

Legislative Committee Review
Response to Questions
Wisconsin Emergency Management
October 5, 2006

What is the status of implementation of MABAS and what is the timetable for future implementation?

The Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (known as MABAS) was approved by the Wisconsin State Legislature and signed by Governor Doyle last spring. MABAS is a mutual aid measure that may be used for deploying fire, rescue and emergency medical services personnel in a multi-jurisdictional and/or multi-agency response.

Participation in the mutual aid program is voluntary. Equipment, personnel or services provided under MABAS are at no charge between municipalities. Expenses recovered from the responsible parties are equitably distributed. In addition, emergency personnel that respond to the emergency remain employees of their initial department or agency.

MABAS is broken into divisions rather than regions. The MABAS divisions basically follow county lines. The only exception is the City of Milwaukee which has established its own MABAS division due to size and number of agencies potentially involved.

Currently, ten counties have formally established MABAS divisions and an additional 20 counties are in the process of adopting the program. Wisconsin Emergency Management has conducted 12 outreach meetings throughout the state to explain the mutual aid measure. It takes 12-18 months for a MABAS division to become fully functional and the most conservative estimate is that it takes a full 5 years before full implementation.

What is the status of implementation of the 2-1-1 system and what is the timetable for future implementation?

The 2-1-1 System connects people with needed human services programs through an easy to remember three-digit phone number. When someone calls 2-1-1, trained staff provide callers with the appropriate resources and information. The information provided may not only include basic human services program requests but also provide emergency public information in times of crisis. For example, 2-1-1 can provide callers with information on locations of emergency shelters, physical and mental health resources, volunteer opportunities and where to send donations.

According to the United Way, currently 62% of the U.S. population has access to 2-1-1, with more systems going live each month. In Wisconsin, development of the 2-1-1 began in 1998. Currently, there are ten active 2-1-1 call centers in Wisconsin, providing full access and service to about 60% of the population. In 2006, they will answer an estimated 290,000 calls.

2-1-1 Wisconsin is a public-private partnership involving the United Way, Department of Health and Family Services and other government and private and non-profit agencies. It is an independent 501(c) 3 organization governed by a board of directors representing 2-1-1 call centers, government, business, United Way, private philanthropy and local communities.

A comprehensive proposal has been developed to expand the statewide coverage of 2-1-1 and to introduce new coordination and resource sharing. The goal is to make available 2-1-1 services to all Wisconsin citizens by use of telephone or internet, 24 hours a day. In addition, 2-1-1 would be used to support Wisconsin Emergency Management during times of disasters or emergencies by providing citizens with disaster related information.

211 Wisconsin just completed a statewide business plan that calls for 100% coverage for information & referral and emergency public information in times of crisis. Currently data is available to local call centers for 60% of the state. The business plan calls for a statewide database and redundant phone system providing seamless access to human services for the whole state by the end of 2007.

Organizers estimate that by the third year of a statewide system, 2-1-1 Wisconsin could be answering almost 520,000 calls annually, equivalent to about 9.5% of the state population and some 2.5 million calls over the first five years of full operation.

What is the status of mass evacuation planning? Are there specific plans for dealing with persons with disabilities? Persons with pets?

The State of Wisconsin and all 72 Wisconsin counties include evacuation and shelter plans as functional annexes under their Emergency Operations Plans. The *Review of Wisconsin's Emergency Preparedness Plans* issued by the Wisconsin Homeland Security Council in October 2005 noted that all Wisconsin plans could accommodate small to medium evacuation and shelter efforts, but — at that time — would likely not accommodate the response and support requirements for either large scale or catastrophic events.

A number of accomplishments in the past year have significantly improved Wisconsin's capabilities for mass evacuation:

Mass evacuation performance standards

Mass evacuation performance standards have been developed and distributed statewide. These standards were incorporated in the Wisconsin Emergency Management 2006 Plan of Work and have been integrated by Wisconsin counties into their local emergency plans.

Milwaukee County and the other counties in the Southeast Region took the lead in mass evacuation and special needs evacuation planning. Developed with the Department of Transportation and other planning partners, Milwaukee County's mass evacuation plan identifies the roles and responsibilities of participating agencies and includes four levels of evacuation — from small-scale evacuations to a mass evacuation involving hundreds of thousands of individuals. Primary and secondary evacuation routes, along with connecting routes, are identified. The plan also identifies Evacuation Transportation Assembly Areas for individuals who need transportation out of the city.

The standards developed by Milwaukee County are being used in Wisconsin Emergency Management's East Central, West Central and Southwest regions — which include 10 of the state's 12 largest cities. In addition, Eau Claire and La Crosse have held three multi-county tabletop exercises to identify local planning issues.

Implementation of mass shelter performance standards is well underway with development of functional concepts for sheltering, including facility identification, facilities management, feeding support, transportation and security, and health and human services.

Transportation resources

Wisconsin has developed a checklist of transportation resources that includes commercial transportation services (surface, air, rail, and marine), local and county services and state transportation assets, including the Wisconsin National Guard.

Counties and municipalities are integrating transportation resources to meet the requirements of their plans. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation is leading a cooperative effort to develop transportation plans that include the Southeast Region Planning Guidance. Transportation planning includes emergency response access, traffic flow, primary and secondary evacuation routes and transportation assembly areas.

Identification of main evacuation routes and alternates has been completed in great detail for the Milwaukee area. The Department of Transportation has established a team to work with major metropolitan areas, while efforts in the other communities are ongoing. Planning has started in the other Wisconsin Emergency Management Regions using the draft plan developed by Milwaukee County.

Evacuation plans for Special Needs Populations

Wisconsin's nursing homes, hospitals and related facilities have specific emergency requirements and work with local and state authorities in the areas of emergency planning, evacuation and exercising. The Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) developed a policy on evacuation of health care facilities including hospitals and nursing homes. This policy, distributed to facilities statewide, requires all health care facilities to evacuate with their own resources.

DHFS has also completed a series of four training events addressing Special Needs populations. DHFS has completed training with 6 counties in 2005 and is involved with 20 others in 2006. The work with 20 counties has included technical assistance to county emergency management, human services, public health, and community based organizations to enhance local capacity to respond and recover from all-hazards for individuals with special needs.

The Southeast Region Mass Evacuation Planning Work Group has established a smaller focus group to continue work on the evacuation planning for Special Populations. The group has scheduled monthly meetings to discuss further planning efforts.

In the last month, the National Incident Management System Integration Center released guidelines for hospitals and health care systems that require individuals who will interact with emergency responders to complete identified Incident Command System courses. Those courses are available online through the FEMA website.

Pet evacuation

Legislation on pet evacuation during emergencies has been introduced by Congress. Based on that legislation and other input from national animal welfare organizations, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security is developing guidance on pet evacuation for state and local agencies. Once this is finalized and federal legislation is adopted, the state will be incorporating the guidance into the State Emergency Response plans. Several county emergency management offices have already developed groups consisting of volunteer agencies, local humane societies and animal welfare groups, veterinarians and other emergency response agencies to develop local plans for pet evacuation.

What is the mission of the WEM regions and how do those regions coordinate their activities with other types of regions?

A key resource within Wisconsin Emergency Management is the WEM Regional offices. There are six regional offices located in Waukesha, Fond du Lac, Spooner, Eau Claire, Madison and Wausau. Each regional office consists of a full time regional director and one half time office administrative assistant. They are assigned to work with a group of surrounding counties ranging in number from eight to 14 counties.

The WEM Regional Directors are responsible for overseeing the county Emergency Management programs. They are responsible for managing several grant programs that direct county emergency management program activities in the areas of planning, training, exercising, and public education/emergency information. They support county programs through their participation in training and exercise events. In this way the Regional Directors are involved in the county programs as they relate to preparedness and response issues in areas such as natural disasters, hazardous materials, terrorism, public health and hospital preparedness, animal diseases, individual preparedness and outreach to the public sector.

When disasters and emergencies strike, they are also WEM's initial on-site representatives, serving as field liaisons for the State Emergency Operations Center. They work closely with local emergency officials and help coordinate any state assistance that may be needed.

The Wisconsin Homeland Security Council has adopted the WEM Regions for planning and response. While other state agencies regional structures do not match WEM's, it does not hamper planning, training, exercise or response activities. WEM Regional Directors work closely various with local, state, federal, private and non-profit agencies to ensure appropriate contacts are made to develop effective response plans. These efforts to bring all parties to the table for planning, training and exercising are aimed at increasing levels of coordination and collaboration regardless of variations in regional structures between participating agencies and levels of government

How will information about disasters be communicated to the public if regular modes of communication are unavailable? Will this be a state or local function?

Crisis communication is a critical function for federal, state, tribal and local agencies. The Emergency Support Function 15 – External Affairs outlines plans and procedures to develop, coordinate and disseminate public information and instructions during an emergency for all levels of government. This may include establishing a Joint Information Center where public affairs officers from various

federal, state, local, tribal, public and private agencies come together to provide coordinated release of information. Templates for ESF 15 have been provided to county and municipal emergency management agencies.

In the event that regular modes of communication are unavailable, both the State and the County Emergency Management systems have access to the statewide Emergency Alert Systems (EAS). EAS ties to public radio as well as commercial stations across the state. Local cable override systems are also used to pass along emergency information.

In addition, emergency information could be broadcast over NOAA Weather Radios. NOAA Weather Radio is a nationwide network of radio stations broadcasting continuous weather information direct from a nearby National Weather Service office. NOAA Weather Radio broadcasts National Weather Service warnings, watches, forecasts and other hazard information 24 hours a day. Working with the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) Emergency Alert System, NOAA Weather Radio is an "all hazards" radio network, making it the single source for the most comprehensive weather and emergency information available to the public.

A number of counties have a reverse 911 system where information is call back to residents for selected areas impacted by an emergency event. This could also be used to provide emergency warnings and information.

Outdoor warning sirens which are activated and controlled at the local level are also used to alert residents to emergency situations and as a means to direct residents to listen to local media.

Is there anything at the state level similar to Information Sharing and Analysis Centers? Should there be?

The Department of Homeland Security has established Information Sharing and Analysis Centers (ISACs) to allow critical sectors to share information toward protecting our critical infrastructure and to help minimize vulnerabilities. Wisconsin does not have formal organizations that mirror ISAC. However, as evidenced by comments made to the Committee by Michael Shoys of Wisconsin Manufactures and Commerce, we do have mechanisms and on-going initiatives to address this critical area.

Similar to DHFS efforts in disseminating information on business risk planning in a pandemic environment, other state agencies (DATCP, DOT, DNR, WEM, DCI, etc.) provide timely information to our partners in the private sector. Particularly noteworthy is the establishment of the Wisconsin Statewide Intelligence Center (WSIC). The WSIC is a collaborate effort among state, federal and local emergency service agencies to provide seamless information-sharing statewide

on law enforcement matters and other significant events affecting the state of Wisconsin. The agency operates as an all crimes-all events center, helping law enforcement and emergency managers in traditional areas of investigation as well as tracking domestic terrorist's threats to Wisconsin. Additionally, the WSIC links public and private agencies (including such areas as agriculture and utilities) to ensure that any threats, man-made or natural are brought to the attention of the proper agencies in a linked, coordinated strategy.

Proactive outreach to the private sector continues. This outreach goes beyond information sharing and provides guidance and assistance in the development of business continuity planning as well as the integration of the private sector in local/regional exercising.

How are private sector disaster relief actions communicated to government in order to avoid duplication of effort?

Most of the coordination with private businesses and industries is conducted at the local level. Contacts are made through local emergency management offices and various businesses such as food industry, hardware stores, etc. When a disaster occurs, these industries provide valuable services such as safety supplies (gloves, shovels, etc.) and food for emergency workers and disaster victims.

At the state level, WEM is developing relationships with the private sector, working with various industries and manufacturing groups.

Can the various disaster preparedness exercises be better coordinated to avoid duplication of the effort?

Currently, there are many exercise requirements for a variety of state and federal agencies. State agencies have no obligation to report their exercise efforts to anyone but themselves and the state and federal administrative agencies responsible for exercise funding. None of these exercises are collated into a central database. Duplication of exercise effort occurs when agencies develop and conduct an exercise with similar or parallel objectives.

Recommendations:

- Designate Wisconsin Emergency Management as the clearing house for all state and local exercises-grant funded or unfunded.
- Require the State Administrative Agency to proactively report all exercise requests to WEM.
- Designate WEM as a single source for identifying exercise facilitators to develop, conduct, evaluate and document state exercises.

- Focus on conducting regional, where feasible, rather than local exercises.
- Develop a State of Wisconsin integrated agency Improvement Matrix.
- Conduct State of Wisconsin annual exercise planning workshops.
- Develop Three Year Preparedness Strategic Plan cycle.

These recommendations will:

1. Avoid the majority of exercise duplication.
2. Combine state resources.
3. Utilize cost of scale to maximize funding.
4. Create a single state preparedness improvement strategy.
5. Enable continuity of exercise design and evaluation.
6. Encourage synergy.
7. Meet federal National Response Plan goals.
8. Proactively identify resource, training and equipment needs.
9. Enable state agencies to access central database to facilitate planning.

The scope and hazard of the various community, county and state exercises is guided by local hazard analysis needs, past history of disaster occurrences, direction from WEM Information & Guidance (I & G) Memos, mandated guidance outlined in exercise grant funding requirements from the Office of Justice Assistance (OJA) or Public Health & HRSA, and mandated requirements from the Governor's Office.

Ongoing coordination of exercises does occur at the county emergency manager level who notifies Wisconsin Emergency Management of scheduled exercises. Additionally, WEM proactively seeks input from state agencies and other public/private entities on their scheduled exercises. These scheduled exercises are posted on the WEM website to provide a centralized database to inform all interested parties as to the exercise sponsor, date, type, location, and hazard. WEM exercise officers work with most of the counties and state agencies in the development, support, execution and evaluation of exercises. WEM exercise officers enforce the Homeland Security Exercise Evaluation Program (HSEEP) in the oversight of exercises to provide a coordinated and standardized exercise program.

Some duplication of disaster preparedness exercises are necessary as each exercise, while confronting the challenges of a similar hazard (for example, a

pandemic incident) could focus on different response & recovery tasks associated with the emergency, or different agency representatives could be involved in an similar exercise then were present in earlier exercises. In addition, an effective exercise program will focus on the same hazard but at three different levels of training experience (tabletop, functional, full-scale exercises). Essentially you begin with a tabletop exercise to discuss response & recovery issues/procedures then you conduct a functional exercise to test actual performance of limited specific tasks and finally you conduct a full-scale exercise with all the lights and sirens to test performance of all response & recover tasks.

Have plans been made to continue operation of public utilities, including water utilities, in the event of a pandemic?

The Energy Emergency Support Function (ESF) of the State Emergency Operations Plans is now being drafted. It utilizes an all-hazards approach and covers disruptions of energy supplies and/or the distribution system, regardless of cause. While no specific planning is being done or planned for disruptions of energy systems due to pandemic, we are confident that the ESF as it is now being drafted will provide the necessary procedures and protocols to deal with such a contingency.