

King County Office of Emergency Management Podcasts

Disasters: Are you ready?

Define Your Region

- I see an emphasis on regional action as one of the touch points to success in our modern society when it comes to improving our local, regional, state and national preparedness.
- Even the Department of Homeland Security has discovered the benefits of taking regional approaches following their experiences in Katrina.
- However, The term “regional” means different things to different people. For the federal government they will think in terms of their federal regions that encompass multiple states. Here in Region X it includes the states of Alaska, Washington, Oregon and Idaho.
- When the term Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) is used it has been defined to mean Snohomish, King, and Pierce Counties, along with the Cities of Seattle and Bellevue.
- Additionally, in Washington State nine administrative Homeland Security regions have been established. These are all multi-county regions except for Pierce and King Counties which each stand alone as regions.
- Lastly, when we started our “regional” disaster response planning back in 1998 we defined the “region” as geographic King County.
- I even use the term “Sub-regional” when discussing the role of emergency management Zones, of which we have three in King County, when looking to how we divide up a more complex place like King County in order to provide for a more effective response.

- Where ever you live I say that you should look at your maps and define your region as that which encompasses the people and organizations that interact regularly in business and commerce.
- I believe that the true “region” for our area of the state is the Central Puget Sound made up by Snohomish, King and Pierce Counties. We share a common population that commutes across county boundaries every day. Our transportation systems are complex and mingled in order to make modern society work on a daily basis.
- When the chips are down and disaster has knocked us back on our collective heels – it will be the regional response and recovery that will ensure a rapid reaction and marshalling of resources to deal with the calamity. No single jurisdiction—no matter how large it is can deal with the catastrophes that we face in man-made and natural disasters.
- If you are still stuck in the idea that you must “go it alone” as a city, county or business, then I suggest you reconsider this course of action and look for ready and willing regional partners with whom to conduct joint planning for the disasters that are yet to come.
- If the Department of Homeland Security and FEMA were to do one single thing that would quickly impact our nation’s readiness I believe they should invest in regional approaches that pull together federal agencies to work in concert with state and local partners.
- Let’s hope this effort starts soon!