Unit 8: Policies and Procedures

CERT Program Manager

Unit Objectives

- At the conclusion of this unit, the participants will be able to describe the role of policies and procedures in operating a local CERT program:

  – Explain why policies and procedures are necessary for running a successful program

  – Identify policies and procedures necessary for starting and maintaining a program

  – Identify resources for developing program policies and procedures

PM 8-1

Unit Topics

- Importance of Policies and Procedures

- Policies and Procedures for CERT

- Resources for Developing Policies and Procedures

PM 8-1

Importance of Policies-Procedures

- Terms sometimes used interchangeably
- "Policy"
  - Plan of action that links organization's "vision" and day-to-day operations
- "Procedure"
  - Series of steps organization will take to implement policy
  - Functionally same as "protocol"

Important Thing to Remember

- Don't worry about definitions

- Bottom line: CERT program needs to know **what** it plans to do and **how** it plans to do it

- Policies and procedures are required when there is need for consistency in day-to-day operational activities

PM 8-2

Write Them Down

- They are guideposts for program:
  - Used to operate
  - Turned to whenever there is a question
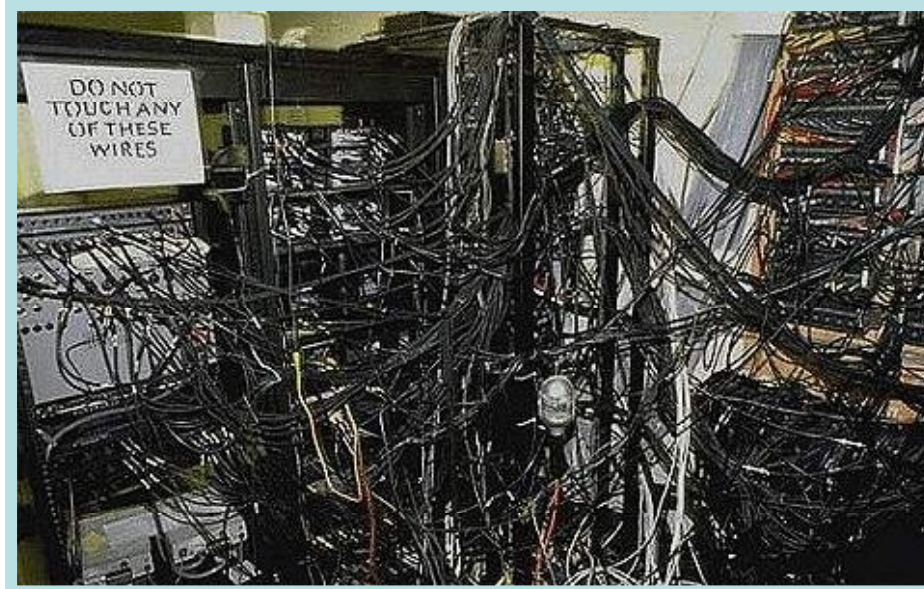- They give guidance to staff and volunteers on how to perform job correctly

PM 8-2

Write Them Down (cont'd)

- They help eliminate common misunderstandings
  - Define roles and responsibilities
  - Establish boundaries

PM 8-2

- **Periodically ask**
  - Are policies and procedures still meeting program's needs?

PM 8-4

"Signs"

- Some "signs" that review and update are needed
    - Increase in number of injuries?
    - Ineffective team operations?
    - More questions on "normal operations"?
    - Feeling of general confusion?
    - Inconsistent performance of CERT members?
    - Increase in stress levels of CERT members?
    - Complaints about poor performance?

PM 8-4

Format

- Determined by program
  - One document with all policies
  - Each policy is its own document
- Need to be well written and complete

- Over years of experience Program Managers have identified the key policies and procedures that CERT program needs to operate smoothly and effectively

- See *CERT Policies and Procedures*

Development Resources

- CERT policies and procedures cannot be developed in a vacuum

- Must be developed with input from sponsoring agency and partners

- Need to be consistent with:
  - Sponsoring agency's needs and procedures
  - EOP or CEMP
  - State and local statutes and regulations

PM 8-11

Liability

- Risks associated with taking *CERT Basic Training* and with being CERT member
  - CERT training and CERT program require physical activity; possibility of personal injury
  - Participation in a CERT may lead to exposure to potentially hazardous conditions
  - CERT members must only respond within scope of their training

PM 8-11

Tips for Reducing Liability

- Reducing liability during training, exercises, and activation must be prime concern for Program Manager
  - Keep safety at forefront, whatever CERT activity
  - Become familiar with regulatory requirements for volunteers in your State
  - Visit CERT Web site page, Reducing Liability

PM 8-11

More Tips

- See the Sample Hold Harmless/ Permission Request form on CERT Web site

- Visit Web site of Legal Information Institute, U.S. Code Collection, Limitation on Liability for Volunteers

- Visit Web site of Missouri CERT; see page, CERT: Liability issues

Find Policies and Procedures

- Don't need to be developed from scratch
- Many already exist in another CERT program or in one of the entities that has authority over CERT program

What Do You Think?

- Experienced Program Managers: Where have you found sample or actual policies or procedures to use when you were developing the ones for your program?

PM 8-13

Draft Program Plan:

Develop Policies and Procedures

Unit Summary

- Importance of Policies and Procedures
- Policies and Procedures for CERT
- Resources for Developing Policies and Procedures

PM 8-13