



Private Sector Liaison Program

Summary

Virginia Department of Emergency Management's Private Sector Liaison Program (PSLP) is an effort to build relationships with Virginia's private sector partners. The relationship is based on mutual situational awareness and information sharing. VDEM's Private Sector Liaison serves as a vital link between the private sector and the state's emergency management community.

Background

Emergency Managers know incorporating the private sector business community into their disaster and emergency response framework can result in an advantageous partnership. In recent years the private sector community has sought out their role in disaster response and how to support the needs of the community and the public sector while maintaining a profitable business. The private sector has noted the importance for their businesses and employees to prepare for emergencies and the need for establishing partnerships with the public sector to support emergency response.

As part of natural growth and after action reviews, some companies developed in-house emergency plans and business continuity models. In the current economy and with funding limitations many companies are no longer able to dedicate staff and resources to emergency response planning.

In 2010 the Virginia Department of Emergency Management began researching a Private Sector Liaison Program. Discussions occurred with Local Officials, Regional Catastrophic Planning Groups, established Private Sector Partners, and Emergency Management Professionals from other states. The value of "pre-event" partnerships between the Public and Private Sector was identified as a desired endpoint. Recently several grant related projects (RCPT Region III, RCPT Hampton Roads, and UASI Programs) have requested information about the Commonwealth of Virginia's integration of private partners including guidance documents and procedures explaining Virginia's implementation of a Private Sector Liaison Program.

Goals and Objectives

The objective of the program is to engage private sector partners within the Commonwealth of Virginia in a mutually beneficial interaction throughout the emergency management cycle. The program is built on a foundation of information sharing, mutual situational awareness between sectors, and relationship building amongst sectors of the Commonwealth. The success of this program will be determined by the level of interaction and benefit of the relationships established. The goal is to bring together the knowledge and assets of the private sector with Virginia's emergency management community, foster a partnership that will result in a higher level of preparedness, response, and recovery to the citizens of the commonwealth, as well as stimulate local economies by allowing resources to be available, and ready, in impacted areas throughout the state.

Description

The Private Sector Liaison will be a conduit between Virginia Department of Emergency Management and private sector partners who play a crucial role in all phases of emergency management throughout the Commonwealth. The program is designed to rouse the partnerships that already exist and develop additional partnerships between public – private entities. The Private Sector Liaison Program will also play a key role within the Virginia Emergency Response Team, by bringing real time situational awareness and information both logistical and operational from the private sector. The Private Sector Liaison Program engages the talent and resources of the private sector community and makes them available to emergency managers at all levels of government within the Commonwealth of Virginia. The program acts as a primary point of contact for private sector organizations to directly connect with the emergency management infrastructure. Developed out of the Logistics Section the program has brought a new level of situational awareness to the Logistical operations of VDEM and its stakeholders.

The governance of the program rests with the Operations Division's Logistics Section. Within the Logistics Section the program reaches out to not only logistical stakeholders but also multiple sectors identified as Critical Infrastructure by the National Infrastructure Protection Plan developed by the Department of Homeland Security. The Private Sector Liaison functions as another tool in the logistical tool box of the Operations Division. Bi-Sector situational awareness and information sharing is the primary function of the Private Sector Liaison Program.

Before, during, and after a disaster in Virginia the Private Sector Liaison Program distributes information to private sector partners to assist in their preparation and recovery. The program not only reaches out to the "big box" retail stores but also uses various trade/professional associations to ensure VDEM's message reaches the small business community of the Commonwealth. The Private Sector Liaison spends a significant amount of time nurturing the relationships that have been developed with large retailers, associations and other state and local stakeholders. The program is constantly adapting to better serve those which

rely on the vital information the program provides. The Liaison also spends time building relationships with counterparts at the federal level to ensure seamless connectivity and access during all phases of disaster.

Targeted areas of Outreach:

- Energy Providers
- Financial Sector
- Transportation
- Communications
- Postal Services
- Commercial Facilities
- Logistics
- Food Industry
- Retail
- Utilities
- Professional and Trade Associations

Requirements for Success

For VDEM's Private Sector Liaison Program to be successful there has to be a dedicated and funded Private Sector Liaison. Currently, the Private Sector Liaison Program is funded by Emergency Management Grants. The agencies Private Sector Liaison has to be able to think like a private sector stakeholder while at the same time working within a state government structure. The Private Sector Liaison assigned to the program must be able to push initiatives and guide the program in a way that will promote private sector engagement and involvement. A Public-Private information sharing program cannot be successful and affective if it does not take time to allow for its private sector partners to have a voice.

Resources

VDEM's Private Sector Liaison Program has a designated and trained Private Sector Liaison that operates out of the Virginia Emergency Operations Center on a day-to-day basis. The program offers the Commonwealths private sector partners an Information Assembly Form (IAF) to provide information back to VDEM during all phases of a disaster. The IAF is designed to allow VDEM to develop a more comprehensive view of the impacts a disaster is having on the private sector. Private sector partners from across the Commonwealth are encouraged to E-mail VDEM-Private-Sector@vdem.virginia.gov with any situational awareness information they would like to provide VDEM, or to receive and submit an IAF.

Training and Exercises

The need for the private sector community to know and understand how disasters, natural and man-made, are managed and responded to, is a critical element to building bi-sector resiliency throughout the Commonwealth. The Virginia Department of Emergency Management opens up some of its trainings to VDEM's Private Sector Partners from across the Commonwealth.

Trainings include courses such as Logistics 101 (*Fundamentals*), designed to provide students with a broad view of logistics in an emergency management context, also included VEOC 101 (*Awareness and Operations*) is designed to establish a baseline awareness of the operations, procedures, plans, and systems utilized by the Virginia Emergency Operations Center. The Logistics team is willing to provide these trainings when requested.

Communication Tools

Information produced by the Private Sector Liaison Program (PSLP) will be in accordance with the principles and beliefs that promote the core values of the agency. The deliverables and flow of information will be developed in conjunction with the Agencies policy on release of information, and as needed by the private sector partners. The information sharing plan may include but is not limited to:

- PSLP Report
- Situation Reports
- ListServ.
- Training materials for emergency management processes
- E-Mail Alerts
- In Person Meetings

Links

[Virginia Department of Emergency Management](#)

[Ready Virginia](#)

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