

After Incident Report Lessons Learned Center

The purpose of the After Incident Report is to identify both successes and challenges on an incident that can be used as a learning tool for others. The lessons learned in the report will also be used to improve training curriculums. Issues and trends that are identified may have Information Collection Teams assigned to them in the future for further analysis and resolution.

Type 1-5 incident commanders and agency administrators are requested to complete the following questionnaire for each incident they manage. Crews and single resources are also encouraged to complete the questionnaire for incidents they participated in:

Incident Name and Type: Columbia Shuttle Recovery Project Paletine Branch	Dates of Assignment 3/15 thru 4/1/03
Unit or Jurisdiction(s): FEMA/Texas Forest Service	Geographic Area: Southern Region (R-8)
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1. MOST NOTABLE SUCCESS AT THE INCIDENT.

External:

- The working relationship developed with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), NASA, and the Texas Forest Service (TFS) personnel locally and at the FEMA Disaster Field Office (DFO) level provided for increased understanding of agency specific missions and effective implementation of operations.
- Medical Unit services, notifications, and field responses were managed professionally following established team procedures. The services of a Physician and nursing staff at the ICP provided timely treatment in an extremely cost efficient manner.
- Orientation and safety training for all incoming field personnel combined with a shadow day for overhead supervision provide for effective management of the recurring rotation of incident personnel.
- NASA and Space Flight Administration visits were educational and very motivational to incident personnel.

Internal:

- 215a format modified for All-Risk provided effective format to identify and mitigate safety issues.
- Having IMET services at the ICP provided real time monitoring and mitigation of weather related safety hazards.

2. MOST DIFFICULT CHALLENGES FACED AND HOW WE OVERCAME THEM.

External.

The multitude of agencies involved, missions of each agency, and organizational structures in place did not align with the concept of Unified Command that is normally expected in incident management. This resulted in a steep learning curve and coordination challenge between the branches, agencies and DFO functions to understand protocols and authorities for the various aspects of managing the incident.

Development of relationships with the various organizations, flexibility in adapting operating procedures, gaining knowledge about each agencies mission and capabilities, recognizing standards and working together for a common goal resulted in a very functional accomplishment of the incident objectives. Having the Texas Forest Service (TFS) as the delegating agency was instrumental in resolving issues.

Obtaining overhead personnel in all functions was extremely difficult and could have had a significant impact on incident operations.

Working through TFS, were able to get authority to name request critical positions needed.

Internal:

The separation of the Aviation branch from the IMT command responsibility but utilizing IMT aviation personnel to manage aviation assets.

Officially reassigned aviation personnel to the DFO aviation organization to provide clear chain of command for personnel.

3. WHAT CHANGE, ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS ARE RECOMMENDED TO TRAINING?

External.

The Columbia Shuttle Recovery Project is a prime example of the need to have all agencies that may respond to All-Risk incidents be trained in ICS organizational structure, function and process. All agencies, including IMTs, need to be educated in the mission and responsibilities of the other agencies,

capabilities of each agency, and the structure and function of organizations responding under the Federal Emergency Response Plan.

The Recovery Project should be used as a case study to review and explore management models that may have resulted in a more coordinated initial response and efficient long-term operation.

4. WHAT ISSUES ARE UNRESOLVED?

External.

Dispatch system was not efficient in providing .mob information and was not proactive in resolving problems.

Home units appeared to not be responsive in releasing resources for All-Risk assignments.

Standards for position qualifications are not equivalent between agencies. Example: Wilderness Search and Rescue Team Managers performing same duties as DIVS.

Internal:

Differences in safety standards, after shift conduct expectations, and pay inequities for similar work duties between the wildland agency personnel and other federal agency contract personnel created some personnel management and operational challenges.