

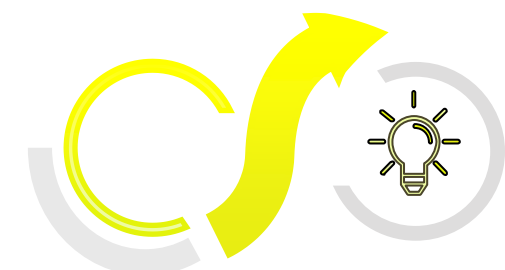
It's Not Broken, Just Misunderstood: The Case for Retaining an All-Hazards Approach

#iaem25

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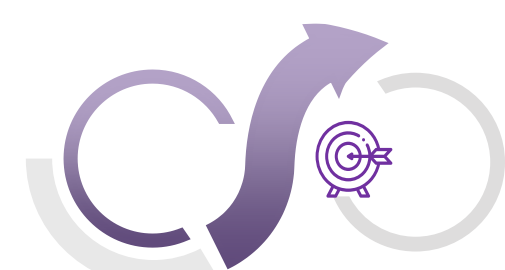
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Introduction



For over 200 years, the Federal Government has played a role in providing disaster assistance to the Nation. Early on this role was largely symbolic, then at the turn of the 20th Century, a series of historic natural disasters triggered discussions proposing the Federal Government play a more active role in domestic disaster assistance. Since 1996, emergency management in the United States has embraced an “all-hazards” approach. However, the release of Presidential Action *Achieving Efficiency Through State and Local Preparedness*¹ directs a shift from an all-hazards approach to a risk-informed process. This poster will examine the similarities, differences, and consider advantages, and disadvantages of both approaches.

Objectives



1. Contribute to the field of emergency management by advancing an understanding of how planning for community resilience and preparedness activities is evolving.
2. Examine if the shift to risk-informed planning in emergency management will enhance the National Preparedness Goal mission areas of prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery.
3. Examine difficulties implementing new policy expectations and requirements with limited empirical data or guidance.
4. Validate that change is needed but review the practical challenges facing emergency managers.

Methodology



A comprehensive literature review of published works from peer-reviewed journals, books, and gray literature from governmental agencies and research organizations.

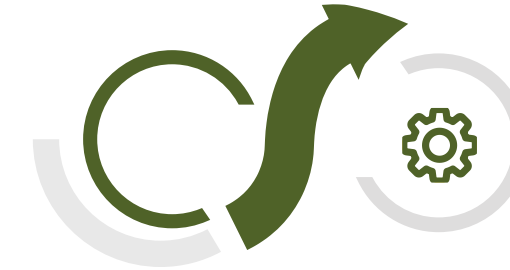
Key words and phrases: all-hazards approach, risk-informed approach, national preparedness system, presidential policy, complex adaptive systems, transparency and trust in federal government.

Significance

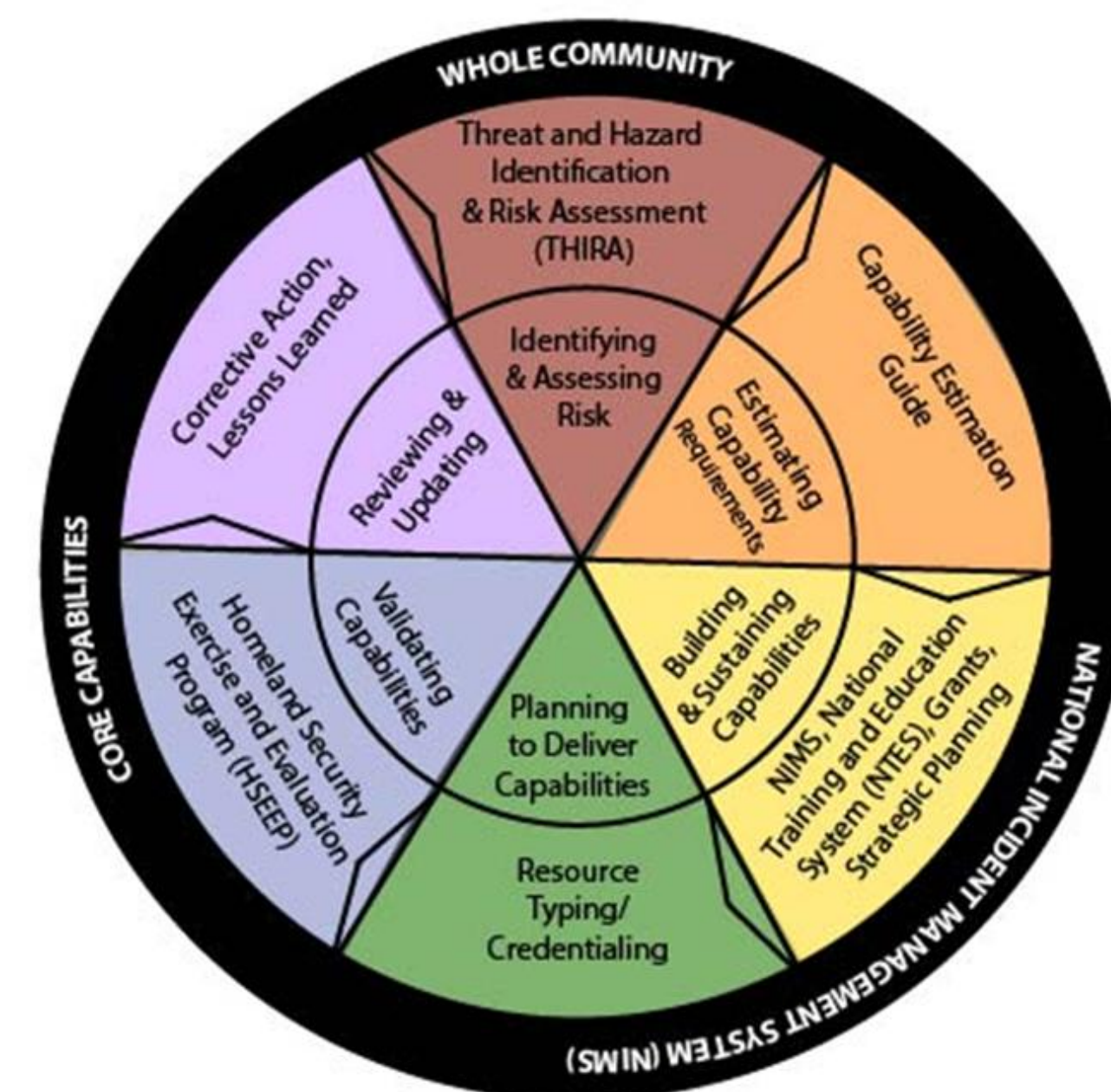


The significance of this research extends beyond improving emergency preparedness planning. It contributes to a broader understanding of how strategic planning efforts support the achievement of resilience and the National Preparedness Goal.

Current Process



National Preparedness System²



Planning Approach

An **all-hazards approach** is designed to broadly describe responsibility to organizations and individuals; establish lines of authority and organizational relationships; identify steps to address mitigation concerns during response and recovery; and identify personnel, equipment, facilities, supplies, and resources available. It assists in the development of an **Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) or base plan** for aiding the rapid assembly, situational assessment, organizational structure, and efficient coordination of resources.³ The Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) process allows emergency managers to utilize a capability-focused planning doctrine to identify the threats and hazards of concern which can then be used to develop the EOP and threat specific contingency plans. The process is designed to include the “whole community”; this includes volunteers, faith-based organizations, and city leaders.

Proposed Process



A **risk-informed approach** is widely used in banking, building and design, healthcare, and nuclear energy industry regulation. The process involves identification of the risks, assessment of the risks identified, understanding and adoption of measures to prevent or mitigate the risks identified, and application of measures to prevent or mitigate the risks identified.⁴ Risk-informed planning and decision-making is addressed in the National Preparedness System (NPS) and CPG 101. An emergency management risk-informed approach also accounts for stakeholders' concerns, costs, feasibility, and public consultation.



Similarities

- Identification and assessment of risks
- Identify personnel, equipment, facilities, supplies, and resources available
- Application of measures to prevent or mitigate the risks identified
- Both approaches are mentioned in the National Preparedness System (NPS) and CPG 101
- Both incorporate broad preparedness strategies to enhance organizational resilience, resource efficiency, coordination efforts, and response capabilities across diverse potential threats



Differences

- Risk-informed explicitly weighs risks alongside costs, feasibility, and stakeholder perspectives
- All-hazards approach places insufficient emphasis on the system knowledge available to the assessor⁵
- All-hazards is oversimplified and neglects uncertainty, infrastructure performance and socio-demographics⁶
- Risk-informed is promoted as being dynamic and continuous

Discussion



The purpose of the shift to a risk-informed approach is to enhance national security to create a more resilient Nation. This new approach is promoted to empower State and local communities to make risk-informed decisions on infrastructure prioritization for strategic investments that improve resilience and preparedness. State and local communities are to consider aspects like cost, safety, complex settings, and diversity of their stakeholders.¹ Improving community resilience is significant given the increase in disasters; however, the policy changes have been made without input from professionals in the community, and it is still unclear how the policy is to be implemented, what resources will be made available, and metrics for assessing realization.

Guidance for implementing the all-hazards approach has been developed through years of application and improvement. It includes training materials, methods for threat and hazard risk assessment, and guides for conducting the planning, exercise and evaluation processes. If executed correctly, the current process should prioritize strategic investments and inform training and exercises opportunities to build resilience.

While the all-hazards plan has been primarily used to develop response and recovery actions, it can meet a broad range of preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery objectives.

Regarding empowering State and local governments, these entities already play an active and significant role in preparedness. Federal funding for disaster-mitigation infrastructure has existed for decades.⁷

State and local governments have been paying the lion's share of these investments for the last half century. The US Bureau of Economic Analysis on government fixed assets, documents the aggregate annual spending of all state and local governments across a range of infrastructure assets generally has been twice that of the federal government's spending.⁸

Neither the all-hazards or risk-informed approach have real measures to define resilience; especially through a lens of socio-environmental systems.⁹ How can emergency managers assess the inter-relationships and interactions of complex adaptive systems if measures to define progress or success in resilience cannot be defined?

Conclusion



- Changes are needed to the application of the all-hazards **approach**.
- The benefits of shifting to a risk-informed approach are yet to be proven
- The two approaches are similar in concept of understanding stakeholder perspectives and a whole community philosophy
- Emergency managers should already be implementing a risk-informed approach with the THIRA process and consequence analysis
- THIRA and consequence analysis provide prioritization for strategic investments and inform training and exercises opportunities to meet a broad range of preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery objectives
- Rather shifting the burden to states with limited resources, return to the original tenets of the all-hazards approach; determine threats, capabilities, gaps, priorities, and involve community stakeholders.
- Return to an **Emergency Operations Plan** for immediate action to all hazards and develop contingency plans for specific threats.

Acknowledgements

