**Discussion: Communications in Emergency Planning**

With the emerging threat of a bioterrorist attack on communities in the United States there has been much discussion by leaders in emergency management as to whether or not the model taught for preparing for emergencies needs to be changed. Some EM leaders argue that the model does not require any fundamental changes while others disagree.

One suggestion put forth is that the most important element of an emergency management and operations plan is communications. The logic is that it is of upmost importance to communicate quickly and effectively across all levels to coordinate and management the response. The argument also presents the point that we already know our hazards and that a vulnerability analysis will not yield the benefits of first establishing a strong communication system. Perhaps the strongest point is that "all we really have to use initially to respond to a bioterrorist attack is communication."

1. Find and summarize a brief example of a disaster or emergency where poor communications significantly hampered operations, and highlight the actual costs of the poor communication: money, deaths, equipment lost, etc.
2. What single action could have prevented the problems?
3. Was implementing the fix feasible?