

SUNY UPSTATE UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL

PREPAREDNESS AND DECISION MAKING PROCESS – WINTER STORM HARPER JANUARY 18th-21st 2019



(Photo: Accuweather.com)

Learning Objectives

1. State challenges to planning and incident command activations
1. Discuss where information was available, and how it applied to the scenario
1. Examine response activities, and how those activities supported positive outcomes
1. Share lessons learned, and how the planning and response has changed since the event

Definitions and Review

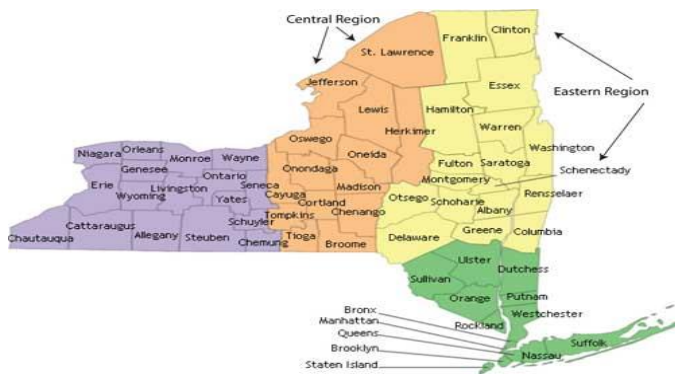
- ***Emergency management*** is the managerial function charged with creating the framework within which communities reduce vulnerability to hazards and cope with disasters.
- ***Continuity of operations (COOP)*** ensures an individual organization can continue to perform its essential functions, provide essential services, and deliver core capabilities during a disruption to normal operations.

(FEMA EMI working group, https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/20130726-1822-25045-7625/principles_of_emergency_management.pdf)

(FEMA Continuity Guidance Circular, <https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1520878493235-1b9685b2d01d811abfd23da960d45e4f/ContinuityGuidanceCircularMarch2018.pdf>)

The Facility

- 17 – County Service Area
- Level 1 Trauma Center for Adults and Pediatrics
- 9,000 + employees, Onondaga County Largest employer
- 1,340 Full Time Students (2018)
- Footprint - 25 buildings on 30 acres



The Storm

- Crossed the country from the West to New England in Mid January 2019
- Heavy snow in the Sierra, Rockies, Midwest and New England
- Heaviest snow totals were in Sierra Nevada, but portions of Upstate NY experienced more than 20 inches



- Snow and Ice: 14.2 Inches near Buffalo, 18 inches near Rochester, 16 Inches near Syracuse

(Source: Weather.com)

Media



(Source: Twitter.com)

Media



WGRZ ✓ @WGRZ · Jan 20

"On the Jimmy Griffin snow accumulation scale accounting for drift, I give **winter storm Harper** 2-1/2 beers."

Thanks to Gregory for the most Buffalo way to measure the snow.



8

135

420



JetBlue Airways ✓ @JetBlue · Jan 19

We're monitoring the path of **Winter Storm Harper**, and sharing an update on how the storm is affecting operations:

blog.jetblue.com/winter-storm-h...

SERVICE INFORMATION

Weather Travel Alert

44

17

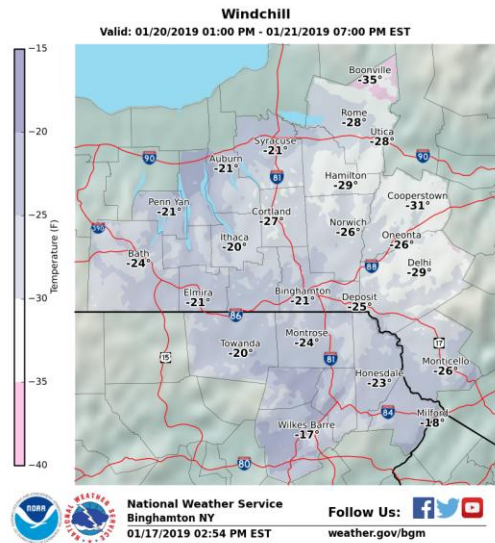
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(Source: Twitter.com)

NWS Predictions

- By January 16, 2019, the NWS was predicting at least 8 inches but the potential for 18 inches over the weekend. Additionally, brutally cold wind-chill was predicted over the weekend for temperatures before -15
- A NWS webinar was scheduled on January 17, 2019

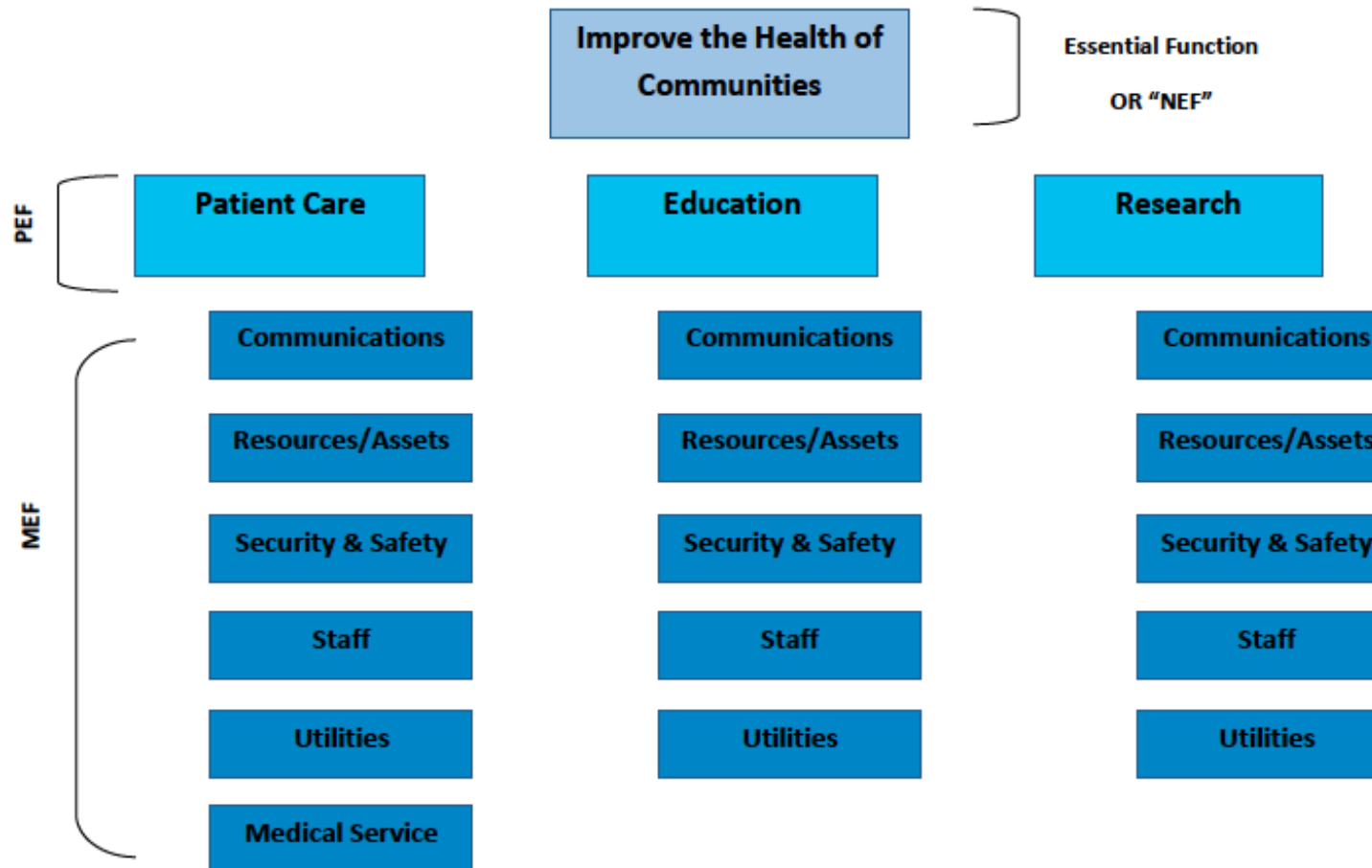


(Source: National Weather Service)

Notification and Activation

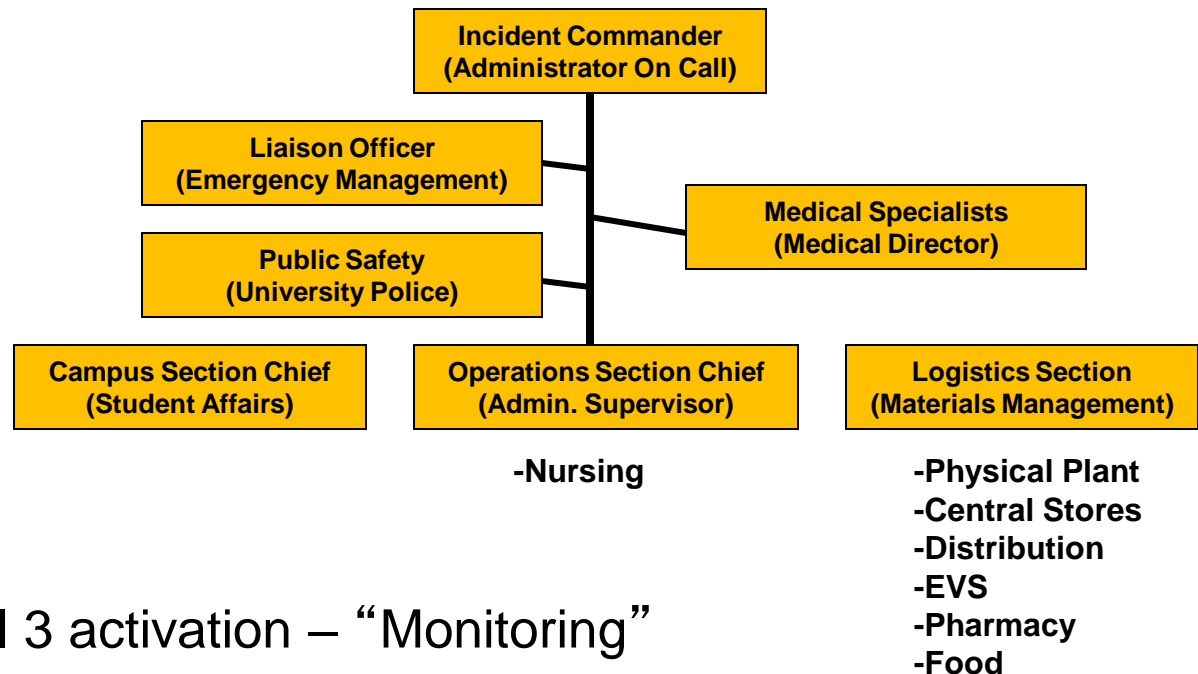
- How do you find out?
- At what point do you decide an event is impactful to your facility?
- What is the process for alerting proper internal authorities?
- Who decides what event is impactful?

Essential Functions



Incident Command Activation

Command Roles Activated:



- 1/17/19 - Level 3 activation – “Monitoring”
- 1/17/19 - Conference Call 2:00pm

Incident Command Levels

LEVEL 3 : Monitoring

- Closely monitor a developing situation
- Limited number of sections to provide situational reporting

LEVEL 2: Partial Activation

- Additional Functional Branches to respond to an emergency or disaster situation
- Consider public information and critical crisis communications

LEVEL 1: Full Activation

- Full Activation of SUNY Upstate Incident Command structure
- Staff recall
- This type of event will have a significant impact on the day to day operations of the institution

1/17/19 Incident Action Plan 1

- **STAFF**

- Repurposing administrative offices to allow RN/MD staff to stay over.
- Physical Plant to maintain staffing for snow removal
- University Police increasing staff patrols on campus and areas where staff would be staying
- Environmental Staff aware of extra spaces to be maintained
- Coordinate messaging to staff for on-call openings, and positions to be filled over the weekend
- Volunteers cancelled for Saturday and Sunday

1/17/19 Incident Action Plan 1

- **PARKING**

- Discussed closing lots at community to allow quick snow removal
- Allow free access to garage to help keep lots clear
- UPD parked cruisers in garage and PM&R overhang

- **FOOD**

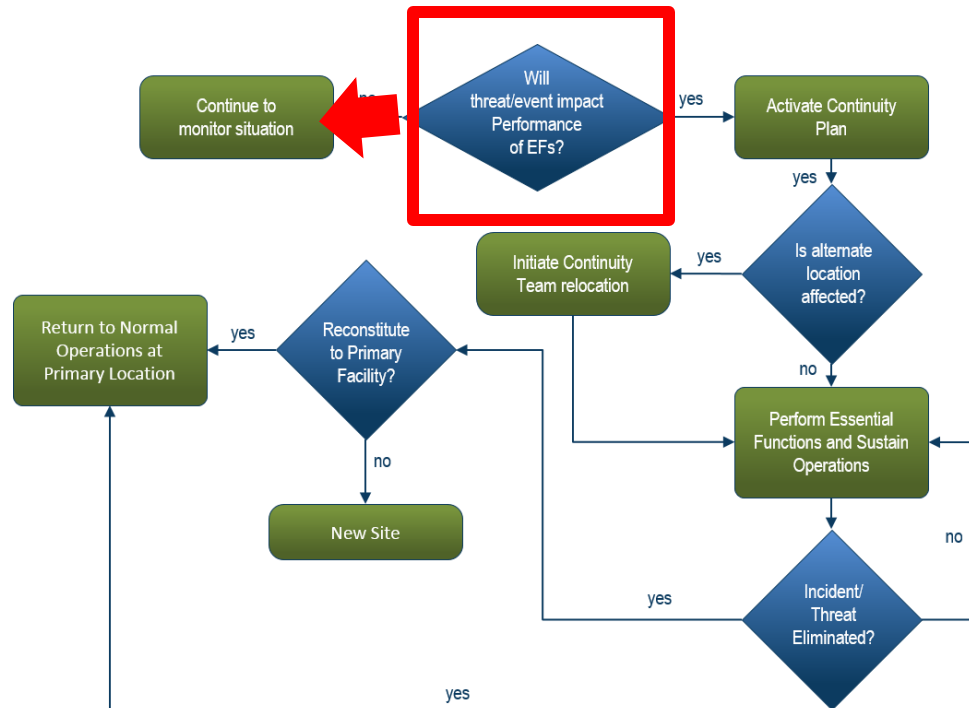
- Maintain par levels
- Estimate food needs from dietary
- Work with physical plant to maintain snow removal on delivery roads and docks

- **EXTERNAL**

- Cold weather, homeless population considerations

1/18/19 Near Miss

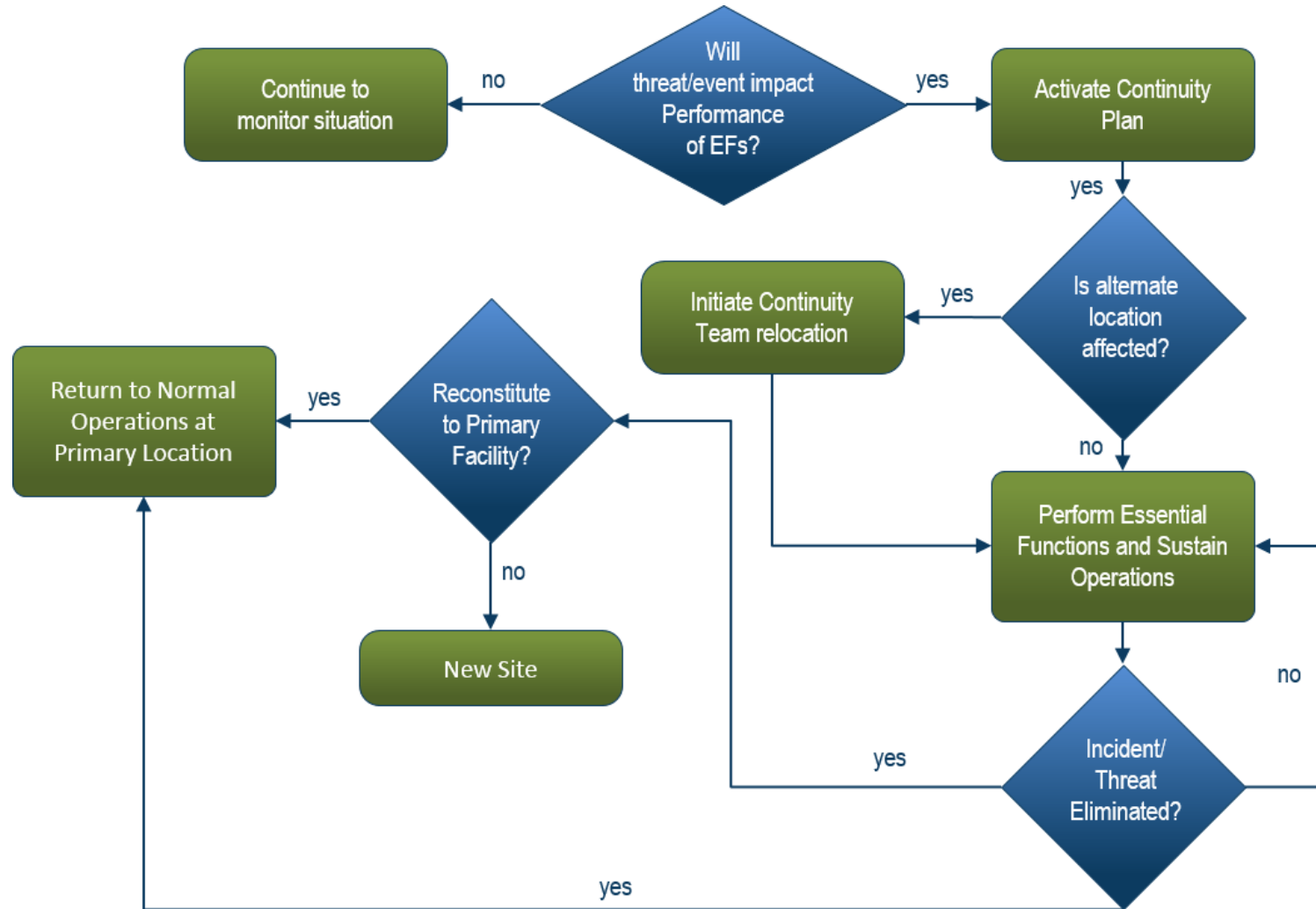
- It was reported at 10:00am on 1/18/19 that Geneva Tower (Student Housing) had lost heat to 6 floors.
- Physical Plant was aware and began immediate diagnostics
- 5 of 6 floors with heat as of 11:40am



RESULT: Stayed at level 3 command. Avoided relocating students, however initiated conversation about trigger points for full Incident Command activation based on the scenario.

(Source: FEMA)

Decision Making Process



(Source: FEMA)

1/18/19 Pre-Identified Trigger Points

- As the weekend approached, most day to day management staff would be offsite, the need for establishing what would necessitate, and when an Incident Command Level 2 would be activated became evident
- In coordination with both AOCs (Incident Commanders) it was determined the following would activate a level 2, and require Incident Command staff to report to the campus:
 - ***Essential Infrastructure Failure (Heat, Water, Electric etc.)***
 - ***Staffing Emergency (due to call ins from weather related challenges)***
 - ***Significant change in storm duration or any event that would impact operations into Monday or Tuesday.***

1/18/19 Incident Action Plan 2

- **STAFF**

- Three spaces on campus identified for staying over
- Coordinate with EVS to clean before Monday
- Moving cots and hygiene items from warehouse

- **MESSAGING**

- Bring supplies to stay
- Pillows, Blankets, Medications,
- Phone Chargers
- Coordinated with PIO and HR
- Capability of 20 actual beds for staff
 - 11 cots in Administrative offices
 - ~25 cots setup ready to use



1/18/19 Incident Action Plan 2

- **FOOD**

- Cafeteria will operate limited menu to staff who stay
- Move potable water from warehouse
- Need to identify staff that are staying for expected volume increase

- **PATIENT CARE**

- Expedite discharges
- Ensure specialty teams are aware (i.e Trauma)

- **EXTERNAL**

- County Emergency Management was expecting a Travel Advisory after 2pm
- High degree of uncertainty with actual snowfall and temperatures

1/18/19 Incident Action Plan 3

- **FOOD**

- Moved 210 Gallons to Community Campus
- Moved 180 Gallons to Downtown Campus
- Made food vouchers available to staff who stayed

- **PARKING**

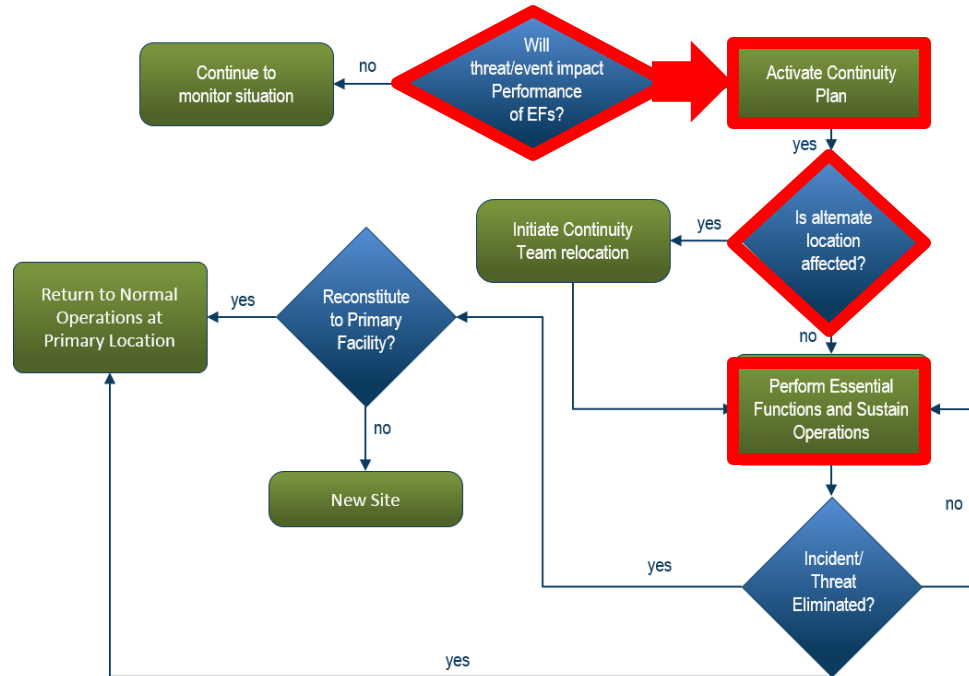
- Shuttle lots are closed for weekend
- All staff allowed to park in East garage free of charge

- **STAFF**

- Encouraging staff to track and return used cots to staging area after use
- On Site command in the event of *trigger events*

1/19/19 Decision Point

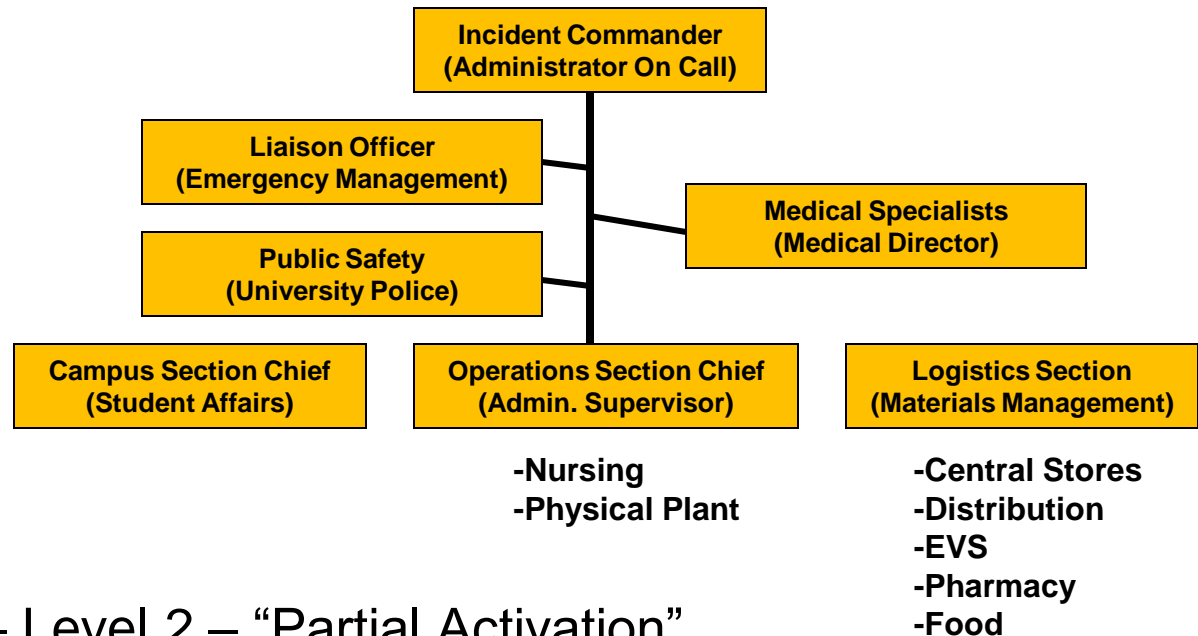
- At 8:10am on 1/19/19, a water main break occurred at Irving Ave and Harrison St.
- 9:09am East Tower lost water
- Worried about impacts to heating
- 11:34am DPW able to restore limited pressure
- 11:37am Multiple leaks due to water pressure restoration
- 12:20pm Receiving reports that it could take 24+ to completely fix the problem



RESULT: Activated Level 2 Incident Command due to large amount of resources, coordination and communication needed to maintain essential functions

Incident Command Activation

Command Roles Activated:



- 1/19/19 9:30am – Level 2 – “Partial Activation”
- 1/19/19 – NWS Conference Call 1:00pm

Water Main Break Response



Water Main Break Response



- Overall water conservation mode due to low pressure
- Limited pressure is impacting booster pump ability to move water up to 12th floor

EXTERNAL

- Authorities working to restore some pressure through re-routing water

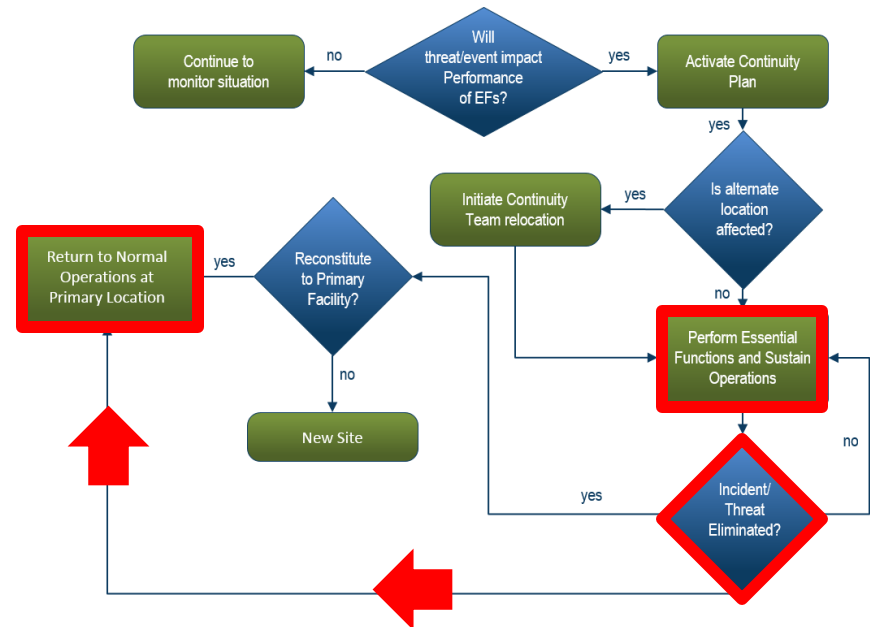
Water Main Break Response



- **EVS** – Using and transporting water to units via bottled water, 1 gallon and 55 gallon containers.
- Called up additional pallets of water ~1000 gallons.
- Executed MOU with water provider
- ED on diversion

Incident Command Rollback

- 1/19/19 1:21pm – Rollback incident command to level 3.
 - Authorities able to provide limited pressure for safe operation
 - Potable water available
 - Still on conservation
 - Appropriate measures to maintain essential functions.



1/20/19 Incident Action Plan 4

- **EDUCATION**

- Campus Activities Building closed due to lack of staff

- **STAFF**

- 18+ staff overnight stays at Downtown
- 19+ overnight stays at Community Campus

- **TRANSPORTATION**

- Some transportation companies not doing out of town transports

- **RECOVERY**

- Get water, and cots back to warehouse

- **INCIDENT COMMAND**

- Level 3 terminated at 11:30am

Lessons Learned

- ***Communicate to staff early and often***
 - Staff expectations very quickly reached unrealistic levels for staying accommodations, food, amount of water coming to the unit
 - Utilize “rounding teams” to walk through units to check status and offer clear, accurate messaging.
- ***Consider a “Stay Team”***
 - Admin Supv. were quickly overwhelmed handling IC, and daily operations.
- ***Potable water MOU did not execute as expected.***
 - Call and meet with vendors to clarify needs and reality during crisis situations
- ***Coordinate staff staying options ahead of time and be very clear with locations***
 - Staff did not stay in designated areas, left rooms not as they found them.

Strengths


- Activated command quickly which facilitated an easy standup for the water event,
- Moved resources ahead of time,
- Coordinated with external stakeholders very well including the county city and DPW,
- Conference calls were extremely helpful for preparation,
- Coordinated with over 110 key staff members directly to command over 3 days.

Strengths

UPSTATEONLINE

A PUBLICATION FOR **UPSTATE**
MEDICAL UNIVERSITY

- Home
- Feature Stories
- Briefs
- Calendar
- Seminars & Conferences
- Upstate People
- Photo Gallery



Upstate's Incident Command mobilized to keep hospital operations up and running during weekend winter storm

Feature Story Index

Current Stories

Gregory P. Connors MD, MPH, MBA, named chair of Pediatrics and executive director of Upstate Golisano Children's Hospital

Upstate's Incident Command mobilized to keep hospital operations up and running during weekend winter storm

Hundreds of medical students seek spot in Upstate's new Family Medicine Residency Program

Newsletter Submissions

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