

UASI Update

A quarterly newsletter of the Metro Boston Homeland Security Region.



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CONTACT US

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The mission of the Metro Boston Homeland Security Region (MBHSR) is to build and sustain region-wide enhanced capabilities in order to reduce the loss of life and property and protect the Region from all-hazards, including acts of terrorism, natural and manmade disasters.

MOMENT OF TRUTH

Urban Shield: Boston



Boston Police Superintendent-in-Chief Linskey briefs SWAT teams on Urban Shield scenarios.

On May 20th, the MBHSR facilitated the first in the nation multi-discipline simulated 24-hour training exercise. Urban Shield was successfully executed through regional collaboration between the MBHSR jurisdictions. The MBHSR is the first UASI to integrate police, fire and EMS training, and through it we have set a national standard for training integration.

Urban Shield began with participant registration and team briefings on Moon Island, at the Boston Fire Academy, followed by a press conference at the consolidated site with Mayor Menino and the JPOC.

The press conference provided an opportunity to introduce the MBHSR and JPOC to the public, as well as announce accomplishments in regional training, security and preparedness. Nearly every local news outlet featured the press conference renewing public confidence in local and regional response capabilities.

Urban Shield also gave the region an opportunity to test regional first responders, and emergency operation capabilities and communication between the Boston, Brookline, Cambridge and Chelsea EOCs. Using We-bEOC as the main communication tool between each EOC allowed command staff to learn the advantages and limitations of this system, while establishing best practices.

This event was successful because of the hard work of participating teams, staff and volunteers throughout the MBHSR.



Boston • Brookline • Cambridge • Chelsea • Everett • Quincy • Revere • Somerville • Winthrop

Mutual Aid

At 7:30 on Tuesday morning June 7th, two MIT dorms were evacuated when a suspicious package was discovered in an area currently under renovation.



Maria Burns Ortiz

Upon further inspection, Cambridge firefighters determined the package had the characteristics of a pipe bomb and requested that the Cambridge Police Bomb Squad be dispatched to investigate. The Boston Police Bomb Squad responded to provide secondary assistance at the scene. Cambridge PD made two

attempts to disrupt the materials contained within the package before determining that the materials did not pose a threat.

While assisting Cambridge PD in at MIT, Boston PD was dispatched to the Longfellow Bridge for a secondary sweep of a suspicious device. Boston PD responded using bomb-sniffing K-9s and video x-ray imaging equipment that was procured through UASI grant funding. Officers were able to determine there was no threat at this site.

While both situations ended without further incident, this is another great example of the level of mutual aid that regional agencies and jurisdictions continue to provide.

Regional Snapshots



Mayor Menino and the MBHSR JPOC address the media during the Urban Shield press conference.



Paramedics train in Urban Search and Rescue at Mass Task Force 1 in Beverly, MA.

Regional Snapshots



EOD personnel discuss tactics to diffuse a bomb located at Quincy High School during Urban Shield.

Return On Investment

Recently, the Region invested in WebEOC system enhancements. The enhancements now allows users to view (and post updates) that are viewable locally and regionally. In addition, the system command structure is consistent with the Incident Command System (ICS) allowing users access based on their Emergency Support Function (ESF).

In recent months, WebEOC has been instrumental in streamlining communication throughout the MBHSR. During July 4th celebrations, Boston and Cambridge experience tremendous crowd surges. WebEOC enabled public safety personnel in Boston and Cambridge to communicate quickly and efficiently.

WebEOC also proved valuable during *Urban Shield: Boston* by facilitating real-

time communication between the four regional EOCs opened for the event. It was also used in testing patient redistribution and communication capabilities between area hospitals and community health centers during *Operation Falcon II* in March.

Using the system as a resource tracking tool will allow us better oversight of regional procurements. Sean Grady, who joined OEM in April as the *Logistics Coordinator*, will be tracking and coordinating resources throughout the Region.

WebEOC has been a welcomed addition to the Region and continues to create greater regional collaboration and communication.

Boston Regional Intelligence Center

Contributed by: David Carabin
Director, BRIC

The Boston Regional Intelligence Center (BRIC) serves as the primary focal point within the Metro Boston Homeland Security Region (MBHSR) for the gathering, receipt, analysis, and sharing of threat-related information among federal, state and local public safety partners. While the BRIC falls within the governance structure of the MBHSR, the operation is under the day-to-day management of the Boston Police Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Analysis, the law enforcement entity physically housing and staffing the BRIC's workspace. The Center utilizes the talents and experience of seasoned detectives coupled with the advanced training and education of civilian analysts with experience in both criminal and homeland security issues. The combination of these two perspectives supports a vetting and analytic development process that creates an in-depth, high-quality intelligence production and assessment capability. Additionally, the vast representation of federal, state and local agencies, and private sector security partners that collaborate with the BRIC make it the ideal place to share information and develop threat mitigation strategies.

Between 2009 and 2010, the BRIC went through a significant transition of leadership, with the appointment of a new Bureau Chief (Superintendent Paul Fitzgerald), Director (David Carabin), and Lieutenant over Homeland Security Operations (Harry Cataldo). With this tran-

sition began a new iteration of outreach initiatives to educate and inform potential customers on what services the Center can (and cannot) provide. The BRIC is now collaborating with its UASI stakeholders through the newly-formed "BRIC Advisory Board" to ensure regional strategies are in-line with the BRIC mission.

The BRIC's new leadership team is determined to ensure the center is providing analytic and operational support to meet the needs of its key partners. In recent weeks, a new analytic team was created to serve as the primary analytic support mechanism for UASI partners. Through the Advisory Board, an Analytic Work Group was established and is working to provide strategic direction for the assignments of the new analysts. The BRIC is also working to develop and release new technology platforms that will enhance regional collaboration, intelligence sharing and analysis. Personnel from the UASI jurisdictions accompanied BRIC leadership to the 2010 National Fusion Center Conference, where they were exposed to national fusion center initiatives that will bring return-on-investment to the MBHSR. Furthermore, personnel from the UASI jurisdictions have participated in several BRIC-hosted training events that will enhance the regions analytic and investigative capacity.

For more information on the BRIC, contact **Director David Carabin** at **617-343-4328** or via email at **bric.bpd@cityofboston.gov**.

Operation Falcon II



Beth Israel staged a full-scale exercise testing their emergency department staff.

Operation Falcon II, an exercise testing the capabilities of regional area hospitals, was facilitated by the Medical Surge Sub-Committee on March 31st.

This functional exercise was developed to evaluate the current Mass-Casualty Incident (MCI) response plan, in the event of a medical surge, for hospitals and community health centers in the MBHSR.

The purpose of this exercise was to measure and validate regional perfor-

mance in Information Sharing, Critical Resource Coordination, and Medical Surge capacities. While the exercise was functional test, two area hospitals opted to test the capabilities of their Emergency Department staff.

Operation Falcon II successfully provided agencies with an opportunity to test their current plans, roles and responsibilities for managing an MCI and provided all involved disciplines with valuable lessons learned. Key areas were identified as requiring improvement in order to further strengthen overall regional response capabilities following an MCI that could result in a patient surge in the MBHSR. However the exercise demonstrated that MBHSR hospitals, public health, community health centers, and EMS agencies have viable plans and procedures to manage information sharing, critical resources, and medical surge during an MCI.

Regional Snapshots



Members of regional fire departments work to secure exterior shoring during Urban Shield.



Boston SWAT Officers secure the scene at the consolidated site during Urban Shield.

Tactical Rope Awareness Training



Members of the Boston Police Special Operations Unit participated in *Tactical Rope Awareness Training* funded by the CBRNE investment on April 26th and 27th.

This 16 hour course was designed to enhance and develop tactical

capabilities, while establishing a great sense of confidence in rappelling. Using the Boston Fire Academy smokehouse, Safety Solutions instructors facilitated each day by teaching rope training fundamentals.

Each participant learned proper gear selection and inspection, along with procedures, tactics and techniques on both fast rope and rappelling. With participants divided into teams, each team rotated to three phases throughout the building that focused on various areas of rope awareness.

Phase 1 allowed participants to practice rappelling, with instruction focusing on developing climber safety and belaying- challenging teams to work on communication techniques. Phase 2 trained teams in lowering each other alongside the building. This technique allows greater ability in controlling their weapons while rappelling. Phase 3 emphasized the ability to climb up to windows at lower heights. This technique is useful in Boston, since many building heights are lower than ten floors.

At the end of the final day, the team left with a better understanding of rope awareness. In addition, each station allowed a focus on specific capabilities, while maintaining the ability to effectively secure weapons, engage suspects, and maintain officer safety. Facilitators reinforced the curriculum and emphasis on safety by routinely testing participants throughout each phase.

This training was well-received, and is instrumental in sharpening the skills of regional tactical teams. It is also helpful in developing the ability and comfort to improvise where needed. Every team valued this training with a unit sentiment, '**training now, saves lives later**'.

Medical Team Training

During the week of April 25th members of the Boston EMS and Cambridge Fire Medic Unit participated in *FEMA Medical Team Training* which was funded through the CBRNE investment. This 40-hour course was designed to provide participants with the knowledge, skills and abilities to operate safely during a structural collapse incident.



Through the training first responders also gained an understanding of the dangers and risks associated with structural collapse incidents. Participants learned about the basics in scene organization and safety, as well as the resources available to structural collapse rescues, hazards on scene, and conducting visual and verbal searches.

Hosted at Mass Task Force 1 in Beverly, Safety Solution instructors provided instruction on addressing disastrous situations and reacting accordingly as a first responder medical team. By learning how to administer continuous on-site medical care in post-disaster environments, this training will be invaluable and life-saving.

Variable Message Boards

Variable Message Sign (VMS) boards are great tools to use for issuing important messages to the public.

The region recently deployed new VMS boards that provided us with different capabilities not available with other models. The new VMS boards are smaller than the traditional boards making it easy for a single person to setup and breakdown.

This system does not require additional software, allowing messages to be changed via computer or PDA. The simplicity of using a PDA to change messages, allows public safety personnel to remain engaged at the scene, while ensuring ongoing public safety needs are met. In addition, we are now able to track unit locations, in the event one is quickly needed or experiencing problems.

Each board is powered by two (2) batteries or the solar panel. The batteries keep the equipment working, without needing to keep it constantly attached to an additional power source. Solar power allows the unit to be used for longer periods of time by using slow blinking messages, while also charging the batteries.

