

Policy Recommendation for Improved Information Sharing

Incorporating information sharing in emergency
management policies and procedures

Robert Mauskapf, MPA
Colonel, USMC (ret)
Director, Emergency Preparedness
Virginia Department of Health
804-864-7035
Bob.Mauskapf@vdh.virginia.gov

The Issue

- Technology and relationship opportunities exist to significantly enhance information sharing still remain.
- Real-time situational awareness can be made available for fast and effective decision making
- Clear processes for providing information can be incorporated into plans and standard operating procedures
- Essential Elements of Information should be identified (i.e., information needs of various decision makers)

Lessons Learned

- Superstorm Sandy
 - Superstorm Sandy highlighted difficulties obtaining essential elements of information including shelter status, power status, and telecommunications status.
- Hurricane Evacuation
 - Real-time information exchange is KEY to support rapid evacuation decisions is essential
- 2012 Derecho
 - Delayed notifications that key telecommunications services were out and 911 service were disrupted
- Localities and state agencies agree there are opportunities to streamline the process.

Where's the data?

- Multiple Agencies
- Local
 - EOC's, 9-1-1 Centers, local DOT, Public Works, ...
- State
 - VDOT, VDEM, VDH, etc.
- Federal
 - NOAA, NWS, ...
- Private Sector
 - Dominion Power and other providers
 - Verizon and other providers
 - Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Association

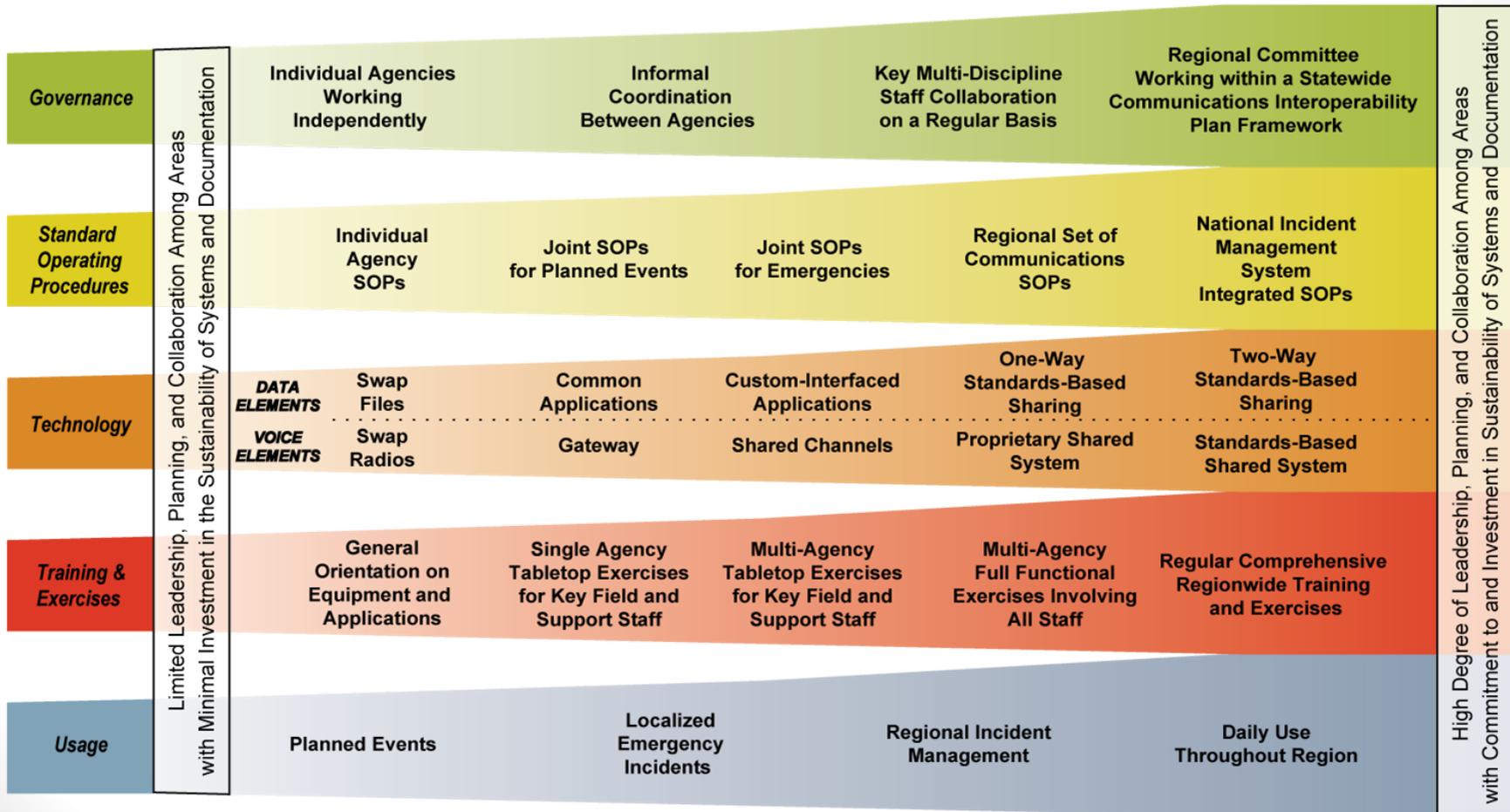
Challenge

- Cultural challenge to integrating technology into decision making processes
- Privacy issues and the need to incorporate detailed information sharing processes into plans and SOPs
- Lack of familiarity with current and emerging technologies
- Information sharing necessitates merged state and local requirements.

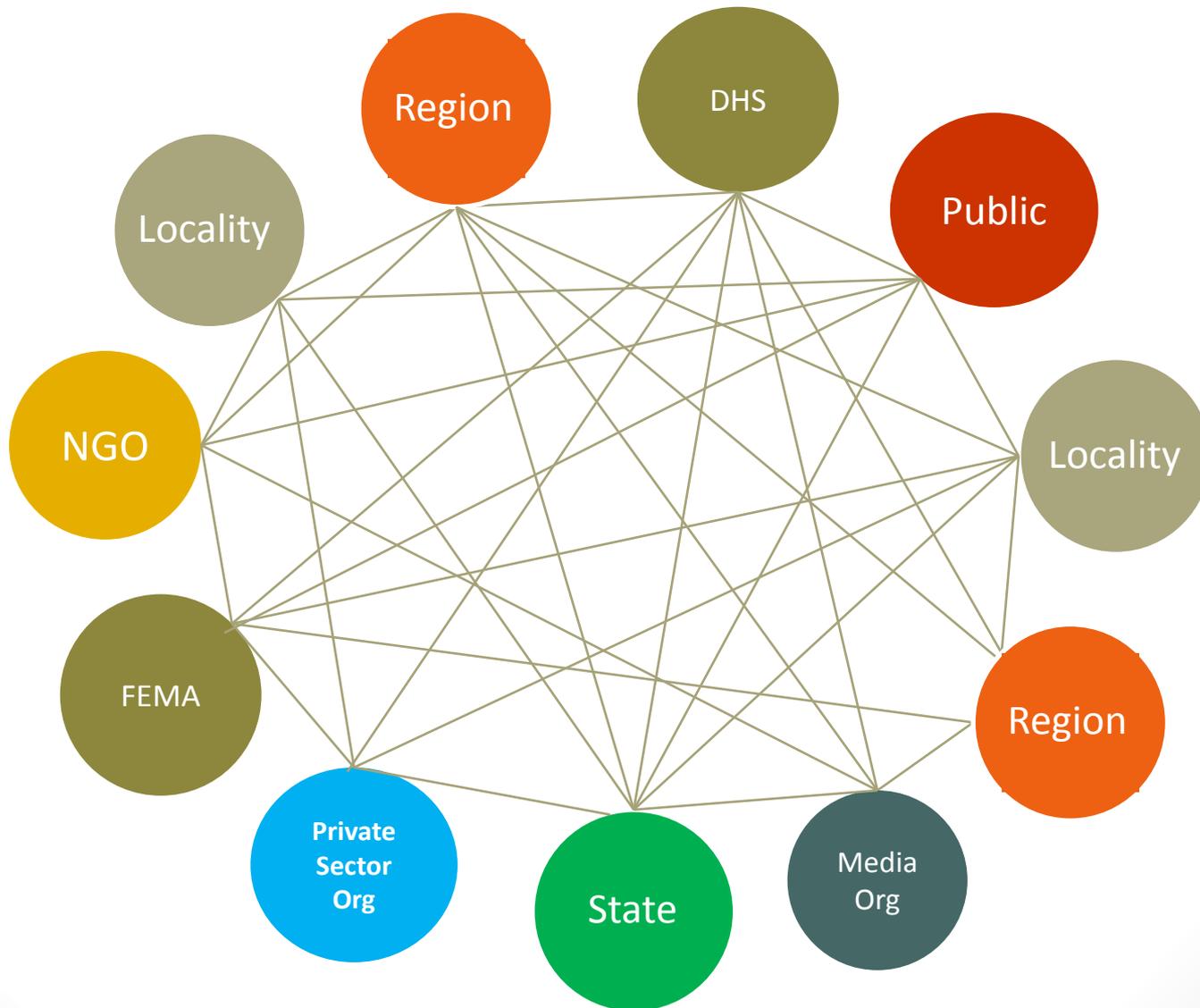
Statewide Information Sharing Plan

- The 2013 Commonwealth of Virginia Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP) includes *Appendix B: The Virginia Statewide Public Safety Communications Plan For Public Safety Information Sharing*
- Vision: “The ability to seamlessly exchange information for the safety and well-being of those who live in, work in, and visit the Commonwealth.”
- The Virginia Statewide Information Sharing plan is designed to facilitate the capability to enable agencies to seamlessly share information at the local, state and federal levels and with the private sector.

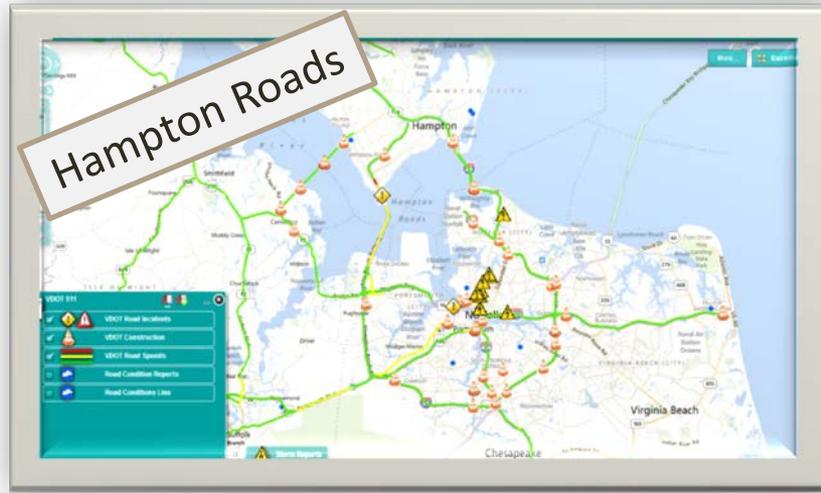
Interoperability Continuum



Decentralized Approach



Current Pilot Projects



CASAWG -Information Sharing Governance

- The Homeland Security Working Group's **Crisis and Situational Awareness Working Group (CASAWG)**
- Established under the auspices of the Office of Veterans Affairs and Homeland Security (OVAHS)
- The CASAWG provides the leadership and structure necessary to create a culture of information sharing and effectively implement the Virginia Statewide Information Sharing Plan.
- The CASAWG utilizes the structure of the Interoperability Continuum to identify strategic initiatives

CASAWG Members

- Derived from the Homeland Security Working Group as well as state-and-local representatives across the Commonwealth.
 - State Coordinator Representatives
 - State Interoperability Coordinator
 - VERT ESF Leads
 - State Agency Emergency Management Coordinators
 - Local Emergency Managers
 - Private Sector (to be added)
- Subject matter experts who are not members of the HSWG or CASAWG may participate on the subcommittee(s), as appropriate.

CASAWG Actions

Addressing all lanes of the continuum: Governance, Technology, SOPs, Training & Exercises, and Usage

Governance: Three subcommittees created

- Requirements
- Policy & Procedures
- Training & Outreach

Initiatives to address Technology, SOPs, Training & Exercises, Usage

- Identify Essential Elements of Information (EEI)
- Develop policy recommendations for incorporation of information sharing into the COVEOP and agency SOPs
- Develop training and outreach plan

Essential Elements of Information

- Defined as information necessary to perform prevention, protection, mitigation, response and recovery missions
- EEIs are the foundational elements of information that should be shared between local, regional, state, federal and private sector partners in order to provide situational awareness and inform decision making.
- Requires two way exchange between all levels of government and the private sector
- EEI needs being collected by VDEM for:
 - State emergency support functions
 - Local emergency management missions
- EEI response to date has shown a clear need for:
 - Status of power (all emergency support functions requested this data)
 - Shelter status (critical during hurricane evacuation)
 - Road conditions (critical for all events)
 - Local emergency declarations
 - Local evacuation status

Gaps

- Current policies do not effectively support achieving and maintaining this capability.
- The COVEOP states that a responsibility of the Virginia Emergency Response Team (VERT) is to maintain situational awareness via the collection, analysis, and dissemination of information.
 - The COVEOP does not specify how situational awareness or information sharing will be accomplished or assign specific responsibilities.
 - Executive Order 41 does not address situational awareness programs/policy
- Most agency and jurisdiction SOPs do not currently support achievement of effective information sharing.

Policy Recommendation

- The HSWG and CASAWG recommend:
 - That the SCP support / recommend development of a policy that identifies a clear approach for incorporation of information sharing into EO41, the COVEOP, and appropriate plans and SOPs.
 - That EO41 and the COVEOP be updated to incorporate and integrate information sharing as an element of appropriate state plans, implementing documents and related guidance, training and exercises.
 - That the VERT, in partnership with OVAHS and the HSWG reach out to the “Whole Community” of stakeholders to identify and engage sources and consumers of essential information.

Policy Request

- That the HSWG be tasked to facilitate implementation of the information sharing initiative.
- OVAHS shall report to the SCP through the HSWG annually on the status of the Information Sharing initiative to include:
 - Core and ESF-specific EEI's;
 - stakeholder participation;
 - updates to plans and related documents;
 - training and exercises;
 - impact on and lessons learned from real events;
 - best practices;
 - overall operations; and
 - fiscal impacts.

Questions

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