

2015 Achievement Awards Virginia Association of Counties

APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 1, 2015.** Please include this application form with electronic entry.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Locality: Prince William County
Program Title: Prince William County, Ebola Response Plan
Program Category: Criminal Justice & Public Safety

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Name: Christopher E Martino
Title: Deputy County Executive
Signature: Christopher E Martino

**VACo Achievement Award Entry
Prince William County Department of Fire and Rescue**

Prince William County Ebola Response Plan

OVERVIEW

In October of 2014, staff had been monitoring the recent developments in Africa and the increase in the number of cases of Ebola that were being identified and treated. It was deemed to be a significant potential risk and hazard for the region and emergency medical response personnel. It was determined that the present policies and procedures associated with infectious diseases were not adequate for this level of incident mitigation. The Department of Fire and Rescue staff assembled personnel to begin evaluating the present situation with the goal of developing an emergency response plan.

It was identified early in this project that stakeholders from County and state government would have direct involvement and would need to be assembled to provide direct input on their areas of expertise. As we began the process of collecting information, we had to identify conflicts between present procedures and methods of operation that would have to be employed to safely protect the patient and staff during these high risk events.

The emergency response plan was developed in conjunction with the identified stakeholders, and meetings were conducted to review the current situation. As we progressed through each segment of the planning project, significant research on the biological, physical, and infectious properties had to be completed based on the limited resources for conclusive information. It was the collaborative effort between the Department of Fire and Rescue, Prince William County Emergency Management, the Virginia Department of Health, and the County's Public Safety Communications Center personnel.

Brief Summary

In October of 2014, the Prince William County Department of Fire and Rescue had been monitoring the recent developments in Africa and the increase in the number of cases of Ebola that were being identified and treated. It was deemed to be a significant potential risk and hazard for the region and emergency medical response personnel. It was determined that the present policies and procedures associated with infectious diseases were not adequate for this level of incident mitigation. Fire and Rescue personnel assembled personnel to begin evaluating the present situation with the goal of developing an emergency response plan.

The emergency response plan was developed in conjunction with identified stakeholders, and meetings were conducted to review the current situation. As the Department progressed through each segment of the planning project, significant research on the biological, physical, and infectious properties of Ebola had to be completed based on the limited resources for conclusive information. This research was the collaborative effort between the Department of Fire and Rescue, Prince William County Emergency Management, the Virginia Department of Health, and the County's Public Safety Communications Center personnel.

It was determined the comprehensive response plan would address the following needs:

- 1) 9-1-1 call processing procedures and unit notification.
- 2) Treatment protocols for response personnel that addressed the complexities related to patient care.
 - a. Donning and doffing of biological high risk PPE.
 - Emergency procedures for bio-hazard exposures.
 - b. Specialized medical protocols that address the circumstances related to patient care.
 - c. Approval and oversight of medical treatment protocols by the Operational Medical Director.

- 3) Decontamination plan for personnel, apparatus to include bio-hazard and incident waste removal.
- 4) Training provided for emergency response personnel on the following:
 - a. Protocol for high risk patients.
 - b. Use of PPE (donning and doffing of PPE).
 - c. Conducted patient transfer drills with all hospitals within County.
- 5) Post incident care for personnel. Procedures were established to address medical and personal needs in the event of exposure.

The EBOLA response plan has been in operation since November of 2014. The Fire and Rescue Department has conducted multiple training scenarios and assisted the Virginia Department of Emergency Management with a tabletop/planning meeting of several jurisdictions to assist in outlining the 2015 Unified Command Ebola (EVD) Exercise. Since the inception of the Prince William County plan, it has been reviewed on a bi-weekly basis and made adjustments as required based on recommendations and response experiences. The plan has provided the framework for systematic guidelines for public safety communication call processing procedures and notification, emergency response, emergency management coordination, decontamination procedures, and personnel post incident care and monitoring.

Problem:

In October of 2014, staff had been monitoring the recent developments in Africa and the increase in the number of cases of Ebola that were being identified and treated. It was deemed to be a significant potential risk and hazard for the region and emergency medical response personnel. It was determined that the present policies and procedures associated with infectious diseases were not adequate for this level of incident mitigation. EMS Operations staff assembled personnel to begin evaluating the present situation with the goal of developing an emergency response plan.

Actions:

It was identified early in this project that stakeholders from County and State government would have direct involvement and would need to be assembled to provide direct input on their areas of expertise. As we began the process of collecting information, we had to identify conflicts between present procedures and methods of operation that would have to be employed to safely protect the patient and staff during these high risk events.

This project identified the need to incorporate Hazardous Materials Team personnel to include their expertise in donning and doffing of contaminated clothing and personal protective equipment. As we developed these resources, personnel developed training videos and training kits to allow for personnel to begin overview of these procedures and begin preparations for emergency response.

The emergency response plan was developed in conjunction with the identified stakeholders, and meetings were conducted to review the current situation. As we progressed through each segment of the planning project, significant research on the biological, physical, and infectious properties had to be completed based on the limited resources for conclusive information. It was the collaborative effort between the Department of Fire and Rescue, Prince William County Emergency Management, the Virginia Department of Health, and the County's Public Safety Communications Center personnel.

It was determined that we would have to develop a comprehensive plan that would address the following needs:

- 1) 9-1-1 call processing procedures and unit notification.
- 2) Treatment protocols for response personnel that addressed the complexities related to patient care.
 - a. Donning and doffing of biological high risk PPE.
 - i. Emergency procedures for bio-hazard exposures.
 - b. Specialized medical protocols that address the circumstances related to patient care.
 - c. Approval and oversight of medical treatment protocols by the Operational Medical Director.
- 3) Decontamination plan for personnel, apparatus to include bio-hazard and incident waste removal.
- 4) Training provided for emergency response personnel on the following:
 - a. Protocol for high risk patients.
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 - c. Conducted patient transfer drills with all hospitals within County.
- 5) Post incident care for personnel. Procedures were established to address medical and personal needs in the event of exposure.

In order to complete the required functions related to emergency response, senior staff provided daily communication with all stakeholders as preparation steps were identified.

Stakeholder planning meetings were coordinated by Emergency Management personnel in order to establish a unified command approach to communicating information and working through the response agencies challenges. Information was disseminated through weekly conference calls to communicate updates to stakeholders, while daily messages were sent to field operations personnel in order to provide updated critical information.

During the initial phase of planning, the need to research and acquire personal protective equipment that would meet the standards related to this level of body substance isolation was conducted. Personnel from EMS Operations worked in conjunction with the logistics section to address this issue. It was determined that the level of protection provided through the use of standard personal protection equipment was insufficient. As a result of our early recognition, we were able to acquire the proper personal protective equipment for operations personnel, identified essential service personnel, and several of our mutual aid partners that had been unable to secure purchase prior to international shortages. In preparation, we were able to obtain ISO-POD (specialized patient isolation transport units) allowing for an additional layer of exposure protection for both emergency and hospital personnel.

In an effort to minimize the impact on emergency medical transport units, we identified a centrally located station within the County to staff an ambulance which was prepared for this level of patient transport. This unit was predetermined for this specific dispatch and could be taken out of service for decontamination procedures. Collaborative response of initial EMS personnel would be in conjunction to the HAZMAT support unit, which was outfitted and personnel trained to provide extensive decontamination of exposed personnel. These

procedures and preparation drills were conducted in conjunction with all hospitals within Prince William County to include our partnership with the Virginia Department of Health.

Personnel from our EMS Operations section provided training to all field operations personnel. These training drills were conducted in preparation on the background and epidemiology of the disease and the special circumstances related to treatment and personnel protective equipment measures. During a period of extensive media coverage, it was the use of training and information being disseminated from our Health Department Staff that provided reassurance that our personnel had received the appropriate preparation to safely provide patient care.

Results:

The EBOLA response plan has been in operation since November of 2014. We have conducted multiple training scenarios and assisted the Virginia Department of Emergency Management with a tabletop/planning meeting of several jurisdictions to assist in outlining the 2015 Unified Command Ebola (EVD) Exercise. Since the inception of the Prince William County plan, we have reviewed it on a bi-weekly basis and made adjustments as required based on CDC recommendations. The plan has provided the framework for systematic guidelines for public safety communication call processing procedures and notification, emergency response, emergency management coordination, decontamination procedures, and personnel post incident care and monitoring.

The dedication of resources required for this project required teamwork, commitment, and support from the entire Prince William County government. It was the communication and

support that started from County Executive, Melissa Peacor, and the Board of County Supervisors that provided the resources required for preparation and incident management. The Ebola Response Plan and logistical needs were utilized by several neighboring jurisdictions and regional mutual aid partners. It is this cooperation, teamwork, and information sharing that provides the foundation for safe and successful emergency incident response.