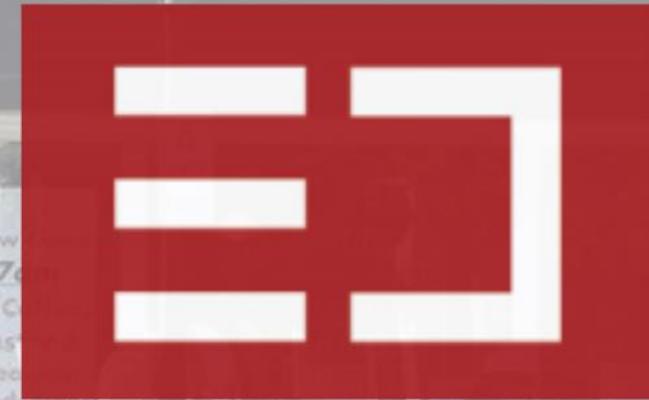


Town of Andover

After-Action Review of Response

The 2018 Merrimack Valley Gas Explosion



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Purpose and Scope

- Describe and constructively assess the events and action that took place in response to the Merrimack Valley Gas Explosions that occurred on September 13, 2018
- This report covers the Town of Andover's preparedness, response, capacity, internal/external communications, policies, and procedures before, during, and after the Gas Event focusing on the first week, particularly the initial 24 hours
- The scope of this after-action review includes the Town Manager's Office, the Fire Department, the Police Department, the Department of Public Works, Facilities Department, the Department of Information Technology, and the Health Department
- This report does not cover the response in other impacted communities, such as North Andover or Lawrence, nor does it cover the actions taken by Columbia Gas and other companies involved, such as Eversource and National Grid

Methodology

We collected primary data through a series of interviews and focus groups with instrumental personnel from a number of the Town's departments.

We reviewed the following material:

- Preliminary reports related to the Gas Event produced by the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) and the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)
- Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) logs from the Andover Police Department and Fire Department
- Audio files capturing radio communications between dispatch and the Andover Fire Department and Police Department
- Archived calls for service data from 2016 and 2017 for the Andover Fire Department and Police Department
- Publicly available materials including social media posts

Key Successes

- Emergency personnel, both fire and police, took immediate actions to address life safety needs
- The EOC was activated promptly and the training, experience and professionalism of the members of the Emergency Management Working Group (EMWG) proved to be critical to the operations
- Nine dispatchers were immediately deployed and performed professionally during an extremely complex and high-stress situation
- Staging areas for mutual aid were established quickly
- The Town Manager's Office facilitated a uniform and consistent public voice to residents
- The Senior Center and the Youth Center were successfully transformed as shelters for displaced residents



Key Successes Continued

- The establishment of a Customer Service Center at Old Town Hall, was critical during the recovery phase
- Team-work of all town departments was instrumental during the recovery phase
- Each department quickly began to track costs during the incident



Key Recommendations - Emergency Management

- Review and modify Town's Code Red System including:
 - Develop pre-scripted alerts using human voice
 - Designate groups of contacts for notifications, EMWG, Police, Fire
- Incorporate WebEOC into EOC planning
- Use tiered EOC response system
- Develop and use checklists for EMWG members
- Designate a shelter with certifications from American Red Cross

Key Recommendations - Emergency Management Cont.

- Assign and train shelter manager on crisis response, maintain volunteer list & checklist for opening
- Update Town's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP)
- Trained EMWG routinely using CEMP plan
- Upgrade Town's existing radio communications system, currently in process
- Continue to conduct continued Incident Command System (ICS) training, including tabletops and exercises
- Contract with a fuel supply company that can respond quickly during emergencies
- Incorporate technological tools from IT Department such as "InformaCast" into emergency planning

Key Recommendations - Fire & Police Departments

- Continue to maintain a minimum of two firefighters assigned to the ladder truck
- Recommend additional radio channel for fire ground operations
- Purchase multi-gas meters
- Designate an aide to assist the Deputy during large-scale emergencies
- Develop an evacuation and traffic route management plan
- Train on evacuation traffic management plan



QUESTIONS // COMMENTS?

THANK YOU!

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