

# Quaker Valley Council of Governments Emergency Management Program Audit Update

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Prepared by:

- **Robert G. Gerlach**, *Training and Exercise Coordinator*  
Allegheny County Emergency Services  
Division of Emergency Management



# Allegheny County Department of Emergency Services Quaker Valley Council of Governments Emergency Management Programs Audit FINAL Update

## Executive Summary

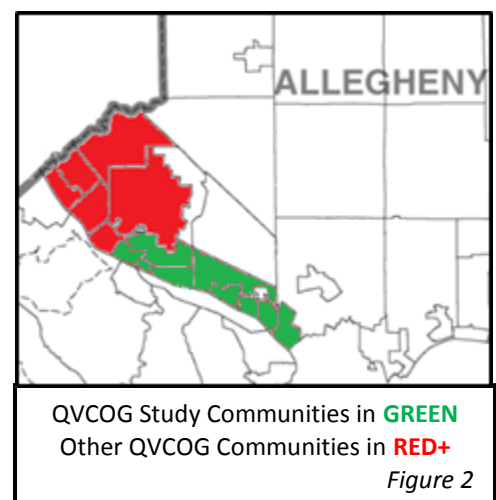
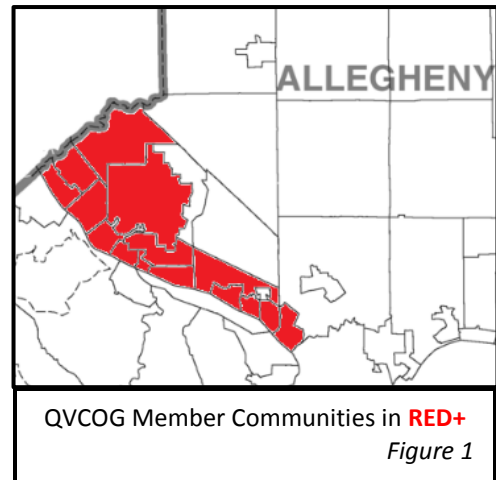
This report is the culmination of activities that started at a Quaker Valley Council of Governments (QVCOG) “PI Team” event on August 16, 2017. Since that date several assessments and surveys have been completed. All 14-member municipalities of the QVCOG (See Figure 1) were invited to participate in the study. None (See Figure 2) participated in the study of their Emergency Management systems.

Pennsylvania Title 35 requires every municipality to provide the following emergency management services:

- Prepare, maintain and keep current a disaster emergency management plan for the prevention and minimization of injury and damage caused by disaster
- Establish, equip and staff an emergency operations center, consolidated with warning and communication systems
- Provide individual and organizational training programs to insure prompt, efficient and effective disaster emergency services
- Organize, prepare and coordinate all locally available manpower, materials, supplies, equipment, facilities and services necessary for disaster emergency readiness, response and recovery
- Adopt and implement precautionary measures to mitigate the anticipated effects of disaster
- Execute and enforce such rules and orders as the agency shall adopt and promulgate under the authority of this part
- Cooperate and coordinate with any public and private agency or entity in achieving any purpose of this part
- Have available for inspection at its emergency operations center all emergency management plans, rules and orders of the Governor and the agency
- Provide prompt and accurate information regarding local disaster emergencies to appropriate Commonwealth and local officials and agencies and the general public
- Participate in all tests, drills and exercises, including remedial drills and exercises, scheduled by the agency or by the Federal Government
- Participate in the program of integrated flood warning systems

Furthermore, every emergency management coordinator must, at a minimum:

- Attend three of four quarterly trainings held annually by the County
- Complete the requirements for Basic PEMA Certification within one year of appointment





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- Complete the requirements for Advanced PEMA Certification within three years of appointment

By using the criteria above to study the nine participating communities, none are in total compliance. Some municipalities are in better shape than others. One municipality does not have an EMC and is 100% out of compliance.

The risk of not having a compliant Emergency Management system and Coordinator can be catastrophic to the residents, businesses, and property owners of a municipality; and possibly bankrupt a municipality. The potential result may end up as the municipality not being eligible for pre and post disaster funding, if those funds were made available.

Allegheny County Department of Emergency Services supports any system that improves the Emergency Management system within Allegheny County. In the case of regionalization, all it takes is two or more contiguous municipalities to be in favor. A Regional (or Sub-Regional) Emergency Management system would reduce the duplication of services and maximize monies each municipality currently allocates to EMA.

By pooling the resources and funds of multiple municipalities together, it may be feasible to pay an individual to fill the role of EMC for the member municipalities. This individual would be dedicated to the emergency management necessities of the municipalities and assist in keeping them compliant with the requirements. The EMC position will also directly benefit the community by being available to present community outreach programs to increase community awareness.

As noted, Allegheny County Emergency Services promotes the regionalization of the County's municipal emergency management programs to better serve the community and will provide all assistance that is necessary. All that is required to start the process is two, or more, contiguous municipalities to be interested.



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### Introduction

This is the final report (3 of 3) in a series of meetings and surveys that began at a Quaker Valley Council of Governments (QVCOG) event on August 16, 2017. Afterwards, an audit of the individual municipalities that comprise the QVCOG and their compliance with the legal requirements regarding Emergency Management was requested from the QVCOG Executive Director to the Allegheny County Department of Emergency Services (ACES), Division of Emergency Management. The initial audit dated December 11, 2017, illustrated that of the fifteen-member municipalities, not a single municipality was compliant Pennsylvania Title 35 or PEMA Directives.

PA Title 35, Section §7503 requires every local-level municipality to provide individually, or through an Intergovernmental Cooperation agreement with other political subdivisions to provide:

- Prepare, maintain and keep current a disaster emergency management plan for the prevention and minimization of injury and damage caused by disaster
- Establish, equip and staff an emergency operations center, consolidated with warning and communication systems
- Provide individual and organizational training programs to insure prompt, efficient and effective disaster emergency services
- Organize, prepare and coordinate all locally available manpower, materials, supplies, equipment, facilities and services necessary for disaster emergency readiness, response and recovery
- Adopt and implement precautionary measures to mitigate the anticipated effects of disaster
- Execute and enforce such rules and orders as the agency shall adopt and promulgate under the authority of this part
- Cooperate and coordinate with any public and private agency or entity in achieving any purpose of this part
- Have available for inspection at its emergency operations center all emergency management plans, rules and orders of the Governor and the agency
- Provide prompt and accurate information regarding local disaster emergencies to appropriate Commonwealth and local officials and agencies and the general public
- Participate in all tests, drills and exercises, including remedial drills and exercises, scheduled by the agency or by the Federal Government
- Participate in the program of integrated flood warning systems

Furthermore, each municipality must have an emergency management coordinator who shall be responsible for the planning, administration, and operation of the local organization subject to the direction and control of the executive officer or governing body. At the local level, the coordinator shall be appointed by the Governor upon the recommendation of the executive officer or governing body of the political subdivision. A candidate for coordinator for two or more political subdivisions may be recommended to the Governor for appointment upon agreement by resolution of the governing bodies of such political subdivisions.

At a minimum, Local Level Emergency Management Coordinators are required to:



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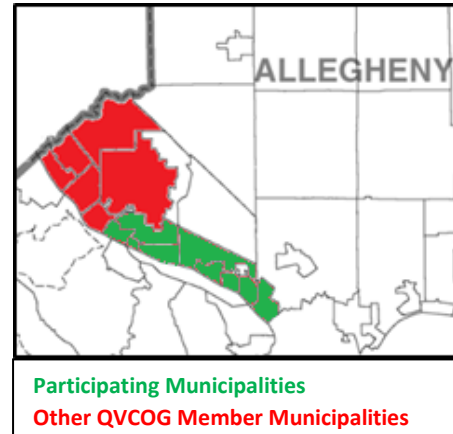
- Attend two of four quarterly trainings held annually by the County
- Complete the requirements for Basic PEMA Certification within one year of appointment
- Complete the requirements for Advanced PEMA Certification within three years of appointment

The criteria used to determine the compliance level of each member community was:

- A current Emergency Operations Plan
- Adoption of NIMS by the elected body
- Adoption of the County-wide Hazard Mitigation Plan by the elected body
- Attendance by the municipal Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC) hosted of at least 2 of four quarterly trainings sessions by the County
- Achievement of the EMC completing the Basic Certification, as applicable
- Achievement of the EMC completing the Advanced Certification, as applicable

After the initial report the QVCOG distributed a survey asking the fifteen-member municipalities their willingness to participate in a study to determine the feasibility of a regional EMA for the QVCOG region. The results of this study ended up with only the municipalities of Aleppo, Avalon, Bellevue, Ben Avon, Emsworth, Glenfield, Glen Osborne, Haysville, and Kilbuck expressing interest. Therefore, the initial audit was updated to reflect the compliance of these nine municipalities and was released on January 14, 2019.

Since that time these nine municipalities have met twice, and the study will culminate with a final meeting and report on April 29, 2019.





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### Situation

Pennsylvania Title 35, Section §7503 requires every local-level municipality, no matter their size, demographics, industry vs. commercial vs. residential, and fiscal solvency) to provide:

- **Prepare, maintain and keep current a disaster emergency management plan** for the prevention and minimization of injury and damage caused by disaster
- Establish, **equip and staff an emergency operations center**, consolidated with **warning and communication systems**
- Provide individual and organizational **training programs** to insure prompt, efficient and effective disaster emergency services
- Organize, prepare and coordinate all locally **available manpower, materials, supplies, equipment, facilities and services necessary for disaster emergency readiness**, response and recovery
- Adopt and implement precautionary measures to **mitigate the anticipated effects of disaster**
- **Execute and enforce such rules and orders** as the agency shall adopt and promulgate under the authority of this part
- **Cooperate and coordinate with any public and private agency or entity in** achieving any purpose of this part
- Have available for inspection at its emergency operations center all **emergency management plans, rules and orders of the Governor** and the agency
- **Provide prompt and accurate information** regarding local disaster emergencies to appropriate Commonwealth and local officials and agencies and the public
- Participate in all **tests, drills and exercises**, including remedial drills and exercises, scheduled by the agency or by the Federal Government
- Participate in the program of integrated **flood warning systems**

This can be done individually, or through an Intergovernmental Cooperation agreement with other political subdivisions.

As previously noted, at a minimum, Local Level Emergency Management Coordinators are required to:

- Attend two of four quarterly trainings held annually by the County
- Complete the requirements for Basic PEMA Certification within one year of appointment
- Complete the requirements for Advanced PEMA Certification within three years of appointment

Failure to meet these requirements as described for a period of two consecutive years shall be cause for replacement. It should be noted that each appointed coordinator, as per Title 35, shall be reimbursed for actual expenses incurred in the performance of their duties and attendance at scheduled meetings by the municipality.



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## Scope

This section will outline the status (as of the date of this report) of emergency management programs for the QVEMA participating fifteen municipalities. Table 1 illustrates each municipality's current level of compliance and status of their respective emergency management programs.

Municipality	EOP Current	NIMS Adopted	HazMit Plan Adopted	Quarterly Training Attendance	Basic PEMA Certification	Advanced PEMA Certification
Aleppo Township	Yes	No	Yes	2	Yes	Past Due 5/2016
Avalon Borough	Expired 11/2005	Yes	Yes	0	Past Due 3/2019	Not due until 3/2021
Bellevue Borough	Yes	Yes	Yes	4	Yes	Past Due 3/2017
Ben Avon Borough	Expired 5/2015	No	No	1 <small>(100%, was appointed in 4<sup>th</sup> Q of 2018)</small>	Due on 10/30/2019	Due in 2021
Emsworth Borough	Yes	No	No	0	Past Due 10/1992	Past Due 10/1995
Glen Osborne Borough	Expired 6/2005	No	No	2	Past Due 1/2019	Due in 2021
Glenfield Borough	None	No	No	VACANT (No EMC)	No	No
Haysville Borough	Expired 5/1999	No	No	2	Past Due 4/2018	Due in 2020
Kilbuck Township	Expired 2006	No	No	0	Past Due 9/2011	Past Due 9/2013
<b>Number in Compliance</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b> <small>(1 not yet due)</small>	<b>0</b> <small>(4 not yet due)</small>

*Table 1*

To explain the criteria above:

- Every municipality in Pennsylvania is required to develop and maintain a comprehensive Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). The entire EOP contains at least four volumes: The Basic Plan, the Notification and Resource Manual (NARM), Functional Checklists, and a Hazard Specific Annex. **Biennially** this plan is to be reviewed, updated as necessary, and then promulgated by the elected body of the municipality. Only **three of nine** municipalities have current EOP's.
- The National Incident Management System (NIMS) is a comprehensive, national approach to incident management that is applicable at all jurisdictional levels and across functional disciplines. It is intended to:





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- Be applicable across a full spectrum of potential incidents, hazards, and impacts, regardless of size, location or complexity.
- Improve coordination and cooperation between public and private entities in a variety of incident management activities.
- Provide a common standard for overall incident management.

Consistent application of NIMS lays the groundwork for efficient and effective responses, from a single agency fire response to a multiagency, multijurisdictional natural disaster or terrorism response. Entities that have integrated NIMS into their planning and incident management structure can arrive at an incident with little notice and still understand the procedures and protocols governing the response, as well as the expectations for equipment and personnel.

Currently only **two** municipalities have adopted NIMS.

- Every municipality in the United States is required to develop and maintain a Hazard Mitigation (HazMit) Plan. This plan must be reviewed and revised every five years. To decrease the burden on local-level municipalities, the Federal Government permits municipalities to adopt the County-Level Plan. Allegheny County has a comprehensive HazMit Plan that all 130 municipalities may adopt in lieu of developing their own.

The effect of not adopting, or developing, a HazMit Plan is that the municipality will not be eligible for pre- and post- disaster hazard mitigation grant funding for projects to strengthen the community.

The process for adoption is by resolution by the elected body. The template form has been submitted to every municipality more than once, yet only **three** municipalities in QVEMA have adopted the HazMit Plan

- As per PA Title 35, the appointed EMC of each municipality is required to attend at least two of four Quarterly Training sessions held by the County. Since the majority of the EMC's in Allegheny County are volunteer, Allegheny County Department of Emergency Service (ACES) holds two sessions each quarter to meet various schedules. Each quarter, on the same day, the ACES quarterly training starts at 10 AM with an evening session at 7 PM.

**Five** of the 9 QVEMA municipal EMC's are compliant with their training requirement attendance. Furthermore, there is one QVEMA municipality that does not have an appointed coordinator.

- As noted previously, all local-level EMC's are required to attain PEMA Basic Certification within one year of appointment and then achieve PEMA Advanced Certification within three years of appointment. Only **two** QVEMA EMC's are compliant with the Basic Certification, with one EMC in progress. As for the Advanced Certification, on None of the QVEMA EMC's has achieved this requirement, but it should be noted that four EMC's are still in the waiting period until this level is due.

This state of the various emergency management programs mirrors issues in volunteer fire departments throughout the region. These problems are a result of the growing shortage of new volunteers. For example, in the 1970's there were approximately 300,00 volunteer firefighters. Today that number is just under 50,000. Volunteer Emergency Medical Services has seen a similar decline. Furthermore, a majority of all volunteer agencies are seeing less and less volunteers.



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This impacts the EMA systems across the Commonwealth with limited people able and willing to fill the role of Emergency Management Coordinator. Emergency Management is mostly an afterthought from the elected officials if the municipality is not disaster prone or significant time has lapsed since the last “disaster emergency.” Therefore, many municipalities do not provide a suitable budget for a comprehensive and compliant Emergency Management Program that has an active EMC and all the equipment and support required in times of an emergency.



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### Survey Results and Analysis

During the March 25, 2019 meeting various points were discussed which led to the decision to produce an anonymous survey to gauge the feelings of the participating municipalities. This led to one question asked using a Likert Scale from 1 to 4 (1 being “Not Favorable” and 4 being “Highly Favorable”) and then three questions being asked on a Likert scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being “Not Favorable” and 5 being “Highly Favorable”

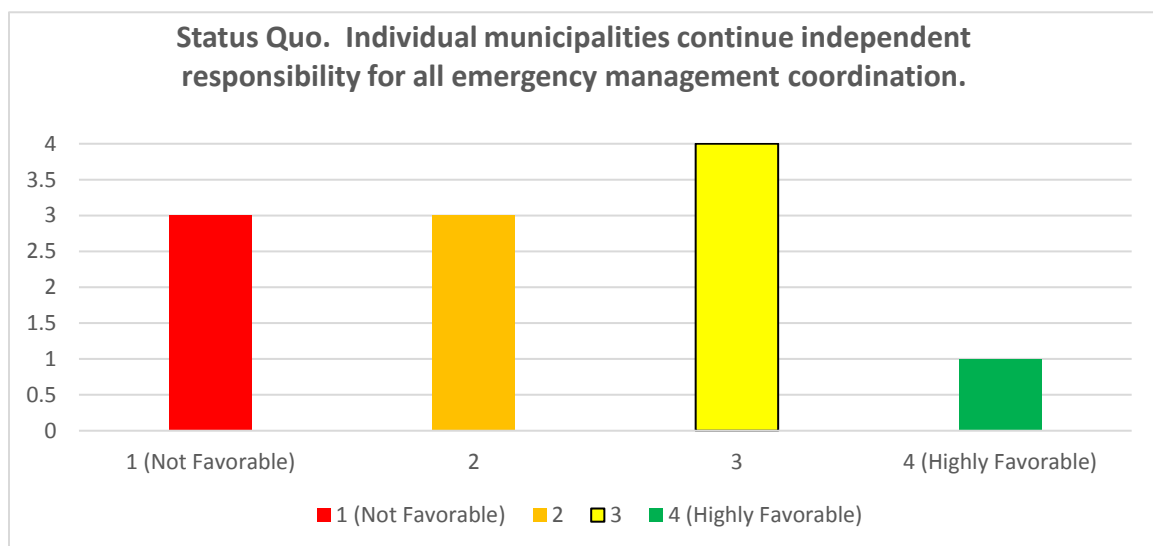
#### Responses

A total of 11 responses were received from Aleppo, Bellevue (2), Ben Avon, Haysville (2), Emsworth (2), Glen Osborne, and Glenfield (2). Seven identified as an EMC and seven identified as an Elected official, this discrepancy is because three individuals are both an EMC and an Elected Official.

The questions that were asked and results are as follows:

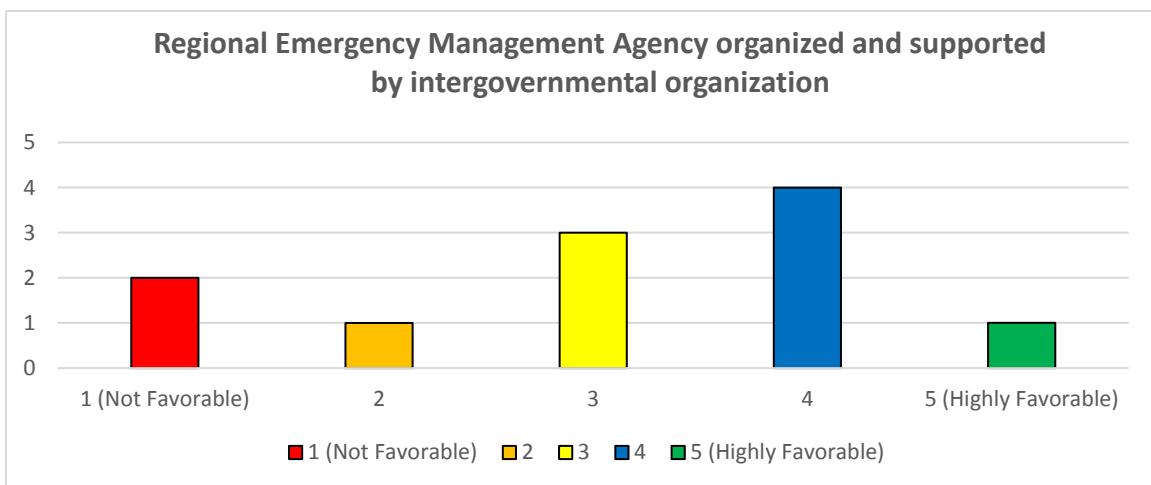
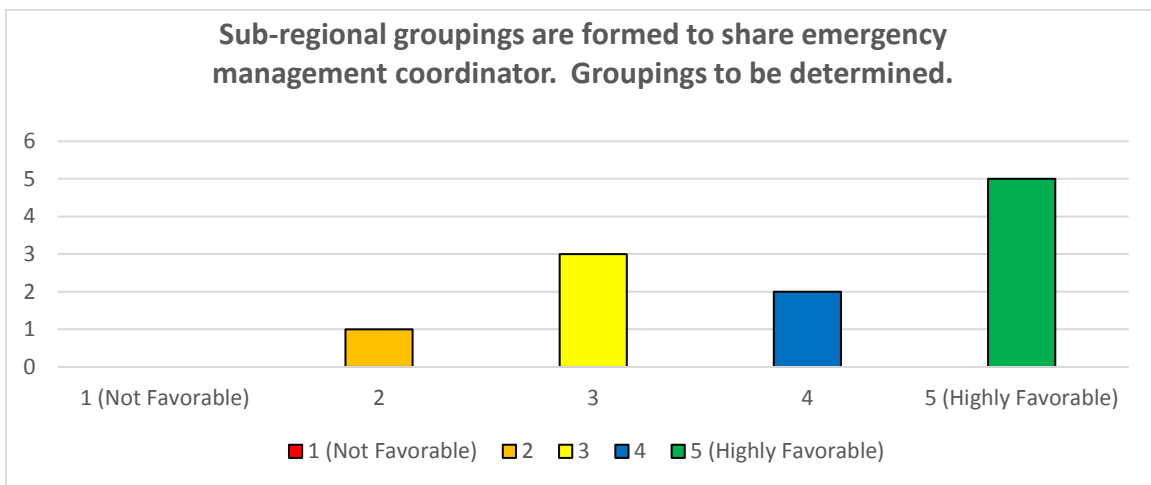
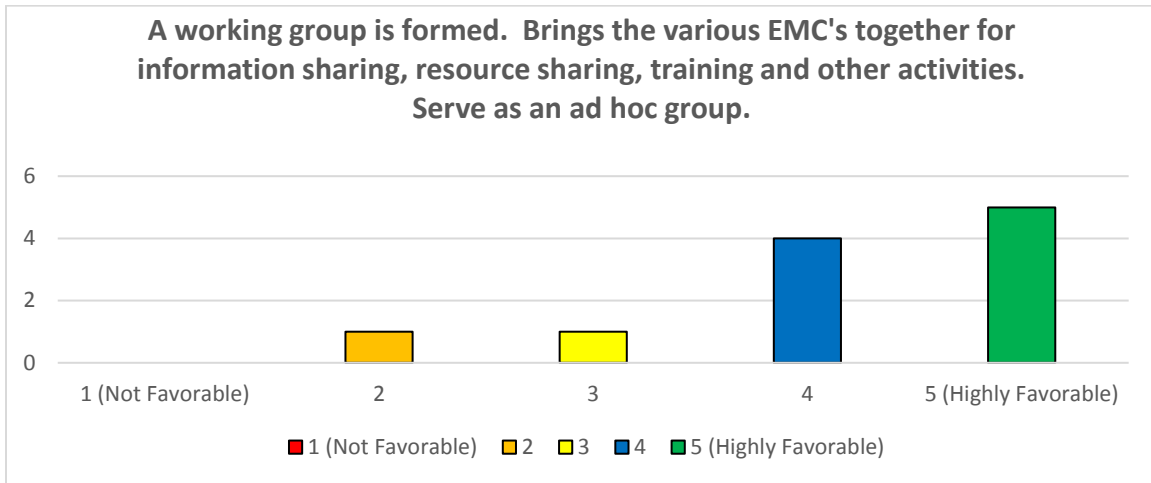
1. Status Quo. Individual municipalities continue independent responsibility for all emergency management coordination.
2. A working group is formed. Brings the various EMC's together for information sharing, resource sharing, training and other activities. Serve as an ad hoc group.
3. Sub-regional groupings are formed to share emergency management coordinator. Groupings to be determined. For example: (1) Bellevue & Avalon; (2) Kilbuck, Emsworth, Ben Avon; (3) Aleppo, Glen Osborne, Glenfield, Haysville. These are examples only.
4. Regional Emergency Management Agency organized and supported by intergovernmental organization, such as Quaker Valley COG.

The results were as follows:





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Finally, there was an open-ended question permitting the participants to voice any other issues or concerns. The responses are as follows:

- Hard to find requirements for individual EMAs. Would like COG wide EMC.
- It is important that the community discuss what is needed for Emergency Preparedness and Management. Elected Officials need to be made aware of what is expected of them in their preparedness and training and what training is required for them and emergency managers and deputies.
- Township has limited resources (\$) and no desire to invest them in Emergency Mgt at the level required by a regional solution.
- While there are some EM requirements that are common throughout the COG, In my opinion there are many localized EM requirements that may be overlooked.
- Currently, I have to read and accept Allegheny County Hazard Mitigation Plan; generate an Emergency Ops Plan indicating I am accepting and following Allegheny County and I do not have to donate equipment (which the Borough does not have, or money which the Borough does not have. I have attempted to work with adjacent Boroughs on other far more simpler issues and it was a nightmare. There was a historical reason we separated in the first place by joining back together we are doomed to repeat that lesson.

### Analysis

The first analysis does not relate directly to the survey, but is as important as the survey, is “how did the current condition with the municipal EMA become the status quo?” The answer is intertwined with:

- The understanding of municipal Emergency Management responsibilities of the elected officials.
- Lack of applied budget for municipal Emergency Management programs.
- The decline of volunteerism.

Many municipal elected officials are not completely aware of what Emergency Management is, its role, and its purpose. Furthermore, many elected officials are not aware of what their legal responsibilities are under Commonwealth statute (refer to the 11 bullet points of Pennsylvania Title 35, Section §7503 under the “Situation” Section). Due to this lack of understanding, many municipal budgets towards EMA is low or non-existent. Also the EMC position has become a figure head position for a retired Fire Chief or other official, or just a “check” in the box because the municipal officials know they must have someone names to the position, while not fully understanding the scope of the position. Additionally, the decline in volunteerism has led to the loss of individuals willing to do all the work required of the Emergency Management Coordinator. With all of the responsibilities and required activities a municipal Emergency Management Coordinator must participate, not many individuals are willing to volunteer for this position without some compensation. Thus, without budgeted money towards EMA, this creates a spiraling scenario.

The risk of not having a compliant Emergency Management system and Coordinator can be catastrophic to the residents, businesses, and property owners of a municipality; and possibly bankrupt a municipality. Failure to have at a minimum: a current Emergency Operations Plan, adoption of the County-wide Hazard Mitigation Plan, adoption of the National Incident Management System, and an Emergency Manager



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current is their responsibilities and training may result in the municipality not being eligible for pre and post disaster funding if those funds were made available. Therefore, the municipality responsible for 100% of the costs which may total many of millions in dollars, with no assistance coming from the State or Federal governments. It would be catastrophic.

### Ad-Hoc Working Group

An analysis based on the survey, most of the municipalities participating are not happy with the status quo and need additional support to become in compliance with Commonwealth legislative requirements and PEMA Directives. Furthermore, the vast majority are in favor of forming a working group for the participating municipalities to meet regularly and assist each other. This would be similar to the County-level organization known as PA Region 13.

PA Region 13 is a regional Task Force that was formed in the late 1990's to increase communication and to create a dialogue between the member counties to better coordinate with large scale events and emergencies; and to reduce the duplication of services and equipment. Since September 11, 2001, PA Region 13, its operating structure, operations, and also the successes from the organization, have become the standard for similar organization, not only throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, but also the United States.

The member governments of PA Region 13 are: the counties of Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Cambria, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Lawrence, Mercer, Somerset, Venango, Washington, Westmoreland, and the City of Pittsburgh. These organizations meet regularly, have subcommittees, and a staff. Allegheny County is the fiduciary of the organization.

A similar set up, but on a smaller scale, for the participating municipalities of the QVCOG may be a major benefit since the region has similar hazards and those hazards, emergencies, or disasters are most likely to affect two or more municipalities at the same time. Thus, requiring a multi-jurisdictional, coordinated response and recovery.

### Sub-Regional Groupings

The concept of forming sub-regional groupings of municipalities who share a single Emergency Management Coordinator appears to be mostly favored, but not universally. One-third of the respondents are highly in favor. While another third is in the middle or leaning to not-favorable. The last third is somewhere in between. The reason(s) for this discrepancy is most likely similar to the reasons explained in the final question (see below).

### Regional (Intergovernmental) EMA

This concept is also split, but most lean to the favorable side of the continuum. Nine respondents marked on the favorable side with three on the not-favorable side, with three choosing right in the middle. It was discussed over the meetings that there is a large discrepancy amongst the municipalities of budget allocated to EMA. Most of the municipalities dedicate very little or no money, while some communities do support more budget towards EMA. Furthermore, some municipalities have more assets for EMA, while many do not. The sticking point has been as to what the municipalities bring to the table (assets) and what can dedicate for maintaining the system (budget). (See Appendix A for Asset Lists as requested)



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The other “hurdle” is change itself. Humans by nature are resistant towards change and prefer a routine that does not waver to a high degree, even if the reason for the waver is an improvement or increases efficiency. In the realm of public safety, in which Emergency Management is a part, the thought process of “This is how we always have done it” can cause increased suffering, injuries, or fatalities. There is also the thought that one community and their unique issues may become overlooked. While this is a possibility, the current system has many areas being underserved and overlooked. Furthermore, sub-regional or regional EMA(s), that has a paid EMC would make it a job requirement to have tasks and training completed to keep all municipalities in compliance.

Failure to meet the needs of one or more municipalities can lead to the loss of employment. Finally, the historical “lesson” that cause the separation of the small municipalities are form a different time, before mass transportation, wide use of technology, and the current globalization of our society. There are very little events that occur in one municipality that does not affect some of the others. For example, a community event in one municipality will impact the contiguous municipalities with traffic congestions and timing. This can affect the other municipalities economically with decreased business use, routes for emergency vehicles, and frustration of residents stuck in traffic.



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### Path Moving Forward

Allegheny County Department of Emergency Services supports any system that improves the Emergency Management system within Allegheny County. In the case of regionalization, all it takes is two or more contiguous municipalities to be in favor. There are two ways this is accomplished:

1. Sharing of the EMC: When two or more municipalities share the EMC but have not merged the systems together. Each municipality has its own EOC, Emergency Operations Plan, etc.
2. Regionalization of the municipalities: Two or more municipalities have an intergovernmental agreement with one the EMC. There is one EOC, one Emergency Operations Plan, etc. that covers all the municipalities involved.

The local level (municipal), is the first line of defense and the jurisdictional authority for all disasters and emergency and must be strong with planning, prevention, mitigation, response, and recovery efforts and operations.

A Regional (or Sub-Regional) Emergency Management system would reduce the duplication of services and maximize monies each municipality currently allocates to EMA. Currently each municipality, if compliant, must individually pay for or provide their own EMC, an Emergency Operations Center (EOC), EMA supplies, EMA and EMC training, etc. Creating a Regional (or Sub-Regional) Emergency Management District would, at the minimum, reduce overhead with one EOC for all the participating municipalities. Moreover, individual EMA budgets can be combined for greater resource acquisition and training. See Table 2. Furthermore, the pooling of allocated the individual municipalities budgeted money for EMA will better served as a larger pot for the coordination of EMA for the region.

By pooling the resources and funds of multiple municipalities together, it may be feasible to a pay an individual to fill the role of EMC for the member municipalities. This individual would be dedicated to the emergency management necessities of the municipalities and assist in keeping them compliant with the requirements. The EMC position will also directly benefit the community by being available to present community outreach programs to increase community awareness.

Allegheny County Emergency Services promotes the regionalization of the County's municipal emergency management programs to better serve the community and will provide all assistance that is necessary. All that is required to start the process is two, or more, contiguous municipalities to be interested.





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### Appendix A – Municipal EMA Assets

All nine municipalities were asked to report any EMA designated assets they currently have in stock. The total municipalities who responded was three. It should be noted that one of the reporting municipalities (Haysville) does not have any. This may be the case with many, if not all, of the non-reporting municipalities:

- Haysville: NONE
- Emsworth: 2 dump trucks 5 ton each  
Plows / salt spreaders  
Road closed barriers  
Safety cones  
Generators  
AEDS
- Bellevue: Trucks (supply) 1 ton dump  
Street Sweeper  
Paver  
Roller  
Fire Trucks  
Police Vehicles  
Barriers 12' Road Closed Flashing  
Flares  
Cones  
Flares  
Cones  
Generators  
Air compressor  
Acetylene torches  
Chain Saws  
Snow Blowers  
Fuel