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**TOMORROW'S WORLD:
Security at the Port of Rotterdam**

Be prepared

Gary Sabol of Prepared Response looks at how the Port of Olympia is using new crisis management planning and response systems

Emergency incidents can be common occurrences at ports across the globe. From natural disasters and other events that threaten port security to the more frequent accidents that occur in the course of doing business, these incidents can disrupt port operations and cause delays in the trade supply chain. In order to mitigate any damage caused by these occurrences, ports need plans in place to effectively manage these types of events.

An emergency incident doesn't have to be the detection of an explosive device in a shipping container. It could be events like an onboard ship emergency, a fuel tank fire, or leakage from a container or other cargo that requires evacuation of the area. Varying degrees of emergencies can happen on a daily basis. How a port prepares for these types of emergencies can mean the difference between a minor incident and full-blown crisis.

The **Port of Olympia** in the state of Washington is a 60-acre marine terminal consisting of three modern, deepwater berths, on-dock rail, a Customs-bonded warehouse, and a complete container yard. The port recently installed a crisis management planning and response system called *Rapid Responder* by **Prepared Response, Inc.** to assist first response personnel, including local police and firefighters, in responding to any type of incident that might occur at the port.

The system runs on laptop computers and allows first responders to instantly access more than 300 data points, including tactical plans, access routes, satellite and geospatial imagery, interior and exterior photos, floor plans, staging areas, hazardous materials locations, utility shut-offs, evacuation routes, and reunification points for virtually any facility. This information securely resides in the port's *Rapid Responder* system and is accessible by authorised first responders via the Web, laptop computers, and portable USB storage devices.

'It's a very important tool for the Port of Olympia or for a terminal anywhere in the world,' said Steve Pottle, Port

of Olympia Commissioner. 'Hazards vary from port to port, but the key is giving emergency responders situational awareness about an incident. This is what *Rapid Responder* provides to facility owners and emergency personnel.'

The port is now part of a larger state-wide system that is being used to protect schools, private buildings, public buildings, and other critical infrastructure like the port facility.

'The Port of Olympia is dedicated to ensuring the safety of its workers, customers and the community,' said Jim Finnell, president and CEO of Prepared Response. The port is the first critical infrastructure facility to be included in the state-wide crisis management system.'

Planning meetings

It is highly desirable that a port should work closely with its local response agencies so they are familiar with the facility when an event occurs. One of the most important parts of the system is the ability to have emergency responders come together to discuss plans before an event takes place. These meetings include law enforcement, fire and facility officials. They may also include personnel from various city, county and state agencies, including emergency medical services and various utilities.

'We sat down with our emergency responders and talked about where to place staging areas in case we needed to move people out of the area,' said Mike Crawford, Port of Olympia marine terminal foreman and facility security officer. 'We also identified alternate locations in case we needed to move the command centre in the middle of an incident. In situations where time is crucial, this tool would prove invaluable to us or any other terminal.'

The responders discuss who should be in command during certain types of incidents so there is no confusion when an event takes place. This command structure can change depending on the type of emergency. The goal is to



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encourage communication between various agencies so they are all on the same page when an incident occurs.

An important component of this meeting is to have emergency responders develop 'pre-plans' before an incident occurs. Using a protest as an example, the first responders could identify where to set up a command post, staging areas, perimeters and roadblocks to contain protesters to a certain area. This is crucial for emergency responders so they don't have to waste time identifying these areas when they arrive on the scene of an incident. Every second counts when dealing with these emergencies. These pre-plans can also be quickly changed in the system during an event and printed for distribution to personnel. The system has been developed as an 'all hazards' approach to emergencies.

Collecting data

The pre-plan tactical meetings are crucial to the success of the crisis management system. After this meeting takes place, the structures in the port need to be

photographed and added to the system. The *Rapid Responder* system is designed to hold an infinite number of data points about a port, including interior, exterior and aerial photographs of buildings and cranes on the facility. In order to gather this information, a photographer and data collection specialist go to each structure and take digital photographs of various locations as specified by the port and first responders. Because of the road, rail and water access, additional photographs need to be taken from different vantage points.

Flammable materials

A wide variety of flammable materials can be housed at port facilities and it is imperative that these items are captured in the system. *Rapid Responder* shows images of where these hazardous materials are housed and their quantity and type so emergency responders know what types of materials they are dealing with during an incident.

Once information about the port is collected, it is entered into the database. Existing floor plans, emergency plans, and

other data port officials want included are also placed in the system.

After all the information is entered into *Rapid Responder*, the port owners are asked to verify the accuracy of the information. This information can be easily updated by the port via a secure Web interface. The updated data is then disseminated to other stakeholders as they log on to the system.

The last step in implementing *Rapid Responder* is to train all the designated users. The system is designed to be very user friendly. Basic training of the system takes about 20 minutes and is easy to navigate.

Using the system

The unique design of *Rapid Responder* allows it to be changed and updated to adapt to any crisis that may occur at a port facility. From mundane items such as locating emergency contact information to extreme situations where there may be a bomb in a container, *Rapid Responder* is designed to deal with a wide variety of emergency situations.

'It all has to do with response to an emergency,' said Pottle. '*Rapid Responder* provides the information emergency responders need when they arrive on the scene of an incident. For example, if you arrive at a terminal that has a storage tank facility and a tank is leaking, first responders need to know information about the tank. What's in the tank? Where are the shutoffs? How close is the tank to other tanks and buildings? All this information is critical to emergency personnel and it is right at the fingertips of the agencies using *Rapid Responder*.'

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