SP 3: Criteria for the Establishment and Operational Functioning of the Disaster Risk Management Centre in Waterberg District Municipality

Establishment

In compliance with section 43 of the Disaster Management Act No. 57 of 2002 (DM Act) and sections 1.2.2.2 and 1.2.5 of the National Disaster Management Framework (NDMF), the disaster risk management centre for the Waterberg District Municipality must be established in accordance with the standards outlined below.

Infrastructure

The Waterberg District Municipal Disaster Risk Management Centre must be located in an area free from exposure to any known risks. For the centre to operate effectively, it must have adequate facilities to allow for access control. The access control system must include security fencing. It is critical that there is an independent power supply and an independent supply of water to support the centre in maximum operational mode for five consecutive 24-hour days.

The centre must include the following minimum infrastructural facilities:

- Disaster Operations Centre (DOC);
- Central Communications Centre; and
- Training, Media and Public Information Centre.

The requirements for each one are discussed in detail below.

Disaster Operations Centre

The DOC must be located within the disaster risk management centre. All disaster risk management policy, planning and operations are directed and executed from the DOC.

Conference room

The central node of the DOC must comprise a dedicated conference room. The conference room has to serve the dual purpose of providing a venue for regular meetings and functioning as a venue for strategic planning and other related disaster risk management activities.

Its size and facilities should be appropriate for the multidisciplinary strategic management of response and recovery operations when disasters occur or are threatening to occur, or when a neighbouring event poses a threat to the municipal area.

The facility must be air-conditioned and large enough to accommodate at least 30 people at a given time. It must have a sufficient number of desks – which can be arranged in a U-shaped configuration – to provide ample desktop space. Seating must include comfortable high-back swivel chairs which are ergonomically suitable for extended periods of occupation. There has to be adequate wall space for white boards and for displaying items such as maps, charts and logs.

Adequate sundry office furniture, including storage cabinets for maps, must be available. Other relevant equipment, supplies and stationery items have to be available at all times.

Easy and ready access to relevant information is critical and the facility must therefore be permanently equipped with the necessary technology. The technology must include a ceiling-mounted (fixed) data projector and a full-size drop-down screen, voice recording facilities, an intercom and public address system, a 24-hour clock, a television, a DVD player and recorder and video monitoring facilities, access to commercial and community media, digital photographic facilities, and adequate telephone connections for each 'desk' with access to dedicated unlisted priority lines that operate independently of a switchboard.

Equally important, the facility must have an uninterruptible power supply (UPS) and adequate and compatible computer hardware, software and ancillary equipment to enable ready and easy access to information, including geographic information system (GIS) data and resource data. It must also provide ready access to the Internet and e-mail, Short Messaging Service (SMS) and Multimedia Messaging Service (MMS) facilities.

Provision must be made for access to the following additional facilities during periods when the centre is in full operational mode:

- adequate ablution facilities, including showers and restroom facilities;
- a fully equipped kitchen, including adequate crockery, cutlery, urns, stove, microwave and fridge to cater for staff; and
- sleeping accommodation and lockers for at least six people at a time.

Administrative offices

Administrative headquarters comprising offices and infrastructure must be housed adjacent to the conference room. The offices should have adequate furnishings and equipment. The head of the centre and all disaster risk management centre staff must have access to the necessary technology to execute their duties. The technology should include, where relevant, access to the Internet, e-mail and GIS, mobile telephones with SMS and MMS, mobile radios for emergency communication and mobile Global Positioning System (GPS) instrumentation.

Ancillary facilities must include:

- photocopying facilities, including the capacity for reproducing large charts and maps;
- fax facilities; and

- a storeroom or storage space.

Central Communications Centre

The Central Communications Centre serves as the information 'hub' of the disaster risk management centre. As such, there has to be ready access to the appropriate resources and infrastructure necessary for it to function efficiently.

The Central Communications Centre must be fully equipped with all the necessary radio communication technology and equipment to allow efficient two-way strategic communication coverage for the whole of the municipal area, including communication to and from communities at risk.

Facilities must include a switchboard with sufficient capacity to enable the disaster risk management centre to operate efficiently when fully operational.

Given that the Central Communications Centre is meant to serve as the central reporting and call-taking facility for all significant events and disasters and for monitoring and disseminating early warnings, as well as provide a public information service, a toll-free number must be made available to allow the public easy and free access to the centre.

For recording and legal purposes, a voice logging system must be installed to record all incoming and outgoing telephonic and radio communications.

The Central Communications Centre must be equipped with the necessary furniture, equipment and additional technology, such as computers and printers and access to the Internet, e-mail, GIS, SMS and MMS, to enable it to function optimally.

Training, Media and Public Information Centre

Reception area

The reception desk should be close to the entrance of the disaster risk management centre. There must be a small reception area, appropriately equipped, where the public seeking information can be attended to and visitors can be received.

Training and media venue

Ideally, there should be a separate facility that is specially equipped for the purpose of holding media briefings. However, for economic reasons, a single facility can be established to serve as both a training venue and a media room.

The venue must be equipped with the appropriate infrastructure and equipment necessary for media briefings and training sessions. It must have comfortable seating and tables to

accommodate at least 25 people at a time. It is important that the furniture can be arranged in different configurations to suit a variety of training events. The venue must also be equipped with a public address system, voice recording facilities, audio-visual aids such as a fixed data projector and drop-down screen/s, computer connections/access, overhead projectors, television monitors, DVD and video recorders, flip charts and white boards.

Attached to the venue, or in close proximity, must be an appropriately appointed room to serve as a library, archive and media facility.

Operational responsibilities of each facility in the disaster risk management centre

The operational responsibilities of the various facilities of the disaster risk management centre are described below.

Disaster Operations Centre

The DOC must develop capabilities based on international principles of disaster risk management best practice. The DOC is responsible for:

- integrated institutional capacity for the direction and integrated execution of policy and legislation;
- establishment and maintenance of a comprehensive information management system for disaster risk management;
- establishment and maintenance of effective administrative and organisational procedures in the disaster risk management centre;
- integrated risk reduction planning and practice; and
- integrated response and recovery planning and operations.

Central Communications Centre

The Central Communications Centre is responsible for:

- developing, establishing and maintaining an effective telecommunications system and operational call centre for the municipal area as a whole.

Training, Media and Public Information Centre

The Training, Media and Public Information Centre is responsible for:

- promoting the recruitment, training and capacity building of volunteers and other role players;

- establishing and maintaining capacity and capabilities for knowledge management in the municipal area for the purpose of disaster risk management;
- developing and implementing an integrated public awareness strategy for the municipal area based on its risk profile; and
- establishing mechanisms to ensure effective media relations in order to provide the public with information.