

ORGANISATION OF THE EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLANNING OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HYDRAULIC ENGINEERING, AUTONOMOUS PROVINCE OF BOLZANO – SOUTH TYROL, ITALY

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INTRODUCTION

In the year 2000, the Department of Hydraulic Engineering of the Autonomous Province of Bolzano became assigned the competencies and responsibilities for hydraulic engineering and maintenances of existing flood protection structures from the National Civil Engineering authority. Associated to this assignment of competencies is the responsibility for setting up the flood alert service and flood emergency management service. In close collaboration with other regional and national authorities and with local voluntary fire brigades an emergency preparedness plan was elaborated. This emergency preparedness plan includes procedures for alerting and emergency management. The plan was tested successfully in practical exercises and in cases of emergencies. During these exercises, the need for an emergency preparedness plan also for other rivers and mountain torrents than the main rivers Eisack and Etsch and for mountain torrents became obvious. Thus, on the basis of the experiences made during the practical exercises for emergency management, an emergency preparedness plan for torrential processes was developed. This plan should allow all involved authorities to prepare their emergency aid activities in a guided and coordinated manner.

METHODS

As a first step, the internal resources of the Department of Hydraulic Engineering and the external framework conditions for civil protection organisations were analysed. In a second step, the functions, responsibilities and competencies of the Department regarding emergency management during region-wide flood events were defined and matched to the responsibilities of other civil protection organisations. After the definition of the main objectives of the emergency preparedness plan for torrential processes, a management handbook was developed on the basis of the prescriptions and requirements of civil protection and on the basis of the German service regulation DV 1-100.

RESULTS

The handbook “emergency preparedness plan for torrential processes” regulates the organisation of the leadership of flood emergency management activities and defines leadership structures, leadership instruments and leadership functions. It is divided into these five main sections:

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- stand-by for emergency duty,
- operation coordination and controlling,
- function of the staff,
- special cases plan,
- lists.

Each section is subdivided into a “red thread” that prescribes the pre-defined activities in numerical order and into an official service regulation that prescribes the function, charging and competency of the regarding actor.

The section “stand-by for emergency duty” describes the procedure for the stand-by service in the pre-alerting and post-alerting phase of a flood event. The official service regulation of this section defines the responsibilities, functions, equipment and duration of the stand-by service. In the section “operation coordination and controlling”, the “red thread” for the director of operations regarding torrential processes describes the post-alerting operations options and the internal and external functions. The internal functions could also be delegated to an internal officer.

The section “function of the staff” describes the responsibilities of the direction for technical emergency operations (TEL-WB). After the service regulation DV 1-100, the functions of the direction for technical emergency operations are divided into the thematics “staff / internal services (S1)”, “situation controlling (S2)”, “action and operations tactics (S3)”, “logistics (S4)”, “media relations work (S5)” and “communication (S6)”. For each thematic it is nominated a person responsible for the organisation, structures and staff.

The section “special cases plan” contains the emergency management plan for the rivers Eisack and Etsch and links to the special cases plans of the Office for Dam’s.

In the section “lists”, addresses of potential actors, internal staff, and staff of other regional authorities, staff of fire brigades, governing mayors, police and army forces are listed.

CONCLUSIONS

The handbook “emergency preparedness plan for torrential processes” regulates the most important tasks of organized emergency aid activities regarding flood events and torrential processes. It contains synthetically functions, tasks and responsibilities of the relevant actors and describes step-by-step their activities during an event. The handbook is an important source for the preparation of the tasks and requirements to fulfil during an event in anticipate of an emergency. Thus, it is important that all actors become familiar with the handbook. Now, the first step for the implementation of the emergency preparedness plan is to provide instructions and training courses for the involved staff by the Department of Hydraulic Engineering and to test the plan in emergency trainings. The handbook is designed to allow a constantly implementation of further developments. From the handbook, the needs for structural optimisations like the adaptation of the radio network, the acquisition of water-proof mobile phones and the development of databases for the logistics could be derived.

Keywords: flood, debris flow, preparedness, emergency management, civil protection