EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

After Action Report: Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge Incident on Thursday April 20, 2023

Report dated: July 28, 2023

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR

Executive Summary

- Call date: Thursday April 20, 2023
- After-Action conference: Wednesday April 26, 2023

Summary of Key Events

- Call time: 22:26:03
- Call placed in queue: 22:30:32
- MPD units dispatched: 22:30:42
- MPD units arrived (11th Street Bridge): 22:30:42
- DCFEMS units dispatched: 22:31:31
- DCFEMS units arrived (11th Street Bridge): 22:34:12
- DCFEMS units arrived (Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge): 22:42:08

Summary of Key Findings

- Call coded properly
- Incident location based on information received from MPD Harbor Unit
- Caller was initially unsure of their location
- Location determining technologies were available

Executive Summary

An After-Action Report assessed the response of District of Columbia (DC) public safety agencies to an incident near the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge in Southeast DC on Thursday, April 20, 2023. An After-Action Report and Improvement Plan were completed after conducting a joint After-Action conference, facilitated by DC Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEMA), and follow-up activities with DC Fire and Emergency Medical Services (DCFEMS), the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), and Office of Unified Communications (OUC). Provided below is a summary of key events, key findings, identified strengths, and opportunities for improvement.

Summary of Key Events

One 911 call came in at 22:26:03 hours (10:26:03PM) and concluded at 22:28:31 (10:28:31PM). The call was placed in both the DCFEMS and MPD pending calls queue at 22:30:32 (10:30:32PM). MPD units were dispatched at 22:30:42 (10:30:42PM) and arrived at the “11th Street Bridge” at 22:30:42 (10:30:42PM). DCFEMS units were dispatched at 22:31:31 (10:31:31PM) and arrived at the “11th Street Bridge” at 22:34:12 (10:34:12PM). At 22:37:39 (10:37:39PM), DCFEMS units, and at 22:38:47 (10:38:47PM) MPD units were aware the incident was now believed to be near the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge. At 22:42:08 (10:42:08PM), DCFEMS unit BCSO arrived at the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge.

Summary of Key Findings

- According to the information provided by the caller, this call was coded properly.
- The OUC call taker selected an incident location based on information received from MPD Harbor Patrol.
- The OUC call taker did not select an incident location based on caller provided information because the caller was initially uncertain of the incident location.
- Location determining technologies were available for this call. It properly identified the location of the caller, who was on the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail, but not the location of the vehicle near the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge.

Strengths

Strength 1: OUC call taker reached out to MPD Harbor Unit to attempt to get a better location based on the caller's description.
Strength 2: Response agencies utilized information in the computer aided dispatch (CAD) system.
Strength 3: OUC conducted an initial independent internal review within 24 hours of the incident.

Opportunities for Improvement

Area for Improvement 1: Use of Incident Command System (ICS)
Reference: National Incident Management System (NIMS)
Analysis: The Incident Command System (ICS) is a standardized approach to the command, control, and coordination of emergency response providing a common hierarchy within which responders from multiple agencies can be effective. The use of ICS by partner agencies allows personnel from a wide variety of agencies to meld rapidly into a common management structure with common terminology to enable logistical and administrative support while avoiding duplication of effort.
Outcomes: Improved real-time communication between partners and more efficient responses.

Area for Improvement 2: Technology Evaluation
Reference: ISO/IEC 20000-1:2018; NENA-STA-017.1-2022
Analysis: DCFEMS, MPD, and OUC plan, establish, implement, operate, monitor, review, maintain and improve service management system requirements to include the design, transition, delivery, and improvement of services to fulfill agreed service requirements. Assess evolving technology to provide a roadmap to plan innovative approaches to recruiting, training, and maintaining a workplace environment that is constantly being exposed to evolving technology.
Outcomes: Workforce is fully trained and capable of leveraging evolving technologies to ensure the most effective emergency response workflows.

Area for Improvement 3: Exercises, training, and development
Reference: Homeland Security Exercise Evaluation program (HSEEP) in addition to appropriate, necessary, and relevant Agency laws, plans, policies, procedures, and regulations.
Analysis: HSEEP provides a set of guiding principles for exercise programs, as well as a common approach to exercise program management, design and development, conduct, evaluation, and improvement planning. Partner agencies could benefit from the opportunity to shape planning, assess, and validate capabilities, and address areas for improvement. Integrated joint training, such as the weekly training conducted at Engine 22 provides an opportunity for DCFEMS, MPD, and OUC to work together in a combined setting and better understand each other's role during disasters, emergencies, and incidents and to cross train on joint communication processes and procedures.
Outcomes: Enhanced awareness of roles and responsibilities, and identification of opportunities for improvement in the management of emergency incident responses.

Conclusion

The joint after action performance assessment and the collaboratively developed improvement plan will guide involved agencies' future actions and enhance their ability to prepare for, respond to, and mitigate incidents, which will ensure they continue to provide the best service to the residents and visitors of Washington, DC.

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