



E Team

Situational Response IN ACTION

Historic Portland, Maine Combines Comprehensive Situational Awareness and Emergency Management Tools in a Post-9/11 World

The City of Portland is the largest metropolitan area in the state of Maine. Home to almost one quarter of the entire state’s population, Portland’s picturesque location and its access to both water- and land-recreational activities make it a popular vacation spot. The city hosts more than 3.5 million tourists each year – swelling the city during the cruise ship season and summer months – and Portland’s Office of Emergency Management is responsible for the safety and well-being of each and every person that lives in, works in, or visits the area.

The Rising Need for an Emergency Management Solution

Prior to September 11, 2001, Portland’s greatest emergency management needs were weather-related, as the area often experienced severe winter storms and hurricanes. During an emergency, the city leveraged the most basic and assured means of coordination – face-to-face meetings. Emergency management leaders from each department would convene to summarize the previous few hours and plan operations for the next few hours. The department heads would repeat this meeting structure through to the end of the incident. This collective decision-making process worked for the city, because most of the events they managed were quite similar. Each department knew its roles and responsibilities, which enabled a very competent, silo-based approach to emergency management.

“Since implementing E Team, we are able to disseminate information before and during an incident, manage our resource deployment efficiently, and ultimately save taxpayer dollars”

September 11, and the resulting reflection and assessment of critical vulnerabilities in both Portland and the country as a whole, highlighted the fact that the emergency landscape had changed. Portland recognized that it too needed to modify its emergency management practices. With the very real possibility of man-made, as well as natural disasters, the city needed tools and processes that could provide a more sophisticated way to manage crisis situations.

Situational Readiness

Portland, Maine



photo by John Cannon, NWS

Challenge:

Implement an incident management system that can help ensure internal preparedness, situational awareness, and effective response capabilities for everyday incidents and major emergencies that arise, as well as provide the ability to collaborate and share information across the entire city and its many organizations.

Solution:

NC4’s E Team Situational Response solution is a collaborative incident management system that allows organizations to track and manage incidents in a single, easy-to-use application that delivers collaboration, real-time mapping, and fast access to information.

Benefits:

- ☰ A real-time view into incident activity across the entire city and its many organizations, including private entities such as hospitals
- ☰ Easy management of the location, movement, and availability of resources to the sites of greatest need

“September 11 was a defining moment for Portland,” says Fred LaMontagne, fire chief and director of emergency management, City of Portland. “We wanted to be able to respond appropriately to incidents as they happened, and understand what each discipline within the city was dealing with at any point in time. In the past, we were managing predictable events that we could prepare for and respond to, but today we need a solution that can prepare us for the unpredictable.”

NC4 Delivers

Portland sought to implement an emergency management solution that could provide a real-time view into incident activity across the entire city and its many organizations. In addition, the city wanted a solution that critical private entities, such as hospitals, could easily leverage. After researching options, Portland decided to implement NC4’s E Team crisis management software. E Team provides the common operational picture and real-time incident overview the city requires, as well as additional robust functionality, including mapping, reporting, and resource-tracking abilities.

In April 2007, a severe Patriots Day storm put E Team to the test. Portland sustained \$2.5 million worth of damage in just seven hours, resulting in a massive influx of calls from the community for assistance. The Portland Fire Department alone received more than 300 calls. With E Team, the city was able to track incidents, collaborate on and deploy resources to the sites of greatest need first, and begin recovery efforts quickly – all while keeping detailed documentation for Federal reporting.

“Since implementing E Team, we are able to disseminate information before and during an incident, manage our resource deployment efficiently, and ultimately save taxpayer dollars,” LaMontagne said. “The Patriots Day storm is a great example, but it’s the consistent use of E Team – by both public and private organizations – for smaller, everyday incidents, that really allows Portland to manage the larger emergencies efficiently. We’ve found that training, as well as consistent use, are the keys to a successful E Team deployment.”

In 2007, Portland turned to NC4’s External Situational Awareness (ESA) solution to amplify its awareness of incidents not only in the immediate area, but also nationwide. ESA notifies the public and private sectors of events that may adversely impact life and safety, continuity of business operations, and physical assets. Drawing on its partnerships with government and law enforcement agencies, NC4’s Incident Monitoring Centers track global events 24x7 – providing notifications immediately as an incident occurs.

“NC4’s ESA solution helps us determine what actions are necessary based on what’s going on nearby,” LaMontagne said. “E Team then provides the tools to manage and execute the plan in place. Together, ESA and E Team provide Portland with a comprehensive solution that everyone can use easily and successfully.”

More about NC4

NC4 delivers Situational Readiness solutions that empower government and businesses with accurate, timely and secure information to manage uncertainty.

NC4’s External Situational Awareness (ESA) service alerts members of events and incidents that may impact business operations. Drawing on its partnerships with government and law enforcement agencies, NC4’s Incident Monitoring Centers (NIMCs) track global events 24x7, providing early, real-time notifications.

NC4’s Situational Response offering, E Team, is a robust platform for effective incident management and reporting. It allows cross-jurisdictional information sharing, empowering emergency management personnel with a common operating picture. With proven real world experience, E Team enables rapid response to crisis situations as well as effective management of non-emergency activities.

NC4’s Extranet Secure Portals (ESP) product provides a Software as a Service (SaaS) solution, bringing government agencies and corporations a common platform for secure communication and collaboration. The ESP solution allows diverse organizations to share critical information, such as Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI), through highly secure, compartmented, web-accessible portals.

To learn more about how NC4 can benefit your organization, visit www.nc4.us.