

## **Michael J. Hall**

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**Michael (Mike) Hall** is the Team Leader for the National Incident Management Assistance Team-West (IMAT), a Senior Executive Service (SES) position. As an FCO, Mr. Hall has lead Federal response and recovery efforts for FEMA during more than a dozen Presidential Disaster Declarations including assisting USAID following this year's Earth Quake in Haiti, the 2009 Floods in North Dakota, Hurricanes Gustav and Ike in Louisiana in 2008, the 2007 California Wildfires, Mt. Lemon Fires in Arizona, Kansas Tornadoes, Ice Storm in Ohio, Tropical Storm Henri and Hurricanes Isabel, Ivan. He is credentialed as a Type 1 FCO.



Previously, Mr. Hall spent more than 26 years in the U.S. Coast Guard, where he retired as a Captain. In 1999 he led the emergency response to the Motor Vessel New Carissa shipwreck and oil spill. He also served as the Assistant Chief of Operations for the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

Prior to joining the Coast Guard, Mr. Hall was a Washington State Trooper for six years.

He holds a Master's Degree in National Security and Strategic Studies from the United States Naval War College and has attended Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

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### **Mega-City/Mega-Disaster Reduction**

I would suggest that Mega-city/Mega-Disasters will continue to happen around the world....it is not *IF* but rather *WHEN*! Given that as a premise, the real question then is how do we prepare for, respond to, recover from and mitigate Mega-Disaster?

I believe that if we do not complete the full-circle at the individual, local, state and national levels then the victims of these mega-disasters will not become survivors but rather they will end up being victimized twice....once by the disaster and once by a bureaucracy that failed at all levels. In the background materials there were some excellent examples of where Mega-city/Mega-disaster responses were impeded by governments, agencies and populations being less than fully prepared for the "next one". More recently this was once again demonstrated in Haiti where simple communication, education, planning, coordination and mitigation would have lessened not only the impact of this earthquake but provided a much more effective response and recovery effort. That did not happen in Haiti and in my view the victims have been victimized twice.

The question remains, what can we do as we focus on Mega-city/Mega-Disasters? The answers start with each individual understanding that they are part of the solution, that they are a resource and not a liability, that they must be prepared, they must have a plan...planning is the key and not necessarily the plan itself; governments must expand their team to include the private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and local citizens, they must develop and enforce stricter construction codes and they must pre-identify highly vulnerable buildings in disaster prone areas (whether it be from flooding, fires, earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, typhoons or any other natural disaster). We at all levels of government along with the private sector and the local citizens must work in a coordinated and collaborative manner. Each of us understands that all disasters are local but Mega-city/Mega-Disasters require a Mega-Response

working with everyone working in a coordinated and systematic way. The Incident Command System (ICS), the Unified Coordination Group (UCG) and the Area Command (AC), coupled together with a deliberate planning system and an executable Incident Action Plan (IAP), are the cornerstones of success and will turn victims into survivors.

Our challenge is to build these systems at all levels of government and across all societies as natural disaster know no boundaries; Mega-Disasters will continue to happen and our challenge is to mitigate their impacts through workshops like this one.