



Webinar - March 9th 2023

Operating in the face of global hazards - risk and operations in a post Covid-19 world.

As we all adapt to a new world order where increased threats from pandemics and extreme weather conditions are part of everyday life, ensuring there is discussion on how to prepare for and respond to increased global hazards is a business requirement for most of us. This webinar was held to create some practical ideas and support on this very topic. The webinar is for businesses that operate a residential or non-profit entity and is of special interest to those entities operating residential facilities from tropical/remote island states.

Webinar overview

This webinar included four industry experts who shared their learnings and views on how small entities should/could be approaching managing long-term planning for global hazards. What planning should be in place? Which protocols worked when there was a global pandemic? What didn't work? And how do we ensure we take a different path in the future?

The webinar included a summary from the Central Caribbean Marine Institute sharing the positives and negatives regarding our hazard planning and management, including the changes that have been made in the last year as the borders have slowly re-opened in the Cayman Islands following the Covid-19 pandemic. The discussion was then handed over to the expert panel, who shared their own experiences during Covid-19 (or other, relevant hazard management).

The discussion focused on how small entities can become better prepared and more responsive to increased global hazards, such as pandemics and extreme weather conditions.

The expert panel included:

Dr. Nick Gent - Chief Medical Officer for the Cayman Islands
Danielle Coleman - Hazard Management Director for the Cayman Islands
Greg Locher - retired EMS fire services professional
Aaron Otis - Assistant Deputy Secretary for County Health System (Florida)

Link to the webinar

You can watch the webinar here: <https://youtu.be/748KdDw-tFY>

Webinar Outcomes

The following advice came from the experts on the Covid-19 webinar:

In summary:

- Be independent and be prepared.
- Anticipation and planning for hazard management is critical.
- Define a strong hazard management strategy that can be adapted and responsive to individual issues (ie. A hurricane plan can be adapted to a different natural disaster and a respiratory health protocol can be adapted to fit specific respiratory diseases).
- Identification of the critical aspects within a business, such as comms, logistics, training, staffing, international travel, etc should be identified as part of the hazard management strategy.
- Identify how to adapt during the emergency and *how to continue to adapt during* after the hazard needs to be part of the overall strategy.
- And finally - how to manage your people, including an increased emphasis on mental wellbeing and managing burn out during a crisis surge and in the aftermath of the hazard, is one of the most important and under-represented aspects of hazard management, based on our experiences with Covid-19.

Pandemic Response & Planning

- All of us must be prepared to face another pandemic or hazard such as Covid-19 in our businesses. The probability of another issue along these lines is a stark reality.
- An all-hazards approach must be undertaken to validate and re-evaluate response plans. A framework approach can help create an overall hazard strategy that can be adapted to specific issues.
- The strategy needs to look at what cannot be predicted, and an adaptive model should be developed. For example, where a surge of need/crisis creates urgency and the strands within the business that need managing (HR, comms, resources, financial).
- Companies need to be more resilient, both in response to and planning of hazard management. Setting the parameters in your own business must be identified and planned for, especially for companies operating residential or remote facilities.
- Better hygiene standards and competence in handling respiratory health should be a given now - developing a respiratory health protocol (rather than specific response protocols to certain diseases) should be adopted to allow for a correct policy and protocol development.
- Identifying how to function in the aftermath of a hazard must become part of the planning - does the business model need to change, what are the adaptations needed with a business to cope with operating during and after a hazard.
- The role of people regarding infectious diseases remains a key component - including the relationship between staff, visitors, and stakeholders.
- Collaborative relationships and partnerships needed to ensure a robust response to hazards are critical and must be managed BEFORE the hazards take place to ensure adaptability and resilience.
- Especially for residential facilities, look at supply chains and resources to support your business needs outside of the 'norm.'

Mental Health

- One area that has been under-represented within the (general) discussion regarding Covid-19 and the impact on staff is mental health. Incorporating how the long-term

impacts of working in a 'crisis' and altered working environment must become part of the management plan.

- Mental health continues to be the 'secondary' emergency of Covid-19. How this is addressed, including long-term staff members, volunteers, or people who 'step in,' is now an essential part of hazard management.
- Identifying how to plan and execute 'surge management' i.e., the response to a crisis, that incorporates staff wellbeing is critical.
- Post trauma from hazards must also be considered, taking into account burn out and negative mental health resulting from coping with the long-term impact of a situation.

About CCMI

CCMI operates a remote marine field station, where we host year-round residential research and education programmes. The Cayman Islands re-opened for international travel in 2022 after two years of border closures. CCMI operates a small facility with residential guests from a remote tropical island. Post Covid-19, we are required to be COVID-19 compliant, and have therefore begun a journey of adaptation and resilience to operating safely, within the context of the pandemic and increased threat from hurricanes. CCMI received a grant in 2022 from the EU's RESEMBID programme to manage the impacts of Covid-19 by improving health and safety features of the facilities infrastructure and adapting emergency management processes to support enhanced operational resilience, thereby supporting CCMI's continued work on improving and protecting marine biodiversity in the Cayman Islands and wider OCTs. This webinar will ensure we share our journey, as well as bringing in some of our key stakeholders and experts who have facilitated our adaptation plans and response to the pandemic.