

Corporate Service Corps in Philippines



As part of the Corporate Service Corps program, a team of eight IBMers traveled to Davao City, Philippines, in the summer of 2008 to undertake projects for organizations such as the city government, the chamber of commerce, universities and information and communication technology organizations.

One of these IBMers was Andrew Levy. . .

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One of the participants was Andrew Levy (in white shirt), who is an IBM senior management consultant providing technology strategy for such organizations as the U.S. Department of Defense and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. As part of IBM's Corporate Service Corps work, he was assigned to help train more than 30 Filipino emergency response agencies in the Incident Command System (ICS), a standardized, on-scene, all-hazard incident management program.

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Levy evaluated emergency response exercises, held “train-the-trainer” sessions and also worked with students. One week after he returned home, some of the agencies with which he’d worked had a chance to put their training to the test, providing incident command for an actual rescue and recovery emergency.

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His training covered several life-and-death scenarios. . .

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Training drill: A bombing at a major trade building

The drill was staged in Davao City. The first step was to set up a command post and clear a path for emergency vehicles, especially fire trucks.

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Training drill: A bombing at a major trade building

During the debrief, Levy highlighted some things to consider when setting up a vehicle staging area:

- When arriving on the scene, determine the best way to leave, e.g. the concept of what goes in, must go out.
- Will vehicles need to cross paths to get to the exit points?
- Can medical personnel transfer patients?
- Where is the incident command post set up in relation to all of this?
- And above all, if the building was to collapse, are all the vehicles and responders out of harm's way?

Not all emergencies take place on the ground, however...

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Training drill: A capsized boat with ten passengers

With Andrew's help, the Island Garden City of Samal staged a deep-water search and rescue drill: a rubber boat with ten passengers capsized, six victims were floating around the boat unconscious; two needed to be airlifted to separate facilities. The Incident Command Post was set up at the Peñaplata Wharf.

The team included the fire department, national police, coast guard, medical corps, civil defense and information officers. "Job well done," Andrew concluded, while stressing the need to properly identify the persons in charge and maximize the use of resources.

Students learned some earth-shaking lessons. . .

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Training drill: A high school in an earthquake

This drill took place at Southern Davao High School in Panabo City. It was unique in that there were no formal systems or technology involved. For example, the alarm was sounded by the principal hitting a hammer against the flag pole. As part of the drill, everyone was buddied up and accounted for.

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Training drill: A high school in an earthquake

To extend the lesson, the school used the drill as an example for students to take home and share with their parents, who had not received any training on emergency preparedness.

As with the makeshift “alarm system,” Andrew teaches drill participants to “use what they have” . . .

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In any emergency, knowing who's who and doing what requires clear thinking and using the resources at your disposal. For example: a paper vest with your role written on it. Andrew taught drill participants that it is also essential that organization charts with people's names and positions be listed in the command post, along with a map of the incident. These and other aspects of an incident command system are vital to an effective response.

And sometimes, lessons get applied in real life, in real time. . .

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This is not a drill: C-130 military plane crash

Part of the training Andrew provided covered drills for emergencies such as a seaport spill of hazardous materials and an airport bombing. Less than one week after this drill, several of those pictured here took the lead in an actual local emergency by coordinating the response and recovery efforts, including establishing an incident command center, for a downed C-130 military plane.

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This is not a drill: C-130 military plane crash

The tragedy—both pilots and the seven crewmen aboard died in the crash—itself taught an important lesson that even Andrew's drills couldn't: it pays to be prepared for a disaster or emergency, because there's rarely a warning.