

Update on the ISO 224 Working Group 7

By: Greg Solecki

Manager, Business Continuity & Recovery

City of Calgary

Calgary Emergency Management Agency

In 2008, the first gathering of an international expert panel for a new ISO Standard on the Crisis Management of Water (Wastewater) Utilities took place in Israel. This group included representatives from Great Britain, Israel, Germany, Portugal, USA, Japan, and of course Canada. The Canadian contingent was created through the CWWA and included members of its Security & Emergency Management Committee.

Although language barriers and theoretical differences are entrenched during group workshops and meetings, great strides are made in developing the best possible standard for small to large utilities. In particular our Japanese friends struggle to get their points across by using broken English (the official ISO language) and PowerPoint presentations.

During a meeting last year in Germany, the Japanese were adamant that the standard should include sections on tsunami, earthquake, and reception centre preparedness and planning. Although these are excellent subjects to be included in any crisis plan, it is geographically specific and also somewhat out of scope for us in ISO 224 WG7 (ISO 223 is the group looking at overall crisis/emergency management known as Societal Security).

Imagine our horror as we watched the disasters unfold this year in Japan including the tsunami and earthquakes. Our Japanese colleagues were there to live through the events and put their crisis management expertise to the test for the water utilities in their country. An incredible overview of the water specific response to the disaster was made available to our working group by representatives of the Japanese delegation.

The latest draft of the standard is an excellent resource for the development of crisis/emergency response planning strategies and concepts. Although it is specifically being developed for the water sector, the ISO process and emergency management concepts would be easily acceptable in any sector, business, or municipality. At this time, the draft now goes to committee for review, and then ratification begins before it is able to become a full standard.

I would encourage anyone interested in crisis/emergency management development for their utility to contact any of the members of the CWWA Security & Emergency Management Committee. They will be able to provide further information on this and other ISO standards related to the water sector.