



Lesson 4. Crisis Decision Making



FEMA

Visual 4.1
Decision Making and Problem Solving (IS-241.b)

Lesson 4 Objectives

- Identify impediments to effective decision making in a crisis.
- Describe strategies for enhancing crisis decision making.



FEMA

Incident Decision Making

- Made quickly and efficiently.
- Based on comprehensive view.
- Taking into account:
 - Past practices and lessons learned.
 - Present operating picture.
 - Future contingencies and needs.



FEMA

Common Operating Picture

- **Full and up-to-date situational awareness**
- **Provides all parties the same critical information:**
 - **Current status and evolving situation**
 - **Availability and location of resources**
 - **Needed resources**



FEMA

Impediments

- Time pressure
- Problems with information
- Losing the “big picture”
- Conflicting priorities
- Fatigue
- Stress



FEMA

Effects of Stress



- Tunnel vision
- Poor judgment
- Focus more on immediate situation
- Greater tendency toward aggression or conflict
- Escape behaviors



FEMA

Using the Problem-Solving Model

- Proven effective.
- Minimizes impediments and impact of stress by being systematic.



FEMA

Step 1: Identify the Problem



- **Size up the situation.**
- **Determine:**
 - **What is happening (and not happening).**
 - **Who is involved.**
 - **What the stakes are.**



FEMA

Step 2: Explore Alternatives

In a crisis, exploring alternatives involves:

- Identifying contingencies.
- Determining objectives.
- Identifying needed resources.



FEMA

Visual 4.9
Decision Making and Problem Solving (IS-241.b)

Step 3: Select an Alternative

- **Carefully consider implementation.**
- **Ensure plan identifies:**
 - **Who . . .**
 - **Will do what (and with whom) . . .**
 - **By when, where, and how.**
- **Communicate plans to all involved.**



FEMA

Steps 4 & 5: Implement and Evaluate

- Implement the solution.
- Evaluate the situation:
 - Has the situation changed?
 - Are more (or fewer) resources required?
 - Is a different solution required?



FEMA

Visual 4.11
Decision Making and Problem Solving (IS-241.b)

Case Study Activity: Fort Rice

Instructions:

1. Using the Student Manual:
 - a. Review the case study.
 - b. Refer to the Analytical Approach Problem-Solving Model job aid.
2. Working in groups, answer the questions following the case study.
3. Be prepared to report back to the large group in 15 minutes.



FEMA

Case Study Questions

Questions:

1. What is the situation?
2. What are your objectives?
3. Who is involved and how will you communicate the alternative selected?
4. What resources are potentially available to you to implement the solution?
5. How will you monitor and evaluate the situation?



FEMA

Summary and Transition

- In Lesson 4 you examined impediments to, and ways to enhance, decision making during a crisis.
- Lesson 5 will examine ethical considerations for decision making.



FEMA