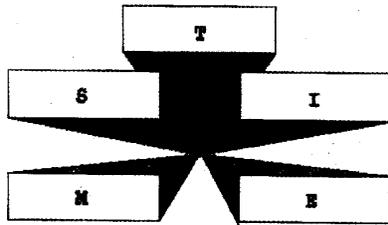


ORGANIZATION PROFILE: TIEMS

By Kathleen M. Kowalski



The International Emergency Management Society (TIEMS) was founded in 1993 as a non-profit organization with the mission of bringing together users, planners, researchers, managers, technicians, response personnel, and other parties interested in emergency management, to exchange knowledge, experience, and ideas about innovative methods and technologies to improve our ability to manage emergencies worldwide. The Society reorganized in 1996, in recognition of the central role that practitioners and social scientists play in the development of emergency methods and technologies.

TIEMS embraces two major goals. First, it allows individuals who are dedicated to improving emergency management for natural and man-made disasters to interact and share experiences with colleagues from various countries and an array of government and private agencies. Second, The Society facilitates networking for these professionals. These goals are achieved through the on-going development of a world-wide network (<http://www.tiems.org>) of individuals from various disciplines and, most importantly, through a yearly conference.

The TIEMS annual conferences solicit papers on a breadth of emergency management issues. Conference discussion topics fall into three broad areas—research and development, application, and education and training. The research and development issues include agent-based simulation, artificial intelligence, behavioral aspects, emergency worker occupational safety and health, communications systems, data analysis and decision support systems, information management and technologies, knowledge acquisition and

processing, new technologies, organization theory, policy analysis, risk analysis, simulation, societal factors, and systems engineering. The application areas include case studies, industrial and environmental accidents, natural disasters, hazardous materials, human factors, medical technology and emergency management, organizational issues, management approaches, mitigation and preparedness, planning and crisis management, policy issues, regional/local and urban considerations, response and recovery, technological disasters, techniques for emergency and disaster management, terrorist threats, and transportation management. And the education and training agenda covers training and tutoring systems, educational experiences, professional education, degree programs, and international programs.

All meeting submissions are peer reviewed and published in a Conference Proceedings. For the past several years, papers have been selected for special editions of emergency management journals; for example, in 1995, *Safety Science* (20) selected papers for publication.

The annual conferences are devoted to specific themes, such as Bridging the Gap Between Theory and Practice, Globalization of Emergency Management, International Issues Concerning Research and Application in Emergency Management, International Challenges for the Next Decade, and Emergency Management in the Third Millennium. These themes are designed to facilitate cross-disciplinary networking opportunities where nuclear scientists can listen to psychologists, sociologists can share ideas with engineers, and practitioners can discuss emergency management issues with scientists. The diversity of the TIEMS membership and the interaction among disciplines is one of The Society's strengths and consequently leads to improved emergency management worldwide.

The annual conference venues alternate between North America and Europe. Past meetings have taken place in Florida's Hollywood Beach, Nice, Montreal, Copenhagen, Washington,

DC, and Delft. Participants from six of the seven continents have attended the TIEMS meetings. TIEMS 2000 will take place May 16-19 in Orlando and TIEMS 2001 will be in Oslo.

Psychologists with an interest in emergency management issues are urged to attend the TIEMS conferences. The Society is encouraging psychologists internationally to develop relationships with emergency managers, academicians, practitioners and others to foster greater understanding of the relationship between human behavior and emergencies. As our colleague Enrico Quarantelli, founder of the first university-based disaster center at Ohio State University, has said, "We are far from certain how much any of us understands about the nature of disasters, the nature of mental health, and the relationship between the two. The initial step is to recognize how significant that relationship may be."

TIEMS members have identified terrorism and the legal responsibility of emergency workers as focal points for future concern. With terrorism on the increase, both response teams and governments are seeking information on innovative methods to manage such man-made disasters. The legal responsibility issue hinges on immunity for emergency workers. Previously, it was common practice to give immunity to fire service and other emergency personnel who frequently put their lives at risk to help others. Since decisions must be made swiftly in hazardous circumstances, mistakes can occur. If immunity is not guaranteed for emergency workers, we risk defensive emergency management—a diversion of costly resources away from emergency intervention toward legal battles.

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