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CHALLENGES OF COLLABORATIVE EMERGENCY EXERCISES IN COMPLEX ENVIRONMENTS

Abstract:

Purpose - The purpose of this paper is to study is to identify the challenges in collaborative emergency exercises.

Design/methodology/approach -The study uses methodological triangulation. The data collection consisted of a set of qualitative methods including archival data from safety organizations. The main pillar however, was constituted of observations, background conversations and unstructured in depth interviews around the course of important exercises. The study consists of 11 cases, which derive from several large R&D projects endorsed by research groups and practitioners in the Arctic.

Findings - The study identified that inter-organizational collaboration is crucial in conducting exercises during the preparedness phase to treat potential emergencies. The finding of this study presented the limited flexibility in decision making in collaborative emergency exercises due to various factors such as safety, security and costs. Furthermore the findings propose the need to conduct more frequently and learning oriented collaborative exercises.

Originality/value - This study is the first investigation to the authors' knowledge into the challenges of collaborative emergency exercises in complex environments with a rich empirical data. The study highlights that exercises should be based on planned-procedures and guidelines, but supplement with improvised resources and decision rules.

Keywords:

emergency management, collaboration, collaborative emergency exercises, complex environment, Arctic