



Emergency Management and Sustainability: Defining a Profession

Robert O., Ph.D. Schneider

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Emergency managers are faced with natural and human-made problems that are constantly evolving and changing the footprints of disaster. The complexity of these problems is more than matched by the complexity of the physical and social systems that emergency managers are expected to understand as they offer solutions for the recurring disaster problems that are presented to them in the normal course of their work. The technical skills and capacities that emergency managers have developed over time as they have plied their trade are impressive and increasingly effective and have never been more important. But they are not nearly enough to keep pace with or manage hazard risks and disasters. Something else is needed. This transformation, the "something else" if you will, is a necessity to assure emergency managers that disasters (both natural and man-made) will never exceed our capacities to manage effectively. This transformation, which if successfully completed better enables whole communities to take responsibility for disasters, is needed to promote hazard resilience in particular and sustainable communities in general. There is a need for a worldview that comprehends the connections between hazard threats, disaster resilience, and sustainability. The purpose of this book is to define emergency management as a profession, something that has been discussed much in recent years but not brought to a satisfactory completion. The linkage of emergency management to sustainability, i.e. the defining of it as a sustainability profession, is presented as the necessary linkage that (potentially) orients all of the professional skill development and the work of the "trade" and transforms it into a profession.

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