



CHATHAM COUNTY EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN

**ESF-1 ANNEX
APPENDIX 1-1
TAB E**

POST EVENT RETURN OF THE GENERAL POPULATION

JULY 2010



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ACRONYMS

AD	Assistant Director
ASOC	Air Support Operations Center
CEMA	Chatham Emergency Management Agency
CPG	Command Policy Group
EAA	Evacuation Assembly Area
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
EOP	Emergency Operations Plan
ERB	Evacuation/Re-entry Branch
ERBD	Evacuation/Re-entry Branch Director
ESF	Emergency Support Function
IC	Incident Command(er)
OSC	Operations Section Chief
PSC	Planning Section Chief
RRC	Returnee Reception Center



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I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The protection of Chatham County residents threatened by an Incident of Critical Significance is a primary objective of the County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). As a part of this Tab, returning County Residents to their properties, homes, and businesses, following an evacuation requires an organized structure to ensure the protection of the general population and the emergency response community.
- B. Post event/disaster conditions in the affected area(s) may result in a variety of hazards not normally experienced. Enforcing access restrictions to hazardous areas, and if required all of Chatham County, may be required to ensure the initial response and prolonged recovery efforts are managed in the most efficient manner prudent.

II. PURPOSE

- A. The purpose of this Tab is to outline procedures that facilitate the safe and timely return of Chatham County's general population into the affected area(s) following an evacuation caused by a local and/or large-scale emergency event and/or disaster.
- B. This Tab also provides the various County Jurisdictions and their supporting agencies with basic coordination requirements to support their returning populations.

III. SCOPE

- A. Both natural and/or man made disasters may call for either a partial (specific locations, areas, and/or portions of the County), or total evacuation of the County's population. This plan is intended for County-wide application for all return procedures taking place into and within Chatham County. This plan is a Tab to Appendix 1-1 (Evacuation, Re-entry and Return Coordination), Emergency Support Function (ESF) 1 Annex (Transportation), of the EOP; and is to be used in conjunction with the EOP under the direction of the Chatham Emergency Management Agency (CEMA), with the approval of the Command Policy Group (CPG).
- B. When established, emergency management partners coordinate efforts to ensure citizens are provided timely and accurate information and support regarding post event return procedures. These provisions apply to all hazards or emergencies, and may be initiated and utilized at any level of organizational management and/or government within Chatham County.



IV. AUTHORITIES

- A. This Tab is developed in accordance with the legal references listed below, and under the authority of the Chairman of the Board of the County Commission, Chatham County, Georgia; and the Director of the Chatham Emergency Management Agency, Chatham County, Georgia. This Appendix supersedes all similar and previous versions to date.
- B. FEDERAL:
 - 1. National Response Framework, October 2007
 - 2. Homeland Security Presidential Directive #5 – Management of Domestic Incidents
 - 3. Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act.
- C. STATE:
 - 1. Georgia Emergency Management Act of 1981, as amended
 - 2. Georgia Emergency Operations Plan.
- D. COUNTY:
 - 1. Chatham County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)
 - 2. Chapter 4, Article III, of the Chatham County Code, Emergency Management, March 24, 2006.

V. ASSUMPTIONS

- A. Following any evacuation, the Incident Commander (IC) and/or the CPG will determine when conditions in the area allow citizens to return to their homes, properties, and businesses.
- B. An IC is in command of a single significant event, and the CPG is responsible for policy decisions following a large-scale disaster. Both IC and CPG apply the same decision making process regarding access back into the affected area(s) following an event. This Tab may use the term CPG and/or IC interchangeably.
- C. Guidance provided in this Tab may also be used to protect lives and property in the event of an ordered partial evacuation.



- D. Re-entry Operations refers to initial post-event efforts by First Responders and other designated emergency workers to enter affected area(s) of the County to mitigate life-safety issues prior to the return of the general population.
- E. Return Operations refers to the procedures that provide for the County's general population to their homes, properties, and businesses following an evacuation.
- F. Returning the County's population to their homes, properties, and businesses after an event is a priority and begins as soon as practical.
- G. Phase I (Restricted Access) of the Re-entry/Return Process has been completed.
- H. Decisions allowing access back into the affected area(s) following an evacuation are initiated by the appropriate command authority using all available resources to assure an effective response.
- I. State assistance is supplementary to local activation of resources and will be made available in response to local requests for assistance.
- J. This plan is designed to provide the guidelines and procedures that allow access (the return) into either a portion or the whole of Chatham County. Operational actions and decisions made prior to allowing access back into County will be based to a large degree on the specific situation at hand and not on any one factor to be outlined in this plan.
- K. This plan applies to the entire population evacuated from the affected area, including those individuals evacuated utilizing public transportation. A successful return of the population will require additional planning and resources.
- L. Utilization of available resources and requests for mutual aid are coordinated through the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) utilizing established ESFs.

VI. IMPLEMENTATION

- A. This plan is implemented upon the recommendation of the Director of CEMA with the approval of the Chairman, Chatham County Board of Commissioners and concurrence of the Mayors of the Municipalities as appropriate (referred within this document as the CPG). Prior to the start of any Return Operations, CEMA will advise the State Operations Center of the anticipated schedule of events.



- B. Management of this plan will be coordinated through the primary coordinators of established County ESF Groups. These primary coordinators jointly make determinations necessary for the required response level to implement the plan. The Emergency Coordinators include:
1. CEMA
 2. EOC Evacuation/Re-Entry Branch
 3. ESF-1 (Transportation)
 4. ESF-2 (Communications)
 5. ESF-6 (Mass Care & Sheltering)
 6. ESF-13 (Public Safety & Security)
 7. ESF-15 (External Affairs)

VII. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

- A. The Decision to Return
1. General. An Incident Management Team starts gathering information and begins evaluating the actual impact and potential affects an incident on the area(s) as part of their initial response. Following an evacuation, the decision made by the IC to allow the general population to return to the affected area(s) may have conditions granting access to some areas of the County while simultaneously limiting access to other designated areas until such time actions can be taken to mitigate and/or minimize conditions posing threats to life and/or safety. This progressive Return to area(s) in the County may be designated and/or defined by municipality(s), geographical area(s), postal zip code(s), or other identifiable and enforceable limitations/boundaries.
 2. Coordination. Allowing access to the affected area(s) following an event will require a coordinated effort on the part of the County's emergency responders. In order to ensure the Return is orchestrated in a timely, efficient, and safe manner, all coordination is accomplished through the Evacuation/Re-Entry Branch (ERB) which is part of the Operations Section (OPS) in the EOC.
- B. Progressive Re-entry/Return. Allowing access back into the affected areas within the County during the progressive return may be accomplished in three phases: first by restricting access to the County as



required; followed by controlling public access once granted; and then if required, monitoring access for the duration of the emergency. The CPG continually monitors the situation and on-going recovery operations, modifying area restrictions and access as required.

1. Phase I – Restricted Access. During the period immediately following an event affecting areas of, or Chatham County as a whole, living conditions will be austere at best. There are likely to be shortages of food, water, fuel; and services such as basic utilities and medical care may be unavailable. Numerous conditions can be expected in the affected area(s) that pose major life-safety issues and challenges. Life-safety issues are conditions that if not addressed by properly trained and equipped personnel pose a continuing or additional risk to the public’s health and welfare. Life-safety issues may include but are not limited to: downed energized power lines; blocked roadways, damaged bridges; structural damage to buildings; extensive debris; displaced domestic and wild animals including alligators and poisonous snakes; rotting garbage; large areas of standing contaminated water; possible gas leaks, chemical spills, uncontrolled fires, large scale flooding, and human remains. Phase I details are outlined in the Chatham County Disaster Recovery Plan, Annex C (Critical Workforce Re-entry Coordination).
2. Phase II – Controlled Access. Phase II begins the process of returning the general population to affected area(s) and/or to the County. However, even after life-safety issues have been mitigated to an acceptable level, conditions in an affected area and/or the entire County may be far from “back to normal”. There is a very real possibility it will take weeks if not months to restore basic utilities such as electricity, water, and sewer services to some areas. Living conditions throughout the County may be difficult at best. In an attempt to avoid over taxing requirements levied on County public services and infrastructure, and to mitigate possible traffic congestion problems, Phase II may be announced and conducted by allowing gradual access into the County by designated geographical areas. Examples of designated geographical areas would include: zip codes, municipalities, and/or neighborhoods.
 - a. Access Restricted to:
 - 1) Residents, Property and/or Business Owners from the Designated Area(s)



- 2) Contractors and Vendors Hired by the Residents, Property and/or Business Owners from the Designated Area(s).
- b. Access Requirements:
 - 1) Personal Identification
 - 2) Proof of Residency or Property/Business Ownership
 - 3) No Re-Entry Permit Required.
OR (for Contractors and Vendors):
 - 4) Personal and Company Identification
 - 5) Copy of Work Order/Contract or Customer Identification and Contact Information
 - 6) No Re-Entry Permit Required.
3. Phase III – Monitored Access. During Phase III, access and movement throughout the affected area(s) and/or the County is monitored.
 - a. Access Restrictions. No Restrictions. No Re-Entry Permit Required.
 - b. Access Recommendations:
 - 1) Be in Possession of Personal or Official Identification
 - 2) Be in Possession of Proof of Residency or Property/Business Ownership
 - 3) Be in Possession of Contractor and/or Company Identification
 - 4) Reasonable proximity, activity, and purpose.
- C. Returning Evacuees From Inland Shelters. As soon as possible during Phase II, Evacuees transported to inland shelters from the Evacuation Assembly Area (EAA) will be provided transportation back to Chatham County.
 1. The Decision to Return. The CPG will authorize the return of evacuees from their inland shelter locations based on the recommendations made by the EOC Manager. Returning the



Evacuees during Phase II may be delayed depending on the level of damage to the infrastructure required to support their return.

2. Coordination. Depending on available communications, and the amount of support being provided by the host jurisdiction at the shelters, it may be necessary for a team from the ERB to travel to the host jurisdiction to coordinate the return. If ground transport is not available or not practical, the Air Support Operations Center (ASOC) may coordinate transportation for the team to the host jurisdiction and back.
3. Procedures.
 - a. When Phase II is announced, Evacuees that used public transportation to evacuate Chatham County will have the option to make their own return arrangements. If Evacuees chose to leave the inland shelters and return on their own, they must follow the shelters' established accountability procedures (checkout).
 - b. Preparing the Evacuees for their return to Chatham County is primarily the host jurisdiction's responsibility as coordinated with the ERB. When practical, the concepts and procedures used during the evacuation process will be applied during the return operations.
 - c. Only the people and pets evacuated from Chatham County via the EAA are eligible to utilize public transportation to return to Chatham County. The original Evacuation Rosters and the most recent shelter registration records will be used to verify Returnee status.
 - d. Pets. Provisions will be made for pet owners to pick up their pets from established pet shelters prior to returning to Chatham County.
 - e. Excess Luggage. There are no provisions to provide additional transportation assets to accommodate additional/excess luggage/baggage obtained by Returnees while sheltered at host inland locations.
4. Return Routes. Once general access back into the County is allowed, all available major roadway networks from inland locations will be utilized. See Exhibit 1 of this Tab (Primary Return Routes).
5. Traffic and Access Control. Outside of Chatham County, traffic and access control in the region will be the responsibility of both State



and local jurisdictions. County and municipal law enforcement agencies have primary responsibility to control access to affected areas within their respective jurisdictions. Within jurisdictional boundaries, law enforcement officials may establish and enforce access restrictions which may include the use of roadblocks, control access points, and/or security checkpoints as needed on designated roads and highways in Chatham County. These controls may be established as far out as Chatham County's jurisdictional boundary. Additional perimeter roadblocks and security checkpoints may be established as required by individual jurisdictions at designated locations based on the emergency and circumstances. See Tab C of this Appendix (Transportation Planning for Evacuation and Return Operations).

- a. Roadblocks and Access Control Points. Roadblocks and access control points may be established to prevent the uncontrolled, premature access back into the affected area(s) by the civilian population which may hinder the efforts of first responders and emergency personnel. These controls are also an efficient way of deterring looting and other acts of lawlessness.
 - 1) Roadblocks. The strategic location of roadblocks is an important part of controlling access to specific areas. Roadblocks are commonly used to prevent entry into the affected area(s) and may be manned or unmanned (barricades).
 - 2) Access Control Points. Access control points are manned roadblocks which allow for the access of authorized personnel into a restricted area.
 - b. Checkpoints. Checkpoints may be established to verify the identification of those persons attempting to gain access to the affected area. Every effort will be made to assist residents, property, and business owners during their return. Jurisdictional law enforcement agencies will be responsible for establishing and staffing checkpoints controlling access into their respective municipalities/jurisdictions.
6. Reception. If conditions allow, Chatham County may establish a Returnee Reception Center (RRC) to assist Returnees. See Tab F of this Appendix (Returnee Reception Center Operations). The location of the RRC will be determined post event based on remaining infrastructure availability and suitability. When established, all Chatham Area Transit bus routes will be modified



as needed to include the RRC to provide Returnees transportation back to their original points of embarkation or to established temporary shelters.

7. Temporary Shelters. There are no pre-designated, post-event, temporary shelter locations in Chatham County. In the event the area has experienced wide spread damage and destruction, it may be necessary for inland shelters to remain in operation, and any Return Operations delayed until such time provisions can be made to establish temporary County shelters and/or housing.

D. Communications.

1. General. Communications following an event will be a challenge. Mass communications networks, along with radio and landline communications methods routinely used by both government and private agencies may or may not be operational or available. Because of this possibility, both government and private agencies must plan to maintain redundant communications capabilities with the County EOC.
2. Communications Methods. Regardless of the location of the County EOC, available communications resources will be coordinated through ESF-2 (Communications) and may include:
 - a. Commercial Land Line Telephone
 - b. Commercial Satellite Telephone
 - c. 800 MHz Radio
 - d. UHF Radio
 - e. VHF Radio (ARES and Public Safety Nets)
 - f. Internet Connectivity
 - g. Message Courier
 - h. Commercial Radio and Television Stations

E. Public Information. Information, news releases, and return instructions will be provided to the public in accordance with established agreements with both public and private communications and media sources.

F. Training and Exercises. Training and exercise help to ensure effective Tab operations.



1. Training. A properly trained staff provides the framework for functionality and expedites operational tactics during the re-entry process. Minimum training requirements for each person supporting this Tab are defined under NIMS.
2. Exercises. Re-entry and Return Procedures must be exercised in accordance with the County Emergency Operations Plan, Annex E – Training and Exercise. Modifications to this Tab, or any part within, require exercise to practice/test those modifications. The exercise may only test the specific modified section of the Tab, or it may test the entire operational plan. The magnitude of an exercise will be dictated by the significance in revision of the existing plan.

VIII. RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. EOC Manager. The EOC Manager is the primary conduit between the CPG and EOC Staff. Upon receiving the directive from the CPG to restrict access to the County or to begin the phased re-entry, the EOC Manager will execute the action through EOC General Staff and manage the overall process. The EOC Manager will provide regular updates to the CPG each Operational Period.
- B. EOC Planning Section Chief (PSC). The PSC is responsible for coordinating the overall Re-Entry Plan. The plan will be based on information provided by first responders and emergency personnel participating in Phase I of the re-entry plan. The PSC shall also ensure the objectives from the CPG are incorporated into the Operational Period's Incident Action Plan and execution of these objectives are summarized in follow up Operational Period Situation Reports.
- C. EOC Operations Section Chief (OSC). The OSC is responsible for executing the overall re-entry process. The OSC shall monitor the process and provide regular updates to the EOC Manager and the PSC.
- D. Evacuation/Re-entry Branch Director (ERBD). The ERBD is responsible for coordinating both Re-entry and Return Operations. The ERBD is the OSC's primary point of contact regarding Return Operations. Groups will be assigned to the Branch as required, and the ERBD will coordinate directly with Group Supervisors to accomplish assigned tasks.
- E. ERB Transportation Coordinator. When assigned, the ERB Transportation Coordinator will coordinate with supporting partners to ensure a sufficient number of buses and drivers are available and prepared to return all Evacuees from the inland shelters (including maintenance concerns and/or fuel issues). The ERB Transportation



Coordinator will also insure other transportation provisions outlined in this Tab are initiated.

- F. ESF-6, Mass Care and Sheltering Group Supervisor. As needed, ESF-6 will coordinate and establish temporary shelters, as well as other support needed for Returnees as required.
- G. ESF-13, Public Safety and Security Group Supervisor. In addition to conducting routine law enforcement activities throughout the County, law enforcement agencies will be responsible to support re-entry operations. ESF-13 will assist these agencies by coordinating the manpower and resources required to support the traffic and access control procedures outlined in this plan and as needed by local jurisdictions.
- H. ESF-15, External Affairs Group Supervisor. In conjunction with ESF-2, ESF-15 will be the primary group providing information to the evacuated population of Chatham County regarding Return Procedures.
- I. Air Support Operations Center (ASOC), Air Boss. The ASOC Air Boss coordinates all requests from the Operations Section for air support during re-entry operations. The types of missions requested by Operations may include route reconnaissance, traffic monitoring, and providing air transport for EOC Staff traveling to inland locations to conduct pre-event (Return) coordination.

IX. TAB MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

- A. Executive Agent. CEMA is the executive agent for Tab management and maintenance. The Tabs and supporting documents will be updated periodically as required to incorporate new directives and changes based on lessons learned from exercises and actual events. This section establishes procedures for interim changes and full updates of the Tabs.
- B. Types and Changes. Changes include additions of new or supplementary material and deletions. No proposed change should contradict or override authorities or other plans contained in statute, order, or regulation.
- C. Coordination and Approval. Any department or agency with assigned responsibilities within the Tab may propose a change to the plan. CEMA is responsible for coordinating all proposed modifications to the Tabs with primary agencies, support agencies and other stakeholders. CEMA will coordinate review and approval for proposed modifications as required.
- D. Notice of Change. After coordination has been accomplished, including receipt of the necessary signed approval supporting the final change language, CEMA will issue an official Notice of Change. The notice will



specify the date, number, subject, purpose, background, and action required, and provide the change language on one or more numbered and dated insert pages that will replace the modified pages in the EOP, Annex, or supporting documents. Once published, the modifications will be considered part of the EOP for operational purposes pending a formal revision and re-issuance of the entire document. Interim changes can be further modified or updated using the above process.

- E. Distribution. CEMA will distribute the Notice of Change to all participating agencies. Notice of Change to other organizations will be provided upon request. Re-issuance of the individual Tabs or the entire EOP will take place as required. Working toward continuous improvement, CEMA is responsible for an annual review and update of the EOP to include related annexes, and a complete revision every four years (or more frequently if the County Commission of GEMA deems necessary). The review and update will consider lessons learned and best practices identified during exercises and responses to actual events, and incorporate new information technologies. CEMA will distribute revised EOC Annex and Appendix documents for the purpose of interagency review and concurrence.



Exhibit 1 – Primary Return Routes (Table)

Route Key	Road or Highway
1	I-95 from South Carolina
2	State Road 21 from Effingham County
3	State Road 30 from Effingham County
4	US 80 from Effingham County
5	I-16 from Effingham County
6	State Road 204 from Effingham County
7	John Carter Road from Bryan County
8	I-95 from Bryan County
9	US 17 from Bryan County
10	US 17 from South Carolina
11	State Road 25 from South Carolina

MAP DEFINED ON NEXT PAGE



Exhibit 1 – Primary Return Routes (Map)

