

CHATHAM COUNTY EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN

APPENDIX 15-1 TAB C JIC CHECKLISTS

March 2010

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EXHIBIT 1
CEMA PIO CHECKLIST FOR SPONTANEOUS EMERGENCIES

- Immediately following an emergency incident, the Initial LPIO will most likely be a member of the first responding agency on-scene. If the incident escalates and the Initial LPIO has not contacted the CEMA PIO for support, the CEMA PIO will make contact with the Initial LPIO to offer assistance.

- If assistance is declined, the CEMA PIO will remain at the CEMA Office monitoring media reports. If assistance is requested, the CEMA PIO will immediately provide support either on-scene or through the CEMA Office.

- CEMA PIO contacts the Chatham County Public Information Coordinator with update.

- If the incident continues to escalate and the Chatham County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is activated, the CEMA PIO will contact the Initial LPIO; the CEMA PIO will move all public information operations to the EOC.

- CEMA PIO will then contact the Chatham County Public Information Coordinator to request that he remain on standby should the incident continue to escalate.

- If the incident continues to escalate, the CEMA PIO will make contact with the Initial LPIO to recommend activation of the Chatham County Joint Information Center (JIC).

- CEMA PIO will contact Incident Commander / Unified Command (IC/UC) to recommend activation of the Chatham County JIC.

- Upon receiving orders from the IC/UC to activate JIC, CEMA PIO will contact Chatham County Public Information Coordinator requesting that he/she assume the LPIO role in the JIC.

- CEMA PIO will contact all ESF-15 partners and request that they assume their positions at the Chatham County JIC.

- ❑ Upon arrival at the EOC, the Chatham County Public Information Coordinator will be briefed by the Initial LPIO.

- ❑ After the briefing, the Chatham County Public Information Coordinator will assume responsibility of the JIC and all public information must be transferred through the JIC.

- The Initial LPIO may remain on-scene but all public information must be transferred back to the JIC **prior** to speaking with media counterparts. At this time, the Initial LPIO will advise media counterparts that all public information will be distributed through the JIC. If the Initial LPIO remains on-scene, they may only speak to the media about their specific agency's response after clearing it through their JIC Counterpart and LPIO. **IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN A UNIFIED MESSAGE, ALL INFORMATION MUST BE CLEARED THROUGH THE JIC PRIOR TO DISTRIBUTION TO THE PUBLIC AND/OR MEDIA.**
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- ❑ If the incident continues to escalate, the LPIO may expand JIC operations. The CEMA PIO would assume the role of Deputy PIO (DPIO). Job descriptions for each JIC position are listed under Section VI Responsibilities.

EXHIBIT 2 CEMA OPERATING CONDITIONS (OPCON)

CEMA has five different operating conditions:

OPCON 5 (Normal / Monitoring): Refers to the normal day-to-day operating level of CEMA. Typical actions outside of hurricane season (December 1 – May 31) include the review/update of operations plans, training, conducting exercises, public outreach and education; updating notification lists; reviewing the previous hurricane season and related impacts and addressing lessons learned.

During hurricane season (June 1 – November 30), OPCON 5 is a monitoring phase. Actions during hurricane season include monitoring the Atlantic Basin via the National Hurricane Center (NHC) forecasts to determine the threat/existence/status of tropical cyclones.

OPCON 5

- Beginning in April / May, the CEMA PIO should ensure that the Media Contact List and Chatham County PIO Association Contact List are accurate and up to date.
- The software program Hurrevac should be updated and installed on the Desktop of the CEMA PIO's computer. This program is to be checked daily along with weather websites such as www.nhc.noaa.gov/, CrownWeather.com, wunderground.com and StormCarib.com.
- All contact lists for the ESF 15 Partners should be updated. News release templates should be stored on the CEMA I drive: I:\ESF-15 EXTERNAL AFFAIRS\NEWS RELEASE TEMPLATES as well as on a Jump Drive that remains in the CEMA PIO's office.

OPCON 4 (Identified Threat 120-72 hours): The transition from OPCON 5 to OPCON 4 occurs when a tropical cyclone is identified that poses a threat to the state of Georgia. This is determined when the tropical cyclone is forecast to affect the coastal region of the state within 120-72 hours. This time frame is referenced to the forecast time for the arrival of tropical storm force winds in coastal Georgia.

Principal actions taken during OPCON 4 include providing initial alerts to the public via the media; information dissemination about the threat to CEMA staff, key local departments/agencies and local EMAs; regional conference calls with GEMA, NHC and the NWS; partial activation of the EOC; coordination with Critical Work Force Shelter Managers; initiation of special needs evacuation at 48 hours prior to the arrival of tropical storm force winds during day light hours; CEMA PIO and Chatham County Public Information Coordinator discuss public information strategy.

OPCON 4

- Prepare and distribute press releases concerning ongoing preparedness and response actions.
- Request local media disseminate information about family preparedness for tropical cyclones.
- Respond to requests from federal, state, local, private sector and Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD) Public Information Officers and assist with media requests and information dissemination.
- CEMA PIO contacts the Chatham County Public Information Coordinator to strategize the dissemination of public information. The CEMA PIO begins distributing preparedness emails through CEMA Alerts to staff and critical workforce personnel.
- CEMA PIO contacts the Chatham County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Volunteers to assist with answering the telephones within the CEMA office. Since a partial activation of the EOC occurs during this phase, Volunteers will be put on standby and asked to be prepared to assist within the EOC or JIC.
- Chatham County Public Information Coordinator and CEMA PIO will schedule a teleconference with all ESF 15 Partners to discuss the possibility of activating the JIC. All JIC response partners will be put on standby in case they need to respond immediately. This will be done by the CEMA PIO via email, text messages and/or telephone calls.
- Develop and maintain Casebook documenting JIC activities through each OPCON phase.

OPCON 3 (Significant Threat 72-48 hours): This OPCON is initiated when the threat of a tropical cyclone becomes significant. This is determined when the tropical cyclone is forecast to affect the coastal portion of the state within 72-48 hours. Full activation of the EOC will require additional staff and key ESFs to be deployed to the EOC.

Principal actions taken during OPCON 3 include communication and coordination with state and local departments and agencies. Key agencies involved in evacuation are placed on standby. Response personnel, staging areas and remote operations centers are prepared and placed on standby. Regional conference calls are held to discuss protective actions. Command Policy group makes evacuation decision. Mandatory evacuation begins 30 hours prior to the arrival of tropical storm force winds.

If Chatham County is put under a Hurricane Watch or Warning, the following actions would also be undertaken: Conduct preliminary decision making meeting; coordinate with partners regarding Evacuation Assembly Area; activate JIC; conduct news conferences every three hours; issue news releases every three hours; activate Critical

Work Force Shelters; conduct meeting with Department of Transportation regarding the intent to turn I-16 one way; at 30 hours prior to the arrival of tropical storm force winds, commence mandatory evacuation of Chatham County.

OPCON 3

- Prepare and distribute press releases concerning ongoing preparedness and response actions.
- Coordinate with media on information dissemination concerning tropical cyclone preparedness and response.
- Provide evacuation information to Georgia Public Broadcasting (GPB) for dissemination to the public.
- Respond to requests from state, local, private sector and VOAD PIOs and assist with media requests and information dissemination.
- Conduct media briefings from the EOC approximately every three hours; issue news releases approximately every three hours or as needed.
- Prepare situation reports concerning preparedness and response efforts.
- Chatham County PIO contacts the Chatham County PIO Association and requests that all members participate in a teleconference. CEMA PIO explains how CEMA is currently responding to the situation as well as the projected storm situation. Chatham County PIO requests assistance with JIC operations from County PIOs.
- If Chatham County is put under a Hurricane Watch or Warning, Chatham County PIO recommends to Command Policy Group (CPG) to activate JIC.
- CEMA PIO coordinates personnel needs with CPG and EOC Manager for staffing a Joint Information Center (JIC) at the EOC.

- After discussion with CPG and EOC Manager and prior to issue of evacuation orders, Chatham County PIO activates JIC. Chatham County PIO is now Lead PIO of JIC operations. CEMA PIO assumes role of Deputy or EOC PIO.

- Coordinate with GEMA to request that The Weather Channel (TWC) display information on evacuation procedures to be displayed on “Local On The 8’s”.

- Maintain Casebook documenting JIC activities through each OPCON phase.

OPCON Level 2 (Imminent Threat 48-24 hours):

This OPCON is initiated when the threat of a tropical cyclone affecting the coast of Georgia appears imminent. This would include the completion of the mandatory evacuation with the eye of the storm passing over Savannah.

Principal actions taken during OPCON 2 include the deployment of equipment, commodities, and personnel to staging areas. Statewide conference calls are held to discuss possible impacts and the coordination of reentry restrictions. Response personnel are transferred to assigned shelters to wait out the storm.

OPCON 2

- Lead PIO assigns staff shift changes for JIC. CEMA PIO will assume either Deputy PIO role or EOC PIO role to act as Liaison to Chatham County JIC.

- JIC response personnel transfer to assigned shelter to wait out the storm.

- If possible, continue to monitor media reports to ensure accuracy.

- Maintain Casebook documenting JIC activities through each OPCON phase.

OPCON Level 1 (Reentry 24-0+ Hours):

This OPCON is initiated after the threat of a land-falling tropical cyclone has passed and response and recovery operations have begun. This transition to OPCON 1 will typically occur 6-12 hours after the passing of the eye of the tropical cyclone.

Principal actions taken during OPCON 1 include coordination of refuge sheltering, debris removal, repairs to critical infrastructure, search and rescue and reentry.

OPCON 1

- Prepare and distribute press releases concerning response and re-entry operations.
- Provide information to GPB for dissemination to the public.
- Coordinate with TWC and other media outlets on re-entry information to be displayed on local and state TV stations.
- Respond to requests from federal, state, local, private sector and VOAD PIOs and assist with media requests and information dissemination.
- Conduct media briefings from the JIC approximately every three hours.
- Distribute news release from the JIC as soon as new information is available.
- Monitor the media for rumor control.
- Coordinate re-entry news release dissemination with the local jurisdictions, local EOCs and state external affairs partners.
- Maintain Casebook documenting JIC activities through each OPCON phase.

EXHIBIT 3

NEWS CONFERENCE CHECKLIST

Listed below is a checklist of preparation activities for news conferences that should be reviewed by the CEMA PIO.

- As the moderator it is your responsibility to set the tone for the news conference. Have a predetermined message for each news conference.

- Provide correct spellings for any of the speakers' names with peculiar spellings. Ensure you state the person's position in the Unified Command.

- Serious consideration should be given to who needs to be present at the news conference. Think about questions that might be asked and who should answer them.

- Brief everyone even remotely involved on the subject matter ahead of time. Subject matter should help you decide who should participate.

- Set a time with your speakers prior to starting the news conference and stick with that time. Do not let any one person dominate the time during the news conference.

- The media can be notified of the news conference by CEMA Alerts, news release, phone calls, fax messages and computer news networks. In an emergency related news conference, the media will probably be waiting at your door, ready for the information.

- Scheduling is an important variable for news conferences. Know media deadlines in your community. Keep a list of deadlines if necessary. With the advent of new technology and the disappearance of most afternoon newspapers, news conference can easily be scheduled for as late as 2pm.

- Most media types do not like to attend weekend news conferences when the news conference relates to a preparedness or awareness activity. Check for other local events scheduled that week as you will want to get as much coverage as possible.

- Even impromptu news conferences won't be covered unless it is sensational news. Remember that evening events need to happen in time for the nightly television and radio news.
- The location of the news conference is critical; space considerations must be addressed in your planning efforts.
- The space provided for the news conference should not be too large; locate the room somewhere easily accessible to the media.

Room set-up considerations should address the following:

- Rows of chairs laid out auditorium style so that reporters are able to hear speakers and ask questions.
- Wide aisles should be established between chairs.
 - Raised stage area in the back of the room so that camera operators will be able to get their shots. If this is not possible, then the back of the room should be wide open for camera operators to use.
 - Include a lectern with an attached mult box (A mult box is a distribution amplifier that provides multiple connections for reporters to connect their voice or video recorders. The benefit is that reporters do not have to put their microphones on the podium to receive a quality audio signal).
- Whenever possible provide the media and other guests with a media kit that includes speakers' bios, paper, pencils and the news release for the event.
- Include various visual materials as part of the news conference. Maps and charts depicting the disaster scene or evacuation routes are extremely useful to the presenter and are helpful to the viewing audience. Set them high enough so they may be seen, photographed, etc.
- Check the room lighting before the news conference.
- Provide water and glasses for presenters.
- If possible, prepare an agenda and have a dress rehearsal for the presenters.

- Provide a holding room for the presenters so they may enter and exit away from the media.
- Limit the news conference to 30 minutes, no longer than an hour. Allow 5-10 minutes for media questions.
- If the spokesperson for the news conference is not the expert, be sure the expert is available for questions.

During a disaster related news conference, it may be necessary to set a time limit for questions and answers. Make sure the media knows when the next news conference is scheduled. Any questions that cannot be answered at the news conference should be researched with answers being provided in a release at or prior to the next scheduled news conference.

- The moderator of the news conference begins by welcoming the media, informing them of procedures to be followed throughout the briefing. The moderator then introduces the subject and speakers of the news conference. The moderator will then ask the first speaker to approach the podium. The moderator takes one step back from the podium to allow the first speaker access. The moderator then steps to the side of the speaker. When the first speaker is finished, he/she will take one step back from the podium allowing the moderator to approach the podium and introduce the second speaker. This format ensures that the podium is never empty and demonstrates organized command of the news conference.

Sample Moderator Script:

Welcome Ladies and Gentlemen to today's (this morning's, tonight's) News Conference.

We will be presenting information on _____ today.

With us today is _____.

We will begin today with some brief statements from the representatives of the Unified Command. Then we will open the floor to your questions. Because of the on-going operations, we will be available for _____ minutes today. Please allow time for everyone here to ask questions.

Following the news conference, the Joint Information Center staff and I will be available to help you with any further needs.

- Maintain a log describing news briefings times and information disseminated.