



# **CHATHAM COUNTY EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN**

**INCIDENT ANNEX A**

# **HURRICANE INCIDENT MANAGEMENT**

**APRIL 2010**



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## **FOREWORD**

**JULY 2009**

The Chatham Emergency Management Agency (CEMA) is continuously striving to improve hurricane preparedness throughout Chatham County. These efforts include this revision of the County's Emergency Operations Plan Hurricane Annex. They also include incorporating the lessons learned from previous events, results of research studies on storm surge potential, clearance time requirements, inland wind-fields and behavioral analyses of attitudes toward evacuation as well as the particular requirements of the Special Needs population.

Over the last few years there has been a marked increase in public levels of hurricane awareness. This has been matched by a renewed dedication on the part of government, public safety and disaster response officials to work collaboratively to protect lives and property from the threat of tropical systems. However, the planning process remains ongoing. Due to the great potential for personal harm, property damage, economic loss and disruption of community activities, everyone with a role in hurricane preparedness must remain perpetually vigilant and proactive; we can never be over-prepared.

It is only through our continued efforts that Chatham County can meet and overcome the potentially devastating effects of a major hurricane.

Comments or questions concerning this Annex should be addressed to CEMA at (912) 201-4500.

Clayton S. Scott  
Director, CEMA



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## **ACRONYMS**

AD	Assistant Director (CEMA)
ARC	American Red Cross
CAT	Chatham Area Transit
CEMA	Chatham Emergency Management Agency
DO	Duty Officer
EAS	Emergency Alert System
EM Net	Emergency Management Network
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
EOP	Emergency Operations Plan
ESF	Emergency Support Function
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
GDOT	Georgia Department of Transportation
GEMA	Georgia Emergency Management Agency
GEOP	Georgia Emergency Operations Plan
GSP	Georgia State Patrol
ICS	Incident Command System
IMT	Incident Management Team
JFO	Joint Field Office
KM/HR	Kilometers per Hour
LEIN	Local Emergency Information Network
LEPC	Local Emergency Planning Committee
MHZ	Megahertz
MPH	Miles per Hour
NAWAS	National Warning System
NHC	National Hurricane Center
NIMS	National Incident Management System
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NRF	National Response Framework
NWS	National Weather Service



OPCON	Operating Condition
PIO	Public Information Officer
PWPD	Pt. Wentworth Police Department
SAR	Search and Rescue
SCMPD	Savannah Metropolitan Police Department
SOC	State Operations Center
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
UHF	Ultra-High Frequency
VHF	Very High Frequency

### **DEFINITIONS**

**Emergency Operations Plan:** A document that describes how people and property will be protected in disaster and disaster threat situations, details who is responsible for carrying out specific actions, identifies the personnel, equipment, facilities, supplies, and other resources available for use in the disaster, and outlines how actions will be coordinated.

**Evacuation:** The organized, phased, and supervised withdrawal, dispersal, or removal of civilians from dangerous or potentially dangerous areas, and their reception and care in safe areas.

**Multiagency Coordination System (MACS):** A system that provides the architecture to support coordination for incident prioritization, critical resource allocation, communications systems integration, and information coordination. MACS assist agencies and organizations responding to an incident. The elements of MACS include facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications. Two of the most commonly used elements are Emergency Operations Centers and MAC Groups.

**National Incident Management System (NIMS):** A set of principles that provides a systematic, proactive approach guiding government agencies at levels, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector to work seamlessly to prevent, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of incidents, regardless of cause, size, location, or complexity, in order to reduce the loss of life or property and harm to the environment.

**State of Emergency:** A governmental declaration that may suspend certain normal functions of government, alert citizens to alter their normal behaviors, or order government agencies to implement emergency preparedness plans.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Forward .....	i
Acronyms and Definitions.....	iii
Table of Contents .....	v
I. Introduction.....	1
II. Purpose .....	1
III. Scope .....	1
IV. Authorities .....	2
V. Assumption.....	2
VI. Implementation .....	3
VII. Concept of Operations.....	4
A. Management Strategy.....	4
1. Management Concept.....	4
2. Storm Surge .....	5
3. Probabilities .....	7
4. Direction and Control .....	8
5. Emergency Operations Center.....	9
6. State and Local Coordination.....	9
7. Emergency Communication and Warning.....	10
8. Action Phases .....	11
9. Operating Conditions .....	12
10. Public Information .....	14
11. School Closure Process.....	15
12. Correctional Facilities.....	15
B. Shelter Management .....	15
1. Local Shelters .....	15
2. Critical Workforce Shelters.....	15
3. Inland Shelter .....	16
4. Pet Shelters .....	16
C. Transportation Management.....	16
1. Types of Transportation .....	16
2. Transportation to Shelters.....	17
D. Special Needs Management.....	17
1. Types of Special Needs .....	17
2. Transportation of Special Needs .....	19
E. Recovery and Re-Entry.....	20
1. Authority, Responsibilities and Coordination.....	20
2. Equipment Staging.....	21
3. Pre-Storm Re-Entry.....	22
4. Regrouping .....	23
5. Post-Storm Re-Entry .....	23
6. Search and Rescue.....	26



7.	Damage and Needs Assessment.....	27
8.	Debris Clearing and Removal .....	28
9.	Public Health.....	29
10.	Public Safety .....	29
11.	Communication Restoration.....	29
12.	Utility Restoration .....	29
13.	Transportation Restoration.....	30
14.	Equipment and Personnel Staging.....	30
15.	Disaster Relief Check In and Information Centers .....	31
16.	Miscellaneous Recovery Considerations .....	31
F.	Training and Exercise .....	31
VIII.	Responsibilities .....	32
A.	CEMA Director.....	32
B.	CEMA Assistant Director .....	32
C.	CEMA Duty Officer .....	33
D.	CEMA Staff.....	33
E.	SF Primary Coordinators .....	33
F.	ESF Support Agencies.....	33
IX.	Annex Management and Maintenance .....	33
A.	Executive Agent.....	33
B.	Types and Changes.....	34
C.	Coordination and Approval .....	34
D.	Notice of Change .....	34
E.	Distribution.....	34

**APPENDICES**

Appendix 1	Saffir Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale.....	SSHWS-1
Appendix 2	Hurricane Response Timeline.....	HRT-1
Appendix 3	Chatham County Storm Surge Map.....	SSM-1
Appendix 4	Historic Storm Tide Elevations.....	HSTE-1



## **I. INTRODUCTION**

- A. The destructive potential of hurricanes poses a serious threat to the coastal areas of the United States. Although the Georgia Coast has not been directly struck by a Category 3-5 hurricane in the past century, the possibility of such an occurrence is not remote. It is essential, that the population be informed of the potential danger of a severe hurricane, as well as the actions they should take to save lives and protect property. It is equally important that government officials are prepared to take appropriate protective actions.
- B. Chatham County is vulnerable to tropical cyclone-related hazards. This Annex establishes the overarching framework for protective actions pertaining to the preparedness, response, and initial recovery from hazards associated with tropical cyclones.

## **II. PURPOSE**

- A. This is a comprehensive plan of action through which Chatham County has prepared for the threat and destructive impact of a hurricane. The purpose of this Annex is to serve as a guide for local officials to ensure effective hurricane preparedness and response in conjunction with other emergency plans and procedures.
- B. This Annex sets forth actions to be taken to save lives and protect property, including notification of emergency response personnel, evacuation of the public, designation of shelter areas and actions to mitigate damage from a storm.

## **III. SCOPE**

- A. This Annex is intended for countywide application of hurricane emergency operations affecting Chatham County. The effects of both storm surge and inland wind have been considered for hurricanes entering the County from either the Atlantic Ocean or the Gulf of Mexico. Although flooding is a damaging effect from hurricanes, it is likely that the effects of flooding may occur in Chatham County from other than just hurricanes. Therefore, this Annex shall also be implemented to the degree necessary for tropical and lesser systems.
- B. This Annex is an Incident Annex to the Emergency Operations Plan (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 Chairman, Chatham County Board of Commissioners and Mayors as appropriate.



#### **IV. AUTHORITIES**

A. Federal:

1. Federal Civil Defense Act of 1950, amended (Public Law 81-920).
2. The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act of 1988, PL 93-288 as amended by Public Law 100-707.
3. Executive Order 12418, July 1979 (assigning Public Law responsibility to FEMA.)
4. National Response Framework (NRF), January 2008.

B. State:

1. Georgia Constitution
2. Georgia Emergency Management Act of 1981, as amended.
3. Georgia Emergency Operations Plan (GEOP).
4. Governor's Executive Order, July 1995.
5. Georgia Warning Plan.
6. Georgia Hurricane Plan.

C. Chatham County:

1. Chatham County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP).
2. Chapter 4, Article III, Chatham County Code Book, Emergency Management.

#### **V. ASSUMPTIONS**

- A. This Annex is designed to accommodate the worst hurricane conditions assumed to be possible for Georgia's coast, as well as any lesser storms of hurricane intensity, including post-landfall storms from the Gulf of Mexico. Operational actions and decisions during a hurricane will be based to a large degree on the forecast intensity of the storm, likelihood of hurricane conditions and the lead-time available for evacuation and sheltering operations.
- B. This Annex assumes three governmental levels of emergency preparedness and response: local, State and Federal. Preparedness,



warning, protection and relief are general responsibilities of levels of government. However, emergency operations are initiated at the local level utilizing available resources to assure effective response. State assistance is supplementary to local activation of resources and is made available in response to local requests for assistance.

- C. This Annex is based on several specific assumptions:
1. Executive decision-makers will be well acquainted with the Annex and its decision-making considerations and will act decisively when circumstances warrant.
  2. Parties with roles and responsibilities for hurricane preparedness, response and recovery will maintain a state of readiness throughout hurricane season, will actively participate in emergency operations when called to do so and will work collectively in a spirit of teamwork as circumstances require.
  3. Local governments and emergency response agencies may not be able to provide for the immediate needs of the community especially when time is critical. Therefore, prioritization of response efforts may become necessary.
  4. Citizens, businesses and others at risk will generally take personal responsibility to follow instructions from local officials and take protective actions. However, this does not assume 100% participation and compliance will actually occur.
  5. State and Federal assistance will neither be expected nor requested until local resources and capabilities are known or prove to be insufficient to satisfy emergency needs. However, such assistance will be made readily available when requested.
  6. Sufficient lead-time will exist to implement this Annex and mobilize available resources. This assumes a Hurricane Watch will be issued approximately 48 hours before expected landfall and/or a Warning approximately 36 hours prior.

## **VI. IMPLEMENTATION**

- A. This Annex will be 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. Any level of activation of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) shall constitute implementation of this plan.



- B. Implementation of this Annex is intended only within the jurisdictional boundaries of Chatham County. The actions guided by this Annex provide support only, and do not directly control response activities outside the boundaries of the County. Additionally, this Annex support actions contained in the County's EOP.

## **VII. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS**

### **A. Management Strategy**

#### **1. Management Concept**

- a. Whenever Emergency Operations are in effect they will be assigned the highest priority and take precedence over other forms of routine government business. They shall be maintained at the appropriate levels until the threat has passed and reported as such by the National Weather Service (NWS). In the event that the County is struck by a storm, emergency operations will be continued until the threat has been eliminated, essential government, transportation and utility services have been restored and the basic survival needs of the citizens have been met. Emphasis will then shift from emergency operations to long-term recovery operations, which are not specifically provided for in this plan.
- b. Early alerting of local officials and agencies with emergency operations responsibilities is essential. Information regarding warning or response actions will be coordinated with local governments in conjunction with the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA). Increased readiness and mobilization actions will be initiated progressively as the threat increases, in accordance with the Hurricane Readiness Action Phases identified in this Annex and in the Georgia Hurricane Plan. Status reports will be made to GEMA regarding events and activities that occur for the purposes of State-local coordination, and possible requests for a State of Emergency.
- c. Upon the recommendation of CEMA, emergency operations shall commence at the discretion of the Chairman, Chatham County Board of Commissioners, or if unavailable, the County Manager. The Mayors of the County's Municipalities may also request that emergency operations commence prior to such recommendation. In unusual circumstances the



Governor, through GEMA, may also recommend or order such action.

- d. The extent of emergency operations conducted, including evacuations, sheltering and protective ordinances, will depend on the severity, magnitude, track and timing of the storm. The NWS will monitor and report on the status of the storm using the Saffir-Simpson Wind Scale to categorize the wind severity of the storm (see Table 1). Detailed information on the Saffir Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale is defined in Appendix 1 to this Annex.

**TABLE 1  
SAFFIR-SIMPSON WIND SCALE**

STORM CAT	WIND SCALE					
	MPH		KNOTS		KM/HR	
	LOW	HIGH	LOW	HIGH	LOW	HIGH
1	74	95	64	82	119	153
2	96	110	83	95	154	177
3	111	130	96	113	178	209
4	131	155	114	135	210	249
5	>155		>135		>249	

- e. History has shown that hurricanes can rapidly intensify at the last moment before landfall. This can render emergency operations prepared for one level of hurricane threat largely inadequate when a more severe storm actually arrives. The result greatly increases the danger because longer evacuation times leave people stranded on the roads when the storm hits. At the recommendation of the NWS, emergency operations conducted under this Annex may be based on the requirements for the next higher category of hurricane than actually expected. In other words, subject to recommendation of the CEMA Director and approval of the appropriate elected officials, if the storm is anticipated to arrive at a Category 2 level the local response may be for a Category 3 storm.

2. Storm Surge

- a. Storm surge is water pushed toward the shore by the force of the winds swirling around the storm. This advancing surge combines with the normal tides to create the hurricane storm tide, which can increase the mean water level 15 feet or



more. In addition, wind driven waves are superimposed on the storm tide. This rise in water level can cause severe flooding in coastal areas, particularly when the storm tide coincides with the normal high tides.

- b. The level of surge in a particular area is also determined by the slope of the continental shelf. A shallow slope off the coast, such as Chatham County's, will allow a greater surge to inundate coastal communities. Communities with a shallow continental shelf can also expect a great deal of surge inundation, as well as large breaking waves which can present major problems. Storm tides, waves, and currents in confined harbors severely damage ships, marinas, and pleasure boats.
- c. In general, the more intense the storm, and the closer a community is to the right-front quadrant, the larger the area that must be evacuated. The problem is always the uncertainty about how intense the storm will be when it finally makes landfall. CEMA balances that uncertainty with the human and economic risks to the community. Planning for a storm one category higher than what is forecast is a normal precaution to help minimize the loss of life.
- d. Wave and current action associated with the tide also cause extensive damage. Water weighs approximately 1,700 pounds per cubic yard; extended pounding by frequent waves can demolish any structure not specifically designed to withstand such forces. Table 2 below defines estimated storm surge values for Chatham County.

**TABLE 2  
WIND SCALE AND STORM SURGE HEIGHTS**

STORM CAT	WIND SCALE		SURGE HEIGHTS	
	MPH		LOW*	HIGH**
	LOW	HIGH		
1	74	95	4	11
2	96	110	11	17
3	111	130	17	21.5
4	131	155	21.5	26
5	>155		26	30.5

\* COASTAL STORM SURGE NORMS AT MEAN TIDE.  
\*\* COUNTY STORM SURGE (SLOSH) PROJECTIONS AT MEAN AND HIGH TIDES. This figure does not represent wave action on top of storm surge.



**3. Probabilities**

- a. The probability that a storm will actually make landfall or at least pass close enough to Chatham County to endanger lives and property must also be factored into the decision making process.
- b. Probabilities are expressed as percentages around the official forecast track of a storm up to 72 hours or more into the future. They are provided by the NWS every six hours and are useful in assessing the potential threat to a particular location as the storm approaches. However, they can be mistakenly over relied upon as the primary criteria in deciding if an evacuation is warranted. While common sense dictates that there must be a reasonable probability of a direct hit to justify an evacuation decision, there is no objective standard for determining what specific level of probability constitutes an acceptable or unacceptable risk.
- c. The Chairman and Mayors must collectively, and somewhat subjectively, agree on a minimum probability level for approving an evacuation order, especially Mandatory. Ideally, consensus will be reached in advance of a decision point so that a subsequent evacuation decision can be made in time to satisfy clearance time requirements.
- d. The maximum theoretical probabilities for a direct storm strike are defined in Table 3.

**TABLE 3  
FORECAST PROBABILITIES**

Forecast Period	Maximum Probability*
72 hours	10%-15%
48 hours	20%-25%
36 hours	25%-35%
24 hours	40%-50%
12 hours	75%-85%
*These probabilities are those which would be computed if the forecast position (at the given time period) were directly over a community. A range of probabilities is given because forecast errors differ by location.	



- e. It is extremely unlikely that the probability of a hurricane strike will ever exceed 25-35% at the Decision Point required to make a timely evacuation decision. If gale force winds arrive seven hours or more before the eye, it will be virtually impossible to have as much as a 50% probability at that time. Therefore, any evacuation order will almost always be issued while uncertainty is relatively high. Delaying a decision to evacuate beyond the decision point when the probability is better than 50-50 will be too late, even for a Category 1 or 2 storm.

4. Direction and Control

- a. State Level: Under statutory emergency powers, the Governor has the authority to establish a safe level of hurricane preparedness. This includes voluntary or mandatory evacuation of the general public, protective Executive Orders, martial law or other specific actions. However, such steps will not generally be taken, particularly if local governments are willing and able to exercise direction and control necessary to manage the emergency.
- b. County Level: The Georgia Emergency Management Act provides authority to the County Commission or elected officials to order evacuation when deemed necessary to protect lives. The Chatham County Resolution Pertaining To Emergency Management specifically authorizes that: *“The Chairman, County Commissioners jointly with the Mayors of the affected cities, or in their absences their legally appointed successors, may determine that an emergency or disaster exists and thereafter shall have and may exercise for such period as such emergency or disaster exists or continues, the following powers:*
  - 1) *To enforce rules, laws and regulations relating to emergency management, and assume operational control over emergency management resources;*
  - 2) *To seize or take for temporary use, any private property for the protection of the public;*
  - 3) *To sell, lend, give, or distribute any such property or supplies among the inhabitants of the county and to maintain a strict accounting of property or supplies distributed and for funds received for such property or*



*supplies; and, to perform and exercise such other functions and duties, and take such emergency actions as may be necessary to promote and secure the safety, protection and well being of the inhabitants of the county.*

- 4) *Within this context the ultimate responsibility and authority for overall direction and control rests with the Chairman and Mayors or their successors. Critical decisions such as evacuation, emergency declaration or protective ordinances, will be made at their level, but may be assisted by other government officials of their choosing. The County Manager and the Municipality Administrators/Managers will exercise direction and control over their respective jurisdictions. The CEMA Director and Key Department Heads will assist them. The CEMA Director will have the authority and responsibility to provide the necessary coordination of emergency operations between jurisdictions as well as response organizations.”*
5. Emergency Operations Center: Direction and Control functions will be conducted in the EOC under the general direction of the CEMA Director and will be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the CEMA EOC Staff Manual (see EOP, Support Annex F).
6. State and Local Coordination: Emergency operations throughout the County will be communicated to and coordinated with neighboring counties, inland counties and the State to ensure a smooth regional response. Interactions with the State will be made through the State Operations Center (SOC). The GEMA Director, acting on behalf of the Governor, is responsible for direction and control of operational response and coordination of the activities of State and local governments. Through his designated representatives in the SOC, situation reports will be received and disseminated, requests for assistance will be considered and processed and specific assets and resources will be allocated to assist local officials. The Director CEMA or designated liaison officials will make requests for assistance from the EOC to the SOC.



7. Emergency Communications and Warning
  - a. Receiving Hurricane Information: Severe weather and hurricane information originates from the NWS and is disseminated to GEMA and CEMA by:
    - 1) National Warning System (NAWAS)
    - 2) Satellite Weather Wire
    - 3) NOAA Weather Alert Monitors
  - b. GEMA may communicate hurricane information directly to CEMA by:
    - 1) GEMA Radio Network
    - 2) NAWAS
    - 3) Facsimile
    - 4) Telephone
    - 5) Computer Network
    - 6) EM Net
  - c. CEMA may also receive hurricane information from other sources:
    - 1) Internet (NOAA et al.)
    - 2) Hurrevac
    - 3) Weather Sentry (Satellite Subscription Service)
    - 4) National Hurricane Center (Direct Phone Line)
    - 5) National Weather Service, Charleston (Direct Phone)
    - 6) Local Meteorologists
  - d. Local Emergency Communications: (Also see Appendix 2, Hurricane Readiness & Response Notifications) Information received by CEMA will be disseminated by a variety of methods:
    - 1) Internet
    - 2) E-mail
    - 3) CEMA web site
    - 4) Telephone
    - 5) Facsimile
    - 6) E-Fax Mass Facsimile System
    - 7) Cellular and satellite telephone



- e. A variety of radio equipment is located in the EOC for communicating with public safety and emergency response agencies operating within the County. This includes:
  - 1) UHF & VHF
  - 2) 800 MHz systems
  - 3) Amateur (Ham) radio
  
- f. Emergency Alert System: The Emergency Alert System (EAS) is the primary public system to provide citizens information on storm intensity, location and direction of travel. This information is provided to the media by the NWS. Until the EAS is activated, citizens rely upon routine broadcasts for weather bulletins and advisories. The NWS, GEMA or CEMA can activate the EAS on a regional or selective-area basis. It is the primary system for disseminating evacuation and reentry information to the general public.
  
- g. Other Local Alert and Warning Systems: In addition to EAS, NOAA Weather Alert Monitors and self-initiated broadcasts by local media, the EOC has several capabilities for communicating directly to the public with warnings, evacuation orders and instructions, as well as other information. These include:
  - 1) Radio controlled outdoor Warning Sirens
  - 2) Audio override of cable TV
  - 3) Local Emergency Information Network (LEIN)
  
- h. The LEIN is a computerized radio system that can broadcast ongoing real-time information to local radio and TV stations for rebroadcast to the public. Private citizens can also monitor it with amateur radios or police scanners.
  
- 8. Action Phases
  - a. Hurricanes tend to develop more slowly than most other natural disasters; therefore State and local governments have the opportunity to systematically mobilize and apply resources necessary to ensure effective response. In order to control and coordinate response efforts within and between the various levels of government, multi-levels of readiness or Action Phases have been established.



- b. The Georgia Hurricane Plan specifies the minimum time frames and preparedness related activities for each Action Phase; local plans are required to be consistent with these minimum levels (See Appendix 2 Hurricane Response Timelines.) Local jurisdictions are also expected to implement their own hurricane plans in conjunction with the State plan and to go to a corresponding Phase at the same time as the State. However, on behalf of the Governor the GEMA Director can order a local jurisdiction to go to a particular Action Phase to protect lives and property if local officials are unable or unwilling to take timely action. Local jurisdictions can initiate Phase related activities earlier than called for in the State plan if their unique circumstances require additional lead-time to complete those activities. This is necessary for Chatham County due to the amount of clearance time required for evacuation.

9. Operating Conditions

- a. The goal of this Annex is to provide the most efficient and effective approach to preparedness and initial response activities from tropical cyclone-related hazards. This Annex presents Operating Conditions (OPCON) that establishes a time-delineated action-oriented preparedness and response framework.
- b. The OPCONs are intended to present a brief summary of the major incident objectives and actions being taken by the County to prepare for and respond to a tropical cyclone threats. The OPCON structure uses timelines that are referenced to the arrival of tropical storm force winds (34 knots / 39 mph) and not the arrival of the hurricane's center which is officially referred to as landfall.
- c. The OPCONs progress through hurricane operations from day-to-day monitoring and preparedness efforts (OPCON 5) through direct and / or indirect impacts to Chatham County (OPCON 1) where county-level assistance is required for coordination and support.
  - 1) OPCON 5 – Normal Operations and Atlantic Basin Monitoring: OPCON 5 represents to the normal day-to-day operating level during any time of the year when no direct threat to Chatham County is posed by a tropical cyclone. Typical actions outside of hurricane season (December 1 – May 31) include reviewing and



updating operations plans, developing Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), providing / conducting training / exercises, facilitating public outreach and education, reviewing impacts from previous hurricane seasons, and incorporating lessons learned and best practices into operational procedures. During hurricane season (June 1 – November 30), OPGON 5 represents the monitoring phase. Regular and vigilant monitoring of the Atlantic Basin is conducted to determine the existence / status / threat level of any tropical system that may pose a threat.

- 2) OPGON 4 – Potential Impact within 120 Hours:  
OPGON 4 represents an initial threat posed to Chatham County by a tropical cyclone and the ensuing ramp up operations. A threat to Chatham refers to both direct and indirect impacts by a tropical cyclone – indirect impacts typically involve the influx of evacuees from a threatened state and direct impacts refer to the arrival of tropical cyclone-related hazards: storm surge, winds, tornadoes, and torrential rain leading to inland flooding. Threat is qualified by the possible impact of tropical cyclone-related hazards within five days / 120 hours which is represented graphically by the National Hurricane Center (NHC) forecast track error cone. Operations during OPGON 4 typically include a Level III or Level II activation of the EOC; information about the threat is disseminated to key Emergency Support Functions (ESFs); conference calls are held with the Command Policy Group; and preparedness efforts are coordinated with GEMA, NWS and Regional EMAs.
- 3) OPGON 3 – Potential Impact within 72 Hours:  
OPGON 3 represents a significant elevation of threat posed by a tropical cyclone. A threat is considered significant when tropical cyclone-related hazards – traditionally Tropical Storm Force Winds (34 knots or 39 mph) – are forecast to affect Chatham County within 72 hours (direct impacts). During OPGON 3, the EOC will be fully activated (EOC Level I) with relevant ESFs to adequately prepare for the elevated threat.
- 4) OPGON 2 – Potential Impact within 48 Hours:  
OPGON 2 represents an operational level where



multilateral and broad-reaching protective actions are initiated. During this timeframe, actions supporting evacuations – both interstate and intrastate – and preparatory actions in anticipation of direct impacts are undertaken. During OPCON 2, the EOC will remain at a Level I activation with relevant ESFs to adequately prepare for the elevated threat.

- 5) OPCON 1 – Potential Impact within 24 Hours: OPCON 1 represents the most elevated level of operational preparedness and response. It is the action phase where protective actions in preparation of direct impacts from tropical cyclone-related hazards are finalized and actions to coordinate indirect impacts are undertaken. During OPCON 1, the EOC will remain at Level I activation with relevant ESFs to adequately prepare for the imminent threat.

#### 10. Public Information

- a. The timely, accurate dissemination of information and the control of rumors are vital to effective emergency operations, particularly when evacuation and sheltering issues are time critical. Both the EOP and Chatham County Code Book pertaining to emergency management assign this responsibility to the county Public Information Officer (PIO). In this regard the County PIO, will exercise direction and control over emergency public information functions through PIOs assigned to the EOC. Upon implementation of this plan, official public statements, interviews, press conferences and news releases will be scheduled, conducted and issued either by or through the PIO to ensure uniformity, consistency and accuracy. Official spokespersons representing individual organizations and senior government officials wishing to make independent public statements should coordinate those statements with the PIO.
- b. A regular schedule of press conferences, situation reports and news releases will be established. Special announcements, instructions, advisories, alerts and warnings will be made as necessary. The media will be expected to adhere to procedural guidelines provided in advance and will be restricted from EOC access.
- c. Issues of concern, unconfirmed reports, and unsubstantiated rumors will be directed to the PIO to be addressed as soon



as possible. Misinformation will be promptly corrected. If questions by either the media or the public cannot be answered they will be researched and followed up with correct responses.

11. School Closure Process
    - a. The decision to open or close Chatham County public schools is the responsibility of the Board of Education. CEMA participates in the process by providing information from a number of sources, to include the National Weather Service and a variety of local, State and Federal emergency management organizations. The Board decision is based not only on the projected availability of utilities and services during the school-day but also, on the safety of its students awaiting transportation to and from school.
    - b. Private schools operate independently but generally follow the lead of the Board of Education. CEMA does not make the decision to open or close schools.
  12. Correctional Facilities: There are four major correctional facilities in Chatham County: Youth Detention Center, Chatham County Detention Center, Men's Transitional Center, and Coastal Correctional Institute. These facilities are required to have hurricane plans and should be self-sufficient during a storm. These facilities will take necessary and appropriate actions to protect and shelter their clients during storm threats.
- B. Shelter Management: A variety of shelters may be utilized once a hurricane threat requires the issue of evacuation orders; these vary both in terms of location and purpose:
1. Local Shelters: During a hurricane evacuation it is the national policy of the American Red Cross (ARC) to not open any shelter in a coastal community regardless of the category of the storm.
  2. Critical Workforce Shelters: Essential personnel needed to carry out evacuation and post-storm reentry and recovery operations will be expected to take shelter before gale force winds arrive. There are four designated shelters within and adjacent to Chatham County for that purpose. These shelters will not be staffed like local public shelters, but two of them will receive feeding assistance from the Salvation Army. The other two will have provisions on site. They will be opened for use after a Hurricane Warning has been issued. However, equipment staging may begin after a Hurricane



Watch has been issued. They will be used for all categories of hurricane. Critical Workforce Shelter designations and operations are detailed in the Critical Workforce Shelters and Staging Sites Plan (EOP, ESF-6 Annex, Appendix 6-2)

3. Inland Shelters: Upon issuance of evacuation orders within Georgia or the influx of evacuees from other states, the State Operations Center will initiate shelter operations. Evacuees will be instructed to follow inland evacuation routes and report to inland county Evacuation Centers where they will be provided information about motels, restaurants and other services in the community. In the event that a shelter begins to reach capacity, the shelter manager will communicate the need to local authorities. The local EOC will notify the State so they can plan how future evacuees will be directed to other shelters.
4. Pet Shelters: There will be no local shelters for pets during any category of hurricane. Most, if not all veterinary clinics and kennels, as well as the Humane Society and Chatham County Animal Control, will not accept animals prior to a storm. Many hotels and motels along the I-16 corridor will accept pets with guests during hurricane emergencies; public shelters will not. However, there are pet shelters in each of the counties where there are public shelters. Owners will be informed of these locations upon reporting to the evacuation centers. Evacuees requiring public transportation to reach shelters will be allowed to bring the pets on buses if they are in travel carriers. In each case when pets are evacuated the owners must bring leashes, carriers, ID tags, food, immunization records and medicines. Pets Sheltering and Management are detailed in the Animals in Disaster Management Appendix (EOP, ESF-11 Annex, Appendix 11-1)

C. Transportation

1. Transportation Types: Citizens requested or ordered to evacuate should either have their own transportation or arrangements to evacuate with others that do. A limited number of public transportation vehicles and drivers will be available to assist those who cannot evacuate on their own. Chatham Area Transit (CAT) will coordinate this activity and operate service along scheduled bus routes. Management of public transportation services and utilization of these services to evacuate general populations without personal transportation assets is detailed in the Evacuation Assembly Area Plan (EOP, ESF-1 Annex, Appendix 1-1, Tab A).



2. Transportation to Shelters: Some public transportation will be provided to inland shelters. Scheduled CAT bus routes will be operated with a schedule established and announced after Hurricane Warning and Mandatory-Full evacuation orders are issued. Evacuees will be transported by CAT to the Savannah Civic Center where they will board school buses for transport to designated inland shelters. Management of sheltering operations and mass care of the general population evacuating through public assets is detailed in the Transportation and Sheltering Appendix (EOP, ESF-1 Annex, Appendix 1-1, Tab B).

D. Special Needs

1. Special Need Types: Special Needs is defined as any person requiring comprehensive assistance with daily living and/or under the part or full-time care or charge of others. This definition goes beyond health-related or medical applications and is used for those requiring unusual or enhanced evacuation and sheltering assistance. Special Needs Management is detailed in the Special Needs Plan (EOP, ESF-8 Annex, Appendix 8-1).
  - a. Home Health Care
    - 1) For persons residing at home requiring transportation, a higher level of medical care than that provided in a public shelter and who do not have anyone to provide that care, evacuation and sheltering may be provided to the degree that resources permit.
    - 2) The care and shelter of Care One patients will be accommodated by the Memorial Medical Center system; Candler/St. Joseph's will arrange for the care and shelter of Care South and Advantage patients.
    - 3) The Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Division and the United Way First Call for Help will develop and maintain a Special Needs Registry for persons that are not affiliated with local hospital health care systems. Immediately after a Hurricane Watch is issued and the EOC is fully activated, registrants will be contacted regarding their status and will be informed to begin preparing for possible evacuation if and when Warning and Mandatory evacuation orders are issued. Once orders are imminent, they will be re-contacted and instructed to be ready to evacuate. They will be expected to have



extra clothing, medical equipment, supplies and medicines, ready to take with them. If they have a personal caregiver, that person must be ready to accompany them.

- a) A variety of transportation resources may be used:
  - b) CAT will provide buses for wheelchair passengers.
  - c) Ambulances will be used for horizontal transport.
  - d) Other resources will be used as available;
  - e) Requirements beyond local capabilities will be directed to the SOC.
- b. Nursing Homes and Care Facilities
- 1) Nursing homes, personal care homes, assisted living facilities and related licensed entities are required to have emergency and disaster plans appropriate for hurricane conditions. As a rule they are expected to transfer residents to a safer and similar facility if they are located in a mandatory evacuation area. Due to the lead-time requirements for transporting patients or residents, these facilities should be prepared to evacuate prior to a Mandatory evacuation order.
  - 2) Transportation for patients or residents, staff and family members is the responsibility of the individual facility. Commercial transport services are contractually available to the nursing home and personal care facility industry. Separate arrangements must be made by each facility to transport patients or residents. Similar arrangements must also be made to transport supplies and equipment.
  - 3) Facilities are urged to commence evacuation upon issue of a Voluntary evacuation order but must be prepared to evacuate immediately upon issuance of a Mandatory evacuation order; unnecessary delays may result in a lack of transportation.



- c. Hospitals
    - 1) Licensed inpatient healthcare facilities in Chatham County are required to have emergency plans appropriate for hurricane threats. Only where specified and agreed upon in their plans or by separate letters of agreement, will local, State and/or Federal Governments assist them prior to a hurricane. Afterwards assistance will be provided to the degree necessary. Furthermore, to the degree that they remain operational and viable after a storm, they will be expected to provide for the medical and mass casualty needs of the community, within the capabilities of their routine function.
    - 2) The degree of shutdown operations and/or evacuation of facilities for any given storm will depend upon the survivability and official policy of each institution. As a general rule, they may cancel elective surgery, discharge patients for whom patient care would not be compromised; transfer patients who could be moved to safer facilities and make special arrangements for those whose condition will not allow transfer or evacuation. Mental health facilities may transfer patients and staff to safer locations.
    - 3) Health care facilities remaining operational during hurricane conditions will not be designated as public shelters and will only be expected to provide emergency care to the degree possible. As available and necessary, they will be provided with law enforcement officers and amateur radio operators to assist them; other assistance will be provided upon request and availability.
  - d. Other Residence Assistance and Treatment Programs: This category encompasses mass homeless shelters, specialized homeless shelters, in-residence treatment programs and certain non-residence assistance programs. Licensed or tax supported facilities are expected, if not required, to have hurricane plans.
- 2. Transportation
    - a. Evacuation and sheltering assistance may be provided to the degree that resources permit for persons requiring a higher



level of medical care than can be provided in a public shelter, those residing at home and requiring transportation, and those that do not have anyone to provide the necessary level of care or transportation.

- b. Where possible, individuals registered with the County Special Needs Registry, not requiring a Special Needs shelter at the time of the storm because their conditions do not require a higher level of care than a public shelter can provide, will be contacted and arrangements made for transport to a public shelter.
- c. Persons requesting transportation that are unable to reach a pickup point on their own due to age, infirmity, health condition or disability and have no one to assist them will be entered on a standby list for possible pickup. This list will be prioritized on the basis of geographic threat and condition of the person requesting assistance; every effort will be made to reach them if circumstances permit.
- d. For specific areas where there are substantial numbers of residents living closely together without transportation such as senior citizen complexes and public housing villages, attempts will be made to provide public transportation. Residents should organize together in advance through neighborhood or building management associations so that a designated central pickup point and time can be established when they would assemble. Concerned resident groups or organizations must coordinate for assistance in advance with the CEMA Director. Although transportation assistance cannot be guaranteed, every effort will be made to provide it after Hurricane Warning and Mandatory evacuation orders have been issued

E. Recovery and Re-Entry

1. Authority, Responsibilities and Coordination

- a. Local elected officials have the authority and responsibility to take action necessary to protect lives and property during and immediately following a hurricane.
- b. The Georgia Hurricane Plan states that:
  - 1) *“...It is the responsibility of elected officials at all levels of government to take action within their jurisdiction to*



*recover from the aftermath of a hurricane. Recovery and reentry operations involve a number of public and private agencies at the local level with augmentation from higher levels or parent organizations as necessary.”* Chatham County will adhere to the Georgia Hurricane Plan regarding reentry requirements.

- 2) It is the duty of the political jurisdictions within the County, both individually and collectively, to employ their assets to restore their respective communities to pre-storm status as quickly and safely as possible. Realistically, a disaster of hurricane magnitude will quickly overwhelm those capabilities. When this becomes apparent, the State will commit its resources in support of local efforts. When State assistance proves to be insufficient, the Federal government can be requested to assist.
- 3) While local officials are preparing for emergency response operations as the storm approaches, the SOC will be preparing to deploy resources necessary to facilitate recovery. After the storm passes local officials assess needs and make appropriate requests to GEMA. GEMA will process requests and coordinate assistance between State and local levels. GEMA employees will respond to the County's EOC and coordinate with local officials through CEMA.

## 2. Equipment Staging

- a. In anticipation of hurricane conditions, the State may stage equipment and personnel in several locations outside risk counties where they can be quickly moved into stricken areas after the threat has passed. Local organizations having equipment or vehicles needed for reentry search, rescue and/or recovery operations must also take appropriate measures to protect and stage their equipment and vehicles in safe locations prior to the anticipated arrival of gale force winds. Criteria for the selection of such staging areas include:
  - 1) Protection from wind and major flying debris.
  - 2) Elevation above anticipated storm surge and fresh water flooding.



- 3) Proximity to Priority 1 reentry transportation routes.
  - 4) Availability of shelter for personnel or crews.
- b. Wherever safely possible, personnel and crews will remain with or within walking distance of their equipment and vehicles. Staging areas will be shared as much as possible by public safety, road clearing and utility company equipment, vehicles and crews in order to facilitate rapid, coordinated reentry.

**TABLE 4  
PRE-STORM STAGING AREAS**

<b>PRE-STORM EQUIPMENT &amp; PERSONNEL STAGING AREAS</b>	
<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>ADDRESS</b>
Effingham Industrial Development Authority	HWY 21
Ebenezer Middle School	Ebenezer Road, Effingham
Savannah Int'l Airport	400 Airways Ave.
Hunter Army Airfield	HAAF
Savannah Morning News	Chatham Parkway
GSU Math and Physics Bldg	Georgia Southern University
GSU Biology Building	Georgia Southern University
GSY Foy Fine Arts Center	Georgia Southern University

3. Pre-Storm Re-Entry: Reentry restrictions may become a necessity before a storm makes landfall. In order to minimize casualties and prevent looting, during the evacuation phase it will be prudent to deny access to at-risk areas being evacuated. Pre-landfall reentry checkpoints identify locations and staff assignments for restricting reentry while an evacuation is in progress.

**TABLE 5  
PRE-STORM RE-ENTRY CHECKPOINTS**

<b>PRE-STORM RE-ENTRY CHECKPOINTS</b>	
<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>STAFFING</b>
Traffic Control Points	SCMPD
US 17 at GA 204	SCMPD
Bridge (17A)	SCMPD
US 17 at Bonnybridge	PWPD
GA 21 at Bonnybridge	PWPD
GA 204 at I-95	GSP
US 80 at I-95	GSP
GA 21 at I-95	GSP
I-95 Airport Exit	GSP
I-16 & I-95	GSP

NOTE: 18-27 Hours before landfall, after mandatory evacuation order: No reentry except officials, residents or employees.



4. Re-Grouping
  - a. As soon as wind and storm surge subside, public safety, critical workforce and emergency operations personnel will report their condition to the EOC.
  - b. Personnel who have sought shelter in a critical workforce shelter, refuge or other location must assess their own condition, attend to any injuries and personal needs, and inspect their equipment and attempt to establish communications with their chain-of-command and the EOC.
  - c. Critical workforce shelters are established so that organizations are assembled together to facilitate reentry. As recovery operations depend on accessibility, clearing a path along major transportation routes and inspecting for hazards are priorities. Savannah International Airport runways will receive priority clearance to facilitate the arrival of disaster relief personnel. Progress will be continually reported to the EOC to assist in damage/needs assessment and recovery planning.
  
5. Post-Storm Re-Entry
  - a. Re-entry involves accessing and repairing damaged areas affected by hurricane related hazards and marks the transition from a response phase through landfall to a recovery phase.
  - b. The GEMA Hurricane Plan adopts a two-phased approach to re-entry. Phase I includes the initial response into damaged areas whereby emergency responders and critical infrastructure personnel will be conducting initial damage assessments, stabilizing utilities and hazardous material containers and performing life safety search and rescue operations. Once the immediate life safety threats are eliminated or stabilized local emergency management personnel will announce the commencement of Phase II operations that include local business owners, contractors, and possibly residents.
  - c. The GEMA has streamlined the emergency response and critical infrastructure personnel re-entry process. In an effort to standardize the re-entry of emergency responders and critical infrastructure personnel to not only Chatham County but also Coastal Georgia, the guidelines listed below have



been established by local and State Emergency Management Officials. These re-entry guidelines are being provided to local and State law enforcement officers who will be controlling access to affected areas after a hurricane.

- d. The Chatham County Hurricane Plans adopts the State two-phased approach to re-entry. Persons attempting to gain entry into an affected area during Phase II must have the following documentation:
  - 1) Photo identification / credential showing they are employed by a business or facility within Chatham County.
  - 2) State issued photo identification or driver's license.
  - 3) Copy of a deed or local utility bill that proves they own or lease property within the affected area.
  
- e. Phase I
  - 1) No re-entry permits will be required or issued to fire, police, emergency medical services, or utility companies i.e.: Georgia Power, AT&T, Atlanta Gas in marked response vehicles with proper credentials and/or badges. It is agreed that these personnel will be allowed access by local law enforcement officials when local elected officials and emergency management personnel announce the beginning of Phase I recovery operations.
  - 2) It is understood that many industrial facilities have significant amounts of hazardous materials that must be secured during the initial Life Safety Phase in order for the area to be considered secure enough to allow follow on critical infrastructure personnel to enter the area. In order to accomplish this objective, facilities that have stand alone hazardous material teams will be provided State of Georgia Phase I Re-Entry credentials by CEMA provided the facility requesting the credentials meets the following criteria and have completed the re-entry pass request form.
    - a) The requesting facility has filed a current Tier II Report with the State of Georgia and the Chatham County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC).



- b) The requesting facility acknowledges that it has a hazardous material response team that is properly trained, equipped, and self-sufficient.
  - c) The requesting facility agrees to report its status to the Emergency Operations Center through ESF-10.
  - d) The requesting facility acknowledges that it has provided for the basic life support needs of their re-entry team to include food, water, shelter and basic medical first aid for at least a five-day period.
- 3) In addition to hazardous material teams, it is understood that many utility providers in Chatham County rely on independent subcontractors for day-to-day operations and will require these subcontractors during hurricane recovery. In order to provide access to affected areas, major utility providers must consolidate a list of subcontractors requiring access and request the appropriate number of passes from the GEMA Planning Division at 1-800-TRY-GEMA. In addition to State issued critical infrastructure personnel permits, subcontractors must have a letter of access authorization from the parent contractor and a company identifier or credential.
- 4) Local, State, and Federal, government homeland security and law enforcement officials agree to recognize three specific pieces of identification from critical infrastructure providers and their designated subcontractors as they seek access at the perimeter of “open but restricted” areas. When critical infrastructure workers arrive at an “open but restricted” disaster scene and request admittance, they must present the following three items:
- a) Letter of Access Authorization from the parent contractor,
  - b) Georgia critical infrastructure personnel permit, and
  - c) Critical infrastructure /company identifier.
- 5) Local utility providers such as electric co-ops requesting critical infrastructure personnel permits should complete the attached critical infrastructure



personnel permit application and submit it to CEMA by email, fax or mail.

- f. Phase II
  - 1) Emergency management personnel will commence Phase II operations based on the recommendations of Phase I public safety and critical infrastructure personnel. This phase may be modified based on the situational needs such as during daylight hours or be modified to cover only certain portions of Chatham County that are deemed safe enough for Phase II operations. No re-entry permits will be issued for Phase II. Persons attempting to gain entry into an affected area during Phase II must have the following documentation:
    - a) Photo identification/credential showing they are employed by a business or facility within Chatham County.
    - b) State issued photo identification or driver's license.
    - c) Copy of deed or local utility bill that proves they own or lease property within the affected area.

**TABLE 6  
POST STORM RE-ENTRY CHECK POINTS**

<b>POST STORM REENTRY CHECK POINTS</b>	
<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>STAFFING</b>
Traffic Control Points	SCMPD
US 17A at State Line-Hutchinson Island Rd	SCMPD
GA 204 at I-95	GSP
I-16 at I-95	GSP
US 80 at I-95	GSP
I-95 Airport Exit	GSP
GA 21 at I-95	PWPD

- 6. Search and Rescue: As soon as possible after the storm, public safety officials under the direction of the Savannah Fire Department will commence search and rescue (SAR) operations in those areas



known or suspected to have victims. As necessary, additional State and Federal resources will be requested through the SOC. Local fire departments will be initially responsible for coordinating search and rescue operations within their jurisdictions. The Coast Guard will coordinate marine operations. Detailed Search and Rescue operations are defined in the SAR Appendix (EOP, ESF-9 Annex, Appendix 9-1)

7. Damage and Needs Assessment

- a. Damage/needs assessment will commence concurrent with reentry and search and rescue operations, particularly with respect to infrastructure, transportation routes and utility services. Each local government will be responsible for its own jurisdiction and must make assignments for this purpose. However, these personnel will first be utilized to assist in search and rescue if deemed necessary. Detailed Damage Assessment protocols are defined in the Damage Assessment Coordination Annex (Disaster Recovery Plan, Annex D)
- b. State assistance for preliminary damage assessment will be requested by CEMA through the SOC.
- c. Returning aircraft from Chatham County Mosquito Control, the Coast Guard, National Guard, and State Patrol will provide aerial assessments and forward them to the EOC.
- d. Conditions permitting designated emergency response and critical workforce personnel will be allowed to conduct damage assessments. Unsafe conditions or potential hazards will be reported to the EOC. Also, private disaster relief agencies such as the Red Cross and the Salvation Army will be allowed to begin needs assessments for storm victims followed by damage assessments for their property.
- e. Damage assessment efforts will initially focus on:
  - 1) Extent and boundaries of the affected area.
  - 2) Extent of damage to public facilities.
  - 3) Infrastructure: Power, water, sewer, and safety of shelter facilities and major structures.
  - 4) Transportation: Ability to drive, land aircraft, and, as applicable, dock ships at ports of entry.



- 5) Communications: Ability to conduct emergency response operations and advise the public (TV, radio, and phone).
  - 6) Continuity of Government: Ability to control movement, looting, access to city/commerce.
  - 7) Extent of damage to individual homes and business.
- f. Needs assessments will use damage assessment data to determine:
- 1) To what extent are the immediate emergency needs of the public being met, and additional state and possible Federal assistance requirements?
  - 2) Are people in the area suffering from medical/health/food/water issues and what is necessary to relieve/mitigate this suffering?
  - 3) Are there conditions that could cause suffering or significant additional damage if not responded to immediately?
  - 4) Do conditions warrant assistance to maintain legal/lawful practices?

8. Debris Clearance and Removal

- a. The clearing of debris is a high priority to allow movement of emergency units into the area and to restore services for transportation, utilities, and communications. Debris clearing and removal along State and Federal reentry routes will be the primary responsibility of the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT). Other debris clearance within the County will be the responsibility of each jurisdiction. State support will be coordinated through the SOC and provided as required by GDOT and other State, Federal and private agencies.
- b. As cleanup operations proceed and short-term recovery efforts near completion, there will be a considerable amount of accumulated debris. To facilitate long-term recovery this debris may have to be temporarily relocated. Temporary sites will be identified on the basis of geographic need within the county. Detailed Debris Management protocols are defined in the Debris Management Coordination Annex (Disaster Recovery Plan, Annex E)



9. Public Health

- a. It is essential to protect the health of the public in the aftermath of a hurricane. Problems may develop due to contamination of water, failure of sewage systems, decomposition of animal and vegetable matter, disease carriers and rabid animals.
- b. The Chatham County Department of Public Health is responsible for assessing public health threats and coordinating precautionary response measures and related public statements. Local water/sewer departments and Mosquito Control will work closely with Public Health officials in this regard. If additional assistance is needed it will be requested from the State Department of Human Resources through the SOC. Public Health issues are coordinated through the ESF-8 Annex to the EOP.

10. Public Safety

- a. ESF-13, Public Safety and Security, establishes procedures for the command, control and coordination of local, county and state law enforcement personnel and equipment to support emergency/disaster operations.
- b. If police, fire and emergency medical service (EMS) services require augmentation after a hurricane strike, requests for assistance will be made to the SOC. Public Safety issues are coordinated through the ESF-13 Annex to the EOP.

11. Communication Restoration

- a. Local public safety agencies will assess the status of their communications systems and report their capability as well as major problems to the EOC. As necessary, the EOC will request State assistance to restore communications systems and control points. Amateur radio operators will augment communications in areas that require support.
- b. Restoration of commercial telephone service is the responsibility of AT&T. Priority should be given to those facilities vital to public safety, medical care and recovery operations. Restoration of mass media communications is a private enterprise responsibility. If transmission towers are operable, direct radio broadcasts may be made from the EOC until regular services are restored.



- c. As required by each department, activity and situation reports must be submitted to departmental representatives in the EOC. Communication Restoration issues are coordinated through the ESF-2 Annex to the EOP.

12. Utility Restoration

- a. Commercial gas and electric providers will restore electricity and gas services. Priority should be given to the restoration of service in those facilities vital to public safety, medical care, victim sheltering, mass communications and recovery operations. Water and sewer services should be restored in accordance with emergency plans of the private companies and local jurisdictions.
- b. As required by each utility, activity and situation reports should be submitted to utility representatives in the EOC. Utility issues are coordinated through the ESF-3 and ESF-12 Annexes to the EOP.

13. Transportation Restoration

- a. GDOT has primary responsibility for the repair and restoration of State and Federal highways and bridges. Highways and bridges that are not State or Federally maintained are the responsibility of local jurisdictions with assistance from the GDOT and State agencies as required and requested of GEMA through the SOC.
- b. As required by each department, activity and situation reports must be submitted to departmental representatives in the EOC. Transportation restoration issues are coordinated through the ESF-1 and ESF-3 Annexes to the EOP.

14. Equipment and Personnel Staging: Identifies tentative, unconfirmed, post-storm locations that may be suitable for staging equipment for recovery operations:



**TABLE 7  
POTENTIAL STAGING LOCATIONS**

LOCATION	ADDRESS	ORGANIZATION
SAV Int'l Airport	Runway #5-23	GA Power et al
K-Mart	Victory Dr.	GA Power et al
Savannah Mall	Abercorn Ext.	GA Power et al
Memorial Stadium	Skidaway & Montgomery Xrds	GA Power et al
Civic Center	MLK & Liberty	SAV Fire

15. Disaster Relief Check In and Information Centers: Identifies locations where disaster relief supplies may be staged and personnel should initially report to receive information and directions before entering the County:

**TABLE 8  
POTENTIAL DISASTER RELIEF CHECK-IN AND INFORMATION CENTERS**

AREA	LOCATION	ADDRESS
Chatham County	GDOT Weigh Station	I-95 Southbound
Effingham County	GDOT Weigh Station	I-16 Eastbound
McIntosh County	GDOT Weigh Station	I-95 Northbound
Chatham County	Savannah Festival Outlet Mall	GA 204 at I-95

16. Miscellaneous Recovery Considerations: In the event of extensive damage to residences, long-term sheltering may be required. Provisions for stand-alone facilities and connections for water, sewer, power and telephones may also be needed.

**F. Training and Exercise**

- a. EOC staff training and exercise help to ensure effective EOC operations. A properly trained staff provides the framework for functionality within the EOC and expedites operational tactics during the response phase of an incident. Each EOC staff member should meet minimum training criteria as established in the Appendices and Tabs of this document. Each EOC position has specific training requirements to effectively operate within the EOC. Those requirements are established under the National Incident Management



System (NIMS), the Incident Command System (ICS), and local EMA guidelines to create seamless incident management between internal staff, EOC staff and the SOC, or other partnering centers. NIMS and local EOC training are absolute minimums for anyone who plans to work in the EOC. Those minimum requirements, along with any position-specific training, are outlined in the Tab for the specific position.

- b. EOC plans and activities must be exercised in accordance with the County EOP, Annex E – Training and Exercise. Modifications to the EOC Staff Manual, or any part within, require exercise to practice/test those modifications. The exercise may only test the specific modified section of the EOC Plan/Staff Manual, 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.
- c. Furthermore, exercises should be performed whenever significant changes in EOC staffing occur. The exercise scenario should determine the operational readiness of the staff and their equipment, and provide record of activities for improvement planning. After Action Reviews/Reports should outline the needs for the Improvement Plan. The Improvement Plan should then be implemented and tracked to ensure any changes are incorporated and exercised to meet the intent of the EOC Plan. Identified improvements, after being exercised and validated, will be incorporated into the existing EOC Plan/Staff Manual.

## VIII. RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. CEMA Director: The CEMA Director provides for the overall command, direction and control regarding the response to and management of an event. He serves as the primary advisor to the County Commissioners and the County Manager to make emergency declarations, response, and recovery decisions. His role is to collect incident-related forecasts and/or information and relay information, along with his professional recommendations, to the local policy group for decisions and declarations. The Director serves as the EOC Manager, and has signature authority and responsibility to issues and/or requests through the County and GEMA.
- B. CEMA Assistant Director: The CEMA Assistant Director (AD) provides the leadership role in CEMA Operations. He takes recommendations from the CEMA Duty Officer (DO) and determines the need for response actions, EOC activations, and other CEMA functions through consultation with the



CEMA Director. In the event activation of the EOC is ordered, the AD will make notifications to CEMA Staff and the GEMA Area V Field Coordinator. The AD's primary role in the EOC is to serve as the Operations Chief. He will take the responsibilities of the CEMA Director when required.

- C. CEMA Duty Officer: The CEMA Duty Officer (DO) serves as the Agency's 24-hour crisis monitor for the County. The DO reports incident-related information to the AD and makes recommendations regarding activation of the EOC. The AD may determine an EOC activation is necessary through consultation with the CEMA Director. In the event activation of the EOC is ordered, the DO will have primary responsibility to initiate notification to EOC Support Staff and the EOC Partial Activation Team. Once notifications are made, the DO is responsible for preparing the EOC for activation. The DO will serve as the initial EOC Operations Section Chief until directed otherwise.
- D. CEMA Staff: CEMA Staff who are not serving as the on-call Duty Officer are subject to short-notification activation for emergencies, disasters and catastrophes. Once notified, they are to report to the designated EOC and assume their roles within the EOC staffing matrix. CEMA staff will function within the Command and General Staff roles of the EOC as designated in this EOC Staff Manual. Personnel must be properly credentialed and badged while inside the EOC.
- E. ESF Primary Coordinator: Each ESF has an agency designated as the Primary Coordinator. The Primary Coordinator has responsibility to ensure county-wide planning efforts are initiated to accomplish the requirements defined by the ESF. During disaster operations, the Primary Coordinator works directly with the EOC for information management and reporting of ESF activities.
- F. ESF Support Agencies: Support Agencies work with the Primary Coordinator and CEMA for purposes of pre-disaster planning and post-disaster coordination of the issues addressed by the ESF. During post-disaster operations, each support agency is responsible for coordinating individual plans and procedures and reporting of ESF activities to the EOC through the Primary Agency.

## IX. ANNEX MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

- A. Executive Agent: CEMA is the executive agent for Annex management and maintenance. The Annexes 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 Annexes.



- B. Types of 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 EOC Annexes may propose a change to the plan. CEMA is responsible for coordinating proposed modifications to the Annexes with primary and support agencies and other stakeholders, as required. 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. 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 participating agencies. Notice of Change to other organizations will be provided upon request. Re-issuance of the individual annexes or the entire EOC Plan will take place as required. Working toward continuous improvement, CEMA is responsible for an annual review and update of the EOC plan 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 documents for the purpose of interagency review and concurrence.