

CHATHAM COUNTY

DEPARTMENT HURRICANE PLANNING GUIDE



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To: All Departments

This guide provides step-by-step advice on how Chatham County Departments and agencies should create and maintain a comprehensive hurricane preparedness program. It has been compiled from a wide variety of sources that have been adapted to hurricane conditions that could occur in Chatham County. The guide is designed to be used as a descriptive model and in some cases, as a checklist, to assist mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from the effects of a tropical storm or hurricane either threatening or striking Chatham County.

A hurricane is a tropical cyclone with wind speeds ranging from 74 miles per hour to in excess of 155 mph that can extend inland for hundreds of miles. Hurricanes bring torrential rains and a storm surge of ocean water that can be pushed well inland by the approaching storm; hurricanes also spawn tornadoes.

Emergency actions in preparation for hurricanes, including preparedness, evacuation, and sheltering, will depend on the severity, track, and timing of a storm. Throughout the hurricane season, the Chatham Emergency Management Agency (CEMA) will monitor and report on the status of storms alerting departments and agencies as conditions warrant. The dissemination of information regarding increased readiness and Watches and Warnings will be initiated commensurate with the threat. Whenever emergency operations are in effect they will be the highest priority and take precedence over all other forms of routine business. CEMA will disseminate tropical storm and hurricane information by a variety of methods:

- CEMA web site: <<http://cema.chathamcounty.org>>
- E-mail
- Telephone, cellular, and satellite telephone
- Facsimile: E-Fax Mass Facsimile System
- Radio & TV

The outline that follows provides recommended hurricane plan contents for County departments and agencies; an abbreviated checklist to ensure that each subject in the plan is adequately addressed; and a timeline that lists the operational procedures CEMA will follow when a storm threatening Chatham County.

Please do not hesitate to contact CEMA if you require assistance or guidance in preparing your plan.

PLAN CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: This one or two page cover sheet provides a brief synopsis of the plan. It should include:

- Purpose of the Emergency Plan
- Authorities and responsibilities of key personnel
- Assessment of vulnerabilities
- Location where response operations will be managed.
- In order to develop a direction and control system:
 - Define the duties of personnel establishing procedures and checklists for each position.
 - Determine lines of succession to ensure continuity of leadership, authority, and responsibility.
 - Determine equipment and supply needs for each response function.

COMMUNICATIONS: Plan for all possible contingencies from a temporary or short-term disruption to a total communications failure:

- Consider the everyday functions performed by your organization and the voice and data communications used to support them.
- Consider the impact if your communications were inoperable. How would this affect emergency operations?
- By what means will suppliers, constituents, and vendors contact you?
- Prioritize all communications; determine which should be restored first in an emergency. Coordinate with ICS about their emergency response capabilities regarding restoration of service.
- Determine needs for backup communications for each function; consider telephones, fax, messengers, radios, point-to-point private lines, satellite systems and high-frequency radios.

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS:

Consider the functions your organization might need to perform in a hurricane and the communications systems needed to support them. Communications are vital between employees, neighboring businesses, customers, suppliers, emergency responders, and the

EOC. Also consider a variety of both high and lo-tech methods of communications and routinely test these systems.

FAMILY COMMUNICATIONS:

Encourage employees to establish plans to communicate with their families. They should arrange for an out-of-town contact for family members to call in an emergency and they should designate a place to shelter during and after a storm. Organizations should provide their employees with telephone numbers for use during an evacuation and coordination of reentry information following a storm.

LIFE SAFETY: The highest priority in any emergency is the safety of the people.

EVACUATION:

- Consider employee intentions, evacuation plans & needs during a countywide evacuation.
- Coordinate plans for post evacuation re-entry procedures and work-site locations with the Chatham Emergency Management Agency.

PROPERTY: Protecting facilities, equipment, and vital records is essential to restoring operations following a hurricane. Identify sources of backup equipment, parts and supplies. Designate personnel to authorize, supervise and perform a facility shutdown. Obtain materials to carry out protection procedures and keep them on hand for use in emergencies. Establish procedures for:

- Closing or barricading doors and windows
- Shutting down equipment
- Covering or securing equipment
- Moving equipment to a safe location

FACILITY SHUTDOWN: If relocation is required, are adequate measures in place for the immediate resumption of operations?

- Revenue
- Administration
- Staff support

- Communications
- Transportation
- Deliveries
- Inventories
- Vital records

RECORDS PRESERVATION: Vital records may include:

- Employee, customer and supplier databases
- Personnel files (Especially in the event of employee injury or death)
- Data processing files, systems and equipment

Preserving vital records is essential to the rapid restoration of operations. Analyzing vital records involves:

- Classifying operations into functional categories such as finance, logistics, and administration.
- Identifying the minimum information that must be readily accessible to accomplish essential functions, for example, maintaining collections may require access to account statements.
- Identifying records that contain essential information and where they are located.
- Identifying equipment and materials needed to access and use the information.

Establish procedures for protecting and accessing vital records. Among the many approaches to consider are:

- Labeling vital records.
- Backing up computer systems.
- Making copies of records.
- Storing tapes and discs in insulated containers.
- Storing data off-site.
- Increasing security of the computer facility.
- Arranging for evacuation of records to backup facilities.
- Staffing of alternate, temporary sites.
- Suspension of non-essential operations.

Development of an interim alternate-site support plan:

- Transition to operation from a recovery or alternate site.
- Implementation of key systems at the alternate site.
- Duplication of communication and networking requirements.
- Personnel for restoration and operation of critical systems.
- Retrieval of backup data and files.
- Alternate site hardware, software and support requirements.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH:

MUTUAL AID AGREEMENTS: To avoid confusion and conflict in an emergency, establish mutual aid agreements with local agencies, businesses, and/or governments. These agreements should define the type of assistance, authority for activating the agreement, and communications procedures. Whenever possible rehearse these procedures.

COMMUNITY SERVICE: While there is no way to predict the demands that will be placed on your organization's resources, consider how the community's needs might influence your responsibilities in an emergency.

RESUMPTION: Recovery and resumption activities directly affect the organization's ability to provide services to the residents of Chatham County.

CONTINGENCY CONTRACTS:

- Consider contractual arrangements with vendors for post-emergency services such as record preservation, and equipment repair.
- Ensure that pre-qualified suppliers of critical services have their own emergency plans and will be able to provide services when required.
- Identify critical operations and plan to bring those systems back on-line. The process may entail repairing or replacing equipment,

relocating operations to an alternate location and temporarily contracting operations.

- Consider the possibility of denied or delayed access to the facility.
- Establish criteria for abandoning a facility and relocating to an alternate site. Who authorizes this decision? What special disaster-specific accountability is required?
- Take photographs of or videotape the facility to document company assets; update these records regularly.

CONTINUITY OF MANAGEMENT: It can be assumed that not every key person will be readily available or physically at the facility after an emergency. Ensure that recovery decisions can be made without undue delay by having current organizational procedures in place for:

- The chain of command.
- Maintaining lines of succession for key positions.
- Designation of responsibility for key duties and functions.
- Relocating to alternate locations.

EMPLOYEE SUPPORT: Employees are your most valuable assets; consider the range of services that you could provide, including:

- How will pay be handled in an emergency: OT, comp, straight time, etc.
- Meeting place for employees and their family members
- Cash advances
- Flexible work hours
- Reduced work hours
- Crisis counseling or stress management workshops
- Assistance packages
- Day care.

RESUMING OPERATIONS: Immediately following a hurricane, take steps to resume operations.

- Check with the EOC to determine if the facility is safe for occupancy.
- Establish a check-in point & conduct employee briefings.
- Assess employee personnel circumstances & provide assistance.
- Establish a recovery team.
- Establish priorities for resuming operations.
- Continue to ensure the safety of personnel on the property.
- Assess the remaining hazards and report the findings to the EOC.
- Keep detailed records. Consider audio recording all decisions. Take photographs or video the damage.
- Account for all damage related costs. Establish special job order numbers and charge codes for purchases and repair work. Keep receipts.
- Coordinate with County Purchasing in the EOC for resource needs and clean up contract requirements.
- Only make repairs necessary to prevent further damage. Protect undamaged property. Close building openings. Protect equipment against moisture.
- Coordinate with the County Risk Manager to review appropriate recovery procedures.
- Maintain contact with the general public and suppliers.
- Be aware of unsolicited and uncertified repair and recovery firms; always verify licenses, credentials and references.
- Clear all major activities through the County EOC.

LOGISTICS: Consider the need for pre-approved purchase orders or requisitions and requirements for special funding authorities. Resource lists of equipment, services and supplies are vital as are mutual aid agreements with other companies and governmental agencies.

Before an emergency, logistics may entail:

- Acquiring equipment.
- Stockpiling supplies.
- Designating emergency facilities.
- Establishing mutual aid agreements.
- Preparing a resource inventory.

Following an emergency, logistics may entail:

- Moving backup equipment in place.
- Repairing parts.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS: The following are considerations when preparing for hurricanes:

- Ask the Chatham Emergency Management Agency about evacuation plans.
- Assign an emergency coordinator.
- Establish facility shutdown procedures. Establish warning procedures. Make plans for assisting employees who may need assistance.
- Establish organization evacuation plans and procedures.
- Make plans for communicating with employees' families before and after a hurricane.
- Survey your facility. Make plans to protect files and equipment. Move valuables away from windows and seal them in plastic bags.
- Arrange for an alternate location for continuity of operations. At a minimum, back-up valuable papers and accounts receivable at off-site locations. Prepare to move records, computers and other items within your facility or to another location
- Purchase a NOAA Weather Radio with a battery backup. Listen for hurricane watches and warnings.
 - Sign up for CEMA Alert at: <<http://cema.chathamcounty.org>>
 - Hurricane Watch: A hurricane is possible within 36 hours. Stay tuned for additional advisories. Tune to local radio and television

- stations for additional information.
An evacuation may be necessary.
Hurricane Warning: A hurricane is expected to make landfall within the next 24 hours. Take precautions at once and if advised, evacuate.

PLAN CHECKLIST

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- Purpose of the Plan
Authorities and responsibilities of key personnel
- Assessment of vulnerabilities
- Location where response operations will be managed

COMMUNICATIONS:

- Priority and procedures for restoration of internal communications.
- Plan for external restoration of communications services.
- Plan for backup communications for each organizational function.
- ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS: Restoration plan.
- FAMILY COMMUNICATIONS: Individual responsibilities plan.

LIFE SAFETY:

EVACUATION:

- Personnel and procedures to shutdown critical operations.
- Post evacuation procedures.
- Identification of personnel for access control upon reentry.

LIFE SAFETY:

- SITE EVACUATION: Employee transportation, re-entry, and post-storm work-site locations.

PROPERTY:

PROTECTIVE SYSTEMS: Plans and procedures:

- Shutting down equipment.
- Covering, securing or relocating equipment.
- Identification of backup equipment, parts, and supplies.

FACILITY SHUTDOWN: Responsibility for non-structural mitigation:

- Securing items that could fall or shake loose.
- Moving heavy or breakable objects to low shelves.
- Ensuring moveable items are above potential flood levels.
- Moving workstations away from windows.
- Wrapping electronic equipment in plastic.

RECORDS PRESERVATION: Identification and labeling vital records:

- Financial and insurance information
- Engineering plans and drawings
- Product lists and specifications
- Employee, customer and supplier databases
- Personnel files
- Backing up computer systems.
- Copies of records.
- Storing tapes and discs off-site or in insulated

containers.

- Evacuation of records to backup facilities.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH:

- MUTUAL AID AGREEMENTS: Procedures with agencies, businesses, and/or governments to provide mutually supportive essential services.
- COMMUNITY SERVICE: Relationship to corporate responsibilities.

RESUMPTION:

CONTINGENCY CONTRACTS:

- Arrangements for record preservation, equipment repair, or engineering resources.
- Property and business resumption policies.
- Plan for bringing critical systems back on-line.
- Responsibility for photographs or videotape of the facility.

CONTINUITY OF MANAGEMENT:

- Chain of command
- Lines of succession
- Relocation to alternate site.

EMPLOYEE SUPPORT:

- Cash advances
- Flexible work hours
- Crisis counseling
- Assistance packages
- Day care.

RESUMING OPERATIONS:

- Recovery team priorities
- Hazard assessment and security.
- Employee briefing.
- Provisions for damage documentation:
 - Audio recording decisions.
 - Photographs or video of damage.
 - Damage related cost inventory and accountability.
 - Assessment of damaged property.
 - Report findings to the County EOC.

LOGISTICS: Coordinate through the EOC the assignment of responsibility for preparing:

- A resource inventory.
- Backup equipment.
- Repair parts.
- Medical, food and transportation.
- Backup communications.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS:

- Evacuation plans.
- Department Emergency Coordinator.
- Facility shutdown procedures.
- Family communications.
- File and equipment protection.
- Alternate operational locations and secure storage site

OPERATIONAL TIMETABLE

Hurricanes tend to develop more slowly than most natural disasters. Therefore, local agencies and organizations have the opportunity to systematically mobilize necessary resources. In order to control and coordinate response actions, a series of time-phased Operating Conditions (OPCONs) have been developed.

The Chatham County Hurricane Plan specifies the minimum times and preparedness activities for each OPCON. Due to local clearance time requirements, activities may be initiated earlier than in surrounding counties.

A lower OPCON number always follows a higher OPCON number and must be acted upon accordingly. It is possible that rapidly deteriorating weather conditions or a sudden change in a storm's intensity, track, or forward speed may require a particular OPCON be upgraded to a higher state of response activity than would ordinarily be next in progression.

OPCON

ACTIVITIES

PRE-SEASON

Pre-season planning with all organizations & local governments
Revisions to County & Individual Hurricane Plans
Agencies and personnel review:
 Individual Standard Operating Procedures
 Aid agreements, Notification lists, Resource inventory lists
 Public education

OPCON 5 HURRICANE SEASON

Routine operations
Regular monitoring of tropical developments & continue public education

OPCON 4 STORM or HURRICANE DEVELOPED 48-72 hours before landfall

Notification of agencies and officials on Emergency Notification List
Storm tracked
Agencies and personnel review:
 County Emergency Operations Plan
 County Hurricane Plan
 Department & Individual Hurricane Plans
 Individual SOP's
 Notification lists
 Resource inventory lists
 Aid agreements
Limited activation of EOC
County Hurricane Plan in effect

48 hours before landfall

Preparations completed for: Vehicles, Equipment, Supplies & Facilities

Agencies with major lead time requirements on full alert
Assignments: Deployment/Staging
Preliminary decision-making meeting with elected and key appointed officials
Pre-mobilization briefing for agencies and individuals on Emergency Notification List
Partial activation of EOC; remaining EOC staff on full alert
Media briefed on situation and activities to follow

OPCON 3 HURRICANE WATCH ISSUED

Pre-activation meeting of EOC staff
Full activation of EOC

36-48 hours before landfall	<p>Routine news releases, press conferences, and situation reports commence Special Needs agencies & individuals begin evacuation mobilization Coordination with State and inland counties Critical Workforce shelters activated; department equipment staging commenced Equipment staging and critical facility protection commenced Request Local Declaration of Emergency Request for State Declaration of Emergency and assistance? Evacuation decision-making meeting Evacuation decision announced (Voluntary evacuation commenced?) Requests for inland shelters on alert status Agencies & departments implement emergency operations plans Shelter preparations completed</p>
Hurricane Warning imminent	<p>Evacuation decision-making meeting Establish contact with DOT & alert to I-16 one-way preparation Special Needs evacuation and sheltering commenced</p>
<p>OPCON 2 HURRICANE WARNING ISSUED 24 hours before landfall</p>	<p>Evacuation decision announced. (Partial or Full-Mandatory evacuation commenced?) Traffic Control Points activated NWS Advisory or update issued Evacuation decision-making meeting Evacuation decision announced (Full-Mandatory evacuation commenced?)</p>
	<p>Remaining emergency operations & protective actions initiated I-16 one way may be in effect</p>
<p>OPCON 1 HURRICANE IMMINENT 6 hours before landfall</p>	<p>Full reentry restrictions enforced All evacuation operations completed Evacuation orders cancelled Emergency Protective Ordinances activated</p>
Gale Force winds arrive	<p>All response activity suspended Emergency Operations personnel take shelter</p>
Hurricane Conditions	<p>Reentry & recovery plans reviewed Communications maintained to degree possible</p>
<p>All Clear 8-14 hours post-storm</p>	<p>Regrouping and communications established Reentry, Search and Rescue & Damage Assessment commenced Reentry restrictions in effect</p>