



CHATHAM COUNTY EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN

**ESF - 1 ANNEX
APPENDIX 1 - 1
TAB D**

EVACUATION PLANNING FOR CHATHAM COUNTY BARRIER ISLANDS

JUNE 2011



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ACRONYMS

CCBI	Chatham County Barrier Islands
CEMA	Chatham Emergency Management Agency
EM	Emergency Management
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
EOP	Emergency Operations Plan
ERBD	Evacuation Branch Director
ESF	Emergency Support Function
GDOT	Georgia Department of Transportation
GSP	Georgia State Patrol
HERO(s)	Highway Emergency Response Operator(s)
NHC	Natural, Historical, Cultural
OSC	Operations Section Chief



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I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) outlines procedures intended to help manage and coordinate resources to safeguard the County's population during an Incident of Critical Significance or any other major disaster posing an immediate or potential hazard and/or threat.
- B. During such events, prudent actions required to protect the population may include emergency planners and local officials ordering evacuations involving portions of or the entire population the County.

II. PURPOSE

- A. The purpose of this Tab is to outline special planning and operational considerations; and assigns coordination and operational responsibilities to both government and non-government emergency service agencies and organizations to support an evacuation of the populations from Chatham County Barrier Islands (CCBI) when ordered.
- B. This Tab, along with the other components of the EOP, Emergency Support Function (ESF) -1 Annex, Appendix 1-1 (Evacuation Coordination) serve as planning and decision guides for emergency planners and local officials.

III. SCOPE

- A. The provisions of this Tab apply to all inhabited CCBI. Due to their large populations and limited egress routes, the primary CCBI affected by this Tab include: Dutch, Isle of Armstrong, Burnside, Isle of Hope, Modena, Oatland, Rose Dhu, Skidaway, Talahi, Tybee, Whitemarsh, and Wilmington.
- B. This Tab shall be implemented in conjunction with the provisions outlined in Appendix 1-1 (Evacuation Coordination) to the degree necessary and required to effect a timely evacuation of CCBI. This Tab is not intended to replace established jurisdictional emergency response plans and/or procedures.

IV. AUTHORITIES

- A. This Tab is developed under the authorities and references listed in Appendix 1-1 (Evacuation Coordination). This Tab supersedes any established plans to date.



- B. Chatham County Emergency Management Agency (CEMA) has primary responsibility for compliance with provisions for the County's EOP and is responsible for ensuring execution of the response activities outlined in this Tab.

V. ASSUMPTIONS

- A. Measures will be taken to provide as much advance warning as possible to the effected population, as the case may be during a full evacuation required due to an approaching hurricane.
- B. Mandatory evacuation orders may be issued that only affect CCBI.
- C. Evacuation operations are initiated as required at the local level utilizing all available resources to assure an effective and timely response.
- D. Pre-event planning conducted at all governmental levels of emergency preparedness have identified resource requirements needed to conduct an evacuation of CCBI.
- E. Traffic control and congestion will be an issue during any evacuation affecting CCBI.
- F. Pre-event coordination will include augmentation from state resources; however state assistance will neither be expected nor requested until requests are submitted through proper emergency management channels.
- G. The majority of the population on CCBI will comply with evacuation recommendations and directives and will self evacuate as required in a timely manner.
- H. There will be a limited portion of the population on CCBI that will not comply with evacuation recommendations and directives and will eventually require evacuation assistance.
- I. Despite warnings and other available information, there may be a portion of the population on CCBI that will ignore evacuation recommendations and directives and chose to remain in place.
- J. The City of Tybee Island will be responsible for traffic control and management for US Hwy 80, from the Lazaretto Creek Bridge east to the end of the highway (including the bridge).



VI. IMPLEMENTATION

- A. The provisions of this Tab are implemented upon the recommendation of the CEMA Director, with approval of the Chairman, Chatham County Board of Commissioners, and concurrence of the Mayors of the Municipalities (Command Policy Group).
- B. Management of this Tab is accomplished through primary coordinators of established County ESF Groups listed in Appendix 1-1 (Evacuation Coordination).

VII. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

- A. General. CCBI are particularly vulnerable to the severe weather conditions commonly associated with an approaching tropical storm and/or hurricane. The vast marshlands and areas of sparse vegetation that surround and/or make up much of CCBI will provide their populations with only limited protection from dangerous storm winds. Low elevations and close proximity to the ocean and major river outlets will subject many CCBI to rising water and flooding from both tidal action and storm surge. When a storm approaches, it is anticipated that conditions on CCBI will deteriorate prior to and more rapidly than other locations in the County.
- B. CCBI Evacuation Timing. Taking the above conditions into account, when considering the probable affects of an actual or anticipated threat to the area the population densities of CCBI, the limited availability of west bound egress routes may dictate emergency planners recommend government officials issue evacuation orders for CCBI prior to the rest of the County. There also may be conditions in which the prudent course of action is to conduct a voluntary and/or mandatory evacuation that affects only CCBI populations.
- C. Voluntary Evacuation of CCBI. Voluntary evacuations are generally recommended as a precautionary measure to move designated populations out of harms way from potentially hazardous conditions created by an Incident of Critical Significance such as the approach of a tropical storm or hurricane. During a Voluntary Evacuation of CCBI, emergency planners will recommend that government officials strongly urge the CCBI populations to leave and move to safer locations inland. Personal discretion on the part of affected populations is allowed, but not advised. Persons who refuse to comply with a Voluntary Evacuation Recommendation will not be forcibly removed. However, individuals ignoring the recommendation must understand that the response to any requests made to First Responders and/or other emergency personnel for assistance may be significantly delayed or unavailable.



1. Mandatory Evacuation of CCBI. The purpose of a Mandatory Evacuation Order is to move designated populations out of harms way from the hazards created by an Incident of Critical Significance such as an approaching tropical storm and/or hurricane. During a Mandatory Evacuation of CCBI, government officials will direct the CCBI populations to leave and move to safer locations inland. Personal discretion on the part of those affected by the evacuation order is not a consideration. Persons who refuse to comply with a Mandatory Evacuation Order will neither be arrested nor forcibly removed from their homes. Designated First Responders and other emergency personnel may be required to “stay-behind” to assist during the evacuation, and are the exception to a mandatory order. However, conditions in the designated/affected area(s) may deteriorate to the point that even stay behind emergency personnel must seek adequate shelter and/or leave. Consequently, there may be a point following a Mandatory Evacuation Order (typically before the onset of sustained tropical storm force winds), when First Responders and other emergency personnel will be unable to respond to individual requests for rescue and/or provide other lifesaving assistance.
- D. Warning and Notification. Chatham County has several methods available for communicating warnings, evacuation orders, special instructions, and other information as needed directly to the public. Methods include:
1. CEMA SIGNALS and ALERTS via mass email and social media
 2. The Community Notification System (telephone)
 3. Activation of radio controlled outdoor warning sirens
 4. Audio override of cable television
 5. The Local Emergency Information Network
 6. Public Service Announcements on local radio and television.
- E. Transportation
1. Self-Evacuation. When an evacuation is announced, CCBI populations should be prepared to provide their own transportation; plan to evacuate with others (family and/or friends); or have the ability to hire the appropriate transportation to inland locations.



2. Public Transportation Evacuation Assistance. There may be portions of the populations on CCBI without the means to self-evacuate. Established protocols outlined in the EOP identify appropriate request procedures and the very limited resources from ESF-1 to support requests for emergency Public Transportation Evacuation Assistance. As required, assembly/pick up locations will be established on CCBI where public transportation resources will pick up evacuees and transport them to the County Evacuation Assembly Area.
- F. Evacuation Routes. The geography of the area limits the number of egress routes available to evacuees leaving CCBI for inland destinations. CCBI critical egress routes include:
1. The west bound traffic lane(s) of US Hwy 80 from Tybee Island through Thunderbolt; and west bound lane(s) of Islands Expressway from Whitemarsh Island to the Savannah City limit.
 2. The west bound lane of the Diamond Causeway (Whitemarsh Ave) from Skidaway Island to Montgomery Crossroads.
 3. For more details, see Exhibit 1, CCBI Primary Egress Routes and Special Considerations.
- G. Bridges
1. Drawbridges. There are approximately 11 major bridges providing access to and from CCBI. Of those 11, three are draw bridges requiring operators. During an evacuation, selected drawbridges may be closed in order to facilitate vehicular evacuation well before the onset of wind gusts of 30-35 mph.
 2. Other Bridges. In addition to these major bridges, numerous smaller bridges are incorporated into CCBI road networks. Even though County bridges are inspected on a recurring basis, they are susceptible to damage caused by vehicle/boat traffic, and from environmental conditions. During an evacuation, bridge conditions will be monitored and alternate routes designated in the event a bridge is rendered unusable.



3. Traffic Control and Management Plan. The goal of traffic control/management during an evacuation of CCBI is to ensure westbound traffic lanes of primary egress roadways (and bridges) remain open. During evacuations, traffic control issues and support requirements are coordinated through the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) ESF-13 (Public Safety & Security) Group; however, final authority regarding traffic control requirements at critical intersections, bridges and potential choke points is the responsibility of jurisdictional law enforcement. To achieve this goal, the following measures should be considered:
4. Evacuation Time. Emergency planners and government officials may adjust Hurricane Response Timelines to accommodate the evacuation of CCBI prior to a mandatory evacuation of the entire County.
5. Maintain Traffic Flow. A primary concern during an evacuation of CCBI is the possibility of an egress route becoming blocked by a disabled vehicle due to a mechanical failure or crash. This requires both preventative and reactive capabilities on the part of law enforcement and other emergency responders.
 - a. Preventative measures may be established to prevent an incident from occurring. These measures may include but are not limited to:
 - 1) Controlling Traffic Speed. When available, post additional warning and speed limit signs (including Electronic Sign Boards) along egress routes. Law Enforcement Units may also maintain hi-visibility along primary egress routes to monitor and discourage evacuees from speeding.
 - 2) Avoid Traffic Bottlenecks. When necessary, deploy traffic control measures to increase the time motorists have to merge from two to one lane; or when practical eliminate merge requirements all together (maintain only one west bound lane where necessary). Law enforcement may also take control of traffic signals at critical intersections to maintain traffic flow. These intersections are identified in Tab C of this Appendix.



2. Natural, Cultural, and Historic (NHC) Resources. Chatham County is the location of many significant natural resources and historical landmarks. In some cases, structures, artifacts, and/or other displays may require additional time and/or outside assistance to prepare for and/or evacuate. Several of these natural resources and historic landmarks are located on CCBI. As required, special evacuation support considerations will be coordinated through appropriate emergency management channels. See Exhibit 1, CCBI Primary Egress Routes and Special Considerations.
- J. Post Event Return to CCBI
1. Post Event (Affecting Only CCBI). Following an event that called for a mandatory evacuation of only the CCBI, there may be life-safety issues or other specific hazards throughout the area that require mitigation by first responders and/or other emergency personnel. Following the mitigation of the hazards and any residual affects, and upon public safety officials making the determination the area is safe, the evacuated populations may be allowed to return to the CCBI with minimal or no restrictions.
 2. Post Event (Affecting Chatham County). See Tab E of this Appendix (Post Event Return of the General Population).
- K. Resources
1. Providing the resources required to support an evacuation of CCBI is the responsibility of the affected jurisdictions. Jurisdictional responsibilities for CCBI are:
 - a. Chatham County: Burnside, Dutch, Isle of Hope, Modena, Oatland, Skidaway, Talahi, Whitemarsh, and Wilmington
 - b. City of Savannah: Rose Dhu
 - c. Thunderbolt: Isle of Armstrong
 - d. City Tybee Island: Tybee Island.



2. During an event calling for a full mandatory evacuation of Chatham County, state resources from the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) and Georgia State Patrol (GSP) are dispatched to Chatham County to assist with traffic management on Federal and major State Highways (primarily I-95 and the contra-flow of I-16). One of the two primary evacuation routes off of CCBI is a State Highway (US Hwy 80). When available (prior to initiation of the contra-flow of I-16), these resources may be dispatched to assist local resources manage traffic issues on US Hwy 80. GDOT and GSP resources may provide the following capabilities:
 - a. Highway Emergency Response Operator (HERO) Units. GDOT may be able to provide Chatham County with a number HERO Units to help maintain the flow of traffic on the primary egress routes from CCBI. HEROs respond quickly to incidents involving damaged and/or disabled vehicles to assist motorist(s) and clear the roadway as quickly as possible. HERO Units are equipped with dispensable gasoline, tire changing equipment, jumper cables, water; and have a bumper capable of pushing disabled vehicles off the road. GDOT also may provide additional electronic message boards and other traffic control equipment as needed.
 - b. Additional Traffic Control and Law Enforcement. GSP Officers may be available to assist monitoring traffic and enforcing traffic laws on US Hwy 80 (the primary egress route off Tybee Island, and one of only two egress routes off Whitemarsh Island). GSP Officers may also be available to expedite issues hindering the flow of traffic such as stalled/disabled vehicles and collisions.

VIII. RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. EOC Operations Section Chief (OSC). The OSC is responsible for executing evacuation requirements outlined in the Incident Action Plan, and/or to meet the situation's evacuation requirements. The OSC takes recommendations from the Evacuation Branch Director and determines the appropriate actions required. Together with other EOC Staff, during evacuation planning and operations the OSC insures required resources are identified, procured, and made available to the ERB. The OSC assumes responsibilities of the ERBD when required.



- B. Evacuation Branch Director (ERBD). The ERBD is the primary EOC point of contact for all evacuation issues; and responsible for coordinating with all ESF partners providing support to CCBI evacuations. The ERBD receives guidance from the OSC and takes recommendations from ESF Primary Coordinators to determine appropriate actions.
- C. ESF-1, Transportation Group. Maintains awareness of County transportation resources available to support an evacuation, and is the primary point of contact for and between all of the agencies providing those resources. When required, dispatch County transportation resources as needed to meet evacuation transportation support requests.
- D. ESF-3, Public Works and Engineering Group. The ESF-1 Primary Coordinator is responsible to ensure adequate technical assistance is available during an evacuation to monitor the condition of roadways and bridges along designated primary egress routes; and engineering expertise and resources are available to make emergency repairs to damaged roads and bridges when required to maintain the flow of traffic.
- E. ESF-5, Emergency Management (EM). CEMA staff and EM Liaisons of CCBI jurisdictions provide for the overall command, direction, and control, during CCBI evacuations. EM Liaisons are their jurisdictions' primary advisors when considering evacuation requirements which include: the need to conduct an evacuation; the level of evacuation required; and timing of the evacuation process.
- F. ESF-6, Mass Care and Sheltering Group. ESF-6 Partners assist with identifying and supporting inland shelter destinations/locations as needed.
- G. ESF-8, Public Health and Medical Services. ESF-8 Partners are responsible for coordinating evacuation assistance for the County's Special Needs population. This includes establishing and maintaining a County-wide Special Needs Evacuation Roster. During an evacuation ESF-8 Partners assist with coordinating transportation, including making arrangements for medical transport, for registered special needs evacuees as required.
- H. ESF-11 (NHC). ESF-11 Natural, Cultural, Historical (NCH) Partners are responsible for pre-event planning to coordinate the procedures and support requirements to protect/preserve, and if required evacuate, NHC sites and resources located on CCBI.
- I. ESF-13, Public Safety and Security Group. The ESF-13 Primary Partner is responsible for identifying and coordinating the resources required to support traffic control and management measures established during CCBI evacuations.



- J. ESF-15, External Affairs. Public Information Officers, using available communications resources, coordinate with government and non-government agencies/organizations to provide the affected population with accurate early warning information and timely evacuation order notifications.

IX. TAB MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

- A. Executive Agent: CEMA is the executive agent for Tab management and maintenance. The Tab and supporting documents will be updated periodically as required to incorporate new directives and changes based on lessons learned from exercises and actual events. This section establishes procedures for interim changes and full updates of the Tab.
- B. Types and Changes: Changes include additions of new or supplementary material and deletions. No proposed change should contradict or override authorities or other plans contained in statute, order, or regulation.
- C. Coordination and Approval: Any department or agency with assigned responsibilities within this document may propose a change. CEMA is responsible for coordinating all proposed changes with primary agencies, support agencies and other stakeholders. CEMA will coordinate review and approval for proposed modifications as required.
- D. Notice of Change: After coordination has been accomplished, including receipt of the necessary signed approval supporting the final change language, CEMA will issue an official Notice of Change. The notice will specify the date, number, subject, purpose, background, and action required, and provide the change language on one or more numbered and dated insert pages that will replace the modified pages in the appropriate document. Once published, the modifications will be considered part of the EOP for operational purposes pending a formal revision and re-issuance of the entire document. Interim changes can be further modified or updated using the above process.
- E. Distribution: CEMA will distribute the Notice of Change to all participating agencies. Notice of Change to other organizations will be provided upon request. Re-issuance of the individual document or the entire EOP will take place as required. Working toward continuous improvement, CEMA is responsible for an annual review of the EOP to include all associated and supporting documents, and a complete update every four years (or more frequently if the County Commission or GEMA deem 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 EOP documents for the purpose of interagency review and concurrence.



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Exhibit 1- CCBI Primary Egress Routes and Special Considerations

CCBI Primary Egress Routes and Special Considerations

ISLAND	ZIP CODE	PRIMARY EGRESS ROUTE(S)	SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS
Burnside	31406	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shipyard Rd • Whitefield Ave • Truman Pkwy 	
Cockspur	31404	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cockspur Island Bridge • US Hwy 80 • Islands Expwy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ft Pulaski National Monument • USCG Station Tybee
Dutch	31406	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herb River Dr • Grimball Point Rd • La Roche Ave • Skidaway Rd 	
Elba	31404	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elba Island Rd • Islands Expwy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LNG Ocean Terminal
Isle of Armstrong	31410	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • US Hwy 80 	
Isle of Hope	31406	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skidaway Rd 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wormsloe Historic Site 9123533023
Modena	31411	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modena Island Dr • McWhorter Dr • Diamond Cswy • Whitfield Ave • Truman Pkwy 	
Oatland	31410	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barley Rd • Islands Expwy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oatland Island Wildlife Center • Wilmington River Drawbridges (2)
Ossabaw	31419	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Road Access • Road Network on Island 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ossabaw Island State Heritage Preserve • Ossabaw Island Foundation 9122335104 • On Island Coordinator: • Jim Bitler 9122101613
Rose Dhu	31419	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coffee Bluff Rd 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Skidaway	31411	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McWhorter Dr • Green Island Rd • Diamond Cswy • Whitfield Ave • Truman Pkwy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marine Extension Service Aquarium • Skidaway Island State Park 9125982300 • UGA Skidaway Institute • Skidaway Narrows Drawbridge
Talahi	31410	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterman Dr • US Hwy 80 	
Tybee	31328	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • US Hwy 80 	
Wassaw	31411	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Road Access • Road Network on Island 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wassaw National Wildlife Refuge • No Permanent Residence • US Fish and Wildlife Service
Whitemarsh	31410	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • US Hwy 80 • Islands Expwy 	
Wilmington	31410	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Johnny Mercer Blvd • US Hwy 80 	



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