



CHATHAM COUNTY EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN

ESF ANNEX 15-2

DISASTER AWARENESS AND PREPAREDNESS STRATEGY

SEPTEMBER 2011



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ACRONYMS

CEMA	Chatham Emergency Management Agency
CCPIOA	Chatham County Public Information Officers Association
DAPS	Disaster Awareness and Preparedness Strategy
DPIO	Deputy Public Information Officer
DO	Duty Officer
EAS	Emergency Alert System
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
EOP	Emergency Operations Plan
GEMA	Georgia Emergency Management Agency
JIC	Joint Information Center
LPIO	Lead Public Information Officer
PIO	Public Information Officer
NRF	National Response Framework
SWAW	Severe Weather Awareness Week

DEFINITIONS

Public Education: The process of making the public aware of its risks and preparing citizens for hazards in advance of a disaster and as a long-term strategic effort. Public Education must occur prior to an event. When a disaster strikes, it should not be the first time that the public is hearing emergency preparedness information.

Public Information: The delivery of messages to the public in anticipation of and during an incident. Public information is incident specific and includes the development and release of real-time messages.

CEMA Alert: An email group dedicated to the distribution of time critical preparedness, safety and administrative material that may be of interest to the public and/or motivate the public to take action.



Social Media: Web-based and mobile technologies that turn communication into an interactive dialogue and can assist in providing immediate emergency notification to citizens.



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I. Introduction

- A. The need for clear, concise information about potential and impending disasters is vital to protecting public safety and welfare. Chatham County is vulnerable to both natural and man-made hazards. It is therefore essential that the community is aware of the hazards they face and have the skills and resources to manage emergencies when they occur.
- B. In order to raise the level of disaster awareness of communities in Chatham County, the Chatham Emergency Management Agency (CEMA) Disaster Awareness and Preparedness Strategy (DAPS) has been developed.
- C. The primary objective of the DAPS is to create an informed public that knows the steps that should be taken to prevent and respond to a wide range of emergency incidents. These steps are to protect life, property, and the environment, and to promptly notify CEMA when an emergency occurs.
- D. In an effort to improve public safety and to minimize the loss of life and property during periods of emergency, effective public education and communication campaigns will provide clear objectives and incorporate techniques to motivate the public to act before an emergency.
- E. In a major emergency or disaster, there may be large numbers of media representatives seeking information about the situation and about response efforts. Chatham County will fully cooperate with the media and procedures have been developed to ensure imperative information is disseminated to the public through the media in a timely manner.

II. Purpose

- A. This Appendix establishes policies and procedures relating to public awareness and education programs in order to increase citizen's knowledge and enable safe attitudes and behaviors. Public education works to change people's opinions about a hazard and to motivate them to take actions to reduce risk.
- B. This Appendix has been prepared to be consistent with the Georgia Emergency Management Agency's (GEMA) Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and the National Response Framework (NRF) for emergencies and disasters.



- C. The intent of this document is to provide a program using existing communication facilities and news media outlets to inform the public before, during and after an emergency or disaster whether it is natural, man-made, or terrorist-related.
- D. This strategy aims to increase awareness about Chatham County's emergency response plan and how to learn additional information about the community's emergency management program.
- E. The public information program will serve as a guide to properly plan and prioritize disaster awareness programs in order to fully utilize limited resources.

III. Scope

- A. This Appendix identifies the key policies, concepts of operations, roles, responsibilities and capabilities of public information before, during and after an emergency or disaster.
- B. CEMA provides informational materials and resources to keep the public informed on a variety of Emergency Preparedness topics ranging from hurricanes, severe storm and flood preparedness, tornado preparedness, self-sufficiency immediately after a disaster, pandemic flu preparedness, fire prevention and safety, injury prevention, hazardous materials awareness, and more. In addition, during specific emergency situations, CEMA provides additional information to be made available to the public.

IV. Authorities

- A. CEMA is mandated by the State of Georgia to operate under the purview of the Chatham County Commission and is directly responsible for emergency operations to include warning services and necessary actions incidental to the preparations for an emergency.
- B. During routine operations, CEMA has the responsibility to provide residents and businesses, which are potentially affected by these hazards with information about what they can do to prepare for, respond to, and recover from an emergency.
- C. CEMA has developed and exercised a variety of tools and systems to assist with notifying and disseminating information to the public to include outdoor warning system, the Emergency Alert System (EAS), NOAA All-hazard Weather Radio, media outlets, emergency notification systems (phone, text, email), website, and social media forums.



- D. If the scope of the disaster is large enough, CEMA can utilize the Chatham County Public Information Officer (PIO) as well other local public affairs representatives who are part of the Chatham County Public Information Officers Association (CCPIOA).

V. Assumptions

- A. The public needs timely and accurate information regarding disasters before, during, and after disasters.
- B. Effective public education and communication campaigns seek clear objectives and incorporate techniques used to disseminate public information.
- C. Many disasters can occur rapidly, hampering the ability of response organizations and local government to provide comprehensive information to everyone impacted at the onset. For this reason, there is a need for public education to prepare people for action in future warnings.
- D. Messages on TV and radio are effective; however, there must be an information stream of multiple communications through diverse media such as websites and social media.
- E. Before, during and after a disaster there will be a need to disseminate information in multiple languages, especially literature in Spanish as there are a high number of Spanish-speaking residents in Chatham County.
- F. The demand for information will be overwhelming if the scope of the disaster is of large scale; there will undoubtedly be a need for a coordinated response from the CCPIOA.

VI. Implementation

- A. CEMA reaches the public through a number of methods. These include programs that are targeted to specific audiences such as school children, seniors or the disabled, church or civic groups, neighborhood watch groups and programs that are directed to the general public through campaigns, publications, and teaching resources. Radio, television, newspapers, community public educators, CEMA staff and volunteers all play a vital role in providing public awareness/information messages of CEMA to the public.
- B. CEMA will rely heavily on technology based media to aid in dissemination of public information including the CEMA website, text and email alerts, and social media.



- C. A proposed outline for Emergency Preparedness Education will be developed annually by CEMA which will include a timetable for delivery of the various messages throughout the year (Appendix A). This timetable will outline the topic of the message, the time frame, target audiences and delivery methods. Fact sheets, flyers and other materials needed for delivery of various programs will be identified during this planning phase.
- D. Special consideration will be given to National and State Observances of events such as Severe Weather Awareness Week in February and National Preparedness Month in September. Other topics will be implemented based upon specific threats or seasons such as Hurricane Season from June through November, Tornado Season in the spring and Holiday Safety in December.

VII. Concept of Operation

- A. Public Education Planning and Implementation is an ongoing process. Before a disaster threatens/strikes Chatham County, residents need to be made aware of the hazards they could be faced with. The message should clearly explain three critical issues: the potential losses, the chances that the losses will take place, and how to minimize the losses.
- B. Coordinating Instructions
 - 1. Preparedness: Preparedness includes measures taken before an incident to prepare for or mitigate the effects. Actions include:
 - a. Identify hazards which are specific to our area. The Chatham County Hazard Mitigation Plan identifies hazards that are most likely to affect Chatham County. Many of these are weather related such as thunderstorms, hurricanes and tornados. These hazards as well as current events will be used in planning and implementing the public awareness campaign.
 - b. Identify target audiences, vulnerable populations and stakeholders to address in the development of key messages. Key messages must be communicated to target audiences in a way that they understand, and inspire them to take action. Target audiences include, but are not limited to: Civic Groups, Neighborhood Watch Groups, Business Organizations, Community Groups, Churches, Schools, and individuals with special considerations (elderly, disabled, non-English speakers and those with vision, hearing and cognitive impairments).



- c. Messages and educational materials will be obtained or developed based upon the identified messages, the audience and the method of delivery. (Several sample documents for Public Educational Topics are attached for reference.)
- d. A variety of techniques shall be used to deliver messages to the community. These include:
 - 1) Local media: newspaper articles, radio/television programs
 - 2) Speaking engagements: civic organizations, school events, Neighborhood Watch programs
 - 3) Special events: local festivals, career day at schools
 - 4) Contests: essay contest for elementary school children
 - 5) Educational materials: pamphlets, flyers
 - 6) Online content: website articles, social media discussion on Facebook and Twitter
 - 7) Video: public service announcements that will be posted on the CEMA website and Chatham County YouTube channel, and special video programs that will air on the County government channel
- e. Having an ongoing, positive relationship with local media is vital to an effective education and awareness campaign. CEMA has already established this relationship with each of the local media. Regular press releases and media notices are provided as part of the agency's Public Relations activities. At the beginning of each hurricane season CEMA will invite local media inside our Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to discuss potential threats and ways the media can help disseminate public information, especially if an evacuation for Chatham County is issued.
- f. The CEMA PIO will collect and maintain a file of fact sheets, instructions and procedures, and other readily available pre-scripted information on a wide range of topics to support the rapid dissemination of public information. Pre-scripted information is verified on a regular basis to ensure that it is current and accurate.



- C. CEMA Duty Officer: The CEMA Duty Officer 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 and the PIO function. The AD may determine an EOC or JIC activation is necessary through consultation with the CEMA Director. In the event activation of the JIC or EOC is ordered, the DO will have primary responsibility to initiate notification to the EOC Support Staff and the Partial Activation Team.
- D. CEMA Public Information Officer: The CEMA PIO develops and/or participates in relevant ESF related planning, training and exercises and ensures necessary supplements to the ESF annex are developed and maintained. The CEMA PIO is responsible for the organization and distribution of public information before, during and after disasters or emergencies that affect Chatham County.
- E. JIC LPIO: If a disaster warrants the full activation of the EOC and a JIC, the Chatham County PIO will assume the role of LPIO and the CEMA PIO will assume the role of Deputy PIO (DPIO)
- F. CEMA Volunteers: CEMA Volunteers may be used to help support public information efforts to ensure effective management, communications, and operations. CEMA Volunteers will be used to help with preparedness efforts, attending festivals and expos as well as reaching out to their communities to identify hazards. If the EOC is activated, CEMA Volunteers will serve as Phone Operators.

IX. Appendix Management and Maintenance

- A. CEMA is the executive agent for Annex management and maintenance. This Appendix 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 EOP Annexes may propose a change to the plan. CEMA is responsible for coordinating all 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 all participating agencies. Notice of Change to other organizations will be provided upon request. Re-issuance of the individual annexes or the entire EOP will take place as required. Working toward continuous improvement, CEMA is responsible for an annual review and update of the EOP to include related annexes, and a complete revision every four years (or more frequently if the County Commission or 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.



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ANNEX A

Annual Outline for Focus of Educational Activities

This outline will be reviewed and updated annually by Chatham Emergency Management Agency personnel. The outline will encompass a variety of subjects and methods of delivery for appropriate educational and informational messages. The annual outline is only a guide and can be updated and amended as needed.

January

Winter Weather

- Target Audience: General public, senior citizens, businesses
- Winter weather safety press release
- Safety tips issued on the County Government channel and Chatham County YouTube channel
- Winter storm preparedness tips placed on agency social media sites and website

February

Severe Weather Awareness Week (SWAW)

- Target Audience: General public, children, senior citizens, businesses
- SWAW press release issued to media about severe weather awareness
- Safety tips issued for each day of the week focusing on severe thunderstorms, flooding, tornadoes, supply kits, and lightening
- PSA created to run on local cable channels, the County government channel, Chatham County YouTube channel, and agency social media sites and website
- Severe Weather Awareness tips discussed on weekly radio show
- CEMA will promote Statewide Tornado Drill
- CEMA will hold an essay contest for area 5th graders

March

Volunteer Opportunities

- Target Audience: General public, businesses, civic groups
- Press release issued to media highlighting volunteer opportunities
- Opportunities placed on agency social media sites and website
- Organizations to include: The Community Emergency Response Team and CEMA Search and Rescue Team



June

Hurricane Season

- Target Audience: Entire Chatham County population
- Multiple press releases issued to the media about hurricane season
- Outreach in neighborhoods, schools, civic groups, businesses
- Literature regarding hurricane season made available at CEMA office
- Hurricane information and PSAs placed on agency social media sites and website, County government channel and Chatham County YouTube channel

Home Depot Hurricane Expo

- Target Audience: General public, businesses, senior citizens
- Press release issued to media about Annual Home Depot Hurricane Expo
- CEMA staff and Volunteers will set up a booth at the Expo with information related to hurricanes and preparedness

September

National Preparedness Month

- Target Audience: General public, education institutions, businesses, senior citizens.
- Press release issued to media about National Preparedness Month
- National Preparedness Month information placed on agency social media sites and website
- Preparedness discussions presented to elementary schools

December

Holiday Safety

- Target Audience: General public, education institutions, businesses.
- Holiday Safety information placed on agency social media sites and website



ANNEX B
CEMA Communication Tools

TWITTER 0-6 hour impact	CEMA ALERT 6-24 hour impact	FACEBOOK 0-indefinite hour impact	CEMA Website/ YouTube Channel	Hurricane Hotline
Severe Weather Watches & Warnings	Hurricane Advisories, Watches & Warnings	Information from CEMA Alerts & Twitter is pushed to Facebook	Hurricane Advisories, Watches & Warnings	Hurricane Advisories, Watches & Warnings
Major road closures/fires	Outdoor Warning Siren Tests	Preparedness & safety tips	Preparedness & safety tips	Preparedness & safety tips
Missing person information	Time critical preparedness/ safety/admin information	Videos/Pictures	Videos/Pictures	
		Articles	Articles	
		Promote discussion	Outdoor Warning Siren Tests	



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