

SEVERE WEATHER RESPONSE PLAN

BASIC PLAN

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Severe Weather Response Plan is to provide an effective and coordinated response on the part of local government and support organizations in the event of a severe weather event, thereby protecting life and property.

II. SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

- A. The Virginia Emergency Services and Disaster Law of 2000, as amended, requires that each city and county prepare and keep current an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). This plan should be officially adopted by the City Council and promulgated by the City Manager. It should be staffed, revised, exercised, and reissued once every four years. Hazard specific sub-plans with more detailed operational procedures should also be developed and maintained as appropriate.
- B. The City of Newport News is one of twenty one (21) coastal localities in Virginia where a hurricane threat is a major hazard and where a Severe Weather Response Plan is needed. As noted in the latest evacuation study, up to 65,650 residents may be advised to evacuate their homes if a major hurricane threatens the City. Although outside agencies will have resources to provide massive aid under catastrophic conditions, the City of Newport News and the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) must be prepared to operate without assistance for 72 hours after the catastrophe.

III. ORGANIZATION

- A. The City of Newport News organization for emergency operations consists of existing government departments and supporting organizations. The City Manager/OEM Director, Assistant OEM Director, OEM Coordinator, and the Deputy OEM Coordinator, with assistance from department heads or their representatives, will direct and control emergency operations.
- B. The primary duties and responsibilities for the Severe Weather Response Plan are as assigned in the Newport News Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and supporting ESF and Incident Annexes. Although additional, more detailed tasking and procedures may be added as needed, compatibility with the EOP will be maintained.

IV. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

General

1. Overall emergency operations will be directed and controlled by the Office of Emergency Management (OEM): Executive, Command and General Staff Positions. The Emergency Operation Center (EOC) will be located at 513 Oyster Point Road. OEM will provide necessary support and direction to all emergency response forces and coordination to federal, state, local and volunteer organizations. The OEM staff will consist of a policy or decision-making group, an action group that will coordinate the in-the-field response, and a support group to provide clerical and other EOC staff support. See Direction and Control ESF in the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP).
2. Each department head and each support organization will develop and maintain detailed standard operating procedures (SOPs) necessary to accomplish their assigned tasks. They will be developed as a part of the planning process, and included in their respective parts of the Severe Weather Response Plan.

3. Detailed action checklists are provided for each department and organization as needed to help them gear up for emergency operations. Uniform operations periods are used in order to provide for a timely and coordinated response.
4. Department and organization heads will maintain and update established lines of succession of key emergency personnel.
5. Communication links between the State EOC and the Newport News EOC must be maintained throughout emergency operations (See Communications and Warning ESF in the EOP).
6. The City Manager/Director of Emergency Management, or his representative, will declare a local state of emergency and direct evacuation or other protective actions as necessary.
7. The Governor or his representative at the State Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in Richmond may also need to declare a state of emergency in order to provide for the reception and care of the same evacuees in pre-designated risk and host localities.
8. The City Manager/Director of Emergency Management will ensure that the State EOC is notified immediately upon the declaration of a local emergency and request a State Declaration of Emergency. Periodic situation reports will be required thereafter (See Direction and Control ESF in the EOP). Major decisions relating to evacuation will be coordinated in advance with the State EOC, conditions permitting.
9. By state disaster laws, the governor is the only authority that can require a large-scale mandatory evacuation. The governor will normally conference with affected jurisdictions on determining the areas to include mandatory evacuation order.
10. The Governor/State EOC will coordinate emergency public information news releases. The Newport News PIO will coordinate event-specific news releases with the State EOC prior to dissemination through the local news media (See Emergency Public Information ESF in the EOP). The Director of Emergency Management must approve all public news releases. During the crisis buildup period as the hurricane or severe weather approaches, close coordination will be required between the State EOC and the City of Newport News EOC.
11. The Newport News Police Department will implement the evacuation order. Evacuation notices will be delivered door to door in special needs cases or other special circumstances. Other pre-designated volunteers will provide assistance. The Newport News Police Department will also provide for traffic control and security in the evacuated area.
12. During Hurricane emergencies, Decision ARC analysts and decision makers in the State EOC and the Newport News EOC will coordinate in determining when and where to evacuate. A Liaison will be established and maintained between the State EOC and the Newport News EOC for all major emergency events.
13. The Department of Planning will be responsible for coordinating with each ESF by collecting and processing information, determining situation status, assist in performing short and long-term planning, and will assist the Coordinator in the preparation of daily situation reports.
14. The Department of Human Services will provide support for the registration and care of evacuees in designated emergency shelters. Assistance will be provided by Newport News Public Schools to open and maintain emergency shelters. The Hampton Roads Chapter of the American Red Cross will assist the City by acting as a central point of contact in the management of volunteer resources during disaster situations, in accordance with the mutual aid agreement between the American Red Cross and the City of Newport News.
15. All department and agency heads will maintain accurate records of disaster related expenditures. All disaster-related expenditures will be documented using the emergency cost codes provided by Budget and Evaluation. The emergency related expenses provide the basis for reimbursement in

accordance with the federal Stafford Disaster Act as amended. All expense documentation will be forwarded to the Director of Finance, the City's Applicant Agent.

16. Federal installations (such as Fort Eustis) will be semi-autonomous. They will take care of their own personnel on site or evacuate them to another federal facility inland or local shelter. Personnel and their families residing off base are considered to be a part of the general public. A Fort Eustis Liaison Officer (LNO) will be in the Newport News EOC and will coordinate with Fort Eustis as needed.
17. Support by military units must be requested through the State EOC. Military forces, when made available, will support and assist the City and may receive from the Newport News Emergency Management Director or his designated representative mission-type requests, to include objectives, priorities, and other information necessary to accomplish missions. In cases of immediate life threatening situation, the Director can request military assistance as required but will be required to follow up any such requests through the State EOC. If substantive assistance is anticipated, an official mutual aid agreement should be consummated in advance.

Operation Periods

1. **Condition 5: Routine Operation**
Forecast: Normal Weather Conditions
Period: None
2. **Condition 4: Alert and Notification Status**
Forecast: Severe weather event expected.
Period: 3-5 Days
3. **Condition 3: Emergency Mobilization Phase (Initial Action)**
Forecast: Severe weather event is expected.
Period: 72-48 Hour Alert - Potential Hurricane Threat
4. **Condition 2: Emergency Mobilization Phase**
Forecast: Severe Weather event is expected
Period: 48-24 Hours
5. **Condition 1: Emergency Response Phase**
Forecast: Severe Weather event is expected.
Period: 24-Hour Alert or Hurricane Warning
Landfall Expected - Hurricane Emergency and Full-Scale Response.
6. **Landfall:**
Forecast: Severe Weather event is occurring.
Period: Current Time
Landfall – Emergency Response Ceased
7. **Reentry and Recovery: Recovery and Response Phase**
Forecast: Life Threatening Severe Weather Conditions do not exist.
Begin recovery/reentry operation.
Period: within 24 hours after storm

V. TRAINING AND EXERCISE REQUIREMENTS

- A. Trained and knowledgeable personnel are essential for the prompt and proper execution of the City of Newport News Severe Weather Response Plan. The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) will coordinate training opportunities; provide training and guidance necessary to ensure that all response personnel have a thorough understanding of their assigned responsibilities in a disaster situation, as well as how their role and responsibilities interface with the components of

the City of Newport News Severe Weather Response Plan. OEM will encourage city personnel to participate in state and federal sponsored training necessary to execute plan responsibilities in an effective and responsible manner.

- B. Newport News Office of Emergency Management is responsible for the City's participation in comprehensive City, and state training and exercise programs tailored to the needs of the City of Newport News. This program will be comprised of a general core, functionally specific, as well as ongoing refresher training programs designed to attain and sustain an acceptable level of emergency preparedness for the City of Newport News.
- C. Training will be based on local, regional, federal and state guidance. State instructors can be selected from local government officials and staff, federal and state government, private industry, the military, as well as quasi-public and volunteer groups trained in emergency services and response. All emergency related training and exercises conducted in the City of Newport News or the Commonwealth of Virginia will be documented. City emergency responders are required to meet all federal and state NIMS training requirements. Training needs will be identified and records maintained for all personnel assigned emergency response duties in a disaster.
- D. Newport News Office of Emergency Management will participate in, develop or conduct functional and/or full scale exercises, as deemed necessary, to maintain response efficiency or to develop and test new policies and procedures. These exercises will be designed to not only test the City of Newport News Severe Weather Response Plan, but to train all appropriate officials, emergency response personnel, and city employees. It will improve the overall public and volunteer groups and/or agencies that are encouraged to participate in these exercises. Deficiencies identified by the exercise will be addressed immediately.

VI. AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES

A. Federal

- 1. **The Federal Civil Defense Act of 1950**, Public Law 81-920, as amended.
- 2. **The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act**, Public Law 93-288, as amended.
- 3. **"Emergency Services and Assistance," Code of Federal Regulations**, Title 44.

B. State

- 1. **"Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Services and Disaster Law of 2000,"** Sections 44-146.13 to 44-146.29:2, Code of Virginia. (See Appendix 1)
- 2. **Commonwealth of Virginia, Office of the Governor, Executive Order Number Four (2002)**, Delegation of Governor's Authority to Declare a State of Emergency and to Call the Virginia National Guard to Active Service for Emergencies or Disasters ...
- 3. **Commonwealth of Virginia, Office of the Governor, Executive Order Number Sixty-Five (2004)**, Promulgation of the Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan.
- 4. **Commonwealth of Virginia, Office of the Governor, Executive Order**, Basic Plan Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan April 2004 Updated: 09/01/05 Page 11 of 79.
- 5. **Number Sixty-Nine (2004)**, Virginia's Secure Commonwealth Initiative.

C. Local

- 1. City Codes: ARTICLE XXVII. OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT Sec. 2-645.

2. City Ordinance. No.5689-01 adopted 25 Sept. 2002, 5854-02 adopted 15 Oct. 2002, 5864-02 adopted November 12, 2002, 5871-02 adopted 11 Nov. 2002, and 6155-05, § 1, adopted September 13, 2005, and effective January 1, 2007, amended Art. VI, Water Emergency.
3. Ordinance. No. 6148-05.Sec. 28-4.1. Curfew during a state of local emergency.
4. City Code Chapter 4. Council Generally, Sec. 4.14. Emergency ordinances.
5. CHAPTER 2. POWERS OF CITY, Sec. 2.02. (D) Relative to finance. Emergency appropriations.
6. City Ordinance 10879-05 adopted 10 May 2005, Shelter Agreement with LINK Hampton Roads.
7. City Ordinance 10674, adopted 22 June 2004, Level III Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Agreement.

REFERENCES

- A. The National Response Framework (NRF), Department of Homeland Security, March 2008
- B. "Guide for All-Hazards Emergency Operations Planning," SLG 101, Federal Emergency Management Agency, September 1996.
- C. Virginia Hurricane Evacuation Study, FEMA and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, March 2008.
- D. Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency Guidance for the 2006 Hurricane Season.
- E. The Hampton Roads Hurricane Traffic Control Plan, Virginia Department of Transportation, June 2006.

VII. DEFINITIONS

Advisory - (Abbrev. ADVY) - Highlights special weather conditions that are less serious than a warning. They are for events that may cause significant inconvenience, and if caution is not exercised, it could lead to situations that may threaten life and/or property.

Backwater Flooding - Hydrologic terms, upstream flooding caused by downstream conditions such as channel restriction and/or high flow in a downstream confluence stream.

Blizzard (abbrev. BLZD) - A blizzard means that the following conditions are expected to prevail for a period of 3 hours or longer: Sustained wind or frequent gusts to 35 miles an hour or greater; and Considerable falling and/or blowing snow (i.e., reducing visibility frequently to less than ¼ mile)

Blizzard Warning - Issued for winter storms with sustained or frequent winds of 35 mph or higher with considerable falling and/or blowing snow that frequently reduces visibility to 1/4 of a mile or less. These conditions are expected to prevail for a minimum of 3 hours.

Civil Emergency Message (Abbrev. CEM) - A message issued by the National Weather Service in coordination with Federal, state or local government to warn the general public of a non-weather related time-critical emergency which threatens life or property, e.g. nuclear accident, toxic chemical spill, etc.

Decision Arc - A graphical means to illustrate reasonably accurate time frames for decision making.

Evacuation Window - The time between the release of an evacuation advisory and when the area to be evacuated must be cleared.

Flash Flood Watch - Issued to indicate current or developing hydrologic conditions that are favorable for flash flooding in and close to the watch area, but the occurrence is neither certain or imminent.

Flash Food Warning - Issued to inform the public, emergency management, and other cooperating agencies that flash flooding is in progress, imminent, or highly likely.

Flood Warning - A flood *warning* means flooding is already occurring or will occur soon in your area.

Flood Watch - A flood watch means a flood is possible in your area.

Gale Warning - Sustained wind speeds of 39-54 mph (34-47 kts) expected.

Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) - International reference time used in communications, aviation and weather to provide a common reference time. GMT is five hours later than Eastern Standard Time, and four hours later than Eastern Daylight Time.

Hurricane - When a tropical storm with pronounced rotary circulation reaches sustained wind speeds of 74 mph (64 kts) or more, it is classified as a hurricane. Severe weather is generally widespread throughout the storm system. The hurricane is assigned a name.

Hurricane Warning - A hurricane is expected to strike your area within 24 hours or less.

Hurricane Watch - A hurricane may strike your area within 24 to 36 hours.

Intermediate Advisory or Bulletin - A method of updating regular advisory information every two or three hours as necessary.

Local Statement - These are disseminated by the local National Weather Service office and provide specific information about the anticipated effects of the storm for local areas.

Major Hurricane – A Category 3, 4 or 5 Hurricane.

Mean Low Water (MLW) - A tidal datum. The average of all the low water heights observed over the National Tidal Datum Epoch. For stations with shorter series, simultaneous observational comparisons are made with a control tide station in order to derive the equivalent datum of the National Tidal Datum Epoch.

Mean Lower Low Water (MLLW) - A tidal datum. The average of the lower low water height of each tidal day observed over the National Tidal Datum Epoch. For stations with shorter series, simultaneous observational comparisons are made with a control tide station in order to derive the equivalent datum of the National Tidal Datum Epoch.

Mean Sea Level (MSL) - The arithmetic mean of hourly water elevations observed over a specific 19-year tidal epoch.

Microburst - A very localized column of sinking air, producing damaging divergent and straight-line winds at the surface that are similar to but distinguishable from tornadoes that generally have convergent damage.

Nor'easter - a winter storm whose winds come from the northeast, the precipitation and wind pattern is similar to tropical storms and hurricanes. They also can cause flooding, erosion, gale force winds, hail, snow and ice.

Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale - A scale used to project potential hurricane damage. There are five hurricane levels, with Category 1 the least damaging and Category 5 the worst.

Enhanced Fujita Tornado Damage Scale – A scale used to project potential tornado damage. There are six tornado levels with EF 0 the least damaging and EF5 the worst. The Enhanced Fujita is based on the amount and type of wind damage.

Special Advisory or Bulletin - Special information given anytime there is a significant change in weather conditions or change in warnings.

Storm Surge - The increase in height of the surface of the sea caused by the force of the storm and the slope of the continental shelf that causes the water level to rise as it approaches land.

Storm Warning - Sustained wind speeds of 55-73 mph (48-63 kts) expected. Although normally issued as a separate event, such as a Nor'easter, it may be in advance of a hurricane event.

Subtropical Depression - A subtropical cyclone in which the maximum 1-minute sustained surface wind is 38 mph (33 knots) less.

Tornado - A tornado is a violently rotating column of air that is in contact with both a cloud base and the surface of the earth. Tornadoes are typically in the form of a visible condensation funnel, with the narrow end touching the earth.

Tornado Warning - This is issued when a tornado is indicated by the WSR-88D radar or sighted by spotters.

Tornado Watch - This is issued by the National Weather Service when conditions are favorable for the development of tornadoes in and close to the watch area.

Tropical Depression - A tropical cyclone in which the maximum 1-minute sustained surface wind is 38 mph (33 knots) or less.

Tropical Disturbance - A discrete tropical weather system of apparently organized convection--generally 100 to 300 mi in diameter--originating in the tropics or subtropics, having a non-frontal migratory character and maintaining its identity for 24 hours or more.

Tropical Storm - Counterclockwise circulation of clouds, and winds 39-73 mph (34-63 kts). The storm is assigned a name.

Tropical Storm Warning - A tropical storm is expected to strike your area within 24 hours or less.

Tsunami - The phenomenon we call "tsunami" (soo-NAH-mee) is a series of traveling ocean waves of extremely long length generated by disturbances associated primarily with earthquakes occurring below or near the ocean floor. Underwater volcanic eruptions and landslides can also generate tsunamis. In the deep ocean, their length from wave crest to wave crest may be a hundred miles or more but with a wave height of only a few feet or less. They cannot be felt aboard ships nor can they be seen from the air in the open ocean. In deep water, the waves may reach speeds exceeding 500 miles per hour.

Tsunami Watch - An advance alert to areas that could be impacted by destructive tsunami waves based on seismic information without confirmation that a destructive tsunami is underway

Tsunami Warning - A warning issued when the imminent threat of a tsunami from a large undersea earthquake or following confirmation that a potentially destructive tsunami is underway.