

CHATHAM COUNTY EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN

STANDARD OPERATING
GUIDE 15-3

DISASTER AWARENESS
PREPAREDNESS
STRATEGY

JANUARY 2016




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<i>Chatham Community Emergency Management Program</i> STANDARD OPERATING GUIDE	<i>Effective Date:</i> 22 JANUARY 2016 <i>Supersedes:</i> N/A	
<i>SOG Title:</i> DISASTER AWARENESS PREPAREDNESS STRATEGY	<i>SOG Number:</i> SOG 15-3	
<div style="text-align: center;"><hr/>Dennis Jones CEMA Director</div>		

1.0 POLICY

- 1.1 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.
- 1.2 The 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.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 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.

2.0 PURPOSE

- 2.1 This document provides guidance 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.

- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 The public information program will serve as a guide to properly plan and prioritize disaster awareness programs in order to fully utilize limited resources.

3.0 SCOPE

- 3.1 This Appendix identifies the key policies, concepts of operations, roles, responsibilities and capabilities of public information before, during and after an emergency or disaster.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 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 (Tab 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.

- 3.6 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.

4.0 ASSUMPTIONS

- 4.1 The public needs timely and accurate information regarding disasters before, during, and after disasters.
- 4.2 Effective public education and communication campaigns identify clear objectives and incorporate techniques used to disseminate public information.
- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 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.
- 4.6 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.

5.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 CEMA: CEMA Director will make notifications to County Commissioners as required, the County Manager, and appropriate County Department Heads. The CEMA Director serves as a liaison and advisor to the Command Policy Group. This role is to serve as the lead person over disaster operations and relay information, along with his professional recommendations, to the Command Policy Group for decisions and declarations. The Director also has signature authority and responsibility to issues and/or requests through the County and GEMA. During times of community crisis or major events, the CEMA Director may serve as the lead spokesperson to the community and primary subject matter expert in relation to the County's emergency management function.

- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 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).
- 5.4 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.

6.0 PROCEDURE

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 Preparedness includes measures taken before an incident to prepare for or mitigate the effects. Actions include:
 - 6.2.1 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.
 - 6.2.2 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).

- 6.2.3 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.)
- 6.2.4 A variety of techniques shall be used to deliver messages to the community. These include:
- Local media: newspaper articles, radio/television programs
 - Speaking engagements: civic organizations, school events, Neighborhood Watch programs
 - Special events: local festivals, career day at schools
 - Contests: essay contest for elementary school children
 - Educational materials: pamphlets, flyers
 - Online content: website articles, social media discussion on Facebook and Twitter
 - 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
- 6.2.5 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.
- 6.2.6 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.
- 6.2.7 PIOs within the CCPIOA meet periodically as needed to share ideas and strategies for delivering important preparedness information to the public.

- 6.3 Response processes mitigate the effects of unexpected problems and allow for the orderly release of information. Response activities for disaster communications with the public include:
- 6.3.1 Rapid mobilization of CEMA PIO to prepare and deliver messages to the public focusing on:
- Emergency status information
 - Lifesaving/health preservation instructions and emergency status information
 - Information in response to public or media inquiry
 - Information to resolve any conflicting information or to dispel rumors
- 6.3.2 Depending on scale of disaster, CEMA PIO will disseminate messages through local media, CEMA Alert, Facebook, Twitter, CEMA Website, text alerts, the County YouTube channel and if it is a hurricane threatening, the WTOC Hurricane Hotline.
- 6.3.3 CEMA has a partnership with Lamar Advertising to use the 13 digital billboards throughout the County to relay important lifesaving information. If needed, CEMA PIO or CEMA Duty Officer (DO) will alert Lamar representatives to use the company's billboards.
- 6.3.4 In situations when the EOC is activated, the CEMA PIO, Chatham County PIO and volunteer Phone Operators will be activated.
- 6.3.5 When deemed appropriate, activate a Joint Information Center (JIC) near the EOC allowing PIOs to collaborate on a unified public message.
- 6.3.6 Prepare media releases, key messages and talking points.
- 6.3.7 If deemed necessary, the CEMA website homepage will be replaced with an incident specific page containing pertinent information about the current emergency/disaster.
- 6.4 During Recovery, incident communications and public information efforts are sustained as long as necessary to continually reassure, inform and respond to public information needs.
- 6.4.1 Deliver messages to the public focusing on:

- Disaster assistance and recovery assistance.
- Donations management assistance from external groups.

6.4.2 If an evacuation is ordered, public information on re-entry and response efforts will be distributed to media, as well as through various CEMA communication tools.

6.5 CEMA will continually monitor the effectiveness of the Public Information strategy by noting the behavior of residents as well as the number of individuals reached through various communication tools. The need for new or revised training will be determined and implemented as identified. In addition, exercises will be used to evaluate the training.

7.0 MAINTENANCE

7.1 CEMA is the executive agent for SOG management and maintenance. The Appendices and supporting documents will be updated periodically as required to incorporate new directives and changes based on lessons learned from exercises and actual events.

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TAB 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

TAB B: CEMA COMMUNICATIONS TOOLS

TWITTER 0-6 hour impact	CEMA ALERT 1-24 hour impact	FACEBOOK 0-indefinite hour impact	CEMA Website/YouTube Channel	Hurricane Hotline
Time Critical Information	Non-time critical information	Information from CEMA Alerts	Hurricane Advisories, Watches & Warnings	Hurricane Advisories, Watches & Warnings
Severe Weather Watches & Warnings	Hurricane Advisories, Watches & Warnings	Preparedness & safety tips	Preparedness & safety tips	Preparedness & safety tips
Major road closures/fires	Outdoor Warning Siren Tests	Videos/Pictures	Videos/Pictures	
Missing person information	Critical preparedness/safety/admin information	Articles	Articles	
		Promote discussion	Outdoor Warning Siren Tests	
		Note***Tweets are pushed to Facebook		

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