York County

Elected Officials

Emergency Management Guide

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Introduction

Pennsylvania's Emergency Management Services Code (35 Pa. C.S. §§ 7101 et seq.) directs and authorizes every political subdivision (i.e., county, city, borough, incorporated town, and township) to have an emergency management program that includes a trained Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC), an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), and a functioning Emergency Operations Center (EOC) with a trained staff. York County Office of Emergency Management (YCOEM) has designed this guide to provide elected officials with a basic understanding of the fundamental requirements to ensure an effective emergency management program.

Emergency Management:

A Vital Government Function

Emergency management is an essential government service. Its purpose is to apply resources and efforts to mitigate, prevent when possible, protect where feasible, and to respond and recover from all threats and hazards that impact the safety and security of the nation.

Emergencies and disasters can pose both short and long-term public policy challenges, including continuity of government, public health, economic development, the environment, agriculture, and technology. In addition to natural disasters, emergency management must deal with complex issues like climate adaptation, cybersecurity, countering terrorism, critical infrastructure interdependencies, infectious disease outbreaks, and school safety. While not necessarily the lead agency in every event, emergency management is responsible for coordinating the overall response. Having an effective emergency management system in place can help minimize the potentially devastating impact from emergencies and disasters.

Government has the responsibility to ensure an effective response and recovery for any event that threatens the residents and communities of a state. The emergency management agency is responsible for:

- Identifying and assessing potential hazards;
- Developing emergency operations plans and procedures;
- Training personnel;
- Conducting drills and exercises to test plans;
- Providing situational awareness for informed decision making by leaders;
- Coordinating response efforts between all public and private entities;
- Providing critical information to the public;
- Facilitating mutual aid;
- Administering disaster assistance programs; and
- Providing overall coordination for disaster recovery.

► Why is Emergency Management Important?

There are real benefits to being prepared. Being prepared can reduce fear, anxiety, and losses that accompany disasters. Communities, families, and individuals should know what to do in the event of a fire and where to seek shelter during a tornado. They should be ready to evacuate their homes and take refuge in public shelters and know how to care for their basic medical needs thereby reducing the demand on public safety resources that are strained or overwhelmed during an emergency.

People also can reduce the impact of disasters (flood proofing, elevating a home or moving a home out of harm's way, and securing items that could shake loose in an earthquake) and sometimes avoid the danger completely.

The need to prepare is real. Disasters disrupt hundreds of thousands of lives every year. Each disaster has lasting effects, both to people and property. If a disaster occurs in your community, local government and disaster-relief organizations are expected to help. Individuals, families and businesses need to be ready as well. Local responders may not be able to reach them immediately, or they may need to focus their efforts elsewhere.

Your constituents should know how to respond to severe weather or any disaster that could occur in your area - hurricanes, earthquakes, extreme cold, flooding, or terrorism. They should also be ready to be self-sufficient for at least five days. This may mean providing for their own shelter, first aid, food, water, and sanitation.

Disasters frequently overwhelm a community's ability to fund recovery efforts. The federal government frequently provides disaster relief or mitigation funds to help reduce potential disasters or recover from them. However, in order to receive these funds all political jurisdictions must comply with presidential directives that require disaster planning and preparedness efforts on the part of government at all levels.

► Who is Part of the Emergency Management System?

- Elected officials
- Local, state and federal emergency management and response agencies
- Private sector representatives
- Volunteer agencies and other non-governmental organizations
- Members of the public

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA):

FEMA's responsibilities during emergencies or disasters, as mandated by federal law and the Stafford Act, are to help protect the United States of America by coordinating state response to major emergencies and disasters, directing assistance to the states when needed, and coordinating assistance with the other federal agencies.

Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA):

PEMA helps communities and citizens mitigate against, prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies including natural disasters, acts of terrorism, or other human-made disasters. PEMA supports county emergency management agencies by coordinating and engaging the whole community including Federal and State partners, volunteer organizations involved in disasters, private sector business communities, and citizens.

York County Office of Emergency Management (YCOEM):

YCOEM is charged with protecting the community by coordinating and integrating all activities necessary to build, sustain and improve the capability to prevent, mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from threatened or actual natural disasters, acts of terrorism or other man-made disasters.

Municipal Emergency Management:

The municipal responsibilities during emergencies or disasters, as mandated by Pennsylvania law, are to help protect their residents by managing and coordinating the response to major emergencies and disasters, requesting assistance to other municipalities and the county Office of Emergency Management when needed. To prepare for this, the municipal emergency management agency is responsible for:

- A trained and certified EMC.
- An EOC with trained staff.
- A mitigation plan that includes a hazard analysis and vulnerability impacts.
- A current EOP.
- A communication system.
- A warning system.
- Evacuation plans.
- Designated mass care shelters.
- Education program for citizens.
- Trained response personnel.
- An exercise/drill schedule.
- A resource manual.
- Equipment for response personnel.
- A trained damage assessment team (county and municipal).

Phases of Emergency Management

▶ What is the Stafford Act?

The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act) is a United States Federal law designed to bring an orderly and systemic means of Federal natural disaster assistance for state and local governments in carrying out their responsibilities to aid citizens. It created the system in place today by which a Presidential Disaster Declaration of an emergency triggers financial and physical assistance through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The Act gives FEMA the responsibility for coordinating government-wide relief efforts.

▶ Title 35

Chapter 75, Section 7501, directs and authorizes each political subdivision to establish a local (the term "local" includes both municipal and county government) emergency management organization. It also explains the legal and moral obligations of elected officials. Each local organization shall have responsibility for emergency management, response, and recovery within its territorial limits. It authorizes the governing body of a political subdivision to declare a local disaster emergency when it finds that a local disaster has occurred or is imminent; the declaration must be signed by a majority of the elected officials. During an emergency, the governing body may delegate to the mayor, or other chief executive officer, authority to declare a local disaster emergency. In some cases counties or municipalities governed under a Home Rule Charter, the mayor or county executive may declare the disaster unilaterally.

Title 35 requires all political subdivisions to appoint an Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC) to oversee planning, training, and preparation during non-disaster times, and to act as the coordinator in the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) during times of disasters. The responsibilities placed on this individual are significant. The EMC is the primary agent for the elected officials and is invaluable when disaster strikes. The EMC is then appointed by the Governor. The EMC is responsible to the elected officials or their designees.

An effective EMC:

- is a leader;
- has the respect of the emergency response groups in the community;
- is capable of rallying all community resources; has planning and training abilities; and
- possesses administrative abilities.

In the development of the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), the EMC also provides and coordinates the appropriate training for personnel; thereby enabling the community's EOP to be a living document. The EMC maintains records and reports, providing required documentation of training, exercises, and disaster events. Failure to do so accurately and in a timely manner may result in an ineffective response to an emergency and result in a failure to support the recovery process.

The effective EMC leads the coordinated, concentrated response effort that results in a successful community response to any emergency. An EMC without leadership ability will have an impossible task. The selection of the wrong person to be the coordinator may place the lives of the people in jeopardy. The elected officials of the community may become respondents to lawsuits for their failure to provide appropriate preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery functions.

It is not advisable to select the police chief or the fire chief for the position of local EMC. While they may be qualified to fill the position, regular duties may compete with those of the EMC during disaster times, making it difficult to fill two positions at the same time. In smaller communities, elected officials have filled the position of EMC. In some instances, elected officials have entered into regional agreements with other municipalities to obtain an EMC.

Act 93, Intrastate Mutual Aid, amended Title 35 Chapter 73 and created a system of intrastate mutual aid between participating political subdivisions within this Commonwealth, whereby each participating political subdivision recognizes that emergencies transcend the boundaries of a political subdivision and that intergovernmental coordination is essential for the protection of lives and property and for the best use of available public and private assets. The system provides for mutual assistance among the participating political subdivisions in the prevention of, response to, and recovery from threats to public health and safety that are beyond the capability of an affected community to respond. The system provides for mutual cooperation among the participating subdivisions in conducting exercises, testing, or other training activities. Under the provisions of this act, all political subdivisions are participants unless they opt out by resolution.

► Other Laws and Directives Affecting Emergency Management

Federal

- Title 44, Code of Federal Regulations, Emergency Management and Assistance
- The Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986 (SARA)
- The National Homeland Security and Combating Terrorism Act of 2002 (S. 2452)
- The National Incident Management System
- The National Response Framework

State

- The Pennsylvania Hazardous Material Emergency Planning and Response Act 1990-165 (Act 165)
- Pennsylvania Radiation Protection Act, 1984-147 (Act 147)
- The Public Safety Emergency Telephone Act, Act 78 of 1990, as amended by Act 17 of 1998, Act 56 of 2003, and Act 72 of 2008
- The Counterterrorism Planning, Preparedness and Response Act, Act of December 16, 2002, P.L. 1967, No. 227 35 (Act 227)

Leadership During Crisis:

The Role of Elected Officials

Emergency management, from mitigation through long-term recovery, must be recognized and supported by all elected officials as a critical government service.

In turn, elected officials should hold emergency management agencies accountable and expect them to demonstrate capability that's been developed through the investment of public funds.

Elected officials must understand their emergency authorities and responsibilities, and practice them in conjunction with emergency management officials before a disaster occurs. They should know their county emergency management director and establish a strong relationship, request a briefing on local preparedness efforts, learn about emergency plans and procedures, and visit the emergency operations center and other critical facilities.

It is vital for government to be able to promptly and accurately inform the public about the seriousness of an event and provide assurance that leaders are fully informed and directing the response with every available resource. For public officials to be effective leaders during times of crisis, they must have a clear understanding of how government responds to emergencies and disasters, what resources are available, what types of assistance can be provided to citizens, and how much time it may take to deliver that assistance. They must be able to instill a sense of calm and temper expectations of what government can do to aid in the recovery. Public officials must deliver a coordinated message with emergency management so that citizens don't receive conflicting information.

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Policymakers have a responsibility to reach decisions that keep their constituents and communities safe even when those decisions may be unpopular. Mitigation should be encouraged before the disaster occurs to strengthen and protect critical infrastructure, provide incentives for communities for the adoption and enforcement of effective building codes, and reward builders and homeowners who make responsible decisions to mitigate risk that can have positive impacts on the entire community.

▶ Essential Acts for Prepared Officials

- Meet with your emergency management team to learn about the hazards that threaten your jurisdiction and what is being done to address those hazards
- Take the training required under Federal law (IS-100, IS-200, IS-700, IS-800)
- Take the recommended training (G-402, G-191)
- Learn about emergency management and disaster assistance services, as well as limitations
- Encourage all government agencies and business leaders to coordinate and collaborate with the emergency management agency
- Visit your jurisdiction's emergency operations center
- Encourage individuals, families and businesses to develop an emergency plan and be self-sufficient in the immediate aftermath of a disaster

▶ First Hour Considerations for Elected Officials

These First Hour Considerations will help elected and appointed officials assess what has happened during the first hour of a major event and make decisions concerning what actions need to be taken to help protect life, property, and the environment.

Immediate Actions for any Incident

- Gain Situational Awareness
- Determine Response Status
- Review Status of Initial Protective Actions
- Consider Additional Protective Actions
- Evaluate Public Information Needs

1. **Situational Awareness**
   - If an incident occurred, what happened, including where and when?
     - What kind of incident (natural disaster, accident, terrorism)?
     - Estimated injuries/fatalities?
     - Estimated damage to or status of critical infrastructure (transportation, power, medical, water, communications, cyber, chemical)?
     - Estimated duration of incident?
   - If incident has not occurred, what is latest information/intelligence about threats? What is the potential impact? What is the expected timeframe?
2. **Response Status**
   - Who is leading the response or investigation?
   - What assets/agencies are on-scene, available, or needed?
   - What is the threat status and/or emergency declarations status (federal, state, local)?

3. **Initial Protective Actions** (Schools, Workforce, and Transportation)
   - Have any initial protective actions occurred for **schools** (e.g. lockdown)?
   - Have any initial protective actions occurred for **citizens** and the **workforce** (e.g. shelter in place or evacuate)?
   - How have special needs populations and pets been addressed?
   - Have any initial protective actions occurred for **transportation** (e.g. public transportation operational, tolls suspended)?
   - What schools, hospitals, other congregate care facilities, hospitals, and/or workforce facilities are in the hazard area?
4. **Additional Protective Actions** and who should be involved in these discussions.
   - What additional protective actions may be needed to protect affected general public, schools, workforce, critical infrastructure, etc?
     - Evacuation, shelter in place, quarantine, school/work dismissal, cancellation of public meetings, closing of government facilities, closing of roads.
     - How to prepare? Activate emergency operations centers and joint information centers; inform health services sector, mass care facilities, transportation assets; request mutual aid; issue public advisories.
   - What considerations should be included when making protective action decisions?
     - For a threat or hazard with a large area impact, consider shelter in place or partial or full-scale evacuation of potentially impacted area.
     - For a threat or hazard with a local impact area, consider shelter in place or local evacuation unless addressed below.
     - For a short air release of a toxic chemical (e.g., brief plume), consider shelter in place initially downwind of release.
     - For a long air release of a toxic chemical (e.g., continuous leak), consider local evacuation downwind of release.
     - For an explosion, consider evacuating the impacted area and secondary devices.
     - For infectious contamination, depending on type, consider quarantine, requesting the strategic national stockpile, and/or mass prophylaxis.
     - For a dirty bomb, consider sheltering initially and then evacuation of people downwind.
     - For flooding, consider evacuation of impacted area.
5. **Public Information**
   - What should be communicated, when, how, and by whom?
   - What information has been communicated to the general public/schools/workforce, and is the message uniform and consistent across all jurisdictions involved?
   - First hour summary statement can be filled in with details gathered in Sections 1 – 3.

[An incident] has occurred in [jurisdiction]. [Local, County, State, Federal officials and agencies] are [responding to/managing the incident]. At this time, [we] are asking individuals who live or work in the area to [shelter-in-place/evacuate] and monitor local radio and television stations for further information and instructions. Schools and daycare facilities throughout the impacted area are [locked down. Students will not be released until the situation has been fully assessed.]

- Evacuation Statement.

The emergency management agency of [insert jurisdiction] is directing all people in the area of [identify areas] to immediately evacuate. [Insert incident] has occurred and residents in this area are in immediate danger. Residents should leave via the following route(s). [Identify streets/roads to use]. Shelters have been opened at [identify shelter locations]. Residents needing emergency transportation should [call / go to] [identify emergency transportation number or assembly location]. Do not drive through barricades or off-limit areas. Do not go to your children's school or day care center. They will probably be evacuated by the time you get there. Public safety officials are requesting residents to follow these instructions immediately and drive safely. Tune to local radio stations and follow message signs while driving for more information. Please make sure your neighbors, homebound people, latchkey children, and mobility impaired neighbors are aware of this bulletin and assist them if possible.

- Shelter-in-Place Statement.

The emergency management agency of [insert jurisdiction] is directing all people in the area of [identify areas] to shelter-in-place. [Insert incident] has occurred and residents in this area should stay inside with your pets and close all windows, and doors. Tape cracks for extra protection. Close all vents on cooling, heating or ventilating systems. If you have a fireplace, put out the fire and close the damper. Do not go to your children's school or day care center. They will be taking shelter there and you will not be allowed inside. Listen to instructions from emergency officials on radio or television. Please make sure your neighbors, homebound people, latchkey children, and mobility impaired neighbors are aware of this bulletin and assist them if possible.

▶ Emergency Preparedness for Individuals

Elected officials should make sure the public, private sector and media understand the limitations of government in disasters and plan for emergencies in advance.

The increasing reliance on government to meet the most basic needs of people in the immediate aftermath of a disaster leads to unrealistic expectations and causes other vital response and recovery actions to be delayed.

Disaster assistance programs are available to help individuals, businesses, nonprofit organizations and governments recover following a disaster, but the programs are limited and many include loans that must be repaid or require a shared financial contribution. Sufficient government funding isn't available to fully restore what can be lost in a disaster. Therefore, it's important that people make good decisions about where they build their homes and locate their businesses, purchase adequate insurance, put emergency plans in place, and take actions to lessen the impact of disasters before they strike.

> The message of individual preparedness and self-reliance is one that should be conveyed by elected officials before, during and after disasters.

State and local emergency management agencies regularly promote individual and family preparedness through public information campaigns and other special events to raise awareness of the importance of emergency planning. Specific instructions on what to do during a disaster can be found on their web sites along with emergency plans, evacuation routes, and emergency shelter locations. Many states now provide information to the public in real-time through apps that can be downloaded onto smart phones or other electronic devices. Elected officials are encouraged to contact their emergency management agencies and lend support to public information campaigns taking place within their jurisdictions.

▶ Private Sector Preparedness

Companies in the private sector have a responsibility to their employees and the communities they serve to be prepared for emergencies and disasters.

Elected officials can encourage key industries and companies to assess their own hazards and threats, develop plans and procedures to address them, and train and drill their employees on emergency protocols. In addition, many businesses that can reopen quickly following a disaster can also help provide basic services to communities such as bottled water, ice, food, and fuel. This allows government to focus on other vital services, such search and rescue operations, utilities restoration and infrastructure repair.

The private sector has vast resources beyond those of government and the systems in place to access and deliver equipment and other assistance more quickly. Most state and local governments have engaged in joint planning with the private sector and recognize them as important partners in an effective emergency management system. Public-private partnerships that allow each sector to utilize their skills and resources can help ensure a quicker recovery.

The private sector must be resilient and elected officials should encourage business leaders to be prepared. Business continuity is vital to a community's ability to recover after a disaster

▶ Public Notification Methods

There are several methods for public notification in emergencies. Some of these are listed below. However, other methods might work better depending on the circumstances.

- Email blasting
- Reverse 911
- Radio and Television.
- Public address systems fixed and mobile.
- Software driven and online automatic dialing systems.

Whichever method you decide to employ, it is vital that a rapid notification system be developed to enable your First Responders to communicate with the public to provide information vital to their safety. Your County Emergency Manager may be able to assist you in this endeavor.

▶ Helpful Links

Emergency Operations Planning – https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/25975

Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency - https://www.pema.pa.gov/Pages/Default.aspx

York County Office of Emergency Management - https://yorkcountypa.gov/emergency-services/emergency-management-office.html

Citizens Corps – https://www.ready.gov/citizen-corps

Personal and Family Preparedness – https://www.ready.gov/

CDC Flu Season Information – https://www.cdc.gov/flu

Centers for Disease Control – https://www.cdc.gov/

American Red Cross – https://www.redcross.org/

Business Disaster Planning – https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/disaster-assistance

National Incident Management System – https://www.fema.gov/national-incident-management-system

▶ Training Links

National Incident Management System – https://training.fema.gov/nims/

Emergency Management Institute ICS Training – https://training.fema.gov/emi.aspx

Are you ready?