

The Role of Elected Officials During Disasters



FLORIDA DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT



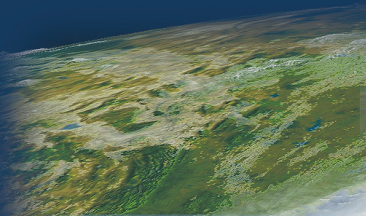


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Introduction

All-Hazards Approach

The State of Florida is vulnerable to many hazards, ranging from hurricanes and wildfires to terrorism and nuclear power plant incidents. However, many of the consequences of disasters are the same, regardless of the hazard. For example, an evacuation may be required because of a hurricane, chemical spill, or a terrorist threat. Rather than planning for each hazard individually, Florida's state and local emergency managers use an all-hazards approach to emergency planning.

Four Phases of Emergency Management (EM)



Purpose of the Guide

Florida's elected officials play an important role during each phase. The purpose of this guide is to help these officials understand their role before, during and after disasters.

ALL DISASTERS ARE LOCAL!

Laws and Authorities

Chapter 252, Florida Statutes (2009) “State Emergency Management Act”

“State policy for responding to disasters is to support local emergency response efforts. In the case of a major or catastrophic disaster, however, the needs of residents and communities will likely be greater than local resources. In these situations, the state must be capable of providing effective, coordinated, and timely support to communities and the public.” Chapter 252.311 (3), Florida Statutes (2009).

The Florida Division of Emergency Management is charged with providing “for the rendering of mutual aid among the political subdivisions of the State, with other states, and with the Federal Government with respect to carrying out all emergency management functions and responsibilities.” Chapter 252.32 (c), Florida Statutes (2009).

Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (2007)

“All requests for a declaration by the President that a major disaster exists shall be made by the Governor of the affected State. Such a request shall be based on a finding that the disaster is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the State and the affected local governments and that Federal assistance is necessary.” Stafford Act, Title IV, Section 401 (42 U.S.C. 5170).

Laws and Authorities

Definitions

“Emergency” means any occurrence, or threat thereof, whether natural, technological, or man-made, in war or in peace, which results or may result in substantial injury or harm to the population or substantial damage to or loss of property.” Chapter 252.34 (3), Florida Statutes (2009).

“Disaster” means any natural, technological, or civil emergency that causes damage of sufficient severity and magnitude to result in a declaration of a state of emergency by a county, the Governor, or the President of the United States.” Chapter 252.34 (1), Florida Statutes (2009).

Disasters are identified by the severity of resulting damage, as follows:

“Catastrophic disaster” means a disaster that will require massive state and federal assistance, including immediate military involvement.” Chapter 252.34 (a), Florida Statutes (2009).

“Major disaster” means a disaster that will likely exceed local capabilities and require a broad range of state and federal assistance.” Chapter 252.34 (b), Florida Statutes (2009).

“Minor disaster” means a disaster that is likely to be within the response capabilities of local government and to result in only a minimal need for state or federal assistance.” Chapter 252.34 (c), Florida Statutes (2009).

I. Preparedness

Preparedness includes plans or preparations made before a disaster to save lives and to help response and rescue operations.

Your role during Preparedness

First—Are **you** ready? Does your family have a disaster plan? If not, go to www.FloridaDisaster.org and create one.

Second—Know the plan **before** the disaster occurs. Work with your emergency management officials to learn the community's emergency plan and take an active role in training and exercising the plan. **YOU PLAY LIKE YOU PRACTICE!**

Third—Know the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the Incident Command System (ICS). NIMS is a national, comprehensive approach to incident management that is applicable at all jurisdictional levels and across functional disciplines. ICS is a widely applicable management system designed to enable effective and efficient incident management. It integrates a combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications operating within a common organizational structure.

✓FEMA recommends that elected officials take “IS-700 National Incident Management System: An Introduction” and “IS-100: An Introduction to Incident Command System”. These courses are available at:

<http://training.fema.gov/IS/NIMS.asp>.

II. Response

Response actions are taken during an emergency to save lives and prevent further property damage.

Your role during Response

First—Know the order of priorities.

Second—Know who's in charge.

STANDING ORDERS	
1.	Establish communication with impacted areas.
2.	Search and Rescue/Security.
3.	Meet basic human needs. (medical, water, food, shelter, emergency fuel—in that order)
4.	Restore critical infrastructure.
5.	Open schools and local businesses.
6.	Begin the recovery process.

Local political subdivisions have statutorily designated authority to request state assistance or invoke emergency-related mutual-aid assistance by declaring a state of local emergency. Under a local state of emergency, the local elected leadership is in charge. Under a state declaration of emergency, the governor is in charge.

Response

Response actions are taken during an emergency to save lives and prevent further property damage.

Your role during Response

Third—Know your powers and limitations.

Learn who in your jurisdiction has the power to declare a local state of emergency. Based on Florida Statute, the duration of each state of emergency declared locally is limited to seven days; it may be extended, as necessary, in seven-day increments. Further, the political subdivision has the power and authority to waive the procedures and formalities otherwise required of the political subdivision by law pertaining to:

- a. Performance of public work and taking whatever prudent action is necessary to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the community.
- b. Entering into contracts.
- c. Incurring obligations.
- d. Employment of permanent and temporary workers.
- e. Utilization of volunteer workers.
- f. Rental of equipment.
- g. Acquisition and distribution, with or without compensation, of supplies, materials, and facilities.
- h. Appropriation and expenditures of public funds.

Chapter 252.38 (3), Florida Statutes (2009)

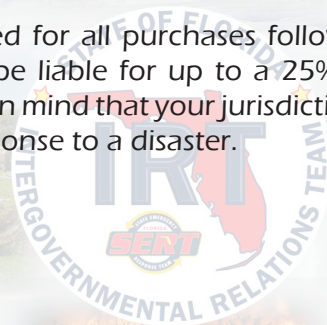
Response

Response actions are taken during an emergency to save lives and prevent further property damage.

Your role during Response

Fourth—Understand the possibility for financial liability.

You may not be reimbursed for all purchases following a declared disaster. In some cases, you still may be liable for up to a 25% cost-share for eligible and approved purchases. Keep in mind that your jurisdiction could be fully responsible for purchases during a response to a disaster.



Disaster Declaration Process

Event Occurs



LOCAL EMERGENCY MANAGERS RESPOND

- If, local resources are exhausted:
 - Local elected officials can declare a local state of emergency
 - Local elected officials can request assistance from the State

STATE RESOURCES DEPLOYED

- If, state resources are exhausted:
 - Governor declares a state of emergency
 - Governor requests assistance from federal government using Preliminary Damage Assessments for a Presidential Major Disaster or Emergency Declaration

FEDERAL RESOURCES DEPLOYED

- President issues a Major Disaster or an Emergency Declaration

Declarations of Emergency

I. Local Declaration of Emergency

Factors to consider when declaring a local state of emergency:

- Scope and magnitude of the event.
- Impact of the damage and losses.
- The ability of the local jurisdiction to respond.

Once a declaration is in place, it allows the following actions to be taken:

- Mobilization of resources.
- Activation of Emergency Operations Plans.
- Implementation of protective actions including evacuations, emergency shelters, shelter-in-place orders, emergency alerts, and warnings.
- Initiation of mutual aid agreements.
- Suspension of statutes.
- Authorization of emergency funds.

A declaration is also the initial step when requesting assistance from the state and the federal government and to qualify for possible reimbursement.

Declarations of Emergency

II. State Declaration of Emergency

The Governor may declare a state of emergency through this process:

- The Governor receives notification of emergency from a local jurisdiction.
- An assessment is made for damage or potential for damage.
- A declaration may cover specific geographic areas of the state or the entire state.
- A state declaration is usually made through an executive order.
- An executive order includes the type of emergency, where it occurred and the authority by which it is made.

A state declaration allows for:

- Activation of the emergency response, recovery, and mitigation phases of the state's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.
- The authority for the mobilization and deployment of resources or any other provision of law relating to emergencies.

The state declaration is also the initial step when requesting a Presidential Declaration.

Declarations of Emergency

III. Presidential Declaration of Emergency

The Governor may request a federal disaster declaration, which is formally submitted to the regional FEMA office.

When deciding whether to recommend a federal disaster declaration, FEMA will consider the following:

- Number of homes destroyed or with major damage.
- Extent to which damage is dispersed or concentrated.
- Impact on the infrastructure or critical facilities.
- Imminent threats to public health and safety.
- Impacts to essential government services and functions.
- Level of insurance coverage in place for homeowners and public facilities.
- Assistance available from other sources.
- State and local resource commitments from previous, declared and undeclared events.
- Frequency of disaster events over recent time period.

Types of Presidential Declarations

<http://www.fema.gov/hazard/dproc.shtm>

1) Emergency Declarations

This declaration usually supplements state and local efforts in providing emergency services or in averting or lessening the threat of a catastrophe. The amount of emergency assistance is capped at \$5 million per single event but can be increased if the threshold is exceeded.

2) Major Disaster Declarations

The President can declare a Major Disaster Declaration for any natural event, fire, flood, or explosion that the President believes has caused damage of such severity that it is beyond the capability of the state and local governments to respond. A Major Disaster Declaration provides a wide range of federal assistance programs, including:

- Teams and equipment, such as hazardous materials teams, search and rescue, etc.
- Supplies, such as food, water and tarps.
- Public assistance (emergency work, repair and restoration, debris removal).
- Individual Assistance for household needs and temporary housing.
- Mitigation grants to reduce long-term risk to life and property.

3) Pre-Disaster Declaration

This type of declaration establishes the circumstances in which a state can request a declaration in advance of an incident that could result in a major disaster. It is specific to threats from an existing hurricane or typhoon, but other natural or man-made incidents may be considered and certain conditions must be met.

Other Types of Declarations

U.S. Small Business Administration Disaster Declarations

When the President issues a Major Disaster Declaration that includes Individual Assistance or Public Assistance, the Small Business Administration's (SBA) disaster loan program is automatically activated. Should a Presidential Disaster Declaration not be issued, SBA may declare a disaster and provide disaster assistance to impacted individuals. SBA provides low-interest disaster loans to individuals and business that may be used to repair or replace real estate, personal property, machinery and equipment, inventory, and business assets.

To be eligible for an SBA physical disaster declaration, at least 25 homes or businesses or a combination thereof in your jurisdiction must have sustained uninsured losses of 40 percent or more of the estimated fair replacement value or pre-disaster fair market value, whichever is lower. Or, at least three businesses each sustain uninsured losses of 40 percent or more of the estimated fair replacement value or pre-disaster fair market value, whichever is lower, and as a direct result of such physical damage, 25 percent or more of the work force in the community would be unemployed for at least 90 days. The Governor may also submit a written request for a physical disaster declaration by SBA.

<http://www.sba.gov/services/disasterassistance/index.html>

Other Types of Declarations

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretarial Declarations

Should a disaster specifically threaten Florida's agricultural industry, it is possible to obtain an agricultural disaster declaration from the United States Secretary of Agriculture. To receive a Secretarial Disaster Designation, damages and losses must be due to a natural disaster and a minimum of 30% production loss of at least one crop in the county must have occurred. Once this has been determined, the Governor makes a request for a disaster declaration in writing to the Secretary of Agriculture.

The Secretarial Declaration will allow eligible producers in the designated counties access to low-interest Farm Service Agency loans, up to 100 percent of actual production or physical losses, not to exceed a total amount of \$500,000.

<http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?navtype=MS&navid=SAFETY>

III. Recovery

Activities taken to return to a normal or even safer situation following a disaster.

Your role during Recovery

First—Know the process for estimating the damage your community has sustained following a disaster.

Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA)

After communicating with local emergency management and depending on the severity of the damage, Preliminary Damage Assessment teams may arrive to verify the impact and magnitude of destruction caused by the event. PDA teams are comprised of personnel from FEMA, the Florida Division of Emergency Management, county and local officials, and the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). The PDA is used as a basis for the Governor's request for a major disaster or emergency declaration when it shows that the cost of response efforts and damage to residents is beyond state and local recovery capabilities.

Local officials should ensure PDA teams are made aware of **all** the damage the jurisdiction has suffered.

<http://www.fema.gov/rebuild/recover/pda.shtm>

Recovery

Activities taken to return to a normal or even safer situation following a disaster.

Your role during Recovery

Second—Know the difference between a local disaster declaration, a state disaster declaration and a Presidential disaster declaration. The disaster declaration process and the different types of declarations are discussed later in this guide.

Third—Know the types of assistance available to your community and the thresholds your community (and the state) must meet to be eligible for federal disaster assistance.

Eligibility for disaster assistance begins on the date of the occurrence of the event that results in a major disaster declaration. Reasonable public assistance expenses incurred in anticipation of and immediately preceding the event may also be eligible for federal assistance.

There are two main types of disaster assistance: Individual Assistance (IA) and Public Assistance (PA). FEMA will send out separate IA and PA PDA teams.

Recovery

Activities taken to return to a normal or even safer situation following a disaster.

Individual Assistance (IA)

Immediately after the Presidential Declaration, disaster workers arrive and set up a Joint Field Office to coordinate the recovery effort. **Disaster Recovery Centers (DRC's)** are where disaster survivors can meet with program representatives and obtain information about available programs and start the recovery process. If a Presidential disaster declaration is not received, state officials may choose to set up **Essential Services Centers (ESC's)**, which are similar to a DRC but without the federal government programs.

To help establish these centers as quickly as possible, local officials can work with the Division in advance to develop a list of primary and alternate locations which best serve the local population. Additionally, local officials can help by updating contact lists for skilled volunteers who will be called upon to help staff these centers.

There are two types of federal Individual Assistance:

Housing Assistance—Assistance to rent a place to live or government-provided housing units when rental properties are not available.

Other Assistance—Assistance with expenses and serious needs caused by a disaster, including personal property, medical and general expenses.

Recovery

Activities taken to return to a normal or even safer situation following a disaster.

Eligibility: To be eligible for IA, your county must be covered under a Presidential Disaster Declaration and you must have filed with the county's insurance company. For more information on the Individual Assistance program, please visit:

http://www.fema.gov/media/fact_sheets/individual-assistance.shtm

Public Assistance (PA)

Under the PA Program, FEMA awards grants to assist state and local governments with debris removal, implementation of emergency protective measures, and permanent restoration of public infrastructure. The program also encourages protection from future damage by providing assistance for hazard mitigation measures during the recovery process. Local officials can assist in establishing a more efficient and effective PA recovery by:

1. Designating at least one staff member to become familiar with the FEMA PA process.
2. Updating the local debris management plan and submitting it to DEM for review.
3. Ensuring that all municipal facilities are adequately covered by the jurisdiction's insurance policy.

Recovery

Activities taken to return to a normal or even safer situation following a disaster.

Public Assistance (PA)

4. Ensuring that local staff are made available to assist in the generation of Project Worksheets.

For more information on the PA process, please visit:

<http://www.fema.gov/government/grant/pa/index.shtm>

In order to be eligible for a Public Assistance declaration, there are two thresholds which must be met under the Stafford Act; a state threshold and a county threshold. FEMA uses a formula based on the last official U.S. Census: population multiplied by \$3.27 per capita for counties and \$1.30 per capita for the state. This equates to \$20,777,091.40 for the state, which must be met before counties that meet their thresholds are eligible for Public Assistance. It is important to note, however, that this rate is subject to change. For the latest information on public assistance thresholds, please visit: <http://www.fema.gov/government/grant/pa/index.shtm>

<http://www.fema.gov/government/grant/pa/index.shtm>

Example: Alachua County Population in 2000 census:

$$217,955 \times \$3.27 = \$712,712.85$$

For more information on current PA thresholds and the Public Assistance Grant Program, please visit:

<http://www.floridadisaster.org/Recovery/PublicAssistance/Index.htm>

IV. Mitigation

Activities that prevent a disaster, reduce the chance of a disaster happening, or reduce the damaging effects of unavoidable disasters.

Your Role in Mitigation

First—Understand the economic importance of mitigation.

Mitigation creates safer communities by reducing loss of life and property damage. A recent study by the Multi-hazard Mitigation Council shows that each dollar spent on mitigation saves an average of four dollars.

Second—Know what kinds of mitigation programs your community may be eligible for. All proposed projects must be coordinated with the Local Mitigation Strategy for funding consideration.

For a complete list of federal and state mitigation programs, please visit:

<http://www.Floridadisaster.org/Mitigation/index.htm>.



Mitigation

Activities that prevent a disaster, reduce the chance of a disaster happening, or reduce the damaging effects of unavoidable disasters.

EXAMPLES OF MITIGATION PROJECTS

For structures that flood repeatedly:

1. **Acquisition**—a combination of local and federal dollars are used to purchase the structure, thereby removing it from the flood hazard area and eliminating future losses.
2. **Elevation**—combined local and federal funding that may be used to lift a structure onto a higher foundation built above the base flood level.
3. **Drainage projects**—combined local and federal funding that may be used for local flood control projects such as larger culverts or retention ponds.

For mitigation against wind damage: Hurricane shutters—if the “shell” of a structure is sound, a shutter system can be used to prevent window and door blow-outs during a storm, which could cause catastrophic damage to the entire structure.

Mitigation

Activities that prevent a disaster, reduce the chance of a disaster happening, or reduce the damaging effects of unavoidable disasters.

PLANNING FOR MITIGATION IN FLORIDA

Good mitigation practices and use of available resources such as federal dollars requires good planning. In Florida, two types of plans support mitigation efforts:

1. **Florida's Enhanced State Hazard Mitigation Plan:** DEM maintains an approved, updated plan for statewide mitigation, partnering with other state agencies to ensure that all possible mitigation resources are maximized to strengthen Florida's built and natural environment. To view this plan, visit www.FloridaDisaster.org/mitigation.
2. **Local Mitigation Strategies:** All of Florida's 67 counties maintain approved, updated plans that address risk and vulnerability to disasters at the local level. These multi-jurisdictional plans produce a locally prioritized list of mitigation measures and also integrate with other local plans, like comprehensive land use plans and emergency management plans. Local Mitigation Strategy working group leaders are listed at <http://www.FloridaDisaster.org/mitigation/local/index.htm>.

State Logistics Response Center

In 2007, the Division of Emergency Management established the State Logistics Response Center (SLRC) in Orlando, Florida. This facility represents the union of state, federal, voluntary agencies, and contract vendors that mobilize during declared and undeclared emergencies to facilitate the acquisition, management, distribution, maintenance, and recovery of Florida's disaster logistics resources.

The 200,000 square foot warehouse, complete with the latest resource management and tracking software and communications technology, is the premier disaster resource facility in the nation.

The warehouse maintains sufficient resources to support an estimated one million people for the first two days after a disaster.



County Contact Information

For information on your county emergency management office, please visit:

http://www.FloridaDisaster.org/County_EM/county_list.htm

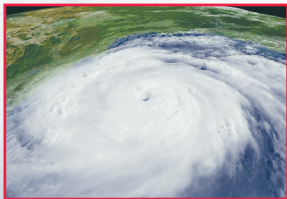


Regional
Map

The Basics of Evacuations

Ordering evacuations is a local responsibility, made with input from your state and county officials. When issuing a local evacuation, keep these tips in mind:

- Tell the public where to go, when to leave, which route to take, and the importance of evacuating before a disaster.
- Monitor traffic situations and update your constituents with current information. Encourage them to prepare for breakdowns, accidents, and fuel needs.
- When opening shelters, remind residents that shelters are more like life boats, not motels, and they should protect occupants from hazards but may not have all the comforts of home.



Do's and Don'ts

DO visit your local Emergency Operations Center and meet your county emergency managers.

DON'T assume a disaster automatically means your community will be eligible for assistance from FEMA.

DO remember that emergency preparedness is a civic responsibility but managing constituent expectations is your responsibility.

DON'T wait until a disaster strikes to learn your role. Take advantage of your county's training and exercise programs to practice before a disaster occurs.

DO remember that the Intergovernmental Relations Team is here to assist you before, during and after a disaster impacts your area. Call 850.410.1084, e-mail EOC-IRT@em.myflorida.com or go to: www.FloridaDisaster.org/IRT.

Intergovernmental Relations Team (IRT)

The State of Florida Intergovernmental Relations Team (IRT) is here to serve you before, during and after a disaster impacts your area. We can provide up-to-date information on emergency management-related activities affecting your constituents and help guide you through the process of obtaining federal disaster assistance.



Website: www.FloridaDisaster.org/IRT
Phone Number: 850.410.1084
e-mail Address: EOC-IRT@em.myflorida.com

Acronyms

- SERT:** State Emergency Response Team
- DEM:** Division of Emergency Management
- FEMA:** Federal Emergency Management Agency
- IRT:** Intergovernmental Relations Team
- ICS:** Incident Command System
- NIMS:** National Incident Management System
- PDA:** Preliminary Damage Assessment
- IA:** Individual Assistance
- PA:** Public Assistance
- SLRC:** State Logistics Response Center
- DRC:** Disaster Recovery Center
- ESC:** Essential Services Center
- SBA:** Small Business Administration
- USDA:** U.S. Department of Agriculture
- EO:** Executive Order

Website Listing

Disaster Plan Creation: www.FloridaDisaster.org	7
Elected Officials FEMA Training: http://training.fema.gov/IS/NIMS.asp	7
Types of Presidential Declarations: http://www.fema.gov/hazard/dproc.shtm	15
U.S. Small Business Administration: http://www.sba.gov/services/disasterassistance/index.html	16
U.S. Department of Agriculture Declarations: http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?navtype=MS&navid=SAFETY	16
FEMA PDA Information: http://www.FEMA.Gov/rebuild/recover/pda.shtm	17
Individual Assistance Eligibility: http://www.fema.gov/media/fact_sheets/individual-assistance.shtm	20

Website Listing

Public Assistance:

<http://www.fema.gov/government/grant/pa/index.shtm>21

State Public Assistance:

<http://www.FloridaDisaster.org/Recovery/PublicAssistance/Index.htm>21

Mitigation:

<http://www.FloridaDisaster.org/Mitigation/index.htm>25

Local Mitigation Strategy Information:

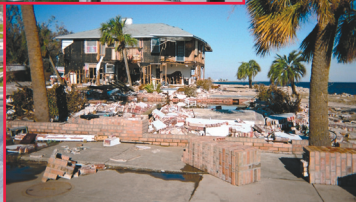
<http://www.FloridaDisaster.org/Mitigation/local/index.htm>27

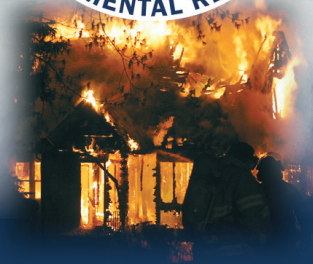
County Contact Information:

http://www.FloridaDisaster.org/County_EM/county_list.htm29

Intergovernmental Relations Team:

www.FloridaDisaster.org/IRT32





STATE OF FLORIDA
INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS TEAM

850.410.1084

EOC-IRT@em.myflorida.com

www.FloridaDisaster.org/IRT

