



Commissioner Notes By James M. Thomas

It is hard to believe but it is June already, and even though we have not had great weather during the spring season we have to get ready for the summer months. As most of you know, June 1st is the beginning of the "Hurricane Season" which runs through November 30th.

Dr. William Gray and his new partner, Dr. Philip Klotzbach at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colorado have forecast average activity for the 2009 Atlantic hurricane season. They have predicted the following:

ATLANTIC BASIN SEASONAL HURRICANE FORECAST FOR 2009 Forecast Parameter and 1950-2000 Climatology (in parentheses)	Issue Date 10 December 2008	Issue Date 9 April 2009
Named Storms (NS) (9.6)	14	12
Named Storm Days (NSD) (49.1)	70	55
Hurricanes (H) (5.9)	7	6
Hurricane Days (HD) (24.5)	30	25
Intense Hurricanes (IH) (2.3)	3	2
Intense Hurricane Days (IHD) (5.0)	7	5
Accumulated Cyclone Energy (96.1)	125	100
Net Tropical Cyclone Activity (100%)	135	105

Probabilities for at least One Major (Cat 3-4-5) Hurricane Landfall on each of the following coastal areas:

- 1) Entire U.S. coastline - 54% (average for last century is 52%)
- 2) U.S. East Coast Including Peninsula Florida - 32% (average for last century is 31%)
- 3) Gulf Coast from the Florida Panhandle westward to Brownsville - 31% (average for last century is 30%)
- 4) Average major hurricane landfall risk in the Caribbean

With this said it is very appropriate that we focus again on preparedness. This issue highlights the State of Connecticut Natural Disaster Plan, and explains in great detail the process for receiving Federal Assistance if needed. One important message that we continue to hear from our federal partners is that we as individual citizens, have to be better prepared at our homes, and we should be able to sustain ourselves for at least 72 hours before the availability of official federal assistance. We know that FEMA is clearly leaning forward in everyway possible but it will still take time to get assistance to communities if we were to experience a major hurricane in Connecticut.

We are also showing some photos of the very successful conference, sponsored by CCM, the Department of Public Health and DEMHS that was held in early May. This was very well attended and the information sharing was outstanding! In addition the Central Naugatuck Valley Emergency Response Committee submitted an article on their very successful "Operation Gridlock" tabletop exercise that was held in Middlebury. We continue to encourage the municipalities and regions to have these training exercises as they really do make all of us much better.

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WHAT'S NEW:

[UPCOMING TRAINING
and EXERCISES](#)

**4th Annual EMD
Conference—June 2nd**

WebEOC Training

**Preparing for
Agroterrorism**

**Happy Father's
Day
June 21st**



**Hurricane Season Begins
June 1st**

CATASTROPHIC DISASTER PLANNING INITIATIVES

The State's Natural Disaster Plan guides the State's response to typical or "garden variety" disasters in Connecticut such as flash flooding (the most common form of disaster in our state) has been in place for many years. The Natural Disaster Plan establishes individual State agency responsibilities and outlines federal/State/local/private agency interaction with respect to many basic disaster functions such as warning, communications, sheltering, situation reporting, preliminary damage assessments, coastal evacuations, etc. The Natural Disaster Plan has recently been reviewed and updated by DEMHS and other stakeholders. It was issued electronically in February, 2009, and it is available on our website at www.ct.gov/demhs.

The threat of a catastrophic disaster, however, such as Category 3 hurricane, poses additional and very challenging planning and operational requirements. Catastrophic disasters, rare though they may be in this part of the country, require that State and local governments be prepared to conduct very challenging operations above and beyond normal operations associated with response to a "garden variety" natural disaster.

Accordingly, DEMHS and other agencies and organizations have been involved with developing catastrophic disaster policies and procedures to supplement the Natural Disaster Plan. The primary focus areas of catastrophic disaster planning currently include debris management, donations management and commodities distribution.

Debris management is perhaps the most complex of these three focus areas. An interagency committee consisting of DEMHS, DEP, DAS, DOT and DPW solicited proposals from major debris contractors in 2008 and awarded 3 contracts for debris removal services. AshBritt, Inc. of Pompano Beach, Florida will be the State's primary debris removal contractor, with a backup debris removal contract awarded to Phillips and Jordan of Robbinsville, North Carolina. A contract for debris monitoring services was awarded to Beck Disaster Recovery of Orlando, Florida. The role of a debris monitoring company is to oversee operations of the debris removal company in the field to ensure that all debris removal operations are conducted appropriately and in accordance with FEMA regulations. Debris monitoring ensures maximum federal reimbursements for debris removal. Local governments will be able to access debris removal services from the State's contractors by contacting the DEMHS.



State agencies are continuing debris management planning by attempting to identify a sufficient number of Temporary Debris Storage and Reduction (TDSR) sites around the State and to develop operational and financial policies and procedures. In addition, a tabletop exercise which will include the contractors is scheduled for June 5, 2009.

Another challenging component of catastrophic disaster planning involves the distribution of massive quantities of food, water, tarps and possibly ice to disaster victims. DEMHS has developed a draft Standard Operating Procedure for commodities distribution and has conducted a commodities ordering exercise that involved approximately 110 municipalities. In December of 2008 DEMHS set up a commodities distribution command post at Rentschler Field in East Hartford which will serve as the State Staging Area for incoming federal relief supplies. In an actual event, commodities would be directed from Rentschler Field to Local Distribution Points (LDPs), activated and staffed by local authorities. All municipalities have identified at least one Local Distribution Point and have received guidance and training from DEMHS on how to operate them. Additional training will be made available on an annual basis.

Catastrophic Disaster Planning Initiatives con't

The other catastrophic disaster focus area is donations management. This involves developing policies and procedures to handle a huge influx of unsolicited goods and volunteers which always occurs following a catastrophic disaster. DEMHS has established a Donations Management Organization consisting of several State agencies and private organizations to address the many issues associated with donations management.



To date, DEMHS has signed an MOU with Aidmatrix Foundation which gives the State of Connecticut permission to use the nation's leading, web-based donations management software, a program that over 30 State's have already committed to using, with more States coming on board each month. The Aidmatrix program allows for on-line offers of cash, as well as donated goods and services from corporations and individuals all across the nation. The software also allows a State Donations and Volunteer Coordination Team (VDCT) to evaluate offers and direct them to the appropriate relief organization (s) in Connecticut.

DEMHS has also signed an MOU with the Adventist Community Services (ACS) to have ACS operate a large donations warehouse that will need to be established following a catastrophic event. ACS has extensive experience in managing warehouses for donated goods. The warehouse itself will be provided by the State of Connecticut. DEMHS is currently working with the Department of Public Works, the Office of Policy and Management, and Department of Administrative Services to identify potential warehouse sites and to arrange for material handling equipment for the warehouse. Large, vacant department stores or other vacant commercial properties are typically used as warehouses. The goal is to have several potential warehouse sites identified by June of 2009 and by the beginning of each hurricane season thereafter.

Upcoming Training & Exercise

June 2	EMD Conference—SCSU
June 11	HazMat Exercise—Coventry
June 23	Preparing Communities for Agroterrorism—Brainard
June 25	WebEOC Training—Brainard
	(All Health Dept, Health District, Hospital and CMED personnel should take upcoming training through DPH and register at: https://ct.train.org)
July TBD	Debris Management Exercise—more information to follow
July 30	WebEOC Training—Brainard
Aug 18-20	Transit Terrorist Tools & Tactics—Bridgeport
Sept 10-11	Bioterrorism: Mass Prophylaxis & Planning—New Haven

For training & exercise questions contact the Training Unit at 860-256-0840.

Fax: 860-706-5539 or email: Training.demhs@ct.gov

You may register for these courses as listed at: www.ct.gov/demhs; or through POSTC at www.ct.gov/post; or through the CT Fire Academy (CFA) at www.ct.gov/cfca.

OVERVIEW OF THE FEDERAL DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Federal assistance in the wake of disasters is coordinated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), a component of the Department of Homeland Security. Under FEMA's Public Assistance (PA) and Individual Assistance (IA) Programs, FEMA provides supplemental aid to States, municipalities, certain private nonprofit organizations (PNPs), individuals and businesses to help them recover from disasters as quickly as possible. This article describes the events that occur after a disaster strikes and introduces the PA and IA Programs.

When Disaster Strikes

Each year, the United States is struck by disasters that severely affect communities and State and local governments. The effects of disasters may be limited to a single community, such as when a small town is hit by a tornado, or they may be widespread, such as when a hurricane affects several States. Regardless of the scope of a disaster, the affected communities and States often need the assistance of the Federal government when responding to and recovering from the event. This assistance is available under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. § 5121 - 5207 (hereinafter referred to as the Stafford Act). Communities are responsible for the protection of their residents, and local emergency response forces will always be the first line of defense when a disaster strikes. The intent of the Stafford Act is that Federal assistance be supplemental to local, State, and private relief organizations.

When a disaster occurs and a locality has responded to the best of its ability and is, or will be, overwhelmed by the magnitude of the damage, the municipality turns to the State for help. The Governor may direct that the State's emergency plan be executed, direct the use of State police or the National Guard, or commit other State resources, as appropriate to the situation. If it is evident that the situation is or will be beyond the combined capabilities of the local and State resources,



the Governor may request that the President declare, under the authority of the Stafford Act, that an emergency or major disaster exists in the State. While this request is being processed, local and State government officials should not delay in taking the necessary response and recovery actions. Such actions should not be dependent upon whether there will be Federal assistance.



Declaration Process

The request for a declaration must come from the Governor. Before sending a formal request letter to the President, the Governor will request that FEMA conduct a joint Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) with the State to verify damage and estimate the amount of supplemental assistance that will be needed. If the Governor believes that Federal assistance is necessary after this assessment is complete, the Governor sends a request letter to the President, directed through the Regional Administrator (RA) of the FEMA Region 1 office in Boston, MA. The RA reviews the request and forwards it with a recommendation to the Director of FEMA who, in turn, makes a recommendation to the President. The President makes the decision whether to declare a major disaster or emergency. After a declaration is made, FEMA designates **by county** the areas eligible for assistance and the types of assistance available (i.e. IA, PA or both).

The Public Assistance (PA) Program

Under the PA Program, which is authorized by the Stafford Act, FEMA awards grants to assist State and local governments and certain Private Non-profit (PNP) entities with the response to and recovery from disasters. Specifically, the program provides assistance for debris removal, emergency protective measures, and permanent restoration of infrastructure. The Federal share of these expenses typically cannot be less than 75 percent of eligible costs. The program also encourages protection from future damage by providing assistance for hazard mitigation measures during the recovery process.

Applicants' Briefing

An Applicants' Briefing is a meeting conducted by a representative of the State (DEMHS) for potential Public Assistance applicants. The briefing occurs after an emergency or major disaster has been declared and addresses application procedures, administrative requirements, funding, and program eligibility criteria. The State representative is responsible for notifying potential applicants (State and local governments, tribal governments and PNPs) of the date, time, and location of the briefing. FEMA personnel also participate in the briefing. To obtain the maximum benefit from the information presented at the briefing, each applicant should send representatives from each of the following:



- management;
- public works; and.
- finance.

Assignment of the Public Assistance Coordination (PAC) Crew Leader

Once the *Request* has been forwarded to FEMA, the FEMA PAC Crew Leader is assigned to the applicant. The PAC Crew Leader is a program expert who serves as the applicant's customer service representative on PA Program matters and manages the processing of the applicant's projects. The PAC Crew Leader:

- conducts a kickoff meeting with the applicant to discuss the program and its application to the applicant's specific needs;
- works with the applicant to develop projects; obtains the appropriate technical assistance, if required, for the applicant's project(s);
- reviews projects for compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and policies;
- ensures that any Special Considerations associated with a project are identified and reviewed; and.
- ensures that the applicant's Case Management File is maintained.

Kickoff Meeting

This meeting differs from the Applicants' Briefing conducted by the State at the onset of disaster operations. While the Applicants' Briefing describes the application process and gives a general overview of the PA Program, the Kickoff Meeting is conducted by the PAC Crew Leader and designed to provide a much more detailed review of the PA Program and the applicant's needs. The meeting is the first step in establishing a partnership among FEMA, the State, and the applicant and is designed to focus on the specific needs of that applicant. The meeting focuses on the eligibility and documentation requirements that are most pertinent to an applicant.

The PAC Crew Leader also discusses Special Considerations, such as insurance, hazard mitigation opportunities, and compliance with environmental and historic preservation laws, including floodplain management issues, that could potentially affect the type and amount of assistance available and the documentation needed.

The Project Worksheet (PW)

An applicant has 60 days following the first substantive meeting, usually the Kickoff Meeting, with FEMA to identify and report damaged facilities to FEMA. The PW is the primary form used to document the location, damage description and dimensions, scope of work, and cost estimate for each project. It is the basis for the grant.



If the applicant requires assistance with the preparation of PWs, the PAC Crew Leader may assign a Project Specialist (Project Officer) or Technical Specialist

(Specialist) to provide the applicant with technical assistance.

For large projects, (i.e. projects with an estimated cost of over \$64,200 for FFY09) a Project Specialist is responsible for working with the applicant to prepare the PW. The Project Specialist may lead a team that includes a representative of the State and

one or more Technical Specialists, depending on the type and complexity of the project. The applicant is responsible for requesting inspections and changes in PWs at any point in the grant process when changes in the project or its costs are identified. The State and FEMA will evaluate the information and, if significant, take appropriate action

Payments

Payment for Small Projects (i.e. PWs with an estimated cost of under \$64,200 for FFY09) is made to the subgrantee by DEMHS soon after the PW is approved by FEMA and federal funds are obligated for the project. The work need not have been done for the subgrantee to be paid in full.



Payments for Large Projects (i.e. PWs with an estimated cost of under \$64,200 for FFY09) are made to the subgrantee by DEMHS **as work is**

completed. Large projects are paid based on **actual costs**, as opposed to Small Projects which are paid based on estimated costs.

The Individual Assistance (IA) Program

If a major disaster is declared and Individual Assistance (IA) is authorized, federal assistance programs become available including the Individuals and Households Program (IHP). This program addresses Housing and Other Needs Assistance (ONA). Housing assistance may be provided when there is disaster-related damage to an individual’s dwelling making it unsafe and unfit to occupy. This assistance can come in the form of rental assistance or financial grants for repairs that are not covered by insurance. ONA may be provided for disaster-related needs other than housing such as: personal property, medical and dental costs, clothing, furniture etc. The maximum amount of financial assistance provided to an individual or household under the IHP is \$30,300 for FFY08.

Application Process and Use of Disaster Recovery Centers

Once the declaration is made, impacted residents can apply for the IA program either on-line or by telephone. Following the declaration, FEMA requests that the State coordinate with them in opening Disaster

Recovery Centers (DRC) in impacted areas. DRCs are locations where impacted residents can come and meet with FEMA, State, and other disaster recovery agency representatives. The Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) has been working with communities to pre-designate Disaster Recovery Centers. DEMHS currently has Memorandums of Agreement with several towns across the state as well as the Community College System. The Community College System and several towns have identified locations in their facilities that will accommodate a DRC if a declaration is received.

Small Business Administration

The Declaration also triggers the availability of Small Business Administration (SBA) Physical Disaster Loans to businesses, renters and homeowners. SBA regulations limit home loans to \$200,000 for the repair or replacement of real estate and \$40,000 to repair or replace personal property (not covered by insurance). The law limits business loans to \$2,000,000 for the repair or replacement of real estate, inventories, machinery, equipment and all other physical losses. SBA Economic Injury Loans are also available to businesses to meet operating expenses the businesses would have been able to meet had the disaster not occurred. The law limits EIDL(s) to \$2,000,000 for alleviating economic injury caused by the disaster. The \$2,000,000 statutory limit for business loans applies to the combination of physical and economic injury, and applies to all disaster loans to a business.



Following a series of storms and flooding in April, 2007, Connecticut requested and received a major disaster declaration with a designation for IA. 2,493 residents and business owners applied for Disaster Assistance. Housing assistance provided to Connecticut residents as a result of the disaster damage equaled \$2,302,434. Impacted residents also received \$96,121.14 in ONA assistance. SBA made over 2.2 million dollars in loans to disaster impacted homeowners, renters and businesses.

On Tuesday, May 12th, DEMHS, in collaboration with the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities and the State Department of Public Health held a very successful annual Emergency Management Symposium at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Cromwell. The keynote speaker was David Miller, the Emergency Management Director from the State of Iowa. Mr. Miller's presentation included the 2008 Iowa disaster response and recovery to devastating storm activity and severe flooding. He was followed by Dr. Matthew Cartter from CT DPH, who gave an overview on the H1N1 outbreak across the world and related planning strategies in Connecticut. These presentations were followed by two separate break-out sessions, one on the legal responsibilities required for municipal leaders during an emergency and one on our states recent Homeland Security initiatives. The entire afternoon included Regional Emergency Support Functions (RESF) project information sharing amongst all five DEMHS regions. Regional representatives from communications, public works, fire service, health, and law enforcement support functions shared their current projects and intentions for future initiatives.

On Wednesday, May 13, DEMHS held a functional Hostile Action Based exercise in coordination with Millstone Station in Waterford. The first of its kind in Connecticut, this exercise adds a Hostile Action element to the traditional radiological emergency scenario. In this type of exercise, the goal is to focus on the interrelation of Local Law Enforcement Agencies (LLEA), EMS and other first responders with Millstone Station Security forces.

Communications between the local Incident Command Post, First Responders, Millstone Station and the Hartford Armory were all put to the test. A new media component was also tested with the inclusion of a "forward" joint information center or "JIC" and the traditional JIC at the Hartford Armory. WEB EOC was also used in an extensive capacity during the exercise.



**CCM
DEMHS
DPH
Emergency
Management
Conference
May 12, 2009
Cromwell**





Overall, the exercise was successful in identifying strengths and weaknesses in communications, practical application of WEBEOC, and interpersonal/interagency communications at the EOC. FEMA observers gave positive comments and were pleased overall with the performance of all agencies involved. DEMHS and our local partners continue to enjoy an excellent working relationship toward our ultimate goals of improving preparedness and communications at all levels of response. Thank you to all participants for your professionalism and enthusiastic participation.



“Operation Gridlock” Tabletop Exercise— Middlebury

On Friday, April 17, 2009, the Central Naugatuck Valley Emergency Response Committee (CNVEPC) conducted “Operation Gridlock,” a table top exercise held at the Middlebury Fire House. Under the guidance of DEMHS Region 5 Trainer Thomas Romano, State Exercise Officer Bob Christ and Regional Coordinator Robert Kenny, over 40 participants from 10 municipalities participated in the half day exercise. They included Chief Elected Officials, EMD’s, Police, Fire, Public Works, and School officials. According to Ken Hanks, Chairman of the CNVEPC, the purpose of the exercise was to test the level of communication and regional cooperation of the emergency response community in the Central Naugatuck Valley Region during a long term event.

The exercise assumed that the I-84/Route 8 interchange in Waterbury, commonly referred to as the ‘Mixmaster,’ was rendered unusable for six to twelve months. This was due to the explosion of a tractor trailer loaded with liquid propane and affected over 150,000 vehicles daily.

Peter Dorpalen, Executive Director of the Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley, stated that “the results of the exercise exceeded our expectations. The emergency response community was well-prepared and knowledgeable, especially on the use of emerging technologies such as WebEOC.” Chief John Field, Chair of Region 5’s REPT, noted that the exercise will be useful in preparing the DEMHS Region 5 Emergency Response Plan.

