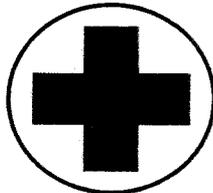
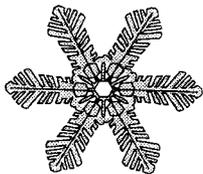




EMERGENCIES

A Field Guide for Local Officials



New York State
Conference of Mayors
and Municipal Officials

FORWARD

Emergencies can happen anywhere and anytime, even in your community. In an emergency situation, it is vital that local officials think clearly and react quickly. This field guide outlines the steps you should be taking.

If an emergency occurs, it is essential that you know what to do. The time to find this out is before an emergency happens. You should have already read NYCOM's, *The Authority of a Municipal Chief Executive During an Emergency*.

The field guide outlines suggested courses of action for local government officials to follow in the event of a series of emergencies. Depending upon the size of your municipality, not all of the positions outlined in this field guide may exist, or the functions may be combined with others.

This is a "working" publication which may be tailored to your municipal needs. Feel free to mark-up the guide and make it your own.

Edward C. Farrell
Executive Director

LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

•Chief Elected Official



•Public Information Officer



•Police Chief



•Fire Chief



•Public Works Superintendent



•Attorney



•Emergency Ambulance and
Rescue Service



•Medical Liaison



•School Liaison



Chief elected official (CEO) 

Initial notification _____

Notified by _____

Time _____

Type of emergency _____

Location _____

Weather _____

Wind direction from _____

Wind speed _____

CEO reporting point _____

Open routes _____

Communication channels _____

Incident size-up

Type _____

Magnitude _____

Best/worst case _____

Damage

Injuries/deaths _____

Area (size) _____

Property damage _____

Other impacts _____

Resources

Incident command status

Internal/external resources committed

Internal/external resources required

Emergency Operations Ctr. status/location

Immediate action



- Begin personal log
- Begin official log; instruct a staff member to record all incidents, information, etc. at your direction
- Establish contact with County Office of Emergency Management
- Insure operational readiness of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC)
- Dispatch police and fire reconnaissance units
- Initiate Community Disaster Plan
- Inform the public re: disaster operations
- Mobilize EOC staff
- Determine response level and activate EOC, if necessary:
 - Activate communications equipment and support facilities
 - Initiate the message flow system
 - Ready the appropriate logs, maps, and status charts
 - Provide staff with copy of EOC Standard Operating Procedure
 - Prepare a shift schedule
 - Announce briefing schedules
 - Direct staff to keep complete logs and financial records
 - Set reporting procedures
 - Direct staff to assess and report on problems, resources, shortfalls, policy needs and options
 - Prepare staff with recovery plans

(continued)

- Locate perimeters of disaster scene
- Identify routes of ingress and egress
- Coordinate emergency services activities at scene
- Notify local hospital director of estimated casualties
- Designate single public information officer
- Contact other involved municipal officials
- Chair assessment meeting
- Address:
 - closing of schools, industry, highways, availability/accessibility of needed resources
 - establishment of medical shelter (at scene)
 - transportation needs
 - need for stress/crisis counseling
 - ensure full use of community resources
- Announce a "Declaration of State of Emergency", if needed
- Issue emergency orders as needed

Personal

- Tell family destination and how to contact
- Take medications, toiletries and clothes
- Take a list of peers to contact for advice
- Remember that your role is policymaking, not operational
- Take personal tape recorder

(continued)

Political



•Recognize accountability

-Check provisions for public officials

-space at EOC

-periodic updates

-staff updates on politically sensitive issues, such as life/property losses, service interruptions, etc.

•Establish and evaluate policy decisions throughout the incident

•Establish liaison with other officials

•Confer with other selected officials when problems arise

•Use elected officials to request assistance from public/private organizations

Public Information Officer



•Evaluate media capabilities

•Establish media center within EOC

•Channel all releases first through CEO in EOC

•Work with departments/agencies to release information

•Establish news media update and access policies

•Provide periodic updates

•Prepare announcements for broadcast over the Emergency Broadcast System (EBS)

•Contact County Emergency Management Office for provision of additional communications networks

•Contact County Emergency Management Office and request activation of the Emergency Broadcast System (may be activated locally pursuant to local emergency plan)

•Address rumor control

•Work with private utilities and fuel suppliers to provide service updates and briefings

•Coordinate distribution of emergency information to public (*See section entitled Information to the Public*)

Police Chief



- Reconnaissance of disaster scene
- Locate disaster scene perimeters
- Contact back to local EOC
- Identify blocked roadways, bridges, etc.
- Establish traffic and access control points
- Initiate crowd control activity
- Provide security at disaster area, shelters and key installations
- Contact Sheriff or State Police if mutual aid is needed
- Conduct evacuation operations
- Notify persons to evacuate
- Coordinate the handling of vehicles with mechanical problems
- Coordinate transportation for essential workers if needed
- Enforce curfews

Fire Chief



- Reconnaissance of disaster scene
- Assess equipment needs and availability
- Check area fire houses (implement Mutual Aid plan)
- Check water supply and hydrant pressure
- Provide fire containment/protection
- Provide rescue of injured
- Identify probable hazardous materials
- Assist in evacuation operations
- Maintain working liaison with outside agencies
- Coordinate with CEO re: need for a Declaration of Emergency

Public Works Superintendent



- Reconnaissance of disaster scene
- Locate blocked roadways, damaged bridges, etc.
- Assess equipment needs and availability
- Open roadways for emergency service units
- Establish communications with County and other providers
- Remove debris, demolish buildings hazardous to public safety
- Rescue disabled emergency service vehicles
- Maintain a liaison with area construction agencies
- Provide community with potable drinking water, if required
- Maintain a liaison with water districts for potable water
- Restoration of roads, bridges, public buildings
- Identify critical supplies
- Provide community with unobstructed sewer (storm and sanitary) systems
- Provide proper sanitation
- Safeguard fuel storage tanks and other critical materials supplies

Attorney



- Assemble emergency legal team
 - contact County Attorney's office
 - contact American Bar Association, New York State Bar Association, or County Bar Association for backup if needed
 - set up duty roster
- Review legal responsibilities and authorities regarding:
 - emergency declarations
 - chain of succession
 - evacuation orders
 - emergency procurement
 - intergovernmental aid
 - social controls (curfews)
 - labor and personnel management
 - emergency shelters
 - price controls
 - enforcement issues
 - mutual aid
 - other restrictions
- Monitor equity of service based on needs and risks
 - maintain balance between public welfare and citizens' rights

Emergency Ambulance and Rescue Service



•Report to Command Post

•Triage of victims and advise medical service of number and severity of injured ASAP

•Treatment and transport of sick and injured

•Assist in rescue and extrication operations

•Work with medical service to establish and operate secondary aid station

•Assist in evacuation operations

•Maintain working liaison with other agencies

•Insure an active communications link between Command Post, EOC, Secondary Aid Station, and hospital

Medical Liaison



•Establish and operate a secondary aid station at a local school gymnasium or other facility

•Mobilize all medical personnel

•Coordinate with local emergency squads the movement and reception of the injured

•Provide medical care and assistance, direction and supervision of local emergency medical problems

•Establish a local medical information center for contact by the public regarding the injured

•Insure an active communication link between the hospital, secondary aid station and the EOC staff

School Liaison



- Provide protection (shelter or evacuation) of school population
- Prepare school facility for use as a community reception (evacuation) center for evacuees (if your disaster plan so provides).
- Provide initial manpower (staffing) supervision, maintenance, feeding and housing of evacuees
- Mobilize drivers and buses for emergency use
- Coordinate with county and voluntary agencies for extended mass feeding and personal services for evacuees
- Insure an active communications link between the school and EOC

INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC

•Hurricane



•Tornado



•Thunderstorms



•Winter Storm



•Hazardous Materials Accidents



•Earthquake



•Flash Flood



•Fire



•Additional Tips



Hurricane



A hurricane is characterized by wind and rain of lethal velocity along coastal areas. Along the Atlantic coast, the hurricane season lasts from June through November. Hurricanes are rated on a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 as the minimum hurricane and 5 as the worst case.

Hurricane watch

Hurricane conditions pose a possible threat to a specified coastal area within 36 hours.

Hurricane warning

Sustained winds of 74 mph (64 knots) or higher are expected in a specified coastal area within 24 hours or less.

When a watch is issued:

- Frequently monitor radio and television for official bulletins of the storm's progress.
- Fuel and service family vehicles.
- Inspect and secure mobile home tie downs.
- Prepare to cover all window and door openings with shutters or other shielding materials.
- Check food, water, and medical and first-aid supplies.
- Stock up on extra batteries for radios, flash lights, etc.
- Prepare to store and secure outdoor objects such as lawn furniture, boats, etc.

When a warning is issued:

- Closely monitor radio and television for official bulletins.
- Follow instructions issued by local officials. Leave immediately if ordered to do so.
- Complete preparation activities, such as putting up storm shutters, storing loose objects, etc.
- Evacuate areas that might be affected by storm surge flooding.
- Leave mobile homes in any case.
- Notify neighbors and a family member outside of the warned area of your evacuation plans.
- Plan to evacuate if you live in a mobile home; on the coastline or on an offshore island, or near a river or in a flood plain; or in a high rise.

If staying in a home:

- Store water.
- Turn refrigerator to maximum cold and open only when necessary.
- Turn off utilities if told to do so by authorities.
- Turn off propane tanks.
- Unplug small appliances.
- Stay at home if dwelling is sturdy and on high ground. Stay indoors during hurricane and away from windows on the downwind side of house. If there is a basement, go there. If not, stay inside small interior room, bathroom, closet, hallway or near stairs or areas around elevator shaft.
- Protect windows with boards, shutters or tape. Close all interior doors. Secure and brace external doors.
- Lie on the floor under tables or other sturdy objects.

After the storm passes:

- Stay in your protected area until announcements are made on the radio or television that the dangerous winds have passed.
- If you have evacuated, do not return home until officials announce your area ready.
- If your home or building has structural damage, do not enter until it is checked by officials.
- Avoid using candles and other open flames indoors.
- Beware of outdoor hazards such as downed power lines and any water in which they may be lying; poisonous snakes driven from their dens by high water; weakened bridges and washed out roads; and weakened limbs on trees and/or damaged overhanging structures.
- Do not use the telephone unless absolutely necessary.

(From "Hurricane!" A Familiarization Booklet, U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Weather Service, April 1993)

Tornado



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A tornado is a violent storm with spiraling highspeed winds. Tornadoes are usually accompanied by hail, severe thunderstorms and wind. Look out for dark, often greenish sky, wall cloud, large hail, and loud roar similar to freight train.

Tornado Watch means there is the possibility of one or more tornadoes in your area. Continue normal activity but watch for tornadoes.

Tornado Warning means a tornado has been sighted and may be approaching. Seek shelter immediately.

When a tornado threatens, immediate action can save your life.

- Stay away from windows, doors, and outside walls. Windows **should not** be opened - this allows damaging winds to enter structures.
- In home and small buildings, go to the basement or to an interior part on the lowest level - closets, bathrooms, or interior halls. Get under something sturdy.
- In schools, nursing homes, hospitals, factories, and shopping centers, go to pre-designated shelter areas. Interior hallways on the lowest floors are best.
- In high-rise buildings, go to interior small rooms or hallways.
- Do not try to outrun a tornado in your car; instead, leave it immediately.
- Leave vehicles or mobile homes behind and go to a substantial structure. If there is no shelter nearby, lie flat in the nearest ditch, ravine, or culvert with your hands shielding your head.
- Flying debris from tornadoes causes most deaths and injuries. Protect your head.

Thunderstorms



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Thunderstorms produce many dangerous and severe forms of weather. Lightning, destructive winds, heavy rain, hail, and tornadoes can all be products of thunderstorms. See section on tornadoes for more information.

Severe Thunderstorm Watch means severe thunderstorms are possible in your area.

Severe Thunderstorm Warning means severe thunderstorms are occurring.

What To Do

- If you're outside, get into a building, car or bus.
- In a forest, pick a low area under thick, small trees.
- If swimming or boating, get out of the water immediately.
- If in an open area, head for low ground such as a valley or ravine, or crouch down.

What NOT To Do

- Don't touch metallic objects such as bicycles, fences, golf clubs, and equipment such as lawnmowers.
- Don't go near trees, poles, hills, clotheslines, overhead wires, metal pipes, water.
- If in a group, don't huddle - spread out.
- Use the telephone only in an emergency.

Winter Storm



Blizzards, heavy snows, ice storms, freezing rain, or sleet can be serious hazards to people in many parts of the country. The first line of protection is to keep informed of weather conditions in the surrounding area through area weather bulletins.

Winter Storm Watch means severe winter weather conditions may affect your area.

Winter Storm Warning means that winter storm weather conditions are imminent.

What To Do

- Check battery-powered equipment, heating fuel, food stock, and other supplies.
- Dress for the season and stay dry.
- Layers of protective clothing are more effective and efficient than a single layer of thick clothing. Mittens are warmer than gloves. Cover the head to prevent loss of body heat.
- Cover the mouth to protect lungs from extremely cold air.
- Take winter driving seriously.
- Keep your car "winterized." Maintain a full tank of gas to keep moisture out of the tank.
- Carry a winter kit containing equipment to help you keep warm, visible, and alive if you are trapped in a winter storm. Kit should include - at a minimum - blanket, flashlight, flares, and reflective clothing/gear.
- If a blizzard traps you in your car, avoid overexertion and exposure, stay in your vehicle, keep it ventilated, turn on dome light at night, and don't panic. Run the motor for about 10 minutes each hour for heat. Check exhaust pipe for blockage.

What NOT To Do

- Don't overexert yourself shoveling snow. It is extremely hard work and can bring on a heart attack, a major cause of death during and after winter storms.
- Don't take unnecessary trips.

Hazardous Materials Accidents



If a hazardous material spill or nuclear power plant emergency occurs which could affect an area near you, you will be notified by public alert systems and by radio or TV. To reduce the effects of potential health problems, you may have to:

Seek Shelter

- Go into the nearest building.
- Close all doors and windows. Shut off fans, air conditioners or furnace.

Evacuate

- Take necessities only, such as clothing, bedding, medication.
- Shelter pets indoors with food and water.
- Lock up house or place of business.
- Proceed calmly along prescribed routes to designated shelters.

What NOT To Do

- Don't use telephone unless you need help.
- Don't try to assemble the family. School children will be transported to a shelter if necessary.
- Don't leave your vehicle if it breaks down; stay inside until help arrives.
- Don't use wood stove or fireplace.

Earthquake



When an earthquake strikes your area, for a minute or two the "solid" earth moves like the deck of a ship. What you do during and immediately after the tremor could help reduce damage and loss of life.

During the Shaking

- Stay indoors and take cover under a sturdy object, such as a doorway, or in a hallway. Stay away from glass.
- Don't use candles or open flames. Douse all fires.
- If the earthquake catches you outside, move away from buildings and utility wires.
- Don't run through or near buildings. If you are in a moving car, stop as quickly as safety permits, but stay in the vehicle.

After the Shaking

- Check your utilities, but don't turn them on.
- If you smell gas, open windows and shut off the main valve. Then leave the building and report gas leakage to authorities.
- If water pipes are damaged, cut off the water supply at the main valve. Shut off the current at the main meter box.
- Turn on your radio to get the latest emergency bulletins.
- Stay off the telephone except to report an emergency.
- Don't go sight-seeing. Aftershocks may occur for several days.

Flash Flood



In many regions flash floods can strike with little or no warning. Local rains may be so intense that small creeks and streams are unable to accommodate so much water. Distant rain may be channeled into gullies and ravines, turning a quiet streamside campsite into a rampaging torrent in minutes.

Do you have flood insurance? Homeowners insurance policies do not include flood insurance. If you live in a floodprone area, protect yourself and your family from the consequences. Call your local insurance agent or broker now to ask about flood insurance.

Flash flood watch means that heavy rains may cause flash flooding in certain areas.

Flash flood warning means that flash flooding is occurring or imminent on certain streams or in designated areas.

Urban and Small Stream Advisory means flooding of small streams, streets, and low-lying areas such as railroad underpasses and urban storm drains is occurring.

Observe these flash flood safety rules. They could save your life.

- Keep alert for signs of rain (distant thunder and lightning), both where you are, and upstream.
- Be especially cautious at night. It's harder to recognize the danger then.
- Know where high ground is and how to get there quickly; move there before access is cut off.
- In your automobile, look out for flooding at highway dips, bridges and low areas. Watch for rising water levels and don't try to drive through flooded areas.
- Abandon your vehicle if water begins to rise over the road, and head for higher ground immediately.
- Children should *never* play around high water, stormdrains, viaducts or manholes.
- If advised to evacuate, do so immediately.

Fire



Most fires are caused by carelessness. Improper storage of flammable materials or the deliberate setting of fires. Wherever you are, plan your safety before tragedy strikes.

Prevent Fires

- Keep storage areas free of trash.
- Store flammable liquids and gasoline in tight metal containers outside; do not use them indoors.
- Keep electrical appliances and wiring in good repair. Don't overload circuits.
- Discuss with your family step-by-step plans for an emergency fire escape and where the family will meet after escape.
- Post the fire department telephone number on all telephones.
- Install a smoke detector for each level of your home and test it monthly.
- Have fire ladders available on the upper level(s) of your home.
- Have fire extinguisher and know how to use it.
- Have practice fire drills regularly.

In Case of Fire

- Call the fire department.
- Smother a small fire with a wet rug, blanket or fire extinguisher.
- Turn off electricity and gas sources.
- Extinguish a grease fire with a pan lid, salt or damp cloth. Do not use water or try to carry it outside.

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- Get out if fire is uncontrollable. Close windows and doors behind you. Do not go back inside once you are out.

- Meet your family at the designated place outside.

- Go to a neighbor's house to report the fire.

Forest or Brush Fire



- Listen to your local radio or TV. Follow instructions.

- Be ready to leave the area immediately.

- Locate safe areas (lakes, rivers, etc.) in advance.

- Plan how and where to get in touch with family if separated.

- Remember to be extremely careful with the use of fire in the forest - wild fires kill animals and destroy valuable timber and property. Extinguish all campfires before leaving the area.

Additional Safety Tips ✓

- Assess the potential for weather and other emergencies in your community, such as, history of the area, elevation, proximity to water bodies, flood plains, railroads, etc.
- Learn location of official shelters and safe routes to get there.
- Keep your automobile fueled. If electricity is cut off, gas stations may not be able to operate pumps for days.
- Store drinking water. Keep a stock of food that requires little cooking and no refrigeration.
- Assemble a disaster supply kit containing first aid kit, blankets/sleeping bags, canned food and can opener, bottled water, rubber boots, rubber gloves, radio, batteries, and flashlight.
- Other items to have on hand: extra clothing, knife, sand, shovel, tow rope, jumper cables, compass and road maps, sterno, candles, matches, hammer, nails, duct tape, plywood boards, rope, inflatable raft, life preservers, eating and heating utensils.
- Keep extra medicine and baby supplies on hand.
- Keep an emergency heat source on hand, such as a space heater, etc. Learn to use properly to prevent fire and injuries.
- If power is disrupted, keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed to conserve cold air. Use most perishable items first.

Radio/TV Stations



NAME/CALL LETTERS **TELEPHONE**

COUNTY EMERGENCY MGMT. OFFICE

County Executive **Telephone**

County Emergency Mgr. **Telephone**

Local gas company **Telephone**

Local electric company **Telephone**

Local telephone company **Telephone**

Local schools superintendent **Telephone**

State Emergency Management Office

(518) 457-2200
(24-hour emergency telephone)

National Weather Service

Albany (518) 435-9580
Serving: Herkimer, Hamilton, Warren, Washington, Saratoga, Fulton, Montgomery, Schenectady, Rensselaer, Albany, Schoharie, Greene, Columbia, Ulster, and Dutchess counties.

Binghamton (607) 729-1597
Serving: Oneida, Onondaga, Madison, Southern Cayuga, Seneca, Yates, Steuben, Schuyler, Tompkins, Chemung, Cortland, Tioga, Chenango, Broome, Otsego, Delaware, and Sullivan counties.

Buffalo (716) 565-0802
Serving: Niagara, Allegany, Orleans, Genesee, Wyoming, Monroe, Livingston, Ontario, Wayne, Northern Cayuga, Oswego, Jefferson, and Lewis counties.

Burlington, VT (802) 862-2475
(24- hour emergency response),
(802) 862- 8711 (response coordination)
Serving: Clinton, Essex, Franklin, and St. Lawrence counties.

Brookhaven (631) 924-0517
Serving: Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Westchester, Suffolk, Nassau, Bronx, Richmond, Kings, Queens, and New York counties.