

**ESCAMBIA COUNTY FIRE-RESCUE***Standard Operating Guidelines***8100.005****Hurricane Operations Plan**

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**PURPOSE**

The Escambia County Fire-Rescue (ECFR) Hurricane Operations Plan has been developed to help guide personnel in preparedness and emergency operations during possible and imminent hurricane strikes. A comprehensive plan of action to prepare for and deal with these events is imperative in order to provide safe and efficient service under extreme conditions.

**OBJECTIVE**

To provide all personnel with a formal plan of action, and identify assigned responsibilities in the event of a possible or imminent hurricane strike in the Escambia County area.

**SCOPE**

All Personnel

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

This plan is consistent with the Escambia County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP), the Florida Fire Chiefs' Association Statewide Emergency Response Plan (SERP), and the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

All personnel should be familiar with this plan and individuals with assigned responsibilities should be familiar with all of the referenced plans contained herein. However, while all circumstances cannot be addressed in this document, the Hurricane Operations Plan, department directives, and department guidelines should be used for events that occur during a hurricane event but are not specifically addressed herein.

For the purposes of this plan, tropical storm impacts shall be treated the same.

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The strength and predicted landfall location of a hurricane will dictate the number of positions to be activated and staffed in this plan. However, the following positions should not be considered all-inclusive and additional positions may be identified and staffed as needed.

**INCIDENT COMMANDER (IC) – County Fire Chief**

- Operates from the Emergency Operations Center (EOC)
- Acts as the branch director for emergency services.
- Formulates and prioritizes strategies for countywide fire-rescue response and recovery operations
- Orders the recall of career and volunteer personnel to facilitate full-time manning of all fire stations
- Orders the evacuation of fire stations and authorizes the re-entry of personnel and resources when it is predicted a station will be affected by storm surge or severe flooding
- Continually evaluates information to determine needed resources and support for effective countywide fire-rescue operations
- Coordinates with the County's Emergency Manager and other EOC representatives to request Federal, State, and local support resources
- Coordinates with County Attorney and County Administrator to implement emergency ordinances regarding fire protection and suppression
- Participates in EOC briefings, situation reports, and media briefs
- Participates in regular conference calls involving the National Hurricane Center, Florida State EOC, and Florida Fire Chiefs' SERP representatives
- Conducts daily operational briefs for chief officers and command staff

**OPERATIONS SECTION – Deputy Fire Chief**

- Operates from the EOC
- EOC representative for Emergency Support Function (ESF) 4/9.
- Ensures pre-storm readiness of all fire stations and support facilities
- Coordinates the duty assignments of career personnel and ensures adequate staffing is maintained at all fire stations
- Monitors countywide emergency response and recovery operations and makes recommendations to the IC concerning operational strategies and needed resources
- Coordinates with Federal, State, and local technical and support resources for assignments and operational objectives
- Supervises Division Officers and Task Force Leaders
- Attends EOC meetings and daily operational briefs

**DIVISION OFFICERS – Battalion Chiefs**

- Supervises and assists in response and recovery operations within a geographic area assigned by the Operations Section Chief
- Coordinates with Task Force Leaders to evaluate short and long-term staffing availability and assists the Operations Section Chief with placement of personnel
- Completes FEMA and departmental reports and records concerning their response to incidents, their assigned vehicle, and equipment use in a timely manner
- Provides requested information to EOC staff in a timely manner
- Attends daily operational briefs

**TASK FORCE LEADERS – District Chiefs, Career Lieutenants (Career Station)**

- Operates from assigned fire station
- Ensures pre-storm readiness of assigned fire station and support facilities
- District Chiefs coordinate recall of assigned volunteer personnel and determine short and long-term staffing availability
- Maintains a detailed record of assigned personnel's time on-duty from activation until the end of the incident
- Coordinates apparatus and shift assignments for personnel assigned to their station
- Coordinates the station evacuation and re-entry of fire-rescue personnel and resources as directed by the IC
- Supervises and assists station personnel in response and recovery operations
- Completes FEMA and departmental reports and records concerning station incidents, apparatus, personnel, and equipment use
- Provides requested information to EOC staff in a timely manner
- Attends daily operational briefs

**PLANNING SECTION – Battalion Chief of Training**

- Operates from the EOC
- Develops and implements a countywide accountability, safety, and security plan for personnel and resources
- Prepares and maintains a master list of local and mutual aid resources and contact numbers of key personnel for distribution
- Maintains routine contact with Division Officers and Task Force Leaders to gather information on personnel, fire station damage, apparatus, equipment, and supplies
- Collects, compiles, and forwards information from all fire districts and mutual aid resources concerning search and rescue operations and community damage assessment to the Operations Section Chief
- Supervises Documentation Unit to ensure an accurate and detailed incident record is maintained
- Supervises Situational Unit to secure accurate first-hand field information
- Attends daily operational briefs
- Coordinates department chaplains
- Staff ESF 4/9 if needed

**DOCUMENTATION UNIT – Office Assistants**

- Operates from the EOC
- Staffs front desk if needed
- Other duties as assigned or needed

**SITUATIONAL UNIT – Fire Marshal**

- Staff ESF 4/9 desk
- Coordinates staffing of ESF 4/9 desk

**SUPPORT STAFFING SECTION – Fire Inspectors**

- Staff ESF 4/9 desk
- Acts as a field observer for the planning section and reports on road conditions, critical hazards, immediate life safety emergencies, fire station damage, community damage assessment, and critical infrastructure damage
- Maintains resource maps and status boards as directed by the Planning Section Chief

**LOGISTICS SECTION – Captain of EMS/Training**

- Operates from the Central Supply Warehouse
- Supervises Logistics Support Unit to ensure prompt delivery of needed supplies and equipment to fire stations and field units, and delivery of 72 hour supply of food and drinking water prior to hurricane landfall
- Coordinates with Planning and Administrative/Finance Sections to order, receive, and process special equipment and supplies
- Coordinates with County Facilities Maintenance and other contractors to accomplish emergency temporary repairs to fire stations and other support facilities to keep them operational
- Coordinates sheltering, feeding, and support of any mutual aid resources not immediately assigned to a fire station or specific facility
- Attends daily operational briefs
- Assigns reserve apparatus/staff vehicles as needed
- Coordinates with local and mutual aid resources for the transportation of evacuees before and after hurricane landfall if directed by IC
- Coordinates with local and mutual aid resources for the delivery of needed supplies and equipment to fire stations and field units

**GROUND SUPPORT UNIT – Fleet Manager**

- Operates from the Central Supply Warehouse
- Coordinates the maintenance, service, and fueling of all mobile equipment, apparatus, vehicles, and station generators
- Assists the Logistics Support Unit if needed

**LOGISTICS SUPPORT UNIT – Warehouse staff/supervisor**

- Operates from the Central Supply Warehouse
- Ensures essential supplies and equipment are warehoused and ready for distribution prior to hurricane landfall
- Assists with the evacuation of equipment and supplies from barrier island stations

**ADMINISTRATION/FINANCE SECTION – Fire Service Manager**

- Shall be located at the EOC
- Responsible for managing all financial aspects of the incident
- Issues authorization numbers to volunteer departments for purchases greater than \$250 if a voucher will be submitted for reimbursement
- Coordinates with Logistics Section and County Purchasing representatives for the procurement of needed equipment and supplies
- Coordinates with County Administrative Services Department regarding establishment of special cost centers and financial reporting procedures
- Coordinates with Planning Section to compile daily informational reports on personnel injuries, station damage, and apparatus damage and forwards to the Fire Chief, insurance representatives, and EOC as requested
- Completes FEMA and departmental reports and records for Local, State and Federal financial assistance and reimbursement
- Attends daily operational briefs
- Staff ESF 4/9 desk as needed

**LEVELS OF OPERATION**

ECFR shall operate at Preparedness Level I, II, or III during the annual hurricane season. Clear communication via radio, pagers, and station fax machines shall notify all personnel at which level the department is currently operating.

**Preparedness Level I**

ECFR will automatically operate at Level I from June 1 through November 30. This time parallels the annual hurricane season.

At Level I, all personnel should have a heightened awareness of tropical weather conditions and keep informed on any tropical storm that has the potential to impact the local area.

Stores become crowded and supplies depleted as a hurricane approaches. Therefore, all personnel should have a pre-hurricane plan and secure needed supplies for their families and property prior to the beginning of hurricane season. The emergency recall of personnel may prohibit them from securing essential supplies at the approach of a hurricane. Safety information and a list of suggested supplies and pre-storm measures can be obtained through Emergency Management.

At the beginning of hurricane season, the senior station officer shall ensure that all personnel are competent in installing their station's hurricane shutters and doors and that all securing hardware is present and usable.

A formal review of the Hurricane Operations Plan should be conducted at each station at the beginning of hurricane season.

**Preparedness Level II**

ECFR will operate at Level II anytime our local area is placed under a hurricane watch, warning, or the EOC is activated.

The ESF 4/9 position shall be staffed at the EOC and direct contact shall be available by phone (850)471-6588.

Additional EOC and support positions may be staffed as deemed necessary by the Fire Chief.

Personnel should make final home and family preparations and monitor weather information. In addition, personnel should be prepared for a possible personnel recall.

All pending leave for career personnel will be canceled unless approved by the Fire Chief or Deputy Chief. Personnel that are out of town should call fire administration for further orders and information.

ESF 4/9 will send periodic updates and situation reports via fax to all stations and via alphanumeric pagers or email to all chief officers.

Initial preparations and checks shall be made at all fire stations and facilities to include personnel availability, apparatus, generators, fuel tank levels, and an inventory made of supplies and equipment.

**Preparedness Level III**

ECFR will operate at Level III when our local area is predicted to sustain a direct impact or suffer major effects from a hurricane.

The incident command structure identified in this plan shall be initiated and positions staffed as ordered by the IC.

A chief officers' briefing shall be held at the Public Safety Building or by conference call to discuss predicted impact, rescue and recovery operations, station evacuations, and personnel issues.

A recall of all personnel shall be issued and details given regarding reporting time and location.

All fire stations and facilities shall be fitted with available hurricane shutters and final preparations made regarding supplies and equipment

**FIRE STATION EVACUATIONS**

When it is predicted that a fire station will be subject to storm surge or severe flooding, the IC shall order it evacuated. The order to evacuate will be held as long as possible so that personnel may continue to respond to emergencies within the response district. Once ordered, the appropriate Task Force Leader shall coordinate the evacuation effort. Through the Logistics Section Chief, Task Force Leaders may request assistance from the Ground Support Unit for transportation needs during the evacuation.

The following actions shall be taken in the event of a fire station evacuation:

- All utilities shall be turned off and the station generator disabled (barrier islands will evacuate generators)
- All loose objects and equipment outside the station shall be brought inside and secured
- All windows and doors shall be locked and secured
- All hurricane shutters and doors shall be in place before departing the station
- All documents, computers, phones and equipment that can be removed shall be removed and evacuated to the central warehouse facility
- Equipment that will be crucial for effective operations after hurricane landfall shall be evacuated
- Any personal items of significance should be evacuated
- Temporary signs shall be placed on all station entrances with the following message: "This fire station has been evacuated due to Hurricane \_\_\_\_\_. If you have an emergency, call 9-1-1 for assistance"
- All apparatus, vehicles, and personnel shall be evacuated to the pre-designated facility

**STATION EVACUATIONS**

<b>STATION</b>	<b>RELOCATION FACILITY</b>
Pensacola Beach	Gulf Breeze & Midway Fire Stations
Warrington	Gene's Floor Covering Warehouse
Perdido Key	Pleasant Grove Station or Bellview Station
Innerarity Point	Gene's Floor Covering Warehouse
Pleasant Grove	Bellview Station

Task Force Leaders shall notify the Operations Section Chief when leaving their assigned station for evacuation, and they shall notify him when all apparatus, vehicles, and personnel have been secured at the assigned relocation facility.

Personnel shall not be allowed to return to their assigned station until the IC has given such order.

**PRE-LANDFALL OPERATIONS**

When ECFR moves into a Preparedness Level III condition, pre-landfall operations shall commence.

## PERSONNEL

Final preparations should have already been made with family members, personal vehicle filled with fuel, and personal property secured.

Due to the large number of personnel occupying fire stations during hurricanes, and the limited amount of living and sleeping areas, family members shall not use fire stations as a shelter location. This does not preclude two auxiliary members occupying the station who are actively involved in support functions.

Personnel should report to their assigned fire station or pre-designated location with the following recommended personal items:

- Additional clothes and footwear for minimum of 4 days
- Ball cap or hat
- Insect repellent, lip balm, and sunscreen
- ID card
- Cash
- Spare glasses or contacts
- Prescription medication
- Towels and washcloths
- Sleeping bag, pillow, and bed linen
- Personal notepad and pens
- Personal hygiene supplies, including shower shoes
- Personal phone, pager, radio, and charging device
- Non-perishable food and snacks
- Cards, reading material, crossword puzzles, etc. for rest periods

Task Force Leaders shall notify the Operations Section Chief when their station becomes staffed continuously. A pre-designated time to begin continuous staffing shall have been established in the chief officers' briefing.

## FIRE STATION OPERATIONS

It is the responsibility of all Task Force Leaders to properly organize and prepare their respective stations for hurricane conditions and operations prior to landfall.

Task Force Leaders shall designate certain personnel for communications duty at each station during continuous manning operations. Communications personnel shall act as the operator of the station radio, receive and send faxes, disseminate information to station personnel received from ESF 4/9, answer and direct telephone calls, utilize other communications devices that may be provided, and keep records pertaining to station response, damage to station and apparatus, and personnel.

If residents contact the station to request shelter accommodations, refer them to the closest public shelter location. A list of these locations shall be forwarded to each station by ESF 4/9.



**If any special purchases in excess of \$250 are made in preparation for hurricane landfall, and county funds will be sought for reimbursement, the purchase must be pre-approved by the Finance/Administration Section Chief and a tracking number assigned to the purchase.**

Loose objects and equipment outside of the station shall be secured and/or removed to the interior of the station.

Preparations shall be made to provide adequate sleeping and living areas for increased numbers of personnel.

Final checks on apparatus and operational supplies shall be made.

Ice shall be placed in available ice chests and freezers for later use.

All water kegs shall be filled on apparatus.

Additional oil and fluids for apparatus, vehicles, and the station generator shall be stocked. One additional blade, bar oil, two-cycle oil, and spark plug shall be stocked for each chainsaw.

15 five-gallon buckets with lids shall be sanitized and filled with water for personal hygiene and sanitation. **Sanitize;** Use one teaspoonful of household bleach or three teaspoons of hydrogen peroxide (the over-the-counter type works fine) per gallon of water. Swish the solution around so that it contacts all surfaces, and then fill the container with tap water. Allow the bleach solution to stand for about 5-15 minutes, the hydrogen peroxide for one hour. Then empty and rinse the bucket repeatedly with tap water until all odors are gone. Fill with tap water and seal.

All portable radios, spare batteries, defibrillator batteries, flashlights, pagers, suction units, cellular phones, and other electronic equipment shall be charged.

The Ground Support Unit shall deliver a 72-hour supply of drinking water and "heater meals" to the station.

Hurricane shutters shall be secured on the windows of the station.

### EMERGENCY OPERATIONS

Personnel staffing apparatus will respond to dispatched calls as assigned by County Dispatch. Personnel shall operate under established department guidelines, directives, and procedures. Due to increased traffic on roadways, downed power lines, airborne debris, and deteriorating weather conditions, personnel must use extra safety precautions while responding to and operating at emergency incidents.

Companies shall use a TAC channel as assigned by dispatch to alleviate unnecessary radio traffic on County Fire main.

As call volume increases, the IC shall coordinate with County Dispatch and issue the order to stop dispatching units to “power lines down”, “trees on fire”, and other alarms deemed low priority. In addition, based on call volume and weather conditions, the IC may issue the order that all calls be dispatched as single unit alarms, to include structure fires. However, in critical situations, mutual aid assistance will remain available upon request from the jurisdictional station.

### **LANDFALL OPERATIONS**

If wind speeds reach 50 mph sustained, the IC shall issue the order to suspend all emergency response operations.

### **PERSONNEL**

When emergency response operations are suspended, personnel shall complete their assignment at any emergency scene, terminate operations, and report to their assigned fire station.

As flying debris and other hazards will be present, personnel shall remain inside the station with all windows, doors, and hurricane shutters in place.

If a fire station is built with a reinforced safe area, personnel shall remain within this area during the height of hurricane landfall.

While emergency operations are suspended, personnel should take this opportunity to bathe, re-hydrate, eat, and rest.

### **FIRE STATION OPERATIONS**

Apparatus and equipment shall be checked, restocked, and prepared for post-landfall operations.

Apparatus shall be parked in station truck bays facing inward. Should any bay doors fail, they will most likely strike the rear of the apparatus and not the radiator, cab doors, or windshield, which could place the apparatus out of service. The apparatus should be placed in the middle of the bay equal distance from the bay doors for stations that store a single apparatus in a drive through bay

All hurricane shutters for windows and bay doors shall be put in place and secured.

Portable radios, cell phones, and pagers should be dried and charged.

**EMERGENCY OPERATIONS**

Fire-Rescue will suspend emergency response operations while wind speeds are 50 mph sustained or greater. If wind speeds never reach this velocity, response operations shall continue during the storm.

If response operations are suspended due to dangerous wind speeds, County Dispatch shall make radio calls to each station every hour to check on personnel and fire station conditions.

The planning section shall work with dispatch to prioritize holding calls during this no response period.

County Dispatch will log and hold all emergency calls for assistance while response operations are suspended. As soon as wind speeds drop below 50 mph sustained, County Dispatch will call each station on the County Fire frequency and assign all holding calls in order of priority.

**POST-LANDFALL OPERATIONS**

Once a hurricane makes landfall, and wind speeds fall below 50 mph sustained, ECFR will commence rescue and recovery operations.

**PERSONNEL**

Post-landfall conditions will require all personnel to be keenly aware of dangerous conditions encountered while operating in the field. Safety must be the top priority for all personnel.

Task Force Leaders should allow personnel the opportunity to check on family members and personal property as soon as possible. However, all personnel must be aware that the rescue and recovery mission of the department cannot be compromised and operations immediately following hurricane landfall will most likely be complex and lengthy. Thus, it may be some time before personnel can be rotated out for personal issues.

The destruction and suffering caused in the wake of a hurricane can be overwhelming. Any personnel that begin to feel high levels of stress and/or anxiety shall report this to their immediate supervisor and may be relieved of duty until they can attend a critical incident stress debriefing. Department Chaplains will be available for this, and other support activities through the Planning Section Chief.

**RECALL PROCEDURES**

The recalling of personnel while monitoring a storm and attempting to determine landfall location can be a constantly changing event. Personnel must remain in the appropriate state of rediness and monitor communications equipment. If the area is threatened by a major hurricane (category 3 or higher) recall procedures may begin 24 to 36 hours prior to landfall. Personnel will be contacted and directed where to report and at what time. Consideration will be given to those that may need to return to their homes and complete final storm preparations. The EOC staff will take bridge closings into consideration and

coordinate with law enforcement representatives to determine when they will close and make necessary changes to facilitate personnel traveling.

### FIRE STATION OPERATIONS

The Planning Section shall contact each fire station after hurricane landfall to determine the status of personnel, apparatus, equipment, food and water supplies, and the fire station.

If any truck bay doors failed or the roof was torn away from the truck bay area, a thorough check shall be conducted on affected apparatus and vehicles before departing the station to ensure the vehicle or apparatus is safe and functioning properly.

Auxiliary personnel, and several active firefighters shall remain at the fire station during rescue and recovery operations to staff the station radio, begin clearing debris from station grounds, and receive any phone calls or "walk-in" notifications of emergencies from the public.

In the event the water system is lost, station personnel will coordinate with the Planning and Logistics Section Chiefs for the placement of temporary sanitary facilities, potable water tanks, and other support equipment.

### EMERGENCY OPERATIONS

Once emergency response operations are restored, County Dispatch shall notify each station of all calls holding in their response area and personnel shall immediately respond to those calls.

In addition to responding to emergency calls, Task Force Leaders shall deploy their personnel in a manner that ensures all areas within their district are scouted for residences and businesses that have sustained heavy or catastrophic damage. These occupancies shall be quickly sized-up and a determination made if any occupants are trapped or in need of assistance.

While field units are conducting rescue and recovery operations, they shall clear any trees or debris that may be completely blocking major roadways so that at least one lane of traffic is opened. If large trees or major debris is blocking roadways, units should not spend excessive amounts of time trying to clear the blockage. The field unit shall notify their station and the station shall forward this information to the Planning Section. Personnel should be aware that in some areas they might have to leave apparatus and conduct assessments on foot.

Personnel should not walk through high water without proper PPE. Extreme caution should be used when operating in any water due to snakes, ants, unseen holes and downed power lines. Apparatus should not drive into high water and should avoid driving over debris if possible. Do not drive or walk over downed power lines. All power lines should be considered energized.

For major hurricanes, and where extensive damage is expected, Federal and State USAR teams may have been requested prior to landfall and pre-staged for immediate response. USAR teams will be responsible for conducting long term rescue and recovery operations on Pensacola Beach, Perdido Key, and other low-lying areas along the waterfront.

A primary search of all districts should be completed within 24 hours of initial operations.

When all areas within a fire district have been assessed and initially searched for trapped occupants, the assigned Task Force Leader shall communicate this information to the Operations Section Chief and appropriate Division Officer.

Additionally, the Task Force Leader shall complete a formal written report and forward this report to the Operations Section Chief no later than 12 hours after initial rescue and recovery operations are complete. The report shall contain information on any trapped occupants found, areas inaccessible to emergency vehicles and apparatus, any critical infrastructure that was severely damaged or destroyed, any potential long-term hazardous materials or contamination situations, damage to apparatus, damage to station, injuries to personnel, staffing availability, and any immediate or long term resource needs. Photo documentation can be very important and should be obtained whenever possible.

#### RECOVERY OPERATIONS

All personnel should plan to operate for a minimum of 72 hours following hurricane landfall without any additional support.

FEMA and other support agencies will arrive in support of hurricane operations as soon as possible. Food, ice, and drinking water will be shipped in for major hurricanes and central dispensing areas for first responders will be set up. Each fire station should plan on sending personnel to retrieve supplies as needed. Station personnel shall only receive supplies if they are in an official fire department vehicle and have a valid identification card. The Task Force Leader shall assign appropriate personnel for this task and assure that supplies retrieved are for use only by crews staffing fire stations.

Major hurricanes will require full-time staffing of all fire stations for an extended period of time. The IC will request mutual aid resources through Escambia County Emergency Management to provide relief at all fire stations on a rotational basis. Task Force Leaders should ensure that all assigned personnel are able to get enough food, water, and sleep so that they can function effectively and safely in the field.

Mutual aid Strike Teams and Task Forces are primarily used to respond to emergencies in place of exhausted local personnel, or to provide a special service. However, mutual aid resources can, and expect, to be used to place fire stations and grounds back in order and in some cases, provide assistance at personnel's residences to address immediate needs.