



**FEMA**

# Fact Sheet

May 2009

## **FEMA's Hurricane Preparation and Response Efforts**

### **Background**

A hurricane is a tropical weather system with winds that have reached a sustained speed of 74 mph or more. Hurricane winds blow in a large spiral around a relatively calm center, known as the "eye." The eye is generally 20-30 miles wide, and the storm may extend outward from the eye for 400 miles. Hurricanes wield incredible power. As they near land, they can bring torrential rains, high winds, floods and flash floods and spawn tornadoes. Even more dangerous is the storm surge - a dome of water that, at its peak, can be 20 feet high and 50-100 miles wide. Surges can devastate coastal communities. A single hurricane can last more than two weeks over open waters and can run along the entire length of the eastern seaboard. The 74-160 mph winds can extend inland for hundreds of miles. Hurricanes are classified by five categories according to wind velocity. Category 1 is the mildest and Category 5 is the strongest. The hurricane season lasts from June 1 through November 30. August and September are the peak months.

### **FEMA's Role**

FEMA's primary responsibility is to ensure that as a nation we are working together to prepare, protect, respond and mitigate against disasters. The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act provides the legal basis for FEMA to provide disaster response and recovery assistance.

FEMA's National Preparedness, Disaster Operations, Logistics Management and Disaster Assistance Directorates have leading roles in hurricane preparedness and response.

### ***NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS DIRECTORATE***

#### **Completed Actions:**

- Developed an after-action report documenting overall strengths and areas for improvement from the 2008 hurricane season. Issues and recommendations identified in the AAR were consolidated into the draft Improvement Plan (IP) which identifies corrective actions and responsible components, and establishes target dates for completion.
- Facilitated a consensus conference on February 19, 2009, to give components the opportunity to validate recommendations, identify responsible components, develop and prioritize corrective actions, identify points of contact responsible for updating the status of assigned corrective actions, and establish target completion dates. The product of that conference was the interim IP. Conference participants were also asked to identify

corrective actions that could be completed prior to the start of the 2009 hurricane season on June 1, 2009. Of the 58 recommendations assigned for corrective action, the interim IP identifies 31 corrective actions that are to be achieved prior to and in preparation for the beginning of the 2009 hurricane season.

## **Training**

- Conducted three offerings of the Emergency Management Institute's (EMI) Hurricane Preparedness Course (L324) at the National Hurricane Center in Miami, FL. One was targeted for the northeast states, one for the southeast states, and one for the Gulf States.
- Conducting the following five EMI courses at the National Hurricane Conference in Austin, TX:
  - Debris Management
  - Emergency Planning and Special Needs Populations
  - Mitigation Planning Workshop for Local Government
  - Hurricane Readiness Course for Coastal Communities
    - Hurricane Readiness for Inland Communities
    - Offering over 30 online EMI courses that help to prepare all audiences for disaster situations.

## ***DISASTER OPERATIONS DIRECTORATE***

FEMA's Disaster Operations Directorate coordinates and provides the immediate federal disaster response capability needed to save lives, reduce suffering and protect property in communities overwhelmed by a major disaster or emergency, such as a hurricane.

Leaning forward and always prepared to respond, FEMA maintains multiple disaster response teams/assets, emergency communications capabilities, operational planning capabilities, and operations centers that play a key part in coordinating and providing support to State and local governments in need.

### **Disaster Response Teams/Assets:**

FEMA's Disaster Operations Directorate manages multiple disaster response teams that can be rapidly deployed to support state and local disaster response operations:

#### ***Hurricane Liaison Team (HLT)***

- The HLT is a small team located at the National Hurricane Center (when activated) designed to enhance hurricane disaster response. The HLT facilitates information exchange between the National Hurricane Center in Miami, FL; other National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) components; and Federal, state and local government and emergency management officials.

#### ***Incident Management Assistance Teams***

- The Incident Management Assistance Teams (IMAT) are full-time, rapid response teams able to deploy to a disaster within 2 hours and arrive at an incident within 12 hours.
- IMATs support the local incident commander, coordinate federal response activities and provide information about the situation and current conditions to FEMA leadership. Two national-level and four regional-level teams are now operational.

### Mobile Emergency Response Support

- FEMA's Mobile Emergency Response Support (MERS) detachments provide mobile telecommunications, life support, logistics, operational support and power generation required for the on-site management of response activities.

### Urban Search & Rescue

- Twenty-eight national Urban Search & Rescue Task Forces, complete with the necessary tools, equipment, skills and techniques, can be deployed by FEMA to assist state and local governments in rescuing victims of structural collapse incidents or to assist in other search and rescue missions.

### **Disaster Emergency Communications**

- FEMA is collaborating with hurricane-prone states to develop up-to-date 2009 state emergency communications plans to facilitate hurricane response. For example, substantial disaster emergency communications support was provided to Texas and Louisiana during the 2008 Hurricanes Gustav and Ike.

### **Operational Planning Capabilities**

- Improving current and future operations planning capabilities to better support response activities;
- Making greater use of metrics to track progress of response and recovery;
- Planning with a greater focus on implications for impacted residents;
- Adopting more innovative regional planning approaches to manage simultaneous multiple storms;
- Providing regional evacuation planning support to the Gulf and East Coast states:
  - For example, FEMA supported the successful evacuation of New Orleans and Louisiana residents last year for Hurricane Gustav using multi-modal transportation assets;
  - Also successfully evacuated medical/special needs patients during Hurricanes Ike and Gustav in coordination with HHS/DOD;
- Making greater use of Catastrophic Planning products to enable storm preparations and response (Florida used the Catastrophic Planning products in responding to Tropical Storm Fay and Hurricane Hanna in 2008);
- Expanding Gap Analysis Program application to collect more data on states' resource availability in order to facilitate disaster response;
- Refining Pre-Scripted Mission Assignments (PSMA) to facilitate disaster response support from other departments and agencies: 236 PSMA's with 29 departments and agencies.

### **Disaster Response Operations Centers/Coordination**

- Disaster Operations has greatly improved coordination and connectivity with its interagency, military, and DHS partners through upgrades to its network of operations centers, such as the National Response Coordination Center, the Regional Response Coordination Centers, and the FEMA Operations Center. These operations centers coordinate and sustain response operations; maintain situational awareness and a common operating picture; facilitate information sharing between FEMA and non-FEMA entities; and provide internal and external stakeholders a consolidated, consistent, and accurate status of ongoing incidents, responses or potential events.

## ***LOGISTICS AND MANAGEMENT DIRECTORATE***

### **Completed 2009 Hurricane Preparedness Activities:**

- Developed logistics annex for 2009 FEMA CONPLAN
- Developed logistics instructions for GAP Analysis Program
- Allocated logistics billets to FEMA regions (Logistics Chief/LMD LNO)
- Restocked FEMA Distribution Centers (DC) at pre-Gustav adjusted levels
- Reassessed FEMA strategic pre-positioned sites and inventories
- Created a standard national Point of Distribution (POD) training program
- Conducted national logistics coordination Rehearsal of Concept (ROC) drill

- Established LMD fly-away team for disaster support
  - Tactical supply chain/distribution assistance
- Conducted resource support coordination visits
  - Region VI (Louisiana and Texas)
  - Conducted ESF-7 Logistics Management and Resource Support 2009 Summit
  - Developed implementation plan for congressionally mandated demonstration program - Logistics Capability Assessment Tool (LCAT) to enhance state/local readiness

### **In-Process 2009 Hurricane Preparedness Activities:**

- Developing Resource Requirements Calculator (RRC) for state and local support in developing logistics gap analysis in coordination with Disaster Operations Directorate.
- Conducting Regional Planning Assistance Team (RPAT) visits to FEMA Regions
- Developing an internal report, analysis and assessment capability
- Transitioning from draft documents to official logistics doctrine
  - Logistics Operations Manual
  - Incident Support Base (formally known as NLSA) Concept
  - Responder Support Camp CONOP
- Renewing National Evacuation Contracts (bus, rail, ambulance)
- Reviewing Inter-Agency Agreements (IAA) with FEMA partners
  - Defense Logistics Agency (DLA)
  - General Services Administration (GSA)
  - United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
  - Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
- Synchronizing ESF-7 (Logistics Management and Resource Support )Business Processes
- Coordinating USNORTHCOM PSMA requirements
- Developing cold-weather pack emergency generator capability for Alaska environment.
- Making TAV enhancements to include: 1. expanding capability to remaining FEMA Distribution Centers; 2. enhancing capability to track partner shipments; and 3. enhancing management-level/decision-making reporting.

## ***DISASTER ASSISTANCE DIRECTORATE***

### **Mass Care Support**

- FEMA staff continues to work with the American Red Cross and other voluntary organizations to ensure that plans, resources and protocols are developed and ready to be implemented before the 2009 hurricane season.
- The American Red Cross has hired and deployed mass care planners to FEMA headquarters, regions and the Pacific and Caribbean Area Offices. These staff was hired under a two-year contract between FEMA and the Red Cross to provide mass care experts in support of catastrophic and regional response planning and operations.
- The American Red Cross and FEMA are finalizing an agreement to exchange data between the FEMA and Red Cross National Shelter Systems (NSS) to ensure accuracy and consistency of information. The enhanced version of the FEMA National Shelter System (NSS) will include GIS mapping capabilities and expanded information fields for State and local jurisdictions.
- FEMA has awarded the new Individual Assistance Technical Assistance Contracts to support the delivery of needed housing, construction, and mass care services under Emergency Support Function (ESF) #6 of the National Response Framework.
- FEMA is establishing contract agreements to support the delivery of mass care and emergency assistance activities under ESF #6, including the purchase of food commodities, shelter kits and supplies.

- FEMA and the US Department of Agriculture-Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA-APHIS) are developing an Interagency Agreement to ensure Federal government compliance with the Pets Act of 2006 as well as with PKEMRA requirements for the evacuation, transportation and care of household pets during and after a Presidentially declared disaster.

### **National Processing Service Center (NPSC) Readiness**

- 2009 hurricane season workload capacity -There are currently 857 customer service representatives working at the NPSC who could take approximately 21,000 registrations each day. On average, 30 percent of our registrations are completed over the Internet, which brings our current capacity to just over 27,000 registrations daily.
- Secured funding for security upgrades of contract mail facilities to expand the mail operation as disaster activity increases.
- Conducted senior-level partnering sessions with the housing inspector contractors to attempt to resolve security adjudication issues and to establish a reporting protocol to provide on-the-ground assessments regarding accessibility issues during the early phase of deployment.

### **Temporary Housing Units**

- New low-formaldehyde travel trailers that will meet stringent standards for indoor air quality (IAQ) will be ordered. Units will be pre-tested and certified at satisfactory air quality rates before acceptance by the government. The contract was awarded on April 7, 2009 with an initial order of 500 units. The order is estimated to be fulfilled by the middle of June.
- Temporary Manufactured Housing Unit Supply Contract (TMUS) - 450+ million IDIQ contract will provide FEMA with the ability to sustain disaster housing operations in the event of a catastrophic disaster:
  - This contract specifies stringent air quality standards for housing units before it can be accepted by the government.
  - Contract is scheduled to be awarded by mid-July. The contract carries a maximum purchase capacity of up to 135,000 manufactured homes and Park Models.
- Analysis of alternative housing units has begun on Alternative Units at the National Emergency Training Center (NETC) at Emmitsburg, MD. The most viable units may be purchased and used on future disaster operations.

### **Public Assistance**

- The Public Assistance Program continues to review and update its policies and guidance based on the lessons learned from hurricanes Katrina and Rita, as well as Gustav and Ike.
- FEMA will deploy upgrades to the Emergency Management Mission Integrated Environment (EMMIE) system. EMMIE is the automated, grants management system for the administration of the Public Assistance program.

###