



Secured Fire Stations, Faster Response

Full Mitigation Best Practice Story

Yabucoa Municipio, Puerto Rico

Yabucoa, PR - To achieve a rapid response during emergency events, first responders should remain in safe and secure facilities, ensuring a speedy deployment when they're needed. Firefighters in the Yabucoa Fire Station have first-hand knowledge of the value of taking preventive measures in the workplace and remaining protected until they're needed.



In 1998, when Hurricane Georges struck the island, Sergeant José de León helplessly watched as rain gusted through windows and wood shutters, damaging equipment and supplies in the fire station. "We didn't feel safe inside the building, even our equipment, including the vehicles, were at serious risk while the winds were blowing. We were only able to protect some of the windows, in the first floor, with heavy wood panels," said Sergeant Leon.

It was 2001 when the Yabucoa Fire Station became part of a joint effort to protect public facilities from natural hazards. The FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funded the installation of storm shutters at 45 fire stations. These storm shutters prevent wind and water damages related to heavy rain and wind events. Other independent mitigation measures taken in the Yabucoa Fire Station were the acquisition of water tanks and electrical generators to guarantee service continuity.

During Tropical Storm Jeanne (2004), the situation was completely different. "Even with all the rain and wind brought by Jeanne, we were safe and we even sheltered additional staff from the Fire Academy in Gurabo," explained Sergeant Leon.

Activity/Project Location

Geographical Area: **Single County in a State**

FEMA Region: **Region II**

State: **Puerto Rico**

County: **Yabucoa Municipio**

City/Community: **Yabucoa**

Key Activity/Project Information

Sector: **Public**
Hazard Type: **Severe Storm**
Activity/Project Type: **Retrofitting, Non-structural**
Activity/Project Start Date: **09/1999**
Activity/Project End Date: **09/2001**
Funding Source: **Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)**
Funding Recipient: **Critical Facility - Police/Fire**
Funding Recipient Name: **Yabucoa Fire Station**
Application/Project Number: **9999**

Activity/Project Economic Analysis

Cost: **\$237,878.00 (Actual)**

Activity/Project Disaster Information

Mitigation Resulted From Federal Disaster? **Unknown**
Value Tested By Disaster? **Yes**
Tested By Federal Disaster #: **No Federal Disaster specified**
Year First Tested: **2004**
Repetitive Loss Property? **Unknown**

Reference URLs

Reference URL 1: <http://www.fema.gov/about/divisions/mitigation/mitigation.shtm>
Reference URL 2: <http://www.floodsmart.gov/>

Main Points

- The FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funded the installation of storm shutters at 45 fire stations. These storm shutters prevent wind and water damages related to heavy rain and wind events.
- Other independent mitigation measures taken in the Yabucoa Fire Station were the acquisition of water tanks and electrical generators to guarantee service continuity.
- During Tropical Storm Jeanne (2004), the situation was completely different. "Even with all the rain and wind brought by Jeanne, we were safe and we even sheltered additional staff from the Fire Academy in Gurabo," explained Sergeant Leon.



Exterior view of the Yabucoa Fire Station.



Storm shutters