Florida Division of Emergency Management

Our Mission:

Ensure that Florida is prepared to respond to emergencies, recover from them, and mitigate against their impacts.
MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

PREPARE A FAMILY DISASTER PLAN NOW!
A well thought-out plan of action for you and your family can go a long way toward reducing the damage from hurricanes and other types of disasters that could strike. Preparing your family disaster plan is the first step in protecting your household.

Before a hurricane threatens, plan a safe evacuation route and identify safe shelter space within your area. Those in storm surge zones, in flood zones, or in less than standard housing should be especially vigilant in preparing disaster plans. Contact your local emergency management office or American Red Cross chapter and ask for the community preparedness plan. Have disaster supplies on hand, and check into flood insurance. Homeowners’ policies do not cover damage from flooding that often accompanies hurricanes.

Call your local insurance agent or the National Flood Insurance Program at 1-800-427-4661.

Be Prepared, Get A Plan! for this hurricane season.

W. Craig Fugate

ABOUT THE DIVISION

The Florida Division of Emergency Management (DEM) coordinates disaster preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation programs in support of the state’s 67 counties and local governments. On behalf of the Governor, the 138 person agency forms the management resource to the State Emergency Response Team (SERT) and serves as liaison to the federal government to administer disaster relief programs.

The State Emergency Response Team (SERT) consists of representatives of over 50 state agencies, including the Florida National Guard, and also private partners and volunteer agencies such as the American Red Cross and Volunteer Florida. The State Team is organized into 18 emergency support functions (ESFs). State agencies take a lead role by the professional or technical area of their support function.

During times of emergency, the Governor directs the state’s response efforts, utilizing the combined assets and personnel of the State Team, under Chapter 252 Florida Statute, to aid local governments and residents with disaster assistance needs. Through Executive Order, the Director of the Division of Emergency Management serves as the State Coordinating Officer (SCO), and is responsible to manage the operation to insure that proper coordination is in place between the local agencies, the state, and the federal government.

In September 2003, Florida’s state emergency management program became the first statewide program in the nation to receive full accreditation from the Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP).
The Davis Productivity Awards recognize and reward state government employees whose work significantly and measurably increases productivity and promotes innovation. The award honors employees who improve the delivery of state services and save money for Florida taxpayers and businesses. The program is a major government improvement initiative chaired by Lt. Governor Jeff Kottkamp and sponsored by Florida TaxWatch, The Florida Council of 100, and the State of Florida.

The annual Davis Productivity Awards honor the excellent work and creativity of State employees who have truly made a difference by developing more efficient products, cost saving systems, and services that benefit the residents of Florida.

Emergency Management’s Gary Freerksen and Bill Owens have received a 2007 Prudential Financial Davis Productivity Award for their efforts to streamline the Public Assistance process and the development of www.FloridaPA.org.

The duo also split a $500 award provided by Florida TaxWatch and were recognized at the annual awards ceremony in June.

GOVERNOR CRIST OPENS THE NEW STATE LOGISTICS RESPONSE CENTER

The new State Logistics Response Center in Orlando, Florida will be managed and operated by the Florida Division of Emergency Management. This 200,000 square foot warehouse will stockpile commodities (water, food and tarps) necessary to plan for, respond to, and recover from hurricanes, tornadoes, flooding, or any other significant natural or manmade disaster.

Facts and figures on the State Logistics Response Center

- A 200,000 square foot, four-zone, climate controlled facility with 27 loading docks
- Helicopter landing zone to accommodate a military and civilian aircraft
- 350 KW emergency generator with three-days of diesel fuel
- 1.5 Million gallons of bottled water
- Over 65,000 shelf stable meals
- Over 45,000 tarps
- 6,000 cots and bedding kits
- 6,000 adult and 3,000 child personal comfort kits
STATEWIDE DISABILITIES COORDINATOR

At the 9th Annual Family Café conference, Governor Crist directed the Florida Division of Emergency Management and the Agency for Persons with Disabilities to collaborate on the appointment of a statewide disabilities coordinator within the Florida Division of Emergency Management. The two state agencies developed a Memorandum of Understanding that will outline their collaboration on emergency preparedness issues and post-disaster response relating to persons with disabilities.

“It is important for Florida to have an emergency-management professional looking out for the unique disaster-related needs of persons with disabilities,” said Craig Fugate, Director of the Florida Division of Emergency Management. “Hurricanes or other disasters may disrupt every person's routine activities, but these disruptions can be life-threatening for individuals with disabilities. For that reason, we must do all we can to encourage preparation within the disabilities community.”

The statewide disabilities coordinator will ensure that the agency and local service providers have continuity of operations plans to be implemented during a threat of imminent disaster. Disasters include weather-related or manmade disasters, including hurricanes, tornadoes, civil disturbances, epidemics, massive migrations, fires, nuclear power plant accidents, train derailments, terrorism, floods and bio-terrorism.

The Family Café began in 1998 as an attempt to respond to a specific need in the disability community: the need for information. This year’s 9th Annual Family Café Conference attracted a truly remarkable 10,000 participants, and offered attendees a wide variety of educational and informational opportunities to choose from. The conference included 140+ classroom size sessions, three keynote addresses, an exhibit hall with more than 120 public and private vendors, as well as the Annual Governor’s Summit on Disabilities, hosted by Governor Charlie Crist.

2007 DISASTER RECOVERY SUMMIT

The Florida Division of Emergency Management (DEM) hosted the 2007 Disaster Recovery Summit. The first annual summit was held July 25th in Daytona Beach. DEM Director Craig Fugate kicked-off the summit discussing the State's role in the recovery process with over 300 state, federal and county attendees. The motivation behind the summit was to clearly address all recovery issues that the State of Florida may face throughout year.

The summit provided a forum for local, state and federal partners to discuss the “ground rules” for recovery activities, and to review the roles and new policies with all stakeholders. Attendees were able to discuss issues of concern, topics of importance, and ultimately provide recommendations to assist in recovery efforts.

“The Disaster Recovery summit was a great opportunity for disaster managers to strengthen their understanding of the recovery process on all levels. It’s a proactive approach to discuss issues of concern, topics of importance, and ultimately provide the groundwork that will help our communities in future recovery efforts.”

Craig Fugate, Director, Division of Emergency Management
FLORIDA NATIONAL GUARD RESPONSE

SSgt. Thomas Kielbasa, Public Information Officer, Florida National Guard

When a major catastrophe impacts Florida, the women and men of the Florida National Guard are usually part of the arsenal of assets used by first responders.

The Florida National Guard and the Florida Department of Military Affairs provide highly trained military units and personnel to support not only national security objectives, but to protect our citizens during state and local emergencies.

Recent natural disasters have demonstrated the versatility of the Florida National Guard as its Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen helped suppress wildfires, distribute supplies after tornadoes and provide logistics support during intense hurricane seasons.

This year as wildfires plagued the state, the Florida National Guard was called to help suppress the wildfires through both aviation and ground assets. UH-60 Black Hawk and CH-47 Chinook helicopters equipped for firefighting dropped more than 1.6 million gallons of water on wildfires in support of Florida Division of Forestry firefighters. More than 60 Florida National Guard Soldiers were called to support the wildfire suppression efforts by performing “mop up” of hot spots in north central Florida.

The Florida National Guard is prepared to meet the threat of a hurricane or any type of emergency that could happen on a daily basis. The availability of our Guardsmen positions us to be able to continuously support both our Federal Mission in the Global War on Terrorism and our State Mission in response to needs of the Governor such as hurricane relief.

ALWAYS READY, ALWAYS THERE!

LIGHTNING SAFETY

Brian Richardson, Deputy State Meteorologist, Florida Division of Emergency Management

Florida is known for its beautiful beaches, theme parks and other enjoyable locations that attract residents and visitors alike. It is also known for something else, something more deadly. Leading the nation in the number of lightning-related fatalities, Florida is known as the “Lightning Capital of the United States.” On average, about nine deaths and 40 injuries each year are attributed to lightning. This constitutes nearly one-third of all weather-related fatalities in Florida over the past decade.

In Florida, thunderstorms can occur year-round. Historically speaking, June, July, and August are the deadliest months for lightning strikes, with July experiencing the most fatalities. Persons 10-19 years of age are the most likely group to fall victim to lightning, with those in their 30's comprising the second most likely group.

A very important lightning safety tip is the “30-30 Rule.” When you see lightning, count the number of seconds until you hear thunder. If the time between seeing lightning and hearing thunder is 30 SECONDS OR LESS, then the thunderstorm is close enough to be an imminent danger. Go indoors immediately and wait AT LEAST 30 MINUTES after hearing the last clap of thunder before leaving shelter. Do not let sunshine and blue skies fool you! Lightning can strike 10 miles away from a thunderstorm or even farther.” Remember, WHEN THUNDER ROARS, GO INDOORS!

For additional safety tips, visit NOAA's lightning safety website at http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov/.
On April 20, 2007 the Florida Department of Health, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and the Florida Division of Emergency Management announced that they would align their regions under single, unified seven (7) region structure. Pursuant to Executive Order Number 07-01, each agency was requested by the Governor to do a top-to-bottom review of its operations and identify ways to improve state services for all Floridians. During its review the Florida Division of Emergency Management identified that the alignment of its regional structure with these other two partner agencies would provide more efficient coordination before, during and after disasters.

Additionally, this initiative will, for the first time, allow the possibility of conducting multiple regional meetings of these agencies in a single geographical location over the course a day or two. This will create efficiencies in regards to travel costs, facility rental and overall coordination between these different agencies who now share the same regional structure.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

DEM will be rolling out its new Public Outreach and Marketing campaign using transit and billboards throughout the State of Florida. The "Get A Plan" message will be on buses and billboards in the Tallahassee, Orlando, Jacksonville, Tampa, St. Petersburg, Pensacola and Miami-Dade area.
We Want to Hear From You!

We welcome your comments and suggestions. Please let us know how we are doing.

Please submit all articles to:
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DEM welcomes submissions from readers. Articles selected for publication must provide accurate information to Floridians and complement the DEM mission. The editor reserves the right to edit submitted material.

OUR MISSION

ENSURE THAT FLORIDA IS PREPARED TO
RESPOND TO EMERGENCIES,
RECOVER FROM THEM, AND MITIGATE AGAINST THEIR IMPACTS