

CITY OF CHARLESTON

Emergency Operations Plan



City of Charleston

REVISED January 2021
City of Charleston Emergency Management
2 George Street, Suite 2900
Charleston, SC 29401

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City of Charleston

MAYOR'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As the Mayor of Charleston, a resilient city of more than 350 years, I am frequently reminded of our mission statement: "To preserve and enhance the quality of life of the citizens of the City of Charleston."

To that end, I am responsible for and our City government is charged with preparing our citizens, neighborhoods, visitors, businesses and City staff for emergencies and disasters. Together, we also shoulder the responsibility for protecting people, property, and the environment from hazards and threats, doing all that we can to mitigate their impacts, and where able, to prevent them from occurring. When an emergency or a disaster looms or occurs, the goal of City government is a robust response and a thorough yet thoughtful recovery. All those who live, work, and attend school here, or who otherwise come to enjoy our City expect no less of us.

We are a City within two counties—Charleston and Berkeley—with neighboring municipalities, and partners across the state who know both the beauty of our City and our challenges. As we continue to build our capacity to handle emergencies and disasters, we are also fortunate to have partners on whom we can rely when conditions warrant.

Of course, being prepared as a city depends on the active participation of every individual. Everyone is their own emergency manager. We also know that neighborhoods where people are socially connected and check on each other tend to be the most resilient.

Emergencies and disasters will always be with us—about this we should neither be naïve nor apathetic. But as we grow in understanding our hazards and threats and in familiarity with this Emergency Operations Plan, and as we tighten the weave of our whole community approach to emergencies and disasters, we can reduce impacts and strengthen our resilience.

This Emergency Operations Plan is both a charge for the present and an aspirational document. It outlines the work for which City government and its partners are responsible. It also envisions increasing our capacity to handle emergencies and disasters over time. Most importantly, it imagines a well-prepared citizenry.

With this letter, the City of Charleston Emergency Operations Plan is hereby promulgated.

Signed this _____ day of _____, 2021

Mayor, City of Charleston

Signatory Page

Mayor _____ Date _____

Clerk of Council _____ Date _____

Corporation Counsel _____ Date _____

Public Information Officer _____ Date _____

Police Chief _____ Date _____

Fire Chief _____ Date _____

Director of Emergency Management _____ Date _____

Chief Financial Officer _____ Date _____

Safety Officer _____ Date _____

Housing and Community Development Director _____ Date _____

Human Resources & Orgz. Development Director _____ Date _____

Chief Information Officer _____ Date _____

Livability and Tourism Director _____ Date _____

Parks Director _____ Date _____

Planning, Preservation, & Sustainability Director _____ Date _____

Public Service Director _____ Date _____

Recreation Director _____ Date _____

Stormwater Management Director _____ Date _____

Traffic and Transportation Director _____ Date _____

**A RESOLUTION DESIGNATING NATIONAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (NIMS) 3.0 (2017)
AS THE BASIS FOR INCIDENT MANAGEMENT BY ALL EMERGENCY SERVICES WITHIN THE CITY OF
CHARLESTON AS WELL AS MEOC STAFF ACTIVATED FOR EMERGENCIES AND DISASTERS**

WHEREAS, the President in Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD)-5 directed the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security to develop and administer a National Incident Management System (NIMS) which would provide a consistent nationwide approach for federal, state, local and tribal governments to work together more effectively and efficiently to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from domestic incidents, regardless of cause, size or complexity; and

WHEREAS, the collective input and guidance from all federal, state, local, and tribal homeland security partners have been, and will continue to be, vital to the development, effective implementation, and utilization of a comprehensive NIMS; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary that all federal, state, local, and tribal emergency agencies and personnel coordinate their efforts to effectively and efficiently provide the highest levels of incident management; and

WHEREAS, to facilitate the most effective and efficient incident management it is critical that federal, state, local, and tribal organizations utilize standard terminology; standard organizational structures; interoperable communications; consolidated action plans; unified command structures; uniform standards for personnel qualification and for planning, training, and exercising; comprehensive resource management; and designated incident facilities during emergencies or disasters; and

WHEREAS, the NIMS standardized procedures for managing personnel, communications, facilities, and resources will improve the City of Charleston's ability to utilize funding to enhance local and state agency readiness, maintain first responder safety, and streamline incident management processes; and

WHEREAS, the Incident Command System (ICS) components of NIMS are an integral part of incident management throughout the state, including emergency management training programs; and

WHEREAS, the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9-11 Commission) recommended adoption of a standardized ICS; and

WHEREAS, NIMS 3.0 (2017) reflects progress since 2008, based on lessons learned, best practices, and changes in national policy, includes updates to the National Preparedness System; reiterates concepts and principles of earlier versions of NIMS; provides additional guidance for EOCs; and describes how NIMS command and coordination mechanisms fit together;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City of Charleston, in a meeting duly assembled, that NIMS 3.0 (2017) be designated as the basis for incident management by emergency services within the City of Charleston and Municipal Emergency Operations Center (MEOC) staff activated for emergencies and disasters.

DONE this

Attest:

CITY OF CHARLESTON

CITY OF CHARLESTON

Jennifer Cook
Clerk of Council

By: John J. Tecklenburg, Jr.
Mayor

RECORD OF CHANGE

DISTRIBUTION LIST

EOP PLAN HOLDER	COPIES
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Charleston County Emergency Management Department	1
Charleston County School District	1
Charleston County Sheriff's Office	1
Charleston Housing Authority	1
Charleston Water System	1
Charleston County 9-1-1/Consolidated Dispatch Center	1
The Citadel	1
City of Charleston Budget, Finance and Revenue Collections	1
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City of Charleston Corporation Counsel	1
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City of Charleston Traffic and Transportation Department	1
The College of Charleston	1
Department of Health and Environmental Control	1
Joint Base Charleston	1
MUSC Health	1
Medical University of South Carolina	1
Town of Mount Pleasant	1
City of North Charleston	1
Ralph H. Johnson V.A. Medical Center	1
Roper St. Francis Health Care	1
The Salvation Army	1
South Carolina Ports Authority	1
Trident Technical College—Palmer Campus	1
U.S. Coast Guard Sector Charleston	1

City of Charleston Emergency Operations Plan

2021

BASIC PLAN

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). It states the EOP's purpose, structure, foundational laws and standards, scope, alignment, and the methodology by which it is developed and maintained.

Those who live, work in, visit, and protect the City of Charleston are best served as each City department becomes familiar with this EOP and develops and maintains related emergency plans and standard operating procedures. External organizations with a role in implementing the EOP also should become familiar with this plan and should develop and maintain related emergency plans and procedures.

To achieve uniformity, continuity, and effective coordination of emergency actions, this EOP aims to align with the EOPs for Charleston County and Berkeley County.

The City of Charleston Emergency Management Division will continue to evaluate, update, and refine this strategic document to address changes and meet new challenges. The Emergency Management Division will coordinate input and updates to this plan with City departments and external organizations and note substantive changes in the EOP's Record of Change.

Purpose

The purpose of this EOP is to provide a framework for the coordinated management of emergencies and disasters affecting the City of Charleston. The EOP creates a unified framework for emergency operations by identifying roles and responsibilities, as well as actions to be taken before, during, and after emergencies and disasters.

Structure

The EOP has four major parts:

- The **Introduction**, including the Promulgation Letter, signed by the Mayor, who approves the plan and assigns responsibilities.
- The **Basic Plan**, which outlines policies and general procedures that provide a common basis for joint operations between the City of Charleston, Charleston and Berkeley Counties, and the State of South Carolina when a natural, technological or human-induced emergency or disaster occurs. In addition, the Basic Plan assigns specific responsibilities to City Departments for response and recovery operations, consistent with their day-to-day operations, with some Departments having assigned and unique duties in support of this plan.
- **Functional Annexes** that expand upon the Basic Plan, outlining how the City will operate when certain hazards or threats result in an emergency or disaster.
- **Hazard/Threat Annexes** that profile specific hazards and threats that may impact the city of Charleston.

Foundational Laws and Standards

Federal

- Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act of 1988 and Amendments (42 U.S.C. § 5121 *et seq.*)
- National Incident Management System (NIMS), 3rd Edition, 2017
- National Preparedness Goal, 2nd Edition, September 2015
- Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act of 1986 (42 U.S.C. § 11001 *et seq.*)
- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. § 12101 *et seq.*)
- FEMA's Comprehensive Preparedness Guide (CPG) 101, 2nd Edition, November 2010

State

- South Carolina Code of Regulations Chapter 58, Article 1, § 58-1.B.1-4, (Local Emergency Preparedness Standards—Municipalities)
- South Carolina Emergency Operations Plan

Local

- Charleston County Government Emergency Operations Plan
- Berkeley County Emergency Operations Plan

Scope

This EOP is the principal plan governing emergencies and disasters occurring within the City or affecting the well-being of its citizens, visitors, businesses, and environment. City departments must undertake their assigned responsibilities to ensure orderly and timely delivery of assistance for emergencies or disasters.

Alignment

This EOP makes every effort to align with EOPs for Charleston County, Berkeley County, and the State of South Carolina. In particular, it acknowledges these key areas:

Resourcing, States of Emergency, and Executive Orders

- Municipal governments determining that they have inadequate resources may request additional resources through mutual aid or via Palmetto through the County Emergency Management Department or its associated EOC, if activated. If County resources are insufficient, County Emergency Management will request state assistance through the South Carolina Emergency Management Division or the State EOC (SEOC), if activated.

- The Governor or his/her designee may execute the SC Emergency Operations Plan to support local situations when local resources cannot sustain an effective response operation or when a significant state presence is required for immediate assistance.
- When an emergency or disaster has occurred or is imminent, the Governor may issue an Executive Order proclaiming the existence of a State of Emergency or activate the emergency response, recovery and mitigation aspects of state, local and inter-jurisdictional disaster plans. The Executive Order is required for the deployment and use of state personnel, supplies, equipment, materials and/or facilities.
- Upon occurrence of an emergency or disaster clearly beyond the capabilities and resources of state and local governments, the Governor will likely request assistance from the federal government by requesting a federal declaration.
- The County may declare a local state of emergency, implementing local emergency authorities.
- When the threat or actual occurrence of a disaster is or threatens to be of enough severity and magnitude to warrant coordinated action to prevent or alleviate the loss, damage, hardship, or suffering threatened or caused thereby, the Mayor may declare a Local Emergency, with the consent of City Council.
- South Carolina is a signatory of the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) that provides for mutual assistance (people, equipment, skills, etc.) between participating member states in managing any emergency or disaster that is duly declared by the governor(s) of the affected state(s).
- The City of Charleston is a signatory to the Statewide Mutual Aid Agreement.

Evacuations

- For natural disasters, the Governor is the only person authorized to mandate and compel an evacuation in South Carolina. During an evacuation, all citizens are expected to leave the area under the Governor's order.
- The Governor, under the advice of the Director of DHEC, may order licensed healthcare facilities (e.g., hospitals, nursing homes, residential care facilities, etc.) to evacuate. The Facility Administrators may submit a request through DHEC to the Governor for an exception to the Order for their facility. Mandatory Medical Evacuations normally, but not always, occur prior to the evacuation of the general population.

Sheltering and Relocation

- County and municipal governments shall be responsible for developing and implementing a shelter/relocation plan to provide for the congregate housing and care of persons displaced or rendered homeless because of a natural or human-induced emergency or disaster.
- The Charleston County Department of Social Services (DSS) Director is responsible for the coordination of all governmental and non-governmental agencies that comprise the

Disaster Response Services (DRS) Group that supports the needs of the population of the county during emergencies/disasters.

- The American Red Cross provides mass care to disaster victims and emergency workers via pre-disaster designated shelter sites in existing structures, temporary shelters, or the use of similar facilities outside the disaster area should evacuation be necessary. Mass Care shelters may be opened by the American Red Cross. American Red Cross-trained volunteers and DSS staff will manage American Red Cross shelter operations.
- Lists of pre-disaster designated shelters are found in the South Carolina Hurricane Plan and the South Carolina Operational Radiological Emergency Response Plan (SCORERP).
- County and municipal governments shall be responsible for developing and implementing a shelter/relocation plan to protect the populace from the hazards of a nuclear emergency.
- Expedient post-event sheltering may occur in other facilities not predesignated if the primary facilities have been made unsuitable by the impact of the event.

Feeding

- The American Red Cross, The Salvation Army (SA), and Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) will manage feeding programs for disaster victims and emergency workers through a combination of fixed sites, mobile feeding units, and if needed, bulk food distribution. The County's ESF-6 (Mass Care) will coordinate feeding operations, supported by the Department of Education, DSS, and major volunteer organizations. Feeding operations will be based on sound nutritional standards and will strive to include provisions for meeting any special dietary requirements of disaster victims.

Methodology

This plan was developed by the City of Charleston Emergency Management Division, which will maintain the EOP in these ways:

- Prepare, coordinate, publish, and distribute changes and revisions to the EOP.
- Continuously review and every two years, revise the EOP, by addressing:
 - Deficiencies and gaps revealed during emergencies and exercises.
 - Changes in City government organizational structure.
 - Changes in hazards, vulnerabilities, capabilities, demographics, etc.
 - New or amended state or federal requirements.
 - Policy and/or procedural changes relevant to City emergency management.
- Provide revised versions of the EOP to City departments and external partners.

SITUATION

This chapter provides background on the current situation that exists in the City of Charleston and the assumptions on which the City's Emergency Management program is based. It contains a general description of potential emergency impacts, hazards and vulnerabilities, planning assumptions, and vulnerable populations.

Potential Emergency Impacts

The City of Charleston is at risk from a variety of natural, technological, and adversarial or human-induced hazards and vulnerabilities. These may overwhelm the City of Charleston's capacity to promptly and effectively provide emergency response and assist the City's recovery.

Thousands of people may have to evacuate, including to locations far from Charleston County or Berkeley County. Thousands of lives may be disrupted, or people may be displaced, locally or in areas outside the region. They also may be unable to return to their homes or places of employment if damage is significant. Temporary shelter or housing may be necessary. Impacted persons may require significant external assistance to recover.

Large numbers of deaths and injuries may result. Hospitals, nursing homes, pharmacies, and other health/medical facilities may be severely damaged or destroyed. Health care facilities that can remain open may become overwhelmed. There may be shortages of medicine, medical supplies, and personal protective equipment. Response personnel, health care workers, and other government staff who provide services may themselves be impacted by the emergency and rendered unable to assist.

Government buildings, critical infrastructure, residences, businesses, and equipment could be severely damaged or destroyed. Hazardous materials could be released into the environment, potentially resulting in casualties, shelter-in-place orders, evacuations, interstate shutdowns, and other impacts.

Damaged utilities may result in the loss of power that would normally cool or heat homes and workplaces and power appliances for eating, storing or freezing food, washing clothes, and other everyday activities. Grocery stores may lose stock and be unable to open for a time. Signal light outages may be widespread. Fuel may be unavailable or in short supply.

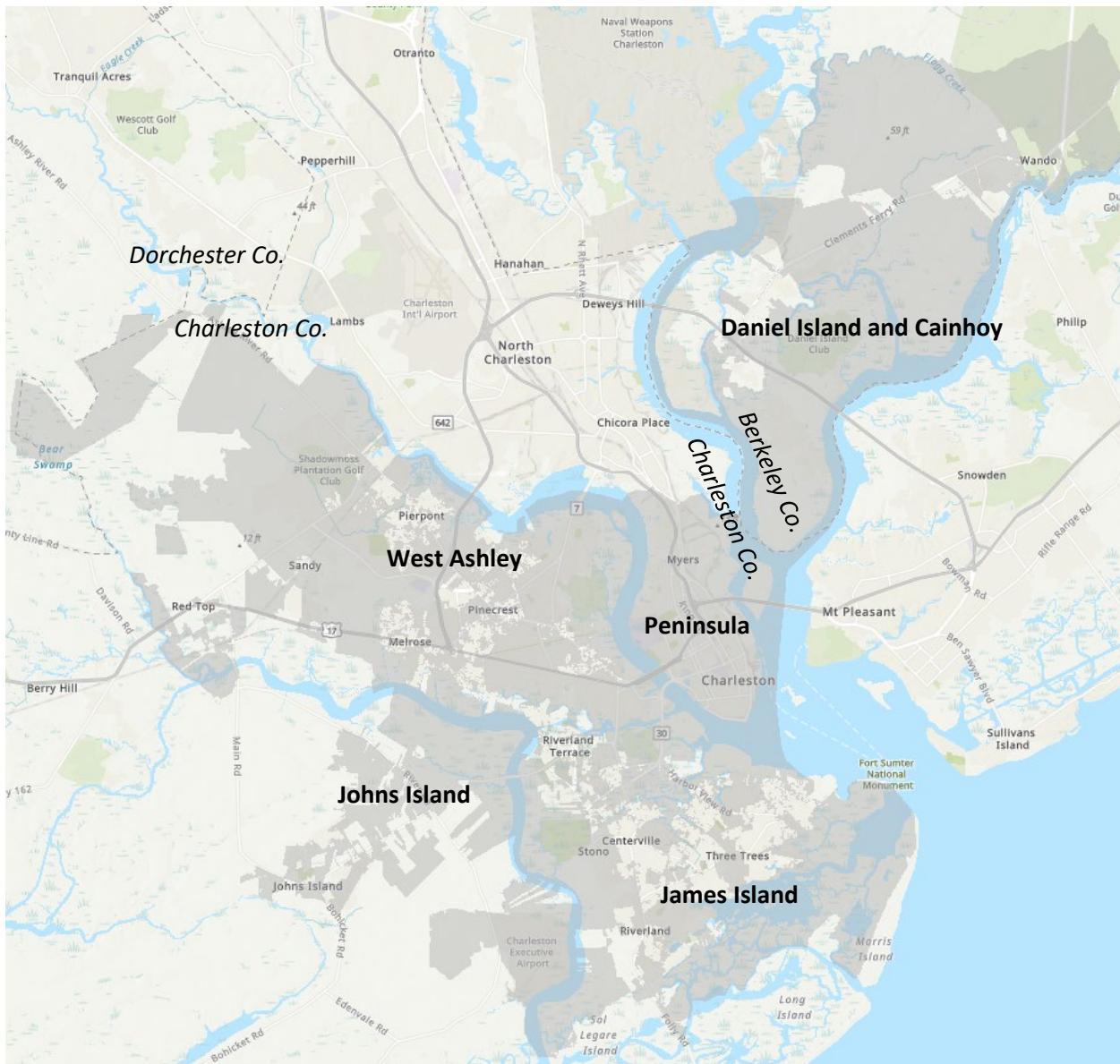
Travel may be impeded by flooding, debris, or ice, for example, making streets and major arteries impassable or dangerous. Bridges may fail or need to be inspected before traffic on or under them can proceed. Significant portions of a fleet of vehicles may be wiped out. Citizen vehicles or public transportation may be damaged or destroyed.

In a no-notice emergency, some impacts may restrict people's access to their families, children, homes, and workplaces. City government, response and recovery personnel, citizens, and visitors may be unable to communicate if telecommunications infrastructure is impacted. Reunification and provision of food, water, health care, and medicine may become critical.

Compounding these hazards and vulnerabilities are people's fear, delayed decision-making, lack of preparation, and complacency, especially if previous years' disasters yield limited impacts. Also, weak social networks—communities where people are not close and not inclined to help each other—exacerbate these hazards and vulnerabilities.

Businesses, business owners, and employees may suffer significant losses because of damage to a facility, inaccessibility, community health issues, or loss of employment.

Impacts may be so severe that assistance and resources from mobilized military assets or responders, recovery personnel, and emergency management personnel outside of the state may be required.



The City of Charleston: Five boroughs in two counties

City of Charleston GIS Division

Hazard Analysis

The City of Charleston, which is within Charleston and Berkeley Counties, is vulnerable to the effects from several natural, technological, and human-induced hazards. The hazards that Charleston faces could result in significant numbers of casualties, damaged properties or harm to the environment. These hazards are found below and in a separate All Hazards Vulnerability and Risk Assessment, published by the City of Charleston in 2020.

Hazards That Can Impact the City of Charleston

Flooding	Mass casualties
Tropical cyclones	Sea level rise/tidal flooding
Tornadoes, straight line winds, waterspouts	Heat wave/drought
Earthquakes	Terrorism, mass murders, active threats, violent extremism
Fire	Dam failure
Hazardous materials	Maritime incident
Severe winter weather	Cyber incident
Transportation failure	Tsunami
Civil disorder	Aircraft incident
Infections/pandemic disease	
Special events	

Vulnerability Analysis

The City of Charleston is the state's largest city. In 2020, its estimated population was 156,536, according to the City's Department of Planning, Preservation, and Sustainability (PP&S). Its 2018 daytime population was estimated at 168,812. Of note, the Charleston region typically hosts over 7 million visitors annually.

The City of Charleston's All Hazards Vulnerability and Risk Assessment describes the city's current and future hazards and vulnerabilities and projects future impacts on people, the natural and built environment, transportation, business, City government resources, and other factors. The assessment outlines mitigation strategies to address hazards and vulnerabilities.

The assessment yielded these key findings:

1. Flooding, earthquakes, and storm surge drive vulnerability city-wide.
2. The ability to cope with flood inundation is a main driver of vulnerability.
3. Certain areas of the City contain high proportions of city-wide vulnerability.
4. Increased tidal flooding will be the primary impact of sea level rise.
5. Areas vulnerable to hazards are also socially vulnerable.
6. Vulnerabilities are different across areas of the City.¹

¹ *City of Charleston, SC All Hazards Vulnerability & Risk Assessment: Executive Summary*. Asheville, NC: NEMAC+FernLeaf, November 2020, 6-7.

The assessment also generated 75 strategies under the five critical components of governance, resources, land use, outreach, and infrastructure.² City staff are using the assessment to prioritize strategies to target and reduce vulnerabilities and risk.³

Additionally, with a population of over 400,000 people, Charleston County has a significant shelter deficit. As of the 2020 hurricane season, its six congregate shelters could only hold 634 people in a Category 1 or 2 hurricane in a social distancing environment with numbers not significantly increasing in a non-pandemic environment. Also, an increasingly dense population and built environment compounds vulnerabilities.

If an emergency exceeds the City's available resources, the public should be prepared to be self-sufficient for 72 hours and expect delays in emergency response, depending on the amount of damage and accessibility of stricken areas.

Planning Assumptions

- An emergency or disaster may occur with little or no warning and may escalate far more rapidly than the ability of City department(s) to handle it.
- The City will manage most of its emergencies and disasters, utilizing available resources.
- When an emergency exceeds the City's resources and response capabilities, City government may request help from Charleston County and/or Berkeley County or from mutual aid organizations.
- State resources will be requested through Charleston County Emergency Management Department and/or Berkeley County Emergency Management Department, or their respective emergency operations centers, as appropriate, when it is likely that City response resources will be exhausted.
- When an emergency or disaster is clearly beyond the capabilities and resources of state and local governments, the Governor likely will request assistance from the federal government by requesting a federal declaration.

Vulnerable Populations

The City recognizes that it is essential to address the needs of vulnerable populations who may be disproportionately affected by emergencies or disasters. These include persons living in low-lying areas, individuals with special or functional needs (i.e., medical needs, non-English speaking, etc.), and persons lacking a support network, access to services, or mobility.

Between 2014 and 2018, 6.1% of Charleston's population under age 65 had a disability, according to a US Census Bureau estimate.

² *City of Charleston, SC All Hazards Vulnerability & Risk Assessment: Executive Summary*. Asheville, NC: NEMAC+FernLeaf, November 2020. 8.

³ *City of Charleston, SC All Hazards Vulnerability & Risk Assessment: Executive Summary*. Asheville, NC: NEMAC+FernLeaf, November 2020. 8.

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

This chapter describes the Concept of Operations for the City of Charleston's overall Emergency Management program.

Program Description

Purpose and Authority

The primary purpose of the City of Charleston's Emergency Management program is to coordinate the work of all City departments in accomplishing the City's Emergency Management Objectives.

In terms of authority, the Director of Emergency Management leads the City in its emergency operations coordination.

While some City departments' emergency response is a daily function, emergencies may require departments to perform extraordinary functions. All City officers and employees may be called upon to respond and recover from emergencies. In these situations, City leadership will make every attempt to preserve the City's organizational integrity and "bench strength" and to assign emergency tasks to City employees consistent with their normal duties. However, City employees may be re-assigned and utilized in functions or areas of greatest need.

City departments' daily functions that do not contribute directly to the emergency operation may be suspended for the emergency's duration. City personnel and resources normally required to perform those daily functions may be redirected to accomplish emergency tasks.

In line with the National Preparedness Goal's whole community approach, it is critical for citizens and visitors to view themselves as emergency managers and to take steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of themselves, their families, and their residences and personal property.

Emergency Management Goal

In meeting its responsibility to protect life and property from the effects of emergencies and disasters, the City adopts the National Preparedness Goal for itself:

"A secure and resilient [city] with the capabilities required across the whole community to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from the threats and hazards that pose the greatest risk."⁴

⁴ FEMA. (2020, July 20). National Preparedness Goal. Retrieved from <https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/national-preparedness/goal>

Emergency Management Objectives

From the Emergency Management Goal flow these Emergency Management Objectives:

1. *Protect public health and safety and prevent loss of life.* This primary objective includes efforts to save human life; rescue endangered people; treat the injured; warn the public to avoid further casualties and inform them about how they can protect themselves, their family, and their property; evacuate people from an impacted area; assess the situation and establish incident objectives and resource needs; and direct people to shelter and mass care.
2. *Preserve property and the environment.* This secondary objective includes efforts to save property from destruction or further loss; securing property, including in evacuated areas; and preventing contamination of the environment.
3. *Assure continuity of government operations and services.* This objective includes providing for lines of succession for elected and appointed officials and assures that essential government functions and services can be maintained and/or restored with minimal interruption.
4. *Restore the community to normal.* This objective aims to restore essential infrastructure and the economic basis of the community and to incorporate disaster mitigation measures into all reconstruction projects.
5. *Mitigate/prevent the causes of damage.* This objective aims to prevent previous damage or threats from occurring again or reducing their likelihood or impact.
6. *Prepare the city in advance of an emergency.* This objective includes developing plans on how to respond to and recover from emergencies, training staff on how to perform emergency duties and responsibilities, and exercising the plans and modifying them based on actual events.

In addressing its emergency management objectives, the City will meet its responsibility for protecting life, property, and the environment from the effects of emergencies and disasters. This will be demonstrated through the actions it takes and the capabilities it builds through:

- *Mitigation.* Reducing the impact of future emergencies and disasters.
- *Preparedness.* Readyng City government, the City's citizens and visitors, as well as property and the environment for an emergency or disaster.
- *Response.* Saving lives, protecting property and the environment, meeting basic human needs, and stabilizing incidents.
- *Recovery.* Restoring essential elements of the Charleston community after an emergency or disaster.

Similarly, the City will meet those same responsibilities as it undertakes:

- *Prevention.* Avoiding, preventing, or stopping criminal or terrorist attacks.
- *Protection.* Protecting Charleston against hazards and threats.

Continuity of Operations

Each department shall develop a Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plan for how it will continue to perform its essential functions and offer services under emergency conditions. This will include identification of essential functions, key personnel, and lines of succession, as well as protection of vital records. Also, it will include formulation of plans and procedures to utilize alternate facilities and resources to continue operations if primary facilities become unusable. Additionally, it will include measures for the protection and welfare of employees. The COOP Plan will be forwarded to the Director of Emergency Management.

All City departments will develop plans and procedures to guarantee the preservation of vital public records, to include their reconstitution if necessary, during and after emergencies.

Preservation of Records

In general, vital public records include those considered essential to the continued operations of City government; essential to the City's ability to fulfill its responsibilities to the public; required to protect the rights of individuals and the City; and, essential to restoration of life support services. Documentation of actions taken during an emergency is a legal requirement.

Specific vital public records include vital statistics, deeds, corporation papers, operational plans, planning records, resources data, authorities, personnel and payroll rosters, succession lists, supplies and equipment lists, laws, charters, and financial records.

Declaration of Local Emergency and Activation of the EOP

When the threat or actual occurrence of a disaster is or threatens to be of enough severity and magnitude to warrant coordinated action to prevent or alleviate the loss, damage, hardship, or suffering threatened or caused thereby, the Mayor may declare a Local Emergency, with the consent of City Council.

A declaration of Local Emergency officially activates the Emergency Operations Plan and authorizes the furnishing of aid and assistance.

Operational Control

The City has formally adopted the National Incident Management System (NIMS), including the Incident Command System (ICS) component.

When an emergency is confined to a single location within the City limits, the City of Charleston department(s) with legal authority will exercise command. The department representative(s) will serve as the on-scene incident commander(s) responsible for the emergency operations.

During a declared local emergency, the Incident Commander, supported by the Director of Emergency Management, directs and controls the City's response to the emergency. Individual field incident commanders always retain tactical control of resources assigned to incidents.

The City of Charleston MEOC utilizes a scalable NIMS ICS for incident/event preparedness, response, and recovery. The MEOC organization adapts to the magnitude and complexity of the situation and incorporates ICS principles of span of control and standard organizational structure. The MEOC uses the ICS structure but does not directly manage on-scene operations. Rather, it facilitates policy decisions, provides support to on-scene efforts, and conducts operational support and coordination for activities that are not part of specific incidents.

City officials operating in the MEOC retain the coordination and commitment authority for local resources and deploy those resources as appropriate.

If City resources are insufficient to handle a hazard or threat, the Incident Commander will utilize existing mutual aid agreements or the MEOC to request resources from and through Charleston and/or Berkeley Counties, who may ask the state to fulfill the request. Counties may request federal assistance through the state on behalf of the City, as approved by the Governor.

Functional Organization

Within the MEOC, the City utilizes ICS principles to organize resources for preparedness, response and recovery functions. The City has identified Operations Section branches and their support entities. Each branch reflects the likely actions needed for a response operation. More detailed information on these functions is contained in the Functional Annexes.

Emergency Management Facilities

Incident Command Post (ICP). The tactical-level, on-scene incident command and management organization is located at the ICP. When multiple command authorities are involved, a unified Command (UC) comprising officials with jurisdictional authority or functional responsibility for the incident under appropriate laws, ordinances, or agreements, may lead the ICP. The Incident Commander (IC)/UC provides direct, on-scene control of tactical operations and utilizes a NIMS ICS incident management organization.

The ICP is usually located at or in the immediate vicinity of the incident site. The IC (or UC) selects the location. There is one ICP established for each incident. Depending on the number and location of incidents, there may be multiple ICPs operating in the City at the same time.

Municipal Emergency Operations Center. The City's primary emergency operations center is the Municipal Emergency Operations Center (MEOC).

Public Safety Operations Center (PSOC). The Public Safety Operations Center is used mainly in certain law enforcement operations and time-limited events (i.e., flooding or severe weather).

Traffic Management Center (TMC). The City's Traffic Management Center is where Traffic and Transportation personnel monitor traffic and can adjust signaling to mitigate traffic issues.

Department Operations Center (DOC). Each department may designate a location for establishing direction and control of its activities in an emergency. The location may be the department's operational headquarters or another location, depending on circumstances.

Virtual Operations. The City may coordinate emergency operations virtually by secure conference, mainly when in-person coordination is not required, or social distancing is needed.

RESPONSIBILITIES

This chapter summarizes the general responsibilities of City departments and offices in the context of the City's Emergency Management program. More detailed responsibilities for City department/offices may be found in the Functional Annexes of this EOP.

Departmental Emergency Preparedness Responsibilities

City government is organized into functional departments, created for the delivery of government services. The City's departments have both routine and emergency functions. Each City Department is responsible for plans that demonstrate mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery activities appropriate to its mission. Certain departments with prevention and protection responsibilities should reflect those in their planning as well. Each department head is responsible for developing and maintaining plans for their department, each division, and any special offices. Departments must keep these plans current in coordination with Emergency Management. Departments must designate a coordinator to create and maintain a Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plan.

Departments also must adopt NIMS for responses to multi-jurisdictional and/or multi-agency incidents. This includes identifying a departmental point of contact to coordinate with Emergency Management concerning NIMS training, exercises, and compliance. Each department's point of contact is responsible for informing Emergency Management as to how that department has incorporated NIMS into their procedures, guidelines, Incident Action Plans, training, exercises, mutual aid agreements, and resource management procedures.

City departments also must familiarize themselves with the provisions of this plan and ensure that they maintain the ability to perform their assigned responsibilities. This includes maintaining the appropriate number of essential staff during an emergency or disaster and providing these staff members with the equipment, training, and support necessary to accomplish their assigned tasks.

Department heads also are responsible for performing functions that may be required to cope with and recover from emergencies. The following emergency preparedness responsibilities are assigned to all City departments and offices:

Planning

- Create and update departmental emergency response plans and procedures.
- Create and update departmental Continuity of Operations (COOP) plans and procedures.
- Develop site specific emergency plans for department facilities if necessary.
- Participate as requested in developing and maintaining core capabilities under the Mitigation, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery phases and under Prevention and Protection where they apply.

Readiness

- Create and update redundant means of notifying staff.
- Educate departmental staff about readiness, including family readiness.
- Upon receipt or warning of an emergency, initiate notification actions to alert employees of assigned duties.
- Ready and refine the platforms, formats, and processes through which the public will be notified, warned, and instructed, and through which rumors will be countered. These may include but are not limited to:
 - social media
 - press conferences and approved and official press releases
 - the Everbridge critical event management platform or similar technology
 - vehicles equipped with public address systems
 - sirens
 - door-to-door notifications of vulnerable populations
 - electronic notifications to neighborhood associations and businesses
 - notifications to other entities whom departments regularly serve or with whom they do business.

Recruitment, Responsibilities, and Training

- Recruit for and prepare to fill positions in the MEOC as requested by the Director of Emergency Management.
- Establish departmental and individual emergency responsibilities and identify related tasks.
- Ensure that employee job descriptions reflect their emergency duties.
- Ensure that employees know their Emergency Classification, as provided by the Human Resources and Organizational Development Department:

A – Employees in this classification are designated members (primary or alternate) of the Municipal Emergency Operations Center (MEOC), or the Public Safety Operations Center (PSOC). These individuals will be required to remain on duty and be located at a designated location within the City during the emergency, especially in the case of a hurricane. These are essentially the core staff who will be the primary coordinators of the City's emergency response efforts.

B – Employees in this classification are required to remain on duty during the initial stages of an emergency. They are essentially the core group of employees in the field assessing damage and conducting initial response efforts.

C - Employees in this classification are allowed to temporarily leave the immediate area, but they are required to remain in a safe yet close proximity to the workplace in the event they may be required to report to work. These employees must call the

Employee Emergency Information Line (EEIL) at (843) 579-7549 for instructions on reporting to work and other important information. This line will be updated continually. Employees are also encouraged to monitor the local media. When prompted by the EEIL to contact their supervisor, or designated contact person, employees must do so within 12 hours. If it is determined that employees should return to work, this information will be communicated via the EEIL or someone will contact them directly, and they will be expected to report to work within another 12 hours of notification.

D – Employees in this classification are part of a designated group within the Budget, Finance, and Revenue Collections (BFRC), Information Technology (IT) and Human Resources and Organizational Development (HROD) Departments who may be required to work before, during, or after an emergency to run the City's core financial and information systems.

- Ensure that employees are trained in basic emergency management classes that the City requires as well as emergency duties outlined further in this EOP.
- Ensure that emergency management-related training for each employee is documented and tracked.
- Provide divisions, sections, and employees with training and exercise opportunities so that they know where, when, and how to undertake responsibilities identified in this EOP.

Cooperation and Coordination

- Regularly meet with other departments to enhance emergency operations cooperation and coordination.

Resources

- Identify, categorize, and inventory all available departmental resources.
- Develop procedures for mobilizing and employing additional resources.
- Prepare to provide internal logistical support to departmental operations during the initial emergency response phase.

Departmental Emergency Response Responsibilities

The following emergency response responsibilities are assigned to every department and office.

Departmental Response to MEOC Activation

- If appropriate or requested, send representatives to the MEOC.
- Provide equipment in support of emergency operations if needed.
- As appropriate during an emergency:

- Suspend or curtail normal business activities as appropriate.
- Recall needed off-duty employees.
- Send employees who are not immediately required home so that they can protect their families and property.
- Secure and protect departmental facilities and equipment.
- Evacuate departmental facilities if appropriate.

Public Notification, Warning, and Instruction, and Rumor Control

- As requested, notify, warn, and instruct the public, and counter rumors, utilizing the following and other appropriate means:
 - social media
 - press conferences and approved and official press releases
 - the Everbridge critical event management platform or similar technology
 - vehicles equipped with public address systems
 - sirens
 - door-to-door notifications of vulnerable populations
 - electronic notifications to neighborhood associations and businesses
 - notifications to other entities whom departments regularly serve or with whom they do business.

Communication and Situational Awareness

- Keep the MEOC informed of field activities and maintain a communications link to the MEOC.
- Activate a Department Operations Center (DOC), if appropriate, to support and facilitate department response activities, maintain event logs, and report information to the EOC.
- Report damages and the status of critical facilities to the MEOC.
- Submit reports and data to the MEOC detailing departmental plans, work accomplished and remaining, emergency expenditures, and obligations.

MEOC and External Coordination

- Coordinate with the MEOC to establish protocols for interfacing with county, state, and federal responders.

Public Information

- Coordinate with the MEOC Public Information Officer or Joint Information Center before releasing information to the media.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

This chapter describes the general financial management policies and considerations that apply to emergency response and recovery operations. After the declaration of a local emergency and/or the adoption of an emergency ordinance, some financial and purchasing regulations requirements may be modified to streamline response and recovery operations.

General

After the Mayor and City Council issue a Local Emergency declaration or the Governor declares a State of Emergency, normal fiscal and administrative functions and regulations may need to be temporarily modified or suspended to support emergency operations in a timely manner.

The Mayor and City Council will authorize the use of emergency financial and procurement procedures and the Chief Financial Officer will announce which are activated and assure that they are implemented properly.

City emergency response and recovery costs must be properly documented so that eligible reimbursements from state and federal sources can be realized.

More detailed responsibilities for City department/offices may be found in the Functional Annexes of this EOP.

Policies

All departments will make every possible effort to assure the safety of cash, checks, and accounts receivable, and will assist in the protection of other valuable documents and records.

Departments will designate personnel to be responsible for documentation of emergency operations and expenditures. Emergency expenditures will be incurred in accordance with existing City emergency purchasing procedures.

During emergency operations, non-essential administrative activities may be suspended, and personnel not assigned essential duties may be assigned to other departments to provide emergency support.

Each department will maintain an updated inventory of personnel, facilities, and equipment as part of their emergency plans and procedures.

Administration

During an emergency or disaster, administrative procedures may have to be suspended, relaxed, or made optional to protect life and property. Departments are authorized to respond through necessary and prudent actions. Emergency service/public safety officers have independent authority to react to emergency situations.

Normal procedures which do not interfere with the timely accomplishment of emergency tasks will continue to be used. Those emergency administrative procedures that depart from business-as-usual will be described in detail in departmental policies, procedures, and instructions or in the Incident Action Plan during a MEOC activation.

Activated MEOC Logistics staff are responsible for keeping records of the name, arrival time, duration of utilization, departure time, other information about the service of activated workers as well as information about lost or damaged equipment, and any extraordinary costs and forwarding them to Budget, Finance, and Revenue Collection personnel.

All activated MEOC staff must thoroughly document injuries and inform their supervisors and the Safety Officer.

Fiscal

Purchasing personnel shall facilitate the acquisition of all supplies, equipment, and services necessary to support the emergency response actions of City of Charleston departments.

When circumstances dictate, emergency response field personnel may be given purchasing authority after coordination with the City's Procurement Division. A record of all purchases shall be reported to the Procurement Division in accordance with City purchasing policies. A complete and accurate record of all purchases and an inventory of all supplies and equipment purchased in support of the emergency response shall be maintained.

Although certain formal procedures may be waived, this in no way diminishes the requirement for sound financial management and accountability. Departments will identify personnel responsible for documenting emergency costs and will utilize existing administrative methods to keep accurate records, separating emergency operational expenditures from day-to-day expenditures. Documentation will include logs, formal records and file copies of all expenditures, receipts, sign-in/sign-out sheets, and personnel timesheets. Department heads will be held responsible for deviations from emergency purchasing procedures.

A Finance/Administration Section will handle monetary/financial functions in MEOC activations.

The City of Charleston may qualify for reimbursement of certain emergency costs from state and federal disaster recovery programs and may collect damages from insurance carriers. Successful documentation of expenditures will maximize reimbursements and assistance that the city and its citizens will receive. All City of Charleston departments are expected to include requirements for emergency fiscal record keeping in their emergency plans and procedures.

Logistics

Departments responding to emergencies will first use their available resources. When the MEOC is activated, it becomes the focal point for procurement, distribution, and replacement of personnel, equipment, and supplies. Scarce resources will be allocated according to the established priorities and objectives of the Incident Commander(s).

Logistics will be needed to support field operations, MEOC operations, and emergency victims.

All departments are expected to maintain an inventory of all non-consumable items, to include their disposition after the conclusion of the emergency or disaster.

Insurance

The City of Charleston's insurance policies are kept on file in the Real Estate Division office of the Budget, Finance, and Revenue Collections Department.

EMERGENCY ORGANIZATION AND OPERATIONS

This chapter summarizes authority for and responsibilities within the City's Emergency Management program.

Emergency Management Authorities/Responsibilities

Mayor-City Council

The City of Charleston operates under a Mayor-Council form of government, a form reflected in S.C. Code 1976, § 5-9-20. City Council consists of the Mayor and 12 members of Council.

The Mayor is the chief administrator of and executive officer of the city (Charleston Code of Ordinances Chapter 3, Division II, Section 2-96). He shall be responsible to the City Council for the administration of all city affairs and the execution of all laws and ordinances.

The Mayor administers the daily business of City government in a manner consistent with policy established by City Council, which may enact local legislation to deal with emergency situations that require a legislative or legal solution (Charleston Code of Ordinances Chapter Chapter 2, Division I, Section 2-23).

The Mayor, in consultation with the Director of Emergency Management and the Incident Commander, maintains direction and control of the City's overall response to an emergency or disaster.

The Mayor provides final approval for the City's State of Emergency declarations, and if necessary, the City's request for aid from the State of South Carolina. The Mayor and Council will work with Charleston and/or Berkeley Counties and the Governor to declare a "State of Emergency" if an emergency or disaster has occurred, or the threat thereof is imminent, and where extraordinary emergency measures are deemed necessary to cope with the existing or anticipated situation. Once declared, the State of Emergency shall continue until terminated by proclamation of one or both counties or the Governor. A county, by itself, also may declare a Local State of Emergency implementing local emergency authorities.

The Mayor provides oversight of Charleston's Emergency Management program through and in collaboration with the City's Director of Emergency Management and the Fire Chief. As the Chief elected official, during emergencies and disasters, the Mayor assumes responsibility for the City's response and for its residents and visitors. The Mayor is responsible for ordering the implementation of the City Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), with the advice of the Director of Emergency Management. The Mayor may issue proclamations and regulations associated with potential dangers, disaster relief, and related matters.

The Mayor is the liaison between the 12 Council members and MEOC staff, assisted by the Director of Emergency Management.

All powers of the City are vested in the City Council, except as otherwise provided by law, and the city council shall provide for the exercise of and for the performances of all duties and obligations imposed on the municipality by law (Charleston Code of Ordinances Chapter 2, Article II, Division I, Section 2-17a). City Council's Committee on Public Safety makes recommendations

to Council on a variety of matters, including civil defense and emergency planning (Charleston Code of Ordinances Chapter 2, Article II, Division I, Section 2-56c.3).

Director of Emergency Management

The Mayor appoints the Director of Emergency Management. The Director's duties include ongoing planning for, management of, and coordination of the City's emergency management program. The Director of Emergency Management is the principal advisor to the Mayor for emergency management activities. The Director ensures that there is an Emergency Management Response Duty Officer available, on-call, 24 hours a day.

The Director manages the MEOC, may recommend opening the MEOC to the Mayor, and organizes resources and activated MEOC staff. The Director also may make recommendations to the Mayor regarding implementation of the EOP during emergencies and may confer with the Police Chief and Fire Chief or their designees. During the sickness or temporary absence of the Mayor, the Mayor Pro Tempore may act as Mayor (Charleston Code of Ordinances Chapter 2, Article II, Division 2, Section 2-68 and Division III, Section 2-98). In such a case, the Director will confer with the Mayor Pro Tempore.

The Director of Emergency Management will coordinate with counties, adjacent municipalities, and state and federal entities involved in emergency management as necessary, to ensure the highest level of emergency preparedness for the City.

The Director also will be responsible for conducting and publishing an After-Action Review following all major emergencies, disasters, and exercises in the City. This review analyzes the City's activities and makes recommendations on how to improve upon them for the next event.

Emergency Management Division

The City's Emergency Management Division is responsible for strengthening and evaluating City departments' mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery postures, as applicable to their mission. Certain departments may have additional responsibilities under prevention and protection. To aid this effort, under the supervision of its Director, the Emergency Management Division maintains this EOP with supporting policies, plans, and annexes.

In a whole community approach, the Emergency Management Division collaborates with elected and appointed City leaders, departmental staff, citizens, jurisdictional partners, and private and non-profit organizations to successfully manage emergencies and disasters. The Emergency Management Division utilizes this collaboration to:

- Identify natural, technological, and human-induced hazards and vulnerabilities that threaten life, property, and the environment.
- Assess the capability of City departments and external entities to address hazards and vulnerabilities and adjust priorities, resources, and personnel to close the capability gap.
- Assign emergency management responsibilities and tasks.
- Effectively assign and utilize City employees in all departments for emergency operations.

- Plan actions that City departments and their partners will undertake to eliminate or mitigate threats and vulnerabilities and to respond to and recover from emergencies.
- Continue City government services during and after an emergency.
- Enhance cooperation, communication, and coordination with adjacent jurisdictions, the state, federal agencies, and private and non-governmental organizations through mutual aid agreements and memoranda of understanding.
- Staff a City planning group to review and revise the EOP, plan and evaluate exercises, and review and offer recommendations on Emergency Management initiatives.

Also, the City of Charleston Emergency Management Division will:

- Provide guidance, policies, and procedures and develop core capabilities for mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery, as well as prevention and protection where applicable.
- Make available City staff training and public outreach opportunities.
- Coordinate MEOC operations and facilitate the training of all MEOC staff.
- Maintain the City's emergency plans.
- Advise the Mayor and the City leadership on best practices for mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery, as well as Prevention and Protection where applicable.
- Coordinate emergency response among City departments and outside organizations.
- Conduct regular exercises to evaluate emergency operations readiness and capabilities.
- Maintain the readiness of the MEOC, JIC, and alternate facilities.
- Identify mission essential functions that must be maintained or rapidly restored and maintain department-specific Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plans to address them.
- Account for all internal emergency/disaster-related expenditures and report these to the MEOC Finance/Administration Section with appropriate supporting documentation.

Incident Command System (ICS) Authorities and Responsibilities

Like other jurisdictions, the City has adopted the National Incident Management System (NIMS) as its standard for incident management and the Incident Command System (ICS) as a component of NIMS. According to NIMS, ICS is:

“a standardized approach to the command, control, and coordination of on-scene incident management that provides a common hierarchy within which personnel from multiple organizations can be effective. ICS specifies an organizational structure for incident management that integrates and coordinates a combination of procedures, personnel, equipment, facilities, and communications.”⁵

⁵ Federal Emergency Management Agency. (2017). *National Incident Management System, Third Edition*, 24.

Incident Commander (IC)

When an incident occurs within a single jurisdiction and without jurisdictional or functional agency overlap, the appropriate authority designates a single Incident Commander who has overall incident management responsibility. The Incident Commander:

- Establishes a single incident command post for the incident.
- Appoints the Command Staff (Public Information Officer, Safety Officer, Legal Officer, and Liaison(s)) with the assistance of the Director of Emergency Management.
- Appoints the General Staff (Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration Section Chiefs) with the assistance of the Director of Emergency Management.
- May appoint a Deputy IC.
- Establishes consolidated objectives, priorities, and strategic guidance, updating them every operational period.
- Establishes a single system for ordering resources.
- Approves a consolidated Incident Action Plan for each operational period.
- Established procedures for joint decision-making and documentation.
- Captures lessons learned and best practices.

Command Staff

The Command Staff comprises the:

- Public Information Officer. The Public Information officer (PIO) is responsible for public and media inquiries, information and instruction to the public, developing and approving official press releases to the media, and rumor control. The PIO reports to the IC.
- Safety Officer. The Safety Officer advises the IC on operational safety issues. The Safety Officer reports to the IC.
- Legal Officer. The Legal Officer advises the IC on emergency declarations, resolutions, and legal issues. The Legal Officer reports to the IC.
- Liaison Officer(s). The Liaison Officers are the MEOC point of contact for representatives of other governmental agencies, NGO, and the private sector. Liaisons typically are a Law Enforcement representative and a Fire representative working at one or both county EOCs. They report to the IC. A Liaison Officer also may be located at another EOC, such as a hospital EOC.

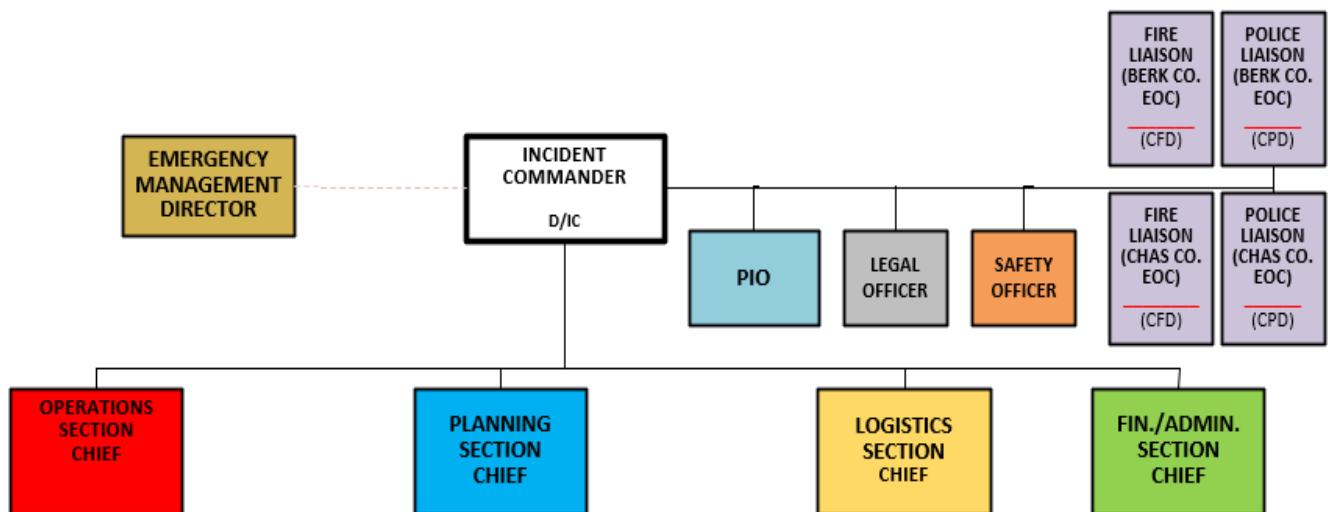
General Staff

The General Staff comprises the:

- Operations Section. The Operations Section is responsible for all tactical operations at the incident level. The Operations Section carries out the objectives of the Incident Action Plan and provides information about ongoing operations to the Planning Section. The Operations Section Chief manages the section and reports to the IC.
- Planning Section. The Planning Section is responsible for collecting, evaluating, and disseminating information related to the emergency or disaster. The Planning Section prepares and documents the Incident Action Plan. The Planning Section also maintains information on the current and forecast situation, prepares and delivers the Situation Report, and tracks the status of assigned resources. The Planning Section Chief manages the section and reports to the IC.
- Logistics Section. The Logistics Section is responsible for providing facilities, services, and materials for the emergency or disaster. The Logistics Section Chief manages the section and reports to the IC.
- Finance and Administration Section. The Finance and Administration Section is responsible for reviewing expenditures, allocating funds, and managing all other financial considerations. The Finance and Administration Section Chief manages the section and reports to the IC.
- Intelligence and Investigation Section. In certain circumstances, the IC may activate the Intelligence and Investigation Section. This section is responsible for investigating possible crimes and gathering information to prevent future threats. The Intelligence and Investigations Section Chief manages the section and reports to the IC.

These sections may have functional branches or units that report to the Section Chief.

Incident Command System



Municipal Emergency Operations Center (MEOC)

MEOC Purpose

The MEOC activates at the discretion of the Mayor or the Director of Emergency Management and exists to coordinate the efforts of the whole community to manage an emergency. The MEOC supports the IC while managing city-wide emergency needs by mobilizing resources, tracking costs, planning for future needs, and addressing issues beyond the focus of any individual incident. MEOC operations are guided by an Incident Action Plan that outlines Incident Objectives for each operational period.

The MEOC is scalable, modular, and flexible to meet the demands of each emergency. MEOC shifts conform to the operational rhythm set by the IC.

The MEOC is in the Charleston Gaillard Center at 2 George Street, Charleston, South Carolina, 29401. There is not an alternate EOC. However, the Public Safety Operations Center (PSOC) may be used for smaller events.

MEOC Activation Levels

As a standard practice, the decision to activate the MEOC may be made at the local level and is situation- or condition-dependent. The City of Charleston employs three MEOC Activation Levels, aligning with the South Carolina Emergency Division and Charleston County Emergency Management Department. (Berkeley County Emergency Management Department uses five OpCons). An event may require moving directly to the most severe OpCon level in a no-notice event such as an earthquake.

OpCon 3—Normal daily operations. Operations are routine and the MEOC is not activated. Emergency Management staff monitor and assess potential threats and hazards; conduct routine and ongoing coordination with other departments and agencies; develop and execute plans, training, and exercises; and maintain facilities and equipment.

OpCon 2—Enhanced awareness. A disaster or emergency is likely to affect the City. The Emergency Operations Plan is implemented. The MEOC is partially or fully activated and staffed to monitor the hazard or threat; to warn, inform, or instruct the public; and to support response and recovery. Examples of events that *could* trigger OpCon 2 and a partial or full activation of the MEOC include but are not limited to:

- A request for a MEOC activation from a City department.
- An incident resulting in 10 or more serious injuries and/or fatalities.
- An evacuation of 50 or more people from their residences.
- A mass care effort requiring the sheltering of 50 or more individuals.
- An order to shelter-in-place for 500 or more people.
- A utility outage to 10,000 customers expected to last at least 72 hours.
- An incident resulting in damage to 5 or more habitable structures.

- A credible threat of terrorism, mass violence, or a high-profile trial, as determined by the Charleston Police Department or the State Fusion Center.
- Events with a Special Event Assessment Rating of 3, 2, or 1.

This may also be a period when an activation is drawing down, as in a post-event shift from response to short-term recovery (i.e., building inspections, damage assessments, etc.).

OpCon 1—Full alert. A disaster is imminent or occurring. The MEOC is fully activated with all or most positions staffed, including personnel from assisting departments or agencies. Examples of events that could trigger OpCon 1 and a full activation of the MEOC include but are not limited to:

- A National Hurricane Center/National Weather Service forecast of a tropical cyclone, historic rainfall-induced flooding, or a significant snow/ice storm
- A no-notice disaster, such as an earthquake, resulting in infrastructure failure and the need for immediate debris clearance.
- An incident resulting in 25 or more serious injuries or fatalities.
- A mass care effort requiring the sheltering of 200 or more individuals.
- An evacuation of 200 or more people from their residences.
- An order to shelter-in-place for 1,000 or more people.
- A utility outage to 50,000 customers for more than 72 hours.
- An incident resulting in damage to 25 or more habitable structures.
- Events with a Special Event Assessment Rating of 2 or 1.
- Civil unrest anticipated to result in significant violence and/or property damage.

MEOC Communications

The MEOC will employ reliable and redundant communications to maximize coordination of preparedness, response, and recovery efforts. Departments supporting MEOC activations will ensure that their employees are equipped with equipment or capabilities to communicate with MEOC Incident Command personnel. Communications capabilities include but are not limited to:

- Landline telephone
- Cell phone and text
- Email
- Integrated multi-feature communications platform
- Radios
- Amateur radio
- Fax
- Satellite phones

Activated staff members should bring their City laptops if they have one. When a member of the MEOC activated staff does not have a laptop, the Information Technology (IT) Department will make every effort to supply them with one. Annual planning for such needs and timely requests will enhance the likelihood that requests can be fulfilled.

The IT Department also will ensure that MEOC staff have printer, copier, and fax capabilities.

Activated staff should bring a City cellular phone, charger, spare batteries, headsets, and a portable radio to the MEOC, as appropriate.

Communications planning should consider the possibility that traditional communications could be severed or fail for an extended period or that personnel may need to operate virtually.

MEOC Design Ratings

With certain hazards in mind, the following summarizes design ratings for portions of the Gaillard Center, particularly where the MEOC is located, on the West Side:

- *Wind- and wind-borne debris.* Wind and wind-borne design ratings are as follows:
 - Exterior windows and doors, Gaillard Center: Wind Zone 3 (up to 110 mph or a high Category 2 hurricane) standards; complies with ASTM E 1996 wind borne debris protection guidelines.
 - Maximum sustained winds, MEOC (West) Side of Gaillard Center: 122 mph (mid-range Category 3 (111-129 mph) hurricane).
 - Maximum gusts, MEOC (West) Side of Gaillard Center: 157 mph (low end Category 5 (157 mph and above) hurricane).
- *Flooding.* The West Side Loading Dock and adjacent areas are the Gaillard Center locations most vulnerable to flooding. Hazards from significant flooding of these areas may require locking down the Gaillard Center, restricting personnel to the 2nd Floor and above, and isolating and restricting access to the Loading Dock and Pump Room.

Gaillard Center Finished Floor Elevations (FFEs) and other elevations of note follow:

- 1st floor FFE: 13.09 feet.
- West Side Loading Dock FFE and Landing FFE (above it): 9.39 feet and ~13 feet, respectively.
- East Side Loading Dock FFE: ~20.09 feet, which has a roll up steel door for which sand bags are placed at its base.
- East Side Corridor FFE: 13.09 feet.
- Rear Mechanical Yard and original building entry area elevation: 11.75-12.09 feet, with removable (manual) flood gates installed.
- *Seismic events.* Seismically, the Gaillard Center is considered a Design Category D based on .5g lateral acceleration and is designed to survive a Modified Mercalli scale intensity of VIII (Severe) or magnitude 6.0 seismic event.

Note: This section is focused on MEOC operations. The City's Public Safety Operations Center (PSOC) at 180 Lockwood Drive does not operate under OpCon levels. It typically opens for smaller localized weather events, known protests, and some special events.

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City of Charleston Emergency Operations Plan

2021

FUNCTIONAL ANNEXES

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ANNEX A-1. FLOOD WARNING AND RESPONSE

Flooding is the most frequent hazard impacting Charleston. The city is at risk of flooding from a variety of sources, including heavy rainfall, tropical cyclones and their many effects, high tides, onshore winds, and sea level rise. Inland flooding, swollen rivers, dam failure, and to a lesser degree, tsunamis, also present a flood risk.

The City of Charleston has developed numerical flood categories to inform flood response. The Level 3 designation signals nuisance flooding. Level 2 is disruptive flooding that may create life-threatening and property damaging situations. Level 1 is significantly disruptive, life-threatening and property damaging flooding. Flooding in any of these categories may be widespread or isolated to flood-prone or low-lying areas.

For tidal flooding in which no rainfall or storm surge is forecast or ongoing, 7.0-7.4-foot high tides constitute Level 3 flooding, 7.5-7.9-foot high tides constitute Level 2 flooding, and high tides of 8.0 feet and above constitute Level 1 flooding. Level 3 flooding from 7.0-7.2 feet and unaccompanied by rain or storm surge may result in no action.

The City's warning about and response to flooding, tied to these flood level designators, is detailed below.

Level 3 Flooding (Nuisance)

Level 3 flooding may involve heavy and/or prolonged periods of rainfall, excessive high tides, or a combination of factors that present a nuisance to motorists and/or require a few road or partial lane closures. In these instances:

- City of Charleston Emergency Management staff will monitor forecasts, communicate with the National Weather Service (NWS) and notify key departments.
- GIS will publish flood-prone streets and ensure that road closures and re-openings appear for public viewing.
- Charleston Police Department (CPD) will observe and report flooding and road conditions, oversee barricade deployments, coordinate with GIS to report road closures and openings, and broadcast road closures and re-openings on social media as they occur.
- CPD and Traffic & Transportation will coordinate traffic management.
- The Public Information Office, if needed, will warn and instruct motorists, coordinate with Emergency Management and the Police Department, and provide messaging to the Citizen Services Desk.
- The Stormwater Management Department, as warranted, will initiate a pre-flood and flooding plan and prepare for “day of” flooding.
- The Citizen Services Desk will prepare for citizen questions and adjust staffing if needed.

Level 2 Flooding (Disruptive; may create life-threatening and property damaging situations)

Level 2 flooding may involve heavy and/or prolonged periods of rainfall, excessive high tides, or a combination of factors. These conditions may disrupt motorists' travel, stall and damage vehicles, will likely result in more than a few road or partial lane closures, and may create life-threatening situations, possibly requiring rescues. In these instances:

- City of Charleston Emergency Management staff will monitor forecasts, communicate with NWS, and notify key departments and external partners. Also, Emergency Management will coordinate messaging, maintain situational awareness, update departments on actions taken, consider a PSOC opening, and seek department head recommendations for the Mayor's consideration.
- GIS will publish flood-prone streets and ensure that road closures and re-openings appear for public viewing.
- CPD will observe and report flooding and road conditions, oversee barricade deployments, coordinate with GIS to report road closures and openings, and broadcast road closures and re-openings on social media as they occur. If conditions warrant, CPD will consider pre-positioning resources and tow trucks and liaising and coordinating with a designated Barricade Team.
- CPD and Traffic & Transportation will coordinate traffic management.
- The Public Information Office will warn and instruct motorists, coordinate with Emergency Management and CPD, and provide messaging to the Citizen Services Desk.
- The Stormwater Management Department will initiate pre-flood and flooding plans as appropriate and prepare for "day of" flooding.
- The Charleston Fire Department will consider pre-positioning resources for potential rescues.
- The Citizen Services Desk will plan for citizen questions and adapt staffing, if needed.
- Human Resources will warn and instruct city staff, if needed.

Level 1 Flooding (Significantly disruptive; life-threatening, and property damaging)

Level 1 flooding may involve life-threatening and potentially property-damaging flooding generated by tropical cyclones or extreme non-cyclone systems, at times exacerbated by tidal flooding. Conditions may include storm surge, excessively high tides, heavy and/or prolonged periods of rainfall, or a combination of factors. Such flooding will almost certainly cause many road closures, stall and damage vehicles, threaten or damage homes, lead to rescues, and disrupt city business. In these instances:

- City of Charleston Emergency Management staff will, as necessary:
 - Monitor forecasts.
 - Communicate with National Weather Service Charleston.
 - Notify key departments and external partners.
 - Coordinate messaging.
 - Maintain situational awareness.
 - Update departments on actions taken.
 - Open the MEOC.

- Initiate the Incident Action Plan.
- Seek department head recommendations for the Mayor's consideration.

Under the Incident Command System (ICS), as necessary:

- The Logistics Section will initiate logistics support and staging of resources.
- The Operations Section will:
 - Initiate a pre-flood and flooding plan that includes flood mitigation.
 - Consider public messaging, to include the use and location of variable message signs, both static and deployable.
 - Request resources.
 - Facilitate evacuation, if necessary.
 - Observe and report flooding and road conditions.
 - Oversee barricade deployments.
 - Prepare for stalled cars, rescuing endangered persons, and moving critical personnel.
 - Consider pre-positioning resources and tow trucks and protect CPD vehicles as conditions warrant.
 - Coordinate traffic management and associated public messaging.
 - Publish flood-prone streets.
 - Ensure road closures and re-openings appear for public viewing.
 - Prepare for recovery.
- The PIO/Joint Information Center will, as necessary:
 - Warn and instruct motorists.
 - Coordinate with Emergency Management and CPD.
 - Provide messaging to the Citizen Services Desk.
 - Prepare for citizen questions.
 - Adjust Citizen Services Desk staffing.
- The Planning Section will, as necessary:
 - Announce flood-prone streets.
 - Ensure road closures appear for public viewing.
- The Finance and Administration Section will, as necessary:
 - Instruct activated staff and others supporting the incident to route resource requests through the Finance and Administration Section for approval before processing them.
 - Instruct activated staff and others supporting the event to properly and in timely fashion document expenses and time worked, as well as retain receipts.

To ensure successful operations, City Departments will maintain and regularly review and update flood-related plans, policies, and responsibilities in their Continuity of Operations Plans and Standard Operating Guides. These documents should align with the City's EOP and Flood Warning and Response documentation and vice versa.

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ANNEX A-2. FLOODING PUMP OPERATIONS

Nature of Flooding

Flooding is the most frequent hazard impacting Charleston. The city is at risk of flooding from a variety of sources, including heavy rainfall, tropical cyclones and their many effects, high tides, onshore winds, and sea level rise. Inland flooding, swollen rivers, dam failure, and to a lesser degree, tsunamis, also present a flood risk.

The City of Charleston has developed numerical flood levels to inform flood response. The Level 3 designation signals nuisance flooding. Level 2 is disruptive flooding that may create life-threatening and property damaging situations. Level 1 is significantly disruptive, life-threatening and property damaging flooding. Flooding at any of these levels may be widespread or isolated to flood-prone or low-lying areas.

Stormwater Management Department Role

The Stormwater Management Department oversees the deployment of pumps to mitigate flooding in the City when it may disrupt traffic or cause harm to life or property. When flooding is forecast or likely, the Stormwater Management Director may direct that pump operations be undertaken or may receive a recommendation to do so from the Director of Emergency Management or the Mayor.

Coordination and Support

Depending on forecast conditions, the deployment of pumps is part of a larger flooding coordination process that may involve Stormwater Management, Police, Fire, Emergency Management, Traffic and Transportation, City or Police PIO, Public Service, and the Mayor's Office. Stormwater Management should ensure that these organizations are informed early regarding pump locations, whether the pumps are operable, and any changes to pump locations. Public safety or Emergency Management personnel may contribute to situational awareness that warrants an adjustment to pump operations.

Pump Operation Thresholds

In general, pumps will be utilized when the National Weather Service forecasts conditions that the City considers to be Level 2 or Level 1 flooding. The following conditions are most likely to contribute to such flooding:

- Storm surge.
- Forecast rainfall rates are at least 1"/hour or an equivalent rate in less than hour.
- Sustained rainfall over a prolonged period.
- A predicted 7' tide or higher and heavy or sustained rainfall over a prolonged period.
- A combination of the above conditions.

Generally, pump operations will not be utilized or are not ideal in the following conditions:

- Level 3 or "nuisance" flooding.

- Tidal flooding, except where water appears to be surcharging out of a manhole cover and can be contained.
- Forecast rainfall rates of less than 1"/hour.

The final call on pump operations rests with the Stormwater Management Department head or their designated agent.

Pump Description, Acquisition Process, Staffing, and Expense

The following outlines the pump description, acquisition process, staffing, and expense to the City for temporary pump equipment operations.

The City typically rents and uses Godwin CDM-150 6" mobile pumps with a maximum capacity of 1,700 gallons per minute (gpm) and CDM-180 8" pumps with a capacity of 2,100 gpm. Each has compatible suction and discharge hoses for removing water from of a flooded area.

When flooding is forecast, the City typically rents four to five of the 6" or 8" mobile pumps.

Two to three persons are required to set up individual pump operations. Set-up and operation time are about 6 hours per pump. As of late 2020, depending on the pump size and assuming a crew of three at six hours each, the City typically rents pumps at a cost of \$2,500-\$3,500/day in these conditions.

Pump Location Strategy and Priorities

The Stormwater Management Department head or their designated agent prioritize where pumps are placed based on forecast conditions; known flood trends and historical flood data; high traffic areas; recommendations from GIS, Emergency Management, the Police Department, the Fire Department; and available resources. As of early 2021, the following streets are priority locations for pump operations:

1. Bennett at Ashley Streets, for which pumped water typically drains into wetlands that drains into Alberta Long Lake and the Ashley River.
2. Ashley at Broad Streets, for which pumped water typically drains into Tradd Street with outfall at the Battery.
3. Colonial at Broad Streets, for which pumped water typically drains into Tradd Street with outfall at the Battery.
4. President at Allway Streets for draining the Crosstown (Septima Clark Parkway). Pumped water at this location typically drains across Hagood Avenue to a tidal marsh at the end of Gadsden Creek.
5. Huger at King Streets, for which pumped water typically drains into New Market Creek.

Circumstances Requiring More Pumps

Circumstances that would prompt the Stormwater Management Department to rent or purchase additional pumps include:

- Tropical storm activity.
- Severe, long duration rainfall

The preferred situation is to notify the contractor the day before pumps are needed. Otherwise, the lead time required is typically no less than four hours for picking up hoses and pumps, moving them into position, and setting them up.

Lowering of Lakes

Sometimes, forecast heavy rainfall and flooding requires lowering of Colonial Lake on the Peninsula and Lake Dotterer at West Ashley Park. This action is a function of the Parks Department in coordination with the Stormwater Management Department.

Other Considerations

For long duration events, the pumps must be refueled. The City has the appropriate contractor refuel their own equipment.

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ANNEX B. TROPICAL CYCLONE WARNING AND RESPONSE

The City of Charleston is vulnerable to tropical cyclones, an umbrella term for major hurricanes, hurricanes, tropical storms, and tropical depressions. Tropical cyclones can be significantly disruptive and generate life-threatening and property damaging storm surge, damaging winds, excessive rainfall, and tornadoes. These hazards may be exacerbated by excessively high tides, recent rainfall, for example. Apathy, warning fatigue, a lack of personal resources, a lack of warning instruments or messaging, construction that is out-of-date or not up to code, and other factors may worsen the tropical cyclone's effects.

On average, since official records began in 1851, a tropical cyclone has passed within 50 nautical miles (58 miles) of the City of Charleston about once every two years, according to National Weather Service (NWS) Charleston. At least once each year, from 2015-2020, the City activated its Incident Command System (ICS) for an actual or threatened tropical cyclone.

The City of Charleston follows the South Carolina Hurricane Plan for tropical cyclones. South Carolina Hurricane Plan annexes offering key direction are Annex A (Evacuation, Decision, and Response Timeline), Annex B (Critical Transportation Need Evacuation Operations Plan), Annex C (Evacuation Zones and Clearance Timing), Annex I (General Population Shelter Management), and Annex J (Special Medical Needs Shelter Management).

The City of Charleston also follows Charleston County Emergency Management Department and Berkeley County Emergency Management Department planning. Charleston and Berkeley Counties are part of the eight-county Central Coastal Conglomerate that also includes Dorchester, Colleton, Orangeburg, Calhoun, Richland, and Lexington Counties. To ensure alignment, the City's Emergency Management Division will maintain tropical cyclone emergency operations checklists.

The City of Charleston will prepare extensively for tropical cyclones to minimize loss of life and damage to property, critical infrastructure, and the environment. At a minimum, preparation includes monitoring, notification, coordination with City departments and external partners, readying an Incident Action Plan, resource requests, logistics support, public messaging, and preparing for recovery.

Details of the City's warning for and response to tropical cyclones follow.

Monitoring

The Emergency Management Division routinely monitors National Hurricane Center (NHC) and NWS Charleston reporting on tropical cyclone-related current weather data, forecasts, and anticipated impacts. NHC disseminates a variety of tropical cyclone products at regular intervals that characterize a tropical cyclone's current or forecast track, location, speed, pressure, projected rainfall, storm surge, projected wind speed, potential for flooding, and potential to spawn tornadoes.

In the period before the MEOC activates and during and after the event, the City of Charleston Director of Emergency Management and staff increase their monitoring of NHC and NWS Charleston reporting through NHC and NWS Charleston websites, text alerts, and e-mails and

through daily telephone conferences and/or webinars with NWS Charleston personnel and regional partners.

Notification

When official forecast conditions warrant, the Director of Emergency Management and/or their designated staff will make notifications to and disseminate timely and accurate tropical cyclone situational awareness updates to the Mayor, department heads, other city staff, and key external partners, making recommendations as needed. The Director of Emergency Management or their staff will update departments on actions taken.

Coordination

When the Director of Emergency Management determines that forecast conditions warrant possible activation of the MEOC, they will consult with the Charleston County Emergency Management Department Director, Berkeley County Emergency Management Director, and other regional partners as necessary. The Director of Emergency Management will advise the Mayor and coordinate actions with City department heads and other city staff as necessary. Emphasis will be two-fold: 1) instruction and information for City staff, to include information about hazards, city closings, pay, and leave, and 2) readying City staff and resources for a possible MEOC activation and for response and recovery.

The Director of Emergency Management may determine that conditions warrant a change in the MEOC's Operational Condition, implementation of the ICS, and activation of the MEOC, from which preparedness, response, and short-term recovery actions that are part of tropical cyclone emergency operations are coordinated.

Incident Action Plan

When the Mayor decides to activate the MEOC for a tropical cyclone, the Director of Emergency Management will determine the beginning of the first MEOC operational period. The Director of Emergency Management then will initiate the formation of the Incident Action Plan for the event and generate initial objectives. The Director of Emergency Management also will call up persons from a pre-determined MEOC staffing roster to staff the MEOC. City departments will fill MEOC and field positions as required. The Director of Emergency Management will coordinate with the Director of Human Resources and Organizational Development on staffing issues such as emergency pay, special pay codes, and leave.

Operations

When MEOC staff and field elements activate for a tropical cyclone, the Operations Section will undertake activities specified in the Flood Warning and Response Annex of this EOP and the following activities, not necessarily all-inclusive, as needed:

- Consider pre-positioning resources and request needed resources as soon as possible.
- Facilitate evacuation.
- Undertake traditional law enforcement, enforce new orders and ordinances, and protect residences and businesses, according to departmental plans.

- Protect public safety vehicles and other City vehicles as conditions warrant.
- Observe and report flooding and road conditions and oversee barricade deployments.
- Ensure road closures and re-openings appear for public viewing.
- Prepare for stalled cars and the possible need to preposition tow trucks, rescue endangered persons, and move critical personnel.
- Plan for and implement planning to reduce risks to vulnerable populations.
- Coordinate traffic management and associated public messaging, including using static and deployable variable message signs.
- Monitor/troubleshoot any issues with shelters and transportation to shelters.
- Initiate a pre-flood and flooding plan that includes flood mitigation.
- Protect city facilities.
- Prepare to set up Points-of-Distribution (PODs) and Neighborhood Distribution and Information Points (NDIPs).
- Prepare for signal recovery, damage assessment for public and private dwellings and infrastructure, debris management, and other recovery functions.

Logistics

When MEOC staff and field elements activate for a tropical cyclone, the Logistics Section will assume responsibility for berthing and providing food for City employees and external personnel assigned from other jurisdictions who are in the field and for MEOC staff, subject to any guidelines about sustaining one's self for certain periods. Berthing and food provisions may be arranged through agreements with external partners.

Planning

When MEOC staff and field elements are expected to activate for a tropical cyclone, the Planning Section will:

- Prepare the Incident Action Plan, with an emphasis on Incident Objectives, the Organizational Chart, and the Operational Rhythm.
- Facilitate the Planning Cycle or Planning “P”.
- Through the Situation Unit, provide situational awareness to the Mayor, Incident Commander, Command and General Staff, and other MEOC staff by collecting, synthesizing, and disseminating information from internal and external sources.
- Through the Documentation Unit, provide near real-time notes on meetings, teleconferences, and webinars and disseminate those to the Mayor, Incident Commander, Command and General Staff and other MEOC staff as authorized.
- Through the Resources Unit and at the direction of the Incident Commander, request resources through Charleston and/or Berkeley Counties using “Palmetto” software when response and recovery strains the City’s capabilities.

Finance and Administration

The Finance and Administration Section will, as necessary:

- Instruct activated staff and others supporting the incident to route resource requests through Finance and Administration for approval before processing them.
- Instruct activated staff and others supporting the event to properly and in timely fashion document expenses and time worked, as well as retain receipts.

Public Messaging

Emergency Management, the Public Information Office (PIO) or Joint Information Center (JIC), the Mayor's Office, the Police Department, the Fire Department, Information Technology—GIS, and other departments as necessary will deliver coordinated and timely warning and instructions to citizens, visitors, motorists, and the media. These messages will cover potential hazards and risks, storm preparations, sand and sand bag availability and garage openings as the City is able to provide them. They also will cover government closings; evacuation, transportation, and sheltering plans; road closures; ordinances; damage assessment tools, debris separation methods; and re-entry using:

- **The Citizen Services Desk.** Before, during, and after a tropical cyclone, City staff will record updated storm-related information on the Citizen Services Desk line. Also, Citizen Services Desk representatives may undertake live operations to prepare for and answer citizens' questions. Depending on the situation, Citizen Services Desk personnel may undertake live operations 24 hours a day or may revert to recorded messages during the evening. The PIO/JIC will provide messaging to the Citizen Services Desk as needed.
- **Special outreach to vulnerable populations.** City departments will make intentional efforts to notify vulnerable populations regarding deteriorating conditions and instruct them in terms of evacuation, transportation, and sheltering, for example. Such efforts may include notifications to residential facility coordinators, door-to-door contact, informational flyers given to residents, and the Everbridge critical event management platform.
- **Social media.** The Public Information Office or, if constituted, the Joint Information Center, will routinely use social media to update and provide instructions to the public and the media as needed. Social media will be used to resend National Hurricane Center and NWS Charleston posts, as appropriate.
- **Press conferences and other media contacts.** At appropriate times and intervals, the Mayor, Police Chief, Fire Chief, Director of Emergency Management, and other City department heads (i.e., for Stormwater, Public Service, Parks, and Traffic and Transportation) or their designees will hold joint press conferences or speak to the media to update and provide instructions to the public.

- **GIS on the City website.** The City's GIS office will make available on its public website road closure information, damage assessment tools, and other information deemed critical for a disaster.

Preparing for Recovery

MEOC staff will assist in readying recovery personnel to perform post-storm actions.

To ensure successful operations, City Departments will maintain and regularly review and update tropical cyclone-related plans, policies, and responsibilities in their Continuity of Operations Plans and Standard Operating Guides. These documents should align with the City's EOP and Flood Warning and Response documentation and vice versa.

Timely individual and family preparedness by staff also are required.

Evacuation, Transportation and Sheltering

Refer to the Mass Care Annex for more detailed information on evacuation, transportation, and sheltering.

Reentry

Refer to the Reentry Annex for more detailed information on reentry.