



Charlottesville-UVA-Albemarle County Elected Official and Executive Staff's Guide to Emergencies and Disasters



Introduction

The Charlottesville-UVA-Albemarle Office of Emergency Management created this guide to inform elected officials about emergency management and the role elected officials have before, during, and after a disaster. Parts of this guide are from a guide created by the Virginia Department of Emergency Management, in partnership with the Virginia Municipal League and the Virginia Association of Counties. VDEM is the lead agency at the state level that protects the lives and property of Virginia's citizens from emergencies and disasters by coordinating the state's emergency preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery efforts. The Charlottesville-UVA-Albemarle Office of Emergency Management is the lead agency at the local level.

This guide will introduce you to the local declaration process, the responsibilities of a local emergency manager, and elected official's responsibilities.

As an elected official, your response to a disaster will influence government, citizens, the private sector, voluntary organizations and the media.

Understanding the Disaster Process

All Emergency and disaster response begins at the local level

If local mutual aid agreements with neighboring localities and other local resources become overwhelmed, a locality can call the Virginia Emergency Operations Center (VEOC) for assistance at (804) 674-2400 or (800) 468-8892. Resource requests will be submitted by the Regional Emergency Management Coordinator through VDEM's WebEOC system.

The VEOC will look first to other local governments and then state agencies, and then to commercial contracts to fill requests. Federal resources are available only if the president declares a federal disaster, which may happen days after the emergency. Wherever assistance comes from, it is important to remember that those resources may be limited and have a cost.

Code of Virginia: Authority

(44-146.19)

Each political subdivision in the Commonwealth is within the jurisdiction of and served by the Virginia Department of Emergency Management. However, responsibility for local disaster mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery falls on the local government. Emergency management organizations in towns are usually integrated into county government, unless specified by charter. Towns shall appoint a coordinator of emergency management to ensure integration into their county's emergency management organization. Each political subdivision shall have a director of emergency management. Each political subdivision shall have an agency of emergency management, which has jurisdiction over the entire political subdivision.

The local director of emergency management or a designee may declare a local emergency with the consent of the governing body of the political subdivision.

If the governing body cannot convene, the director, or designee, or in the absence of both, any member of the governing body may declare a local emergency, subject to confirmation by the governing body at its next regularly scheduled meeting (or at a special meeting within 14 days of the declaration, whichever occurs first).

Emergency Management

Emergency Management is a field that involves dealing with and avoiding risks through four steps: Preparedness, Response, Recovery, and Mitigation

As an elected official, you probably will receive calls from your constituents. Work with the Public Information Officers designated in your Emergency Operations Plan to coordinate public information.

Response

During an emergency, your locality may declare a local emergency, which allows your Emergency Management Coordinator and first responders to respond more quickly to the event.

In addition, the Governor may declare a State of Emergency to speed state agency assistance. In some cases, the Governor may make an emergency declaration before an emergency happens, such as an approaching hurricane. A Governor's Declaration of

Emergency is a required step toward receiving a federal disaster declaration.

Code of Virginia: Response

(44-146.21)

- Whenever a local emergency has been declared, the local director of emergency management may control, restrict, allocate or regulate the use, sale, production and distribution of food, fuel, clothing and other commodities, materials, goods, services and resource systems. The director may enter into contracts and incur obligations necessary to combat the threatened or actual disaster in order to protect the health and safety of persons and property and to provide emergency assistance to the victims of the disaster, as long as these actions do not affect systems in adjoining or other political subdivisions.
- The director may proceed in exercising the powers vested in this section, under the supervision and control of the governor, without regard to usual procedures and formalities prescribed by law (except mandatory constitutional requirements).
- A declaration of a local emergency activates that jurisdiction's Emergency Operations Plan and authorizes aid and assistance in accordance with the plan.
- No interjurisdictional agency or official thereof may declare a local emergency. However, an interjurisdictional agency of emergency management shall provide aid and services to the affected political subdivision because of a local or state declaration.
- When the local governing body decides that all emergency actions have been taken, it shall take appropriate action to end the declared emergency.

Recovery

Recovery involves all of the cleanup, repair, and financial assistance needed to return an area back to pre-disaster conditions; it is one of the most challenging aspects of disasters and the most complex. It will take time and a community-wide effort to recover from a disaster.

Some residents may question the pace of the recovery efforts or question why they are not seeing relief workers in their specific area. The priorities after a disaster are:

1. **Life Safety**
2. **Critical Facilities** (systems)
3. Private **Property Damage**

After initial response efforts, your community must determine the amount of damage. Your locality must submit an initial damage assessment to the Virginia Emergency Operations Center (VEOC), usually within 72 hours. If the damage appears significant, then a team of state, and federal personnel may visit the area to perform additional assessments.

As an elected official, you should get regular briefings on the extent of damage and status of the recovery process from your local emergency manager. These briefings will help you answer questions from your constituents and the media.

If the damages appear to meet the criteria, the governor may request a federal declaration. When the state of Virginia hits their \$11.6M threshold the current Public Assistance threshold is \$3.68/per capita. If the state of Virginia does not meet the threshold of \$11.6M, the local threshold transitions to \$4/per capita. Not all disaster events result in a Governor's request. Only the President of the United States has the authority to approve the request, and an approval is not automatic. Many disasters in Virginia have not received a federal declaration.

A federal declaration must include the locality's name for it to receive aid. There are two main types of federal disaster assistance: **Individual Assistance** and **Public Assistance**.

Individual Assistance (IA) for Individual Citizens and Businesses

- By law, Federal assistance cannot duplicate any coverage provided by private insurance
- In order to receive IA, registrants must live in the localities named in the Federal Declaration
- The majority of assistance to individuals comes through low interest loans from the Small Business Administration (SBA). All registrants will be asked to fill out an application for an SBA loan.
- Other Federal assistance comes through direct grant and reimbursement programs:
 - Housing Assistance
 - Other Needs Assistance
 - Federal Disaster Assistance and Small Business
 - Federal Disaster Assistance and Agriculture

If Individual Assistance is available, citizens should register by calling the special toll-free telephone number: 1-800-621-FEMA (TTY: 1-800-462-7585) or register online at www.fema.gov.

If the Commonwealth does not receive a federal disaster declaration, Virginia's Emergency Relief to Localities may be able to reimburse a locality for costs if threshold and program requirements are met.

Public Assistance (PA) for State and Local Governments and Certain Nonprofits

Public Assistance reimburses local and state governments and certain private nonprofits for the expenses involved in response and recovery efforts.

In Virginia, state and local governments will combine funds to match 25 percent of the federal reimbursement

amount. How much the local government will contribute depends on its fiscal stress. Some localities might be required to provide 13 percent and the state 12 percent, while other localities might only need to provide 2 percent as the state provides the remaining 23 percent. Talk to your Emergency Management Coordinator about your locality and matching funds.

To be eligible, the work must be the result of the disaster, be located within the designated disaster area and be the legal responsibility of the applicant. Projects that may be reimbursed include:

- Debris removal from public roads and rights-of-way and from private property when determined to be in the public interest. Encourage your locality to develop a debris removal plan in advance of an emergency. Take advantage of state debris removal contracts already in place. *Note: debris removal on private property is the property owner's responsibility, unless the debris poses a hazard to the community at large.*
- Emergency protective measures, including search and rescue, warning of hazards, and unsafe structure demolition. Zoning and ordinance issues can play a major role with rebuilding. Get regular briefings about the status of these issues from the appropriate agencies.
- Public infrastructure repair, including roads, bridges, water control facilities and public utility distribution systems.

Mitigation is taking sustained actions to reduce the impact of natural hazards on people and property. Mitigation activities can save lives and money. For example, maintaining strong building codes and enforcing them can reduce property damage from storms, and storm water management can minimize flooding risks.

As an elected official, you should be aware of the mitigation issues in your community. Learn the high-risk areas, the existing or potential mitigation projects, and how they are funded.

Preparedness

As an elected official, there are several important steps you can take to prepare yourself and your community for emergencies and disasters.

1. **Understand the National Incident Management System (NIMS).** Localities are not eligible for federal preparedness funds if they do not meet annual NIMS requirements. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) created NIMS to provide a comprehensive and consistent approach to incident management.

Make sure that all government departments and agencies in your community have adopted NIMS. Encourage NIMS adoption and use by all departments, agencies, associations, utilities, non-government organizations and the private sector.

NIMS should be adopted through executive order, proclamation, resolution, or legislation as the jurisdiction's official all-hazards, incident response system.

FEMA strongly recommends that elected officials complete “IS-100 An Introduction to Incident Command System (ICS)” and “IS-700 An Introduction to National Incident Management System (NIMS)” training courses. They are available online at <https://training.fema.gov/is/crslist.aspx>

2. **Get involved with your local Regional Emergency Operations Plan (EOP).** The Code of Virginia requires each jurisdiction to maintain and keep current an Emergency Operations Plan. Familiarize yourself with the plan before an emergency, and be involved with any updates. Your participation will send a strong message to the agencies and departments involved that this process is an important one.
3. **Participate in training and exercises.** Statewide and regional exercises are conducted regularly, and local participation is an opportunity to practice your Emergency Operations Plan.
4. **Encourage community and business preparedness.** Emergency responders will respond quickly after a disaster, but they cannot reach everyone right away. Everyone should be prepared to be self-sufficient for at least the first 72 hours after a disaster. For more information about how to prepare, visit <http://www.ready.gov>.

As an elected official, you should take NIMS classroom training from VDEM, including G402: ICS Overview for Executive and Senior Officials.

Code of Virginia: Preparedness

(44-146.19, 44-146.20)

- The director may develop mutual aid arrangements for reciprocal assistance in case of a disaster too great to be dealt with alone. Such arrangements should be consistent with state plans and programs, and it shall be the duty of each local organization for emergency management to render assistance in accordance with the provisions of such mutual aid arrangements.
- Each local and interjurisdictional agency shall prepare and keep current a local or interjurisdictional emergency operations plan for its area. The plan shall include, but not be limited to, responsibilities of all local agencies and shall establish a chain of command.
- Every four years, each local and interjurisdictional agency shall conduct a comprehensive review and revision of its emergency operations plan to ensure that the plan remains current, and the revised plan shall be formally adopted by the locality's governing body. In the case of an interjurisdictional agency, the plan shall be formally adopted by the governing body of each of the localities encompassed by the agency. Each political subdivision having a nuclear power station or other nuclear facility within 10 miles of its boundaries shall, if so directed by the Department of Emergency Management, prepare and keep current an appropriate emergency plan for its area for response to nuclear accidents at such station or facility. All political subdivisions shall provide on or before July 1 each year an updated emergency management assessment to the State Coordinator of Emergency Management.
- All localities with populations greater than 50,000 shall establish an alert and warning plan for the dissemination of adequate and timely warning to the public in the event of an emergency or threatened disaster. The local governing body shall amend its local emergency operations plan to include rules for the operation of its alert and warning system, to include sirens, Emergency Alert System, NOAA Weather Radios, other personal notification systems, amateur radio operators, or any combination thereof. Emergency operations plans should be updated to reflect the addition of new information as it becomes available, or, at a minimum, annually.

Media Guide

For many disaster survivors, information is their first need, and it is vital that information be consistent.

It is important to understand that government assistance can help disaster survivors, but it is not designed to replace all that was lost. Make sure your community has a strong public information team that can coordinate and distribute information to the public.

One of your main jobs as an elected official is to help manage public expectations about what government can or cannot provide during or after a disaster. Reassure citizens that responders are doing all they can, but do not raise unrealistic expectations. Knowing your local Regional Emergency Operation Plan will help you more confidently and accurately answer questions.

You can support response agencies and reassure the public by talking about:

1. Only what you know
2. What emergency responders and community leaders are doing
3. What the public can and should do
4. Positive things. Avoid focusing on problems – it can have a negative effect on recovery efforts

What you say to the media can have a great impact on the public's perception of response and recovery.

Important Phone Numbers

Local Emergency Management Coordinator

434-971-1263

ECC Non-Emergency Line

434-977-9041

VDEM State Coordinator

(804) 897-9711

Virginia Emergency Operations Center

(804) 647-2400 or (800) 468-8892

VDOT Road Conditions

511

Regional Power Company Contact Information

Dominion Power Company

www.dominionenergy.com

(866) 366-4357

Central Virginia Electric Co-op

www.mycvec.com

(800) 367-2832

Appalachian Power

www.appalachianpower.com/outages

(800) 956-4237

Rappahannock Electric Cooperative

www.myrec.coop

(800) 552-3904

Charlottesville-UVA-Albemarle County Addendum

Regional Hazard Profile

Elected officials should be able to recognize the region-specific hazards the city of Charlottesville, University of Virginia, and Albemarle County face, and should be familiar with the emergency procedures in place to mitigate and respond to disasters. Based on historical and anticipated impact to the region, flooding, severe winter storms, hurricanes, and high wind events offer the most significant threats to the area. The following table, excerpted from the 2017 Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan – Thomas Jefferson Planning District (<http://tjpd.org/environment/hazard-mitigation-plan-2017/>), is a prioritized list of moderate to severe hazards for the region, based on national and state-level data as well as local experiences.

Table 1. Prioritized Regional Hazards

EVENT	PROBABILITY	HUMAN IMPACT	PROPERTY IMPACT	BUSINESS IMPACT	RISK
	<i>Likelihood this will occur</i>	<i>Possibility of death or injury</i>	<i>Physical losses and damages</i>	<i>Interruption of</i>	<i>Relative threat*</i>
SCORE	0 = N/A 1 = Low 2 = Moderate	0 = N/A 1 = Low 2 = Moderate	0 = N/A 1 = Low 2 = Moderate	0 = N/A 1 = Low 2 = Moderate	0 - 100%
Hurricane/high wind/windstorms	3	3	3	3	100%
Flooding	3	1	3	2	67%
Winter storms/weather	3	1	1	3	56%
Wildfire	2	1	1	1	22%
Lightning	2	1	1	1	22%
Drought and extreme heat	2	1	1	1	22%
Dam failure	1	2	2	2	22%
Tornado	1	1	2	2	19%
Earthquake	1	1	2	2	19%
Landslide	1	1	1	1	11%
AVERAGE SCORE	1.90	1.30	1.70	1.80	34%

All-Hazards Response

The city of Charlottesville and Albemarle County are vulnerable to a range of hazards, but since many of the consequences of disasters are the same regardless of the hazard, emergency managers use an all-hazards approach to emergency planning. This involves preparing for and responding to a variety of emergencies with a streamlined and shared response, leading to more effective management strategies before and during an emergency.

Regional Emergency Operations

The City of Charlottesville, University of Virginia, and Albemarle County commit to a regional emergency response strategy for incidents affecting the region and will devote available resources to save lives, stabilize the incident, and minimize property damage. Regional response is coordinated under the City of Charlottesville, University of Virginia, Albemarle County Regional Emergency Operations Plan (Regional EOP), which establishes a single, comprehensive framework for the management of major emergencies and disasters within the region. The successful implementation of the plan is contingent upon a collaborative approach between the City, County and University, with a wide range of partner agencies and organizations that provide crucial support during emergency operations. This collaboration involves intergovernmental communication and information-sharing, as well as coordination of planning, resource management, and other tasks relating to emergency preparedness and response.

Declaring an Emergency

In the Commonwealth of Virginia, if a disaster overwhelms or has the potential to overwhelm local emergency response capabilities, it is the responsibility of the Director of Emergency Management to declare a local emergency. A Declaration of Local Emergency can be declared prior to an event/incident occurring. The Director of Emergency Management for Albemarle County is the County Executive, while for the City of Charlottesville it is the City Manager, and for the University of Virginia it is the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer. Before a Declaration of Local Emergency, each Director will consider the scope and magnitude of the event, the impact of the damage and losses, and the ability of the local jurisdiction to respond.

A Declaration of Local Emergency allows for the following:

- Mobilization of resources
- Implementation of protective actions including evacuations, emergency shelters, shelter-in-place orders, emergency alerts, and warnings
- Initiation of mutual aid agreements
- Suspension of statutes
- Authorization of emergency funds

Public Information

Once the Emergency Operations Plan is activated, there will be a Regional Public Information Officer supporting the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The Regional PIO position is staffed by public affairs specialists from City, County, and University staff who assume the position in the EOC based on a rotating schedule established to support the response. The Regional PIO is in charge of coordinating and disseminating information relating to the incident, and is in contact with the Unified Command and the media. Elected officials must be prepared to interact with constituents and the media regarding the emergency situation, but should be careful to coordinate their statements with the Regional PIO's information to ensure they are sharing accurate and current information.

Further Resources

For more specific emergency response information, elected officials should familiarize themselves with the Charlottesville-UVA-Albemarle Emergency Operations Plan. Questions should be directed to the Office of Emergency Management at (434) 971-1263.

Glossary of Terms

Coordination

The process of systematically analyzing a situation, developing relevant information, and informing appropriate personnel of viable alternatives for selection of the most effective combination of available resources to meet specific objectives.

Declaration of Emergency

Whenever, in the opinion of the Governor, the safety and welfare of the people of the state require the exercise of extreme emergency measures due to a threatened or actual disaster, he may declare a state of emergency to exist. (Also see "Local Declaration of Emergency.")

Emergency/Disaster/Incident

An event that demands a crisis response beyond the scope of any single line agency or service and that presents a threat to a community or larger area. An emergency is usually an event that can be controlled within the scope of local capabilities; a major emergency or disaster usually requires resources beyond what is available locally.

Emergency Alert System

A network of broadcast stations interconnecting facilities authorized by the Federal Communications Commission to operate in a controlled manner to warn and inform the public of needed protective actions in the event of a disaster or emergency situation.

Emergency Operations Center

A facility from which government directs and controls its emergency operations; where information about the status of the emergency situation is officially collected, assimilated, and reported on; where coordination among response agencies takes place; and from which outside assistance is officially requested.

Emergency Operations Plan

A document which provides for a preplanned and coordinated response in the event of an emergency or disaster situation.

Emergency Management

The preparation for and the carrying out of functions (other than functions for which military forces are primarily responsible) to prevent, minimize, and repair injury and damage resulting from natural or manmade disasters. These functions include fire-fighting, police, medical and health, rescue, warning, engineering, communications, evacuation, resource management, plant protection, restoration of public utility services, and other functions related to preserving the public health, safety, and welfare.

Emergency Support Function

A function which takes agencies to provide or to coordinate certain resources in response to emergencies or disasters.

Exercise

An activity designed to promote emergency preparedness; test or evaluate emergency operations plans, procedures, or facilities; train personnel in emergency response duties, and demonstrate operational capability. There are three specific types of exercises: tabletop, functional, and full scale.

Evacuation

Assisting people to move from the path or threat of a disaster to an area of relative safety.

Federal Disaster Assistance

Aid to disaster victims and/or state and local governments by federal agencies under provisions of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act of 1988 (PL 93-288).

National Response Framework

Establishes a process and structure for the systematic, coordinated, and effective delivery of federal assistance to address the consequences of any major disaster or emergency.

Geographic Information System

A computer system capable of assembling, storing, manipulating, and displaying geographically referenced information, i.e., data identified according to their locations.

Hazardous Materials

Substances or materials which may pose unreasonable risks to health, safety, property, or the environment when used, transported, stored or disposed of, which may include materials which are solid, liquid, or gas. Hazardous materials may include toxic substances, flammable and ignitable materials, explosives, corrosive materials, and radioactive materials.

Incident Command System

A model for disaster response that uses common terminology, modular organization, integrated communications, unified command structure, action planning, manageable span or control, pre-designed facilities, and comprehensive resource management. In ICS there are five functional elements: Command, Operations, Logistics, Planning and Finance/Administration.

Initial Damage Assessment Report

A report that provides information regarding overall damage to public and private property, thereby providing a basis for emergency declaration and/or disaster assistance.

Integrated Communications Plan

This plan coordinates the use of available communications means and establishes frequency assignments for certain functions.

Local Declaration of Emergency

The condition declared by the local governing body when, in its judgment, the threat or actual occurrence of a disaster is or threatens to be of sufficient severity and magnitude to warrant coordinated local government action to prevent, or alleviate loss of life, property damage, or hardship. Only the Governor, upon petition of a local governing body, may declare a local emergency arising wholly or substantially out of a resource shortage when he deems the situation to be of sufficient magnitude to warrant coordinated local government action to prevent or alleviate the hardship or suffering threatened or caused thereby.

Local Emergency Planning Committee

Appointed representatives of local government, private industry, business, environmental groups, and emergency response organizations responsible for ensuring that the hazardous materials planning requirements of the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986 (SARA Title III) are complied with.

Mitigation

Activities that actually eliminate or reduce the chance occurrence or the effects of a disaster. Examples of mitigation measures include, but are not limited to, the development of zoning laws and land use ordinances, State building code provisions, regulations and licensing for handling and storage of hazardous materials, and the inspection and enforcement of such ordinances, codes and regulations.

Mutual Aid Agreement

A written agreement between agencies and/or jurisdictions in which they agree to assist one another, upon request, by furnishing personnel and equipment in an emergency situation.

Preparedness

The development of plans to ensure the most effective, efficient response to a disaster or emergency. Preparedness activities are designed to help save lives and minimize damage by preparing people to respond appropriately when an emergency is imminent. Preparedness also includes establishing training, exercises and resources necessary to achieve readiness for all hazards, including Weapons of Mass destruction incidents.

Presidential Declaration

A presidential declaration frees up various sources of assistance from the Federal government based on the nature of the request from the governor.

Situation Report

A form which, when completed at the end of each day of local Emergency Operations Center operations, will provide the Director(s) of Emergency Management with an official daily summary of the status of an emergency and of the local emergency response. A copy should be submitted to the State EOC via fax or submitted through the Virginia Department of Emergency Management website.

Span of Control

As defined in the Incident Command System, Span of Control is the number of subordinates one supervisor can manage effectively. Guidelines for the desirable span of control recommend three to seven persons. The optimal number of subordinates is five for one supervisor.

State of Emergency

The condition declared by the Governor when, in his judgment, a threatened or actual disaster in any part of the State is of sufficient severity and magnitude to warrant disaster assistance by the State to supplement local efforts to prevent or alleviate loss of life and property damage.

Unified Command

Shared responsibility for overall incident management as a result of a multi-jurisdictional or multi-agency incident. In the event of conflicting priorities or goals, or where resources are scarce, there must be a clear line of authority for decision-making. Agencies contribute to unified command by determining overall goals and objectives, jointly planning for tactical activities, conducting integrated tactical operations and maximizing the use of all assigned resources.

Acronyms

ARES	Amateur Radio Emergency Service
CERT	Community Emergency Response Team
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
EAS	Emergency Alert System
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
EOP	Emergency Operations Plan
ESF	Emergency Support Function
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
GIS	Geographic Information System
HAZMAT	Hazardous Materials
ICS	Incident Command System
JIC	Joint Information Center
LEPC	Local Emergency Planning Committee
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NIMS	National Incident Management System
NRF	National Response Framework
NWS	National Weather Service
OEM	Office of Emergency Management
PDA	Preliminary Damage Assessment
PIO	Public Information Officer
RACES	Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services
SAR	Search and Rescue
SITREP	Situation Report

SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
UVA	University of Virginia
VDEM	Virginia Department of Emergency Management
VOAD	Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster

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