



Gordon County
Government

Annette Berry <aberry@gordoncounty.org>

Disaster Awareness Plan

1 message

Courtney Taylor <ctaylor@gordoncounty.org>

Wed, Jan 3, 2018 at 11:19 AM

To: Annette Berry <aberry@gordoncounty.org>

Cc: James Ledbetter <jledbetter@gordoncounty.org>

Good morning, Annette. Can you place the attached plan on the agenda to be adopted by the BOC please? It is a required plan by the state that basically identifies how we will disseminate education and information before, during and after a disaster.

All I need is it approved by them and for you and Becky to sign off on the last page. Should I email it to all the commissioners so they have time to review or will you take care of that?

Let me know if you need anything further. Thanks!!!

Courtney Taylor, Director
Gordon County Emergency Management
4543 Fairmount Highway SE
Calhoun, GA 30701
706-602-2905



Disaster Awareness Plan Gordon County.docx

25K

**GORDON COUNTY
COMMUNITY DISASTER AWARENESS
AND PREPAREDNESS PLAN**

**Gordon County
Emergency Management Agency
Gordon County, Georgia**

January 5, 2018

ACRONYMS

ARES – Amateur Radio Emergency Services
CERT – Community Emergency Response Team
DAPS - Disaster Awareness and Preparedness Strategy
DPIO – Deputy Public Information Officer
EMA - Emergency Management Agency
EAS - Emergency Alert System
EOC - Emergency Operations Center
EOP - Emergency Operations Plan
GEMA - Georgia Emergency Management Agency JIC Joint Information Center
LPIO – Lead Public Information Officer
NRF - National Response Framework
PIO – Public Information Officer
SWAW -Severe Weather Awareness Week

DEFINITIONS

Public Education: The process of making the public aware of its risks and preparing citizens for hazards in advance of a disaster and as a long-term strategic effort. Public education must occur prior to an event. When a disaster strikes, it should not be the first time that the public is hearing emergency preparedness information.

Public Information: The delivery of messages to the public in anticipation of and during an incident. Public information is incident specific and includes the development and release of real-time messages.

EMA Alert (StormReady email): An email group dedicated to the distribution of time critical preparedness, safety and administrative material that may be of interest to the public and/or motivate the public to take action.

Social Media: Web-based and mobile technologies that turn communication into an interactive dialogue and can assist in providing immediate emergency notification to citizens.

I. Introduction

A. The need for clear, concise information about potential and impending disasters is vital to protecting public safety and welfare. Gordon County is vulnerable to both natural and man-made hazards. It is therefore essential that the community is aware of the hazards they face and have the skills and resources to manage emergencies when they occur.

B. In order to raise the level of disaster awareness of communities in Gordon County, the Gordon County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) Disaster Awareness and Preparedness Plan (DAPP) has been developed.

C. The primary objective of the DAPP is to create an informed public that knows the steps that should be taken to prevent and respond to a wide range of emergency incidents. These steps are to protect life, property, and the environment, and to promptly notify Gordon County E9-1-1 and public safety when an emergency occurs.

D. In an effort to improve public safety and to minimize the loss of life and property during periods of emergency, effective public education and communication campaigns will provide clear objectives and incorporate techniques to motivate the public to act before an emergency.

E. In a major emergency or disaster, there may be large numbers of media representatives seeking information about the situation and about response efforts. Gordon County will fully cooperate with the media and procedures have been developed to ensure imperative information is disseminated to the public through the media in a timely manner.

II. Purpose

A. This plan establishes procedures relating to public awareness and education programs in order to increase citizen's knowledge and enable safe attitudes and behaviors. Public education works to change people's opinion about a hazard and to motivate them to take actions to reduce risk.

B. This plan has been prepared to be consistent with the Georgia Emergency Management Agency's (GEMA) Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and the National Response Framework (NRF) for emergencies and disasters.

C. The intent of this document is to provide a program using existing communication facilities and news media outlets to inform the public before, during and after an emergency or disaster whether it is natural, man-made, or terrorist-related.

D. This strategy aims to increase awareness about Gordon County's emergency response plan and how to learn additional information about the community's emergency management program.

E. The public information program will serve as a guide to properly plan and prioritize disaster awareness programs in order to fully utilize limited resources.

III. Scope

A. This plan identifies the key policies, concepts of operations, roles, responsibilities and capabilities of public information before, during and after an emergency or disaster.

B. Gordon County EMA provides informational materials and resources to keep the public informed on a variety of emergency preparedness topics ranging from hurricanes, severe storm and flood preparedness, tornado preparedness, self-sufficiency immediately after a disaster, pandemic flu preparedness, fire prevention and safety, injury prevention, hazardous materials awareness, and more. During specific emergency situations, Gordon County EMA provides additional information to be made available to the public.

IV. Authorities

A. Gordon County EMA is mandated by the State of Georgia to operate under the purview of the Gordon County Board of Commissioners and is directly responsible for emergency operations to include warning services and necessary actions incidental to the preparations for an emergency.

B. During routine operations, Gordon County EMA has the responsibility to provide residents and businesses, which are potentially affected by these hazards with information about what they can do to prepare for, respond to, and recover from an emergency.

C. Gordon County EMA has developed and exercised a variety of tools and systems to assist with notifying and disseminating information to the public to include the Emergency Alert System (EAS), NOAA All-hazard Weather Radio, media outlets, CodeRed emergency notification systems (phone, text, email), email groups, website, and social media forums.

D. If the scope of the disaster is large enough, a public information officer (PIO) will be assigned based on nature and location of event and in conjunction with unified incident command. Gordon County EMA, Gordon County Sheriff's Office and Gordon County Fire Department all have identified PIO's.

V. Assumptions

A. The public needs timely and accurate information regarding disasters before, during, and after disasters.

B. Effective public education and communication campaigns seek clear objectives and incorporate techniques used to disseminate public information.

C. Many disasters can occur rapidly, hampering the ability of response organizations and local government to provide comprehensive information to everyone impacted at the onset. For this reason, there is a need for public education to prepare people for action in future warnings.

D. Messages on TV and radio are effective; however, there must be an information stream of multiple communications through diverse media such as websites and social media.

E. Before, during and after a disaster there will be a need to disseminate information in multiple languages, especially in Spanish as there are a high number of Spanish-speaking residents in Gordon County.

F. The demand for information will be overwhelming if the scope of the disaster is of large scale; there will undoubtedly be a need for a coordinated response from the media outlets.

VI. Implementation

A. Gordon County EMA reaches the public through a number of methods. These include programs that are targeted to specific audiences such as school children, seniors or the disabled, church or civic groups, and programs that are directed to the general public through campaigns, publications, and teaching resources. Radio, television, newspapers, community public educators, Gordon County EMA staff and volunteers all play a vital role in providing public awareness/information messages of Gordon County EMA to the public.

B. Gordon County EMA will use technology based media to aid in dissemination of public information including the Gordon County website, text and email alerts, and social media.

C. A proposed outline for Emergency Preparedness Education will be developed annually which will include a timetable for delivery of the various messages throughout the year. This timetable will outline the topic of the message, the time frame, target audiences and delivery methods. Fact sheets, flyers and other materials needed for delivery of various programs will be identified during this planning phase.

D. Special consideration will be given to National and State observances of events such as Severe Weather Awareness Week (SWAW) in February and National Preparedness Month in September. Other topics will be implemented based upon specific threats or seasons such as hurricane season from June through November, tornado season in the spring and holiday safety in December.

VII. Concept of Operation

A. Public education planning and implementation is an ongoing process. Before a disaster threatens or strikes Gordon County, residents need to be made aware of the hazards they could be faced with. The message should clearly explain three critical issues: the potential losses, the chances that the losses will take place, and how to minimize the losses.

B. Coordinating Instructions

1. Preparedness: Preparedness includes measures taken before an incident to prepare for or mitigate the effects. Actions include:

a. Identify hazards which are specific to our area. The Gordon County Hazard Mitigation Plan identifies hazards that are most likely to affect Gordon County. Many of these are weather related such as thunderstorms, winter storms and tornadoes. These hazards as well as current events will be used in planning and implementing the public awareness campaign.

b. Identify target audiences, vulnerable populations and stakeholders to address in the development of key messages. Key messages must be communicated to target audiences in a way that they understand, and inspire them to take action. Target audiences include, but are not limited to civic groups, business organizations, community groups, churches, schools, and individuals with special considerations (elderly, disabled, non-English speakers and those with vision, hearing and cognitive impairments).

c. Messages and educational materials will be obtained or developed based upon the identified messages, the audience and the method of delivery.

d. A variety of techniques shall be used to deliver messages to the community. These include:

- 1) Local media: newspaper articles, radio and television programs.

- 2) Speaking engagements: civic organizations, school events, church groups
- 3) Special events such as local festivals, career day at schools
- 4) Educational materials: pamphlets, flyers
- 5) Online content: website articles, social media discussion on Facebook and Twitter.

e. Having an ongoing, positive relationship with local media is vital to an effective education and awareness campaign. Gordon County EMA has already established this relationship with each of the local media. Regular press releases and media notices are provided as part of the agency's public relations activities.

f. Gordon County EMA will collect and maintain a file of fact sheets, instructions and procedures, and other readily available pre-scripted information on a wide range of topics to support the rapid dissemination of public information.

2. Response: Response processes mitigate the effects of unexpected problems and allow for the orderly release of information. Response activities for disaster communications with the public include:

a. Rapid mobilization of an assigned PIO to prepare and deliver messages to the public focusing on:

- 1) Emergency status information
- 2) Lifesaving/health preservation instructions and emergency status information
- 3) Information in response to public or media inquiry
- 4) Information to resolve any conflicting information or to dispel rumors

b. Depending on the scale of the disaster, the Gordon County EMA PIO will disseminate messages through local media, the Gordon County EMA Alert/StormReady email, Facebook, Twitter, Gordon County Website, and text alerts.

c. In situations when the EOC is activated an assigned PIO will be activated along with other essential staff.

d. When deemed appropriate, Gordon County EMA will activate a Joint Information Center (JIC) near the EOC allowing PIOs to collaborate on a unified public message.

e. Preparing media releases, key messages and talking points.

f. If deemed necessary, the Gordon County website homepage will be replaced with an incident specific page containing pertinent information about the current emergency/disaster.

3. Recovery: Incident communications and public information efforts are sustained as long as necessary to continually reassure, inform and respond to public information needs.

a. Deliver messages to the public focusing on:

1) Disaster assistance and recovery assistance.

2) Donations management assistance from external groups.

b. If an evacuation is ordered, public information on re-entry and response efforts will be distributed to media, as well as through various Gordon County EMA communication tools.

C. Exercise and Training: Gordon County EMA will continually monitor the effectiveness of the public information strategy by noting the behavior of residents as well as the number of individuals reached through various communication tools.

VIII. Responsibilities

A. Gordon County EMA Director: The Gordon County EMA Director serves as the primary advisor to the County Commissioners and the County Administrator and will make notifications as deemed necessary. The Director also has signature authority and responsibility to issues and/or requests through the County and GEMA. During times of crisis the Director may serve as the lead spokesperson to the community and primary subject matter expert regarding the County's emergency management plan. The Director will continually evaluate the capabilities required to accomplish the goals established in the annual outline for Emergency Preparedness Education.

B. The Gordon County EMA Public Information Officer: The Gordon County EMA PIO develops and/or participates in relevant ESF related planning, training and exercises and ensures necessary supplements to the ESF annex are developed and maintained. The Gordon County EMA PIO is responsible for the organization and distribution of

public information before, during and after disasters or emergencies that affect Gordon County.

C. JIC LPIO: If a disaster warrants the full activation of the EOC and a JIC a lead PIO and deputy PIO will be assigned through the unified command system based on nature and location of event.

D. Gordon County CERT and ARES: Gordon County CERT and ARES may be used to help support public information efforts to ensure effective management, communications, and operations. They will also be used to help with preparedness efforts, attending festivals and expos as well as reaching out to their communities to identify hazards.

IX. Guideline Management and Maintenance

A. Gordon County EMA is the executive agent for annex management and maintenance. This plan will be updated periodically as required to incorporate new directives and changes based on lessons learned from exercises and actual events. This section establishes procedures for interim changes and full updates of the plan.

B. Types of Changes: Changes include additions of new or supplementary material and deletions. No proposed change should contradict or override authorities or other plans contained in statute, order, or regulation.

C. Coordination and Approval: Any department or agency with assigned responsibilities within the EOP annexes may propose a change to the plan. Gordon County EMA is responsible for coordinating all proposed modifications to the annexes with primary and support agencies and other stakeholders, as required. Gordon County EMA will coordinate review and approval for proposed modifications as required.

D. Notice of Change: After coordination has been accomplished, including receipt of the necessary signed approval supporting the final change language, Gordon County EMA will issue an official Notice of Change. The notice will specify the date, number, subject, purpose, background, and action required, and provide the change language on one or more numbered and dated insert pages that will replace the modified pages in the EOP. Once published, the modifications will be considered part of the EOP for operational purposes pending a formal revision and re-issuance of the entire document. Interim changes can be further modified or updated using the above process.

E. Distribution: Gordon County EMA will distribute the Notice of Change to all participating agencies. Notice of Change to other organizations will be provided upon request. Working toward continuous improvement, Gordon County EMA is responsible for an annual review and update of the EOP to include related annexes, and a complete

revision every four years (or more frequently if the County Commission or GEMA deems necessary). The review and update will consider lessons learned and best practices identified during exercises and responses to actual events, and incorporate new information technologies. Gordon County EMA will distribute revised EOC Annex documents for the purpose of interagency review and concurrence.

ANNEX A

Annual Outline for Focus of Educational Activities

This outline will be reviewed and updated annually by Gordon County Emergency Management Agency personnel. The outline will encompass a variety of subjects and methods of delivery for appropriate educational and informational messages. The annual outline is only a guide and can be updated and amended as needed.

January

Winter Weather

- Target Audience: General public, senior citizens, businesses
- Winter weather safety press release
- Safety tips issued by Gordon County Emergency Management Agency.
- Winter storm preparedness tips placed on agency social media sites and website

February

Severe Weather Awareness Week (SWAW)

- Target Audience: General public, children, senior citizens, businesses
- SWAW press release issued to media about severe weather awareness
- Safety tips issued for each day of the week focusing on severe thunderstorms, flooding, tornadoes, supply kits, and lightening
- PSA created to run on local radio stations, in local newspapers, the county government website, and agency social media sites and websites
- Gordon County EMA will promote Statewide Tornado Drill

March

Volunteer Opportunities

- Target Audience: General public, businesses, civic groups
- Press release issued to media highlighting volunteer opportunities
- Opportunities placed on agency social media sites and website
- Organizations to include: The Community Emergency Response Team and Gordon County Fire Department Volunteers.

June

Hurricane Season

- Target Audience: Entire Gordon County population
- Multiple press releases issued to the media about hurricane season
- Outreach in neighborhoods, schools, civic groups, businesses
- Literature regarding weather safety made available at Gordon County EMA office
- Weather information and PSAs placed on agency social media sites and website.

September

National Preparedness Month

- Target Audience: General public, education institutions, businesses, senior citizens.
- Press release issued to media about National Preparedness Month
- National Preparedness Month information placed on agency social media sites and website
- Preparedness discussions presented to elementary schools

December

Holiday Safety

- Target Audience: General public, education institutions, businesses.
- Holiday safety information placed on agency social media sites and website

This plan is effective upon adoption by the Gordon County Board of Commissioners and will be activated upon the direction of the heads of local government.

Adopted this _____ day of _____ 2018.

GORDON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Becky Hood, Chairperson

ATTEST:

Annette Berry, County Clerk