



# NATIONAL EXERCISE PROGRAM

Validating our nation's preparedness

**National Level Exercise 2018  
After-Action Findings**



FEMA

**National Level Exercise (NLE) 2018 examined the ability of all levels of government, private industry, and nongovernmental organizations to protect against, respond to, and recover from a major Mid-Atlantic hurricane**

01

PRE-LANDFALL  
PROTECTIVE  
ACTIONS



02

SUSTAINED  
RESPONSE IN  
PARALLEL WITH  
RECOVERY  
PLANNING



03

CONTINUITY  
IN A  
NATURAL  
DISASTER



04

POWER OUTAGES  
AND  
CRITICAL INTER-  
DEPENDENCIES



# National Themes with Focus Areas

Informed by the 2017 Hurricane Season

Pre-Landfall Protective Actions	Sustained Response in Parallel with Recovery Planning	Continuity in a Natural Disaster (Focus on NEF #6)	Power Outages and Critical Interdependencies
Pre-Staging Resources	Mass Care	Decision-Making and Implementation	Public-Private Coordination
Evacuation Decision-Making	Initiation of Housing	Reporting and Situational Awareness	Supply Chain Restoration
Catastrophic Planning	ESF and RSF Integration	Inter- and Intra-Agency Coordination	Prioritization of Resources
Leveraging Preparedness Data	EMAC and Mutual Aid	Resilience of Communications and Information Systems	Mutual Assistance
Private Sector Information Sharing	Distribution of Staff	Public/Private Sector Interdependencies	Prioritization of Infrastructure Restoration
	Mission Assignments		
	Strategic Messaging		
	Private Sector Engagement		
	Philanthropic and Volunteer Engagement		



# Key Takeaways

**BUILDING A CULTURE OF NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS**

**RISK-BASED COORDINATION**

**PRIVATE SECTOR INTEGRATION**

**EXTENSIVE STATE AND LOCAL PARTICIPATION**

**LEADERSHIP ENGAGEMENT**



**FEMA**

01

# PRE-LANDFALL PROTECTIVE ACTIONS



1

Federal, State, local, and private sector partners coordinated effectively with FEMA Region III and potentially affected States to comprehensively assess impacts to critical infrastructure and prioritize protective measures.

2

FEMA Region III successfully simulated pre-staging power restoration assets, but the Federal Government struggled to leverage other private sector offers of support.

3

FEMA Region III used preparedness data and lessons learned from the 2017 hurricane season and other past incidents to inform decision making.

4

Hurricane plans from FEMA Region III guided pre-landfall coordination with states and post-landfall evacuation and sheltering efforts.



5

FEMA headquarters coordinated with FEMA Regions III and IV to efficiently simulate the pre-staging of communications resources near threatened areas but faced challenges simulating pre-staging medical transportation resources as both Regions sought ambulance resources from the same contract.

6

To pre-position life-saving and life-sustaining resources, FEMA Regions III and IV identified Federal Staging Areas (FSAs) and Incident Support Bases (ISBs), identifying qualified staff despite shortfalls from deployments to Puerto Rico and the United States Virgin Islands.

7

During evacuation decision-making processes, the states and FEMA Region III worked together to consider requirements for people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs.



# SUSTAINED RESPONSE IN PARALLEL WITH RECOVERY PLANNING



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FEMA headquarters and FEMA Region III successfully staffed the response, despite shortfalls due to ongoing incidents.

9

Departments and agencies noted confusion regarding mission assignment adjudication, including the use of pre-scripted mission assignments.

10

The National Business Emergency Operations Center (NBEOC) increased situational awareness and enabled the government and private sector to convene consistently throughout pre-landfall and response efforts by creating a predictable schedule of daily coordination calls.

11

The National, Regional, and State Business Emergency Operations Centers (BEOC) demonstrated an increased level of coordination from past hurricane seasons.

12

All levels of government showed strong coordination with established nonprofit partners throughout response and early recovery activities.



# SUSTAINED RESPONSE IN PARALLEL WITH RECOVERY PLANNING



13

External Affairs partners at all levels of government coordinated effectively with each other and with key stakeholders to issue protective action guidance and provide accurate information on response and recovery activities.

14

Although Recovery Support Function Leadership Group (RSFLG) meetings provided a productive platform for conversations between Emergency Support Function and Recovery Support Function stakeholders, existing limitations prevent full integration.

15

FEMA Senior Leadership quickly prioritized fulfilling pre- and post-landfall hospital needs, and Federal and state counterparts coordinated effectively with partners to support facilities across the Region.

16

During initial response operations, FEMA and affected states prioritized housing and identified initial sheltering options, but engagement with private sector partners was minimal.



17

Department and Agency leadership consulted continuity plans to determine an appropriate response, but, in some cases, the decision-making process revealed issues with devolution as a viable continuity option.

18

Most organizations started reconstitution discussions immediately.

19

Some organizations were unable to successfully account for all personnel and did not account for impacts of the disaster on their employees' ability to report for duty.

20

Continuity reporting from participating Departments and Agencies was inconsistent.

21

Continuity situational awareness requirements and reporting processes require planning, training, and exercising.



# CONTINUITY IN A NATURAL DISASTER



22

Most organizations did not demonstrate successful use of alternate communications systems.





23

FEMA leadership prioritizes incorporation of the private sector into response and recovery operations, but current doctrine does not reflect the National Business Emergency Operations Center's role in facilitating integration, while staffing limitations hinder opportunities for innovation.

24

Integration with private sector partners, especially utility companies, is limited; one consideration is that they do not have a consistent designated role in Federal and state operations centers or staging areas.

25

Participants in the electricity subsector noted several barriers and potential vulnerabilities to effective communication between electric utilities and government partners.

26

Clear communication regarding power restoration prioritization allowed effective coordination and efficient use of limited resources.

# POWER OUTAGES AND CRITICAL INTER-DEPENDENCIES



27

FEMA Region III and the American Red Cross coordinated effectively with private sector logistics and retail companies to ensure the notional delivery of goods from Incident Support Bases (ISB) to Points of Distribution (POD) in Maryland.

28

Emergency Support Function #1 coordinated effectively with NORTHCOM to prevent a notional emergency at a power station, which enabled disaster operations to continue in Hampton Roads and along I-64.

29

The District of Columbia coordinated effectively with the Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Coast Guard, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to address hazardous materials in the Potomac River.

30

States encountered difficulties coordinating damage assessment efforts for tunnel unwatering, which could have hindered response efforts.