**Section 11 – Emergency Management**

**Overview**

As provided in § 252.31- 252.90 FS each County in Florida is tasked with establishing an Emergency Management (EM) Department and receives funding through the Emergency Management, Preparedness and Assistance Trust Fund as well as grant money from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) annually to fulfill this task. The EM Department is responsible for reducing loss of life and property and protecting the people within their jurisdiction during an emergency resulting from natural, technological, or manmade causes which includes but is not limited to hurricanes, wildland fires, flooding, hazardous material incidents and any other event that affects a large portion of the community.

To complement County EM Departments, legally constituted municipalities are authorized to create municipal EM programs, per §252.38(2) FS. Municipalities without EM programs shall be served by their respective county agencies. However, if a municipality elects to establish an emergency management program, it must comply with all laws, rules, and requirements applicable to county emergency management agencies. Each municipal emergency management plan must be consistent with and subject to the applicable county emergency management plan. EM develops and implements plans to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters including but not limited to:

1. Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP)

2. Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)

3. Local Mitigation Strategy Plan (LMS)

4. Floodplain Management Plan

In addition, each municipality must coordinate requests for state or federal emergency response assistance through its county regardless if they have an established EM program. *This requirement does not apply to requests for reimbursement under federal public disaster assistance programs.*

**Community Support**

EM manages the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), with support from local, state and federal partners. The EOC is the central point where disaster response and recovery efforts are coordinated. Each jurisdiction within a County should have representation at the EOC during activation to share information and coordinate use of resources as needed. One or more Finance Department members are especially helpful. The staff that will be requested to operate in the EOC should be identified in advance to allow for integration in preparation, planning and training to which include the annual mock hurricane or other table top exercise.

**Reimbursement**

If you are in a Finance Department that is other than the County, (City, Special District, etc.) consistent communication with the County is very important throughout the year to promote cooperation and coordination during a disaster. In the event of a disaster, your jurisdiction will be responsible for the response, recovery and mitigation of your community. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) required reporting to facilitate the reimbursement process will also be your jurisdictions responsibility. The Finance Department is often tasked with the reimbursement process. Prior to an event, the Finance Department needs to plan for cash flow needs immediately following the event as well as in the future due to delayed FEMA reimbursement. This can be accomplished by working with the government board to increase cash reserves, or arrange for a line of credit from a financial institution or a combination of both.

If your government will be using its own employees and equipment during emergency operations, there must be staffing and usage policies in place before the disaster. It is recommended that the use of timesheets, equipment usage and travel logs be available in paper form as backup in the event of power outages and/or system unavailability. FEMA will reimburse allowable costs up to their current Schedule of Rates. *(See current FEMA Schedule of Rates* <https://www.fema.gov/schedule-equipment-rates>)

As required by Chapter 119 F.S. and by 2 C.F.R. §200.333, reimbursement records should be retained for a period of five (5) years from the date of submission of the final expenditure report, however, it is recommended that the records be retained longer as FEMA can take years to close out projects. *Training and preparedness are imperative to understand the reimbursement process requirements and ensure your government receives the maximum reimbursement allowed from FEMA.*

The resources below will be helpful in obtaining further information:

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)

Florida website used for FEMA reimbursement reporting <http://floridapa.org/>

Helpful guides <http://floridapa.org/site/guidelines.cfm>

State of Florida public website <http://www.floridadisaster.org/DEMpublic.asp>

Lists information needed by the public in case of a disaster including shelters, evacuation zones and routes.

Answers many questions regarding disaster preparedness for your family, business, schools, pets and special needs.

State of Florida training classes <http://trac.floridadisaster.org/trac/trainingcalendar.aspx>

If you have never used this website, slides are provided for your use:

<http://trac.floridadisaster.org/trac/sert_trac_orientation.pdf>