

Section 11 – Emergency Management

Overview:

As provided in ss. 252.31- 252.90, F.S., 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 Emergency Management (EM) Department is responsible for reducing loss of life and property and protecting the people within their jurisdiction during an emergency resulting from manmade, technological or natural causes which could include hurricanes, wild fires, flooding, severe weather, hazardous material incidents, homeland security issues or 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 s. 252.38(2), F.S. 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:

- Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP)
- Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)
- Local Mitigation Strategy Plan (LMS)
- 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 recovery efforts are coordinated. Each jurisdiction within a County should have representation at the EOC during activation to help share information and coordinate use of resources as needed. One or more Finance Department members are especially helpful.

Preparation

Planning and preparedness for a disaster is important for every community. There should be policies and procedures in place before a disaster and they should be reviewed at least annually. Examples of preparedness activities that should be completed at least annually:

- 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.
- Evaluate cash flow needs prior to an event and plan for delayed FEMA reimbursement

May require governing authority to authorize reserve funding, a line of credit, or both.

- Update equipment rates if utilizing your own employees and equipment.

These rates must be less than or equal to FEMA rates (see resources below) in order for the reimbursement requests to be approved and paid.

- Ensure employee policies and procedures are updated and in place
- Review Procurement contracts for FEMA compliance –
<https://www.fema.gov/assistance/public/nonstate-nonprofit/procurement-checklist>
- Update Continuity of Operations (COOP) plan
- Review latest FEMA Policy guide –
<https://www.fema.gov/assistance/public/policy-guidance-fact-sheets>
- Maintain paper copies of forms that may be needed (time sheet, equipment usage, travel logs, vendor payment forms, etc.) in the event of power outages and/or system unavailability.

Training and preparedness are imperative to ensure your government receives the maximum reimbursement allowed from FEMA. Stay abreast of new developments in the EM community. If your government receives federal grants, there are training requirements for ALL employees.

Reimbursement

In the event of a disaster, your jurisdiction will be responsible for your community's response, recovery and mitigation as well as all of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) required reporting to facilitate the reimbursement process. Generally, the responsibility for the reimbursement process is the Finance Departments. Retention of the reimbursement related records should be retained longer than current retention policy states as FEMA can take a few years to close out their projects.

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.*

Resources:

Chapter 252, F.S.; Emergency Management –
http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&URL=0200-0299/0252/0252.html

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) – www.fema.gov

FEMA Policy Guide (effective June 2020) –
<https://www.fema.gov/assistance/public/policy-guidance-fact-sheets>

Florida has a website that is 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>

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/sertrac_orientation.pdf