



GLASTONBURY FIRE DEPARTMENT
STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES



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CATEGORY: EMERGENCY OPERATIONS - GENERAL
SUB-CATEGORY: SEVERE WEATHER EVENTS
SUBJECT: HURRICANE/TROPICAL STORM EVENTS
RELATED GUIDELINE: FDO-105

Section I – Introduction

A. Objective

To establish a protocol as it relates to a hurricane and/or tropical storm event with the goal of minimizing risk to personnel, as well as to protect the human, physical and cyber infrastructure critical to safeguarding the town before, during and after a natural disaster event.

B. Applicability

During a hurricane and/or a tropical storm event, the fire department will maintain a safe working environment for its firefighters and will provide essential emergency services to the public as long as the safety of the firefighters is not endangered by current storm conditions.

C. References

State of Connecticut Commission on Fire Prevention & Control – Model Procedure for Response of Emergency Vehicles During Hurricanes and Tropical Storms.

Section II – Guideline

A. Pre-season Preparations

At least two months before the start of hurricane season, the fire department should initiate the following actions:

- Review the fire department's standard operating guide, update as needed and review with all members.

- Obtain and review the most recent version of the Town of Glastonbury's Emergency Operations Plan (Revision 4 – August 30, 2010) that is maintained in the Fire Chief's Office.
- Update target occupancies list.
 1. *Target occupancy may be a building with a high probability of trapped victims or a structure that stores a large amount of hazardous materials or is susceptible to structural failure. (Examples: schools, hospitals, health-care facilities, factories)*
- Each station should be familiar with the topography of their response area to become aware of flood-prone areas.
- Inventory all equipment.
- Ensure apparatus readiness.
- Check the physical condition of each fire-department building and facilitate repairs of any damaged roof areas, windows or doors that could contribute to increased damage in a hurricane.
- Check and service as needed any sump pumps for basement areas.
- Be sure all surface-area drains around the exterior of buildings are free and clear of all debris to allow for proper drainage.
- Ensure all fire-department generators have been serviced and are working.
- Inventory and check batteries and chargers for portable equipment and be sure all are in working order and that there is an adequate number available.
- Maintain all apparatus fuel tanks at no less than three-quarters full.
- Contact the local emergency-management office to review their plans and submit the fire-department plan.
- *Ensure the fire department is part of the local emergency management operations. Review flood maps to determine if any fire-department building is within the flood zone.*
- Develop plans for the relocation of apparatus, equipment, electronic devices and departmental records. Check basement storage to be sure all items are raised off the floor in buildings that are subject to water penetration.
- *Per review of flood maps above*
- Update department and personal phone lists for call-in.
- Assist evacuation and special-needs shelters, including staff requirements.
- Develop alternate communication plans for the event of a total system failure.
- Develop a post-storm food and water plan for 7-14 days.
- Update street maps due to probable loss of signage and landmarks.

- Develop and communicate emergency evacuation plans in the event a station needs to be evacuated during an incident:
 1. Pre-designation of safe havens
 2. Instructions on shutting off the utilities
 3. Recommendations on securing (or evacuating with personnel) electronic equipment and pertinent records.
- Ensure all members have a personal family plan to secure their family and property in preparation for reporting to duty.
 1. Establish a family contact number that family members can call to check on a department member.

B. Hurricane Watch

A watch is implemented when the threat of a hurricane is detected within 36 hours.

- Fire department command and general staff should develop and implement an incident action planning process.
- Top off station fuel tanks and apparatus, including spares, chain saws, generators, power units, portable pumps, etc
- Test and ensure all power equipment is operational.
- Fill cascade bottles and SCBA bottles.
- Secure adequate drinking water for personnel.
- Secure all loose items around the exterior of stations.
- Ensure all first responders/EMS supplies are up to normal levels.
- Test all manual pumping equipment on fuel tanks (if available).
- As needed, have additional supplies delivered to each fire station.
- Develop work schedules to ensure proper sleep/rehab time.
- When the local emergency operations center (EOC) is opened, ensure the fire department is represented at the EOC at all times. If needed, consider establishing a fire department-specific operations center.

C. Hurricane Warning:

A warning is implemented when a hurricane is expected to hit within 24 hours. As an additional precaution Department Officers should use their discretion when responding, mindful of the safety of fire personnel as their top priority.

- Charge all batteries.
- Encourage all personnel to move personal vehicles to higher ground if possible. *(if appropriated based on geography, flood map data, history, etc.)*
- Consider relocating companies in flood-prone areas.
- Notify the public if fire protection in a certain area will be compromised.

- The fire department should issue media releases to advise the public that when certain weather conditions occur related to a hurricane, fire-department response will cease (*be specific as to what those conditions are*).
- Suggested items for members who will be reporting for duty to bring:
 - 3 sets of clothes/work uniform/tee shirts
 - 1 jacket
 - 5 each of undershirts, underwear, pairs of socks
 - 1 extra pair of shoes
 - 3 bath towels
 - Sleeping bag/bedding
 - Personal flashlight and batteries
 - Personal articles for 3 days
 - Prescribed medication
 - Toothbrush and toothpaste
 - Deodorant
 - Soap
 - Shampoo
 - Razor and shaving cream
 - Mosquito repellent
 - 3 days' supply of food that does not require refrigeration or cooking
 - 3 gallons of water
 - Other personal hygiene articles
 - The spare apparatus should be staffed.

D. Hurricane Operations

As the hurricane approaches:

- Fire department should response until the situation dictates that the firefighters' lives are believed to be endangered.
- When storm conditions dictate that operations cease, the department will need to make a conscious and calculated decision that takes into account the realization that some apparatus and equipment may be vulnerable to the storm effects and may be damaged or lost.
- No member shall ride alone during a storm. All members will operate in pairs.
- All members are to wear full bunker gear, including eye protection, for all responses in order to protect from flying debris.
- Aerial devices should not be operated when sustained winds are 35 mph or per department policy.
- Prior to sustained wind speeds reaching 50 mph, or wind gusts over 65 mph, any chief officer or company officer who feels the situations encountered are sufficiently dangerous to the safety of personnel may cease operations and return to quarters. The officer must advise the incident commander and the dispatch center.
- For the safety of the members, the fire department should discontinue response to all fire/EMS calls when sustained wind speeds reach 50 mph or wind gusts are over 65 mph. When the order to cease response is given due to hazardous wind conditions:
- Units responding to or on the scene of an emergency shall continue their work until completed, at which time the units will return to their assigned stations.
- Units out of station, but not on a call, should return to their stations as soon as possible.
- When responses cease due to wind conditions, all apparatus should be parked headfirst in the station causing the rear of the unit to be facing outward, thus protecting the windshield.
- Dispatch will relay all requests for service to the hurricane command, which will prioritize these requests for response when conditions permit.
- Operating companies must notify dispatch and other responding companies of all hazardous conditions they encounter including high water, road damage or blockage, etc.

- Before walking through water, members should use a pike pole or stick to ensure the ground is not washed away or collapsed.
 - Use extreme caution when walking through water. Six inches of moving water can knock a person off their feet.
 - Be aware of hazards in the water such as downed live electrical wires.
 - Use extreme caution and limit speed when driving. Be especially cautious where the ground is saturated or flooded – the road could be washed away.
 - Generators used to supply electricity to the station must be outside and if possible, elevated while ensuring the exhaust is ventilated to the outside.
 - If stations must be evacuated, company officers will ensure utilities are shut off and the station is secure and the company will report to the identified safe haven, all in accordance with predetermined evacuations plans.
- E. Hurricane Operations – during the eye of the storm
- Operations during this period should be limited to re-securing the fire station.
 - No companies will be dispatched during the eye of the hurricane.
 - All operations during the eye of the hurricane should only be performed if they can be done safely.
 - Members should help citizens who come to the station when it would be a danger to release them.
 - Even though the skies appear clear, storm conditions will return suddenly.
 - The safety of department personnel will remain the primary consideration during these operations.
- F. Resuming Operations After the Hurricane
- The chief of the department or designee shall make the determination when the department can resume response operations.
 - This decision will be announced by dispatch as a resume-response order.
 - Chief officers and company officers who believe it is safe to resume operations before receiving this order shall contact command and state the conditions at their location and their need to begin operations. Command shall order accordingly.
 - If these officers are unable to contact command, the decision to begin operations will be the responsibility of the highest-ranking officer on scene.
 - Operations shall be undertaken only if such operations can be performed in a safe manner.
 - Personnel conducting emergency operations must realize that their own safety and well-being is their fire priority.
 - Many hazards will be encountered after a hurricane, including but not limited to live wires down, gas leaks, building fires, unsafe structures, flooding, hazardous materials, heat stress, traumatized victims, civil disturbance and displaced animals.
- G. Company officers responsibilities s operations are resumed will include:
- An immediate survey of personnel, equipment and facility.
 - The company officer is to provide command with an assessment
 - The assessment will include the following:
 - i. Personnel
 - Does any member require medical assistance?
 - Does adequate staffing exist?
 - Are there any other personnel problems?
 - ii. Equipment
 - Report on damage to windshield, body, tires, aerial, equipment and pump.
 - Is the apparatus and related equipment operational?
 - Can the unit be dispatched?

iii. Facilities

- Is the station operational?
- Do any hazards exist in or immediately adjacent to the station?
- What significant repairs must be made?
- Company officers should conduct an area survey as soon as possible surrounding the station (that which can be observed from the station property) and report conditions to command.
- Companies are to conduct a "drive by survey" of their first-due area, if possible, including all target hazards identified in the preseason planning, and report conditions to command so they may get a full assessment of the incident and deploy resources in an efficient manner to where they are most needed.
- While life-saving assistance remains the top priority, a search of predetermined target occupancies will be conducted as soon as possible.
- No member shall ride alone immediately following the storm.
- All members will operate in pairs or teams.
- Personnel shall utilize all safety equipment available, work in teams and keep well hydrated.
- Every attempt should be made in order to abate the after-storm in a *safe* manner.
- Survey the area for any electric wires before cutting any trees or debris
 - If wires are present, assume they are live and contact the electric company to determine the status of the wires.
 - Make sure members are aware that generators used by civilians may back feed into the system, thereby energizing downed wires.
- Use chain saws for their appropriated use.
- Use the proper care and protective gear as outlined in Department SOG FDO-105.
- The incident commander will establish and strictly enforce periodic rehabilitation times for all personnel, as well as establish a relief program.

Section III- Approval

Fire Chief

Michael P. King

Date of Approval:

1/11/16