

North Carolina Emergency Management

2012 Annual Report



Prevent



Prepare



Respond



Recover

About NCEM

North Carolina Emergency Management works with communities to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies and disasters. The division maintains the State Emergency Operations Center, which serves as the command center for coordinating response.

Three regional branch offices and 26 field staff serve as the bridge to local communities, responding to emergencies, helping counties develop response plans and fielding requests for state assets. The capital-based staff administers state and federal grants, manages multi-agency disaster response plans, coordinates regional hazard mitigation plans, facilitates training classes and exercise programs and manages state-owned assets such as the regional hazmat response teams and various search and rescue teams.

In 2012, NCEM became a division of the newly-created Department of Public Safety. The agency also increased its capabilities with the addition of the Civil Air Patrol and Geodetic Survey sections. Founded as the auxiliary wing of the U.S. Air Force, the Civil Air Patrol helps locate downed aircraft, find missing persons, assess storm damage and provide disaster response. The Geodetic Survey branch establishes and maintains the official survey base for the state that supports mapping, boundary determination, infrastructure development and floodplain mapping. With additional resources now under one umbrella, North Carolina has never been better poised to respond to and recover from emergencies.

The NCEM Director is appointed by the governor and reports to the Secretary of Public Safety.



Letter from the Director

Every state in the nation experienced record-breaking extreme weather events in 2012, from the worst drought in a half century in the nation's mid-section, to destructive wildfires in the west, to Superstorm Sandy which ravaged the Northeast. For North Carolina, overall, 2012 was a welcomed relief from some of the more damaging disasters in recent years.

But it didn't start out that way. Rare winter tornadoes swept through several western counties the second week in January. And our state experienced close brushes with two named hurricanes weeks before hurricane season officially started. In addition, North Carolina Emergency Management staff responded to flooding events, plane crashes, hazardous materials spills, snow and ice storms, bomb threats, train wrecks and various other local emergencies. State and county emergency management agencies partnered on numerous training exercises and helped coordinate security, emergency response and infrastructure protection during the Democratic National Convention in Charlotte.

North Carolina was fortunate last year; in terms of disasters, it was relatively quiet. However, we know that will not always be the case. Our challenge is to ensure that we are ready – at the personal, local, regional and state levels – for whatever disasters may happen.

Our local and state emergency managers have proven themselves repeatedly when dangers and disasters have threatened North Carolina. They also have responded to the needs of other states through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, and have achieved the best state of readiness North Carolina has ever known. I urge you to continue that determination and commitment to professionalism. We have built a quality Emergency Management program that includes all sectors of our state and our communities. Help this effort continue to grow.

As I retire to the mountains, I am filled with a sense of satisfaction from seeing us all grow and come solidly together as a team. It has been my privilege to serve as director of North Carolina Emergency Management for the past seven years. Our capabilities and resources are plentiful because of your willingness to share through mutual aid. And North Carolina is a safer place to be because of your commitment to the fundamentals of planning, training and exercising.

As I leave, I extend my sincerest thanks to all of you for the work you continue to do. We have developed a nationally recognized Emergency Management program, and it is because of you.

All the best,

Doug Hoell, Director



Preventing Damage by Planning for the Future

The emergency management cycle begins and ends with identifying threats, then updating plans and developing capabilities to minimize or mitigate those threats and improve disaster response. Working with local and federal government agencies and private industries, NCEM improves the state's disaster readiness posture through deliberate and coordinated planning. This past year, NCEM:

- **Completed Hazardous Materials Commodity Flow Studies** for two additional regions. NCEM continued analyzing and mapping potential impacts along hazardous materials transportation routes to help ensure that hazmat substances are transported in the safest manner possible along corridors with minimal risk. Planning staff have analyzed seven of the nine domestic preparedness regions and completed the fourth year of the study.



- **Completed Threat Hazard Identification and Risk Analysis** and was the first state to submit the newly-required federal document to FEMA. Led by NCEM staff, a multi-disciplined team from several local and state agencies identified and analyzed North Carolina's top natural, technological and cyber-security hazards.

- Updated five regional **Hazard Mitigation Plans**.

- Closed out 13 **hazard mitigation projects** to keep damage from future disasters to a minimum.

- Led the efforts to **acquire and demolish a flood-prone volunteer fire department** that had been plagued by flash floods for years. Using a FEMA/NCEM hazard mitigation grant, the agency was able to build a new volunteer fire station that will double as a community shelter during disasters.



- Used FEMA/NCEM grants to **remove 16 Pamlico County homes from a floodplain**. The project marked the earliest ever award of a FEMA mitigation grant, thanks to NCEM's detailed and efficient analysis.

- **Applied for federal funds to acquire or elevate** nearly 200 properties that were impacted by both the April tornadoes and Hurricane Irene in 2011.

- **Installed flood warning gauges** along the

Trent and Cashie rivers and secured funds for seven new gauges on the Pamlico and Albemarle sounds to provide to local and state emergency managers improved situational awareness during flood events that will help with operational decisions.

- **Retrofitted four local Emergency Operations Centers to better protect them** during earthquakes. NCEM staff worked with local officials to secure federal funding to retrofit EOCs in Cherokee, Swain and Graham counties, and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

- **Continued developing the Integrated Risk Management system** which provides the level of risk and probability for every structure in the state. Homeowners, business owners and city planners can review their property's risk online to determine which structures may be affected by various natural disasters and see what steps they can take to mitigate those risks.

- Conducted preliminary meetings with 22 counties to **update the Hurricane Evacuation Study**. In addition, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers updated flood basin information needed for the study. Study work should be completed in 2013.

- **Revised and updated the State Emergency Operations Plan** and State Recovery Plan, which provide guidance to all state agency partners on actions and responsibilities before, during and after disasters.



Preparing Our Partners

Providing frequent training and carefully developed exercises gives emergency management employees, first responders and volunteers the opportunity to develop, sharpen and practice those essential skills that are needed during disaster response and recovery. In 2012, North Carolina Emergency Management sponsored more than 280 classes that trained more than 6,500 fire, rescue, law enforcement, emergency management, school officials and community leaders in how to respond to various types of crises. Individual courses included:



- disaster response and recovery
- managing debris after a disaster
- handling mass fatalities
- assessing damages from disasters
- mass shootings response
- donations management
- planning for evacuations and reentry
- responding to methamphetamine labs
- managing people in disasters

Through dozens of local or regional training exercises, emergency response partners practiced communicating, coordinating and responding to various incidents. Some of the more notable exercises include:

Preparing for hurricanes – Even as the remnants of Hurricane Alberto passed offshore, more than 120 emergency management officials and meteorologists met to discuss communication and weather forecasting needs during hurricane season. Additionally, eastern counties met to discuss their coordinated response to storms.

Keeping Schools Safe – Ensuring that children and teachers are safe at school is a top priority for the emergency management community. More than 400 teachers, principals, school administrators and first responders took a two-day course that taught them how to identify potential hazards, mitigate possible damage and develop effective plans to respond to various school emergencies. In addition, several school systems held simulated shooter exercises to test their abilities to provide a coordinated response to a planned attack at a local school.

Responding to Earthquakes – More than 450 emergency responders from four counties spent five days testing their communication, coordination and search and rescue skills in this multi-county exercise. Exercise components included search and rescue in collapsed structures, mass casualty response, command and control of a disaster scene.

Training Community Emergency Response Teams – CERT members act as force multipliers during emergencies because they already have been trained in basic disaster response. In 2012, teams trained in a myriad of exercises such as mock tornadoes, plane crashes and hurricanes, and helped with several actual search and rescue operations.



Protecting the public in nuclear events – Emergency management, first responders, law enforcement, school, health and community officials practiced their ability to notify and protect the public during mock incidents at the Brunswick Nuclear Plant and Catawba Nuclear Station. Federally graded exercises are held biennially to ensure that all response agencies are prepared for a nuclear event. NCEM staff participated in the day-long nuclear exercise while simultaneously responding to Hurricane Sandy as it grazed the state's coastline.

Responding to Hazardous Material Incidents – Various exercises simulating radioactive contamination, dirty bombs, ammonia leaks, chemical fires and more gave hundreds of first responders, medical staff and community leaders the opportunity to test their emergency response plans and skills. Although each scenario and exercise was different, they all offered the chance for emergency personnel to test their communication and coordination skills, incident command, decontamination procedures and medical triage.



Preparing our communities – Several local exercises helped prepare communities and counties to respond to various emergencies, such as plane crashes, active shooters at a school or in a prison, caring for people and animals in shelters during evacuations and hazardous material spills.

Training Search and Rescue Teams – More than 30 first responders participated in a four-day swift water rescue training course to learn critical skills to safely respond to flood emergencies. Additionally, the nationally recognized N.C. Helo-Aquatic Rescue Teams held more than two dozen classes in every region of the state to practice their ability to rescue via helicopter people trapped by severe flooding or stranded in an isolated mountainous area.



Responding to the Call, Supporting Communities

Because all disasters start and end locally, 26 North Carolina Emergency Management field staff members are strategically positioned across the state to provide on-scene support in response to natural or manmade disasters. These employees interface with local responders and officials daily and can easily tap the additional state resources needed to respond to an emergency or call for technical support and advice. In 2012, they were on the scene:



- When severe storms and rare winter tornadoes rolled across the state January 11, injuring 15 people and destroying dozens of homes in Burke and Rutherford counties, NCEM personnel worked alongside with local responders then helped local authorities survey the damage. Additional staff worked with survivors to secure needed loans and grants to begin the recovery process.

- After tornadoes swept through Cherokee, Cabarrus and Mecklenburg counties damaging more than 200 homes and businesses, NCEM staff responded to the disaster and helped local officials survey the damage.



They also opened a disaster loan center to help qualified residents seek financial assistance to repair or rebuild their property.

- After Tropical Storm Beryl struck southeastern North Carolina and spawned tornadoes in Carteret County, NCEM staff worked with local officials to survey damaged homes.

- When a scheduled burn in the Croatan National Forest grew out of control and became a raging forest fire scorching 21,000+ acres, NCEM staff responded to the disaster and worked for several weeks with state forestry and local officials to get the fire under control.



- After severe thunderstorms dumped nearly a foot of rain in just a few hours in Halifax and Northampton counties, dozens of roads (including Interstate 95) and homes were flooded. NCEM staff worked alongside

local officials to protect people and property, then set up disaster loan centers to help residents secure financial assistance to recover from the storm.

- As Hurricane Sandy meandered along the coast for several days causing flooding, heavy surf and wind along the Outer Banks. NCEM worked with local officials to provide shelter for evacuees, coordinate search and rescue missions for victims trapped in the flood waters and survey the damage left by the superstorm.



The state's seven hazmat **Regional Response Teams** responded to 56 requests for on-scene or technical assistance in 2012.

One of the most notable incidents was when a truck carrying 22,000 pounds of dynamite overturned on a major interstate closing the road for hours and prompting the evacuation of nearby homes and businesses.

North Carolina has one of the most comprehensive and respected **Search and Rescue programs** in the country. This local-state partnership resource includes dozens of highly-skilled rescue technicians who are specially trained to search for victims trapped by rising floodwaters, stranded in the wilderness or confined in a collapsed structure. This past year, the teams conducted several search and rescue missions including rescuing people in a collapsed apartment building, as well as a teenager who slipped off a cliff and was trapped on a mountain ledge.

The NCEM 24-hour operations center is, in essence, the 911 center for each of the county's emergency call centers. The center serves as the state's repository for all emergency notifications, including severe weather threats, missing person calls, hazardous materials spills, structure collapse, bomb threats, sewage leaks, fish kills, forest fires, petroleum spill and a variety of other threats. Emergency management officers are available at all hours to respond to resource requests and notify other affected agencies. The 24-hour center answered 2,462 calls in 2012. An internal change in storm tracking procedures halved the number of weather-related calls from previous years.

Calls into State EOC	
Bomb threat	20
Complaint	61
Fire	42
Hazmat	770
SAR	177
Transportation	80
Wastewater	357
Weather	815
Other	140
Total	2,462

Helping Communities Recover from Disaster

When disasters strike, state emergency management works with communities to help residents and business owners recover and rebuild as quickly as possible. Immediately following the emergency, disaster assessment teams from the county, state and sometimes federal governments inventory the damage to determine what financial assistance, if any, may be available to help disaster survivors, local governments and eligible non-profit organizations get back on their feet.

After larger events, state and federal emergency management workers temporarily move into the impacted community to provide closer coordination during the often-complicated recovery process.

During 2012, NCEM helped residents and businesses recover from several floods and localized tornado outbreaks. Also, NCEM staff continued helping individuals and local governments recover from the destruction caused by Hurricane Irene and statewide tornado outbreak of 2011.

Here is a snapshot of the assistance NCEM provided in 2012.

Burke and Rutherford county tornadoes – January 11

Severe storms spawned rare winter tornadoes in western North Carolina, injuring 15 people and destroying dozens of homes. NCEM:

- Inspected more than 70 homes and businesses.
- Operated two disaster recovery centers.
- Provided \$200,000 in state grants and \$905,000 in Small Business Administration loans to 26 families.

Cherokee, Cabarrus and Mecklenburg county tornadoes – March 2-3

Tornadoes swept through several western counties damaging more than 200 homes and businesses. NCEM:

- Inspected more than 60 homes and businesses.
- Operated a disaster recovery center.
- Provided nearly \$72,000 in state grants and additional funds through SBA loans to help families recover.



Flooding in Halifax and Northampton counties – August 25

Severe thunderstorms dumped nearly a foot of rain in just a few hours flooding dozens of roads – including Interstate 95 – and scores of homes. NCEM:

- Inspected 120 homes and businesses
- Operated a disaster recovery center
- Provided \$345,000+ in state grants and \$581,000+ in SBA loans to 122 families and 3 businesses

- Provided \$400,000+ in state funds to help with debris removal, road repair and emergency protective measures.

Hurricane Sandy – October 27-30

Hurricane Sandy meandered along the North Carolina coast before making landfall in New Jersey clobbering several northeastern states. For North Carolina, the impacts of ‘Superstorm Sandy’ were relatively mild and largely confined to Dare County. Three deaths were attributed to the storm which left 30,000 without power and sent 40 people to shelters for refuge.

- Inspected more than 35 homes and businesses
- Operated a disaster recovery center
- Grants and loans were still being processed in early 2013.

Continued Recovery from Hurricane Irene – August 27, 2011

Recovery efforts continued in several coastal and inner banks counties following the worst hurricane to strike the area in more than a decade. In 2012, NCEM recovery staff:

- Transitioned 194 families from temporary federal housing units back into their repaired or rebuilt homes.
- Worked with more than 1,600 families to find additional help and match them with available resources such as securing food stamps, child care or finding volunteer labor to help repair homes.
- Dispersed more than \$70 million to more than 200 local government entities and eligible non-profit organizations in 38 counties to help cover the costs of response and recovery efforts from Irene.



Continued Recovery from April 2011 Tornado Outbreak

Recovery efforts from the worst tornado outbreak in state history continued well into 2012. Last year, NCEM staff worked with nearly 90 local and state government agencies and eligible non-profit organizations to replenish more than \$3.5 million that was spent in 17 counties on tornado response and recovery efforts.



Funding Emergency Management

NCEM has a \$9.3 million annual operating budget. The money, which comes from a combination of federal and state funds and receipts, is primarily used to:



- Plan for the use of state and local resources to respond to disasters.
- Exercise annually to ensure state and local agencies are ready for all types of emergencies (including incidents at fixed nuclear facilities).
- Manage the statewide floodplain mapping program, the geodetic survey program and the National Flood Insurance Program.
- Evaluate and plan for North Carolina's hazards and associated risks to people and infrastructure.
- Respond to real emergencies and disasters when they occur anywhere in the state.
- Manage long-term recovery from past disasters.
- Maintain 24/7 capability to receive and process requests for assistance from local governments.



Funds pay for equipment for local, county and state agencies; for training and exercises for first responders, emergency management staff and law enforcement; and to operate the floodplain mapping and regional response hazardous materials programs.

Forty-three percent, or \$4 million, of the division's annual budget is paid for through state appropriations. Those monies are used to leverage federal funds. The remaining \$5.3 million comes from receipts received through the radiological protection and flood plain mapping programs.

Additionally, NCEM serves as the fiduciary agency for \$20.3 million in federal funding from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The division administers these federal grants to state and local entities or agencies that apply and compete for federal money. The funding amount granted through each program can vary widely from year to year depending on how many other states apply for and receive funding.

Hosting a National Security Event

When your state hosts a week-long national gathering for 125,000 people, there are tremendous logistical needs for everything from communication to transportation, housing and safety. But when the event is political AND involves the sitting president, communication and coordination can become an event itself.

Charlotte hosted the 2012 Democratic National Convention, and all of the related pre- and post-convention meetings, parties, festivals, parades, demonstrations and celebrations that accompany such an event. Planning for the national security event began more than a year in advance.

North Carolina Emergency Management helped register and track more than 6,000 first responders, law enforcement and emergency managers who worked in support of the event. A five-section hub in Mecklenburg County coordinated security, emergency response and infrastructure protection activities for the national security event. The state emergency operations center was activated to provide resources as needed for the week of September 1-7.





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