

Northampton County Emergency Operations Plan

2 Situation Overview

Emergencies of various types, sizes, intensities, and durations may occur within or near the jurisdictional boundaries of the County with or without warning. Emergencies are daily, routine events handled by first responders. These emergencies can develop into disasters, which affect the safety, health, and welfare of the population and cause damage or destruction to private and public property.

The Eastern Shore of Virginia 2011 Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) developed by the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission (A-NPDC) describes the primary hazards in Northampton County as follows:

- 1. The greatest threats to Northampton County are coastal flooding and erosion. Stormwater flooding, high-wind events, winter storm events, and droughts also pose significant threats to the County.*
- 2. A strong-wind event would be the most far-reaching event that Northampton County could experience. Many more homes lie in the wind-borne debris hazard area than in the Special Flood Hazard Area or erosion hazard area.*
- 3. Established neighborhoods in the County are at great risk of damage in a wind event, not solely from wind but from wind-damaged trees and other airborne debris.*
- 4. Three hundred and forty-four homes were within 100 feet of the shoreline and 72 of these were within 50 feet of the shoreline in 2006, according to the Eastern Shore of Virginia Coastal Erosion Vulnerability Assessment (2006). These homes are vulnerable to coastal erosion and are also the homes that will likely receive some of the worst flooding.*
- 5. Northampton County's vulnerability is increasing due to loss of land from coastal erosion and new construction near shorelines. Many of the homes being built are on the waterfront and therefore lie in the Special Flood Hazard Area and the wind-borne debris hazard area.*
- 6. In 2003, Hurricane Isabel proved to be an extremely damaging event for Northampton County, despite being a tropical storm that did not make direct landfall within the County. The storm caused approximately \$10 million and \$3 million to the County's agricultural and aquaculture industries, respectively; widespread damage to trees; extensive coastal flooding; and destruction of the Ocean Cove Seafood building in Magotha that had withstood the great hurricane of 1933. Storms of similar or greater magnitude are likely to occur in the future, and Isabel should serve as a lesson for the County.*
- 7. The Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel (CBBT) is a critical facility that affects the local economy, communications, and emergency response capabilities.*
- 8. It is expected that a bayside-focused disaster would be worse than a similar seaside disaster, considering the current pattern of development in the County and the greater exposure to storm-related hazards on the bayside.*
- 9. Private flood insurance policies for homes within Special Flood Hazard Areas are becoming increasingly difficult to attain within the County.*

The government of Northampton County is responsible for maintaining an EOP and the response capability to protect the lives and property of its citizens from the effects of both human-made and natural disasters. County government must continue to function throughout a disaster or emergency situation.

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The Virginia Emergency Management and Disaster Law of 2000, as amended, requires that each city and county prepare and keep current an EOP. This plan should be officially adopted by the local governing body and promulgated by the chief administrative official.

The Director of Emergency Management, or designee, will update the EOP annually. She/he will coordinate with each emergency resource organization and ensure the development and maintenance of an appropriate emergency response capability.

In the event of an emergency situation that exceeds local emergency response capabilities, outside assistance is available, either through mutual support agreements with nearby jurisdictions and volunteer emergency organizations or through the State Emergency Operations Center (VA-EOC). A local emergency must be declared and local resources must be fully committed before state and federal assistance is requested.

Demographic Profile for Northampton County

According to Census data from the U.S. Census Bureau, Northampton County's population was 12,389 in 2010. Additionally, the following population characteristics exist in the County:

Age

Under 5 years old – 6.3%
Under 18 years old – 22.1%
65 years and over – 20.9%

Ethnic Origin

White (non-Hispanic) – 54.5%
Black – 36.5%
Hispanic – 7.1%

Households

Households – 5,258
Persons per household – 2.49

Income

Per capita income – \$21,872
Median household income – \$34,501
Persons below the poverty line – 20.6%

Business

Total non-farm establishments – 346
Private non-farm employment – 3,546
Total number of firms – 1,285

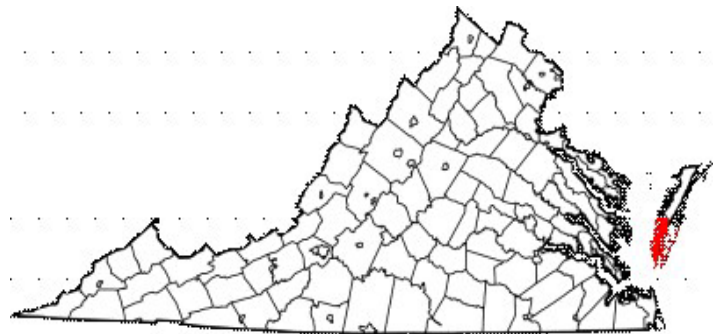
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Geographic Profile for Northampton County

Northampton County is situated on the Eastern Shore of Virginia, in the tidewater region of Virginia. The County is bordered to the north by Accomack County, Virginia, and is surrounded on all other sides by water. Northampton County maintains connectivity with Virginia Beach via the CBBT, which traverses the mouth of the bay. The southern tip of the County is surrounded by the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay.



Northampton County is bisected by Route 13 (Lankford Highway), a major north—south thoroughfare. Northampton County also features a railroad that ends in Cape Charles and continues via rail car barge to inland Virginia.



2.1 Assumptions

A disaster may result from a natural, technological, or human-made hazard.

A disaster affecting Northampton County may be sudden (with a defined start point such as a hurricane) or covert (with an unidentified start point such as a pandemic).

A disaster will interrupt the normal daily activities of the community.

The immediate concern is the protection of life, followed by critical infrastructure and property.

A disaster response will require coordinated efforts among town governments, county government, neighboring jurisdictions, private industry, and state and federal resources.

Local resources may become rapidly overwhelmed following a disaster.

State resources may not arrive for at least 72 hours following the immediate post-event period.

Mutual aid resources from the state and federal government may be delayed due to the isolated location of Northampton County.

Full recovery from a disaster may take several weeks, months, or years.

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2.2 Hazard Vulnerability and Mitigation

At the initial Eastern Shore Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee meeting, sheets from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) publication entitled State and Local Mitigation Planning, How-to Guides were distributed. Members reviewed these sheets and listed all the hazards on the sheets that affect the Eastern Shore and some unique hazards that were not listed, including the following:

- Coastal Flooding
- Stormwater Flooding
- High Wind
- Coastal Erosion
- Ice/Snow
- Sewage Spills
- Drought
- Wildfire
- Hazmat Incidences
- Heat Wave
- Biohazards
- Well Contamination

The Eastern Shore Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee utilized five criteria to rank the hazards from highest to lowest priority. Those five categories included probability based on past events, number of structures damaged, primary impacts, secondary impacts, and potential mitigation options. The Committee agreed to use the following definitions as a standard for evaluation of all the hazards:

Probability: Frequency of occurrence based on historical data of all potential hazards

Level

- 1 - Unlikely (less than 1% occurrence: no events in the last 100 years)
- 2 - Likely (between 1% and 10% occurrence: 1 to 10 events in the last 100 years)
- 3 - Highly likely (over 10% occurrence: 11 events or more in the last 100 years)

Affected Structures: Number of structures affected

Level

- 1 - Small (limited to 1 building)
- 2 - Medium (limited to 2 to 10 buildings)
- 3 - Large (over 10 buildings)

Primary Impacts: Based on percentage of damage to typical structure or industry in the community

Level

- 1 - Negligible (less than 3% damage)
- 2 - Limited (between 3% and 49% damage)
- 3 - Critical (more than 49% damage)

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Secondary Impacts: Based on impacts to the community at large

Level

- 1 - Negligible (no loss of function, no displacement time, no evacuations)
- 2 - Limited (some loss of function, displacement time, or evacuations)
- 3 - Critical (major loss of function, displacement time, or evacuations)

Mitigation Options: Number of cost-effective mitigation options

Level

- 1 - Few (0 to 1 cost-effective mitigation option)
- 2 - Several (2 to 3 cost-effective mitigation options)
- 3 - Many (over 3 cost-effective mitigation options)

The Eastern Shore Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee then prioritized and ranked these hazards based on the preceding criteria.

In the general discussion of the hazards, the Committee determined that well contamination is usually the result of secondary effects of coastal or stormwater flooding. For this reason, a discussion of this hazard will be included with the coastal flooding profile. The four hazards that have the highest priority are coastal flooding, high wind, stormwater flooding, and coastal erosion. The following table represents the Committee’s prioritization criteria and how each individual hazard was ranked.

		<i>High 12-15</i>			<i>Medium 9-11</i>			<i>Low 5-8</i>	
<i>Hazard Type</i>	<i>Probability</i>	<i>Impacts</i>			<i>Mitigation Options</i>	<i>Total Score</i>	<i>Hazard Priority</i>		
		<i>Affected Structures</i>	<i>Primary Impact</i>	<i>Secondary Impact</i>					
Coastal Flooding	3	3	3	3	3	15	High		
High Wind	3	3	3	3	3	15	High		
Storm Water Flooding	3	3	3	2	3	14	High		
Coastal Erosion	3	3	3	1	2	12	High		
Ice-Snow	3	1	2	3	2	11	Medium		
Sewage Spills	3	1	2	2	3	11	Medium		
Drought	3	1	3	2	2	11	Medium		
Wildfire	3	1	1	1	3	9	Medium		
Hazmat Incidents	3	1	1	2	1	8	Low		
Heat Wave	3	1	1	1	1	7	Low		
Biohazards	2	1	1	2	1	7	Low		
Well Contamination	3	1	-	-	-	-	-		

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High-Priority Hazards

Coastal Flooding – These events are highly likely, affecting large numbers of buildings, infrastructure, and people. Damages can be critical, with buildings suffering over 49% damage from these events. These events are also typically very disruptive to the region, causing major displacement and evacuations.

Stormwater Flooding – These events are highly likely, affecting large numbers of buildings, infrastructure, and people. Damages can be critical, with buildings suffering over 49% damage from these events. These events are also typically disruptive to the region, causing some displacement and evacuations.

High Wind – These events are highly likely, affecting large numbers of buildings. This hazard received the maximum available score during the current update, surpassing stormwater flooding and tying with coastal flooding. Damages were considered to be limited during development of the original plan in 2006, but the current update considered damages to be critical, with buildings suffering over 49% damage from these events. These events are also typically disruptive to the region, causing some displacement and evacuations.

Coastal Erosion – Erosion is considered to be highly likely, affecting large numbers of buildings. Damages can be critical, with buildings suffering over 49% damage from these events. These events are not typically disruptive to the region.

Medium-Priority Hazards

Ice/Snow –The probability of winter weather events rose to medium priority during the current update, but these hazards affect small numbers of structures. Ice and snow are considered to cause limited damage to the structures on the Eastern Shore. Winter weather is very disruptive to the region, causing major loss of function to the area's commercial businesses, schools, shellfish harvesting industry, and aquaculture industry.

Sewage Spills – This hazard was considered during the original 2006 plan, but did not receive a score. The current update considers sewage spills to be medium priority, with a small number of structures affected by an event. These events cause limited damage to structures and cause limited disruption to the region. The Committee believes there are over three cost-effective options for mitigating these events.

Drought – This hazard was considered likely during the original 2006 plan, but has been elevated to medium priority for the current update, with little effect on the built environment. Droughts cause critical damage to the water supply for farmers and residents. Crop loss is especially damaging to the regional, agriculturally based economy and is a secondary impact of drought. These events are also typically disruptive to the region, causing some loss of individual water supply wells.

Wildfires – These events were considered to be low priority originally, but have been elevated to medium priority for the current update. These events are considered highly likely but affect small numbers of structures. Wildfires generally cause negligible damage to the larger wood product industry. These events are not typically disruptive to the region.

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Low-Priority Hazards

Hazmat Incidents – These events are elevated to low priority for the current update, but affect almost no structures. They cause negligible damage to the structures on the Eastern Shore and are moderately disruptive to the region.

Heat Waves – These events are low priority but generally do not affect the built environment. Heat waves cause negligible damage to structures and industries in the community. These incidents are not typically disruptive to the region.

Biohazards – These events include algal blooms and fish kills and are considered to be likely. They have little impact on structures and cause short-term disruption to the fishing industry. Biohazards have limited impact on the community at large.

Risk Descriptions

The Eastern Shore Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee members prioritized the hazards based on primary and secondary impacts, probabilities that the event would occur again, and cost-effective mitigation options. Four hazards are considered high-priority hazards under the criteria. Hazards ranked as medium or low priority are not considered in substantial detail, since mitigation options either do not exist or the mitigation options are not as cost effective as the high-priority mitigation options. On the Eastern Shore, mitigating damages from ice-snow events, sewage spills, drought, wildfire, Hazmat incidents, heat waves, or biohazards are not as cost effective as mitigating damages from coastal flooding, stormwater flooding, coastal erosion, and high-wind events, which cause extensive disruption and damage.

2.3 Phases of Emergency Management

Since this comprehensive EOP is concerned with all types of hazards to which Northampton County is exposed before, during, and after an occurrence, four phases of emergency management are recognized as follows:

1. PREPAREDNESS

Preparedness activities serve to develop the response capabilities needed in the event of an emergency. Planning, exercising, training, and developing public information programs and warning systems are among the activities conducted during this phase.

In addition, preparedness activities are those that help avoid or intervene to stop an incident from occurring. Preparedness involves applying intelligence and other information to a range of activities that may include such countermeasures as deterrence operations; heightened inspections; improved surveillance and security operations; investigations to determine the full nature and source of the threat; monitoring of public health; agricultural surveillance and testing processes; and immunizations, isolations, or quarantine.

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2. RESPONSE

Response activities help to reduce casualties and damage and to speed recovery. These activities include warning, evacuation, rescue, and other similar operations addressed in this plan. During the response phase, emergency services are provided.

3. RECOVERY

Recovery includes both short-term and long-term activities. Short-term operations seek to restore critical services to the community and provide for the basic needs of the public. Long-term recovery focuses on restoring the community to its normal, or improved, state of affairs. Examples of recovery actions would be temporary housing and food, restoration of non-vital government services, and reconstruction of damaged areas.

4. MITIGATION

Mitigation activities are those that eliminate or reduce the probability of a disaster occurrence, as well as those long-term activities that lessen the undesirable effects of unavoidable hazards. Some examples include establishment of building codes, flood plain management, insurance, elevating buildings, and public education programs. Mitigation activities take place at all levels of emergency management, including during the incident recognition phase for an incident with notice, such as a hurricane, as well as during response operations for a no-notice incident, such as a terrorist incident or tornado.

2.4 Concept of Operations

In a catastrophic incident, requests for interdisciplinary resources accumulate quickly and typically in such a manner that no single agency or organization can meet all resource requirements. In accordance with the Virginia Department of Emergency Management's (VDEM) Local EOP Templates, the County EOP provides for the orderly coordination of multiple government agencies, the private sector, and nongovernmental organizations.

At the inception of any incident, typically either at the "Alert/Notification" phase or the "Incident Recognition" phase, the Director of Emergency Management will determine the level of severity of the situation and the need for potential activation of individual ESFs.

In a large-scale catastrophic event, the Director of Emergency Management will automatically activate all functions within this plan and immediately open the EOC where all ESF representatives will report.

Northampton County supports and relies on numerous agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector to support emergency operations by providing resource support, both personnel and materiel, and recognizing that any reduction in the ability of a single entity to deliver goods and services can potentially impact operations. The County EOP is based upon the concept that emergency functions of Northampton County and its stakeholders will, to the extent possible, parallel normal day-to-day functions.

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2.4.1 Alert/Notification

Northampton County may receive notification of an incident from a variety of sources and will provide situational awareness to appropriate stakeholders. The notification will include but is not limited to the size and scope of the incident, location(s) across the County/region, anticipated duration, and personnel requirements.

During the Alert/Notification phase, Northampton County Emergency Management will do the following:

- Alert the stakeholders of a potential activation of the County EOC and request that all departments begin to review their plans and procedures.
- Conduct situational assessment and determine if any further action is required.
- Alert all leadership of the situation and request direction for other staff notification.
- Alert leadership of the five towns in the County of the situation.
- Notify all personnel using internal notification protocols through all available message delivery systems currently in place, as necessary.
- Begin drafting public messages to minimize confusion.
- Review memorandums of agreement (MOAs) or mutual aid agreements (MAAs) with appropriate agencies.
- Complete a hazards analysis to determine which potential disasters are most likely to occur and which actions are most needed.
- Review a notification roster of key personnel and their alternates.
- Review a list of essential services and facilities that must continue to operate and may need to be protected during an emergency.
- Implement accounting and record-keeping procedures for expenses incurred during an emergency.

2.4.2 Incident Recognition/Activation

Upon recognition that a hazard will potentially threaten the County, Northampton County Emergency Management will activate the EOP. The County Board of Supervisors will proclaim an emergency exists if the hazard is slow moving and provides sufficient warning time.

During the Incident Recognition/Activation phase, Northampton County Emergency Management will do the following:

- Ensure the operational capability of the EOC facility and alert on-duty personnel.
- Activate and mobilize relevant staff positions within the EOC ESF to provide coordination and support throughout the incident.
- EOC staff will coordinate with towns to ensure that accuracy and up-to-date situational awareness is acquired.

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- Conduct an immediate briefing of all ESFs before the EOC opening either in person or via conference call.
- Conduct a briefing of all ESFs after the EOC opening either in person or via conference call.
- Draft an initial situation report and schedule regular EOC briefings.
- Establish check-in procedures for staff accountability.
- Review preparedness and response plans and ensure that personnel with response obligations are trained on their role in response.
- Maintain contact with the VA-EOC to determine the size and scope of the incident and the need for additional resources in alternate regions within the state, if applicable.
- Compile an inventory list of available resources, including personnel, transportation, supplies, and equipment.
- Activate, implement, develop, and update MOAs or MAAs with appropriate agencies and organizations, as necessary.
- Implement record keeping of all incurred expenses, if applicable.
- Prepare to provide emergency information to the public.

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2.4.3 Response

During the Response phase, Northampton County Emergency Management will do the following:

- Develop an Incident Action Plan (IAP).
- Continue activities from the Incident Recognition/Activation phase as relevant and needed.
- Attend all scheduled briefings.
- Direct and control emergency operations.
- Provide logistical support to on-site emergency response personnel.
- Coordinate daily with ESF representatives.
- Acquire facilities, equipment, and personnel throughout the regions to support activation.
- Request accurate and updated information from the towns.
- Establish and maintain liaison with the VA-EOC and adjacent jurisdictions.
- Provide daily situation reports to the VA-EOC.
- Facilitate the management of information flow between towns and local response agencies when needed and necessary.
- Prepare news releases.
- If needed, provide incident-specific public education/awareness campaigns and support outreach to communities.
- Upon receipt of state assets, ensure appropriate resource allocation and distribution.
- Alert additional personnel to be on standby status as needed.
- Brief the Board of Supervisors as appropriate.
- Review actions already taken and expedite those necessary to conduct in-the-field mitigation and preparedness activities.
- Delineate the specific areas that may need to be evacuated and designate evacuation routes.
- Make a list of potential evacuees, if feasible.
- Ensure the completion of checklist items in each functional annex.
- Provide an Initial Damage Assessment and forward it to the VA-EOC.
- Declare a local emergency if the situation warrants.
- Begin to keep records of all expenses incurred and continue to do so for the duration of the emergency.
- Monitor social networks for disaster-related situational awareness

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2.4.4 Recovery

During the Recovery phase, Northampton County Emergency Management will do the following:

- Prepare for and implement populace return to evacuated areas.
- Restore essential facilities and services.
- Continue to provide security and access control for evacuated areas for the purposes of re-entry into the County, if necessary.
- Compile and submit records of disaster-related expenses.
- Continue to provide information to the public regarding the County's recovery efforts.
- Determine which sections and response staff are no longer needed and order EOC deactivation or demobilization.
- Coordinate with the VA-EOC and provide supplementary damage assessment information as required.
- Request post-disaster assistance, if appropriate.
- Ensure that deactivated sections complete all required paperwork for financial reimbursement and transfer any remaining tasks or responsibilities to the appropriate remaining staff.
- Maintain liaison partners and other organizations as needed and required.
- Begin to return to a normal state of operations.
- Compile incident documentation for After-Action/Corrective Action planning and recovery reporting purposes.
- Conduct leadership and staff debriefing to identify single points of failure in response operations.
- Write an After-Action Report/Improvement Plan for future planning initiatives.