



# NORTHAMPTON COUNTY

## Department of EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES



### STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

<b>TOPIC:</b> Disaster Staffing and Response	<b>SOG #:</b> 2.21
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<b>Written by:</b> Maryann B. Fitchett	<b>Revised:</b> 01/01/2013
<b>Approved by:</b> Hollye B Carpenter	<b>Adopted:</b> 01/01/2013

## PURPOSE

To outline measures for preparation and response to man-made and natural disasters

## SCOPE

All Northampton County Department of EMS (NCEMS) personnel

## CONTENT

Attempting to provide direction for all disaster-related contingencies is impossible. For situations not covered by this plan, the Officer-in-charge shall take appropriate action(s) or refer the matter to a higher authority, if the situation permits.

## DEFINITION OF DISASTER

Disasters may be either anticipated (i.e., hurricanes and winter storms) or unanticipated (i.e., tornados and WMD events). For the purpose of this plan, a disaster is a large-scale event or a combination of lesser events occurring simultaneously, whether natural or man-made, which significantly impact the economy, social structure or system of government services in the county. Examples include, but are not limited to: hurricanes, tornados, civil disturbances, WMD events, winter storms, and "northeasters." The essence of a disaster is that NCEMS and other county agencies may not be able to meet service demands for a period of 12 hours or greater under normal operating procedures.

## ASSUMPTIONS

1. NCEMS will work within existing county and departmental policy to the extent possible during emergency situations. It is understood situations may dictate actions outside of current policy. Actions so taken are expected to meet the overall departmental vision toward safe, effective, legal, and efficient service delivery.
2. NCEMS personnel should strive to continually maintain high levels of readiness. While some disasters permit advanced warning and preparation efforts, other disasters provide for little or no forewarning of their occurrence. Subsequently, while the use of this policy will largely be based upon the threat of hurricanes, NCEMS personnel shall adopt an all-hazards approach to disaster preparedness.
3. NCEMS Officers are expected to exercise independent decision-making in the event of a total failure of communication systems.
4. NCEMS will gauge the needs for additional staffing and the activation of personnel based upon the perceived threat and the staffing needs of the county. Staffing decisions will be based upon facts, potential conditions, National Weather Service advisories, police intelligence, credible threats, etc.



# NORTHAMPTON COUNTY

## Department of EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES



### STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

<b>TOPIC: Disaster Staffing and Response</b>	<b>SOG #: 2.21</b>
--	--------------------

5. At some point during a disaster, normal emergency response procedures will be unattainable. The Eastern Shore of Virginia 911 Communications Center (ESVA911), in conjunction with the Northampton County EOC, shall determine at which point modified response protocols will be enacted and when emergency response should be temporarily curtailed or halted due to environmental conditions making travel and operations unacceptably unsafe.
6. Response to any disaster will not be the responsibility of a single-department. All county departments, offices, and agencies have an integral role to play in overall planning, preparation, response, and recovery.
7. As a guiding planning principle, in the event of a disaster the county and NCEMS should expect to function without outside aid for three (3) days. After seventy-two (72) hours, state and federal resources may become available. While in some disasters state and federal aid may be available sooner, disasters impacting large regions or multiple states may slow the response of resources external to the county government.
8. Facilities are Community Volunteer Fire Company (CVFC), Northampton County Department of EMS Office, and Cape Charles Rescue Service (CCRS) and Northampton Fire & Rescue (NF&R). We can anticipate above normal levels of both EMS and Fire Department personnel will be operating out of these stations. At present, there are no plans to stage other county, state, federal or private resources in the stations; this may change during each event.
9. NCEMS shall not be expected to provide the workers of other agencies with food or water. However, coordination or resources among the occupants of each individual station is encouraged.
10. NCEMS personnel will utilize facilities normally utilized by EMS crews. It is not expected that additional space will be required for EMS personnel.

## PREPARATION AND PLANNING FUNCTIONS

### Training

All NCEMS staff members, career and volunteer, are encouraged to complete the following Emergency Management Institute (EMI) on-line courses:

- ✓ Are You Ready? An In-depth Guide to Citizen Preparedness (IS-22)
- ✓ Principles of Emergency Management (IS -230)

It is recommended that all NCEMS Officers complete the following EMI on-line courses:

- ✓ Emergency Planning (IS-235)
- ✓ Role of the Emergency Operations Center (IS -275)

### Personal Preparedness

As all NCEMS staff members are subject to work during any disaster, it is recommended all personnel plan for the possibility of their absence from home during an event. It is recommended this be completed during normal operating conditions. It is the staff's responsibility to monitor events and make necessary adjustments to their personal and family preparations. Each staff member must recognize the potential for his recall to work for extended periods. Considerations for such a plan (*see NCEMS "Individual Readiness" Form*) include, but are not limited to:

- ✓ Arranging for the sheltering of immediate family members
- ✓ Emergency contact information



# NORTHAMPTON COUNTY

## Department of EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES



### STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

TOPIC: Disaster Staffing and Response
---------------------------------------

SOG #: 2.21
-------------

- ✓ Maintaining supplies in the home (food, cooking supplies, flashlights, etc)
- ✓ Maintaining items necessary to secure personal property
- ✓ Maintaining supplies for use during a recall
- ✓ Maintaining supplies in-station for unforeseen events

There are websites and pamphlets offering specific information on emergency preparedness to the general public, including:

- ✓ Virginia Department of Emergency Management
- ✓ American Red Cross
- ✓ Ready.gov.

Staff members are urged to take advantage of these information resources to prepare their families.

Staff members should plan on providing sufficient food, water, and personal items to sustain themselves for minimum of 72 hours.

All NCEMS career personnel are classified as essential employees under the County's Personnel Policy and Procedures Manual and are therefore required to report for duty regardless of the County's operational condition. Volunteer members are also considered essential and should participate to the greatest extent possible.

#### Station Preparedness Planning

Each EMS Lieutenant shall assist in developing a site-specific disaster preparedness plan. The station disaster preparedness plan should include, but not be restricted to, the following issues:

- ✓ Evaluation of emergency generator capabilities
- ✓ Identification of specific fuel needs and the identification of the closest fueling sites
- ✓ Identification of station operational staffing capability based on vehicle characteristics
- ✓ Designated sleeping areas
- ✓ Potential issues with overhead lines
- ✓ Evaluation of alternative water supply (i.e., water heater)
- ✓ Evaluation of HVAC capabilities
- ✓ Designated tornado safe sites
- ✓ Evaluate the potential for housing long-term (24+ hours) of NCEMS personnel
- ✓ Identification of alternative hygiene facilities (means and site)
- ✓ Identification of station evacuation preparations
- ✓ Designated storage areas for personal disaster kits
- ✓ Planned station evacuation procedures

#### Automotive Services & Equipment

All operational vehicles should be maintained in a constant state of readiness. In the event of a projected period of severe weather, EMS Staff shall ensure all vehicles are fully fueled and all fluid levels checked. Fuel tanks should be checked for levels and arrangements made to fill.



# NORTHAMPTON COUNTY

## Department of EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES



### STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

TOPIC: Disaster Staffing and Response
---------------------------------------

SOG #: 2.21
-------------

#### Staffing

For purposes of planning for sleeping arrangements, station space, and cleaning supplies, all stations shall base estimated numbers on at least twice the daily staffing level.

#### Station Supplies & Equipment

##### Cleaning and EMS Supplies

EMS Lieutenants will ensure cleaning, sanitary and medical supplies are inventoried. Levels under one and one-half times normal level from June 1 through November 30 should be reported to EMS Liaison.

##### Water

During a recall, personnel are responsible for acquiring their own individual water supply. For stations with coolers, water jugs and other containers suitable for storing drinking water, these containers should be cleaned and prepared for service prior to June 1 annually. These should be filled in the event of an impending hurricane.

##### Fuel Storage Levels

EMS Lieutenants will verify fuel storage tanks (for generator & vehicle, as applicable) are filled and maintained at not less than 50% capacity for the entirety of the hurricane season. Liaisons should be aware of status and encouraged to keep full. Unforeseen circumstances could hinder delivery or ability to fuel in other places.

##### Generators

Generators should be tested on a regular basis.

#### Weather Information

While NCEMS shall attempt to provide weather information on a regular basis, personnel should become familiar with sources of reliable weather-related information. Information from the Wakefield Office of the National Weather Service can be accessed at the following site: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov>.

### **CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS**

NCEMS will maintain normal services to the greatest degree possible during a disaster or prior to an impending storm. Once the County shifts to an emergency operations condition, administrative and training functions may be scaled back or halted.

#### Administration Office Closure/Loss of Facility

For continuity of operations in the event of loss of the EMS Administration Building, administrative staff and functions will relocate to the County Administration Offices located in Eastville until the building can be restored. In the event both facilities are



# NORTHAMPTON COUNTY

## Department of EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES



### STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

TOPIC: Disaster Staffing and Response	SOG #: 2.21
---------------------------------------	-------------

unusable, rescue squads shall serve as the relocation site for NCEMS staff and operations.

#### Loss of Individual Station

In the event of damage to an individual station which renders that facility unusable, the EMS Captain will identify a neighboring station for initial relocation. The EMS Captain will facilitate temporary vehicle loans from other rescue squads if needed. For long-term relocation scenarios, additional coordination will be needed between the rescue squad, NCEMS, and the County to house that squad until the primary facility is returned to service.

#### **NCEMS DEPARTMENT OPERATIONAL STATUS**

NCEMS has established the following operational statuses as a guidepost for organizational operations during a disaster. They are aligned with the county/state conditions of readiness. While, in general, the county shall determine the operational readiness status, in the event of an unanticipated disaster the EMS Director or his designee may raise the operational status of NCEMS above that of the remainder of county/state government.

- Normal Operating Status
- Developing Situation Status (no modification to daily operations)
- Increased Readiness Status (moderate adjustments to daily operations; pre-impact operations)
- Response Status
- Recovery Status
- Return to Normal Operations Status

Specific actions to be taken during each status are noted later in this policy.

#### **RESPONSE AND RECOVERY OPERATIONS**

##### Accountability

During any disaster, NCEMS shall monitor the locations and status of all on duty personnel.

##### Recall

At some point during a disaster, the EMS Director or designee may institute a recall.

The recall may be partial or total.

In the event of an anticipated disaster, the EMS Director or designee may approve the recall of the entire department. In such cases, NCEMS will make every effort to have an "on-duty" shift and a "stand down shift."

It is the responsibility of every staff member to monitor storm development during hurricane season. When authorities have determined that our area should monitor a



# NORTHAMPTON COUNTY

## Department of EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES



### STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

TOPIC: Disaster Staffing and Response
---------------------------------------

SOG #: 2.21
-------------

storm's progress, staff members should immediately prepare for the possibility of the storm's influence upon the area in the days to come.

#### Stand Down

During long-term disaster operations, crews may be placed on rotating shifts that include a stand down period. During that period, personnel are expected to take appropriate action to ensure they are mentally, physically, and emotionally prepared for their next duty period. The NCEMS Officers are responsible for ensuring that stand down personnel are not working during their stand down period to an extent that would hinder their ability to function safely during duty periods.

NCEMS Officers who require or knowingly permit personnel to work long periods of their stand down time may face discipline if their subordinates are unable to maintain mental, physical or emotional readiness for a return to duty.

The EMS Lieutenant at each location shall ensure sufficient beds or cots are available to support assigned personnel. During each stand down period, the EMS Lieutenant will ensure that bunks are assigned to each staff member of the stand down crew. Those personnel on the stand down crew shall have first call for beds. Generally speaking, those staff members not on stand down may use unassigned bunks as they become available, but should not expect to have one assigned for their use.

#### **GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF PERSONNEL DURING A RECALL**

##### All Staff Members

During the approach of an anticipated disaster, it is recommended that all off-duty personnel take the necessary precautions to protect their families and property as quickly as possible. A personnel recall may be initiated at any time. While NCEMS recommends that staff members monitor media sources for continued updates, this shall not be standby time.

Unless otherwise directed, during a recall, all personnel shall report to their duty assignment. If they cannot make it to their duty assignment, they are to report to the closest NCEMS staffed facility. If they cannot make it to any NCEMS staffed facility in a safe and timely manner, they are to contact their EMS Lieutenant for further direction.

During the approach of an anticipated disaster, if conditions permit, on-duty personnel may be provided an opportunity to be relieved from duty to secure homes and family or to make additional personal preparations. The decision to do this shall be made by the EMS Director or designee, as additional personnel arrive. The length of time each member shall be permitted to be off-duty shall be determined by the EMS Director or



# NORTHAMPTON COUNTY

## Department of EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES



### STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

TOPIC: Disaster Staffing and Response
---------------------------------------

SOG #: 2.21
-------------

designee. This shall be a period of liberal leave usage and EMS Staff shall have sufficient leave (i.e., annual, compensatory) accrued for this purpose.

#### OPERATIONAL STATUS-SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

##### NORMAL OPERATING STATUS

1. NCEMS recommends that all staff members develop and maintain plans for personal and family preparation.
2. Stations and EMS Officers shall develop plans to prepare their sites for the impact of a disaster, reviewing them annually. This shall be completed by July 1 of each year. The EMS Lieutenant shall be responsible for facilitating the process, assisted as needed by other EMS Staff.

##### DEVELOPING SITUATION

1. Review the Hurricane Readiness Conditions.
2. Initiate action planning:
  - ✓ Continue to track the weather system
  - ✓ Update Contact Lists
  - ✓ Begin preparatory actions such as identifying stocks of material, pre-warning emergency service personnel, etc.
3. All personnel are encouraged to monitor weather/news reports.
4. All personnel are encouraged to conduct last minute checks of their personal and family preparations.
5. All Officers may, at the discretion of the EMS Director or designee, meet to discuss the current situation and begin developing operational objectives as needs dictate.

##### INCREASED READINESS

1. Prepare for staffing assignments to be made, published, and disseminated to the department early during Increased Readiness.
  - ✓ Development of plans for recall of personnel (limited or full) cancellation of leave, if necessary
  - ✓ County EOC may be staffed during this time. Initially, the position may be staffed in a limited fashion.
2. Initiate operational and planning cycles and meetings.
  - ✓ EMS Lieutenants should contact all subordinates, notifying them of current watch status and advising to prepare for possible recall.
  - ✓ All personnel will consider themselves on ALERT STATUS, subject to recall, and prepare for the approaching storm.
  - ✓ While under ALERT STATUS, all personnel will make themselves available for contact by telephone and for possible return to duty.
  - ✓ Members prepare station and selves for potential holdover
  - ✓ Consider need for reassignment of EMS Vehicles, based on "service" status
  - ✓ EMS Captain shall secure list of ventilators dependent patients and O2 dependent patients
  - ✓ EMS Captain shall contact OMD to affirm Open Protocol Status
  - ✓ EMS Director or designee shall contact County Administrator regarding Master Fuel Key for County/School fuel pump for all vehicles
  - ✓ Ensure EMS is ready for service



# NORTHAMPTON COUNTY

## Department of EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES



### STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

<b>TOPIC: Disaster Staffing and Response</b>
--

<b>SOG #: 2.21</b>
--------------------

- ✓ Back-up files to disc and secure appropriately
- ✓ Consider removal of critical files
- ✓ Prepare EMS stations and administration office for severe weather
- ✓ Consider moving/securing laptops, ID machine and ID supplies
- ✓ Move computers off the floor. Cover in plastic as feasible.
- ✓ Unplug all unnecessary electrical devices
- ✓ Cover furniture as feasible
- ✓ Clear all desks

During an event with a lengthy approach period, such as a hurricane, the tasks noted in Increased Readiness may take place over several days, with implementation of each step being undertaken as necessary.

At the recommendation of the EMS Captain, the Medical Director, at his discretion, may issue an Open Protocol Order. The EMS Captain will transmit an Open Protocol Order to all personnel. Issuance of an Open Protocol Order will allow currently certified providers operating under general supervision of the Operational Medical Director of the Department of Emergency Medical Services to perform medical techniques to the highest certified medical trained level as outlined by the Tidewater Emergency Medical Services Council Regional Medical Protocol Manual without prior Medical Control permission. This order does not allow for deviation from the Regional Medical Protocol Manual, only the relaxation of contacting medical control prior to performing authorized medical techniques.

#### *Response Issues*

1. Response priorities will be developed by ESVA911 and the NC EOC based upon the type and severity of the event and will be communicated to all personnel in the most efficient manner possible. This will be done to ensure apparatus and personnel assist and respond to the greatest need created by the event and are not over committed to low priority incidents such as wires down/trees down/water leaks.
2. The decision to alter the normal response matrix will be made by ESVA911 and NC EOC. Safety considerations to be taken into account should include, but not be limited to:
  - Excessive winds
  - High water
  - Civil disturbances
  - Roadway debris
  - Visibility deterioration
  - Extremely hazardous driving conditions
  - Chemical/radiation/bio-hazards
3. Recall/Callbacks



# NORTHAMPTON COUNTY

## Department of EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES



### STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

<b>TOPIC: Disaster Staffing and Response</b>	<b>SOG #: 2.21</b>
--	--------------------

- All personnel should remain cognizant that recalls may be made during Increased Readiness. All are encouraged to monitor the weather and news while off-duty.
- All vacation leave scheduled for the next 72 hours after the department goes to Increased Readiness may be canceled at the discretion of the EMS Director or designee. Those individuals in a leave category, including those out of town, must call the NCEMS Office to determine if their leave will be cancelled. The EMS Director or designee may waive this requirement in cases of personal hardship.

#### RESPONSE

During such times as actual hurricane conditions exist, every attempt will be made by the NCEMS to continue its primary mission of protecting the lives of the citizens of Northampton County. It should be remembered that EMS personnel are subject to the same limitations as are members of the public. All attempts to deliver Emergency Medical and Rescue Service to the public during hurricane conditions should be tempered by safety.

- ✓ Begin preparing for post impact activities.
  - ✓ Begin planning for recovery operations.
1. During hurricanes, NCEMS may order evacuations at some point depending upon circumstances. Personnel in stations to be evacuated should be prepared to evacuate with little or no notice. Personnel in stations receiving evacuated workers shall be prepared to receive them.
    - If station evacuation becomes necessary, NCEMS owned-vehicles that are not moved should be disabled through removing the keys or disconnecting the batteries.
  2. NCEMS shall stop all emergency response if conditions warrant. Examples include, but are not limited to:
    - Tornados sighted in immediate area of a station
    - Large-scale civil disturbances
    - Chemical clouds
    - During WMD detonation/attack
    - Hurricanes
    - a. At the discretion of the NCEMS Captain, departmental response shall cease if wind conditions make travel extremely hazardous.
    - b. When the announcement to cease response for hazardous wind conditions is made, units en route to or on the scene of an emergency shall continue their work until completed. If out of station and not on a call, units shall report back to their assigned stations as soon as possible.
    - c. NCEMS shall order the cessation of vehicle travel as noted:
      - Small vehicles shall be ordered to cease travel when sustained winds make further response unacceptably hazardous. This determination shall be made by the EMS Captain, in consultation with the NC EOC. Response of small vehicles may cease prior to the cessation of response by large vehicles. This shall include zone cars.



# NORTHAMPTON COUNTY

## Department of EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES



### STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

**TOPIC: Disaster Staffing and Response**

**SOG #: 2.21**

- Clearance to respond, after the ordered cessation of response, must be approved by the EMS Captain on an individual basis.
- Large vehicles shall be ordered to cease travel when sustained winds make further response unacceptably hazardous. This determination shall be made by the EMS Captain, in consultation with the NC EOC. Response of small vehicles may cease prior to the cessation of response by large vehicles. Clearance to respond, after the ordered cessation of response, must be approved by the EMS Captain on an individual basis.
  - All emergency responses will cease to be dispatched when SUSTAINED winds reach 50 mph for the Northampton County area.
  - Changes in response limitations will be announced via radio.
  - When responses cease, due to wind conditions, all apparatus will be driven "head first" into the stations causing the rear of the apparatus to be facing outwards, thus protecting the windshields.
  - Specific roads, neighborhoods or areas may be excluded from vehicular response due to hazardous conditions such as standing water, ice or other hazards.
3. The determination for resuming responses will be made by the EMS Captain, in consultation with the NC EOC.
  4. Communications Check:
    - ✓ Personnel will attempt to make contact with the next closest station to determine ability to relay information. Radio discipline must be maintained from this point until relaxed.
    - ✓ The telephone must be tested immediately following the event. If the telephone is operative, it is to be used for emergency communications only.
    - ✓ If the NCEMS experiences total communications failure and no radio or telephone communications are available, EMS Officers should use their initiative and judgment and begin post-impact operations. If available and practicable, a system of "runners" (using zone cars or utility vehicles) shall be used to relay written messages. Each station shall establish a system of "runners" to the NCEMS Office. The NCEMS Office will create a "runner" system between the NCEMS and the NC EOC.
  5. After the event has passed the area, post-event operations will begin as follows:
    - ✓ Accountability of Personnel: EMS Lieutenants will take an accounting of all personnel in quarters.
    - ✓ Inspection of Facilities: Inspect the EMS facility, apparatus, and grounds for damage.
    - ✓ Check for downed wires and other unsafe conditions.
    - ✓ Remove any obstruction that may hamper response. (Do not remove any downed wires.)
    - ✓ Advise the EMS Captain of the condition of personnel, apparatus, and facility.
    - ✓ Provide information on availability to respond.
  6. NCEMS Captain shall:
    - ✓ Consider hold over of on-duty personnel, if necessary.
    - ✓ Adjust operational periods, if needed.
    - ✓ Initiate post event activities, i.e., Damage Assessment.
    - ✓ Continue cancellation of leave, if needed.
    - ✓ Reinstate emergency response when condition allows.



# NORTHAMPTON COUNTY

## Department of EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES



### STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

TOPIC: Disaster Staffing and Response	SOG #: 2.21
---------------------------------------	-------------

- ✓ Begin recovery planning and operations.
- ✓ Begin planning demobilization of personnel.

#### RECOVERY ACTIVITIES

Once the immediate threat of the incident has passed, an initial assessment will be made of squad facilities and equipment using the NCEMS "Damage Assessment Snapshot". Results will be reported to EMS Captain. Information gathered will be used to identify operational priorities and determine resource needs.

1. Report the following to the NCEMS Captain:
  - Injuries to EMS personnel
  - Damage to EMS stations
  - Damage to EMS equipment
  - Building damages
  - Approximate number of civilian injuries
  - Special hazards
  - Special equipment needs
2. The EMS Captain shall report on the following to the Emergency Operation Center:
  - Overall injuries to EMS personnel
  - Overall damage to EMS stations
  - Overall damage to EMS apparatus and equipment
  - Approximate number of civilian injuries
  - Special equipment needs
  - Special hazards
  - Whether or not additional personnel will be needed
  - Roadway access problems
3. Continue planning meetings and operational periods; however, begin the process of returning to normal activities.
4. Evaluate personnel needs, callbacks, holdovers, and cancellation of leave.
  - Begin demobilizing personnel, as appropriate.
  - Provide sufficient time to allow personnel to be prepared for their return to duty, if possible.
5. Consider the need for Critical Stress Debriefing.
6. If applicable, terminate Open Protocol Order.

Personnel conducting emergency operations must realize that their own safety and well-being is their first 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.



# NORTHAMPTON COUNTY

## Department of EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES



### STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

TOPIC: Disaster Staffing and Response
---------------------------------------

SOG #: 2.21
-------------

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 hazards in a safe manner.

EMS Officers will establish and strictly enforce periodic rehabilitation times for staff members.

Additional health and safety considerations include:

- Ensure all exposures to personnel are properly documented.
- Provide vaccinations as necessary.
- Provide post-storm follow-up care as needed.

#### *Rapid Assessment Team/Patrol*

1. When directed by the EMS Captain or NC EOC, a unit may be designated to patrol a route to assess targeted vulnerable sites.
2. Provide periodic reports of damage to structures and transportation systems.
3. Evaluate target sites.
4. Should the patrol route be blocked by debris, attempt to identify an alternate route. Report road blockages to NC EOC. When needed, the crew can conduct minor debris clearing, but the patrol should not be significantly delayed. EMS Staff will not remove downed wires.
5. If injured civilians are encountered, provide them with first aid supplies as feasible. If transport is needed, advise ESVA 911 of the patient's location. Completion of the patrol route mission should only be abandoned in the face of a life-threatening emergency. Any deviations must be reported to EMS Captain.
6. Upon completion of the patrol route, contact EMS Captain for further instructions.
7. Cautions:
  - Be aware of downed power lines and other electrical hazards.
  - Use caution when driving through debris to avoid damaging tires.
  - Avoid standing water.

#### **RETURN TO NORMAL OPERATIONS**

Review/Recommendations:

- 1) What went well?
- 2) What did not go well?
- 3) What issues should we examine in our post-event evaluation?
- 4) Discontinue operational periods.
- 5) Discontinue planning meetings.
- 6) Return to normal activities.
- 7) Begin after Action Reporting



# NORTHAMPTON COUNTY

## Department of EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES



### STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

TOPIC: Disaster Staffing and Response

SOG #: 2.21

#### SPECIAL OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

During Increased Readiness, the following special guidelines shall be implemented and shall remain in effect until NCEMS reaches Return to Normal Operations:

1. Normal non-emergency program activity will cease, with the exception of apparatus check-off and station clean up. They shall be carried out at the beginning of each operational period.
2. To lessen the chance of illness, EMS Officers shall ensure that members undergo appropriate decontamination or undertake appropriate hygiene measures.
3. Vehicles may not be moved through standing water until it has determined that the passage may be done safely. This may require checking the depth of standing water.
4. Officers should be wary about permitting members to work in areas with standing water. They should require the use of appropriate PPE and the continuous monitoring of water depths. Before walking through water, members must use a pike pole or stick to ensure the ground has not washed away or collapsed. Staff members must 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 and wildlife, including snakes.
5. Standing water presents an especially hazardous environment for EMS Staff. EMS Staff who have entered such environs should be fully decontaminated as soon as possible, but definitely at the end of their operational cycle. If full decontamination facilities are not readily available, PPE and clothing should be washed in-station using the most appropriate means until access to a decontamination site may be made.
6. County policy prohibits the transportation of civilians in county vehicles. During a disaster, in Increased Readiness or higher, NCEMS units may transport civilians out of hazardous areas to the nearest Fire-EMS station, shelter or medical facility if, in the opinion of the EMS Officer, leaving the person in place would place them at severe risk of life or health. This information shall be relayed to the EMS Captain, which may redirect the unit to another location.
7. Personnel are not to carry out unauthorized vehicle, equipment or structural repairs without permission of the EMS Captain. Permission shall be granted based upon the perceived need and the known abilities of on-scene personnel. As appropriate, the EMS Captain will coordinate this with the NC EOC.
8. Because there is the possibility that returning to a facility may be delayed due to heavy workload, breakdown, or environmental conditions, all EMS Staff are encouraged to carry small emergency packs with them in their vehicles, including snacks, drinks, a change of clothing, and any miscellaneous items they deem necessary. The size of the emergency pack should be small enough that it can easily be carried in the vehicle.
9. Because of the possibility of eye injury from shattered glass and wind-borne debris during sustained winds of 35 mph or higher, all members shall wear eye protection both while in and outside vehicles.
10. Personal chainsaws and/or power tools may not be used by EMS Staff during a disaster.

#### POST-IMPACT SURVEY

When directed by the EMS Captain, the EMS Lieutenant of each site shall conduct a survey of the immediate area surrounding the station and report to the EMS Captain. Following that, each station shall conduct a survey of the first due area as outlined by the Damage Assessment Policy. Removal of trees from the roadway is not a primary EMS Staff responsibility. However, crews may assist FIRE and VDOT personnel when



# NORTHAMPTON COUNTY

## Department of EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES



### STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

TOPIC: Disaster Staffing and Response	SOG #: 2.21
---------------------------------------	-------------

safe. Attention should also be placed on sweeping debris from the road which may damage tires. VDOT has a plan designed to clear roadways – employee life safety needs first, followed by services. VDOT suspends services when SUSTAINED winds meet 45 mph. This plan will affect departmental response capabilities.

#### Implement Damage Assessment Plan

Following the check of personnel, facilities, and equipment that indicates the station is available to provide service, the Damage Assessment Snapshot will be completed and the results will be forwarded to the EMS Captain as soon as possible.

#### Facility Survey

A priority for rescue personnel following the event is verifying ready access to high risk facilities such as nursing homes, senior apartments and hospitals. Damage to any such facility should be reported to the EMS Captain. Crews may be assigned to visit key facilities designated by the EMS Captain.

#### Field Operations

Damage may have created road conditions that could severely hamper response. Operational decisions must reflect this probability.

During these early periods, our focus must be toward providing the most assistance to the most people.

Decisions must reflect this objective. Building collapse presents the possibility for trapped occupants. Identification of potential search sites is important. This information must be forwarded to the EMS Captain.

#### Travel

When traveling while conducting area surveys, minimal help is to be rendered to those on the roadside. Providing bandaging material and first aid is all that can be provided at this time. Life threatening conditions are the exception.

### **AFTER ACTION REPORTS AND CRITIQUE**

Subsequent to any disaster, the NCEMS will complete an After Action Report (AAR). The following are the guidelines for AAR reporting.

#### **GUIDELINES**

The EMS Captain shall be assigned the responsibility for completing the AAR.

EMS Lieutenants shall report on the following matters to the EMS Captain, who will be tasked with compiling a summation. This shall be done within 14 days. The report shall include the following:



# NORTHAMPTON COUNTY

## Department of EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES



### STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

<b>TOPIC: Disaster Staffing and Response</b>	<b>SOG #: 2.21</b>
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- ✓ Overview of activities
- ✓ Description of significant events including injuries, damage to facilities and apparatus, and incident-related matters
- ✓ Comments on site preparation and planning
- ✓ Comments on communications
- ✓ Comments on county and NCEMS policy
- ✓ Comments on command issues
- ✓ Comments on matters that went very well
- ✓ Comments on matters requiring improvement, with specific recommendations

The EMS Captain will review the documents, conducting follow-up inquiries as necessary. The final AAR submission format shall include an overview of departmental preparations and response, an analysis of significant issues, an identification of noteworthy trends, and recommendations to improve the process in the future. This shall be completed within 30 days and submitted to the EMS Director.

A critique shall be conducted by the EMS Director within 60 days.

#### **POLICY REVIEW**

The Department's Disaster Preparedness Plan will be reviewed by all EMS Officers on or about May 1<sup>st</sup> of each year and will report completion to the EMS Director by May 15<sup>th</sup>.

While subject to the existing policy review cycle, this policy shall also be reviewed after each disaster, permitting needed revisions to be made in a more timely fashion.