

An Overview of Emergency Management in New Jersey



New Jersey Office of Emergency Management Structure

- **State Director of Emergency Management (Patrick J. Callahan)**
 - The Colonel of the New Jersey State Police
 - Responsible for planning, directing, and coordinating emergency or disaster operations within New Jersey
- **NJSP Lieutenant Colonel of the Homeland Security Branch (Christopher DeMaise)**
 - Serves as the Deputy State Director of Emergency Management
 - Authorized to act on behalf of the Director in his/her absence
- **Major of the Emergency Management Section (Douglas Lemanowicz)**
 - Serves as the Assistant Deputy Director of Emergency Management
 - Responsible for day-to-day operations of the NJOEM
 - Commands five (5) Bureaus (Emergency Response, Preparedness, Recovery, Incident Support, and Communications)



What Does A State of Emergency Mean?

- When local resources are depleted, and the municipality can no longer effectively manage the incident, the Municipal Emergency Management Coordinator should declare a State of Emergency.
- Declaring a State of Emergency allows for certain emergency protective measures to be available, such as evacuations, sheltering, mass feeding, and road closures.
- A county can declare a State of Emergency on behalf of a town for their respective county, and the state can declare on behalf of a county or all twenty-one (21) counties.
- The Governor will rescind the State of Emergency when it is no longer needed to provide necessary support to localities or until the threat of impending danger from the event has passed.



What Constitutes A Major Disaster?

IDA Flooding – Manville, NJ

- As defined by the Stafford Act, any natural catastrophe (including any hurricane, tornado, storm, high water, wind-driven water, tidal wave, tsunami, earthquake, volcanic eruption, landslide, mudslide, snowstorm, or drought) or, regardless of cause, any fire, flood or explosion, in any part of the United States.



- The President determines the causes damage of sufficient severity and magnitude to warrant major disaster assistance under this act to supplement the efforts and available resources of local, State governments and disaster relief organizations in alleviating the damage, loss, hardship or suffering.



Municipal Emergency Management Coordinator

- Disasters begin and end locally; municipal government is the first line of official public responsibility
- Resource support comes from County/State/Federal agencies after exhausting local resources and mutual aid.
- The governing body must appoint a Municipal Emergency Management Coordinator for a 3-year term (App.A:9-40.1).
- A non-resident coordinator shall reside within a reasonable proximity of the municipality.
- The Municipal Coordinator must appoint a Deputy Coordinator, subject to approval by the governing body (App.A:9-40.3).



Municipal Emergency Management Coordinator

- Primary responsibilities (App.A:9-40.1-40.5)
 - Plan, activate, coordinate, and conduct emergency management operations within the municipality
- Duties include (but are not limited to) (Directive NJOEM-7 (2022)):
 - Coordinate with the County Coordinator
 - Prepare, review, and update the municipal Emergency Operations Plan (Directive NJOEM-11 (2023))
 - Declare a local state of emergency
 - Chair the Local Emergency Management Council (App.A:9-41) (Directive NJOEM-9 (2022))
 - Coordinate requests for resources
 - Provide situation reports to the county
 - Educate the public on resources available during emergencies and on the importance of emergency preparedness planning



County Emergency Management Coordinator

- Every county is required to have a County Emergency Management Coordinator, appointed by the county commissioners for a 3-year term, subject to the approval of the State Director of Emergency Management. (App.A:9-42.1.a).
- The State Director has supervision and control of the County Emergency Management Coordinators.
- The Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator position is filled by the governing body in each county. (App.A:9-42.1.b).



County Emergency Management Coordinator

- Primary responsibilities – (App.A:9-42.2)
 - The development, coordination, and activation of countywide mutual aid emergency management plans
 - Activation of county emergency management facilities/ services
- Duties include (Directive NJOEM-6 (2022)):
 - Supervise daily operations and ensure 24-hour availability of the county OEM
 - Maintain and implement the County Emergency Operations Plan (Directive NJOEM-11 (2023))
 - Chair the County Emergency Management Council
 - Coordinate all resource requests within the county and maintain situational awareness reporting with the State
 - Declare a county-level state of emergency
 - Public Information



What Are The Steps To Declare a State of Emergency?

- Evaluating whether the incident meets the criteria for a declaration (overwhelms local or county resources and/or infrastructure)
- Advising and consulting with the local elected officials and county and state emergency management officials
- Determining recommended Emergency Protective Measures and justifications.
- Preparing and issuing the declaration
- Forwarding a copy of the declaration to the NJOEM Regional Representative through normal channels



Who can declare a State of Emergency?

- The Emergency Management Coordinator is the only official with the power to issue an emergency declaration.
- When possible, the Coordinator should confer with the Mayor (County Commissioner for the County) before making the declaration.
- The Municipal Coordinator should also be in contact with Annex Leads and the County Coordinator.
- The Municipal Coordinator must immediately advise the county about any local emergency declaration per Directive NJOEM-2 (2022).



Is a State of Emergency required under the Stafford Act to receive a Major Disaster Declaration from the President of the United States?

- No. This was demonstrated in 2012 with the Straight-Line Wind event, DR 4070, that occurred without warning.
- Our Recovery Bureau works in coordination with local, county and federal partners to determine the estimate of damage to ensure we have reached the county and state threshold.
- The Stafford Act (§401) requires that: “All requests for a declaration by the President that a major disaster exists shall be made by the Governor of the affected State.”



Does a State of Emergency mean you aren't allowed to go anywhere or do anything until it's lifted?

- The Governor's declaration does not normally restrict citizen movements or activities. Still, the State may limit access to affected areas due to concerns for public safety and will notify the public of these restrictions.
- If it is necessary to impose vehicular or personal movement restrictions, the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management will alert the public using all available means, including, but not limited to, the Emergency Alert System, urgent press releases, DOT highway signs, law enforcement teletypes, etc.
- NJOEM will make every effort to facilitate safe passage for utility, health care, and emergency services workers whose presence is necessary for public safety or in response to the emergency.



Does a declaration of emergency bar the sale or provision of goods and services?

- The Governor's declaration does not address restrictions on selling or providing goods or services. However, your locality may enact restrictions under its local emergency declaration. We recommend that you contact your local government for any specific information.

Is it an employer's responsibility to pay employees who cannot get to work during a State of Emergency?

- The Governor's declaration does not mandate administrative policies for individual businesses or address workplace situations where employees cannot travel. Businesses must address hours of operation and compensation on an individual basis. Once a federal disaster is declared, employees unable to work may be eligible for unemployment assistance.



Are all State Offices closed during a State of Emergency?

- The Governor's declaration does not automatically close State offices.
- Should it be necessary due to conditions experienced during the Emergency to scale back or close State offices, the Governor will make an announcement to the Cabinet members and through the media.

All disasters are unique and present their own set of challenges, so it is crucial to coordinate from the municipal level and remain in close contact with county stakeholders to provide management and oversight of jurisdictional disasters.

