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LLIS.gov Resource Compilation for the 20 May 2013 Oklahoma Tornado

The LLIS.gov team has compiled various resources to help support efforts and initiatives focused on preparedness, response, and recovery following the May 20, 2013, Oklahoma Tornado. These resources are topic-specific and have been analyzed in order to provide support during tornado response operations.

Debris Removal: Public Information and Downed Power Lines

Document Topics:

Note: The *LLIS.gov* team conducted specific research on communicating debris removal information to the public following a tornado. In addition, the team reviewed resources related to training local personnel on how to assess downed power lines during preliminary damage assessment after a hurricane. *LLIS.gov* resources related to these topics are listed below.

DEBRIS REMOVAL – PUBLIC INFORMATION

Workers have initiated debris removal operations in Moore, Oklahoma. These long-term operations will require an extensive, coordinated public information effort that may overwhelm local capacity.

The *LLIS.gov* team found that after the Joplin tornado, the cities of Joplin and Duquesne, Missouri; the State of Missouri; and FEMA partnered to effectively communicate public information about the debris removal process to residents. These entities recognized that the magnitude of the disaster created public information needs that would quickly overwhelm existing capabilities. Additionally, debris removal, housing, and other areas required specific, technical expertise not available locally.

Moore, OK, on May 27, 2013
(Source: FEMA)

- ***Lessons Learned Information Sharing.*** **Disaster Recovery: The Public Information Partnership formed by the Cities of Joplin and Duquesne, the State of Missouri, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency after the May 22, 2011 Tornado**
  https://www.llis.dhs.gov/content/disaster-recovery-public-information-partnership-formed-cities-joplin-and-duquesne-state
  This document describes the mechanisms utilized to communicate Expedited Debris Removal information to residents. These mechanisms included social media, town hall meeting, field information stations, etc. This effort was extremely successful and could be replicated.

Crews remove debris in Joplin (Source: FEMA)

- ***Lessons Learned Information Sharing*****. The Response to the 2011 Joplin, Missouri, Tornado Lessons Learned Study**
  https://www.llis.dhs.gov/content/response-2011-joplin-missouri-tornado-lessons-learned-study
  On Sunday, May 22, 2011, a catastrophic Enhanced Fujita-5 (EF-5) tornado struck the City of Joplin, Jasper County, and Newton County in southwest Missouri in the late afternoon. With winds in excess of 200 miles per hour, the ¾-mile-wide tornado cut a 6-mile path of destruction through central Joplin. The tornado caused 161 fatalities and approximately 1,370 injuries, making it the single deadliest U.S. tornado since 1947. Thousands of structures were destroyed or damaged, from single family homes to apartment buildings to large retail and public buildings, including St. John's Regional Medical Center, the Home Depot, and Wal-Mart. This after action report includes preliminary findings related to the Federal and local emergency response to the incident. All findings are based upon in-person interviews and analyzed data.

DEBRIS REMOVAL – DOWNED POWER LINES

The May 20, 2013, tornado downed several major power lines serving the area, broke electric poles, and destroyed transmission towers, substations, and transformers in Moore and the surrounding area. Soon after the tornado, utility companies began to assess damage to the electric grid. Downed power lines posed a significant hazard for survivors, volunteers, and emergency response personnel operating in the disaster area.

During the 2004 hurricane season Volusia County, Florida, was severely affected by Hurricanes Charley, Frances, and Jeanne. Emergency personnel performing damage assessments or attempting to clear debris sometimes encountered unidentified wires. In these cases, debris removal operations could not continue until a qualified individual determined whether or not the wires were downed power lines. Only power company personnel had the expertise and training necessary to make these determinations.

Since 2004, Volusia County has been working with local power companies to host a course on identifying downed power lines for police and fire department personnel who perform preliminary damage assessments following hurricanes. Volusia County may provide information about just-in-time training for personnel working in the disaster area.

- ***Lessons Learned Information Sharing.*** **Hurricane Preparedness: Training Local Government Personnel to Assess Safety of Debris Removal**

https://www.llis.dhs.gov/content/Hurricane-Preparedness-Training-Local-Government-Personnel-to-Assess-Safety-of-Debris-Removal
This document describe the Volusia County example. The document also encourages jurisdictions to train local personnel to make determinations regarding the presence of downed power lines in debris. This can facilitate prompt debris removal operations following a hurricane.