

#### RELATED TERMS

- Hurricane Floyd
- Hurricane Pick-Up Points
- Hurricane Preparedness



## Lessons Learned Information Sharing

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#### PRIMARY DISCIPLINES

- Emergency Management
- Transportation

## LESSON LEARNED

### Mass Evacuation: Using Regular Public Bus Routes to Evacuate Residents without Personal Transportation

#### SUMMARY

Emergency managers should consider using regularly scheduled public bus routes to evacuate residents without access to personal transportation. This can help ensure that residents are transported to designated evacuation staging areas in an efficient and timely manner.

#### DESCRIPTION

On September 16, 1999, Hurricane Floyd made landfall as a Category 2 hurricane at Cape Fear, North Carolina. The National Weather Service originally predicted that Hurricane Floyd would strike Florida as a Category 4 hurricane. However, the storm's track shifted north towards Georgia and later North Carolina, forcing an evacuation of over 3 million people in Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina. On September 13, 1999, more than 200,000 residents evacuated Chatham County, Georgia, when the Chatham Emergency Management Agency (CEMA) ordered a mandatory evacuation. CEMA used Chatham Area Transit (CAT) buses to evacuate residents without access to personal means of transportation. The buses picked up residents from designated hurricane pick-up points and along regular bus routes to transport them to evacuation staging areas.

It became apparent to CEMA and CAT officials during the evacuation that there were not enough buses to service both the pick-up points and the regular bus routes. CEMA officials believed that directing all buses to service the pick-up points would be ineffective because residents may not be familiar with the pick-up point locations. In addition, CEMA officials preferred the regular bus service because those routes were already designed to serve members of the population who did not have access to personal transportation. During the evacuation, CEMA directed buses to continue picking up evacuees both at the pick-up points and along the regular routes rather than completely abandon one or the other. However, CEMA's after-action report recommended using regular bus routes rather than special hurricane pick-up points to evacuate residents.

Emergency managers should consider using regularly scheduled public bus routes to evacuate residents without access to personal transportation. This can help ensure that residents are transported to designated evacuation staging areas in an efficient and timely manner.

#### CITATIONS

Chatham Emergency Management Agency. *Hurricane Floyd After-Action Report*. Jan 2000. [https://www.llis.dhs.gov/member/secure/detail.cfm?content\\_id=20053](https://www.llis.dhs.gov/member/secure/detail.cfm?content_id=20053)

Webber, Phillip. Director, Chatham County Emergency Management Agency. Interview with *Lessons Learned Information Sharing*, 27 Feb 2007.

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