



FEMA

## Lessons Learned Information Sharing

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### LESSON LEARNED

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## Emergency Operations Centers: Developing a Generic Hurricane Response Timeline

### SUMMARY

Emergency managers should consider developing a generic hurricane response timeline that highlights critical actions to be taken. This will help guide the hurricane response effort during future activations.

### DESCRIPTION

The New York State Office of Homeland Security, New York State Emergency Management Office (NY SEMO), and New York State Department of Health (NYS DOH) sponsored the Empire Express Hurricane Functional Exercise (FE) from May 30 to June 4, 2008. The exercise scenario involved a Category 2 hurricane that made landfall in New York City and impacted 3 nearby counties. This hurricane created a massive amount of debris, which posed significant public health risks to residents, and required extensive rescue operations. The New York State emergency operations center (EOC) coordinated response efforts with NYS DOH, regional health operations centers, and Nassau, Suffolk, and Westchester counties. Six federal, fifty-four state, forty-nine local, and twenty private sector entities participated in the FE. The FE tested the ability of EOCs to coordinate a statewide response to the hurricane.

The New York State EOC employs a multi-agency coordination (MAC) group to direct the state's response and recovery efforts during EOC activations. In addition to providing liaisons to ensure representation at other facilities, the MAC is responsible for developing incident goals and priorities during all EOC activations. During the FE, evaluators noted that although some MAC group procedures and tasks only apply to certain hazards, most are relevant to all activations.

The FE after-action report (AAR) observed that MAC group personnel responding to a hurricane or coastal storm could benefit from the use of a timeline that isolates activities based upon "hours to impact." A generic operational timeline could also provide support to MAC group personnel as they progress through any activation period, clarifying recurring meetings and submission deadlines. The AAR suggests that NY SEMO develop a timeline that identifies key state-level actions as a hurricane or coastal storm progresses. This timeline could stimulate critical decisions and the implementation of pre-designated actions.

For more information on developing timelines for emergency operations centers, please refer to the *Lessons Learned Information Sharing* Lesson Learned, [Emergency Management: Instituting an Operational Timeline to Organize Response Operations at Emergency Operations Centers](#).

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#### **CITATION**

Federal Emergency Management Agency. *Empire Express Hurricane Functional Exercise (FE) After Action Report (AAR)*. 12 Nov 2009.

<https://www.llis.dhs.gov/docdetails/details.do?contentID=41330>

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