



# FEMA

Prepared. Responsive. Committed.

FEMA B-653 / July 2008



# FEMA

# Focused and Flexible – FEMA

**DISASTER CAN STRIKE ANYONE**, in any community and at any time. It can take many forms, building over time, or hitting suddenly without warning. Whatever the scenario, as the nation's lead emergency management and preparedness agency, FEMA is there, ahead of disaster to help prepare for the worst and to provide care and assistance after.

**FEMA'S MISSION** is to reduce the loss of life and property and protect communities nationwide from all hazards, including natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters. FEMA leads and supports the nation in a risk-based, comprehensive emergency management system of preparedness, protection, response, recovery and mitigation.



Disaster victim hugs FEMA employee after receiving direct Housing Assistance for temporary housing.  
Mark Wolfe/FEMA

Cover Photo by Michael Raphael/FEMA



Members of the FEMA Urban Search and Rescue, Colorado Task Force 1, receive instructions before entering Ground Zero at the World Trade Center. Michael Rieger/FEMA

## A History of Care

The Congressional Act of 1803 was the earliest effort to provide disaster relief on a federal level after a fire devastated a New Hampshire town. From that point forward, assorted legislation provided disaster support. In 1979, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was established by an executive order, which merged many of the separate disaster-related responsibilities into a single agency. Since then, FEMA has dedicated itself to the mission of helping communities nationwide prepare for, respond to and recover from natural and manmade disasters – a mission strengthened when the agency became part of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in 2003. As of November 2007, FEMA has responded to more than 2,700 presidentially declared disasters.

## Continuously Strengthening Operations

To serve disaster victims and communities more quickly and effectively, FEMA builds on experience, applies lessons learned and best practices

from field operations, gathers feedback from many sources, and constantly strives to improve upon its operational core competencies:

- **Service to Disaster Victims** – Responsive and compassionate care for disaster victims is FEMA's top priority. FEMA provides rapid, ready, clear and consistent access to disaster assistance to all eligible individuals and communities. The agency also is able to assist individuals with multilingual or special needs requirements.
- **Integrated Preparedness** – FEMA works closely with federal, tribal, state and local governments, voluntary agencies, private sector partners, and the American public to ensure the nation is secured and prepared to respond to and recover from terror attacks, major disasters and other emergencies.
- **Operational Planning and Preparedness** – Working closely with federal, tribal, state and local partners, FEMA's Operational Planners assist jurisdictions to develop planning capabilities and write area- and incident-specific operational plans that will guide local response activities.
- **Incident Management** – With a forward-leaning posture, FEMA can respond more swiftly and decisively to all hazards with around-the-clock support. The agency continues to professionalize its workforce by training and certifying staff

in emergency management skills and techniques. FEMA also works closely with external partners to improve and update standards, and support the enduring efforts of America's first responders.

- **Disaster Logistics** – FEMA implements 21st century logistics and procurement systems to help efficiently and effectively plan, identify, track and distribute supplies needed by disaster victims, emergency responders and other users on the ground. Working with an array of public and private strategic partners, donors and pre-arranged contractors, a businesslike FEMA provides improved logistics integration and customer support.

- **Hazard Mitigation** – FEMA works proactively to reduce the physical and financial impact of future disasters through improved risk analysis and hazard mitigation planning, risk reduction and flood insurance. FEMA helps implement effective hazard mitigation practices in order to create safer communities, promote rapid recovery from floods and other disasters, and reduce the financial impact at the federal, tribal, state and local levels.

- **Emergency Communications** – FEMA is a leader in emergency communications by working with federal, tribal, state and local partners to establish and facilitate consistent disaster emergency communications standards, plans and capabilities. As part of this leadership role, FEMA works to forge an integrated operational link before, during and immediately after an event and is an advocate for disaster emergency communications at the national level on behalf of first responders.

- **Public Disaster Communications** – FEMA coordinates all hazards messaging before, during and after national emergencies using three strategies: public risk communications, partnership management and employee communications. By successfully managing these elements, FEMA supports operational efforts and ensures clear, consistent and effective information for disaster victims and emergency management partners and stakeholders.

- **Continuity Programs** – FEMA supports upgrades to and implementation of the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System. It is the lead agent for the Nation's programs in ensuring the continuity of government operations and essential functions and the endurance of our constitutional form of government in a catastrophic event.



Supplies being loaded at one of eight FEMA logistics centers, which support FEMA disaster responders with critical equipment and supplies and also provide resources to states during disaster operations. Liz Roll/FEMA



FEMA Mitigation staff gives flood repair and prevention information to a shopper at a local home building store. John Ficara/FEMA



A FEMA Community Relations employee talks with a victim, providing pamphlets and brochures with vital information about FEMA programs and steps to take to apply for assistance. Andrea Booher/ FEMA

# Dedicated Leadership and Employees

FEMA staff work together with tribal, state and local emergency management personnel to prepare communities before a disaster, and to respond effectively and with care. FEMA's efforts at the national and regional levels are led by individuals with a broad range of hands-on emergency management, fire, rescue, emergency medical services, law enforcement, military and private sector experience. FEMA employees are committed to their mission of protecting lives and communities. Whether full-time, part-time, temporary, supplemental or on-call, FEMA employees serve disaster victims and communities tirelessly, with compassion and understanding.

## Building a Culture of Preparedness

FEMA, through its National Preparedness Directorate and U.S. Fire Administration, provides prevention and preparedness programs, research, data collection and national policy guidance. FEMA trains emergency managers, firefighters, elected officials and other emergency responders through a variety of courses in all-hazards emergency



FEMA Community Relations employees assist residents at a grass-roots level by going neighborhood by neighborhood in hard hit disaster areas ensuring everyone who needs help is getting it. Andrea Booher/FEMA

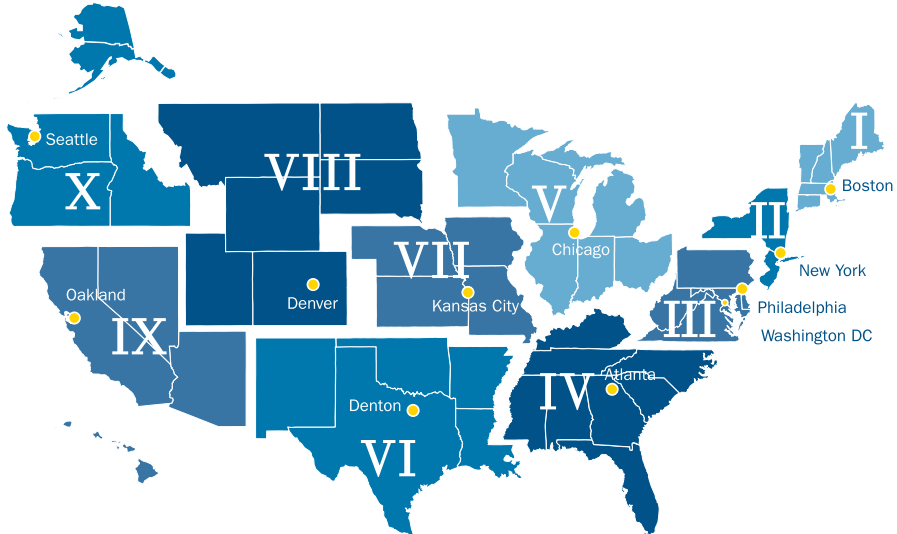
planning and response. In addition, FEMA works through its National Emergency Training Center and Center for Domestic Preparedness, as well as with other training partners, to establish and deliver effective training and professional education programs and develop a national certification system for overall emergency management competency and expertise.



Emergency responders in Level B Personal Protective Equipment conduct decontamination training at FEMA's Center for Domestic Preparedness. The center's performance-based instruction features the only toxic chemical agent training for civilian responders. CDP/FEMA

# Positioned and Prepared to Act

Headquartered in Washington, DC, FEMA also has 10 Regional Offices located throughout the country. These offices work more closely with other federal agencies, strategic partners and tribal, state and local officials in their regions, further supporting the agency's mission and core competencies. FEMA has additional facilities across the country.



## FEMA

The Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006 created a “New FEMA.” With an expanded mission, stronger regions and the added responsibility of homeland security preparedness, FEMA has implemented significant, positive changes throughout the agency to help build world-class emergency management and customer service capabilities.

The new FEMA leads and supports the nation in a risk-based, comprehensive emergency management system of preparedness, protection, response, recovery and mitigation. FEMA is forward leaning, able, agile and reliable. Businesslike in its approach, FEMA inspires public trust and workforce pride. Through timely information, resources, tools and technical assistance, FEMA is helping families and communities overcome all hazards – natural and manmade – and helping America build an overall culture of preparedness.

For more information about FEMA and its operations and capabilities, please visit [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov).

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