

**Galveston Fire Department
Standard Operating Procedure
1400.01 Tropical Storm/Hurricane**

Fire Chief _____

Implementation Date: June 2007

Revision Date: June 2011

Review Date: May 2012

Tropical Storm/Hurricane

This Standard Operating Procedure is intended to guide the department through preparation, response and recovery in the event of a Tropical Storm or Hurricane making landfall on or near Galveston. Depending on the category storm, forecasted storm surge and rainfall amounts there may be some deviation from this SOP.

This plan recognizes critical work assignments before, during, and immediately after a tropical storm or hurricane and embodies the "four conditions" of readiness described in the City's Basic Emergency Plan as parameters for this operating procedure.

These weather systems may require several days to develop and move across the Gulf of Mexico and their probable effects upon landfall remain far more predictable than other emergencies. Therefore, adequate time is provided to prepare for the storm. At the time a "Tropical Storm or Hurricane Watch" is announced, city government enters into an Emergency Condition status. During this condition, unscheduled absences may be considered only for sickness and/or other unforeseen emergencies. **The department will determine and direct all staffing patterns as necessary.**

Line of Succession

Continuity of organizational structure is essential to the effective delivery of services and resource management. Line of succession to the Fire Chief shall be the Command staff which includes the Assistant Chief, Fire Marshal followed by the Battalion Chiefs in order of their attained seniority in the classification of Battalion Chief. Those individuals who may be required to assume the position of Fire Chief within the line of succession established herein will assume full authority and responsibility as vested by applicable law for the department.

Storm Categories

Category	Pressure		Wind
	Inches	Millibars	MPH
One	28.94+	>980	74 – 95
Two	28.50 – 28.91	965 – 979	96 – 110
Three	27.91 – 28.47	945 – 964	111 – 130
Four	27.17 – 27.88	920 – 944	131 – 155
Five	>27.17	>920	>155

Preparation

1. At the beginning of hurricane season, all GFD personnel will review the Tropical Storm/Hurricane SOP.
2. The Fire Department may conduct an annual exercise or tabletop drill to review and update the Hurricane Disaster Plan

Fire Dept. Hurricane Command Plan

Once a Hurricane watch is issued, the Fire Chief may activate the Hurricane Command Plan. The department will operate according to this plan until the emergency situation has been terminated.

The Department will be divided into four Divisions;

Administration

This Division will be directed by the Fire Chief. Responsibilities will include coordination of all fire department activities. Additional suppression personnel will be assigned to this Division to assist as directed.

Documentation

This Division will be directed by the Asst. Fire Chief. Responsibilities will include documentation of all fire department activities. Additional suppression and FMO personnel will be assigned to this Division to assist as directed.

Logistics

This Division will be directed by the Fire Marshal. Responsibilities will include the coordination of all fire department fleet, facility and personnel needs, including purchases station preparations & evacuations, fleet storage, equipment acquisitions, supplies and communications. Additional suppression personnel will be assigned to this Division to assist as directed.

Operations

This Division will be directed by the Safety/Training Chief. Responsibilities will include fire, rescue and shelter operations and the coordination of personnel rehab. Suppression personnel will be assigned to this division.

All Personnel will be assigned to one of these four divisions. The Chain of command will be according to assignments within each Division. (More details regarding this plan are on page 6 of this document.)

Readiness Conditions

Condition 4 - Increased Readiness During Hurricane Season

(At the beginning of each Hurricane season and 72 hrs prior to landfall)

1. Command staff meeting to review Tropical Storm/Hurricane SOP and discuss necessary issues related to fire dept. operations prior to, during and post landfall.
2. Battalion Chiefs shall meet with their respective shifts to review Tropical Storm/Hurricane SOP and update contact information for all personnel.
3. Company Officers shall survey stations regularly to determine the condition of emergency equipment, i.e., generators, stand-by batteries for station communication systems where applicable, storm shutters and/or availability of all necessary materials for same, and antennas. Appropriate measures to correct discrepancies shall be taken without delay.
- 4 All officers will update and keep current contact information for all personnel assigned to their command.

Battalion Chiefs contact Captains

Captains contact their assigned Drivers and Firefighters.

All shifts shall submit a contact list to the Fire Chief's office at the beginning of June. Any personnel changes need to be submitted as they occur during Hurricane season.

Condition 3

(72-60 hours before 39 mph winds impact Galveston)

1. Command Staff meeting to discuss updated weather forecast, the potential for activation of Hurricane Command plan, assignments and planning for upgrade to Condition 2.
2. Once activated, each Hurricane Command Division will conduct meetings with officers assigned to each respective division as necessary.
3. Facility and fleet preparation
 3. Review of US&R Marking system
 5. Personnel shall take home all personal effects and PPE in the event that their respective station is evacuated prior to their return for duty.

Condition 2 Tropical Storm or Hurricane Watch

(59-24 hours prior to 39 mph winds affecting Galveston)

1. Command staff meeting. At this point, the Fire Chief may activate Hurricane Command Plan. Assigned personnel will be contacted by their shift Battalion Chief for their assignment.
2. All Company officers shall ensure that actions listed in Condition 4 and 3 have been accomplished. Once completed, Company Officers shall report station status via E-mail to the shift Battalion Chief.
3. Battalion Chiefs shall coordinate a reasonable amount of leave time for on duty personnel to prepare families/personal property if applicable.
4. Conduct test of all emergency power systems and communication equipment. Ensure that all apparatus/equipment are fully fueled.

Condition 1 Tropical Storm or Hurricane Warning/Pre-Landfall
(24-12 hours prior to 39 mph winds affecting Galveston)

1. Command staff meeting every 4 hours or as needed.
2. Personnel ordered to duty, shall report with clothing, personal items, food, and provisions to sustain their readiness in duty status for a minimum of 3 days.
3. As needed, Stations may be evacuated and all personnel and equipment relocated as deemed appropriate by GFD Command.
3. Total relocation of personnel and assets may be directed by the Fire Chief.
4. When the decision to cease responses is implemented, Dispatch will tone out all stations advising them so and will re-tone once the conditions allow responses to resume.

Communications

GFD Communications will continue as normal. Units may be assigned to specific channels based upon their assignment. In the event of a radio system failure, the following options are available and may be employed;

Smart Zone Failure – All radios will switch to Zone C.

Galveston Tower Failure – Radios may be switched to another Zone/Tower to be determined at that time.

Complete system Failure – All radios will switch to Zone A Channel 14 or 15.

Disaster Operations

Once landfall of a Hurricane is determined to be imminent, fire dept. operations will be based on the situation. Personnel safety and the preservation of the fleet will take priority.

State and Federal assistance may be requested at the discretion of City Emergency management officials and/or GFD Command Staff. All activities will be coordinated through City Emergency Management and GFD Command.

**Fire Department Hurricane Plan Activation
Personnel Assignments**

Administration

Personnel required: 3

Once it has been determined that the department is operating under the Hurricane Command Plan, the Fire Chief will be responsible for the Administration Division and all department personnel assigned. The Documentation, Logistics and Operations Division Chiefs will report directly to the Fire Chief. In addition, four additional personnel will be assigned to the Administration division and will report to the Fire Chief.

City E.O.C. – * 1 if determined to be necessary
County E.O.C. – 2

These personnel will work 12hr. shifts and will remain at their assigned EOC until released by the Fire Chief or Asst. Chief.

Documentation Division

Personnel Required: 3

Once it has been determined that the department is operating under the Hurricane Command Plan, the Fire Marshal will be responsible for all documentation and personnel assigned to this division. FMO personnel will be assigned to work in this division. The areas of responsibility include but are not limited to;

Purchasing/Procurement
Equipment/Station inventory
Fire Investigations

The work schedule for these personnel will be dictated by the situation and department needs.

Logistics Division

Personnel Required: 6-8

Once it has been determined that the department is operating under the Hurricane Command Plan, a Battalion Chief will be responsible for all Logistics and personnel assigned to this division. Six to eight suppression personnel will be assigned to this division. The areas of responsibility include but are not limited to;

- Fleet Preservation
- Station prep/Evacuation
- Equipment/Fleet assignments
- Communications
- Food/Water supply distribution

The work schedule will be dictated by the situation and department needs.

Operations Division

Personnel Required: 98

Once it has been determined that the department is operating under the Hurricane Command Plan, the Assistant Fire Chief will be responsible for all operations and personnel assigned to this division. The areas of responsibility include but are not limited to;

- Fire Suppression
- Rescue
- Hazardous Materials
- G.M.R. Personnel
- Rehab
- Shelter Management

A large portion of the department's personnel will be assigned to this division. The standard Chain of command will exist within this division. Shift schedules will be 12hr on/12hr. off schedule. During that 12hr. off period, personnel will remain available for emergencies based on the situation and department needs.

Fire/Rescue (2-12hr shift)

66 - Personnel

1- Command Team = Battalion Chief, Driver

6- Squads = Captain, Driver, FF, FF

Shelter Management (2-12hr. shift)

8 – Personnel per shelter

Once it is determined that shelters of last resort will be opened, it will be the responsibility of the FD to manage these shelters. Personnel from operations will be re-assigned as Shelter teams. These assignments will be made based upon station evacuations. The first Station evacuated could be tasked with staffing the first shelter. Additional shelters will be staffed in the same order.

GMR (2-12hr. shift)

16 – Personnel

Personnel assigned to GMR operations, will be functioning under the direction of Emergency Management. GFD personnel will be compensated at the GFD rate of pay. If possible, there will be a GFD officer assigned as part of the GMR Command team. Once the GMR mission is completed, all GFD personnel will return to operations for assignment based upon needs.

Operations with Outside Assistance Agencies

When it becomes necessary to bring in outside assistance such as US&R teams, State Fire Mutual Aid assistance, Incident Management Teams and the like, GFD will coordinate the actions of these agencies. A Fire Officer will be assigned to function as the Liaison between the specific group and GFD. When practical and as available, GFD personnel will be merged into these groups to assist them with their assigned operations.