

# **Erie County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan**

## **Evacuation Annex**

### **Introduction**

This function deals with the movement of people to a safe area, from an area believed to be at risk, when emergency situations necessitate such action.

### **Purpose and Objective**

This Erie County Emergency Evacuation Annex describes the provisions that have to be made to ensure the safe and orderly evacuation of people threatened by the hazards the County of Erie may face. The following should be considered:

1. Meet the requirement for a local disaster preparedness plan as provided for in the New York State Executive Law Article 2-B, Section 23, 7.b.(6).
2. Set forth specific information required by persons involved in an evacuation as a response to an emergency in Erie County
3. Describe the organization and procedures necessary to implement a timely evacuation, when ordered by the County Executive.
4. Provide for the short-term reception and care of evacuated persons.
5. Identify specific areas in Erie County, which are vulnerable to the residents and visitors of Erie County.

### **How to use this Annex**

1. This annex is appropriate for use in any emergency in Erie County requiring evacuation. The elements and procedures contained herein are directed primarily at evacuations involving significant numbers of persons (500 or more) but may be modified for response to emergencies requiring smaller evacuations.
2. Information provided in this annex is evacuation specific and supplements the basic emergency operations procedures described in the Erie County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, to which references are made.
3. This annex is designed for quick and easy reference during an emergency situation with pre-selected and analyzed vulnerable areas (hazard areas) subdivided into smaller manageable evacuation zones (EZ), delineated by publicly recognizable boundaries to facilitate public information.
4. This annex includes sections describing evacuation related operational details.

## Situations and Assumptions

Hazard considerations, which necessitate an evacuation, vary with the type and location of the emergency or disaster.

1. Most emergencies are localized and do not involve large geographic areas or sizeable populations. It is likely that for many of these localized emergencies, the capability of town, city, and village governments in Erie County will be sufficient to handle the situation. However, the Erie County Emergency Services Office would be notified of such situations even though they may not receive requests for assistance.
2. Other emergencies might require limited assistance by the Erie County Emergency Services Department.
3. An emergency affecting more than one municipal jurisdiction and requiring mass evacuation to other parts of the county or to other county's, is clearly beyond management capability and local resources. If this occurs, Erie County Emergency Services should provide assistance to manage the evacuation operation, at the request of the local disaster coordinator.
4. An evacuation would be implemented under the authorities and responsibilities contained in the New York State Executive Law, Article 2-B.
5. Based on the on-scene assessment of the emergency characteristics, the Erie County Executive may designate zones of the disaster area within which the occupancy and use of buildings and the ingress and egress of vehicles and persons may be prohibited or regulated, and issue an evacuation order.
6. The need for a mass evacuation operation generally stems from the occurrence of a major disaster. Accordingly, it is likely that the Erie County Department of Emergency Services will be activated partially or entirely, and is in place to coordinate the required evacuation operations.
7. As a hazard threatens or is imminent, a portion of the population may spontaneously evacuate prior to any advice or order to evacuate.
8. The population ordered to evacuate will be instructed to use their private vehicles for transportation to the reception area, and offer transport to neighbors and friends without transportation. Arrangements will be made to provide public transportation to all persons needing this service, including the elderly and the handicapped.
9. Strategically located pick-up points along evacuation routes will be established and publicized for persons without private transportation.
10. Although evacuation of the hazard area may be ordered, and instructions issued, it cannot be known in advance how many persons will respond to the order or follow the instructions. Every reasonable effort will be made by the authorities to remove all persons from the hazard area.

In the city, town or village levels of government, the Chief Executive of such municipalities also has this authority to issue an evacuation order. Any person who knowingly violates an evacuation order of the County Executive, promulgated pursuant to New York State Executive Law, Article 2-B, Section 24, is guilty of a class B misdemeanor.

11. A number of special groups in institutions, such as intensive care patients in hospitals that cannot be moved, may have to remain in the hazard area and receive special in-place care and protection.
12. Arrangements will be made by the Erie County Emergency Services Department with the American Red Cross to shelter and feed all evacuees, if the need arises. However, it is anticipated that the many persons ordered to evacuate will arrange for their own needs such as lodging and feeding, in motels or with family and friends, outside the disaster area.
13. After the evacuation is completed, essential workers may maintain critical services or rescue and recovery operations in the hazardous area as safety considerations permit.
14. Return of the evacuated population to their homes will be on the order of the Erie County Executive.

## **Background**

Erie County has 25 Towns, 16 Villages, and 3 Cities under its care. With New York State being a Home-Rule State, the local municipal government of the community should have an Emergency Plan. This plan should consider what could affect its community, and plan for emergency actions that will help its residents and visitors with proper actions to address the emergency situation in a safe and expeditious manner.

The types of Emergency Situations that may cause an emergency evacuation are as follows:

- Tornado
- Earth Quake
- Major Winter Storm
- Flooding
- Hazardous Materials Emergency
- Explosion
- Major Fire
- Or other major emergencies which make it necessary to evacuate

Evacuation procedures are a necessary part of every Emergency Plan. The guidelines in this plan, which detail responsibilities and functions, need to be followed in all cases.

In an evacuation of any size or duration, the availability of safe housing is a serious consideration. Crossing county, state, or international boundaries may be required in order to locate safe shelters. The International Joint Committee on Emergency Planning could help with this aspect because of its working relationships with Niagara County, and the Niagara Region of Canada.

All areas of Erie County have the potential for having any one of the above named emergencies occur within its boundaries. That is why pre-planning needs to take place by each community and Erie County as a whole, to prepare for the worst that could happen, namely an evacuation.

Some of the situations that may occur as a result of an evacuation are as follows:

Sufficient warning time to implement a planned evacuation for people identified at risk in the area of the emergency.

Spontaneous evacuation will occur when there is sufficient warning of the threat. Between 5 and 20 percent of the people at risk will evacuate before being directed to do so.

Some people will refuse to evacuate, regardless of the threat.

Some owners of companion animals will refuse to evacuate unless arrangements have been made to care for their animals. That is why Erie County also has an Annex to address sheltering of animals during times of emergency.

Roughly 20 percent of the population at risk will require shelter in a mass care facility. Many evacuees will seek shelter with relatives, friends, or motels rather than use government-provided mass care facilities.

Where available, military support (as approved by the Governor) will be available to support evacuation efforts.

For some seasonal hazards, such as a tornado or flood, some other standard designated evacuation routes will be used to evacuate people.

Evacuation of people at risk for emergency situations that occur with little or no warning will be implemented on an ad hoc basis.

## Concepts of Operation

There are several factors, which must be considered when planning an evacuation. Among these are the characteristics of the hazard or threat itself. The magnitude, intensity, speed of onset, duration, and impact on the local community, is all significant elements to be considered. They will determine the number of people to be evacuated, time available in which to effect the evacuation, and the time and distance of travel necessary to insure safety. Evacuees are moved from their homes to a designated area within the jurisdiction (or a neighboring jurisdiction in some cases) not impacted by the hazard that caused the evacuation.

### A. Evacuation Characteristics

Evacuations can be classified according to the following three characteristics, each requiring different decision-making and response organization structures.

- a. Scope: The number of people involved and the geographic area impacted
- b. Urgency: Demand for immediate action
- c. Duration of Displacement

#### 1. **Scope**

- a. **Major**: A major community-wide evacuation involving hundreds or thousands of people; which might involve evacuation of neighborhoods, communities, or other extensive geographic and densely populated areas. Examples might include a Mississauga (Canada) type evacuation, or one associated with widespread flooding of a major river or stream in a city, town or village.
- b. **Limited**: An evacuation addressing a specific localized threat, which might involve a few homes, buildings, or a focused area and population. Examples would include a hazardous materials incident of marginal but controlled risk, or local flooding of a stream affecting a group of homes or sparsely populated area.

#### 2. **Urgency**

- a. **Gradual**: An evacuation may be a response to a slowly developing hazard or potential threat, where evacuation operations would take place over several hours. An example would be a hurricane evacuation, where ample warning is

provided and the size and complexity requires a prolonged operation. An expected or developing threat of flooding in a densely populated area would be another example.

- b. Immediate: Other evacuations addressing immediate, life-threatening situations require instant decision-making and action to initiate and carry out movement. Most often these would involve some overwhelming threat associated with a transportation or industrial hazard; including fire, explosion, or toxicity; but a flash flood or dam break would also be an example.

### **3. Displacement**

- a. Long Term: Evacuations of several hours or days, and those taking place in poor weather or under other adverse conditions, may require extensive shelter and care, along with other resources and vital human services.
- b. Short Term: Evacuations can involve short-duration displacement, which does not require sheltering and other long-term services. An event where people are out of their homes or buildings for several minutes or a few hours.

## **General Considerations**

These are the provisions that have been made for carrying out a complete or partial evacuation of the people from the community that is affected. The areas likely to be evacuated will be defined after the emergency is determined. The travel routes will be designated, depending upon the potential or actual emergency. The means that will be used to transport evacuees needing transportation will be listed.

The Incident Commander will act on behalf of the Chief Elected Officer of the local community or the County, depending upon the magnitude of the emergency. The Incident Commander will be in charge of the resources needed to bring the emergency to a safe conclusion to the best of his/her ability without jeopardizing the safety of these resources.

The Chief Elected Official will be able to declare a state of emergency for that community or the county if there is a need to do so. The CEO, whether it be the

local municipal chief elected officer, or the IC in order to expand, or lessen the scope of the evacuation will, continuously update the County Executive.

The media will be informed of the status of the emergency on a regular basis, so as to keep the public informed on when or if the residents can return to their homes and businesses. This will be done by the Public Information Officer as designated by the Chief Elected Official of the community(s) affected.

The American Red Cross will be the primary agency to provide sheltering when an evacuation occurs. The Red Cross has working arrangements with schools, hotels, and other large buildings in order to accomplish housing for evacuees. They will utilize locations that are pre-established by them, in every general area within and outside of Erie County. They will supply the necessary essentials, such as food, and other items that will be needed by the evacuees. Erie County does not have the capabilities to support ancillary pop up shelters. Therefore, evacuees will be instructed to proceed to a designated shelter location.

Once the evacuation process is completed, the areas that have been evacuated will be secured by every safe means possible, in order to insure protection of property and safety. If local law enforcement cannot handle the security of the evacuated site, then whatever means possible will be obtained to accomplish this function.

Once the area is deemed safe for return by evacuees, provisions will be made to release the evacuated residents and businesses in an orderly manner to ensure that no un-invited guests get into the site ahead of the evacuees. Residents will provide identification that they live or work in the evacuated area in order to return.

### **Authority**

Authority and decision-making in evacuation may differ depending on the scope, urgency, and shelter resources required. According to Article 2-B, ultimate authority rests with the local government Chief Executive, through other emergency service officials can order and conduct evacuations under their authorities and responsibilities when public safety is threatened or imperiled. This would include law enforcement personnel, fire officers, and public health officials.

Although emergency service officers (e.g., police, fire) may not have specifically stated authority to conduct evacuations, they have broadly implied authority to exercise reasonable judgment in assuring public safety, which is often applied to evacuation decisions.

1. Local Emergency Services Officers would be expected to take the lead in evacuation decision-making and operations when evacuations are characterized by:
  - Limited scope
  - Urgency for immediate action and movement
  - Limited or short-term displacement, with minor demand for services
2. Leadership, authority and management of evacuations is the legitimate responsibility of the local government Chief Executive in all situations; but active involvement is usually exercised only in evacuations characterized by the following demands:
  - Major scope
  - Prolonged action and movement
  - Demands for services and resources including public and private sector assistance

### **Direction and Control**

#### **1. Immediate Evacuation Requirements**

When local evacuation must be undertaken immediately because of an existing or threatened public safety situation, direction and control is the responsibility of the chief emergency service officer (first responder) at the scene.

#### **2. Major Evacuation**

A major community-wide evacuation is the responsibility of the Chief Executive of the jurisdiction where evacuation is required. In evacuations involving multi-jurisdiction evacuation, the County Executive shall be responsible for overall coordination of evacuation operations, working with the local Chief Executives to execute the evacuation operations.

### **Organization and Assignment of Responsibilities**

#### **Chief Executive Officer –**

Requires the evacuation coordinator to report to the EOC when notified of an emergency situation. (Assigned to representative from Erie County Emergency Services).

Should issue, or designate a PIO to issue a statement on the jurisdiction's policy on people that do not comply with evacuation instructions. This statement addresses the consequences for not evacuating and the services

(food, medical, utilities, sanitation, etc.) that will be discontinued or interrupted in the evacuation area.

Issues evacuation instructions or an evacuation order when appropriate.

**Evacuation Coordinator** – (Assigned to Erie County Emergency Services or Local Disaster Coordinator).

Reviews known information about the emergency situation and makes recommendations to the Emergency Manager on the appropriate evacuation options to implement,

Determines any scene(s) where IC(s) may have already evacuated. If so, identifies perimeters and verify extent of abandonment.

Identifies assembly areas for picking up people that do not have their own transportation.

Identifies evacuation routes.

Estimates the traffic capacity of each designated evacuation route.

Selects evacuation routes from risk area to designated mass care Facilities.

Examines access to evacuation routes from each part of the risk area.

Coordinates with law enforcement officials.

Assists, as appropriate, with the implementation of the animal care annex with the assistance of volunteers, to evacuate animals at risk during catastrophic emergency situations.

**Emergency Manager** –

Makes recommendations to the “CEO” on the appropriate evacuation option to implement.

## **Law Enforcement –**

Provide traffic control during evacuation operations. Operational Considerations include:

Route assignment departure scheduling.

Road capacity expansion.

Entry control for outbound routes.

Perimeter control on inbound routes.

Traffic flow, including dealing with breakdowns.

Establishment of rest areas.

Secures, protects, and houses those prisoners that must be evacuated.

Assists in the evacuation of the risk area, as necessary.

Protects property in the evacuated area.

Limits access to the evacuated area.

Coordinates with the evacuation coordinator.

## **Public Works –**

Verifies the structural safety of routes (roads, bridges railways, waterways, airstrips, etc.) that will be used to evacuate people.

## **Public Information Officer –**

Disseminates the following types of instructional materials and information to evacuees:

Identification of the specific area(s) to be evacuated.

List of items that evacuees should take with them (such as food, water, medicines, portable radio, fresh batteries, clothing, sleeping bags).

Departure times.

Pick-up points for people requiring transportation assistance.

Evacuation routes. (Give easy to understand instructions using major roads, streets, highways, rivers, etc.)

Location of mass care facilities outside of the evacuation area.

Keeps evacuees and the general public informed on evacuation activities and the specific actions they should take.

Disseminates information on appropriate actions to protect and care for companion and farm animals that are to be evacuated or left behind.

#### **Mass Care Coordinator –**

Activates staff and opens mass care facilities outside the evacuation area when directed to do so by appropriate authority.

#### **Health Department –**

Ensures patient population is reduced in hospitals, nursing homes, and other health care facilities, if evacuation becomes necessary.

Ensures transport and medical care are provided for the patients being evacuated.

Ensures continued medical care is provided for patients who cannot be moved when hospitals, nursing homes, and other health care facilities are evacuated.

### **On-Scene Operations –**

1. For most evacuation situations, it will be necessary to establish on-scene direction and control operations. Such operations can facilitate decision-making and the coordination of the overall emergency response by the EOC staff. The on-scene direction and control operations should include the following:

- First Responders – First person on location to take initial action.
- On-Scene Commander – First Officer on Location that takes command.
- Evacuation Coordinator – Assists with coordination of command actions.

### **Administration and Logistics –**

**Administration** – Specific areas to be addressed include:

Records and reports associated with tracking the status (evacuation notices, number evacuated, number of evacuees in mass care facilities, etc.) of evacuation events.

Attaching maps that depict the routes that have been designated as primary and alternate evacuation routes.

**Logistics** – Specific areas to be addressed include:

The provisions that have been made to move from the area being evacuated are those essential supplies and equipment items that are needed to sustain operations and to meet the needs of evacuees.

Typical items are:

Food

Water and water trailers

Medical Supplies

Food, carriers, leashes, etc. for animals.

Sanitation devices.

Portable generators and lighting devices.

Security

Gas and diesel fuel.

Public works equipment and vehicles such as bulldozers, graders, dump trucks, snowplows, etc.

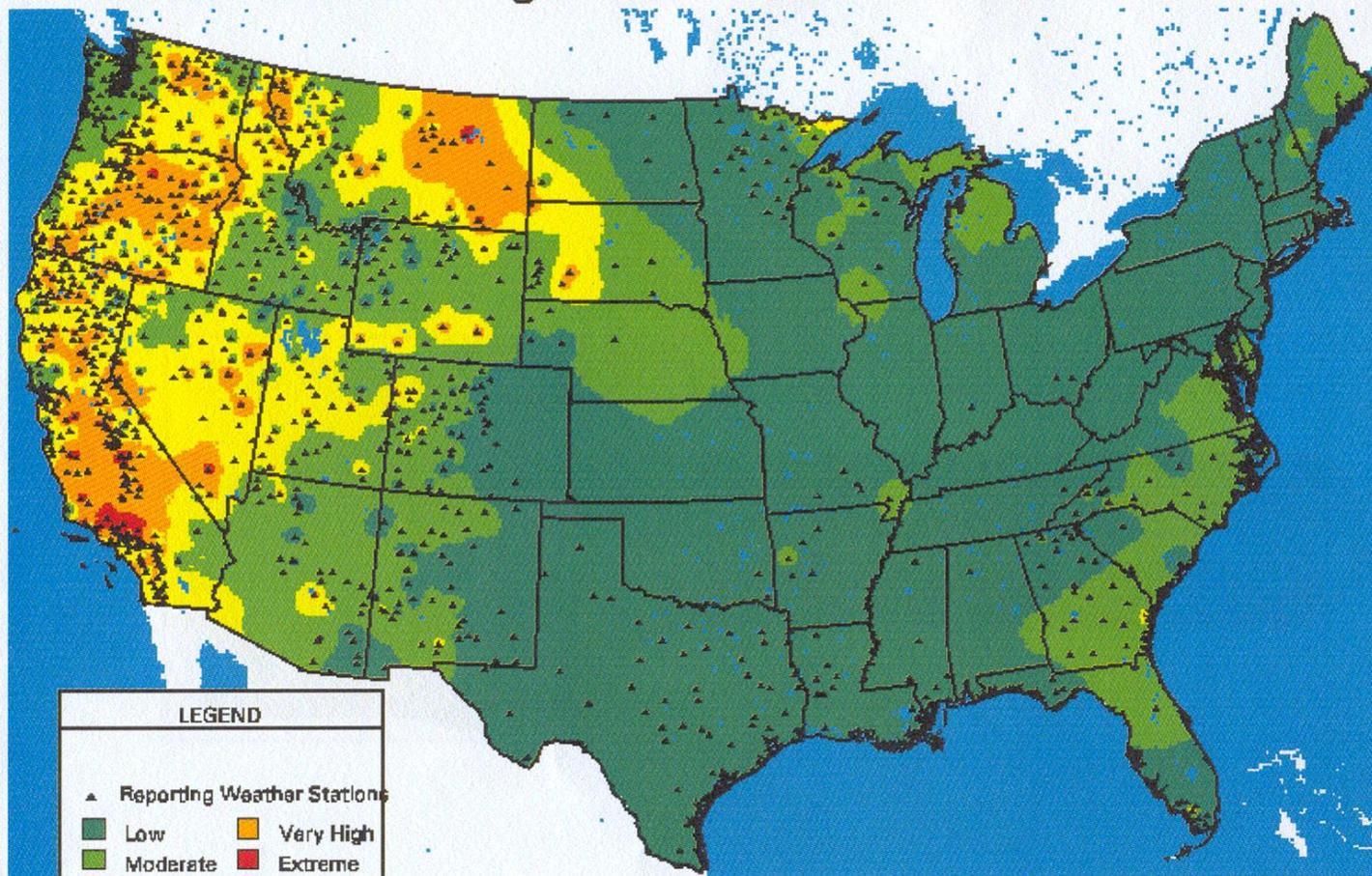
Mutual aid agreements with neighboring jurisdictions that address the support (law enforcement personnel, vehicles to transport evacuees, mass care staff and facilities to shelter evacuees, etc.) to be provided by the jurisdictions to facilitate evacuation operations.

**Maintenance of this Annex to the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan**

The Erie County Department of Emergency Services will be responsible for the maintenance of this annex. This annex will be updated, as necessary, and will be evaluated at least every other year, or when necessary.

May, 2010

# Observed Fire Danger Class: 26-JUL-04



LEGEND	
▲ Reporting Weather Stations	
■ Low	■ Very High
■ Moderate	■ Extreme
■ High	■ Water

{Inv. Dist.<sup>2</sup> Interp.}

WFAS-MAPS Graphics FIRE BEHAVIOR RESEARCH MISSOULA, MT

