

Executive Summary for Emergency Coastal Response

(Updated August 2024)



Introduction

Volusia County, Florida, is a coastal community with 37 miles of developed Atlantic coastline, 50 bridges, and 1,000 miles of county-maintained roads. It encompasses 1,101.1 square miles and has a population of 590,357 residents. The county's demographic profile reveals a median age of 46.6 years, with 25.7% of the population aged 65 and over, indicating a significant senior presence. Economically, the median household income stands at \$64,857, with an employment rate of 52.9%.

Volusia County understands the unique vulnerabilities and risks associated with the community. Therefore, Volusia County provides a wide variety of emergency response services to residents and visitors, including fire protection, law enforcement, infrastructure maintenance, debris removal, and coastal storm response.

Volusia County's number one priority is always life safety. To maintain the County's life safety priority, Volusia County developed a stance that allows it to remain flexible and adapt to any weather characteristic affecting our dynamic coastline, roadways, bridges, waterways, utilities, and other public infrastructure. Volusia County continues to take a forward-leaning posture to anticipate the potential impacts the community could face during a potential event and educate the community on prevention, preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation efforts. Partnerships with local governments, non-profits, and private sector organizations are involved with preparing residents for impending impacts. Volusia County has established relationships with its municipalities, state and federal agencies, contractors, vendors, and volunteer organizations in anticipation of any potential impacts the community may experience.

Preparedness

Volusia County, Florida, and its 16 municipalities must be adequately prepared to address the many disasters threatening local governments, neighborhoods, infrastructure, institutions, and businesses. This preparation requires continuous actions to decrease the vulnerabilities of the county to these potential disasters and weather events, to be able to provide emergency services when a disaster does strike and to accelerate the recovery process and return quickly and effectively to normal or identify the new normal after the impacts of such an event. This document summarizes the response plans that Volusia County manages and utilizes to coordinate emergency response.

Community meetings: Coordination with municipalities, to include their building officials to identify the community's vulnerabilities and areas of concern due to previous storm impacts.

Community outreach and public education: Consistently conduct public education presentations and participate in community outreach to better prepare Volusia County citizens on an individual level for the different types of hazards that the county may face.

Partner meetings, trainings, and exercises: Regularly planning and participating in trainings and exercises that address prevention, preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery for a variety of hazards that may impact Volusia County emergency preparedness is a year-round activity within the Public Works Department, the primary agency within the County responsible for infrastructure maintenance, operation, improvement, and repair. This includes the Road and Bridge Division, Coastal Division, Water Resources & Utilities, Engineering & Construction, Mosquito Control, Solid Waste, and Traffic Engineering.

Certain personnel responsible for keeping contact lists and response plans up to date are cognizant of the importance of these activities throughout the year. Individuals responsible for the upkeep of equipment ensure that equipment necessary during an emergency is maintained in a state of readiness throughout the year for potential emergencies, including hurricanes.

Detailed planning includes meticulous team assignments within each maintenance area and the identification of critical paths that should be prioritized in the event of a disaster. It also includes identifying suitable storage and staging areas for mass debris removal.

Tools available in response specific to an erosive coastal storm event based on the response necessitated by the event conditions:

- 3,000 linear feet of trap bags and supplies to respond to coastal erosion concerns
- Executed agreement with the Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND) for about 200,000 cubic yards of beach quality sand at an upland DMMA in Edgewater, Florida
- Beach Sand Haul Report that identifies numerous upland sand sources for distribution to the various reaches of the County's beaches along with identified truck haul routes.
- Two (2) Sand Haul, Beach Restoration, and Debris Removal contracts in place for recovery efforts
- Current area-wide permit with FDEP allowing for installation of TrapBags on private properties where appropriate easements are provided.

- Easements were recorded for at-risk private property response, and easements were available for oceanfront property owners who have yet to sign.
- Road and Bridge along with traffic engineering crews stage for infrastructure repairs, traffic management, and stabilization for road failures, traffic signal repairs, traffic management/detours.
- Volusia County maintains 24 continuing service contracts with engineers and contractors, as well as ongoing agreements for asphalt and milling when emergency repairs require supplemental resources.

Planning Components

Volusia County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan

During an incident/emergency, Volusia County has developed a Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, which shall be implemented using the following operational priorities:

- Life safety and the safety of first responders shall be the number one priority, along with the general health and welfare of Volusia County Citizens.
- The protection of property and the environment.
- The restoration of essential infrastructure, utilities, and essential functions to provide for the citizens of Volusia County.
- Coordinating the efforts of not only Volusia County but activating the resources, personnel, and expertise of the municipalities, non-governmental organizations, and all other stakeholders within the Emergency Management Program.

Response: Consequence Management

Local State of Emergency

“Declaration of a Local State of Emergency” in accordance with the provisions of state statutes. This declaration may include promulgating any necessary emergency ordinances, including those requiring the closure of businesses, public offices, and evacuation orders. The County assumes complete control of County-owned resources and facilities for purposes of supporting emergency response and disaster recovery operations. If the response to the event threatens to deplete available county and municipal resources, the county may request state assistance and/or mutual aid from adjacent jurisdictions.

Activation of the Emergency Operations Center

Volusia County utilizes Emergency Support Functions, which focus on information sharing, planning, and resource support for emergency operations. The designated representatives of the lead agencies or organizations of the county's Emergency Support Functions assume control of the operation of that function. Emergency Support Functions include but are not limited to mass care, utilities (power, water, gas), Public Works, Law Enforcement, Fire Services, business industry, and local non-profits. Personnel representing the Emergency Support Functions and assigned to the EOC will activate their operations in accordance with established plans and procedures for that Emergency Support Functions.

Public protective actions, e.g., evacuation, will be implemented as necessary through the cooperation of the County Emergency Support Functions and involved municipalities. When protective actions have been pre-planned, they will be implemented per established procedures and pre-determined decision guidelines. Otherwise, protective action decisions will either be made by the on-scene incident command or the County Emergency Operations Center.

Evacuations and Notification

The Emergency Operations Center will coordinate all County assistance and support for multi-jurisdiction evacuations under the direction and control of the Director of Emergency Management. The Manager's Advisory Group will make policy decisions (such as deploying personnel, determining evacuation routes, and opening shelters).

The Volusia County Sheriff will activate curfews when necessary and coordinate enforcement in conjunction with municipal law enforcement.

Evacuation routes have been coordinated between Volusia County Emergency Management, the Volusia Sheriff's Office, Florida Highway Patrol, Florida Department of Transportation, Volusia County Road and Bridge Division, Volusia County Traffic Engineering, and local municipalities. The main evacuation routes are the major roadways in the county. These include the interstate system (I-95, I-4), U.S. highways (U.S. 1, U.S. 92), state roads (S.R. 40, S.R. 421, S.R. 44, S.R. 415, S.R. 5A, S.R. 442, S.R. A1A). Alternate routes will be immediately identified if evacuation routes are closed or damaged.

To ensure the residents' life safety, especially during Atlantic CAT 3-5 storms, barrier island residents will be advised through the media, the Alert Volusia, Everbridge Notification System, social media, and the Emergency Management application to consider leaving as early as possible before a mandatory evacuation order goes into

effect. If the likelihood of an impact scenario exists, mobile/manufactured home residents and those residing in known flood-prone areas will also be advised to consider evacuating before a mandatory evacuation order is issued.

Targeted evacuations will be considered and coordinated when previously damaged or significant vulnerabilities are identified in the predicted impact area. A mandatory evacuation order will ensure sufficient clearance time for the specified specialized populations to evacuate threatened areas before tropical storm-force winds (winds > 39 mph) arrive. Notification for targeted evacuations will be disseminated through the previously stated methods. If contact cannot be completed, notification will occur by any means necessary.

As a result of the 2022 hurricanes, many oceanfront properties have yet to have an opportunity to complete permanent structural repairs. The County has been actively engaging with County and municipal building officials to identify residential structures at risk of collapse during a storm event. The applicable agency with jurisdiction over the upland property is prepared to issue property-specific evacuations, based on current structural assessments, in advance of a significant coastal storm to ensure that lives are not at risk.

General re-entry to all areas previously evacuated will be authorized based on public safety and security concerns, operational requirements for search and rescue, establishment of essential infrastructure and services, and the need to reestablish property owners on their property. This re-entry policy will be established as soon as possible and with as few restrictions and limitations as possible regarding public safety requirements. The decision to establish general re-entry will be evaluated through continuous coordination among the various county and state agencies, municipal law enforcement agencies, and adjacent counties.

Building safety inspections under the supervision of the building official for a specific jurisdiction may be required if structural integrity concerns exist. Mutual aid from other building officials and engineers will be used as requested. Additional resources may be requested through WebEOC to the Florida Division of Emergency Management.

Contracts, Master Agreements, Rental Agreements, Mutual Aid Agreements

An emergency is any condition that may affect the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Volusia County or a condition that stops or seriously impairs the necessary function of the County government. If emergency purchases are required when the Purchasing and Contracts Division is closed, the Department / Division Director may purchase at his/her discretion and shall contact the Purchasing and Contracts Division the next business day to obtain an emergency purchase authorization.

This type of purchase is subject to all requirements stated above and shall be processed in the same manner. Approvals are obtained as required per the dollar value of the purchase. Emergency Purchase Orders are assigned special numbers to designate the specific emergency and to facilitate tracking as may be required for various agencies, such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The director of Purchasing and Contracts may designate one or more Purchasing and Contracts Division staff members during major emergencies (such as storms or hurricanes) to be on call twenty-four hours a day.

State Resources: State and Federal emergency management representatives reside within the emergency Operations Center during an incident to maintain continuous communication and resource access. The Florida Division of Emergency has the capability to provide resources or order resources during an emergency if the county has an unmet need.

Recovery, Mitigation, and Resiliency

The County will begin an initial damage assessment to determine whether more detailed damage assessments are necessary and identify those areas where further efforts should be concentrated.

Short-term recovery begins immediately after the event and is the transition from response to recovery. Community agencies are integral in ensuring survivors' long and short-term recovery. The short-term priority needs of disaster survivors and locally damaged infrastructure priorities are:

- Providing basic human needs (food, clothing, shelter, and medical assistance).
- Restoring critical infrastructure and facilities (power, communications, water, sewage, transportation).
- Restoring critical functions (Fire/EMS/Law Enforcement, Infrastructure, Government).
- Meeting societal needs (rules of law, crisis counseling)

Volusia Prepares is a multi-organizational, multi-jurisdictional group of local government agencies, community groups, private sector organizations, and interested public members coordinating mitigation activities.

Resiliency efforts by the County are at the council's direction, where capital improvement projects are approved and funded.