

# **Egg Harbor Fire Department and First Responders Standard Operating Guidelines**

**SUBJECT: SEVERE WEATHER PROCEDURES**

**SOG 831**

**PURPOSE:** To have a basic plan to preserve or lessen the effect of the storm on life and property. Storm periods can be divided into three basic phases: storm preparations, storm period, and post storm period. It is essential that Department members understand terminology used by the National Weather Service. Watches indicate that weather conditions are conducive for the formation of storms and the public should expect bad weather. Warnings indicate that a storm is in progress and that persons should take immediate cover.

**SCOPE:** This policy shall apply to all members of the Egg Harbor Fire Department.

## **STORM PREPARATION:**

While under the storm watch, members should expect threatening weather. Members' families should be prepared for threatening weather. If severe weather conditions are announced, EHFD personnel are to first be certain they provide for the safety and well-being of their family before responding to any request(s) for assistance. Stations should be prepared to respond for emergencies associated with storms.

## **STORM PERIOD:**

During any storm, members must care for and provide shelters for their family. This should be done prior to the storm period, as there normally are requests for assistance from the Fire Department. If the winds exceed 50 mph or conditions place the firefighters and equipment at risk, vehicles should not leave the station unless absolutely necessary. Keep radio traffic to a minimum.

## **POST STORM PERIOD:**

Equipment shall be placed back in service as soon as possible. Damaged or broken equipment must be reported to the appropriate company officer. A report of damage shall be prepared and submitted to the Fire Chief indicating the damage and any loss that occurred. The Incident Commander will give out assignments based on the continued size-up of community needs.

**TORNADO:**

A request for the Fire Department after a tornado presents a unique challenge. Buildings may be partially damaged or destroyed creating a collapse hazard. The first priority shall be to conduct a search for possible victims in buildings, structures, or vehicles that have been struck. A minimum number of firefighters shall be used to conduct searches. Any persons found should be removed from the building if possible and their injuries assessed and treatment rendered to the ability of the crews on the scene. Persons may have to be treated where they are found. Department crews must also be aware that ambulances may not be available due to their demand elsewhere in the community, or they may have been hit by the tornado and disabled. An Incident Command Post shall be established to control resources.

**UTILITY CONTROL:**

All utilities must be controlled as soon as possible to prevent any unwanted escalation of the situation. It will be imperative that we work closely with all affected utility companies to assist us with controlling the situation. Gas must be shut off at the tank as broken gas lines in the building can cause an accumulation of gas in pockets or areas. Electricity must be controlled to prevent electrical equipment from arcing and introducing ignition sources into the building causing fires. Once utilities have been controlled, this must be communicated to command.

**RESCUE:**

The rescue of endangered occupants will be of the utmost concern. Rescues in heavily damaged or partially collapsed structures will require careful consideration. Shoring equipment, lifting equipment, or even heavy equipment may be required to facilitate rescue. The rescue should be carried out, if possible, with medical personnel present to care for trapped victims. Rescue methods used will vary with the situation; however they will be carried out with safety of the firefighters in mind and so as not to compromise the safety of any endangered occupants. If needed contact Mutual Aid and request their rescue equipment and personnel.

**SECUREMENT:**

All buildings shall be secured after they have been searched. Buildings shall be marked or identified that they have been searched so as not to waste time and resources researching buildings.

**FIRES:**

Fires as a result of storms shall be combated as outlined by our Standard Operating Guideline for that occupancy.