

WEST PALM BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT

IV-16 HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS PROCEDURE

EFFECTIVE: 01/01/2005

CALEA Standards: N/A

CFA Standards: 20.01, 20.02, 20.04

I. POLICY: The West Palm Beach Police Department will provide police protection and services to the citizens of the City when a hurricane threatens or strikes the City. In an emergency situation such as a hurricane, each employee must know his or her duties and responsibilities.

II. DEFINITIONS:

A. **Hurricane Watch** - A National Weather Service announcement that hurricane conditions may develop within a specified area. A hurricane is not imminent at this time, but this is the time to begin preliminary preparations for the storm.

B. **Hurricane Warning** - A National Weather Service announcement that a hurricane is imminent and is expected to affect a specified geographic area within 24 hours. Preparations should be made.

III. ANNUAL HURRICANE REVIEW:

A. In the first week of June each year, the Assistant Chief of Support Operations will coordinate a review of the Hurricane Preparedness Procedure.

B. It is the responsibility of the Bureau Chiefs and Division Commanders to ensure the following actions are completed:

1. All personnel are notified of the beginning of hurricane season and this standard operating procedure is reviewed.
2. All emergency equipment and generators are tested for proper operation.
3. The availability of necessary emergency materials to secure the building is verified.
4. A list is prepared of emergency supplies anticipated to be needed in the event of a hurricane.
5. All Supervisors will verify the home telephone numbers of all personnel under their command. A list of home telephone numbers for all Police Department employees is available in each Bureau and Shift Commander's Office.
6. All Police Department personnel, sworn and civilian, in all divisions are subject to call in during this emergency situation. All personnel are advised to take the necessary steps to ensure the safety of their families and personal property as soon as possible during a storm threat.

IV. STORM DEVELOPING:

A. When a storm is forming that may later pose a threat to the community, the Assistant Chief of the Field Operations Bureau or a designee will establish a liaison with the City's Emergency Management Coordinator. The Emergency Management Coordinator is in contact with the Palm Beach County Division of Emergency Management, the State Division of Emergency Management and the National Weather Service. The Emergency Management Coordinator will advise the police liaison of all pertinent weather information. In the event the City's Emergency Management coordinator is not available, contact should be made with the County's Division of Emergency Management.

B. The Assistant Chief of Field Operations or a designee will contact the West Palm Beach Emergency Management Coordinator to determine the City's emergency plans as well as those of the Palm Beach County Emergency Operations Center.

C. The Dispatch Operations Supervisor will coordinate communications between the Department, the Emergency Operations Center, and the Fire Department.

D. Each District Commander will verify that extra equipment and rain gear are available in quantities to meet anticipated need in the event a hurricane threatens the City of West Palm Beach.

E. The Support Services Division Commander is responsible for ensuring the following:

1. All technical and non technical aspects of the Police Administration Building will operate under emergency conditions.
2. Necessary manpower will be arranged for security of the Police Administration Complex, including the parking garage, while under emergency conditions.
3. Food and quarters for all personnel will be available, if it becomes necessary.

F. Personnel are advised to protect their family and personal property as soon as possible. Personnel are subject to immediate recall during the emergency.

V. HURRICANE WATCH: The following procedures are to be followed whenever the National Weather Service includes the City of West Palm Beach in a hurricane watch. The Chief of Police reserves the right to initiate these procedures prior to the issuance of a National Weather Service Hurricane Watch Bulletin.

A. The Field Operations Commander or a designee will:

1. Contact the City Garage to ensure that sufficient quantities of extra equipment (i.e., tires, batteries, headlights, tune-up parts) are available.
2. Verify all officers have dry clothing and rain gear in lockers, assigned vehicles, personal vehicles, or somewhere on the premises.
3. Verify the emergency numbers of utility companies.
4. Verify that a current list of all Police personnel and their phone numbers is available to the Shift Lieutenants.
5. If possible, allow on-duty personnel to leave early to secure their property and care for their families.

B. The Assistant Chief of Support Operations will oversee all matters relating to building security and continued functioning of the various police support functions.

C. When asked questions by citizens concerning the storm, all personnel should keep the following in mind:

1. The decision of a citizen to remain at home or go to a shelter is his or her responsibility. The Department will not decide for the individual.
2. The Department will not furnish transportation to shelters except in extreme or unusual circumstances. The decision to transport a citizen to a shelter can only be made by an on-duty Patrol Supervisor.
3. The Dispatch Operations Supervisor will procure a list from the City's Emergency Management Coordinator of Red Cross shelters and the area each shelter is designated to service. Citizens may be advised concerning the location of the nearest shelter.
4. The Department does not assist citizens in boarding up their homes, moving lawn furniture, etc.

VI. HURRICANE WARNING: The following procedures are to be followed whenever the Palm Beach Division of Emergency Management includes the City of West Palm Beach in a hurricane warning:

A. The City's Emergency Operations Center (EOC), located at the Water Treatment Plant Dispatch Center, will be activated in accordance with the City's Emergency Management Manual and the EOC Standard Operating Procedures.

B. Each District Commander or a designee will ensure:

1. Officers going off duty check with the Shift Lieutenant for future orders before leaving the station.
2. If it becomes necessary to call in extra personnel, the next scheduled shift will be called in first.
3. Contact is maintained with the West Palm Beach Emergency Management Coordinator so any evacuation orders issued can be implemented.

C. To facilitate compiling the required post storm reports, an officer will be assigned to the Field Operations Commander as an Administrative Aide.

The aide will maintain an incident log which will reflect a chronological sequence of events and will include:

1. The time the emergency procedure went into effect.
2. The actions taken to mobilize personnel and equipment for the emergency.
3. Intelligence information which becomes available.
4. The reporting times of all personnel both coming on and going off duty.
5. Other pertinent information concerning the storm and the Department's operations.

D. In extreme emergencies, all police personnel will be placed on duty. Quarters and meals will be provided.

E. Citizens coming to the Police Department for protection from the storm will be directed to the nearest designated Red Cross shelter. The Police Department is not a designated Red Cross shelter. Neither citizens nor the families of Department personnel are allowed to stay in the Police Department Building during the storm.

F. All officers who are on leave or off duty on the day of the hurricane are to check with their Supervisor and/or Dispatch Operations for instructions.

VII. DURING AND AFTER A HURRICANE:

A. Each District Commander will be responsible for ensuring that:

1. Additional zones are assigned;
2. Manpower and vehicles are available; and
3. Patrol Units are manned by two (2) officers, when practical.

B. Units will not traverse flooded areas.

C. In case of an emergency on the Intracoastal Waterway, the U. S. Coast Guard Station, Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office Marine Division or the Florida Marine Patrol will be called. Assistance may also be available from the Palm Harbor Marina.

D. Any substantiated loss of life during the storm will immediately be reported to the Dispatch Operations Supervisor.

E. The Dispatch Operations Supervisor or a designee will compile storm damage information.

1. Patrol Officers will immediately report blocked streets, downed power lines, and other damages which involve an imminent threat of bodily harm or structural collapse.
2. If telephone contact becomes difficult, the Dispatch Operations Supervisor will establish open lines with utility companies, the City Emergency Operations Center, and others requiring frequent contact.
3. Any substantiated loss of life or significant damage (i.e., building collapses) from the storm will immediately be reported to the City Emergency Operations Center.

F. The Assistant Chief of the Support Operations Bureau or a designee will be responsible for ensuring that the entire Police Station, including the basement and equipment room, are checked frequently for water leaks. Appropriate action must be taken to prevent damage.

G. When, in the judgment of the Chief of Police, it is necessary to request outside assistance, he or she will advise the Emergency Management Coordinator or a designee in the City Emergency Operations Center of the exact type and amount of assistance required. The request for assistance will be routed to the appropriate emergency response agency by the E.O.C.

H. All personnel mobilized during the storm will remain on duty until authorized to leave by their Supervisor.

I. Each District Commander will identify those geographic areas requiring additional police presence after the storm and make assignments accordingly.

J. The Public Information Officer will coordinate all statements with the City's Emergency Management Coordinator and will be responsible for disseminating information to the public and the media regarding Police activities.

K. Each officer is personally responsible for returning all equipment he or she requisitions during the storm to its proper place.

L. Within one week after returning to normal operations, Bureau Commanders will present a complete report to the Chief of Police concerning all actions taken by their respective Bureaus during the storm. The reports will include a critique of the operations and recommendation for future emergencies.

VIII. REFERENCE:

- City's Emergency Management Manual.

Delsa R. Bush, Chief of Police

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Job Title Task Files: Dispatch Operations, A/C Support Services, A/C Field Operations, Captain Field Operations, Building Facility Supervisor, Patrol Sgt., PIO