



SPECIALTY OPERATIONS AND CRITICAL INCIDENTS			906.00	
<div><div></div><div>UNUSUAL OCCURRENCES</div><div></div></div>				
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## PURPOSE

The purpose of this standard operating procedure is to establish guidelines for a comprehensive emergency management system designed to preserve life, minimize damage, and ensure an efficient agency response to all types of emergencies and disasters.

## SCOPE

This procedure shall apply to all Punta Gorda Police Department personnel.

## DISCUSSION

Charlotte County is exposed to many hazards, all of which have the potential to disrupt the community, cause damage, and inflict casualties. Natural hazards include floods, tornadoes, and fires. Other hazards include hazardous materials accidents, plane crashes, escapes, manhunts, or other law enforcement-intensive operations. This procedure calls for the creation of Emergency

Management Plans for responding to hurricanes, civil disturbances, mass arrests, and other emergencies that will utilize the basic procedures outlined herein.

The complexity and variety of potential unusual occurrences make it impractical to include detailed plans for all types of emergencies in this document. Instead, this directive will establish areas of responsibility for key members of the agency and provide them with the necessary authority to cope with any unusual occurrence. The success of our emergency response will depend on detailed preplanning and the flexibility, ingenuity, and creativity of our members.

Our primary goal as an agency is to protect life and property while maintaining peace and order. Your ability to adapt to the situation while following these guidelines may be instrumental in saving lives and will greatly assist the community's recovery from a disaster. The Chief of Police and the City Manager share responsibility for emergency management activities pertaining to the Police Department. When an emergency exceeds their capability to respond, assistance will be requested under the provisions of the Florida Mutual Aid Act.

## DEFINITIONS

1. **Casualty/Missing Person Post:** A post established near the site of a disaster involving mass casualties that will receive, record, and investigate reports of casualties and missing persons. Officers and crime scene technicians assigned to this post will work with the Medical Examiner's Office, the Office of Disaster Preparedness and the Red Cross to recover and identify casualties.
2. **Checkpoint:** Security checkpoints established to control entry into heavily damaged, evacuated, or restricted areas.
3. **Emergency Management:** The preparation for and the carrying out of all emergency responsibilities and functions, other than those for which military forces or other federal agencies are primarily responsible, to prevent, mitigate, or repair injury and damage resulting from the occurrence or imminent threat of widespread or severe damage, injury or loss of life or property resulting from emergencies.
4. **Emergency Management Director (EMD):** The Chief of the Punta Gorda Fire Department is the Emergency Management Director for the City of Punta Gorda.
5. **Emergency Support Function:** The Charlotte County Emergency Operation Center (EOC)/State uses a functional group response to a disaster situation. Eighteen support functions (e.g. Transportation, Communications, Public Works and Engineering, Firefighting, etc.) are represented by a contact person at the EOC during a full activation. The law enforcement, security function (ESF-16) is manned by Sheriff's Office and Police Department personnel and representatives from other local and state law enforcement agencies.

6. **Emergency Operations Center (EOC):** The City of Punta Gorda's Emergency Operation Center acts as the direction and control facility during major disasters. All available resources, and requests for assistance from various levels of government, are coordinated through this point. It is normally activated during hurricane preparation, response, and recovery operations; however, it may be activated whenever a response to an emergency requires resources beyond what the police department or county government can provide.
7. **Incident Command Center:** During major occurrences, the primary command center will be at the Punta Gorda Public Safety Complex, 1410 Tamiami Trail.
8. **Incident Command Post:** A post established to direct emergency operations at unusual occurrence scenes.
9. **Officer in Charge (OIC):** The on-duty supervisor charged with directing and controlling the activities of the agency.
10. **Public Facilities:** County and city government buildings, courthouse, public utilities, etc.
11. **Staging Area:** A safe area, located close to the command center of the field command post, which is to be operated for the collection, storage, maintenance, disbursement, and accounting of members, vehicles, supplies and equipment used or held in reserve. The staging area may also be used for the temporary storage of recovered property and impounded vehicles.
12. **Unity of Command:** The concept that each individual in the organization has only one immediate supervisor.
13. **Unusual Occurrence:** Any occurrence, or threat thereof, whether accidental, natural, or caused by man, which results or might result in substantial injury or harm to the population or substantial damage to or loss of property.

## PROCEDURE

### I. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING

- A. **Authority:** The sheriff will exercise command and control over all civil law enforcement resources committed to unusual occurrences that are countywide in nature (Chapter 30, Florida Statutes).
- B. **Unity of Command:** All emergency management plans authorized by this directive will provide for unity of command and will observe the agency's guidelines regarding the span of control.
- C. **Policy Group:** Command Staff will establish guidelines for the agency's overall response to emergencies.

- D. Emergency Management Director: The Chief of the Punta Gorda Fire Department is designated as the city Emergency Management Director (EMD). Their duties include the following:
1. Ensure annually that all department Tactical Plans are updated to include changes in structure, employee data and positioning;
  2. To provide requisite training to all employees and families as required;
  3. To maintain liaison with the Charlotte County Department of Emergency Management;
  4. To ensure all Mutual Aid Plans are in place and updated;
  5. To ensure the database required to making declarations is updated with employee and equipment information;
  6. Attend requisite training and technical program updates;
  7. Keep the City Manager informed as to readiness status;
  8. Provide assistance and direction to all departments as necessary or directed; and
  9. Provide requisite training to all employees engaged in emergency management response initiatives to enhance or maintain their skill levels.
- E. Emergency Management Plans: All agency emergency management plans and manuals will comply with the standards set forth by the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation. Plans addressing the following specific types of emergencies and mobilization procedures will be addressed in the following directives:
1. [Hurricanes \(SOP 907.00\)](#);
  2. [Civil Disturbances/Mass Arrests \(SOP 908.00\)](#); and
  3. Others as directed by the Chief.
- F. Disaster Rosters: The Chief of Police or designee is responsible for maintaining department call-out rosters. Rosters are maintained on the internal department computer network in a folder entitled "Rosters." Rosters will include the following information:
1. Member's name;
  2. Address;
  3. Telephone number;

4. Cellular telephone number (if applicable); and
5. Radio identification number.

## II. MOBILIZATION PLAN

A. Operational Phases: The operational phases that follow are designed to aid in the rapid mobilization of personnel in response to an impending or actual emergency:

1. Phase I: Any emergency that curtails immediate response to calls for service and requires the utilization of all on-duty, sworn members, except those necessary to handle priority calls. The watch commander, or higher authority, may initiate a Phase I activation.
2. Phase II: Any emergency that curtails immediate response to calls for service and requires the utilization of all on-duty sworn members in the city. The watch commander, or higher authority, may initiate a Phase II activation.
3. Phase III: Any emergency that curtails response to calls for service, cannot be controlled by on-duty personnel, and requires the recall of off-duty members. A Phase III activation may be initiated by a Command Staff Officer. Elements of an activation request for Phase III or higher may include:
  - a. The Emergency Operations Center will be activated in support of field command posts;
  - b. Staff members will assume their emergency management assignments; and
  - c. The Chief may request activation of the county Emergency Operations Center.
4. Phase IV: Any emergency beyond the control of the Punta Gorda Police Department. The Chief or designee will request mutual aid from surrounding agencies or request that county government declare a "State of Local Emergency" and request state aid or invoke emergency-related mutual aid assistance.

B. Call-Out: A Command Staff Officer, either with or without a request from the incident commander, has the authority to call out additional personnel as needed. The following factors should be considered when determining the appropriate call-out levels.

1. Nature, scope, and duration of the emergency;
2. Location;
3. Number of citizens affected;

4. Work force presently committed; and
  5. Additional work force needs, i.e., crowd control, traffic control, and perimeter security.
- C. Shift Schedules: A 24-hour emergency activation will require implementation of 12 hour shifts designated as follows:
1. Alpha Shift: 0600 hours to 1800 hours;
  2. Bravo Shift: 1800 hours to 0600 hours.
- D. Tiers: The various levels of reporting time frames in which employees are required to report to their assigned work stations in response to a Declared State of Emergency, after the All Clear has been determined.
1. First-In Team: Multi-functional group of employees that has been created in advance of the Declared State of Emergency at the direction of the Emergency Management Director to assess the welfare of the community and establish and maintain control immediately after the All Clear declaration has been made.
  2. First Responder: An employee whose function falls within the parameters of emergency operations or essential functions and who is required to stay at their work station/area or in one of the City's designate safe or protected facilities for the duration of the event.
  3. Tier 1: Employees placed in this tier must report to their work station or the EOC within three to six (3-6) hours after the All Clear has been given, provided they are physically able to do so.
  4. Tier 2: Employees placed in this tier must report to their work station or EOC within six to twenty-four (6-24) hours after the All Clear has been given, provided they are physically able to do so.
  5. Tier 3: Employees placed in this tier must report to their work station or EOC within twenty-four to thirty-six (24-36) hours after the All Clear has been given, provided they are physically able to do so.

### III. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. First Responder: The first officer on the scene of an unusual occurrence will be responsible for the following:
1. Serve as Interim Incident Commander;

2. Evaluate the nature and scope of the occurrence;
3. Report findings and summon assistance/resources;
4. Prepare reports; and
5. Inform the watch commander if the situation cannot be controlled with available members or order cannot be restored immediately.

B. Watch Commander: The watch commander is responsible for the following:

1. Respond to the scene immediately and assume incident command duties;
2. Evaluate the situation and initiate action to protect life and property and restore order;
3. Inform command staff if the situation cannot be controlled with available members or order cannot be restored immediately;
4. Direct all field operations within the problem area until relieved;
5. Establish an inner and outer perimeter around the problem area to contain the situation, to preserve evidence, and to keep innocent persons out of the area;
6. Establish adequate traffic control to provide safety to the public with minimum interruption to normal traffic flow;
7. Assign an officer to staff the field command post. This officer will establish and maintain an incident log, handle communications, and coordinate the deployment of manpower; and
8. Establish safe access routes to and from the command post and staging areas.

C. Operations Commander: The Operations Commander will coordinate the agency's overall response to the emergency and is responsible for the following:

1. Assume incident command anytime they deem necessary;
2. Coordinate activities with other sections;
3. Call the Public Information Officer (PIO) to the scene, if necessary; and
4. Provide the Public Information Officer with information to include the status of the emergency, public safety hazards, and casualty and missing person information as it becomes available;

5. Coordinate mutual aid;
  6. Maintain a liaison with the Charlotte County Sheriff's Office, the courts and prosecutor, and other support agencies;
  7. Increase or decrease the operational call-up level;
  8. Communicate field conditions and requirements to the Emergency Operations Center;
  9. Keep the Policy Group informed of field strategies, emergency status, casualty count, and pertinent information;
  10. Facilitate the police department's response to the emergency from the Emergency Operations Center or the field command post at the direction of the incident commander;
  11. Oversee the investigation of homicides, suspicious deaths, and other high priority investigations.
  12. Serve as liaison with the county's Director of Emergency Management; and
  13. Ensure that a comprehensive After Action Report is submitted that outlines the agency's response to the emergency.
- D. Support Services Commander: The Support Services Commander is responsible for the following:
1. Preplan and coordinate the logistics function;
  2. Coordinate the acquisition of special emergency equipment and the inspections of equipment designated for use in unusual occurrence situations to ensure operational readiness;
  3. Coordinate security functions for shelters, EOC, alternate command post (if activated), and all other specialized security needs;
  4. Provide manpower for casualty and missing persons posts;
  5. Manage Coordination Point for casualty and missing person information;
  6. Provide Emergency Operations Center with casualty and missing person information as it becomes available;
  7. Coordinate with the Emergency Operations Center and the Red Cross for large numbers of casualties and missing persons.
  8. Coordinate advance preparations to move computer operations to an alternate facility with compatible equipment and coordinate the set-up and staffing of the Incident Command Center.



9. Maintain records of vehicle and equipment assignments, arrange for vehicle and equipment repairs, and coordinate with Facilities Maintenance for emergency repairs or precautionary measures to protect agency property and members (e.g. sand bags, window boarding, etc.).
  10. Coordinate security of vulnerable agency property and records that may be endangered by an emergency and shall make advance preparations with Utilities and Procurement to maintain or restore vital services to agency installations on a priority basis. The Support Services Commander shall provide civilian support staff as requested by the Chief of Police.
- E. Miscellaneous: The Property Custodian shall provide unassigned radios and spare batteries to the staging area for distribution to members and assisting agencies. They shall also provide for the emergency requisition and distribution of supplies and equipment through the Procurement Department (e.g. fuel, ammunition, etc.).

#### IV. EMERGENCY OPERATIONS

##### A. Incident Command Posts

1. Factor to Consider
  - a. Locate the post near the problem area but outside of the danger zone.
  - b. Provide space for, or be close to, a staging area for the assembly of members, vehicles, and equipment.
  - c. Restroom facilities; and
  - d. Telephone.
2. Command Post Staffing: The command post will be staffed by at least one officer whose duties will include:
  - a. Monitoring communications (telephone and/or radio);
  - b. Maintaining a chronological log of events that includes the following information:
    - 1) Time the emergency was discovered;
    - 2) Time the need for emergency operations was recognized;
    - 3) Time the Communications Section was notified;

- 4) Type of action being taken to restore order or to prevent the situation from increasing in size or intensity;
  - 5) Member job tasks, assignments, and temporary radio call signs;
  - 6) Intelligence reports that come to the attention of the watch commander; and
  - 7) Other information that might be of assistance in formulating an After Action Report.
- B. Member Response: Members will respond to the emergency in uniform and with issued gear. They will report to the field command post or staging area with their assigned vehicle for assignment and briefing. Under some circumstances, the incident commander may direct members to respond directly to a post or assignment. In all cases, members will report their presence to the command post via radio or in person.
- C. Deployment: Officers will be assigned to certain areas and functions according to the requirements of the emergency. They will be assigned to squads for operational control as follows:
1. Squads: Squads will consist of a squad leader (lieutenant/corporal) and no more than six officers. Senior officers may be assigned as squad leaders until a sufficient number of supervisors become available.
  2. Other Law Enforcement Support: Law enforcement personnel from other agencies who report for assignment may be allowed to work as an independent squad to maintain agency integrity. However, a Punta Gorda Police Department member will be assigned as squad leader. Personnel reporting in less than squad strength will be integrated into a police department squad.
- D. Communications: All members deployed to the emergency will operate on the assigned radio frequency subject to the following:
1. All radio traffic will be kept to a minimum.
  2. Radio transmissions will be initiated by the Communications Section or supervisory members only except emergency or urgent traffic.
  3. Plain language will be used in lieu of “10-codes” and “signals” to facilitate communications with members not routinely assigned to road patrol and personnel from other agencies.
  4. Field units will switch to the Mutual Aid Tac Channel to maintain critical communications with squad leaders and assisting agencies.

5. In the case of individual radio failure or the total inability to communicate with other units, officers are instructed to return to the command post or make telephone contact with the Communications Section as soon as possible. High risk contacts (e.g. traffic stops, building searches, unassisted arrests) will not be initiated while radio communications are disrupted except in immediate life-threatening situations.

## **V. EVACUATION**

- A. Notification: Officers will be responsible for notifying the affected public if an evacuation of an area is required due to a storm, hazardous material spill or leak, plane crash or other hazardous situation. The following notification methods may be used depending on the time of day, locations, and emergency:
  1. Telephone contact (including Alert Punta Gorda notification);
  2. Door-to-door contact; or
  3. Public address system/loud speaker.
- B. Transportation: Citizens who require transportation assistance (e.g. wheelchair lift vans, buses, and other vehicles) should be directed to contact Charlotte County Emergency Management. Officers may be required to assist with transporting citizens out of an evacuation area in an emergency.

## **VI. DE-ESCALATION AND RECOVERY OPERATIONS**

- A. The incident commander will de-escalate the agency's response in concert with the county EOC. Procedures may include:
  1. Performing primary and secondary responsibilities as outlined in the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP);
  2. Establishing reentry checkpoints to evacuated areas;
  3. Assisting with search and rescue operations;
  4. Attempting to mitigate hazards (e.g. downed power lines, chemical spills, gas leaks, wild animals);
  5. Protecting unsecured property;
  6. Locating missing persons and perform victim identification;
  7. Releasing members whose job tasks are no longer required;

8. Confirming that all reports and documentation related to the incident have been properly submitted. Each member involved in the emergency operation will submit a supplement report. Required documentation may include:
  - a. Offense Incident Reports;
  - b. Supplemental reports;
  - c. Emergency daily work logs;
  - d. Accident reports;
  - e. Workers' compensation reports; and
  - f. Emergency operations checklists.
- B. Community Recovery: The incident commander will take the necessary action to assure the community's orderly transition back to normal at the conclusion of the emergency. These actions include:
  1. Providing adequate traffic control measures;
  2. Maintaining a law enforcement presence, including high visibility patrols to prevent looting or the gathering of crowds;
  3. Continuing monitoring of critical installations;
  4. Providing status reports to the PIO for release to the media.
- C. Agency Assessment and Recovery: The agency will undertake a self-assessment when the immediate danger has passed and conditions permit. Responsibilities are as follows:
  1. Section commanders will submit documentation to the Chief of Police that outlines the resources needed to carry out their assigned missions and an analysis of their ability to perform normal and recovery operations.
  2. The Command Staff will prepare a consolidated agency assessment report to the Chief that lists losses and casualties, needed resources, and estimates of current capabilities.
  3. Command staff, working in concert with the Charlotte County Emergency Management if necessary, will seek the required assistance from appropriate outside agencies.

**VII. MUTUAL AID REQUESTS:** Specific procedures for requesting and delivering mutual aid are outlined in the Florida Mutual Aid Plan and mutual aid agreements.

**A. Aid to the City of Punta Gorda**

1. **Local Law Enforcement Assistance:** When an unusual occurrence exceeds the police department's capabilities to resolve the situation, the Chief of Police may request assistance from agencies with whom the department has entered into "operational assistance agreements" under the provisions of Florida's Mutual Aid Act.
2. **Florida National Guard Assistance:** When an emergency is beyond the capabilities of local, state, and civil defense agencies, the Governor, at the request of the county administrator, may direct use of the Florida National Guard to furnish assistance.
  - a. Military response is limited to supporting civil authorities and is not intended to substitute for civilian law enforcement.
  - b. The National Guard must maintain its unit integrity at all times. Individual units of specific numbers of members and equipment will not be separated.
  - c. National Guard members assigned inside an affected area will be accompanied by a state law enforcement representative. A local law enforcement representative will be assigned if the unit is used outside an affected area. The representatives will maintain communications with the incident command center to ensure coordination of the function.

**B. Aid to Other Agencies:** The police department will provide assistance to other agencies as outlined in established mutual aid agreements.

**VIII. SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT:** The Chief of Police is responsible for overseeing the acquisition and semi-annual inspection of specialized equipment for use during unusual occurrence situations. Specialized equipment includes, but is not limited to:

- A. Back-up Power Generator:** The Police Department's back-up power generator is maintained by City Facilities Maintenance personnel and is inspected on a monthly basis, at a minimum, in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. The inspections are logged in a book maintained in the Communications Section.
- B. Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS):** Critical equipment in the Communications Section is supported by an Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS). The UPS provides short-term, continuous power supply in case of a power failure. The UPS system is inspected monthly by City Facilities Maintenance personnel at the same time as the generator inspection.

## IX. TRAINING

- A. Annual Review: Managers and supervisors with specific emergency management responsibilities will conduct an annual review of established emergency procedures with affected members. Command personnel will review and update procedures, to include this policy and [Standard Operating Procedure 907.00 – Hurricane Plan](#), annually.
- B. Staff Training: The Emergency Management Director will arrange for periodic refresher training on emergency management issues to key staff members.

## APPROVED



**PAMELA R. SMITH, CHIEF OF POLICE**

**STAFF REVIEW DATES:** 05-10-1993, 01-27-1998, 06-30-1999, 06-01-2000, 01-10-2003, 07-23-2004, 06-01-2005, 05-23-2008, 06-14-2010, 07-05-2011, 05-29-2012, 06-02-2014, 06-30-2015, 05-24-2016, 05-19-2017, 05-01-2018, 01-14-2020, 01-04-2021, 01-07-2022, 01-27-2023, 01-11-2024

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