

Office of Emergency Management • ANNUAL REPORT

gwinnettcounty
2013



A word cloud of terms related to emergency management, including: materials, preparedness, staging, all, health, fema, incident, hazardous, disaster, oem, operations, casualty concerns, gwinnett, mass, response, department, multi-agency, fire, police, public, coordination, gema, citizen, eoc, emergency, and management.

Board of Commissioners



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Chairman



Jace Brooks
District 1



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District 2



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District 3



John Heard
District 4

County Administration



Glenn Stephens
County Administrator



Phil Hoskins
Deputy County
Administrator

*Deputy County Administrator Phil Hoskins
was appointed in 2014.*

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Letter from the Director



Disasters can strike at any time with little to no warning. Preparedness is the responsibility of the whole community including government, private and nonprofit sectors, and individual citizens. The Office of Emergency Management strives to engage the whole community in the accomplishment of our vision to foster a disaster resistant community. This report highlights accomplishments toward the realization of that vision.

Our staff worked diligently this year to improve Gwinnett County's ability to respond and recover from natural and manmade disasters and I encourage all Gwinnett County residents to improve their individual and family readiness. Several significant projects were accomplished in 2013 as we continue to strengthen our capabilities in emergency planning, incident management, training and exercises, and public education. We have made significant progress this year in embracing our nongovernment colleagues as members of the emergency management team. Fundamental differences exist in the way government and the private sector operates and continued collaboration is vital as we move into 2014 and beyond.

It is my pleasure and honor to serve as the Director of Emergency Management for Gwinnett County. The successes noted in this annual report are due to the dedicated, highly professional staff of emergency managers we have in Gwinnett County.

Greg Swanson, Director of Emergency Management



Mission & Vision

To administer a community wide comprehensive emergency management program in partnership with all departments, agencies, operating units, administration, and neighboring jurisdictions to save lives, protect property, and safeguard the environment.

The Vision of the Gwinnett County Office of Emergency Management is to encourage and foster a Disaster Resistant Community.

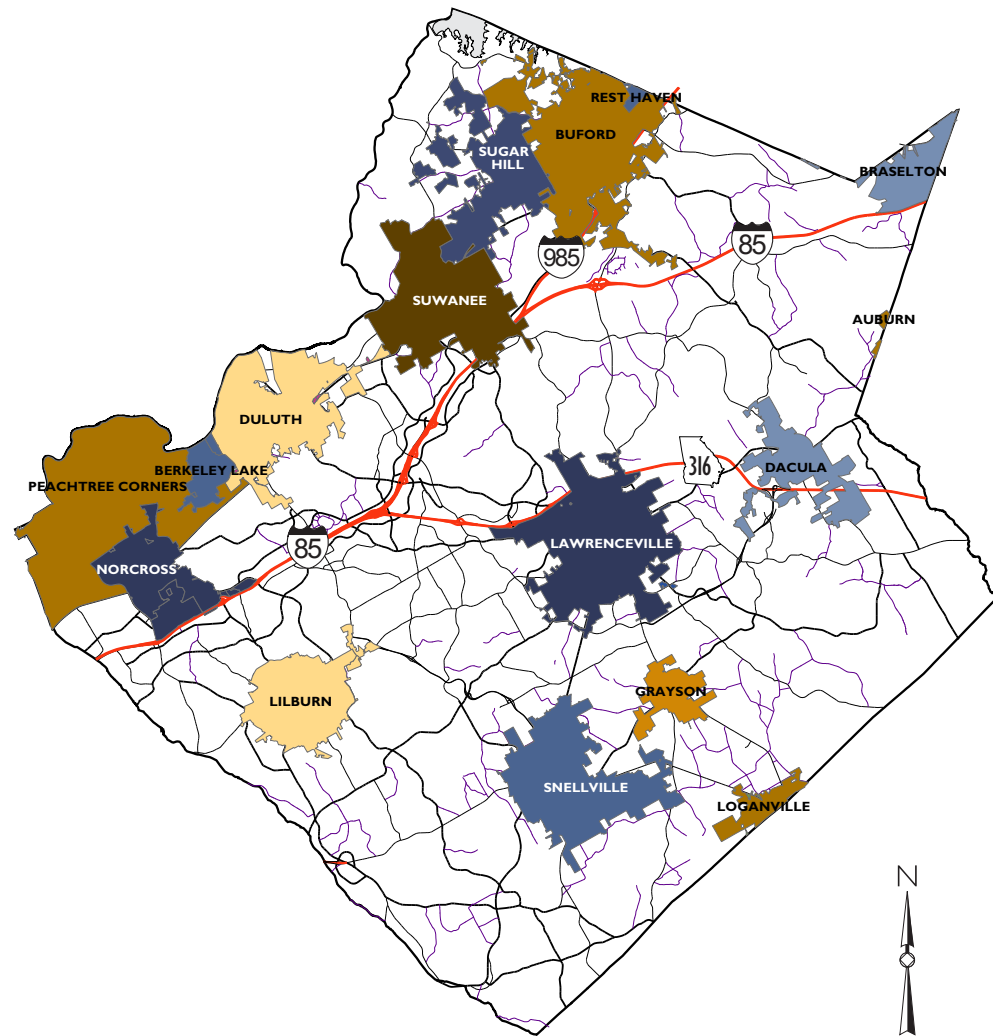


History



The Gwinnett County Office of Homeland Security was established in December 2005 and Emergency Management was transferred from Gwinnett Fire and Emergency Services to the Police Department in 2006. The Office of Homeland Security was removed from the Office of Emergency Management and assigned to the Special Investigations Section of the Police Department in October 2009.

The Gwinnett County Office of Emergency Management represents the governing officials of the county and the cities within the county on matters pertaining to emergency management, helping to identify local hazards and outline plans and efforts to reduce the impact of disasters. The director is appointed by the Board of Commissioners, with concurrence of the governing officials of the cities.



Administration & Finance



Staffing Analysis

All county departments have been asked to do more with less in recent years. In an effort to blend innovation and efficiency, the Office of Emergency Management has used a mixture of on-loan employees, interns, recruits, volunteers, and consultants to augment full-time staff. A staffing analysis completed in 2013 revealed these efforts were beneficial, but not adequate.

Since 2009, the department has experienced a 100 percent increase in the number of state and federal mandates related to emergency management. During an 18-month period beginning in July 2010, the Georgia Emergency Management Agency published 22 new requirements for local jurisdictions. Additionally, seven new federal training requirements have been issued since 2009. These items bring the total mandated program requirements to 58, up from 29 in 2009.

The addition of an Emergency Management Specialist was included in the Police Department's 2014 Business Plan to assist handling these increased mandates, improve response capabilities, and reduce reliance on contractors. The additional position was included in the Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners' adopted fiscal year 2014 budget.

StormReady

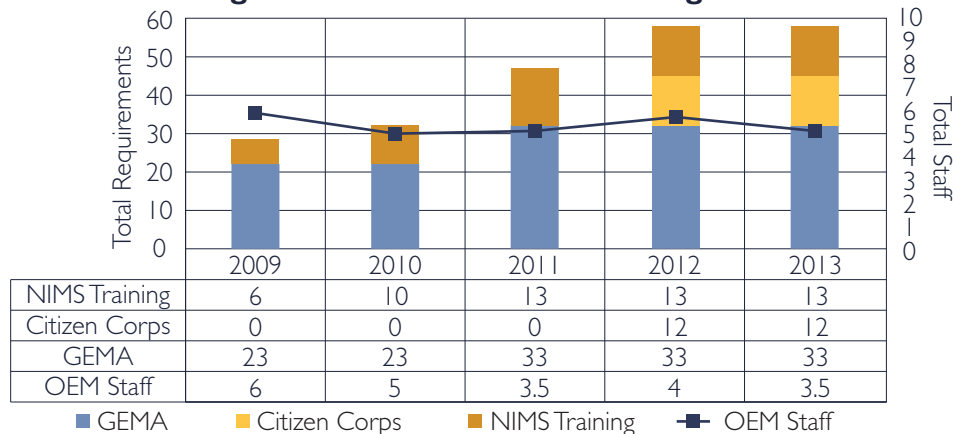
Gwinnett County renewed its StormReady designation with the National Weather Service (NWS) in 2013. This NWS program encourages communities take a proactive approach in improving local hazardous weather operations and provides emergency managers clear-cut guidelines to do so.

To receive the official StormReady designation a community must:

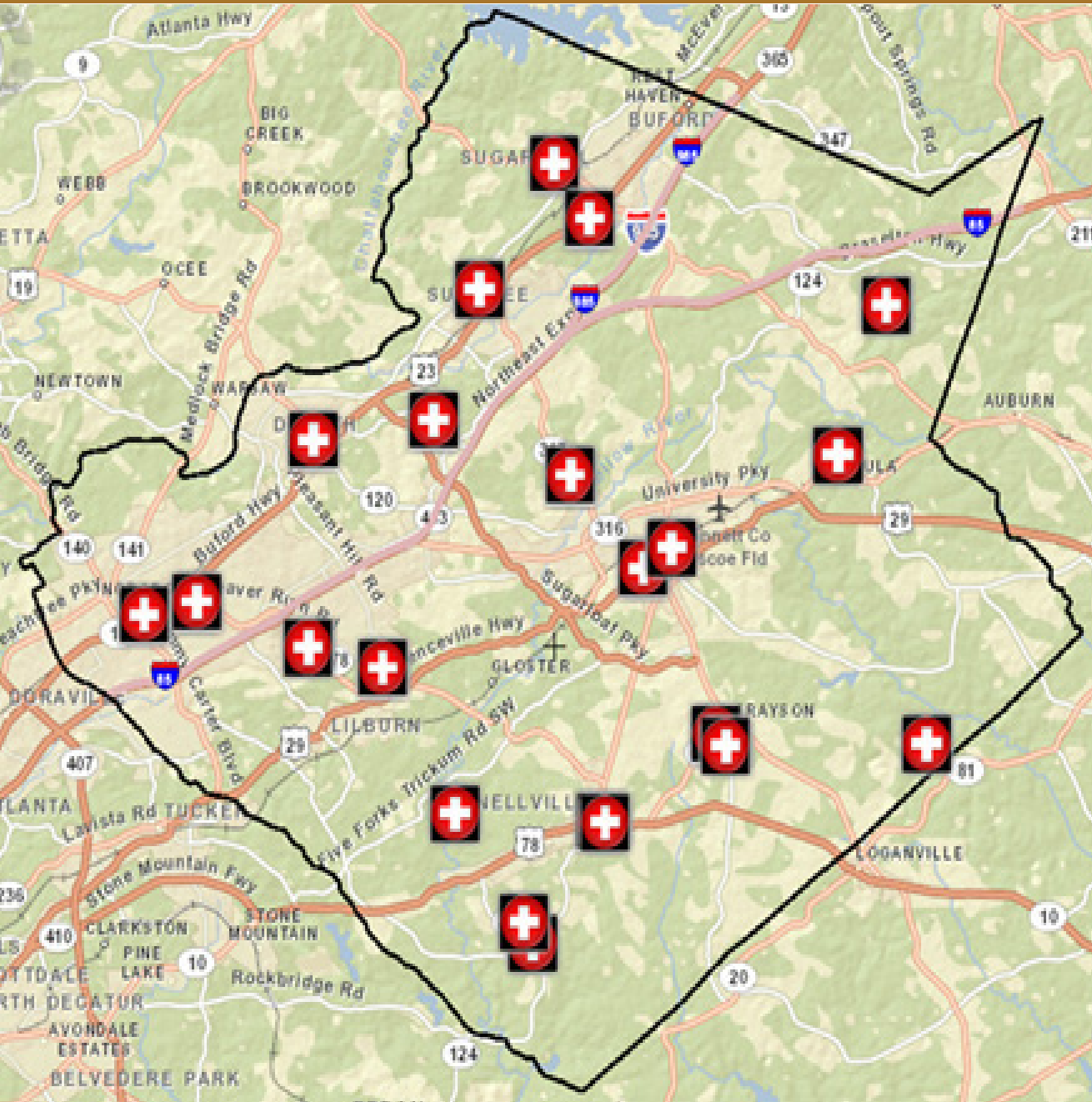
- Establish a 24-hour warning point and an emergency operations center
- Have more than one way to receive severe weather warnings and forecasts and to alert the public
- Create a system that monitors weather conditions locally
- Promote the importance of public readiness through community seminars
- Develop a formal hazardous weather plan, which includes training severe weather spotters and holding emergency exercises

The StormReady program requires recertification every three years, Gwinnett County has consistently held its designation since 2001.

Program Mandates & OEM Staffing: 2009 – 2013



Operational Planning



Continuity of Operations

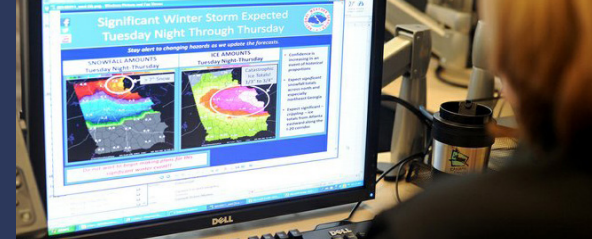
Continuity of Operations (COOP) planning is an initiative that prepares Gwinnett County departments and agencies to continue operation of their essential functions under a broad range of circumstances, including natural, human-caused, or technological threats. COOP is a collection of resources, actions, procedures, and information that is practiced and held in readiness for use during major disruptions. Gwinnett OEM has provided a planning tool for county use, and provides training every December to help all county departments keep their COOP plans up-to-date and ready to implement at a moment's notice.

Emergency Operations Plan

Sheltering residents in times of disaster requires strategic partnerships with multiple organizations. Planning and preparing for sheltering residents is crucial to an effective and efficient response when the need arises. In 2013, Gwinnett County added five local churches and two public schools as partners in providing facilities to support shelter operations. These new partnerships increased the county capacity to shelter residents by more than 2,000 people. Staff from the following organizations continue to play an active role in building the counties sheltering capacity:

- Gwinnett, Newton, Rockdale Public Health
- Gwinnett County Department of Family and Children Services
- American Red Cross
- Gwinnett County Animal Welfare
- Gwinnett County Office of Emergency Management

Incident Management & Facilities



Keeping an Eye on the Weather

A weather station was installed at the Emergency Operations Center in May. This robust system is part of a nationwide network of individual weather stations and allows the County to have the earliest possible warning for the potential of severe weather right here in Gwinnett neighborhoods. One of the strengths of this system is that it captures both cloud-to-ground and in-cloud lightning for advanced warning of potentially hazardous thunderstorm activity – one of the top hazards facing the county. This advanced warning provides data to emergency responders about lightning activity as a

storm moves through and allows additional preparation time in anticipation of lightning-caused fires or destructive winds.

EOC Team

The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is a centralized location for multi-agency response coordination to major emergencies or disasters. Enhancements were made throughout 2013 to improve the county's ability to coordinate major events at the EOC. The facility layout was changed to offer a flexible work arrangement for organizations being represented at the EOC. Several incidents requiring extended activation of the EOC confirmed the need for additional trained personnel to allow for rotation of key staff. An EOC Support Team concept was approved and will be implemented in four phases. The training curriculum was developed in 2013 and will be delivered to more than 50 personnel to improve the County's ability to manage large-scale incidents.

Mass Casualty Response

Gwinnett County is subject to a variety of natural, technological, and human-caused incidents that have the potential to cause a large number of casualties. These incidents can tax or overwhelm the healthcare system and require multi-agency, multijurisdictional coordination. In 2013, multiple organizations worked together to improve the county's preparedness. Some highlights include:

- Twenty-seven emergency management stakeholders from six organizations participated in a national level exercise with FEMA to enhance the county's response capabilities and coordination effort.
- Staff from the Office of Emergency Management worked with members of the fire department and local hospitals to develop a mass casualty plan.
- A functional exercise was conducted with the fire department and Gwinnett Medical Center, in which 99 patients were simulated to evaluate the mass casualty plan and coordination effort with hospitals throughout metro Atlanta.
- Emergency management staff worked on a State Department of Public Health committee charged with developing guidance for medical surge issues resulting from events like mass casualty incidents.

Emergency Water Purification

Gwinnett County received water purification equipment as part of a grant from the Metro-Atlanta Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI). The equipment includes a cargo trailer, two water purification units, portable drop tanks, distribution equipment, and associated materials. The trailer is one of 12 being issued throughout the metro area with the intent of developing water purification teams. Each unit will have the ability to purify an existing water source for emergency potable water in the event that normal distribution systems are compromised. In 2014, the Office of Emergency Management will work closely with Atlanta UASI partners and other County departments to develop policies, identify a strike team, provide training, and become proficient with the equipment issued.

Training & Exercises



The Office of Emergency Management embraces its task to ensure County personnel remain ready for disasters through its all-hazards training and exercise program. Each year OEM conducts surveys and workshops to gain input, determine what the projected needs of the county are, and to establish priorities for the next two years. Advanced planning is critical to establish priorities, provide guidance, and allow the time required to fully develop an effective training and exercise cycle. In 2013, a survey went out to 42 stakeholder agencies and the workshop consisted of representatives from five lead agencies that play a major role in the established priorities. At the time of publication, the 2014 –15 Training and Exercise Plan included 36 training or exercise events to accomplish.

In 2013 OEM developed, coordinated and supported 14 exercises for the County although the State only requires the participation in two per year. These exercises were modeled to address the top disaster preparedness priorities established the previous year. The focus ranged from Police Depart-

ment staging areas, mass casualty incident coordination, hazardous materials response, public health concerns, EOC operations, citizen disaster preparedness, and more. Gwinnett was also recognized by FEMA's Emergency Management Institute for playing a key role in the successful launch of its new Virtual Table Top Series (VTTX) by participating in four of its initial exercises. Jurisdictions must apply and be selected to participate in FEMA's VTTX events, which offer a low-cost alternative while meeting federal standards and exposing personnel to the actions of similar agencies around the country.

In 2013, OEM began teaching a new version of the Basic EOC Operations. This course is designed for individuals who have been selected as emergency coordinators for their department or agency. Each department is asked to identify three people who are able to make policy level decisions and report to the EOC as needed when it is activated. The new version of this class teaches these individuals about the national framework for disaster response, multi-agency coordination, EOC operations, their specific roles and responsibilities, and an introduction to WebEOC, which is a crisis communications software platform. The course ends with a simulated disaster situation in WebEOC so students have an opportunity to practice what they have just learned. Basic EOC Operations is the first in a series of seven position specific courses that OEM has designed for those responsible for working in the EOC. Thirty-three coordinators received this new training in 2013.

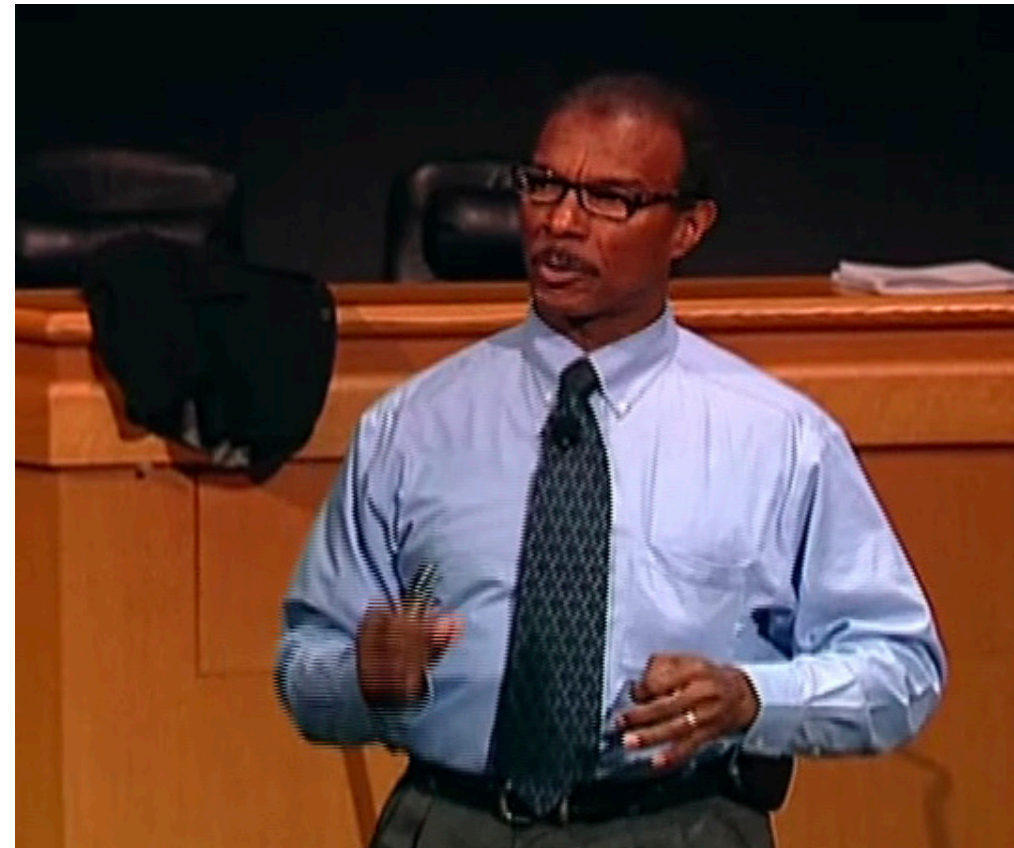


Community Resiliency (Public Education)



Storm Spotters

The effects of severe weather can be catastrophic to Gwinnett County. When severe weather moves into our area, the National Weather Service relies on trained weather spotters to help keep them abreast of developing trends, situations, and confirm radar data. Every year, our office sponsors a National Weather Service Storm Spotter class, teaching residents how to prepare for severe weather and provide timely and accurate information back to the NWS during weather events. These classes have become so popular that the 2013 class was moved to the Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center Auditorium, and had more than 80 students in attendance. This class was filmed by TVgwinnett for broadcast during severe storm season.



One priority of emergency management is to provide residents with training to prepare themselves and their families for hazards that may impact our area. Using this training, residents have the skills to assist others following an emergency event when professional responders are not immediately available to help. The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program is an essential program towards that effort. In 2013, Gwinnett OEM trained 80 citizens in the CERT program, including 15 from Gwinnett's first Teen CERT class.

The Citizen Corps Council took a significant step forward in 2013. The Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners formally recognized the council as an entity of the county. The continuing mission of the Gwinnett County Citizen Corps Council is to form a partnership among the Gwinnett County community, government, business, faith-based, and volunteer organizations to make our community safer, stronger, and better prepared to respond to the threats of terrorism, crime, public health epidemics, and disasters of all kinds.



UNITING COMMUNITIES - PREPARING THE NATION

**Resolution to Formally Establish the
Gwinnett County Citizens Corps Council**

WHEREAS, Gwinnett County may be subjected to emergencies and disasters of all types; and

WHEREAS, the Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners is committed to promoting preparedness to respond to the effects of such emergencies and disasters to protect public peace, health and safety and to preserve lives and property of the people; and

WHEREAS, Gwinnett County realizes the vital role played by volunteers from various organized groups and their contribution to response and recovery benefiting the whole community; and

WHEREAS, The Federal Emergency Management Agency's Citizen Corps Program promotes whole community participation in disaster preparedness efforts; and

WHEREAS, the National Citizen Corps Mission is to harness the power of every individual through education, training, and volunteer service to make communities safer, stronger, and better prepared to respond to the threats of terrorism, crime, public health epidemics, and disasters of all kinds; and

WHEREAS, The Georgia Emergency Management Agency promotes the development of local Citizen Corps Programs and Councils; and

WHEREAS, The Gwinnett County Office of Emergency Management has been established to coordinate the emergency response of public and private agencies and organizations; and

WHEREAS, Gwinnett County wishes to establish a local Citizens Corps Council to form a partnership between the Gwinnett County community, government, businesses, faith-based and volunteer organizations to make the greater Gwinnett community safer, stronger, and better prepared to respond to the threats of terrorism, crime, public health epidemics, and disasters of all kinds. This will be achieved through cooperation, coordination, communication, and collaboration of member organizations.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Gwinnett County Citizens Corps Council is formally established as a collaborating body to foster communication and coordination among all Citizen Corps programs in Gwinnett County; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Gwinnett County Office of Emergency Management will coordinate all necessary activities to create and support the Gwinnett County Citizens Corps Council and will ensure its operation in compliance with all local, state, and federal guidelines.

We've updated our website to make it easier for residents to find information necessary for planning, preparing, and staying informed for all types of disasters. Our new site – www.gwinnettema.com – contains the latest information on disaster kits, how to receive warnings and notifications, and disaster training opportunities in Gwinnett County.

gwinnettcounty government

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Office of Emergency Management

Police

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- Press Releases
- 911 Information
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- Complaints or Commendations
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- C.O.P.S. Watch
- Crime Prevention Unit
- Emergency Management**
 - About Us
 - Be Prepared
 - Learn About Local Hazards
 - Volunteer and Training
- Employment
- Evidence Unit

Departments > Police > Emergency Management

Be Prepared When Disaster Strikes

About the Office of Emergency Management

The Gwinnett County Office of Emergency Management is a unit of the Gwinnett County Police Department that handles a variety of tasks involving planning for emergencies and disasters, responding to incidents as a coordinating agency, directing mitigation against hazards, and assisting Gwinnett County Government and its residents in recovery after an incident. The Office of Emergency Management works very closely with all Gwinnett County departments and private/nonprofit partners to accomplish these goals.

Saving Lives, Protecting Property, and Safeguarding the Environment

Be Prepared

Learn About Local Hazards

Volunteering and Training

About Us



Please consider the environment before printing this report.

gwinnettcounty
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