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Introduction to EMAC



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SECTION I. **The History of EMAC**

The history of emergency management mutual aid can be traced back to a perceived threat of nuclear attack in 1949, when the Soviet Union exploded its first nuclear device and the North Koreans invaded South Korea. President Truman established the Federal Civil Defense Administration to safeguard American citizens. Congress quickly followed suit and passed three acts in 1950: The Federal Civil Defense Act, the Defense Production Act, and the Disaster Relief Act. The Disaster Relief Act was established for natural and human-caused disasters.

President Carter later used an Executive Order to develop the "Federal Emergency Management Agency" (FEMA) - as proposed by the National Governors' Association - to assist in responding to disasters, both nuclear and natural. In 1992, when Hurricane Andrew devastated Florida, it became apparent that even with federal resources, states would need to call upon one another in times of emergencies.

As a result, Florida's 41st Governor Lawton Chiles (pictured to the right), worked through the Southern Governor's Association (SGA) to develop a state-to-state mutual aid agreement: the Southern Regional Emergency Management Assistance Compact (SREMAC), which was adopted in 1993.



In January 1995, the southern governors voted to open membership to any state or territory in the Union that wished to join. The broadened agreement was called the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC). NEMA, the National Emergency Management Association became the administrator of EMAC in 1995.

EMAC became Public Law (104-321) when ratified by the United States Congress in 1996, a necessary step under the Constitution. EMAC became the first national disaster compact since the Civil Defense Compact of 1950 to be ratified by Congress.

Today, EMAC stands as a model all-hazards/all-disciplines Compact for disaster response. All 50 states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and Guam have legislatively enacted the EMAC agreement, making them members of the compact.

EMAC benefits:

- Resources shared by the states under the EMAC agreement are coordinated with the federal response, providing resources to citizens in need as quickly and efficiently as possible.
- Assistance from a neighboring state under EMAC may be more readily available than other assistance.
- EMAC protocols and procedures allow for a quick response to disasters, utilizing the unique human resource expertise possessed by member states.
- State-to-state assistance during Governor-declared state of emergencies.
- A responsive and straightforward system for states to send personnel and equipment to help disaster relief efforts in other states.
- EMAC establishes a firm legal foundation: Once the conditions for providing assistance to a Requesting State have been set, the terms constitute a legally binding contractual agreement. Resolved upfront are problems that could arise for tort liability, reimbursement, credentials, and licensure.
- Fast and flexible assistance: EMAC allows states to ask for whatever assistance they need for any type of emergency, from earthquakes to acts of terrorism.

The success of mutual aid relies on the relationship of federal, state, county, territories, regions, and numerous multi-discipline partners all working toward the same goal – a multi-disciplinary approach using a coordinated incident command oriented mutual aid system: EMAC.

SECTION II. **The Mission of EMAC**

Background: EMAC developed and implemented its first strategic plan in 2003. The EMAC Executive Task Force and NEMA staff met in June 2005 to develop its first *five-year* strategic plan (2005-2010). Following the appointment of the EMAC Committee within NEMA, the Chair of the EMAC Committee, the EMAC Executive Task Force, and NEMA staff have met annually to update the five-year EMAC strategic plan.

The strategic plan identifies the mission, vision, and goals of the Compact:

EMAC Mission Statement: The mission of EMAC is to facilitate the efficient and effective sharing of resources between member states during times of disaster or emergency.

EMAC Vision Statement: EMAC: The cornerstone of mutual aid

The five years covered by the 2007 strategic plan are intended to be a period of sustainment and growth for EMAC through the following goals:

1. Provide national leadership and expertise on mutual aid
2. Coordinate EMAC capabilities with national preparedness and response
3. Sustain and enhance mutual aid capabilities
4. Promote mutual aid and strengthen relationships

For more information about EMAC's mission, refer to the EMAC Strategic Plan.

SECTION III. **EMAC in Action**

Since 1995, EMAC has been activated more than 100 times in response to events such as floods, wildfires, tornados, hurricanes, and winter storms, the 2003 space shuttle Columbia disaster, and the 2001 World Trade Center incident.

EMAC experienced significant growth and development as a result of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. At that time, only 28 states were members of EMAC. The number of members quickly grew, as states saw the need to have a national mutual aid system in place that could assist impacted states and facilitate response to catastrophic disasters and other emergencies. Following these events, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) placed a new focus on state and **local** mutual aid as a key to the nation's emergency response capabilities for all hazards, man-made or natural. The National Incident Management System (NIMS) provides an operational framework for the response by federal, state and local agencies. In the NIMS, mutual aid is emphasized as an indispensable tool for the swift and coordinated response to disasters of all kinds. Many of the agreements across local jurisdictions were not formal agreements and did not address key issues such as liability and compensation; and encompass multi-disciplines. To be able to move assets effectually between local jurisdictions and across state lines, mutual aid agreements had to be robust, inclusive, demonstrate an effective relationship to EMAC and address liability and compensation issues in a manner consistent with state law.

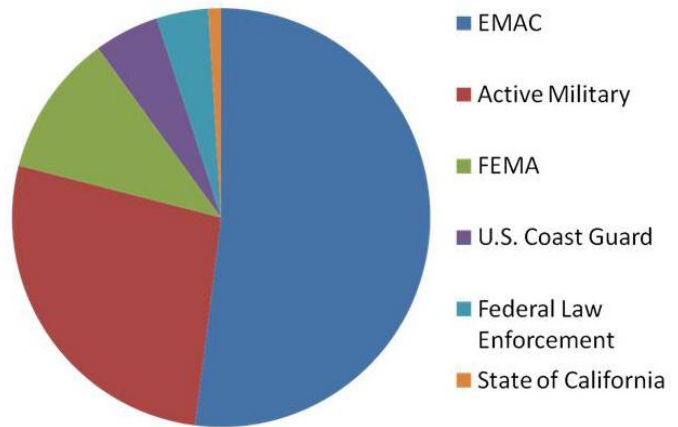
As a first step, NEMA developed a multi-discipline working group which brought together representatives from state emergency management personnel, state general counsel, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the National Association of State EMS Officials, the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, International Association of Fire Chiefs, the National Association of County and City Health Officials, and International Association of Emergency Managers, the National Sheriff's Association, and the American Public Works Association to develop Model Intrastate Mutual Aid Legislation (2004). This model legislation placed a new focus on the state and local (emphasis on all hazards, man-made or natural) approach to mutual aid. When this legislation, modeled after EMAC, is passed by the states, it provides a formal agreement addressing key issues such as liability and

compensation – encompassing multi-disciplines and setting the stage for an effective relationship with EMAC that is consistent between local jurisdictions and from local to state government.

EMAC took another step forward in 2004 as states realized the multi-discipline capabilities provided under the Compact. While the 2004 response paled in comparison to the next year’s efforts, the response was nonetheless a historic moment for states deploying resources under EMAC. The 49-member states of EMAC responded to Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan & Jeanne in Florida, Alabama, and West Virginia. State emergency management personnel and local resources (non-state assets such as county owned) provided over 85 days of continuous response operations under EMAC. Civilian resources accounted for more than 800 state *and local* personnel deployed from 38 states (including one non-member state, California). National Guard deployed 1,828 personnel under EMAC. Response costs were approximately \$15 million in personnel, equipment, and National Guard expenditures. These events also marked the first significant deployment of local government resources under EMAC and demonstrated the Compact’s ability to deploy a wide array of public health and safety disciplines for disaster response.

In late August 2005, EMAC scaled operations more than twenty times than in 2004, when member states deployed 65,929 personnel in response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita to Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, Alabama, and Florida. States deployed personnel and equipment comprised of multiple disciplines from ALL member states. The EMAC process enabled National Guard, search and rescue teams, incident management teams, emergency operations center support, building inspectors, law enforcement personnel, health and medical, human services, public works, animal support, and other disciplines to assist the Requesting States. On September 10, 2005, resources deployed under EMAC

2005 Response Resource Breakdown



Source: GAO-07-854

accounted for 52% (53% counting California who joined EMAC on September 14, 2005) of out-of-state personnel deployed in response to Hurricane Katrina¹. The National Guard continued their response through EMAC when deployed under Title 32 (under Title 32, National Guard troops stay under the Command and Control of the Governor for federally authorized missions funded with federal dollars) because of the organization, requesting ability, tort liability protections, accountability, and tracking abilities EMAC provides².

Facts about the 2005 deployments²:

- More than 1,300 search and rescue personnel from sixteen (16) states; searched more than 22,300 structures and rescued 6,582 people.
- More than 2,000 healthcare professionals from twenty-eight (28) states; treated more than 160,000 patients in the days and weeks after the storms, under the most primitive of conditions.
- Nearly 3000 Fire/Hazmat personnel from twenty-eight (28) states
- 200 engineers from nine (9) states
- More than 6,880 sheriff's deputies and police officers from thirty-five (35) states and countless local jurisdictions deployed across Louisiana and Mississippi - a total of 35% of all of the resources deployed.
- 112 animal rescue personnel from four (4) states; one team alone sheltered approximately 1,500 animals.
- The longest ongoing mission was for newborn blood screen testing (January 1, 2005 – March 31, 2006) in which no personnel were deployed

EMAC was identified by Congress and the White House as the resounding success story of the 2005 response to Hurricane Katrina. This response clearly demonstrated an entire nation pulling together across political jurisdictions to provide assistance. The response also illustrated enhancements needed to continue to make EMAC successful in the future:

- Better training and education of all political jurisdictions on the procedures/protocols and in-state guidance for deploying under EMAC

¹ Emergency Management Assistance Compact: Enhancing EMAC's Collaborative and Administrative Capacity Should Improve National Disaster Response. Report by the United States Government Accountability Office as a Report to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, U.S. Senate. June 2007.

² Emergency Management Assistance Compact: 2005 Hurricane Season Response After Action Report. Titan-L3. September 2007.

- Consistency of training and education materials
- Improvements to the EMAC Operations System to better track deployed resources, both personnel and equipment.
- Integration of resource typing among all states and disciplines
- Development of resource typed mission packages for commonly deployed resources (with costs, footprint, and logistical needs predetermined)
- Guidance and tips for disciplines deploying under EMAC through the states
- Guidance for disciplines on how to coordinate EMAC assistance through the state emergency management agencies.

Since 2005, EMAC has been used for events such as wildfires, flooding, Kansas tornados and floods, 2007 Hurricane Dean, and the 2007 California Wildfires, 2008 Iowa Flooding, and 2008 California Lightening Wildfires.

Bottom line: EMAC works. It is a scalable system to deploy resources through an established command and control structure with clearly defined liability protections, licensure and certificates, workers compensation, death benefits, and reimbursement procedures. All levels of emergency response (all political jurisdictions) must be familiar with EMAC and their own in-state procedures for deploying under EMAC. Together, all disciplines and all political jurisdictions can continue to make EMAC the cornerstone of mutual aid.