

Vermont Emergency Management



2018 ANNUAL REPORT



2018 VERMONT EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

VISION: A Fully Prepared and Resilient Vermont

MISSION: Vermont Emergency Management ensures that the people and communities of Vermont have the capabilities to prevent, protect, mitigate, respond to, and recover from natural and man-made threats and hazards. This work results in the enhancement of safety, quality of life, and economic vitality of the State and its citizens.

- **OBJECTIVE 1:** The State Emergency Management Plan is validated through revision, training, and exercise on an annual basis at local and state levels according to a comprehensive training and exercise plan which reflects the programmatic and organizational requirements of all partner agencies.
- **OBJECTIVE 2:** The local and state emergency management enterprise (including VEM staff, partner agency representation, SEOC support staff, and local emergency management organizations) is rostered, appropriately trained and qualified, and tracked according to developed standards.
- **OBJECTIVE 3:** State and community-based professional and volunteer emergency management capabilities and assets are developed and supported to prevent loss of life and property, provide swift recovery, and strengthen community resilience before, during, and after disasters.

VERMONT EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, BY THE NUMBERS

\$13,003,367	<i>federal funding to assist in preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation efforts statewide</i>
\$3,993,114	<i>school safety capital funds for infrastructure improvements</i>
\$614,000	<i>misc. special revenue</i>
\$421,265	<i>general fund allocation for VEM staff</i>
\$220,000	<i>emergency relief & assistance funds disbursed to affected towns</i>
\$198,113	<i>interfund</i>
\$20,303	<i>surplus</i>

VERMONT EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT STAFF

Erica Bornemann, Director

Charles Deasy, Deputy Director

Mark Bosma, Public Information Officer

Susan Sharbino, Administrative Assistant

Operations and Logistics Section:

- **Brett LaRose**, Operations and Logistics Section Chief, Emergency Management Support Specialist
- **Brett Pierce**, Emergency Management Support Specialist
- **Randall Bronson**, VT-ALERT Administrator

Recovery and Mitigation Section:

- **Ben Rose**, Recovery and Mitigation Section Chief
- **Kimberly Canarecci**, Public Assistance Officer
- **Ron Pentkowski**, Public Assistance Administrator
- **Lauren Oates**, State Hazard Mitigation Officer
- **Stephanie Smith**, Hazard Mitigation Planner

Planning Section:

- **Erin Magee**, Planning Section Chief
- **Josh Cox**, Emergency Management Planner
- **Marian Wolz**, Emergency Management Planner
- **Glenn Herrin**, Emergency Management Specialist

Engagement Section:

- **Ed Von Turkovich**, Engagement Section Chief
- **Richard Cogliano**, Regional Emergency Management Coordinator - South
- **Emily Harris**, Acting Engagement Section Chief, Regional Emergency Management Coordinator - Northeast
- **Max Kennedy**, Regional Emergency Management Coordinator - Northwest
- **Eric Forand**, State Exercise Administrator
- **Brittany Marquette**, State Training Administrator
- **Sunni Eriksen**, School Safety Grants Program Manager

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Vermont Emergency Management (VEM) is a division of the Department of Public Safety.

2018 saw a number of accomplishments for VEM. Notably, \$4 million in school safety infrastructure improvements was allocated for Vermont schools, and another \$1 million was dedicated for planning and exercising school safety protocols.

VEM also completed rewrites of the State Emergency Management Plan and the State Hazard Mitigation Plan –both of which are updated every five years. These plans outline the state’s planning, response, recovery, and mitigation efforts into the next decade.

Many more accomplishments are on the following pages. Please reach out to VEM if you have questions or need more information about our programs.

TRAINING & EXERCISE

VEM assumes primary responsibility in the state to ensure local and state emergency responders are adequately prepared to respond to incidents. This includes preparing for a crisis through free training for first responders, volunteers, elected officials, emergency managers, school administrators, private industry and others.

In 2018, VEM delivered:

895 hours of training during
119 sessions of
30 unique courses to
2,131 students

These trainings taught school administrators how to respond to a disaster and how to communicate with students and parents; municipal executives the basics of emergency response; responders to effectively communicate with the public in a crisis; local Emergency Management Directors skills to fulfill their critical function; and several others.

Critical training sessions included:

- 22** Incident Command System for Executives
- 5** Crisis Communications and Public Information for Schools
- 2** Basic Public Information Officer
- 3** Introduction to the Incident Command System
- 4** Incident Command System/Emergency Operations Center Interface
- 8** Emergency Management Director
- 5** Local Emergency Management Plan Seminar

The VEM Exercise Program provides first responders, volunteers, elected officials, emergency managers, school administrators, private industry and others a chance to work together to manage a hypothetical incident. VEM utilizes the national all-hazards approach to exercises which work to improve the capabilities associated with managing an incident, regardless of the specific hazard or threat.

VEM conducted or supported 15 exercises in 2018.

In addition to supporting state agencies through State Emergency Operations Center exercises, VEM conducted 15 exercises statewide, including at the following locations (with additional participating agencies in parenthesis):

- Springfield Hospital (District 11 Emergency Medical Services, Vermont State Police, Vermont Department of Health, state Hazardous Materials response team, Chester Fire, Chester Highway
- Union Street School (Springfield Fire, Springfield Police)
- Williston School District
- Town of Woodstock (Vermont Agency of Transportation, Woodstock Police, Woodstock Fire, Woodstock Highway Department, Emergency Medical Services, HAZMAT, Woodstock Terrace Nursing Home, Woodstock Elementary, Merten’s House Nursing Home, Thompson Senior Center, American Red Cross)
- Town of Duxbury
- Champlain Water District
- Global Foundries

Emergency Operations Center Activation Exercises:

- Common Operating Picture Workshop (3/13/18)
- Integrated Emergency Management Course TTX (4/18/18)

- Integrated Emergency Management Course FE (4/19/18)
- Continuity of Operations Plan Seminar (5/30/18)
- Time to Leave COOP TTX (8/8/18)
- Ready Set Activate Drill (10/12/18)

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER ACTIVATIONS & DISASTER DECLARATIONS

Emergency Operations Center Activations:

- Governor's State of the State Address (1/4/18)
- March for Our Lives (3/24/18)
- Severe Winter Storm (11/27/18)

Emergency Management Assistance Compact Missions:

- **U.S. Virgin Islands** – Public Health Advisor/Analyst to support the USVI Department of Health to develop and coordinate public health goals throughout the territory in response to Hurricane Maria.
- **Hawaii** – One team member from the Vermont Department of Public Service to support Kilauea East Rift Zone Event (Volcano/Lava Flow).
- **North Carolina** – Type I Swiftwater Rescue Team (17 members) from Vermont Task Force 1 to support local and state operations in response to inland and coastal flooding following Hurricane Florence.
- **North Carolina** – Three Registered Nurses from the Vermont Department of Health to staff county shelters across the impacted areas in response to Hurricane Florence.

Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund:

As of the end of 2018, 72% of Vermont communities had up-to-date Local Hazard Mitigation Plans (LHMPs), up from 69% at the beginning of the year. 95% of communities had current Local Emergency Operations Plans (LEOPs), up from 92% at the end of 2017.

Of the 287 municipalities (including villages and gores), 66 (i.e. 23%) currently meet all five of the Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund (ERAF) criteria and therefore qualify for the maximum state disaster recovery assistance percentage of 17.5%.

2018 Federal Disaster Declarations:

DR-4356 (Severe storm and flooding, October 29-30, 2017):

Declared on January 2, 2018 for Addison, Chittenden, Essex, Franklin, Grand Isle, Lamoille, Orange, Orleans, Washington, and Windham Counties. **\$4,885,855 obligated** (with all projects obligated, subject to final adjustment).

DR-4380 (Severe storm and flooding, May 4-5, 2018):

Declared on July 30, 2018 for Chittenden, Grand Isle, Lamoille, Orange, and Orleans Counties. **\$372,045 obligated** (with \$1.9 million still pending, including an estimated \$1 million+ of project-specific hazard mitigation funding to Vermont Electric Cooperative and Town of Colchester).

FEMA also continued obligating funds for **DR-4330** (severe storms and flooding of June 29 to July 1, 2017). **\$5,298,279 obligated** (with another \$5.3 million still pending final obligation).

**In addition to declared disasters, Governor Phil Scott has submitted a federal declaration request for a severe winter storm on November 26-28, 2018 for Franklin, Lamoille, Orange, Orleans, and Washington Counties.*

13,308 self-registered users on VT-ALERT at the end of 2018

143,871 residents contacted via VT-ALERT in 2018

317,284 businesses contacted via VT-ALERT in 2018



VT-ALERT
www.VTAlert.gov

STATE & LOCAL PLANNING

State Emergency Management Plan Revision:

VEM completed a revision of all key components of the State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP). The SEMP is the all-hazards plan that serves as the framework for the State of Vermont emergency management system, including management of local and statewide emergency incidents. Governor Scott issued Executive Order 01-19 promulgating the SEMP and the Agency of Administration detailed the roles and responsibilities of agencies and departments outlined in the SEMP. The SEMP officially went into effect January 1, 2019.

State Hazard Mitigation Plan Update:

The 2018 State Hazard Mitigation Plan: Vermont Stronger (SHMP) update involved significant support and buy-in from stakeholders across Vermont, including state agencies, nonprofits, municipalities and the private sector.

Over 100 individuals participated, representing 70 distinct organizations.

FEMA approved the plan on November 17, 2018 and plan actions will be implemented over the next five years.

Key priorities of the 2018 SHMP include:

- Development of a State Conservation & Buyout Program
- A statewide audit to create efficiencies and synergies across state government
- A reevaluation of the Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund (ERAF) to ensure Vermont is properly incentivizing proactive mitigation efforts statewide



Local Emergency Management Plans:

In accordance with the SEMP, Vermont jurisdictions are expected to develop and maintain a Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP). A current local emergency plan is also required for municipalities to receive federal preparedness grants and increased state reimbursement through ERAF. Municipalities should review and update their emergency plans annually and readopt them between Town Meeting Day and May 1 every year.

Vermont Emergency Management is responsible for maintaining a census of which municipalities have updated plans, developing templates for communities to follow when writing their plan, and, in coordination with Regional Planning Commissions, assisting towns in writing plans.

At the end of 2018, 95% of municipalities had a current Local Emergency Operations Plan or Local Emergency Management Plan on file with Vermont Emergency Management.

These current plans aid VEM with quickly reaching municipalities during an emergency to relay relevant information and assess their current status.

Local Hazard Mitigation Plans:

Local Hazard Mitigation Plans (LHMPs) are required to receive any FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance grants and are also required for increased state reimbursement through ERAF. VEM is responsible for providing technical assistance on plan development, assisting communities in securing grant funding to develop plans, and reviewing plans for conformance with FEMA requirements.

At the end of 2018, 72% of Vermont communities had an approved LHMP.

Once a plan is approved by FEMA, it is in place for five years. LHMPs assist communities in better understanding their vulnerability to natural hazards and developing actions to reduce their risk.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE GRANTS

VEM obligated \$593,763 in Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) funds to all 11 Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs) in Vermont to support local-level engagement in emergency preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation.

This included funding for special projects like the development of flood maps, conducting vulnerability assessments, development of a community organization active in disasters, among others.

RPCs also assisted towns with completing nearly 200 Local Emergency Management Plans, 57 trainings, and 12 exercises in 2018.

With VEM support, RPCs also assist communities during and after an emergency, as well as with the collection of statewide damage information

through the local liaison program. In 2018, RPCs were activated to collect information on damages after three emergency events, including two that resulted in Federal Disaster Declarations. RPCs also worked with VEM to provide direct assistance for case management for victims and with the Vermont Disaster Relief Fund to finalize applications for affected individuals.

The Department of Environmental Conservation also completed a \$25,000 EMPG sub-award for a project that developed a landslide inventory map and landslide report for Chittenden county to help identify potential hazard sites and enable hazard avoidance and mitigation measures to be developed. The project, which was extended to Orange County in 2018, will inform a statewide landslide hazard inventory.

SCHOOL SAFETY GRANTS

In 2018, the Governor and Legislature allocated \$4 million for Vermont schools to make safety upgrades.

Two-hundred-thirty-nine schools in 50 supervisory unions received grants to fund over 560 separate projects that are filling the security gaps identified in safety assessments.

When these projects are complete:

- 94** schools will have new surveillance cameras
- 95** schools will be able to better control access to the building through card readers or other entry systems
- 114** schools will have new locks and doors
- 125** schools will have new PA systems or two-way radio communication capabilities to communicate with staff and students in the event of an emergency
- 77** schools will have new windows, shades, or film to make it more difficult for those wanting to do harm to see inside

Another \$1 million dollars will help schools prepare through planning, training, and exercise.

This money will facilitate the creation or maintenance of School Emergency Operations Plans or Supervisory Union/School District Emergency Operations Plans, and design an options-based approach to school safety training based on the Department of Homeland Security's "Run, Hide, Fight" model, and then provide the appropriate training to schools.

\$400,000 in US Department of Justice grants will expand the SurviVermont program that involves the whole community in school safety, and establish a VSP-hosted school safety tip line.

Independent of that, VEM conducted five day-long sessions in the summer of 2018 to train more than 100 school administrators and staff in basic emergency response concepts and emergency crisis communications.

LONG-TERM RECOVERY & MITIGATION

Tropical Storm Irene Closeouts:

To date, the federal share obligated for Tropical Storm Irene Public Assistance projects is \$208.4 million.

The total is expected to increase slightly during the remaining project closeouts.

During calendar year 2018, VEM staff successfully closed out 57 project worksheets from Tropical Storm Irene.

Fifty-three of the original 3,500+ Irene projects are yet to be administratively closed.

Only two Irene projects remain under construction – the new Vermont Agriculture laboratory and the Roxbury Fish Hatchery.

Hazard Mitigation Projects and Successes:

Based on the latest report from the National Institute of Building Sciences (NIBS), **mitigation has a return on investment of \$6 for every \$1 spent, with \$7 for every \$1 spent on riverine flooding projects**, which is the majority of what we mitigate in Vermont.

FEMA reviewed more than \$650K in Pre-Disaster Mitigation and Flood Mitigation Assistance applications from Vermont for 2018, including:

- Buy-outs of vulnerable homes in Brandon
- Buyout of flood-damaged home in Wardsboro
- Development of 14 Local Hazard Mitigation Plans (LHMPs)
- Advance Assistance to the town of Plainfield for engineering to address an undersized bridge in the village

Vermont submitted **\$2 million** in project applications for federal hazard mitigation funding associated with the June-July 2017 storm, including:

- Stabilization of a road in Manchester, which has been subject to repetitive erosion
- Expansion of the VTrans Transportation Resilience Planning Tool (TRPT) to four new watersheds
- Restoration of natural floodplain along the Whetstone Brook in Brattleboro
- Emergency generators for critical facilities in Marshfield
- Buy-outs of flood-vulnerable structures in Brandon, Burlington, Cabot, and Middlesex

During 2018, recent years' hazard mitigation projects yielded flood avoidance benefits in Barre City, Brandon, and Cambridge.



December 8, 2017 – Ribbon-cutting ceremony for the newly-constructed Cambridge Greenway Trail Bridge in Jeffersonville, VT, which reduces Brewster River constriction and allows for greater access of the River to its natural floodplain at the outlet to the Lamoille River.



January 24, 2019 – An ice jam along the Neshobe River forced the River to jump its banks, scattering broken ice – as thick as one foot – along Newton Road. A large factory, once standing in the left of the image, was removed using FEMA Hazard Mitigation funds, and thus avoided impact from this ice jam event.



January 24, 2019 – Significant ice jamming along the Gunners Brook was “caught” by the flood-debris racks, which were installed following the City’s acquisition and demolition of five adjacent flood-prone structures. The debris racks successfully stopped the thick ice from potentially impacting downstream infrastructure.

THANK YOU, EMERGENCY RESPONDERS

Thomas Anderson, VT Public Safety Commissioner

Throughout 2018 I had the opportunity to meet many first-responders in the fire service, emergency medical services, law enforcement, and emergency management through the Governor's Capitol for a Day initiative. I continue to be humbled and awed by your service and commitment to you communities.

I would like to say thank you to responders and those who support them for all they do.

No one becomes an emergency responder to get rich. In fact, most responders are not paid for the time they spend responding to emergencies, nor for the countless hours they spend training for that purpose.

Most people know there are very few paid firefighters or Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) in Vermont. Most departments are run by volunteer chiefs and staffed with volunteers who are willing to donate their time. Volunteer and career firefighters, police, EMTs and other professionals not only respond to emergencies, but go through hours upon hours of training to ensure their own safety and the safety of those they serve.

The same goes for the voices on the other end of the line when you call 9-1-1. Emergency Communication Dispatchers work in a high stress environment every day; and these highly trained professionals perform their duties with distinction.

The families of these responders also play an important role, holding down the fort at home during emergencies that sometimes happen at night, on weekends, or during holidays, often without much notice.

Others give their time in the name of public safety in other ways. Every municipality in Vermont has an Emergency Management Director (EMD) or Coordinator who is directly responsible for the organization, administration, and coordination of local emergency management. EMDs work to ensure disaster responses in their town are coordinated, and that the town has the physical tools it needs to respond to any number of emergencies.

The Department of Public Safety understands the sacrifices of responders and the importance of supporting them. Vermont Emergency Management and the Division of Fire Safety facilitate and conduct free trainings throughout the year and administer federal grants for response organizations. The Vermont State Police, through the state Homeland Security Unit, also provides funding so response agencies can equip themselves to protect the lives of the public.

Once again, on behalf of the entire Department of Public Safety, I express my sincere gratitude to all emergency responders for the work you do and the sacrifices you make. We are all better off for your efforts.