



Gwinnett

2020

**OFFICE OF
EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT**

END OF YEAR REPORT

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Kevin Hill
*EM Specialist
Hazard Mitigation*

2020 GOALS & OBJECTIVES

- Obtain and document evidence of compliance with the Emergency Management Standard as published by the Emergency Management Accreditation Program by completing a self-assessment
- Continue mandated revision to the countywide Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Review and approve safety plans in Gwinnett County public and private schools as required by state law
- Execute the annual Performance Partnership Agreement with GEMA and complete quarterly reporting.
- Maintain and coordinate participation with the Atlanta Urban Area Security working group
- Maintain a training program that includes assessment, development, and implementation of emergency management training for response personnel and the public
- Design, conduct, and evaluate a minimum of two exercises per year as defined in the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program.



SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS & HIGHLIGHTS

The Gwinnett County Office of Emergency Management is a unit of the Gwinnett County Police Department that handles a variety of tasks including 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 closely with all Gwinnett County departments and private/nonprofit partners to accomplish these goals.

Success with disaster response and recovery relies on effective planning, training, exercise, and stakeholder engagement efforts. The challenges endured with the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, along with an active year of natural and human-caused disasters, was a test of the years of planning and preparation for OEM.

A small agency with a big mission, OEM works with all Gwinnett city and county agencies, along with other local, state, and federal agencies to save lives, protect property, and safeguard the environment.

The resource requirements brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic required a change to normal operations and resulted in the cancellation of most of the scheduled training and outreach activities in 2020. That time was instead directed to the support of Gwinnett County's efforts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite the challenges, all Federal and State emergency management mandates were met in 2020. Gwinnett County's Hazard Mitigation Plan was updated and approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in April, meeting the federally required five-year review. The Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency mandated exercise was completed in September. The mandated National Incident Management System reporting was completed in November. In addition, OEM was granted accreditation by the Emergency Management Accreditation Program in June. Gwinnett County OEM is the first county in the state of Georgia to achieve this prestigious honor!

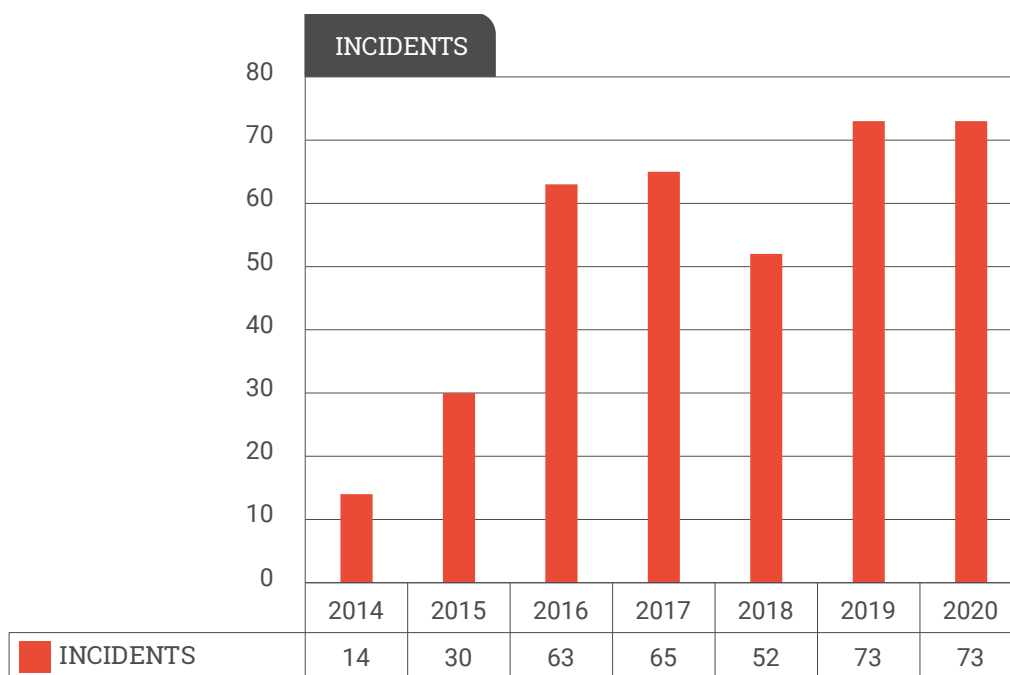
Overall, GCOEM recorded:

- 308 days of Emergency Operations Center Activation
- 6,855 hours of response and recovery actions
- 44 days of severe weather monitoring
- 11 missing person searches conducted
- 140 school emergency plans reviewed
- 1.7 million pieces of Personal Protective Equipment purchased, warehoused, and distributed to support the COVID-19 effort
- 16 training classes and one exercise held

Incident Response

The Georgia Emergency Management Act of 1981 (O.C.G.A. 38-3-27) requires the local director, or their designee be available or on-call at all times beyond normal working hours.

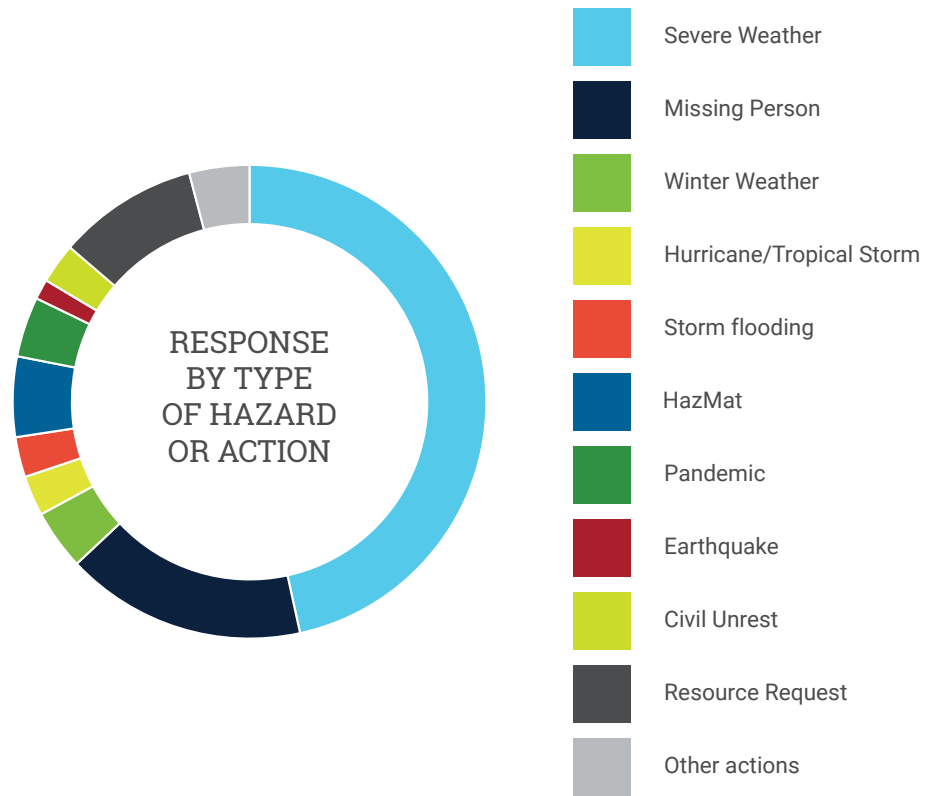
The duty officer serves as the OEM primary emergency point-of-contact for the alert, notification, and initiation of a preliminary response to major emergencies and disaster events occurring in Gwinnett County. Incidents that require a duty officer response continue to rise in both quantity and complexity. Whether responding to a request for resources, coordinating disaster response actions, or leading the search for a missing person, the OEM duty officers are responsible for putting the county's emergency plans into action.



As part of normal operations, OEM duty officers responded to a large number of and variety of incidents that were not COVID-19 related, resulting in 6,855 staff hours directly related to response and recovery actions.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Office of Emergency Management activated the Emergency Operations Center on March 2, 2020. The EOC remained activated for this event into 2021.

Response Types



OEM staff duty officers monitored or provided coordination for 73 incidents during 2020. Even without considering the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 was a very active year for all types of disasters in Gwinnett County. The chart above shows the breakdown for the response to types of hazards OEM dealt with throughout the year.

COVID-19 Response

While the Gwinnett-Newton-Rockdale Health Department was the agency leading Gwinnett County's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, OEM played a significant role in coordination, resource management, and guiding Gwinnett County's response to the novel coronavirus pandemic.

The Emergency Operations Center was partially activated on March 3, 2020 when the first reported cases of COVID-19 were identified in Gwinnett County, significantly impacting the standard operations of OEM. The partial activation of the Emergency Operations Center, along with new social distancing and facility hygiene requirements, necessitated the cancelation of almost all scheduled training and exercise events throughout the year.

As part of the pandemic response, OEM was tasked with the acquisition and distribution of Personal Protective Equipment for all of the County agencies and departments, and the public safety departments of the cities in the county. The emerging coronavirus disrupted the PPE supply chain worldwide, creating massive shortages and a gray market of counterfeit goods. This increased the task of vetting, procuring, and distributing critical supplies. Despite the challenges, storage space was secured and all types of PPE – from gloves and gowns to masks and sanitizer – was procured and distributed.

By the numbers:

- 6,287 personnel hours of COVID-19 response
- PPE distributed:
 - 1,015,100 gloves
 - 566 gallons of hand sanitizer
 - 504,564 masks
 - 88,243 assorted protective coverings



WAVE TO



OPEN

Tropical Storm Zeta

Gwinnett County was not in the direct path of the very active 2020 hurricane season, but was still affected. Hurricanes Sally, Delta, and Zeta brought tropical storm force winds that impacted our residents.

Tragically, Hurricane Zeta was responsible for two deaths in the county. The storm was downgraded to a tropical storm by the time it reached central and north Georgia, but still caused significant damage across the region. Damage was reported all across Gwinnett County, including downed trees and powerlines, with 66 homes reporting damages.



Emergency Management Accreditation Program

The Gwinnett County Office of Emergency Management was the first county in Georgia to achieve accreditation by the Emergency Management Accreditation Program. Accreditation recognizes the ability of programs to bring together personnel, resources, and communications from a variety of agencies and organizations in preparation for and in response to a disaster of any type.

In 2020, the Office of Emergency Management was granted full accreditation by EMAP. OEM provided over 10,000 pages of documentation as proof of compliance for the 64 standards and 103 elements in the EMAP standard.



EMAP is an independent non-profit organization whose mission is to foster excellence and accountability in emergency management programs by establishing credible standards applied in a peer-review accreditation process. The EMAP standards provide a set of metrics that help emergency management agencies understand their capabilities and capacity for disaster management. The EMAP accreditation process provides emergency management programs the opportunity to be evaluated and recognized for compliance with standards certified by the American National Standard Institute and recognized by the industry complies with the EMAP's mission to build safer communities through credible standards of excellence.



Planning

Plans must be in place that describe Gwinnett County's emergency response, continuity of operations, continuity of government, and recovery from emergencies or disasters. Specific areas of responsibility need to be assigned for performing functions in response to a disaster, and hazards that impact Gwinnett County must be addressed. Plan documents are developed, reviewed, and revised on a schedule that is based on the specific requirements of that plan. Some plans require additional approvals such as local adoption or State and Federal approval.

Plans evaluated or revised in 2020 were:

- Gwinnett County Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Multi-Year Training & Exercise Plan
- Multi-Year Strategic Plan

The purpose of hazard mitigation planning is to identify policies and actions that can be implemented both immediately and in the long term to reduce risk and future losses. Gwinnett County's Hazard Mitigation Plan forms the foundation for our long-term strategy to reduce disaster losses and break the cycle of disaster damage, reconstruction, and repeated damage. An updated Hazard Mitigation Plan must be submitted to the Federal Emergency Management Agency every five years, and the county's previous plan was set to expire in July 2020.

The level of planning required for a plan of this complexity is not done in a vacuum, and Emergency Management Specialist Kevin Hill took the lead in engaging multiple county departments and local jurisdictional contacts to produce the current plan revision in time for the mandated update. Over 40 individuals representing multiple county agencies, local jurisdictions, and educational organizations participated in these planning efforts. In addition, three public meetings were held to gain input from Gwinnett County residents.

EM Specialist Hill submitted the update to the Georgia Emergency Management/Homeland Security Agency in October 2019 for initial approval. The plan was approved by GEMA in December and sent to FEMA for final approval. The Hazard Mitigation Plan received final approval by FEMA in March 2020, and was adopted by the Gwinnett County Board of commissioners in April.

Training and Exercise

While the training and exercise program was significantly reduced during 2020, OEM still met the federal and state mandates for training and exercise actions, along with meeting internal training goals.

- Search Team refresher training
- Winter Weather Tabletop Exercise
- COVID-19 Sheltering Exercise
- EOC Readiness Series
- Continuity of Operations Planning
- Career Development Series/NIMS training



Gwinnett

COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Gwinnett County Office of Emergency Management
800 Hi-Hope Road | Lawrenceville, GA 30043
GwinnettEMA.com