



2023

OFFICE OF
EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT

END OF YEAR REPORT



Gwinnett

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Leadership	2
Letter from the Director	3
Mission and Vision	4
Mitigation	5
Planning	5
Training and Exercises	6
Disaster Response	8

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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



As we reflect on the past year, I am pleased to present an overview of the achievements and initiatives undertaken by the Gwinnett County Office of Emergency Management. Amid a dynamic landscape, we have consistently upheld the Gwinnett Standard, embodying a commitment to excellence in service, stewardship, and integrity.

Our overarching goal remains unchanged: to cultivate a disaster-resistant community. Throughout the year, we have embraced this vision by implementing a comprehensive emergency management program in collaboration with various departments, agencies, and neighboring jurisdictions, adapting to evolving circumstances and challenges as they arise.

Central to our efforts is hazard mitigation, a cornerstone of disaster preparedness. In 2023, Gwinnett County continued to facilitate the update of the Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan. Valuable insights from community members have informed our approach to addressing localized hazard risks.

Our emphasis on planning and training has been unwavering. In response to shifting dynamics, we have meticulously reviewed and revised multiple plans, assigning clear responsibilities to tackle the diverse hazards facing Gwinnett County. Tailored training programs have been conducted for first responders, non-governmental organizations, and private sector partners, ensuring readiness in the face of potential threats.

Exercises remain instrumental in honing our preparedness efforts. Adhering to the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program, we have conducted a series of exercises, surpassing Georgia's requirements. Notably, a comprehensive active shooter exercise, involving multiple agencies, showcased our commitment to readiness and coordination.

The pivotal role of the OEM duty officer cannot be overstated. Additionally, the Office of Emergency Management has worked to facilitate coordination and monitor conditions when necessary during emergency events and times of increased need. The dedication of our OEM staff has been instrumental in orchestrating effective disaster response actions and resource allocation.

In closing, I extend my sincere appreciation to the Board of Commissioners for their steadfast support and dedication to integrity, accountability, equity, inclusivity, and innovation. It is through this collaborative partnership that the Office of Emergency Management continues to fortify our community's resilience. Looking ahead, we remain resolute in our pursuit of excellence, committed to serving the residents of Gwinnett County.



MISSION AND VISION

The Gwinnett Standard

The Gwinnett Standard is an expectation of excellence in service, stewardship, and integrity in everything we do. It is a connecting thread that runs throughout County government and is reflected in the excellence of our schools, libraries, businesses, community organizations, and residents.

Vision Statement

The vision of the Gwinnett County Office of Emergency Management is to encourage and foster a disaster-resistant community.

Mission Statement

To administer a communitywide 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.

Board of Commissioners Values Statement

Integrity: We believe in being honest, building trust, and having strong moral principles.

Accountability: We believe in stewardship, transparency, and sustainability.

Equity: We believe in fairness and respect for all.

Inclusivity: We believe in engaging, embracing, and unifying our communities.

Innovation: We believe in continual adaptation of technology, process, and experience.

MITIGATION

Hazard mitigation is any sustainable action that reduces or eliminates long-term risk to people and property from future disasters. Mitigation planning breaks the cycle of disaster damage, reconstruction, and repeated damage. Federal and state funding is occasionally available for specific mitigation efforts for those communities that have a federally approved Hazard Mitigation Plan. Gwinnett County was awarded a mitigation planning grant to support the update of the Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan. Public input regarding the Hazard Mitigation Plan was received through a published survey. The survey was broadcast on several Gwinnett County maintained platforms, but also received support from several municipalities who circulated the survey as well. The survey, and its results, not only satisfy a federal requirement for the plan, but also allow a way to record resident opinions on localized hazard risks.

New mitigation strategies were identified in 2023 necessitating a plan amendment which was accepted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in May. The Office of Emergency Management continues to provide technical assistance to several departments and municipalities as they seek funding toward identified mitigation projects.

PLANNING

Plans must be in place that describe Gwinnett County's emergency response, continuity of operations, continuity of government, hazard mitigation, 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, evaluated, 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. In 2023, four plans were evaluated and revised.

Plans Evaluated & Revised

- Strategic Plan
- Continuity of Operations Plan
- County Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Integrated Preparedness Plan
- Recovery Annex

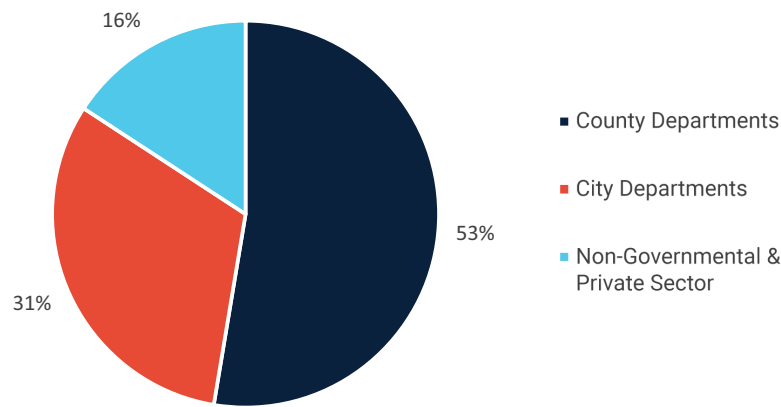


TRAINING AND EXERCISES

Training

OEM administers a formal training program that begins with a needs assessment to address internal and external requirements. Participants in the assessment process include County departments, city departments, and non-governmental and private sector partners.

Training Needs Assessment Participants



Training is regularly scheduled and specialized to the threats and hazards of the county. Courses were conducted in the subject areas listed below. Target audiences may include key public officials, first responders, non-governmental and private sector partners, and the general public.

Course Title	Number of Offerings
Incident Command System/Emergency Operations Center Interface	1
Intermediate Incident Command for Expanding Incidents	1
Advanced Incident Command	1
Continuity of Operations	1
WebEOC Incident Management Software	6
Basic Emergency Operations Center Processes	4
Search for Missing Persons	5
Total Training Courses	19



Exercises

Exercises play a vital role in preparedness. A formal exercise program provides a low-risk and controlled environment to familiarize personnel with roles and responsibilities, foster meaningful interaction, and enhance communication. Exercises also assess and validate plans, policies, procedures, capabilities, and identify strengths and areas for improvement. Exercises are conducted and documented consistent with the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program. The state of Georgia requires local emergency management programs to complete two exercises per year.

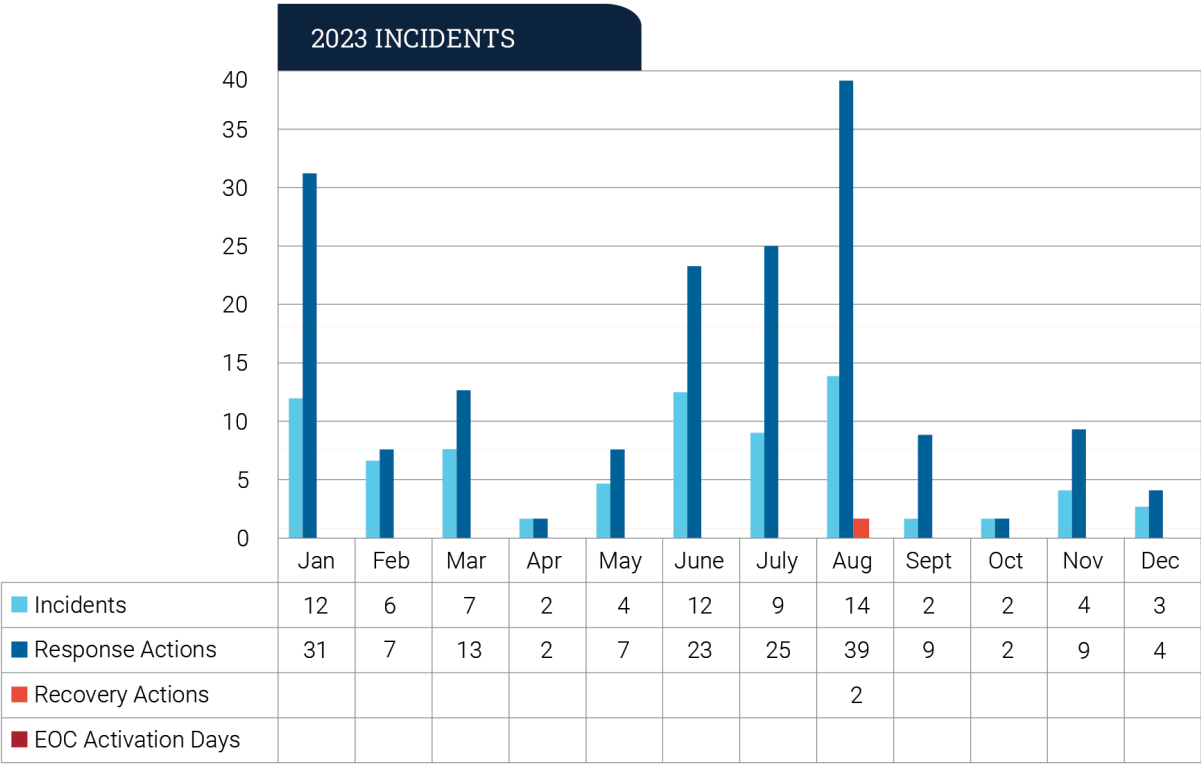
Gwinnett County, along with the Atlanta Regional Commission and other metro Atlanta counties, conducted a full-scale mass casualty exercise in 2023. This exercise validated existing plans, procedures, and equipment to address this type of threat and provide immediate medical care. Multiple law enforcement agencies, fire departments, and Emergency Management agencies participated. Valuable information was learned that will contribute to the improvement of how the region responds to a large-scale event. In total, the exercise included the participation of more than 400 active participants and was the culmination of more than a year of planning.

DISASTER 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 OEM duty officer serves as the 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. Consideration will be given to activating the Emergency Operations Center when the duty officer becomes aware of an incident and anticipates a need for coordination and/or resource support from the EOC. Management of these major emergencies and disasters requires the support of the entire OEM staff. Scheduled planning, training, and exercise activities are put on hold during the response and recovery to these non-scheduled events.

As part of normal operations, OEM duty officers responded to a large number and variety of incidents, resulting in 319 staff hours directly related to response and recovery actions.





Gwinnett

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