

ANNEX D

TORNADO RESPONSE PLAN



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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ANNEX D - TORNADO RESPONSE**I. PURPOSE**

To describe MDOT's operational concepts for the preparation, response and recovery of the State Highway System after a major tornado. Sections of State Highway Routes under contract at the time of an emergency response will be handled as follows: The contractor will be paid for work required to restore and/or maintain traffic, which is caused by snow, ice, major flooding, landslide or phenomenon of nature such as an earthquake, hurricane, tornado, etc. when damage from such cause is beyond the control of and without the fault or negligence of the contractor.

II. SITUATION

- A. Tornadoes appear as a rotating funnel-shaped cloud, spinning rapidly, and extending toward the earth from the base of a thunderstorm accompanied by lightning, hail and damaging winds.
- B. The National Weather Service considers a storm severe if it produces hail at least 3/4 inch in diameter, wind at 58 mph or higher, or tornadoes. The National Weather Service will issue the following:
 - 1. Tornado Watch - weather conditions exist for a possible tornado.
 - 2. Tornado Warning - a tornado has been spotted.
- C. Mississippi's latitude and longitude place it within the region in North America that is most prone to storms. Tornadoes generally occur during the months of April, May and June between the hours of 3:00 P.M. and 7:00 P.M. However, tornadoes are unpredictable and can occur during any month and at any time. Usually there is sufficient warning by the National Weather Service for precautionary measures to be taken.

III. RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Mississippi Department of Public Safety (MDPS)
 - 1. Provide emergency notification and warning.
 - 2. Maintain liaison with SEOC.
 - 3. Coordinate functions with the SEOC.
 - 4. Provide direction and control of traffic as needed.
 - 5. Provide assistance to local authorities as needed.

B. Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT)

1. State Emergency Coordinator

- a. Work with MEMA and other state agencies in responding to tornado damage.
- b. Provide liaison with the SEOC.
- c. Coordinate functions at the SEOC with the Mississippi Department of Public Safety.
- d. Provide direction, control and coordination.
- e. Provide damage assessment support.
- f. Notify appropriate state and District people.
- g. Review the Comprehensive Emergency Transportation Response Plan.
- h. Monitor emergency situation.
- i. Coordinate the opening of those routes essential for the delivery of goods, services and people in support of emergency operations.

2. District Emergency Coordinator

- a. Coordinate the Districts response to tornado damage.
- b. Monitor weather forecasts.
- c. Determine if detours will be required.
- d. Assign personnel to check sign inventory for appropriate signs that

will be required at each location.
- e. Determine where signs should be located.
- f. When road closure becomes necessary, notify the Executive Director, Chief Engineer and the State Maintenance Engineer.
- g. Notify local news media and 911 officials.
- h. Assign personnel to place signs and barricade and close access to tornado damaged areas.
- i. Assign personnel to assist traffic in and around affected area.
- j. Assign personnel to check for any necessary road repairs before re-opening to traffic.
- k. Assign personnel to remove all traffic control devices.
- l. Notify state and local officials that the road is now open.
- m. Restore roadway system in accordance with MDOT established priorities.

IV. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

- A. Most District Engineers and Superintendents have experienced tornado damage and know that incident management type action will be required such as road-closed signs and planned detour signs.
- B. Like other disasters, tornadoes are managed at the lowest possible level. When a specific area or District is particularly hard hit, it is incumbent on the District Emergency Coordinator to make the Districts needs known. All available resources will be made available to the MDOT team members requiring assistance. A major disaster will result in a request from the Governor to the President for federal assistance. When approved a tremendous pool of assets will become available. In addition, experience has shown that a tremendous energy will be expended in record keeping and documentation by District personnel. Also accompanying federal assistance will be numerous requirements for MDOT expertise on disaster/needs assessment and survey teams. Unaffected Districts with less damage should anticipate helping affected Districts.
- C. Information on the extent and severity of the tornado is vital, particularly in reference to the status of closed roads. This information should be passed on as soon as possible to the District Emergency Coordinator for further dissemination to the State Transportation Emergency Coordinator and to Public Affairs Division for dissemination to the media.

V. EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE DIRECTORY
(See ANNEX L)

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