

Annex J: Flooding

Nature of the Hazard

The City of South Portland is subject to flooding events, primarily from storm surges and rapid accumulation of storm water runoff. The Cumberland County Hazard Mitigation Plan, dated December 24, 2004, notes that "Cumberland County has suffered repeatedly from flood hazard events, both riverine and coastal. These events have resulted in significant damage to property, economic disruption, reduced access for emergency vehicles, injury and death of persons. These events are associated with spring runoff events and coastal storms" (p. 15). Flooding events are rank ordered as high priority events, as there have been 10 federally declared disasters in Cumberland County between 1987 and 2003 due to flooding events. Six of these 10 disaster declaration flood events involved South Portland.

Risk Area

The entire city is subject to flooding, because of the coastal nature of the city (located on the Atlantic Ocean and the Fore River) and because of the frequency of severe intense thunderstorms that bring large amounts of rain in a short timeframe to the area. The County Hazard Mitigation Study cited above lists several areas of South Portland that are susceptible to frequent flooding.

Direction and Control

Normal flooding events are handled by city departments without any emergency assistance. If flooding occurs, it is likely going to be a citywide issue, and therefore a scene specific Incident Commander is not anticipated. The Emergency Operations Center should be activated to manage emergency response actions.

The Emergency Management Director (City Manager) may designate a senior department head or the EMA Director to manage EOC operations in response to flooding conditions.

Communications

Normal city communications channels will be used to manage response to flooding conditions. Flooding events are not likely to overload telephone, cell phone and two-way radio systems.

Warning

Flooding events may come with short advance notice (e.g. severe spring storms dropping significant rainfall in short amounts of time), or may be known hours in advance. In any event, areas or the city that may be in danger because of severe flooding will be warned via methods described in the All-Hazards Emergency Plan, including use of the EAS system, use of police officers and firefighters using bullhorns and other devices, using the emergency warning system designed for the hard of hearing and other means. Warning messages and methods will be coordinated by the EOC staff, if activated.

Emergency Public Information

Emergency Public Information (EPI) will be issued as necessary by the EOC staff, through the Public Information Officer (PIO). Methods of EPI dissemination include using the TV camera mounted in the Joint Information Center (JIC). This JIC camera is connected to the SPC TV broadcast studio at City Hall, allowing emergency instructions to be broadcast through SPC TV to about 12,000 households in South Portland and Cape Elizabeth. News releases will be developed as needed by the PIO, approved by the EOC Manager, and then disseminated to the public through Portland area radio, TV and print media outlets as well as city website and social media sites.

Evacuation

EOC staff would determine, based on current flood conditions, forecast flood conditions, road conditions, and other factors, if evacuation of the public were necessary. Appropriate evacuation routes would be developed in the EOC, approved by the EOC Manager, and then broadcast to the public via the EPI system described above. A combination of police officers, firefighters, public works staff, and appropriate barricades and other traffic control devices would be employed to effect the evacuation in an orderly and timely manner.

Mass Care

EOC staff will determine if mass care facilities should be opened and manned. The primary mass care facility in South Portland is the Community Center on Nelson Street, behind the South Portland High School. Approximately 500 evacuees can be processed in this mass care facility. Other city facilities, including the High School can be used as mass care shelters.

Health and Medical Concerns

The Portland Water District may be contacted once floods have receded to ensure the safety of the drinking water supply. Local officials may mandate “boil water” orders for those on well water systems or others as determined necessary. Local medical resources are deemed to be adequate to deal with flood victims.

Resource Management

Local resources are considered adequate to deal with flooding events. If additional resources are needed, Cumberland County Office of Emergency Management will be contacted by the South Portland EOC and requested to facilitate the procurement of additional needed resources.

Specific Actions For Flooding Events

Fire Department Actions

- Implement SOGs as appropriate.
- Work with other city agencies to determine mitigation methods (sandbags, evacuation, road closures, etc) and help implement those measures.
- Respond as requested by the EOC.

Police Department Actions

- Work with other city agencies to determine mitigation methods (sandbags, evacuation, road closures, etc.) and help implement those measures.
- Respond as requested by the EOC.

Public Works Actions

- Work with other city agencies to determine mitigation methods (sandbags, evacuation, road closures, etc.) and help implement those measures.
- Respond as requested by the EOC.

EOC Actions

- Activate and staff as needed.
- Notify the public and key infrastructure facilities of actions taken, expected duration of flooding, impact on the community, and determine what additional measures should be taken.
- Coordinate mitigation, response and recovery actions with CCEMA, MEMA/State EOC and other jurisdictions as needed.