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Newsletter of the Township Emergency Management Association

August 2021

Calling All Subject Matter Experts!

As indicated below, PSATS continues to host numerous in-person and virtual educational events targeted for municipal officials, employees, and professional consultants. If you are interested in sharing your expertise to make an in-person or virtual presentation on any topic of interest to our audience, please contact Scott Coburn at scoburn@psats.org.

If you have suggestions of topics you would be interested in knowing more about, email tema@psats.org or call TEMA Coordinator James Wheeler at (717) 763-0930, ext. 128.

Latest News

FEMA Releases Updated Continuity Guide for State and Local Governments

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has issued an updated manual to help state and local governments prepare for continuity of operations during a disaster or other emergency. The document, titled "Guide to Continuity of Government for State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Governments," is available [HERE](#).

Continuity of operations is a tool to help local governments develop a workable and suitable plan for sustaining their critical services and essential functions when a disaster or emergency disrupts routine operations. This FEMA document provides guidance in the form of planning factors to help state or local governments achieve viable continuity plans and future capability to ensure the resilience and preservation of essential functions in the event of an emergency.

Update on Tornado Preparedness and Response

On one recent day in late July, nearly a dozen confirmed tornadoes hit the state, including one with 140 mph winds, or an EF3 on the [Enhanced Fujita scale](#) (*an EF5 is the maximum*). Because of the public danger of such incidents, EMCs and their Public Information Officers (PIOs) are encouraged to share the following information with their township's road crew and residents using all the township's communications channels:

What to do if you are under a tornado or severe weather warning:

- Go to NOAA Weather Radio and your local news or official social media accounts for updated emergency information. Follow the instructions of state, local, and tribal

officials.

- Go to a safe shelter immediately, such as a safe room, basement, storm cellar, or small interior room on the lowest level of a sturdy building.
- Stay away from windows, doors, and outside walls.
- Do not go under an overpass or bridge. You're safer in a low, flat location.
- Watch out for flying debris that can cause injury or death.
- If your family can't stay home, make plans to go to a public shelter. Review the CDC's guidelines for going to a public disaster shelter during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Preparing for a tornado

- Know the signs of a tornado, including a rotating, funnel-shaped cloud, an approaching cloud of debris, or a loud roar like a freight train.
- Get your neighbors to sign up for your community's warning system. The Emergency Alert System (EAS) and NOAA Weather Radio also provide emergency alerts. If your community has sirens, become familiar with the warning tone.
- Pay attention to weather reports. Meteorologists can predict when conditions might be right for a tornado.
- Identify and practice going to a safe shelter, such as a safe room built using [FEMA criteria](#) or a storm shelter built to ICC 500 standards. The next best protection is a small, interior, windowless room or basement on the lowest level of a sturdy building.
- Prepare your neighbors for long-term stay at home or sheltering in place by gathering emergency supplies, cleaning supplies, non-perishable foods, water, medical supplies, and medication.

Staying safe during a tornado

- Immediately go to a safe location that you have identified.
- Pay attention to EAS, NOAA Weather Radio, or local alerting systems for current emergency information and instructions.
- Protect yourself by covering your head or neck with your arms and putting materials such as furniture and blankets around or on top of you.
- Do not try to outrun a tornado in a vehicle. If you are in a car or outdoors and cannot get to a building, cover your head and neck with your arms and cover your body with a coat or blanket, if possible.

Staying safe after a tornado

- Save your phone calls for emergencies and use text messaging or social media to communicate with family and friends.
- Pay attention to EAS, NOAA Weather Radio, and local authorities for updated information.
- Stay clear of fallen power lines or broken utility lines.
- Contact your health care provider if you are sick and need medical attention. Wait for further care instructions and continue to shelter in place.
- Wear appropriate gear during damage assessment and cleanup, such as thick-soled shoes, long pants, and work gloves; use appropriate face coverings or masks if cleaning mold or other debris.

Training Opportunities

TEMA Fall 2021 Emergency Exercise Forums: These full-day, in-person classes are designed for everyone who is responsible for your municipality's emergency management program, such as elected officials, municipal managers, front office staff, road crew/public works personnel, and most important, local emergency management coordinators (EMCs). Worried about tornadoes, landslides, sinkholes, flood, blizzards, power outages, cyber security? You should be! And now is the time to hone your rapid response operational skills by participating in the nearest TEMA fall tabletop exercise session. And while the exact scenarios may be a secret, it is also no secret that, as in this class, you never know what upcoming hazard you might face!

Click on the appropriate link below to register for the **TEMA Fall 2021 Emergency Exercise Forum** of your choice:

- [October 28 - Central \(Enola\)](#)
- [November 4 - West \(Canonsburg\)](#)
- [November 9 - East \(Conshohocken\)](#)
- [November 18 - Central \(State College\)](#)

EMCs and other members of the township's emergency management team are reminded to get early approval to attend these important emergency preparedness sessions.

Each day starts at 9 a.m. and concludes by 3 p.m. Lunch and handouts are included.

AGENDA (subject to change):

9:00	Welcome / Introductions / Game Plan / TTX Basics
9:15	Tabletop Response Exercise & After-Action Report (AAR)
11:30	Lunch
12:30	Tabletop Recovery Exercise & After-Action Report (AAR)
3:00	Adjourn

TEMA Spring 2022 Training: Mark Your Calendar!

No, it is never too early to plan! Save the date for the Spring 2022 Emergency Management Forum, which will be held in-person Sunday, April 24, 2022, in conjunction with the 2022 PSATS Annual Conference in Hershey. Registration for this event will begin in early December.

TEMA Q&A

Q: We are looking into creating a “storm safe room” in our township building and at one of our most popular parks. What information is available on criteria that should be considered when designing safe rooms?

A: FEMA provides several resources on this topic:

- Click [HERE](#) for information on **criteria to consider** when siting a community safe room.
- Click [HERE](#) for information about **tornado-proof doors** that can be installed in community safe rooms.
- Click [HERE](#) for a list of **frequently asked questions** on this matter.

Q: Should our township EMC gather emergency contact information from private sector companies in the township?

A: It is recommended that the township's EMC have contact information for the emergency manager at all public and private entities, such as schools, hospitals, nursing homes, day care

facilities, etc. as part of the township's Notification and Resource Manual. The EMC should also be in regular contact with neighboring EMCs in case they need to share such information during a disaster or emergency.

PEMA encourages EMCs to use CEMPlanner by Previstar to give the township's emergency management team full-time access to all the township's emergency operations plans and other resource materials. Plans developed using CEMPlanner are stored in a secure, centralized virtual library, ensuring every member of the team is viewing the most up-to-date plan. CEMPlanner is web-based, which allows users to access their plans from practically anywhere, which enhances the continuity of operations program and the ability to operate from any location.

For more information about CEMPlanner, EMCs should contact their county emergency management agency. An overview of this software is available [HERE](#).

Q: As drones, or unmanned aerial systems (UAS), become more commonplace, our township is interested in learning more about how they can be used for emergency management purposes. Where can we go for trustworthy information?

A: The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration, or FAA, has an informative website [HERE](#) that addresses all the requirements for operating a UAS for any purpose. For information specific to flying a UAS for an emergency purpose, click [HERE](#).

Comments and suggestions about this monthly newsletter for members of the Township Emergency Management Association can be emailed to James Wheeler at jwheeler@psats.org.



Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors

David M. Sanko, Executive Director

4855 Woodland Drive
Enola, PA 17025