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Newsletter of the Township Emergency Management Association

June 2022

Latest News

Are You Ready for Summer Blackouts? Other Issues?

As we prepare for our upcoming TEMA Fall Tabletop Exercise (TTX) Forums, we thought it would be helpful to explain to new township supervisors and emergency management coordinators the general nature of tabletop exercises.

The upcoming TEMA TTXs cover a wide range of "What would/should you do?" scenarios that will help you assess your organization's and residents' level of preparedness. These tabletop activities are intended to be low-stress conversation starters to lead to discussions, as the name implies, around your meeting table.

For example, here is a scenario that is applicable to both work and home and will give you some concrete actions to help enhance your preparedness.

Imagine that suddenly the lights flicker and then the power goes out. Stepping outside, you realize that the entire neighborhood has lost power. Your cellphone is still half-charged, so you check social media and see that many of your friends are also experiencing the power outage. It's summer, and despite the sun going down, the temperature and humidity remain high — which was the case one recent weekend when the power went out.

Here are some questions to start your discussions:

- What supplies are in your emergency kit? Does it include extra batteries and spare charging devices for your cellphones for use in your home, office, and car?
- Do you have a generator? If so, review proper use of the generator with everyone involved, emphasizing carbon monoxide safety and refilling the fuel.
- How will the power outage affect important devices in your home? Think of your refrigerator, freezer, garage door, alarm systems, lifesaving medical devices, etc.
- Is there a need for the township to set up cooling centers for those who can't handle the heat due to medical or other conditions?
- Does anyone have special needs, such as medical, emotional, or physical needs or limited English proficiency, that might present challenges if they had to stay at a shelter? If so, have you prepared a special plan for them?
- How might you address medication or foods that rely on temperature control?

As you can see, asking thought-provoking questions in a make-believe setting will help reduce stress when a real disaster strikes. There is no better time to help spread an educational message to you and your residents than while an important matter is on their minds, such as power outages.

Disasters and incidents of this kind — and worse — are always around the corner. Having your emergency management team attend a TEMA TTX will help you prepare for the next disaster. Have your team save these dates:

- [Sept. 15 — TEMA TTX West — Westmoreland County](#)
- [Sept. 29 — TEMA TTX Central — Cumberland County](#)
- [Oct. 13 — TEMA TTX East — Montgomery County](#)

Reminder: Federal Flood Mitigation Funding Available

Pennsylvania will receive \$5 million through the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to support implementation of mitigation actions that will protect against future damage from natural disasters. Properties covered by a National Flood Insurance Program policy that have sustained repetitive losses due to flooding are eligible for the new Swift Current initiative. For more information, [click here](#).

Applications must be submitted by noon, **October 3, 2022**, using the [Mitigation eGrants Management System](#). Interested applicants are encouraged to contact Tom Hughes, the state hazard mitigation officer, at (717) 651-2726 or thughes@pa.gov.

The following types of projects are eligible even if an insurance claim has been filed:

- property acquisition and structure demolition/relocation;
- nonstructural retrofitting of existing buildings and facilities;
- structure elevation;
- mitigation reconstruction;
- dry floodproofing of historic residential structures or non-residential structures; and
- structural retrofitting of existing buildings.

Federal 'Internet for All Initiative' Aims to Bring High-Speed Internet to Everyone

The U.S. Internet for All Initiative, part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, will provide \$45 billion to provide affordable and reliable high-speed internet for everyone by the end of the decade. The initiative will be administered and implemented by the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA).

The initiative launched with three grant opportunities:

- Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program (\$42.5 billion)
- Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Program (\$1 billion)
- State Digital Equity Act program (\$1.5 billion)

NTIA is conducting a series of webinars for interested parties to learn more about these opportunities. [Click here](#) for more information on the webinars. [Click here](#) for more about these programs and application deadlines.

Legislative Report

The following is a summary of legislation affecting townships that has recently been considered by the General Assembly.

[HB 1462](#) would require municipalities to **provide written notification by first class mail to property owners of changes to special flood hazard area maps** by the Federal Emergency

Management Agency.

[HB 2268](#) would allow a 17-year-old to train for an interior firefighting module with live burns if they have permission to engage from a fire chief and a parent or guardian. The minor would be required to be under the supervision of a credentialed Pennsylvania State Fire Academy Instructor.

[HB 2404](#) would allow municipalities to apply for continuous maintenance permits for streams within their jurisdiction for at least 10 years.

[HB 2405](#) would create county programs to remove obstructions and address flood-related hazards within streams through emergency maintenance permits in consultation with their county conservation district.

[HB 2406](#) would create a small stream maintenance project permit for the mitigation of flood-related hazards of less than 250 linear feet or an area of less than one acre in size, reviewed and issued by county conservation districts.

[HB 2407](#) would clarify that the Pa. Fish and Boat Commission has no authority for permitting or enforcement related to stream clearing or maintenance activities.

[HB 2408](#) would eliminate the requirement for a permit when conducting maintenance activities on a culvert.

[HB 2409](#) would eliminate the requirement for a permit to remove flood-related hazards from streams that are deemed to be an emergency by a state or county.

[HB 2410](#) would clarify that permits are not required for stream maintenance activities conducted 50 feet or less upstream or downstream from a bridge or culvert.

[HB 2411](#) would require the state Department of Environmental Protection to provide an annual report on flooding and stream maintenance restoration in Pennsylvania.

[HB 2434](#) would increase Medicaid reimbursement rates for ambulance transportation, including a loaded mileage fee, and would provide a 10% add on for areas designated as super-rural by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid.

Upcoming PSATS Educational Opportunities

Calling All Subject Matter Experts!

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

In-person Classes

[Flagger Training](#)

PSATS is offering in-person, instructor-led flagger training for individuals who have flagging responsibilities on public roads. Others who would benefit from this course include, especially during an emergency, township road crews and public works departments, utility companies working on low-volume roads, local law enforcement personnel, tow-truck drivers, and township managers and elected officials (to understand the importance, and for budgeting purposes). This course meets the PennDOT Publication 408 flagger training requirements. Click on "Flagger Training" above to see the current list of classes.

PSATS PowerPass-Eligible Webinars

[Webinar – National Weather Service Resources for Townships – 6/1/22](#)

Weather events can negatively impact all areas of township operations, from emergency management to road crew readiness. There is no reason these days to not be fully prepared for oncoming weather. In this webinar, presenters from the National Weather Service (NWS) in State College will discuss how your township can take advantage of NWS resources to be better prepared for the weather challenges you are sure to face, whether severe rain, high winds, extreme cold, or snow. Register your road crew and emergency management teams to attend this webinar so they can be ready to use the cutting-edge resources from the NWS to keep your township safe from whatever weather comes your way.

[Webinar - Backyard Stream Repair - 7/28/22](#)

This webinar will describe how townships and residents can use native vegetation to protect and restore streambanks that suffer from mild to moderate bank erosion. Topics will include how streambank erosion starts, how to identify suitable restoration sites, and how to select, install, and maintain vegetation.

[Webinar - FEMA Grant Funding Opportunities - 8/3/22](#)

Tom Hughes, PEMA's State Hazard Mitigation Officer, will discuss numerous funding opportunities through FEMA, including the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program, which helps with hazard mitigation projects. He will also address grants available through the Flood Mitigation Assistance program, which can be used for projects that reduce or eliminate the risk of repetitive flood damage to buildings insured by the National Flood Insurance Program.

[Webinar - Making Intermunicipal Stormwater Management Work For You - 8/25/22](#)

Municipal stormwater regulations can put pressure on limited administrative and financial resources. This webinar will provide an overview of intermunicipal collaborative arrangements that have been used in Pennsylvania and have yielded efficiencies and cost savings. Pros and cons of each will be discussed in terms of initial investment, cost of compliance, co-benefits, and suitability for different situations.

TEMA Q&A

Q: We are looking for information to help explain to our residents how insurance companies use the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) to rate flood-prone properties. Are there any resources available?

A: Yes. The U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recently issued its "[Rate Explanation Guide](#)," which explains how its new rating methodology, "Risk Rating 2.0: Equity in Action," considers specific characteristics of a building — the where, how, and what — to provide a more modern, individualized, and equitable flood insurance rate. Understanding these characteristics can help your residents better identify their building's unique flood risk and the associated premium calculated by their insurance agent.

Q: Our new emergency management coordinator is interested in learning more about the emergency alerting system used to inform the public during an emergency. Is there any training she can take for this purpose?

A: Yes. The U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) National Emergency Training Center online class "[IS-247.B: Integrated Public Alert and Warning System \(IPAWS\) for Alert Originators](#)" would be a good place to start. In general, this course was designed to make authorized public safety officials aware of the benefits of using IPAWS for effective alerts and warnings.

The course provides guidance to prospective alert originators by:

- Increasing awareness of the benefits of using IPAWS for effective alerts and warnings;
- Improving skills to draft more appropriate, effective, and accessible alert and warning messages;
- Increasing understanding of the importance of training, testing, and exercising with IPAWS; and
- Offering best practices in the effective use of IPAWS to reach the public.

In addition to taking this class, EMCs or other public safety officials should work with their county emergency management agency on this kind of undertaking.

This monthly newsletter for members of the Township Emergency Management Association focuses on news and matters of interest to municipal emergency management personnel and provides details on upcoming training opportunities. To access previous editions, log onto www.psats.org and look under the "Newsroom" tab. Email comments and suggestions to TEMA Coordinator James Wheeler at jwheeler@psats.org.



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