

“Keep the Courts Open”

Emergency Preparedness in the Florida State Courts

Presentation Overview

1. The Problem and an All-Hazards Approach
2. Overview of Emergency Preparedness Planning in the Florida State Courts
3. Examples of Hurricane Damage and Lessons Learned
4. Appendix: Preparing for an Influenza Pandemic

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The Problem and an All-Hazards Approach

Defining the Problem – In Their Own Words

- ❑ “One thing I have found is a strong correlation between effective leadership and effective response. Unfortunately, I have also found the converse to be true.”
 - Senator Susan Collins, Maine – Chairman, Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs – February 10, 2006
- ❑ “The most important thing in a situation like this is people’s lives. Everything else is secondary.”
 - Chief Judge Carolyn Dineen King, United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Judicial Circuit – Sept. 1, 2005
- ❑ “We can’t return to the building anytime soon. So we have to have an alternative site. The question is, where?”
 - Chief Judge Carolyn Dineen King, United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Judicial Circuit – Sept. 1, 2005

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Defining the Problem – In Their Own Words

- ❑ “The first thing a system of justice must do is differentiate between the urgent and the important. The important is almost everything we do. But there are some matters that are going to be urgent.”
 - District Judge Mark Davidson – Sept. 7, 2005
- ❑ “Most computer records will be saved. Many other records will be lost forever. Some local courthouses have been flooded, imperiling a vast universe of files, records and documents.”
 - “Storm Leaves Legal System a Shambles.” *New York Times* Sept. 9, 2005

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An All-Hazards Approach

Suspicious Substance
(Example – Punta Gorda January 6, 2004)

High Profile Cases

Asbestos
(Example – Lakeland February 25, 2004)

Electrical Blackout
(Example – Tallahassee June 13, 2004 and Bartow June 1, 2006)

Suspicious Package
(Example – Bonifay October 18, 2001)

Hurricanes

CAUTION
Asbestos Containing Material (ACM)
Cancer and lung disease hazard
Do not disturb without proper training and equipment

SUSPICIOUS
If you observe a suspicious package...

1. Do not touch or move the package. 2. Notify the proper authorities. 3. Do not use elevators. 4. Do not use public phones.

If a package is open and/or a threat is identified...

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Overview of Emergency Preparedness Planning
in the Florida State Courts

Clear Policy Goals Established

- ❑ We must deal with crises in a way that protects the health and safety of everyone inside our facilities
- ❑ We must “keep the courts open” to ensure justice for the people



Justice Wells



Justice Pariente



Justice Anstead

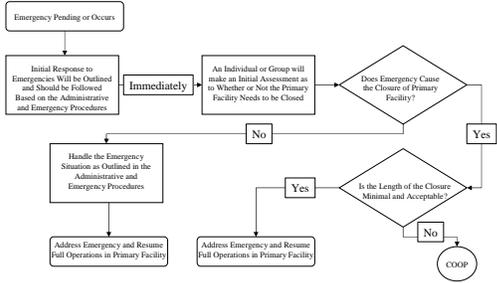
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Practical Tools Developed to Achieve the Goal

- ❑ The Process for Responding to Emergencies
 - Administrative and Emergency Procedures
 - Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)
- ❑ The Court Emergency Management Group (CEMG)
 - The CEMG represents a **policy** group
- ❑ The Eight Fill in the Blank Templates
- ❑ The Court Emergency Management Team (CEMT)
 - The CEMT represents an **operational** team

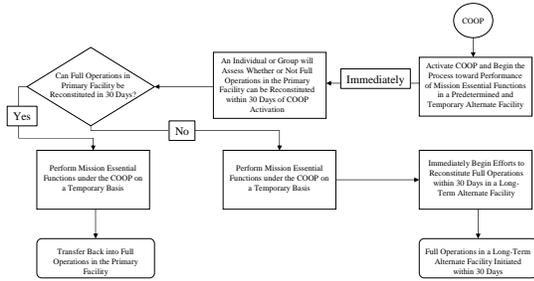
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Process under the Administrative and Emergency Procedures



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Process under the Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)



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The Court Emergency Management Group (CEMG)

- ❑ The CEMG is local group to develop local policy for preparing, responding, and recovering from emergencies
- ❑ The CEMG is a means to develop policy given the multiple players and multiple constitutional officers
- ❑ The CEMG is the means to address the “authority issue”
- ❑ Membership on the CEMG should include representatives from all relevant stakeholders
- ❑ The CEMG should utilize the planning templates to develop their unique local plan(s)

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The Eight Fill in the Blank Templates

Administrative and Emergency Procedures

1. Checklist for Administrative and Emergency Procedures
2. Decision Making Guide
3. Employee Directory Template
4. Family Disaster Plan
5. Agency Directory Template

Continuity of Operations Plans

6. Mission Essential Functions Template
7. Alternate Facility Template
8. Continuity of Operations Plans Template

Copies of these templates are available at
www.flcourts.org (Click on "Emergency Preparedness")

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The Court Emergency Management Team (CEMT)

- ❑ While the CEMG represents a policy group, a separate group, referred to as the Court Emergency Management Team (CEMT), represents an operational team
- ❑ The CEMT should be made up of the officials and staff who will actually perform the mission essential functions if the COOP is activated
- ❑ The CEMT members must be provided (or must maintain) all the resources necessary to perform their assigned function
 - Resources agreed to be provided by the alternate facility
 - The CEMT members maintaining "black-bags"
 - Pre-positioning resources at the alternate facility
- ❑ The CEMT members must have a family disaster plan

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Examples of Hurricane Damage
and Lessons Learned

Examples of the Impact of Hurricane Ivan



M.C. Blanchard Courthouse in Pensacola Florida

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Examples of the Impact of Hurricane Ivan



M.C. Blanchard Courthouse in Pensacola Florida

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Examples of the Impact of Hurricane Ivan



Chief Justice Barbara J. Pariente visits Pensacola and Reviews COOP Operations

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2004 Hurricane Season – After-Action Review

- ❑ An after-action review was conducted following the 2004 hurricanes
- ❑ Some of the observations included
 - “The overwhelming observation throughout the series of storms was the need for adequate communication.” 5th Circuit
 - “Cooperation between the Court and the Emergency Management Officials in all five counties has been excellent. Close communication and contact was maintained with the local Emergency Management Center in each of the five counties.” 20th Circuit
 - “Be sure local government has participated in the plan and has endorsed the plan in the event implementation becomes necessary.” 1st Circuit

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Improvements Based on 2004 Experience

- ❑ Improved branch-wide coordination with the development of a branch-wide plan
 - Maintain statewide emergency contact list
 - Hold daily statewide conference calls when activated to share the latest available information
 - Establish statewide emergency website and telephone hotline
 - Coordinate issuance of tolling order
 - Assist with administrative issues (P-card, FEMA reimbursement, etc.)
 - Address issues raised with impacted meetings, conferences, etc.
- ❑ Improved emergency communications – Satellite phones
- ❑ Stressed the importance of leadership and the importance of coordination with other stakeholders

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Examples of the Impact of Hurricane Dennis



Santa Rosa County Courthouse in Milton Florida

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Examples of the Impact of Hurricane Dennis



Santa Rosa County Courthouse in Milton Florida

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Examples of the Impact of Hurricane Katrina



Coral Gables Courthouse in Miami Florida

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Examples of the Impact of Hurricane Wilma



Hendry Courthouse in LaBelle Florida

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Examples of the Impact of Hurricane Wilma



Broward Courthouse in Ft Lauderdale Florida

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Examples of the Impact of Hurricane Wilma



Miami-Dade County Courthouse in Miami Florida

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Examples of the Impact of Hurricane Wilma



Lawson E. Thomas Courthouse Center in Miami Florida

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2005 Hurricane Season – Lessons Learned

- ❑ New tolling order procedures needed
- ❑ The importance of leadership and cooperation with all relevant stakeholders continues to need to be stressed
- ❑ Emergency communications continues to need to be addressed
- ❑ The importance of personal and family preparedness continues to need to be stressed
- ❑ Additional ECO/PIO training needs to be provided
- ❑ The importance of updating plans needs to be stressed

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Appendix: Preparing for a Pandemic

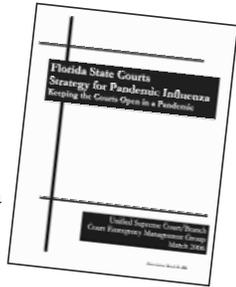
We'd Like to Avoid...



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Update on Court Planning Efforts related to an Influenza Pandemic

- ❑ *Florida State Courts Strategy for Pandemic Influenza*
 - Released March 29, 2006
- ❑ Statewide Training Event scheduled for June 26, 2006
- ❑ Coordination with the Florida Department of Health is Ongoing



A copy of the *Strategy* are available at www.flcourts.org (Click on "Emergency Preparedness")

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Seven Planning Tasks in the *Strategy* to Build Upon the Existing "All-Hazards" Planning

- ❑ **Task 1:** Engage State and Local Public Health and Other Officials in Advance
- ❑ **Task 2:** Prepare for Legal Considerations in a Pandemic
- ❑ **Task 3:** Update Court Technology Continuity and Disaster Recovery Plans
- ❑ **Task 4:** Provide Education Regarding the Threat Posed by a Pandemic
- ❑ **Task 5:** Improve Communications
- ❑ **Task 6:** Strengthen Court Emergency Management Teams and Address Other Personnel Issues
- ❑ **Task 7:** Consider Jury Management: A Non-Traditional Approach

See Appendix B in the *Strategy* for more detailed subtasks

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Comments or Questions



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www.flcourts.org
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