

# Pennsylvania Coastal Resiliency



## Municipal Operations

### Recommendations

**Create a continuity of operations plan.** The continuity of operations plan is separate from an emergency operations plan, which is more commonly used by municipalities. The continuity of operations plan ensures that essential municipal functions continue to be performed before, during, and after a wide range of emergencies. This document can help a municipality prioritize essential facilities, equipment, vital records, and other assets for protection. It can also help reduce or mitigate disruptions to operations, and facilitate decision-making during an emergency.

**Create an evacuation plan that documents the municipality's evacuation protocol before and during disasters.** Information that could be added to this plan includes evacuation routes that could be flooded, the necessary time frame to evacuate residential neighborhoods, and conditions (if any) that would spur a lane reversal in order to evacuate a greater volume of residents from the municipality.

In June 2009, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Regional Task Force, which includes representatives from Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia counties as well as many of the state and federal transportation agencies, developed the *Southeastern Pennsylvania Emergency Transportation Plan*. This plan was developed to ensure the safe movement of residents and visitors during a public emergency. It provides direction and coordination for a regional emergency evacuation and is intended to be used in conjunction with local emergency and evacuation plans.

### Examples and Resources

*Example:* The Borough of Avalon, *Continuity of Operations/Continuity of Government (COOP/COG) Plan*, April 15, 2009.

*Resource:* Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA), *Evacuation Planning and Implementation Guidebook*, 2006.

## Recommendations

**Create an action plan for riverine floods.** Some neighborhoods in a municipality may experience riverine flooding during storms, in addition to or instead of the coastal/tidal flooding discussed more prominently on this webpage. By drawing upon its knowledge of both past storms and its topography (especially its low-lying areas), a municipality can create an action plan that (1) identifies the types of storms that create flooding at vulnerable locations, (2) outlines steps for staff and community members to take to prepare for and respond to similar storms in the future, and (3) specifies resources available for addressing the anticipated problems.

**Develop formalized emergency management practices with the county in which the municipality resides, and with neighboring municipalities.** For example, a municipality can coordinate evacuation and re-entry routes, create large-scale outreach initiatives, or expand available sheltering options and amenities if shelters are at risk during floods. Storm shelters need to be outside of the floodplain and able to withstand high winds and other storm hazards.

**Create a local CERT program.** Delaware County has a countywide CERT team that covers all 49 municipalities, but one has not yet been created in Bucks County or within individual Bucks County municipalities. CERT programs can provide volunteer support to first responders, provide assistance to victims, help to organize volunteers at disaster sites, and collect disaster information to support first responder efforts. For small municipalities with limited staff, CERT teams are particularly useful and can help cut costs.

**Reexamine evacuation routes.** Future floods may affect a municipality's ability to evacuate along its existing evacuation routes. Using maps of future flood risks, the municipality may need to plan alternate routes and provide residents and businesses with updated information.

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## Examples and Resources

*Resource:* The [CERT webpage](#) at the Ready.gov website.

*Example:* The Borough of Avalon, [Continuity of Operations/Continuity of Government \(COOP/COG\) Plan](#), April 15, 2009.

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## Examples and Resources

*Resource:* Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA), *Evacuation Planning and Implementation Guidebook*, 2006.