



**City of Winchester
Fire & Rescue Department
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE**



Section:	Operations	SOP:	7.10
Subject:	Severe Weather Operations	Executed:	September 3, 2014
		Revised:	
Approved:  Allen W. Baldwin, Fire Chief			

SCOPE

To provide operational guidance to all personnel when severe weather is pending or occurring in the City.

PURPOSE

During severe weather, incident volume and duration may be significantly increased along with a corresponding increased risk level to personnel. To be effective, this policy must be applied as early as possible. Severe weather produces events such as thunder storms, extreme heat with high humidity, high winds, heavy rainfall, tornadoes, hurricanes, tropical storms, flooding, snow/ice and/or a combination thereof. Damage potential includes flooding and erosion, heavy snow/ice build-up, damage to or destruction of public and private property, communications and critical infrastructure and loss of life. These conditions and events could increase the demand for emergency and public services. This is to establish policy and procedure specific to Winchester Fire and Rescue Department (WFRD) and the Winchester Emergency Communication Center (ECC) for preparation, response, and recovery operations during a severe weather emergency.

DEFINITIONS

Watches - A watch is appropriate when the weather has the potential to occur but there is no certainty of where and when it will arrive. A watch simply alerts citizens to the possibility of bad weather.

Warnings - A weather warning means that weather with potential to disrupt and cause damage is very likely to occur or is in the process of occurring. A weather warning should motivate personnel into planning a course of action to seek safety if they find themselves in the path of foul weather.

Only a Warning - Certain types of extreme weather do not qualify for watches but do for warnings, with the weather having to be in the offing for the Weather Service to issue

the warning. Warnings about wind chill, high winds, freezes, and excessive heat fall into this category.

NOTIFICATION POLICY

1. Initial notification: ECC shall notify all personnel through a general announcement (GA) over WFRD channel 1 and by initiating the working incident text page any time a warning is issued for our area, and/or at the discretion of the Battalion Officer.
2. The concept of “Phased Planning” for severe weather planning, response, and recovery shall be used:

Phase I- Pre-Emergency; WFRD - Severe weather warning has been issued

- Review weather emergency plan, policies, and procedures
- As needed and based on forecasted weather, ALL apparatus and personnel should be returned to their respective stations for severe weather preparations.
- Review resource lists, check generators, fuel, chainsaws, 4WD units for readiness.
- Station officers will review station shelter in place operations and identify an emergency rallying point if apparatus and personnel become displaced or separated due to severe weather and the station is not a safe place.
 - Friendship – TV Lounge off of apparatus bay.
 - Rouss – Basement located off of the Boscawen bay. Entrances are Boscawen bay and metal doors located in the sidewalk along Braddock street.
 - Shawnee – EMS Equipment Storage Room.
 - South End – BC’s office on the first floor; the former boiler room on the first floor; the radio room on the first floor; and the supply closet on the first floor.
 - Headquarters - Basement area as designated.
- WFRD Command Staff will review shelter availability and readiness with Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC) Staff.
- Station Officers and Battalion Chief’s will make sure that stations are prepared with necessary support (Food, Shelter, Manpower, etc.) for possible extended operational periods.
- WFRD Command Staff will make notification to Volunteer Chiefs for the availability of manpower for station staffing and extended operational period planning.
- Ensure that basic procedures are in place for rapid procurement of services, equipment, food, and supplies.
- Verify emergency generator readiness by verifying generator test log.
- Battalion Chief and Command Staff will review staffing needs based on forecasted weather.

- WFRD Command Staff will disseminate forecast and weather information to department officers and personnel as needed and monitor potential weather conditions.
- Station Officers will identify any special needs for on-duty personnel and family etc. WFRD will strive to insure these needs are met to lessen burden of responders.

Phase I- Pre-Emergency Public; Fire Marshals, Department PIO in conjunction with the Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC)

- Enhance public education on relevant topics such as:
 - Severe weather warning systems
 - Home safety preparedness checklists
 - Evacuation routes
 - Pre and post-weather safety procedures

Phase II- Initial Emergency WFRD; The probable impact or onset of a severe weather event.

- Apparatus and personnel should remain on station for duration of weather event, expect for responses and as directed by command staff or in the event of station evacuation. All other out of station needs shall be suspended.
- Use facts such as the National Weather Service, local radar systems to remain vigilant of weather patterns. Station officers should monitor weather via weather channel or NOAA website.
- **Heavy rain** - May or may not have any effect on fire or rescue functions and personnel. Personnel shall use increased caution during response being aware of visibility issues, flash flood issues, utility compromise and high water.
- **Hail** - When encountering hail conditions, all personnel shall wear protective clothing, including head and eye protection, and officers should use discretion to determine if the company should seek shelter during an incident.
- **Flooding** - Officers must exercise considerable judgment and discretion relative to personnel safety when entering flooded areas. In rapidly moving water, personnel should use a lifeline and wear personal flotation device (PFD). Care should be taken to avoid run-off areas, drains, strainers, open manholes, and ditches. Vehicles should not be driven into areas where water depth cannot be reliably determined.
- **Lightning storms** - Personnel not actively involved in emergency operations should remain inside apparatus or structures during local lightning. Aerial, ground ladders and other elevated (rooftop) operations should be halted during lightning conditions. Avoid hilltops, open spaces, wire fences, and metal clothes lines. Avoid carrying or using long metallic

tools. Pump operators should seek shelter in a fully enclosed cab. If it is imperative to remain at the pump panel, do not lean against the apparatus and minimize physical contact with the apparatus.

- **Wind** - Personnel operating out in sustained wind conditions or gust above 30 mph will wear helmets, PPE, and eye protection for protection from flying debris. In the absence of manufacturer recommendations, during high wind events, halting all aerial operations when sustained winds speeds exceed 35 mph should be considered. Ground ladders should be secured to the building. At sustained wind speeds above 50 mph, only critical fire and rescue operations should be undertaken. Officers can make the decision to suspend, alter, or terminate operations using the following factors: flying debris, vehicle stability, personnel footing, diminished visibility, proximity to power lines, presence of down power lines.
- **Tornadoes** - When a tornado or funnel cloud is observed in the field, companies should move away from it at right angles to its direction of travel, if possible. If proximity to the tornado prevents escape, the apparatus should be abandoned and personnel seek shelter in a sturdy building or a culvert and remain together. If a tornado is observed from quarters, personnel should seek shelter immediately in the designated area in the station.
- Station Officers and Battalion Officers shall provide to WFRD Command Staff a list of employees who have requested welfare checks and assistance for family members while they are on Duty. WFRD Command staff will work to insure these needs are met and information reported back to the employees.

Modified response procedures:

- If emergency incidents escalate, the Battalion Officer / Command Officer have the authority to alter alarm response levels above that list in SOP 7.3 Condition "D" Status.
- The following shall apply:
 - Response to EMS incidents shall not be altered
 - A minimum of one unit shall respond to other non-EMS alarms
 - Serv / Utility / Command vehicles may pre-empt suppression units
 - Alarm prioritization is as follows:
 1. EMS alarms and reported fires
 2. Potential building damage due to wind or falling debris
 3. Activated fire alarms
 4. Downed power lines, etc.
- During high emergency alarm periods, WFRD through ECC shall assess the availability of mutual aid assistance (given and received).

EOC / Command Officer will make the determination to modify or restrict mutual aid services until assessing resource status of responding apparatus.

- Once a severe storm begins, the Battalion Officer / Command Staff shall assess the severity of the storm and determine conditions that are too dangerous for personnel to respond to. ECC is to be directed to hold all alarms and prioritize them as identified in this procedure, unless otherwise directed by the Battalion Officer / Command Officer. Resumption to emergency incidents will occur as soon as possible and assuring the safety of personnel.

Phase II- Initial Emergency Public; Fire Marshals, Department PIO in conjunction with EMC)

- Enhance public education on relevant topics such as:
 - Severe weather warning systems
 - Home safety preparedness checklists
 - Evacuation routes
 - Shelter in place procedures
 - Modified Response Policy

Phase III: Post-storm Procedures WFRD:

- Battalion and Station Officers ensure that all personnel are safe.
- Provide a PAR to WFRD Command Staff., each station is to assess the condition of the station using the severe weather checklist (attached). An emphasis should be placed on checking the following:
 - Station for damage
 - Communications- radio, portables, cell phone, land lines, station alerting system
 - Power- electric, generator, HVAC
 - Apparatus- ability to respond, damage
- The Battalion Officer / EOC / ECC is to be advised as to the operational status of the equipment and station
- If structural damage prevents removal of apparatus from a station, the Battalion Officer / EOC are to be notified as to what assistance is needed to remove the apparatus from the station. If it is necessary to evacuate the station, and safe to do so, the following should be done:
 - Shut off electric and gas to station if safely possible
 - Secure station as best as possible
 - Place sign on door of station indicating “in case of emergency, dial 911”
 - Report to designated station determined by Battalion Officer /WFRD Command Staff.

- Station Officers and Battalion Chief will have on duty/on station personnel check on family conditions and identify any needs.
 - After ensuring the safety of personnel, checking the station, satisfy all required responses, each station shall conduct a windshield survey of their first due areas as directed by the EOC and complete the appropriate Damage Assessment Report as directed by the EMC.
 - To minimize radio traffic, unless an emergency / safety scenario, obtain information and convey it via landline / cell phone to EOC if available.
 - Once the incident demand(s) have been fulfilled / stabilized, the Battalion Officer / EOC will request that the department return to normal operations. This will be announced by ECC via radio and page.

Phase III: Post-storm procedures Public; Fire Marshals, Department PIO in conjunction with EMC

- Enhance public education on relevant topics such as:
 - Recovery operations
 - Where to go for and how to get help.
 - Warnings and alerts
 - Shelter procedures

Winchester Fire and Rescue Department Severe Weather Checklist

Severe weather warning issued	Notify Battalion Officer / Command Staff
Identify needs for station coverage	Station checklist / preparation
Phase I: Based on Severe Weather Threat	Phase II: Based on Severe Weather Threat
Call back personnel or volunteer coverage	Conference call with volunteer chiefs / staff
Staff additional vehicles	Second command vehicle
Cancel non-essential activities	Assign volunteer chiefs
Radio announcement of Phase I operations	Evaluate need to modify response procedures
Monitor National Weather Service reports	Radio announcement of Phase II
	Consideration to activation of EOC
Phase I / II: Based on Severe Weather Threat	
Call back of personnel or volunteer coverage	Conference call with volunteer chiefs / staff
Cancel non-essential activities	Radio announcement of Phase I/snow total
Ready 4WD units	Complete Incident Action Plan
Phase I / II: Based on Severe Weather Threat	
Increase staffing levels	Assign second command vehicle
Stock station with supplies	Activate EOC
	Radio announcement of Phase I /snow total
	Evaluate needs to modify response procedures
Phase I / II: Based on Severe Weather Threat	
Increase staffing levels	Assign third command vehicle
Establish 12 hour work periods	Fully staff EOC
Assign Public Works vehicle to each station	Initiate mandatory recall
	Consider reduction of mutual aid assistance
Phase III: Recovery	
Damage assessment	Each station complete station damage assessment to EOC
Area assessment	Each station perform windshield surveys
Assess staffing needs	Release of overtime personnel
Resumption of normal operations	ECC announces normal operations resumed

WFRD FACILITY DAMAGE ASSESSMENT REPORT

CALLER NAME		PROPERTY ADDRESS (include apt. no; zip code)		
PHONE CONTACT				
Station	Cell			
CONSTRUCTION TYPE				
<input type="checkbox"/> Masonry <input type="checkbox"/> Wood Frame <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Home <input type="checkbox"/> Manufactured <input type="checkbox"/> Other				
<input type="checkbox"/> Property <input type="checkbox"/> Sewer Back-up <input type="checkbox"/> Flood (Structure) <input type="checkbox"/> Flood (Contents) <input type="checkbox"/> Wind/Hurricane <input type="checkbox"/> None				
DAMAGES (Check all that apply)				
HVAC <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Water Heater <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Electricity <input type="checkbox"/> On <input type="checkbox"/> Off Natural Gas <input type="checkbox"/> On <input type="checkbox"/> Off				
Roof Intact: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Foundation <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Windows <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Sewer <input type="checkbox"/> OK <input type="checkbox"/> Not OK				
Major Appliances: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Basement Flooding <input type="checkbox"/> Yes - Depth ____ Feet Furnace <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				
SOURCE OF DAMAGES				
<input type="checkbox"/> Sewer back-up <input type="checkbox"/> Primarily Flood <input type="checkbox"/> Wind/Wind driven rain <input type="checkbox"/> Tornado Other <input type="checkbox"/> _____				
10. Based on the damages reported, the property is currently <input type="checkbox"/> Habitable <input type="checkbox"/> Uninhabitable				
APPARATUS STATUS				
COMMENTS				
DATE & TIME				