BRANTLEY COUNTY

HURRICANE RESPONSE PLAN

(revised May 2015)

(revised May 2025)

**INTRODUCTION**

This plan guides Brantley County officials in ensuring effective hurricane preparedness and response in coordination with other local emergency plans, the Georgia Office of Homeland Security/Georgia Emergency Management Agency, and the Hurricane Evacuation Plan for Coastal Georgia. The plan will focus on life safety, assessment, evacuation of its citizens, and notification of emergency response personnel. All employees and Public Safety Personnel will follow this plan, in conjunction with the Brantley County Local Emergency Operation Plan (BCLEOP).

**ASSUMPTIONS**

This plan assumes three levels of emergency preparedness and response at the governmental levels: local, state, and federal. All three levels are generally responsible for preparedness, warning, protection, and relief, with emergency operations beginning locally.

This plan is based on several assumptions:

1. Official decision-makers will be well-informed about this plan and will act decisively when circumstances warrant.
2. All parties with roles and responsibilities for preparedness, response, and recovery will maintain a state of readiness throughout the hurricane season. When called, they will actively participate in emergency operations and work collectively in the spirit of teamwork as the circumstances require.
3. Local government emergency response agencies may not be able to meet all the community's immediate needs, especially when time is of the essence. Therefore, prioritization of response may become necessary.
4. The community at risk will generally take personal responsibility for following instructions from local officials and taking protective measures. However, this does not mean 100% participation and compliance will occur.
5. State and Federal assistance will not be requested until resources are known to be needed to satisfy an emergency need. However, help will be readily available when requested.
6. Sufficient lead time will exist to implement this plan and mobilize available resources. This is assuming a Hurricane Watch is issued approximately 36 hours before expected landfall and/or a Hurricane Warning is issued approximately 24 hours before expected landfall.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

This plan will be implemented on the recommendation of the Emergency Management Director, with the approval of the County Commissioner Chairman and County Manager. Any activation of the Emergency Operations Center shall constitute the implementation of this plan.

I. DEFINITIONS

The following listing provides definitions for various terms used in this plan.

**EVACUATION** - The withdrawal or removal of people from an area or place threatened by some danger (i.e., a hurricane) to another location or place of safety.

**HOST AREA** - An area to which residents relocate during an evacuation.

**HURRICANE** -When a tropical storm reaches sustained winds of 74 mph or higher.

**HURRICANE WARNING** - A hurricane will strike your area within 24 hours or less.

**HURRICANE WATCH** - A hurricane may threaten your area within 24 to 36 hours.

**SHELTER** - A temporary refuge for evacuees during an emergency.

**STORM SURGE** - The strong winds associated with hurricanes and tropical storms cause the sea level to rise above normal tidal heights, accompanied by giant wind-driven waves and strong, unpredictable currents, which can sometimes extend 50 miles along the coast.

**STORM WARNING** - Wind speed of 55 to 73 mph is expected.

Five categories describe a hurricane's strength according to a classification system known as the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale. Based on wind speed, these categories are listed below.

**Category One**

Winds of 74 to 95 mph. Damage primarily to shrubbery, tree foliage, and unanchored mobile homes. No real damage to other structures. There is some damage to poorly constructed signs. Storm surge is eight to nine and a half feet above normal tide level. Low-lying coastal roads may be inundated, minor pier damage may occur, and small crafts in exposed anchorages may be torn from their moorings.

**Category Two**

With winds of 96 to 110 mph, there may be considerable damage to shrubbery and tree foliage, including trees blown down. There may also be significant damage to exposed mobile homes and extensive damage to poorly constructed signs. There is some damage to the roofing of buildings. Storm surges eleven to thirteen feet above normal tide level may cause small craft in unprotected anchorages to be torn from moorings. Evacuation of some shoreline residences and low-lying areas is required.

**Category Three**

With winds of 111 to 130 mph, foliage may be torn from trees, large trees may be blown down, and poorly constructed signs may be blown down, causing damage to roofs, buildings, windows, and doors. Mobile homes may be destroyed by storm surges seventeen to twenty feet above normal tide level. Severe flooding along the coast and small coastal structures may be destroyed. Battering waves and floating debris may damage larger structures near the shore. Low-lying escape routes inland are cut by rising water nine to ten hours before the hurricane center arrives, resulting in significant erosion of beaches. Massive evacuation of all residences within 500 yards of shore may be required, as well as single-story residences on low ground within two miles of the coast.

**Category Four**

With 131 to 155 mph winds, shrubs, trees, and signs will be blown down. Extensive damage to roofing, windows, and doors. Destruction of mobile homes. Storm surge 23 to 26 1/2 feet above normal tide level. Flat terrain two feet or less above sea level could be flooded inland as far as six miles. The significant damage to the lower floors of structures near the shore is due to flooding and battering of waves and floating debris. Low-lying escape routes inland are cut by rising water eleven to twelve hours before the hurricane center arrives, resulting in significant erosion of beaches. Massive evacuation of all residences within 500 yards of shore and single-story residences on low ground within two miles of shore are required.

**Category Five**

Winds greater than 155 mph will blow shrubs and trees down; there will be considerable damage to the roofs of buildings, and signs may be down. Extensive damage to windows and doors and destruction of mobile homes. Storm surge greater than 27 feet above normal tide level. Significant damage to the lower floors of all structures less than fifteen feet above sea level within 500 yards of shore may require the evacuation of residential areas on low ground within five to ten miles of the coast.

**OPERATIONS**

Emergency services shall commence upon the recommendation of the EMA Director and at the discretion of the County Manager and the Commission Chairman. In some circumstances, the Governor, through GEMA, may order such an action.

**DIRECTION AND CONTROL**

The Brantley County Hurricane Response Plan addresses hurricane preparedness, response, and recovery activities. It has been prepared following the Georgia Natural Disaster Operations Plan (NDOP), the Hurricane Evacuation Plan for Coastal Georgia, and the BCLEOP. It has been coordinated with adjacent counties, host/risk county Hurricane Response Plans, and other state and federal agency plans that affect Brantley County.

These functions will be conducted in the Emergency Operation Center under the general direction of the Brantley County EMA Director in conjunction with the County Manager,

**RESPONSIBILITY**

Following the BCLEOP and the Brantley County Resolution dated February 2005 and updated in 2025, Brantley County will follow this plan.

Coordination of Resources

City and County governments will utilize all available resources to meet emergency needs. When local resources are inadequate, the EMA Director may request assistance from state or federal agencies through WEBEOC.

**INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM**

The Incident Command System organizes and structures a large-scale emergency operation incident, which will be utilized when this plan is implemented. The emergency operations are organized around five general functional areas: Command, Operations, Logistics, Planning, and Finance. A Unified Command version of ICS will be employed, which allows critical decision-making authority and responsibility to be shared at the top levels of government.

**STATE AND LOCAL COORDINATION**

All interactions with the State will be made through the State Operations Center (SOC). Situation reports will be received and disseminated, requests for assistance will be considered and processed, and specific assets and resources will be allocated to assist local officials. The Brantley County EMA will make all requests for assistance.

**COMMUNICATION AND WARNING**

Responsibility

Following BCLEOP, the local governments and the Brantley County Emergency Management Agency (BCEMA) are responsible for maintaining the communication and warning system.

**HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS**

Plan

A hurricane is considered a specific hazard for Brantley County. The county will respond in concert with the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) hurricane plan for Georgia.

Concept of Operations

Upon notification of recommended or mandated evacuation either locally or from GEMA, local emergency operations will be conducted in the following manner:

Preparatory Procedures (Preparedness—Watch and Warning Phases) encompass all actions taken prior to the issuance of a relocation alert.

Relocation Procedures (Evacuation Phase) include all actions taken during recommended or mandated relocation.

The re-entry Phase includes all actions taken following the order to terminate relocation and will provide for the return of the evacuation population.

Risk

Hurricane Operations

When actual hurricane conditions exist, Brantley County will try to protect the lives and property within the county. However, Brantley County personnel and volunteers are subject to the same environmental limitations as members of the public.

The following will occur during hurricane conditions:

Dispatch may be authorized to alter normal response assignments under the direction of the Incident Commander due to incident volume, nature of the incident, and storm conditions.

• Units may be placed out of service due to storm conditions using the following guidelines:

* Upon the arrival of tropical storm conditions, the EMA Director, the City of Nahunta and Hoboken Police Chiefs, the Sheriff, and the County Manager must perform a risk-benefit analysis, taking into consideration the storm conditions and risk to public safety to determine when units should be taken out of service. Personnel safety will always be the primary goal when units are out of service.
* Brantley County's emergency response shall remain operational until sustained wind speeds reach 35 MPH with deteriorating conditions. Once sustained wind speeds reach 35 MPH with deteriorating conditions, Brantley County apparatus and personnel shall immediately report to the assigned fire station. All emergency responses will cease until weather conditions improve and all personnel can respond safely. All other emergency vehicles will remain safe and off the roadway.

Readiness Conditions:

**Level 5**

* regular day-to-day operations.
* The EMA Director will monitor weather advisories.

**Level 4**

* notify the County Manager of a possible event.
* Monitor weather advisories
* Contact vendors for fuel, propane, and oxygen if needed
* Post updated weather advisories on social media pages
* Utilize FEMA forms 214

**Level 3**

* Weather briefing meeting with department heads and Commissioners
* Discuss activating the EOC
* Notify Volunteer Chiefs to have all apparatus and generators checked for fuel levels
* Have fire departments check chain saws, K-12 saws, and other rescue tools.
* Ensure maintenance has prepared county buildings have been secured
* Check generators and radio towers for fuel levels

**Level 2**

* Weather briefing meeting
* Activate EOC, if not already activated
* Update GEMA via WEBEOC
* Continuing monitoring weather via Weather Stem
* Cease emergency response if weather dictates it

**Level 1**

* Update county officials via phone calls or text messages
* Continue monitoring weather briefings
* Remove all vehicles from the roadway to safety

**CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS**

The Brantley County 911 Center is designated as the primary warning center and warning/information relay point for Brantley County. Severe weather reports and other emergency information are received at this center and disseminated according to the Brantley County Warning Plan.

Warning information at this center is received from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) via NOAA radio, teletype, and news contact. The EMA directs and controls intergovernmental communications. All city and county departments and BCEMA are equipped with radios. Mobile cellular phones and radio units make up the basic system.

Communication Procedures

Intergovernmental communications between city and county departments are achieved through city and county law enforcement networks, fire department networks, and public works networks. Inter-agency communication will continue over normal radio channels until HAP 3 becomes effective. At that point, the EOC will be fully staffed with representatives of each response group and will become the communications base for all groups as outlined in BCLEOP. Communications with adjacent jurisdictions, appropriate coastal counties, and EMA officials will be maintained by telephone.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) can communicate on the local EMS radio frequency and statewide hospital frequency.

Radio and television stations serving the area will broadcast information to the public. Local or state officials will make statements following procedures outlined in the BCLEOP. This plan's Emergency Public Information portion will also be broadcast to the public population. Information will be sent via social media, emails, and the emergency alert system.

**PUBLIC INFORMATION**

Responsibility

Local government officials and the BCEMA Director are responsible for providing emergency public information through local media. The BCEMA Public Information Officer (PIO) and the above officials will act as chief spokespersons in the event of a hurricane. The county commission chairman, County Manager, and the mayors of Nahunta and Hoboken, in coordination with the BCEMA Director, will also provide public information. GEMA officials may provide public information at the governor's request.

**RELOCATION**

Based on the control group's decisions, public information will be disseminated to news media. The information will address conditions in Brantley County, including weather reports, evacuation and relocation routes, and clean-up recovery instructions.

Warnings and emergency information will be disseminated through the news media (radio, TV, and newspaper), National Weather Service (NWS) bulletins, social media, advisories, and statements. Emergency public information should be released to the news media near regular broadcast times.

The BCEMA Director, PIO, or other designated spokesman will answer inquiries that come into the EOC.

**STAGING AREA**

Responsibility

BCEMA will be responsible for coordinating operations with GOHS/GEMA, other state agencies, federal agencies, and local governmental support agencies regarding equipment and manpower resources relocated to Brantley County for use in supporting emergency operations in coastal Georgia.

Equipment

Equipment moved into Brantley County, requires a temporary storage or parking space before emergency allocations. It will be housed and parked at the Brantley County Public Works, located on US Highway 301, and the Brantley County Recreation Department, situated on Baker Creek Road in Nahunta, GA.

Support Personnel

Personnel relocating to Brantley County to support hurricane operating conditions and requiring shelter will be housed at Brantley Middle School.