

Dukes County Emergency Management

FY2018 Annual Report

This year, the Dukes County Emergency Management Agency made significant efforts to improve its services to the County Public Safety and Public Health Infrastructure and to partner with other Island Government and Non-Government entities. Three areas in particular were targeted to improve county disaster response support for the towns of Dukes County.

- 1) Emergency Communication with Federal and State disaster response agencies during periods of loss of normal communication
- 2) Inter –municipal communication between towns and the Dukes County Emergency Operating Center during disasters
- 3) Logistical support to towns during disasters

A Dukes County Emergency Operating Center has been converted into a multi-faceted communication center. The purpose of this valuable disaster service is to enhance Martha's Vineyard and Elizabeth Islands disaster survivability through direct, multi-faceted communication capabilities which serves agencies in a multi-discipline and multi-jurisdictional manner.

The radios installed include public safety VHF radio, a VHF radio that directly links county emergency management to the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency headquarters and its Regional office, Amateur radio 2 meter and HF bands, a Marine radio on the US Coast Guard frequencies and a Digital Mobile Radio repeater.

The county continues to maintain the VHF radio repeater and the 4 radio frequencies that are owned by Dukes County Emergency Management. Inter –municipal communication between towns during disasters was enhanced by the improvement of a radio system that link the county to the island town Emergency Operation Centers, using the county emergency management radio repeater system.

The county is a participating member of the Federal backup radio system called SHARES (SHARED RESOURCES), a Federal government HF radio program for backup communications and interoperability among Federal agencies and Federally-affiliated entities that have a need to send or receive national security or emergency preparedness communications such as state agencies, county emergency management agencies, and critical infrastructure/key resources providers (telecommunications, energy, healthcare, transportation, etc.).

The County Emergency Management Director is the state designated official for the RACES (Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service) on Martha's Vineyard and the Elizabeth Islands. RACES is a protocol created by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Federal Communications Commission for the purpose of

emergency communications during disasters. Operators are activated by local, county and state jurisdictions and are the only Amateur Radio operators authorized to transmit during declared emergencies when the President of the United States specifically invokes the *War Powers Act*

In addition to radio communication, computers systems were upgraded for internet weather, the web-EOC (a program for response reporting to the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency), a hurricane tracking program called Hurrevac and for the transmittal of email alerts to county residents and mass media outlets.

Emergency Power is provided gasoline, diesel and propane on-site generators. Redundancy is provided by the ability to convert all functions to battery power with electricity supplied by solar panels.

In the area of logistical support to towns during disasters, several pieces of equipment were either refurbished or purchased for responding to emergencies. The reconditioned ambulance was further outfitted with new radios and antennas were permanently mounted on the roof.

An International cargo truck was acquired on a lend basis from the Federal Government along with a very large diesel generator which is now owned by the county

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We continued sending storm condition alerts and disaster preparation information by email. Alerts were sent out to warn of impending threats of severe weather events along with information bulletins for preparing for these events, especially the blizzard that occurred this year.

There were no hurricane events to affect Dukes County during 2018. There were several winter storms. The county Emergency Manager activated the Dukes County Emergency Operating Center for these incidents. Disaster plans and protocols were implemented for these events.

The County Emergency Management Agency continued its partnership with the Martha's Vineyard and Elizabeth Islands Emergency Management Directors, the MV Medical Reserve Corps and the Island Boards of Health.

The County EM participated in the annual drill which tests the MV Airport's ability to respond to an aircraft accident on the airfield.

The County EM participated as an official observer for Windemere's Regional Facility Evacuation & Resource/Asset Support Exercise. Windemere is a long-term care facility and an affiliate of the Martha's Vineyard Hospital. Dukes County Emergency Management is listed as a regional asset in the Windemere Emergency Action Plan.

Respectfully Submitted by
Charles (Chuck) Cotnoir, Dukes County Emergency Management Director