

# Peekskill Emergency Management Office

*When Disaster Strikes, Every Second Counts*



# WHO ARE WE

Peekskill's Emergency Management Office (PEMO) staff consists of a team of professionals under the direct supervision of the City of Peekskill Police Department and Chief Eugene Tumolo. In addition to the Emergency Response Teams that respond to City emergencies such as residential structure fires to ensure that residents have post-incident food, shelter and related disaster services to the Inter-Agency Mobile Command Post operations, the staff of PEMO meets weekly to review city-wide plans, create table top drills, meet with representatives of the County, SEMO and FEMA and plan for up coming multi agency "pre-planned" incidents within the city. This weekly interaction ensures that PEMO stays current and ready to respond at a moments notice.

# PREPAREDNESS

The Peekskill Emergency Management Office works with every City department to prepare for the inevitable disaster before it strikes. Advanced preparation helps keep our community resilient— saving lives, property, time, money, and resources.

**Planning, Exercises, Mitigation, and Public Education** are our key preparedness activities that help build Peekskill's disaster resistance. These activities are described below:

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## Planning

A planning process has been carefully developed to identify hazards, assess vulnerabilities, and prioritize actions to reduce losses. This planning process helps us create an Emergency Operations Plan, which helps to direct the City-wide response before, during, and after a disaster. Every City department also has their own emergency plans and mutual aid agreements for their critical functions.

The Emergency Operations Plan covers many vital functions for the City, for example:

- Communications, Public Information, and Warning
- Shelter and Human Services
- Fire and Rescue Services
- Law Enforcement
- Medical, Health, and Mental Care
- Public Works and Utilities
- Resource Management
- Damage Assessment and Recovery

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## Exercises

Plans on paper don't work unless you test and use them, so PEMO regularly coordinates and participates in a number of preparedness exercises. These range from a small tabletop drill to full-scale exercises with response vehicles and actors. After a drill, the participating agencies evaluate the results and discuss improvements to the plans that were tested. This ensures that the plans are reviewed and updated and the personnel involved are familiar with them if and when the need arises to put them into play. Other similar activities are the Inter-Agency Command Posts staffed by PEMO personnel at large city-wide events. These bring police, fire and EMS under one umbrella to make joint decisions during the event similar to what would occur in an actual disaster scenario.

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## **Mitigation**

While we will never be able to completely prevent disasters from occurring, the City of Peekskill works hard to reduce their impacts on people and property. Mitigating (i.e. reducing or eliminating) hazards before a disaster is the most proactive and successful method for lessening the physical, financial, and emotional losses caused by disasters.

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### **Public Education**

Peekskill is a great place to live because of the work of individuals and groups across the community. We need to continue to work together to protect our community by taking preventive measures before a disaster strikes. Our community education programs help share preparedness information through many outlets. In addition PEMO's Support Staff which is comprised of civilians who volunteer to train for such tasks as emergency shelter operations, Inter-Agency Command post operations and other needed duties bolsters that community helping community atmosphere that PEMO is attempting to foster. This Support Staff falls under President Bush's newly created Citizen Corp and CERT program under the Office of Homeland Security which works hand in hand with PEMO.

# **MITIGATION**

The City of Peekskill implements many hazard mitigation activities designed to eliminate, reduce, or postpone the future impacts of disasters. Reducing the physical, financial, and emotional losses caused by disasters is critical to speeding up recovery and maintaining the sustainability of our community. PEMO provides technical assistance for city departments and the community for mitigation projects. Below are sample mitigation activities that the City of Peekskill has implemented:

- Research**

Hazard analysis and vulnerability assessment studies are an important component for determining what the risks are for our community. The results of these studies are key components to developing master plans and prioritizing funds for mitigation activities. A recent study by PEMO completed a hazard analysis for the City.

- Warning and monitoring**

Hazards are unpredictable by nature, but some systems can be put into place to monitor hazardous conditions. One of Peekskill's most valuable monitoring tools is the direct hotline connect with the Westchester County, NYS and Entergy regarding Indian Point incidents and unusual events.

- Building standards**

Building standards specify how buildings are constructed or renovated. The City of Peekskill has many building codes to help reduce the risk and impacts of hazards such as fire and flood.

- Development regulations**

The City of Peekskill has adopted regulations for the location, type, and intensity of new development for various safety and environmental reasons.

- Capital improvement projects (CIPs)**

CIPs are implemented on City-owned infrastructure to solve existing problems such as erosion and flooding. They are commonly funded using bonds, departmental operating funds, or fees. In some cases OEM can identify grant funding for CIPs that fall under mitigation & preparedness

# RESPONSE

The Peekskill Emergency Management Office (PEMO) coordinates the City of Peekskill's response actions and communications during a disaster or emergency situation. PEMO facilitates this process by implementing emergency and communications plans and activating the either the Inter-Agency Mobile Command Vehicle (Mobile Command 1) or Emergency Operations Center (EOC) or both. ***PEMO does not dictate what actions the City's first responders and departments will take, but rather provides and collates information and assists with Inter-Agency coordination to help manage a complete and successful city-wide response.***



PEMO helps coordinate city-wide & multi agency responses

This centralized response system helps to quickly and effectively prioritize City resources in order to help save lives and prevent further property and economic losses. First priorities are always life and safety, such as: search and rescue operations, treating the injured, re-establishing vital public services, in addition to providing emergency shelter and services.

Communication among City, County, State, and Federal responders is also key to help fully understand the situation and formulate the appropriate response. As soon as this centralized information is available, various public communications systems are used to distribute emergency information from the EOCs to citizens and the media.

Example types of situations where the PEMO would respond and/or activate the EOC:

- A significant number of casualties;
- Severe or widespread damage;
- Multi-agency response in a non-routine fashion;
- A shortage of needed resources;
- Interruption of vital services such as transportation or utilities;
- Extended evacuation requiring sheltering;
- Residential fires that require the need for short term resident shelter and disaster assistance.
- Routine City-wide events that require the coordination of multi-agency resources.
- Elements that cannot be managed using daily City procedures.
- Unusual Events at Entergy Nuclear Northeast's Indian Point facilities.



# RECOVERY

Recovering from a disaster is a long and difficult process for everyone. There are many phases that need to be coordinated to help families, the community, businesses, and the local economy recover.

The City of Peekskill Emergency Management Office provides leadership for many recovery activities such as:

- Assisting with city-wide recovery response coordination.
- Compile damage estimates and event related cost tracking.
- Request outside assistance, if needed, from:
  - Mutual aid agreements,
  - Private relief organizations, such as the American Red Cross,
  - New York State Emergency Management Office (SEMO) assistance, and
  - Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) assistance.
- Provide input how to best rebuild better and stronger to improve resistance to future disasters.
- Review post-incident effectiveness of responses and plans.



Debris crews assist with cleanup after a flood.

## EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER

The Office of Emergency Management maintains the City's All Hazards Emergency Operations Center (EOC). During area-wide emergencies, the EOC serves as the command center for the City of Peekskill's response and recovery operations.

A variety of communications tools and backup systems are installed in the EOC to aid in the receipt and release of vital information. The EOC houses the Indian Point NYS Communications system as well a bank of multi frequency radios. Through a direct hotline link the Peekskill City EOC has direct communication with the Westchester County EOC, Indian Point and New York State..

The EOC brings together decision-makers to coordinate the flow of information and strategy development. A variety of organizations and government agencies send representatives during an EOC activation to join the PEMO staff, depending on the type and severity of emergency.

### **Example representatives:**

- American Red Cross
- Entergy Nuclear Northeast
- Peekskill City School District
- Westchester County Amateur Radio Emergency Service
- City of Peekskill
  - Peekskill Mayor and City Manager
  - Peekskill Fire Department
  - Peekskill Police Department
  - Peekskill Emergency Medical Services
  - Peekskill Buildings Department
  - Peekskill Water Department
  - Peekskill City Clerk
  - Parks & Recreation Department
  - Public Information Office
- NYS Emergency Management Office
- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- Buchanan Police Department
- Town of Cortlandt Homeland Security Office

