



## Part 3: Emergency Operations Guide

### EOG 3.1.01 Damaging Winds

Revised June 15, 2010

**HIGH WINDS** – Storms with sustained winds of 40 mph or gusts of 58 mph, expected to last for an hour or more.

#### NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE (NWS) CRITERIA

**HIGH WIND WATCH** – Conditions are favorable for the HIGH WINDS in the next 48 hours but are not yet certain

**HIGH WIND WARNING** – A potentially life-threatening HIGH WIND event is occurring or is about to happen. Winds are or will be at the WARNING level or above

**HIGH WIND ADVISORY** – Events that are not life threatening, but may cause limited power outages or other inconvenience. Sustained wind of 30 to 39 mph or gusts of 45 to 57 mph.

#### THREAT ANALYSIS

- Downed trees and tree branches
- Closed roads (trees or other debris in the roadway; tree/power line entanglement)
- Power outages (short term specific sites; long term system-wide damage)
- Telephone outages (conventional and cellular; line damage; tower damage; overload)
- System outages (internet service providers; data transfer systems; communications)
- Property damage (homes and businesses; impacts from any of the above)

#### WARNING AND INFORMATION SOURCES

- National Weather Service Seattle (multiple products)
- Washington Warning Point (State EMD; ACCESS bulletins, NAWAS announcements, e-mail lists, call lists)
- Subscription-based e-mail and text notification systems
- Conventional news media outlets (regional broadcast/cable television; AM/FM radio)
- Situational awareness (DEM-owned weather instrumentation, etc.)

#### WARNING AND INFORMATION OUTLETS

- NOAA severe weather alert receivers
- Conventional news media
- Subscription-based text and e-mail (NIXLE, etc.)
- Specialized e-mail lists (partner agencies, neighborhood preparedness groups)
- Key personnel notification systems (Emergin)
- Direct contact (partner agencies, emergency response agencies in high threat areas)
- DEM web site (in-progress activities page)
- DEM situation reports (SITREPS) distributed via multiple channels

#### EMERGENCY RESPONSE RECOMMENDATIONS (EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT)

1. Maintain 24/7 awareness of conditions during storm season (typically October 1 through April 1).
2. Ramp up DEM situational awareness when storm potential increases.

3. Provide for receipt and analysis of NWS storm bulletins (Duty Officer).
4. Activate the Emergency Operations Center at minimum staffing to enhance information management.
5. Ramp up EOC staffing depending on potential severity.
6. Begin issuing local SITREPs.
7. Advise emergency response agencies to execute storm checklists (refueling chain saws, staff call-back, etc. depending on potential severity).
8. Consider developing incident action plans when conditions indicate the potential for very severe weather.
9. Conduct partner/agency briefings and pre-incident planning sessions.
10. Monitor distant situation as storm systems develop.
11. Consider requesting declaration of emergency to provide for full activation as needed.
12. Issue local news releases to augment regional information.
13. Monitor storm activities and track damage reports.
14. Monitor response and support response agencies where needed.
15. Enhance or de-escalate EOC staffing as conditions warrant.
16. Demobilize emergency response phase when activity levels allow.

### **POST-INCIDENT RECOVERY RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Initiate private property damage information collection process.
2. Identify critical unmet needs and propose solutions.
3. Initiate public property damage information collection process.
4. Modify or enhance EOC staffing to transition from response to recovery operations.
5. Assemble joint damage assessment teams for private damage.
6. Conduct post-incident briefing for senior officials.
7. Carry out preliminary damage assessment in impacted areas.
8. Provide public and private damage data to the State EMD.
9. Request joint Preliminary Damage Assessment process be initiated if local damage exceeds FEMA thresholds.
10. Coordinate with partner agencies in prioritizing restoration of services and disposal of debris.
11. DEM will act as principal coordinator in organizing and executing short term and long term recovery.

### **VARIABLES AND LIMITATIONS - DAMAGING WIND INCIDENTS**

1. Downed trees entangled in power lines cannot be approached by road crews without a utility company representative present to verify that the lines have been de-energized. When there are multiple simultaneous incidents, considerable delay in opening routes is likely.
2. Storm forecasting in our area is difficult as regional variables can be extreme. High wind incidents historically impact some areas more than others. Actual observed wind speeds are occasionally much less than predicted.
3. For safety reasons, road crews will be required to stop operations during periods of extreme damaging winds.
4. Utility company priorities (restoration of damage) may not coincide with priorities for opening roads. Secondary routes may not be cleared for several days following the incident.
5. Utility company repair resources may be insufficient to meet the demand.
6. When the EOC tracks damage and emergency response during the incident, the transition to recovery is faster. Identification of unmet needs (health and safety issues) as early as possible is important.

### **SUGGESTED THRESHOLDS**

- Sustained winds of 40 mph (gusts to 58) – Increased monitoring and reporting
- Gusts to 70) – Activate EOC at Phase 1A
- Gusts to 80 – Activate EOC at Phase 2
- Gusts above 80 – Activate EOC at Phase 2; activate City Coordination Center
- Sustained wind speeds of 40 mph or higher with cold temperatures – Activate EOC at Phase 2