



HURRICANE MILTON

AFTER ACTION REPORT AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN CAPE CORAL POLICE DEPARTMENT

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A. ADMINISTRATIVE STATEMENT**HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS**

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**REPORT AND ACTION PLAN SUMMARY**

The Hurricane Milton After-Action Report and Improvement Plan have been created to comprehensively analyze the Cape Coral Police Department's (CCPD) preparedness and response efforts. This report identifies the strengths and weaknesses in CCPD's preparedness, response, and recovery operations, with the goal of enhancing the department's ability to manage future events and activations of the Department Operations Center (DOC).

The report aims to identify and assess processes that can be improved for future emergencies. With contributions from each bureau, this After-Action Report and Improvement Plan recognize successes, challenges, and areas for improvement to equip CCPD for upcoming emergencies better.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

The feedback received and the observed activities indicate that the CCPD was highly effective in responding to and managing the impacts of the hurricane landfall and post-hurricane response from 10:00 AM on October 9, 2024, to 10:00 AM on October 10, 2024.

Much of this success can likely be attributed to

- The CCPD's leadership support of training and investment into preparedness activities leading up to the incident period
- Recent experience managing the DOC for Hurricane Ian in September 2022 and Tropical Storm Debby in August 2024
- Established inter-agency relationships with City Administration, Fire, Emergency Management, Utilities, Public Works, and Lee County Government

2. ANALYSIS OF KEY STRENGTHS, BEST PRACTICES, AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

KEY STRENGTHS: HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS

- Comprehensive preparedness plans: Activation of EOC/DOC on time and detailed planning for hurricane response and staff meetings and briefings ensured consistent communication
- Having a detailed hurricane preparedness plan, 2024 Natural Disaster Plan, and timely activation of the 2024 Natural Disaster Plan and assigned roles for personnel
- Established a team of professional staff to provide additional assistance
- Flexible team with varied skills was able to adjust to communications needs
- Maintaining adequate supplies like food, water, communication devices, and protective gear
- Having a contingency plan for maintaining communication in case of power outages

KEY STRENGTHS: HURRICANE RESPONSE

- The personnel were proactively deployed within the community, allowing for rapid intervention during hurricane events
- Officers had the knowledge that helped them identify vulnerable areas and populations, enabling targeted assistance and communication efforts

- Efforts of the Trainee Officers in debris removal operations and routine cleanup activities have been commendably acknowledged
- Assessing damage, identifying areas requiring immediate attention, and coordinating recovery efforts with other agencies
- Adaptability and flexibility: CCPD's personnel are adept at adjusting the response strategies based on evolving situations and unforeseen challenges

BEST PRACTICES

- Pre-storm preparation: Conducting community outreach to educate residents on hurricane preparedness, identifying vulnerable populations, and coordinating evacuation plans
- During the storm: Monitoring weather updates, enforcing evacuation orders, and responding to emergency calls
- Post-storm recovery: Patrolling damaged areas to prevent looting, managing traffic flow to facilitate recovery efforts, and assisting with damage assessments
- Training and professional development: Ensuring personnel are adequately trained in emergency response procedures, including disaster-specific skills
- Technology utilization: Utilizing advanced technology such as GIS mapping, communication systems, and data analytics to enhance decision-making
- Interagency collaboration: Building strong partnerships with other agencies at the local, state, and federal levels to leverage resources and expertise

CHALLENGES

- There is a critical shortage of high-water vehicles for community assessments during storms, which limits access and hinders damage evaluations
- Insufficient supply of essential items, such as cots, for personnel stationed at the DOC
- There is a gap between the responsibilities in the 2024 Natural Disaster Plan and the assigned tasks during the emergency
- Insufficient emergency training and preparedness exercises pose a significant risk to safety and response effectiveness
- Clear guidelines regarding the individuals responsible for managing and accessing storage and supplies
- Clear communication from the City Administration regarding incoming supplies and food deliveries to the CCPD is essential
- Lack of a team of liaison officers to coordinate with all the other agencies
- The Joint Information Center (JIC) operated exclusively in support of the City Administration, which hindered its ability to provide timely updates to the personnel of the CCPD and the surrounding community via social media platforms. Furthermore, it is essential that the JIC, a vital function for public safety, be managed by a designated Public Affairs Officer (PAO) appointed from the relevant public safety departments

3. AFTER-ACTION REPORT (AAR) INTRODUCTION**PURPOSE**

This After-Action Report (AAR) is intended to delineate the events associated with Hurricane Milton in 2024 and to enhance the response and recovery capabilities of the Cape Coral Police Department (CCPD) for future storms and other disasters. The findings detailed within this document were derived from a comprehensive analysis of data predominantly sourced from personnel across the various bureaus of the CCPD. It is important to emphasize that these findings are not prescriptive for any individual bureau. The report is designed to serve as an impartial informational resource to inform future disaster planning and preparedness initiatives throughout the CCPD.

The data analysis was conducted from October to November 2024. The Planning Analyst responsible for compiling this AAR has presented relevant insights regarding processes and communication while maintaining discretion and sensitivity toward the participants involved. This approach considers the diverse perspectives articulated during interviews and reports, which reflect the varying roles of individuals in the response operations. The report incorporates information that has been critically evaluated to assess the potential impacts of these varied observations

SCOPE

This report focuses on the 2024 Hurricane Milton response and recovery activities that occurred within and between the Department's bureaus and external partners across the City of Cape Coral. It aims to outline the functions executed by the Cape Coral Police Department (CCPD) during this event, assess the collaboration between the agencies, evaluate departmental processes, and analyze the operational infrastructure. Furthermore, the report will offer essential recommendations.

Participants

The following CCPD teams participated in this process:

- Communications and Logistics Bureau
- Investigative Services Bureau
- Professional Standards Bureau
- Patrol Bureau
- Community Services Bureau
- Special Operations Bureau
- Public Affairs Office

LOOKING AHEAD

CCPD intends to leverage this document as a learning and improvement tool to enhance awareness of and aggregate the experience gained during the response and recovery to 2024 Hurricane Milton. Lessons learned from this event will better prepare the department and the partner agencies for response and recovery efforts and future emergencies and disasters.

4. EVENT OVERVIEW

HURRICANE MILTON

Hurricane Milton was a powerful hurricane that began as a tropical depression in the Gulf of Mexico on October 5, 2024, then rapidly intensified into a Category 5 hurricane by October 7, 2024. Hurricane Milton was forecasted to hit Florida's West Coast, including a potential direct impact on Southwest Florida and a significant impact on the City of Cape Coral. Milton landed in Siesta Key, Florida, as a Category 3 hurricane on October 9, 2024. Hurricane Milton caused flooding, downed trees, and power outages. Hurricane Milton also unleashed a deadly tornado outbreak before and after making landfall.

IMPACT ON THE CITY OF CAPE CORAL

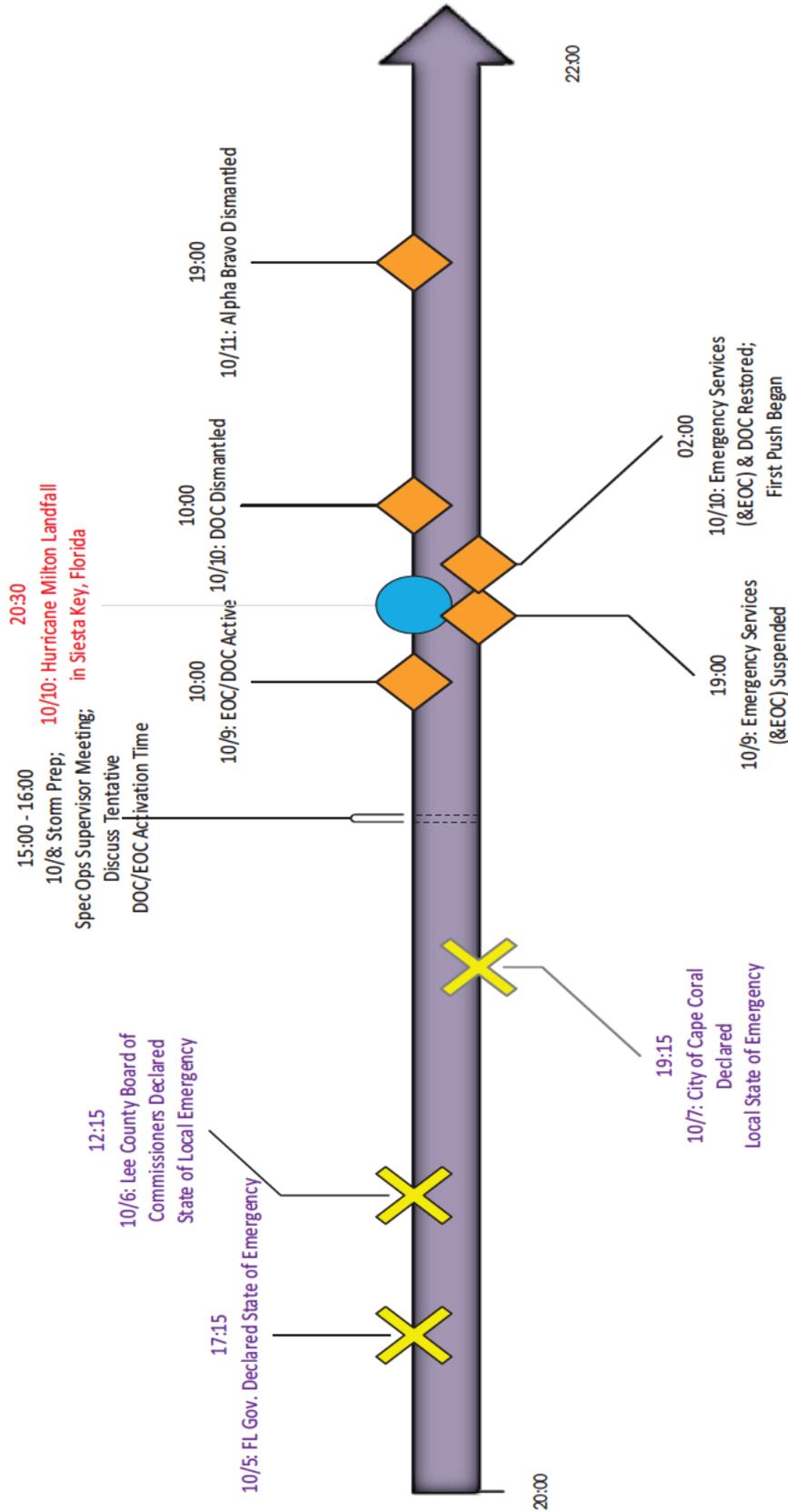
Hurricane Milton hit the City of Cape Coral with intense winds, heavy rains, and flooding, leading to widespread damage to infrastructure, economy, and the environment. Buildings and roads sustained damage, with power outages affecting thousands of residents across the city. Flooded streets complicated the emergency response efforts, highlighting the infrastructure vulnerabilities.

5. TIMELINE OF EVENTS

HURRICANE TIMELINE

A hurricane timeline is a chronological overview that tracks a hurricane's development, intensity changes, landfall, and impacts on affected areas. This structured approach aids authorities and communities in understanding the storm's lifecycle and managing response efforts.

In Florida, hurricane season lasts from June 1st to November 30th, peaking between mid-August and late October. Warm waters in the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico foster tropical wave formation.



Hurricane Milton Timeline

6. PREPAREDNESS

KEY PREPAREDNESS MEASURES

1. **Emergency Supplies:** Stockpiles of food, water, and necessities were secured before the storm
2. **Securing Facilities:** Conducting inspections and reinforcing vulnerable structures across the CCPD building
3. **Communication Systems:** Established multiple channels for alerts, including email, SMS, and social media
4. **Flood Awareness and Outreach:** Improved flooding awareness and outreach efforts can improve the number of deployments for future events

PERSONNEL AND RESOURCES

1. **Self-Sustainability Plan:** Formulate a comprehensive plan to guarantee the provision of logistics, supplies, and equipment. This should include cots, food, charging cords, surge protectors, storage solutions for officer gear, and emergency kits for each officer sheltering
2. **Inventory Management:** Increase inventory of white message boards for marking territories of areas of operations for clear messaging to officers sheltering at the CCPD building

7 RESPONSE OPERATIONS**INITIAL ACTIONS**

During Hurricane Milton, CCPD activated its natural disaster response plan to address immediate needs and ensure safety. Key actions included:

- Facilities Management: Trainee Officers were tasked with securing the building, assessing damages, clearing debris, and performing essential daily tasks
- Housing Services: Respite areas for officers were created in conference rooms, providing food, water, and necessary supplies
- During the First Push, officers worked in pairs within vehicles to ensure rapid responses to debris removal and other issues, with immediate backup available when necessary. It is recommended that this practice be established as standard procedure
- Proactive early alerting and outreach to community members living in and near flood-prone areas potentially saved lives

FIELD OPERATIONS

- The Rapid Response Team, through a coordinated effort with Public Works and other City Administration stakeholders, effectively minimized downtime and reduced the duplication of resources

- The community was contacted through the JIC, which the City's Communication Manager led as the JIC Coordinator

INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION

Overall, partner agency feedback was very positive, with potential improvements in the accessibility of current road closures and storm impact information.

8. CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED

COMMUNICATION

- There were no communication disruptions
- Early integrations of a Geospatial Information Systems (GIS) specialist into the DOC would have likely improved the DOC's situational status awareness

RESOURCES

- Expand the radio equipment inventory, as the radio charging bases and spare batteries were borrowed from the PVU office during the storm. This arrangement is inadequate for future situations that may require hosting any mutual aid will need to share radios with vendors or other City staff
- Non-availability of high-water vehicles for accessing the roads at the first push (at 0200) with no streetlights and flood waters, it was hard to reach some areas of the city

SAFETY CONCERNS

- Ensuring all the garbage at the CCPD is picked up before the storm, as this can become projectiles

- [REDACTED]

INFRASTRUCTURE

- CCPD's space limitations are impacting operational efficiencies. While addressing these spatial challenges may be particularly difficult in the short term, exploring alternative solutions can substantially mitigate their impact.
- Implementing precinct locations, as outlined in CCPD's Four-City Plan, would relieve current space constraints, thereby enhancing the department's ability to accommodate personnel more effectively during emergencies and improving overall operational efficiency
- Improve CCPD's gasoline and diesel fuel supply and dispensing capabilities to fuel vehicles, generators, and portable equipment

9. SUCCESS AND STRENGTHS

EFFECTIVE OPERATIONS

- During the event, several roads, including Cape Coral Parkway, were temporarily closed to facilitate emergency response due to flooding. This measure helped protect CCPD's vehicles and personnel while reducing the amount of paperwork involved. For example, if a patrol vehicle or other equipment was lost or damaged, the supervisor would need to complete a vehicle damage report in Blue Teams. Additionally, a police report or traffic crash report would typically be required, along with an internal inquiry report for disciplinary purposes
- Officers taking shelter at the department before the storm was effective and significantly impacted their readiness
- Most of the patrol units consistently responded with emergency lights activated at the onset of incidents, with the "cruise light" setting being the most effective for visibility. However, fewer personnel adopted this practice in subsequent days. It is recommended to implement a policy that requires the use of emergency lights during states of emergency to enhance visibility, deter issues, and foster community recognition during the early recovery from the storm
- Trainee Officers were organized into teams to accomplish designated tasks efficiently. Team leaders were appointed, and Trainee Officers were assigned to these leaders, facilitating the division of labor, and assigning specific duties and

responsibilities. This approach fosters camaraderie and enhances teamwork among the recruits

- The Joint Information Center (JIC) internal communication was highly effective. All JIC members were informed of ongoing developments through consistent meetings and briefings. Before the hurricane, Melissa Mickey, the JIC Coordinator, disseminated information regarding the scheduled times for Public Affairs Officers (PAOs) to convene and outlined expectations for these meetings

LEADERSHIP AND DECISION-MAKING

- The DOC concept has proven effective for the Police Department's response, enabling direct communication for enhanced efficiency in fulfilling requests, rapidly creating operational units, and effectively triaging calls in coordination with the Fire Department
- Assigned positions from the 2024 Natural Disaster Plan effectively established ownership and accountability among individuals. This strategy received positive feedback and ensured that the department's needs were adequately addressed in the preparation for, during, and following the storm.
- The timing of the Alpha/Bravo shift activation was effective. The decision to bring in the night shift a few hours early proved to be advantageous, as it facilitated the timely clearance of day shift personnel from the station without increasing risks

- The integration and organization of the Rapid Response Team (RRT) with Public Works and other City stakeholders effectively minimized downtime and the redundancy of resources. This collaborative approach enabled the team to access and manage intersections efficiently

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- The Public Affairs Officer (PAO) of CCPD is responsible for sending out communications and monitoring the social media accounts for CCPD. Both the personnel in PAO at CCPD were a part of the City Administration's Joint Information Center (JIC)
- Develop contingency plans to ensure the dissemination of information to the public during scenarios where traditional communication methods are rendered ineffective due to significant damage to infrastructure.

10. AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

RESOURCE GAPS

- Explore additional/alternative options for cell phone communications (like Starlink) in the future if the city loses cellular connectivity for the new training facility, as this will host our officers in future emergencies
- Develop a routine maintenance schedule for generators and other essential power sources to avoid failures during critical times
- Set up distributed storage locations throughout the building to ensure easy access to food and emergency supplies
- Develop relief & rest periods for all staff, including Captains and DOC Staff
- Review all existing vendor contracts and confirm the vendor's ability to provide resources
- Dedicated space or time allotted for Dispatch teams and Officers on Duty to have access to food and necessities
- Design ways of having checklists and standard procedures for accepting donations post-hurricane
- Have a clear assignment of which ranking official will be in charge and have access to storage and supplies
- Evaluate and improve drinking water and ice inventory

- Develop contingency plans for vehicle mechanic support and tire inventory
- Conduct staffing needs evaluation and develop bureau-specific staffing plans for each storm phase
- Reinforce communication to employees the need to have an evacuation plan for family members before hurricane season
- Develop an employee vehicle parking plan
- Assess the feasibility of providing a temporary housing plan for employees whose residence is not tenable following a storm
- Create a comprehensive checklist outlining the necessary procedures for safeguarding the department's assets at each facility

TRAINING NEEDS

- Provide staff training in basic emergency preparedness and response procedures to increase operational flexibility
- Conduct Supervisor training in proper documentation and timekeeping of Telestaff with Emergency rates and shift change times before the event
- Develop a meal plan and identify a lead staff member to manage. Additionally, provide staff to support this logistical need for a minimum of 48 hours

11. RECOMMENDATIONS:

OPERATIONAL CHANGES

- Have a plan to work with all the partner agencies before the start of the Hurricane season
- Initiate of a community call center/hotline for welfare checks instead of receiving over 911, which also included Calls for Service
- Explore options for creating an online system for donations
- While both the personnel in the PAO working in the JIC worked well for the City communications, we need to consider having one PAO staff in-house for communication and broadcasting public and safety information through our channels of communication
- During the “First Push,” the officers assessed the roads in two-person cars, which helped us navigate and quickly respond to debris and other issues, providing an immediate backup officer when needed. This should be made a standard practice
- Develop formal procedures for pre-storm and post-storm welfare checks, inclusive of geo-mapping
- Improve pre-storm and post-storm documentation procedures of CCPD facilities and equipment

RESOURCE ACQUISITION

- Maintain a detailed inventory of essential items and establish regular checks to replenish stocks
- Create a roster of personnel (or provide training) for those who can be called upon to assist in high-demand areas or staff support tasks
- Considering having more custodial services (Trainee Officers had to do much of the day-to-day cleaning and building maintenance) during emergency
- Increase inventory of high-clearance vehicles, high-water rescue vehicles, vehicles for marine units, and inventory for spare tires and parts
- Identify safety equipment needs of employees specific to job duties

TRAINING PROGRAMS

- Cross-train personnel on basic emergency response tasks, allowing more flexible resource management
- Provide staff training to improve decision-making in resource distribution during high-demand events
- Provide All-Hazards position-specific training to DOC staff. Determine the required depth of positions and include those employees in the training

- Have an Emergency Preparedness Plan as well as an amended Emergency Response Plan in place with assigned and defined roles and duties along with expectations for each of the personnel
- Identify personnel to participate in various training courses offered by FEMA for natural disaster assistance and management, such as Organizations Preparing for Emergency Needs (OPEN), which provides a framework for developing emergency operation plans and creating a culture of preparedness
- Provide training materials for FEMA 214 electronic version and a paper form
- Provide training for PAOs through FEMA's online basic public information course and/or their on-campus Advanced Public Information Course

12. OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Observation 1:

Existing emergency plans were not fully utilized, understood, or shared. Despite the Department's Natural Disaster Plan and supporting documents, prior departmental emergency plans, interviews, and data highlighted that not all personnel knew these plans or how to leverage them.

Recommendations

- Have an Emergency Preparedness Plan as well as an amended Emergency Response Plan in place with assigned and defined roles and duties along with expectations for each of the personnel
- Familiarize all response staff and stakeholders with current emergency plans (preparedness and response).
- Conduct regular training and exercises to validate the plans and include everyone involved in responding to the specified scenario.
- The bureau captains should coordinate with new personnel to familiarize them with emergency plans, help clarify what their role may be during an emergency, and ensure they are included in emergency training and exercises

Observation 2:

The resources and logistics planning demonstrated in delivering essential commodities, equipment, and services in the hurricane response efforts. This included sourcing supplies, vetting, fulfilling resource requests, establishing, and managing the storage areas, distribution and replenishment, and associated resource and capability gaps.

Strengths:

- Critical assets, including department assets and shelter supplies (cots/separators), were pre-positioned due to the forecasted impact area
- The Donations Coordinator repurposed an existing area (Sally Port) to manage the influx of donations for staging and distribution and sent out the early communication

Recommendations:

- Conduct a comprehensive gap analysis of severe weather equipment and supplies across all the departmental bureaus. Address gaps in equipment and supplies and train staff appropriately
- Due to a large influx of donations (hot food) arriving at the CCPD building, hit-or-miss communication about food arriving from the City Office, and the lack of a formal donations management plan (though the Donations Coordinator made a log of the incoming donations), PSB had to identify available storage in the building spontaneously
- Since the department is not equipped with specialized vehicles to be able to reach some of the hardest hit areas with storm surges, we had to wait until the storm

waters receded. While Hurricane Milton was not a direct hit to Cape Coral, a direct hit hurricane in the future, we would need a specialized high-water rescue vehicle to reach out to communities that need the help most

- Investigate the feasibility of a comprehensive storage/warehousing operation, including storage, packaging, and staffing/management
- Provide hurricane preparedness go-kits (with flashlight, first aid kit, extra batteries, personal sanitation products among others) for personnel staged at the CCPD building, as well as for field staff who may not have access to required equipment and supplies prior to their deployment in the field
- Following the first push, dispatch personnel and officers assigned to traffic duty experienced limited access to resources due to the specific nature of the services provided. To address this issue, it is essential to implement separate storage solutions, such as dedicated refrigerators in the dispatchers' break room, and establish a designated staging area to facilitate prompt access for on-duty patrol officers. This approach will ensure that all personnel are adequately equipped with the necessary supplies to effectively perform their duties

Organizational Management:

Effective coordination was established among the officers during the first push, along with the Rapid Response Team, facilitating the formation of multidisciplinary teams tasked with sharing resources, coordinating transportation, and delivering assistance to

affected communities. Daily briefings were conducted in the morning and evening, providing all bureaus with updates on accomplishments and prioritization of tasks.

Recommendations:

- Implement annual exercises before the beginning of hurricane season to enhance familiarity among all relevant personnel with the response plan structure, operational procedures, and overall response strategies
- Investigate the feasibility of deploying civilian and professional staff, such as Victim Advocates, following the initial response phase to assist with tasks beyond those assigned to Bravo services, including needs assessment, organization, and documentation of welfare checks
- Establish a succession plan to fill the current Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Logistics Liaison position, currently held by Sergeant Jason Wallace, ensuring the availability of two personnel for both Alpha and Bravo shifts, with requisite training on the Virtual Emergency Operations Center (VEOCI) application provided
- Develop and deliver Just-in-Time (JIT) training to personnel to address and mitigate identified knowledge and skills gaps
- Consider the modification of meeting times for hurricane planning and response. Specifically, it is recommended to schedule the daily morning meeting at 1000 hours and the evening meeting at 1600 hours for the Alpha shift, ensuring that the Bravo shift receives the most current information and planning guidance,

particularly given the substantial time difference from 1400 hours to the subsequent day's 1100 hours

- Identify personnel for participation in various training courses offered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) relevant to natural disaster assistance and management, such as the Organizations Preparing for Emergency Needs (OPEN) program, which provides a framework for developing emergency operation plans and cultivating a culture of preparedness

Decision Making:

The early establishment of a comprehensive and coordinated Department Operations Center (DOC) structure facilitated effective resource allocation across various departments. The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) functions as the primary coordinating entity for response efforts, while the DOC adopts a more tactical, "boots on the ground" approach. Clearly defined lines of authority and specific roles and responsibilities for both the EOC and DOC contributed to a well-organized command structure. Interviews with participants revealed that a cohesive command framework instilled confidence and assurance among responders.

DOC Operations:

On October 5, 2024, at 5:15 PM, the Governor of Florida declared a state of emergency. In response, the Cape Coral Police Department (CCPD) convened its initial hurricane preparedness meeting at 9:00 AM on October 6, 2024. Subsequently, the City of Cape

Coral declared a local state of emergency on October 7, 2024, at 7:15 PM. This proactive strategy enabled advanced planning and established a robust foundation for disaster response.

Implementing a consistent operational rhythm within the Department Operations Center (DOC) empowered staff to prepare effectively for planning discussions, operational meetings, and briefings.

The Professional Standards Bureau (PSB), tasked with overseeing food distribution, ensured that personnel on-site received adequate meals. The early procurement of food supplies (including MREs) and an influx of donations facilitated uninterrupted meal service, ensuring that all shifts remained well-nourished throughout the emergency.

Joint Information Center (JIC) and Communications:

The Joint Information Center (JIC) and Public Information focus area emphasizes the City's capacity to deliver timely, reliable, and actionable information to the entire community. This is accomplished through clear, consistent, and accessible communication methods that are culturally and linguistically appropriate. The objective is to effectively communicate information regarding incidents, actions taken, and available assistance. Furthermore, this focus area fosters interoperability among response agencies and partners and identifies and addresses any deficiencies in communication resources and capabilities.

Strengths:

- The Joint Information Center (JIC) team, under the leadership of City Communications Coordinator Melissa Mickey, demonstrated remarkable agility in adapting to the communication needs as the situation developed. By utilizing their diverse skill sets, the team produced a considerable quantity of public information content, including photographs, graphics, and videos, disseminated through social media channels, regular press conferences conducted by the Mayor, and newsletters
- Furthermore, the establishment of the Hurricane Milton Information Page on the City's website created a centralized resource for residents and businesses, enabling them to access vital information efficiently

Recommendations:

- JIC placed significant emphasis on the press conferences conducted by the City's Mayor, effectively utilizing the resources and primary time of the CCPD's PAO
- To enhance clarity and operational efficiency, assigning one staff member from the CCPD's public affairs office to act as a liaison at the Joint Information Center (JIC) would be prudent. At the same time, the other individual would focus on social media monitoring. This delineation of responsibilities would improve real-time situational awareness and facilitate better messaging coordination from external sources

Closing Recommendations:

1. A comprehensive gap assessment of the EOC, DOC, and all relevant departments is essential to ascertain which existing response plans require updating and which new plans should be developed
2. All plans should undergo annual exercises and be updated following any actual response incidents
3. Furthermore, the department may consider the development or revision of the following plans or annexes:
 - Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plan
 - Crisis Communications Plan
 - Disaster Recovery Plan/Annex
 - Volunteer and Donations Management Plan/Annex
 - Recovery Plan/Annex

13. CONCLUSION

The report organizes all findings into specific topic areas generated from data collected in response to Hurricane Milton through bureau-submitted AAR analysis and interviews.

The findings are divided into focus areas: Planning, Resources/Logistics, Incident/Organizational Management, Command / Decision Making, Partner Coordination, and Public Information and Communications, each divided into observations and recommendations.

The output is a thorough review of the response and recovery effort, including what was done well (strengths, best practices), what could be improved (areas of improvement), challenges, and overall lessons learned to help inform future development of preparedness, policy, and procedures for departments and agencies throughout the department.

14. APPENDICES:

HURRICANE TIMELINE

Below is the timeline of significant hurricane preparedness and response activities-related events. This timeline highlights critical actions and decisions to ensure safety during hurricane situations.

Date	Time	Hurricane Preparedness
Oct 5	1715	FL Governor Declared State of Emergency for 35 Counties, including Lee County
Oct 6	1215	Lee County Board of Commissioners Declared State of Local Emergency
Oct 7	1915	City Of Cape Coral Declared Local State of Emergency
Oct 8	1500-1600	Spec Ops Supervisor Meeting; Storm Prep; Discuss Tentative DOC/EOC Activation Time; CCPD Asset Storage Assessed
Oct 9	1000	Emergency Services (Emergency Operations Center (EOC)), Department Operations Center (DOC) is active; Active Alpha Shift
Oct 9	1900	Bravo Shift Took Over; Emergency Services (&EOC) Suspended
Oct 9	2030	Hurricane Milton Landfall

HURRICANE MILTON AFTER-ACTION REPORT**OCTOBER 2024**

EOC suspended the emergency services, waiting for the hurricane to pass and for the winds to sustain the speed for safe rescue and response operations:

Date	Time	Hurricane Response
Oct 10	0200	Emergency Services (EOC) & DOC Restored; First Push Began
Oct 10	0227	Cape Coral Parkway EB flooded
Oct 10	0230	Lee County Jail (LCJ) Operational; No Hospitals Operational
Oct 10	0243	Fuel at City Hall Operational
Oct 10	0255	Cape Coral Emergency Room (CCER) Open
Oct 10	0255	Cape Coral Emergency Room (CCER) Open
Oct 10	0430	Cape Coral Bridge is shut down due to flooding
Oct 10	0547	Cape Coral Bridge Open
Oct 10	0547- 0700	Monitored Road Closures and Damage
Oct 10	0700	Alpha Shift Took Over
Oct 10	0800	Non-Operational Fleet Fuel Pumps Due to Power Outage
Oct 10	0800-0959	All Intersections Monitored and Recorded in VEOCI
Oct 10	1000	DOC Dismantled
Oct 11	0700	Alpha Rollcall; CCPD Staffing Intersections Without Power
Oct 11	1130	DC Coston Email of Alpha/Bravo Demobilizing 1900
Oct 11	1200	Email Requesting for Officer Overtime for Intersections
Oct 11	1900	CCPD Alpha/Bravo Demobilized

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STRENGTHS AND AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT SUMMARY

Focus Area	Strengths	Areas of Improvement
<p>Resources/ Logistics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepositioned response and shelter supplies • Ensuring sufficient food for the initial hours after emergency activation • Ability to quickly identify existing contracts/vendors • Promoting collaboration among bureaus and City Departments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a critical shortage of high-water vehicles for community assessments during storms, which limits access and hinders damage evaluations • The resource request process is unclear, causing confusion • It’s advisable to repurpose a facility for vendor donations and food supplies • Additionally, there is an insufficient supply of essential items, such as cots, for personnel
<p>Planning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activation of the 2024 Natural Disaster Plan and assigned roles to the personnel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a discrepancy between the responsibilities outlined in emergency response planning and the designated tasks

Focus Area	Strengths	Areas of Improvement
<p>Planning (Contd.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous damage assessment training • Traffic plans facilitated after the first push were instrumental in effectively directing traffic flow • Staff meetings/briefings ensured clear and consistent communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of emergency training and exercises • Revising the scheduling of briefing hours to enhance communication between the Alpha shift and the incoming Bravo shift • [REDACTED] • [REDACTED] • Ensuring all the garbage is picked up before the storm, as this can become projectiles • Clarity in the assignment of who will be managing and accessing storage and supplies • Clarity in City Administration’s communication concerning incoming supply/food delivery to the CCPD before their arrival, ensuring that adequate notice is provided

Focus Area	Strengths	Areas of Improvement
Incident and Organizational Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish multidisciplinary teams to share assets. • Disseminate regular situational awareness products throughout the response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of a team of liaison officers to coordinate with all the other agencies. • Understaffed for Custodial services (leading recruits to perform most daily cleaning and maintenance tasks)
Command / Decision Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activation of EOC/DOC on time and detailed planning for hurricane response • Pre-staged response and shelter resources offered by the County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During and right after the first push, when some officers were focused on responding to citizen calls for service that had been held. In contrast, emergency services were shut down; the screen kept filling up with officer-generated calls for service. It was sometimes difficult to prioritize and self-dispatch to the right calls. We should consider relying on Dispatch to manage the citizen calls for service and the EOC or DOC to manage the others

Focus Area	Strengths	Areas of Improvement
<p>Partner Coordination (Contd.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established a cadre of Professional Staff for additional assistance • City Administration providing free childcare for the employees • Strong partnerships between the agencies, County, and community-based organizations (CBO) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of formal Volunteer / Donations Management Plan as an annex to the Emergency Operations Plan • Lack of a 24/7 storm response call center and an online system for donations and volunteer assistance
<p>Public Information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible team with varied skills was able to adjust to communications needs • Creation of a Hurricane Information Page for centralized public information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JIC worked exclusively for the City Administration and was unable to help the CCPD personnel and community by providing updates through social media • JIC is a critical public safety function and should be led by a designated Public Affairs Officer (PAO) from the safety department

Focus Area	Strengths	Areas of Improvement
Public Information (Contd.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Joint Information Center (JIC) operated effectively, with robust internal communication facilitated by regular meetings and proactive planning measures for the impending hurricane	

REFERENCES:

1. Internal bureau AARs submitted by the bureau captains
2. Timeline Infographic: Visio diagram specific details:

\\psdc01\shared\POLICE\Planning\Sree\Projects\Hurricane Milton After-Action
Report_Oct 2024\After Action Report - Hurricane Milton - October 2024\Visio
Diagram of timeline
3. Inputs from staff interviews