

Somerset County Emergency Operations Plan

ATTACHMENT A - FLOODING

I. NATURE OF THE HAZARD

Somerset County is subject to water overflowing the banks of rivers and standing water bodies; structural failure of dams; ice jams; rapid accumulation of storm water runoff; and hurricane-caused storm surges. The primary concern with flooding is the rise in flood elevation in relation to topography and structures. Flooding can happen at any time of the year, but predominates in early spring due to melting snow, breakaway ice jams, and rainy weather patterns. Flooding may also occur during the summer due to a hurricane or severe tropical storm. Flooding has been rated as the #1 hazard profiled in the Somerset County All-Hazard Mitigation Plan.

In Somerset County, flooding is most often associated with the effects of hurricanes, ice and snow build-up in the mountains and rivers, ice dams, and spring run-off. The County contains eight major rivers and many streams and lakes, and is located in the foothills and mountains. It also has 74 dams, including 6 high hazard dams and 7 significant hazard dams which could cause significant flooding if there is a dam failure. The most likely damages caused by flooding are the destruction of roads caused by washouts and undercutting. Most communities that have flooding issues have joined the National Flood Insurance Program and are controlling future development through the enforcement of a local flood hazard ordinance.

In the middle portion of the county, Moosehead Lake covers some of the eastern border of the county for about 40 miles in length with many chains of ponds extending across the county that provide discharge into this great lake. The Kennebec River headwaters flow from this great water body and nearly half of the length of the Kennebec River (Commonly called the Kennebec River Valley) lies in the central portion of the county. The Dead River, which flows in the western portion of the county feeds into the Kennebec from Flagstaff Lake. Many other major water bodies such as Pierce Pond flow into the Kennebec as it continues its flow through the county.

The Carrabassett and Sandy Rivers flow to the Kennebec from the mountains of adjoining Franklin County. Winding through the low lying communities and road systems of Western Somerset, they pose a significant concern for flooding with spring runoff and ice jams. Along the eastern border of the county we encounter the Sebec Stream, which also becomes a contributor to the Kennebec River in the southern portion of the county as the water flow continues to the sea.

II. RISK AREA

The majority of flooding in Somerset County is caused by winter runoff in the spring. If Maine has a good amount of snowfall during the winter and the springtime temperatures and rainfall conditions are right, the snow pack melts off quicker than the watersheds can handle. This will cause local wetlands and water bodies to overflow their boundaries and flood nearby roadways and structures.

The Kennebec River is the major river located in Somerset County. The Sandy River and Carrabassett River also borders numerous communities.

The largest majority of the population locates within 7 communities in the south central part of the county but numerous communities that border the Carrabassett, Sandy, Kennebec, and Sebec that could be affected by flooding. The communities that could be effected by sever flooding are: West Forks, Forks, Caratunk, Moscow, Bingham, Concord, Embden, Solon, New Portland, North Anson, Anson , Madison, Mercer, Starks, Norridgewock, Skowhegan, Fairfield and Pittsfield.

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Flooding in Somerset County is not a rapid event, but historically builds slowly over 12 hours to several days. Residents of old learned to build out of the flood zones and flood ordinances today restrict development in flood zones. However, new residential construction is being built in hurricane surge inundation areas with no restrictions. Historically, Maine has experienced about a half dozen Category I hurricanes in each century.

III. DIRECTION AND CONTROL

Each municipality will be responsible for conducting emergency response, damage assessment, and recovery operations within their jurisdiction. When resources have been exhausted or reimbursements by FEMA are possible, each municipality will provide resource requests, situation reports, and state damage assessment forms to the Somerset County EMA for processing. The Somerset County EMA will consolidate the reports from each municipality and forward reports and forms to the Maine Emergency Management Agency. The Somerset County EMA will utilize the locally appointed Community Emergency Manager to provide the municipal report to the County for consideration.

IV. COMMUNICATIONS

Communications will be maintained between the Somerset County Communications the Somerset County EMA office, the first responders and the municipal officers. Flooding is not likely to overload telephone lines, cellular telephones or two-way radios.

V. WARNING

The National Weather Service is responsible for providing up-to-date rainstorm and flood information. Warning notices are received from Gray for Central and Southern Somerset, and from Caribou for Northern Somerset. The Somerset County EMA will monitor the NWS/NOAA, television news reports, and weather radios. This information is also monitored by the Somerset County Communication Center through the METRO system. Should there be a dam failure in Somerset County, Florida Power and Electric (FPL) will initiate their notification alert and warning system with the Somerset County Communication Center and Emergency Management Agency. Subsequent notification will be initiated to communities bordering the river system through the County EMA Homeland Security and all-Hazard radio/pager repeater system. Word will also be received on television and radio reports.

VI. EMERGENCY PUBLIC INFORMATION

As soon as the situation is determined, the Somerset County EMA will contact local radio and television stations to notify the public of the expected elevation of the flood waters, instructions on when to evacuate and the status of road closures. Further information may also be passed through the Somerset County Homeland Security/All Hazard communication system.

VII. EVACUATION

Very few evacuations are expected due to the nature of flooding in Somerset County. A few localized individual residential and commercial evacuations may be necessary. These will be managed by the municipal fire departments and the effected individuals.

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VIII. MASS CARE

Because very few evacuations are expected, there will be only limited needs for sheltering effected families and individuals. These cases of sheltering will be managed by the Mid Maine Chapter of the American Red Cross in Waterville and the effected individuals. Most will be sheltered in area commercial lodging, but could be housed in one or more of the designated area American Red Cross Shelters if major flooding causes more relocation of many communities along the Kennebec and its major contributing tributaries.

IX. HEALTH AND MEDICAL

The Somerset County EMA will contact municipal officials to determine the drinking water quality and sanitary conditions in their communities following a flood event.

X. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Municipalities will contact the County EMA office when requesting resources.