

Biloxi Flood Protection Plan Update for 2019

Annual Review

Ordinance 1356, was adopted March 7, 1984 by the City of Biloxi. Revised Ordinance 2124 was adopted on February 3, 2009 to update to the Flood Protection Plan. This memo is the City of Biloxi's progress report. It was prepared by Biloxi's Floodplain Management Coordinator.

The City of Biloxi's Flood Protection Plan has four ongoing activities being implemented by various City departments.

Activity 1: Enhance and expand efforts to educate and inform Biloxians and visitors about the risks of natural hazards and protective measures that can be taken to avoid or minimize the loss of life and damage to property.

Objective 1.1: Expand the City's current Public Information Outreach Campaign.

Action 1.1.1: Continue ongoing public outreach efforts to educate citizens about the dangers of coastal storms and flooding.

Update: The City's Public Affairs Manager continues to disseminate information to caution residents about the dangers of coastal storms and flooding via mailed newsletters, email, through the City's website and press releases. Efforts to disseminate information are increased prior to the start of Hurricane season each year.

Action 1.1.2: Provide hazard education and outreach to vulnerable populations.

Background: While the City already makes a great effort to educate and notify non-English speaking residents on the threat of hazards, outreach efforts must be expanded to include temporary populations, such as tourists and volunteers, as well as the transitional housing population which does not benefit from the County's Reverse 911 system due to lack of landline telephone service.

Update: The City's Public Affairs Manager continues to disseminate information concerning hazards in various languages.

The Civil Defense Director has installed warning sirens throughout the city and implement a hazard warning call system for cell phones since many residents no longer have land lines. The City of Biloxi website has an icon that will translate the website into other languages. The City of Biloxi has also implemented texting important information to citizens.

Action 1.1.3: As part of the existing outreach campaign, continue to work with appropriate agencies to inform citizens of evacuation routes and transportation alternatives available to assist with evacuations.

Update: The City's Public Affairs Manager continues to publicize evacuation routes in City newsletters and on the website. Emergency Management agencies, MDOT and Coast Transit have all boosted media outreach efforts to inform residents of proper evacuation routes and alternate transportation available for evacuation.

Action 1.1.4: Continue to work with American Medical Response and Harrison County Emergency Management to educate senior citizens, disabled citizens and special needs patients about the importance of having a personal evacuation plan.

Update: Biloxi's Emergency Management Director continues to work with American Medical Response to address the needs of special needs citizens and enhance evacuation efforts. The City's Public Affairs Manager promotes the importance of having a personal evacuation plan through annual newsletters while American Medical Response host seminars with senior citizens throughout the year to promote awareness.

Objective 1.2: Increase Disaster Preparedness of city staff, elected officials and appropriate private and public entities.

Action 1.2.1: Continue annual National Incident Management System (NIMS) training for first responders, city officials and critical employees.

Update: The Biloxi Fire Department and Biloxi Emergency Management officials continue to participate in annual NIMS training programs.

Action 1.2.2: Continue to maintain and update the City's internal Hurricane Action Plan. Provide overview for new employees and inform existing employees of changes.

Update: Biloxi Emergency Management continues to maintain the City's internal Hurricane Action Plan and provides an overview for new employees as needed.

Activity 2: Reduce future hazard related loss or damage.

Objective 2.1: Provide protection for critical public facilities and utilities.

Action 2.1.1: Storm proof and retrofit critical facilities.

Update: Biloxi Emergency Management is currently working with MEMA to secure Hurricane Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) grant funding for storm proofing and retrofitting of critical facilities.

Action 2.1.2: Replace existing traffic signals at major intersections with more durable and weather resistant mast arm poles.

Update: Signals along Highway 90 have been replaced with mast arm poles. The City continues to work with MDOT and others to secure funding to replace traffic signals on additional roadways throughout the City. MEMA has said HMGP funding cannot be used for this effort.

Objective 2.2: Provide protection for future development to the extent possible.

Action 2.2.1: Strictly enforce building and related codes to insure that design and construction of structures will provide maximum protection against hurricanes, floods and other natural hazards.

Update: City building and public works officials continue to enforce IBC 2018 codes and ensure that all new construction is compliant.

Action 2.2.2: Prevent unprotected and improper development in flood hazard areas and prohibit development in floodways through the improvement of existing regulations governing building and land development in Biloxi.

Update: The City Building Official, Floodplain Manager, Mayor, City Council and Planning Commission members continue to monitor development in potential floodways and improve governing regulations as necessary.

Action 2.2.3: Recognize and consider flood hazard potential in the establishment of land use patterns, particularly in terms of current and future comprehensive planning efforts by the City and County.

Update: The City Building Official, Floodplain Manager, Mayor, City Council and Board of Supervisors continue to consider potential flood hazards in its planning efforts and land development.

Objective 2.3: Minimize flood loss.

Action 2.3.1: Insure that all properties affected by flooding have some form of protection; i.e., flood insurance, elevation, flood proofing, structural protection, etc.

Update: The City Building Official and Floodplain Manager continue to promote increased elevation, flood proofing, and the attainment of flood insurance to those property owners in low lying areas affected by flooding.

Action 2.3.2: Reduce the number of repetitive losses and severity of flooding for residents of Biloxi with a corresponding reduction in costs to federal, state and local governments.

Update: The Department of Community Development continues to promote awareness to reduce repetitive loss and flood severity.

Action 2.3.3: Continue to improve and upgrade drainage to reduce flooding.

Update: The Department of Public Works continues to improve drainage systems throughout the City in order to decrease local flooding. The Emergency Management Director continues to work with MEMA to attain HMGP funding for additional drainage repair projects. The City of Biloxi has adopted the 100 year design storm in Stormwater Management.

Action 2.3.4: To maintain or improve the status of the City of Biloxi in the Community Rating System (CRS) and the National Flood Insurance Program.

Update: The Department of Community Development, the Floodplain Manager, and CRS Coordinator continue to adhere to

the standards of the CRS program and maintain the community's Level 5 rating. The Emergency Management Director continues to work with MEMA to attain HMGP funding for additional drainage repair projects which will reduce flooding and perhaps improve the City's CRS rating.

Activity 3: Improve the City's Emergency Management Capability.

Objective 3.1: Enhance early warning and advisory procedures to inform the public of threatening weather systems and evacuation orders.

Action 3.1.1: Acquire an outdoor siren system.

Update: The Biloxi Emergency Management Director worked with MEMA to acquire HMGP funding for an outdoor siren system. The outdoor siren system has been installed, tested, and is used when needed. The City of Biloxi is trying to acquire funding upgrade the outdoor siren system to solar power.

Action 3.1.2: Enhance evacuation routes throughout the City through placement of appropriate signage.

Update: MDOT has worked to place evacuation route signage on major thoroughfares throughout the City.

Action 3.1.3: Acquire and implement the Reverse 911 notification system.

Update: The City continues to utilize Harrison County's Reverse 911 but hopes to secure funding to implement its own call system in the future.

Objective 3.2: Enhance communication system for essential personnel and emergency service providers to insure that communications are not interrupted during a disaster.

Action: 3.2.1: Research and purchase alternative communication devices to improve communication before, during and after a disaster.

Update: Public Safety and Emergency Management officials continue to support this effort and are hoping to secure funding in the future to improve public safety communication devices.

Objective 3.3: Relocate the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to a safer location and upgrade emergency management equipment/technology.

Action 3.3.1: Research potential locations and determine specific needs and funding for the new site.

Update: While it is still a goal to relocate the City's EOC, MEMA has said HMPG funding cannot be used for this effort. The City will continue to seek additional funding for a new EOC in a safer location.

Objective 3.4: Provide safe, pre-storm and post-storm disaster shelters for Biloxi residents.

Action: 3.4.1: Continue to support and encourage Harrison County's effort to build multiple 361 shelters.

Update: The City continues to support and encourage Harrison County's effort to build multiple 361 shelters.

Activity 4: Reduce economic loss and minimize social disruption often caused by natural hazards.

Objective 4.1: Encourage local businesses to develop and implement a contingency plan to ensure the return to normal operations following a disaster.

Action 4.1.1: Work with the Chamber of Commerce and local civic groups to establish continuity training workshops and educational information to be distributed to new and existing businesses.

Update: The Public Affairs Manager continues to promote this effort through the City's annual storm preparedness newsletters, while the Chamber of Commerce also continues to advise clients about the importance of contingency plans.

Objective 4.2: Provide back-up power for critical City facilities and utilities.

Action 4.2.1: Secure generators to insure continuous operation for critical City facilities and utilities.

Update: The Emergency Management Director is currently working with MEMA to secure HMGP funding for this effort.

