Hagerty Evacuation Planning: National Level Expertise

Hagerty is home to some of the nation’s leading evacuation planning subject matter experts, including those who have supported the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) National Integration Center (NIC) in evacuation-focused technical assistance for communities across the nation. Our professionals linked individual jurisdiction evacuation plans by crafting and implementing a Unified Regional Coordination (URC) Framework to ensure cross-jurisdictional communication and phasing of evacuation processes. The URC Framework concept has been memorialized by the FEMA NIC and the National Governors Association (NGA) guidance for governors. Hagerty professionals validated these evacuation concepts during state-level response support for Hurricane Irma. Hagerty is currently supporting the federal government in the development of nationwide evacuation guidance.

Who is Hagerty?

Hagerty Consulting is an emergency management consulting firm that helps clients prepare for and recover from disasters. Established in 2001, Hagerty’s offices are in Austin, TX; Evanston, IL (corporate headquarters); Hickory, NC; New York, NY; Sacramento, CA; and Washington, DC. Hagerty professionals live in all 10 FEMA regions and provide a rich breadth of emergency management experience to client assignments.

Learn More

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Evacuation Planning is critical for emergency managers to successfully respond to hazard events and safeguard communities. The Hagerty Team has learned from various previous mass evacuations and planning processes and developed a companywide approach for evacuation planning which can help clients utilize best practices to create successful evacuation plans.

Evacuation Planning: The Hagerty Approach

The Hagerty Team has developed a seven-pronged approach for successful evacuation planning. This approach is outlined in the illustration below:

1. Establish Common Terminology and Promote All Protective Actions: This step promotes the development of a common operating picture to eliminate confusion during life safety operations by streamlining operational communications. A critical portion of this step is to clarify what common terms mean, such as full or partial evacuation, recommended evacuation, and mandatory or voluntary evacuation.

2. Establish/Implement Unified Coordination: Implementing the Unified Coordination Group (UCG) concept promotes inter-jurisdictional communication to ensure coordination during hazard events. A successful UCG will coordinate evacuation zones and routes to shelter in place or evacuate, evacuee populations, clearance times, resource needs and requests, evacuation facilities, hazard updates, public messaging, and re-entry processes.
3. **Pre-Identified Zone and Re-entry Concepts**: This step considers where evacuees will go and promotes shelter in place protective actions for those not at risk. This will require consideration of hazard risk for the planning area as well as transportation accessibility. This step also considers how evacuees will re-enter communities. Hagerty promotes a color-coded re-entry approach to provide a continuum of options to control re-entry to homes and businesses. This color-coded approach can indicate to citizens the risk involved with re-entering previous evacuation zones by indicated which public services have been restored. This reduces the burden on governmental agencies.

4. **Plan for Critical Transportation Needs (CTN)**: This step is critical to provide a holistic plan for evacuation. CTN populations include evacuees with limited or no access to transportation and therefore require government assistance to evacuate safely. CTN populations typically include homebound populations, individuals with access and functional needs, individuals with limited English proficiency, individuals with pets, unaccompanied minors, and individuals with no access to a vehicle.

5. **User-Friendly Operational Tools**: An important step in evacuation planning is the development of user-friendly operational tools which streamline the planning and execution of evacuations. These tools include execution checklists, command job aids, regional conference call agendas, and resource projection tools.

6. **Inclusive Planning**: Creating an inclusive planning group is a best practice for evacuation planning. This means relying on traditional stakeholders (e.g., police, fire, emergency management, transportation departments) but also inviting non-traditional stakeholders, such as large businesses, military installations, colleges and universities, and critical infrastructure personnel, to be a part of the planning process.

7. **Innovations in Evacuations**: Continuing to seek out innovation and best practices to make the planning process effective will help communities continue to understand the best plan for evacuations in specific communities. This may include integrating other plans or planning processes, utilization of the latest data, and integrating new technologies or innovations.

**Hagerty’s Approach to Evacuation Planning Comes from Nationwide Experience**

**NGA Evacuation Best Practice Guide**
Hagerty developed an Evacuation Best Practice Guide for Governors in 2013 to provide newly elected governors with guidance on actions they need to execute to evacuate large populations before, during, and after major catastrophes. The guide aimed to educate governors on common frameworks, terms, and legal standards to ultimately improve evacuation preparedness in the nation. Hagerty implemented a three-step process to incorporate feedback from stakeholders at all levels of government, conduct a best practice assessment, and craft the guide according to NGA writing standards. The result was a comprehensive guide to inform governors about evacuation planning, actions to prepare for and implement evacuations, mass care considerations, and re-entry to communities after a disaster.

**Baltimore Urban Area Regional Evacuation Plan**
Hagerty led regional evacuation planning for the Baltimore Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) by analyzing evacuation emerging best practices from across the country to develop evacuation authority memorandums and planning guide documents, including an evacuation plan sample outline. Using the foundation set by the emerging best practice research, Hagerty developed a pilot plan for one Baltimore UASI jurisdiction. This plan served as the example plan for the remaining Baltimore UASI jurisdictions and the national model in evacuation planning. Hagerty developed an evacuation regional coordination supplement for the Baltimore UASI to serve as a national pilot plan and created operational support tools for the pilot jurisdiction plan and the regional coordination supplement.

**Cuyahoga County Evacuation Annex Update**
Hagerty incorporated a whole-community, all-hazards approach to inform a multi-jurisdictional evacuation plan based on evacuation best practices for 60 municipalities, including Cleveland. Hagerty used a multi-phased approach to update the County Evacuation Annex, build the local evacuation plan template, and develop the local evacuation plans. The process involved robust data collection facilitated through meetings and communications with the county. Hagerty also collected spatial data from the client to develop mapping products for the evacuation annex.

**Indiana-Illinois-Wisconsin Combined Statistical Area Regional Catastrophic Evacuation and Mass Care Coordination Program**
The Indiana-Illinois-Wisconsin Combined Statistical Area (IN-IL-WI CSA), comprised of 19 counties, three states, and inclusive of the City of Chicago, selected Hagerty to deploy the National Mass Evacuation Tracking System (NMETS), develop a regional shelter placement continuity of operations plan, and validate planning activities through trainings and exercises to enhance the region’s mass care common operating picture. Hagerty developed a Shelter Placement and Coordination Plan and other evacuation decision making tools before aiding the region in deploying NMETS, which was designed by FEMA to assist states in asset tracking. These activities were validated through the development, implementation, and evaluation of a training program, shelter placement tabletop exercise (TTX), and NMETS functional exercise.

**Southwest Florida Regional Evacuation Plan and Exercise**
Hagerty assisted Southwest Florida Region 6 with an all-hazards mass evacuation planning and exercise project. Hagerty supported the development of a regional evacuation framework that addressed the horizontal coordination and communication between all Region 6 municipalities, various non-governmental entities, and vertical integration with the State of Florida Department of Emergency Management. The omnidirectional, zone-based, and phased evacuation concept of operations was validated through a TTX. An After Action and Improvement Plan was developed to outline next steps in regional coordination. Changes were made in the regional evacuation concept of operations to ensure lessons learned were integrated in the planned approach to a similar scenario.