

# *Hurricane Deployment After-Action Report*



*Charley*



*Frances*



*Ivan*



*Jeanne*

## *South Florida Urban Search & Rescue Task Force 2*

*August 13<sup>th</sup> to September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2004*

*City of Miami Department of Fire Rescue  
Sponsoring Agency*

## Executive Summary

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*Beginning with the Alert Order for Hurricane Charley at 1600 EDT on August 13<sup>th</sup> 2004 and ending with the Demobilization Order following Hurricane Jeanne at 2100 hours on September 26<sup>th</sup> 2004, South Florida Task Force 2 responded to four hurricanes that made landfall in the State of Florida.*

*During those six weeks of frenetic activity, many lessons were learned as to how our Task Force may complete its mission more efficiently in the future, as well as how the Program Office may assist the Task Forces in completing their assigned objectives.*

*As detailed in the e-mail from Dave Casey on October 25<sup>th</sup> 2004, one combined after action report for all hurricanes will be completed with the adaptations listed below:*

*In order to facilitate the consolidation of all issues related to FLTF2's actions, this executive summary will consist of a compilation of all the "Evaluation" and "Lessons Learned" sections of each After Action Report. After Action Reports have been completed for each of the four hurricanes and are enclosed in this package. They may be referred to for more detailed information.*

## Evaluation

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- Callout was accomplished by paging and e-mailing of personnel before the Alert Order was received. This was followed up by an e-mail with a complete roster. Personnel on the roster were asked to respond and if no response was received, a follow up phone call was made. The method worked well because the team assembled quickly due to the "pre-rostering". The fact that hurricanes give plenty of notice allows us to do so.
- During "**Activated**" periods, where the Team was not yet deployed, various training/refresher opportunities became available. This accomplished the dual function of providing a refresher and sometimes a certification class while keeping the Team's morale up and their "heads in the game".
- The Team appreciated the frequent briefings that kept the Team informed even if there was only minimal information to be exchanged. The idea of coinciding briefings with National Weather Service Updates helped keep the information fresh.

## Lessons Learned

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### Task Force Issues

**Statement of issue** – During long standby times, activities should be planned to keep the Team members’ minds sharp and morale at a high level.

**Background discussion** – Drills, refreshers, training and formal classroom were given, but instructors had a somewhat difficult time in “ad-libbing” some of the subject matter.

**Recommended action** – “Canned” schools should be kept with the Task Force that can be given on short notice with equipment at hand.

**Assigned responsibility** – Training Committee.

**Statement of issue** – Medical Check-in process is needlessly complicated, often delaying departure.

**Background discussion** – Medical Check-in is always the bottleneck in the Check-In process. Forms are repetitive.

**Recommended action** – Streamline medical check-in process by removing repetitive forms and actions.

**Assigned responsibility** – Program Manager.

### USAR Program Office Issues

**Statement of issue** - During Hurricane Ivan, we were asked to search a large area and quantitatively report our findings.

**Background discussion** - Finding the documentation in our FOG manuals insufficient, our Engineers devised a system that would classify damage to each structure as light, moderate or severe, and that system was used to determine our search procedures

**Recommended action** – Adapt a standardized method of typing structures after hurricane damage, which will then determine search criteria.

#### ***Damage Assessment Structural Evaluation & Search Criteria:***

1. Structures with **light** wind and/or water penetration damage are to be evaluated from the exterior perimeter only. Audible calls are to be performed to determine presence of possible occupants. When possible, assessment is to be corroborated by neighboring residents.
2. Structures with **moderate** wind and/or water penetration damage are to be evaluated for structural stability and, conditions permitting (including possible access limitations), said structures are to be searched for potential occupants.

3. *Structures with **severe** wind and/or water penetration damage are to be evaluated for structural stability from the exterior only. Audible calls are to be performed to determine the presence of possible occupants. Furthermore, when possible, search dogs are to be utilized to determine whether any occupants are present.*

What still remains unanswered is what classifies **light moderate or severe**.

Following hurricane Andrew, a “picture board” was created that had a picture of each type of building damage followed by a classification as to 1, 2, 3, or 4. This system could be reworked and adapted so that all Task Forces would be working under more standard guidelines.

**Assigned responsibility** – Program Office.

**Statement of issue** – Communications between Rescue Teams in the field and Task Force Leaders at the Base of Operations was always difficult and non-existent at times.

**Background discussion** – Alternative methods were developed through necessity. A lot of our communications was through Nextel phones.

**Recommended action** – Finalize communications purchase requirements.

**Assigned responsibility** – Program Office.

**Statement of issue** – Our team traveled with a Type I cache. At the beginning of the mission, there was a possibility that we may be called upon to use it. The Type III table of organization calls for only two Logistics Specialists. That is a lot of equipment to move!

**Background discussion** – There’s a lot going on in the BoO that makes it very difficult for two Logistics Specialist to accomplish even in a Type III.

**Recommended action** – Table of organization should call for at least two more Logistics Specialists.

**Assigned responsibility** – Program Office.

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**Joseph Zahralban, Program Manager**

**Florida Task Force 2**