

**Mission Statement: To provide planning for disaster preparedness including coordinating the efforts of government, private and volunteer agencies capable of providing assistance during disaster response to include resource management. Command and control during response and recovery phases of disasters and large scale emergencies is maintained in the Emergency Operations Center.**

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**Director Gary Murrell** was appointed as a full time EMA Director in July 2007 and brought to Hawkins County a vast knowledge of emergency services including fire suppression, rescue technology, emergency medical expertise as well as administration and law enforcement training. Gary has been involved in the emergency field since 1977 when he graduated Rogersville High School. Living in Hawkins County his entire life has given him the opportunity to grow with the county and learn various venues of services which he strives to provide to all responders.

**DEFINITION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT:** Emergency management is the process of coordinating available resources to deal with emergencies effectively, thereby saving lives, avoiding injury, and minimizing economic loss.

**Hawkins County Emergency Management has several roles...**

- Advising on flood plain management
- teaching people how to get through a disaster
- help equip cities and county emergency preparedness organizations
- coordinating with TEMA and FEMA with response to a disaster
- coordinating the disaster assistance programs available to citizens, communities, and businesses
- supporting the surrounding agencies of fire, EMS and law enforcement services in Hawkins County
- administering the federal emergency-related grant programs

## Preparedness

Preparedness ensures that if disaster occurs, people are ready to get through it safely, and respond to it effectively. Whether you're an individual citizen, a volunteer group or a government agency, preparedness means figuring out what you'll do if essential services break down, developing a plan for contingencies, and practicing the plan.

Readiness for disaster is important at every level of the emergency management system. And it's equally important for the public at large. By encouraging planning, making resources available for facilities and equipment, giving emergency personnel the training they need, sponsoring exercises and getting information out to the public. Hawkins County Emergency Management Agency helps build an emergency management system that can protect people and property in any kind of disaster.

- **Planning:** Hawkins County Emergency Management is responsible for developing and maintaining the Hawkins County Emergency Operations Plan, which is the legally binding document that dictates how Hawkins County will respond to disasters and emergencies. Hawkins County Emergency Management also coordinates the development of many other adjunct plans and standard operating procedures covering county response to a variety of "unique" situations that affect Hawkins County in some form or fashion.
  
- **Training:** Every year hundreds of emergency responders within Hawkins County, firefighters, EMS rescue personnel, and law enforcement agents, attend training classes.
  
- **Exercises:** Hawkins County Emergency Management works with local emergency officials to develop exercises to test the training and planning that have taken place to validate the concepts developed during those processes.
  
- **Information:** Hawkins County Emergency Management provides information of preparedness and response to the media and the general public.

## Response

Response begins as soon as a disaster is detected or threatens. It involves mobilizing and positioning emergency equipment; getting people out of danger; providing needed food, water, shelter and medical services; and bringing damaged services and systems back on line. Local

responders, government agencies and private organizations take action. Sometimes the destruction goes beyond local capabilities.

## Recovery

The task of rebuilding after a disaster can take months, even years. Not only services, infrastructure, facilities and operations, but the lives and livelihoods of many thousands of people may be affected.

Hawkins County can request three types of assistance:

- [\*\*Individual assistance\*\*](#) for individuals, families, farmers and businesses -- loans and grants, emergency housing, tax relief and unemployment assistance
- [\*\*Public assistance\*\*](#) for local communities and nonprofit groups -- financial assistance to restore public systems and facilities
- [\*\*Mitigation\*\*](#) funds for local agencies and local communities for projects that eliminate or reduce an area's vulnerability to a hazard.

## Mitigation

Mitigation is the ongoing effort to lessen the impact disasters have on people and property. Mitigation involves keeping homes away from floodplains, engineering bridges to withstand earthquakes, creating and enforcing effective building codes to protect property from hurricanes -- and more. Mitigation is defined as "sustained action that reduces or eliminates long-term risk to people and property from natural hazards and their effects." It describes the ongoing effort at the Federal, State, local, and individual levels to lessen the impact of disasters upon our families, homes, communities and economy.

