Hurricane Hermine

August 30, 2016 – September 12, 2016

After Action Report/Improvement Plan

11/29/2016

Florida Division of Emergency Management

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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EVENT SUMMARY

Hurricane Hermine, which was the first hurricane to strike Florida in more than a decade, began as Tropical Invest 99L, which formed near the western coast of Africa and moved westward through the Atlantic and towards the Bahamas. On August 19, the National Hurricane Center indicated a 50 percent chance of formation. This percentage was increased to 80 percent on August 24 while the system was passing over the Leeward Islands. Although 99L did not become a tropical depression until August 28th while in the Florida Straits and southeastern Gulf of Mexico, the National Hurricane Center was predicting the system would become a tropical storm as it neared the Bahamas and provided the State Emergency Response Team with the latest forecasts beginning August 23.

Protective actions began as early as August 25 as County Emergency Operations centers increased their activation level. The Port of Key West initiated an "X-ray" condition for the port on August 26 due to the expectation of wind gusts up to 40 mph and heavy rain. The State Emergency Operations Center activated to a Level 2 on August 30.

Tropical Depression Nine became Tropical Storm Hermine on August 31 and was upgraded to a hurricane 25 hours later on the afternoon of September 1. Hurricane Hermine made landfall in Florida at 1:30 am EDT Friday, September 2, as a Category 1 hurricane with winds of 80 mph just east of St. Marks at the head of Apalachee Bay.

Tropical Storm and Hurricane Watches were first issued for Florida on August 30. Tropical Storm Warnings were issued for coastal and inland locations in North Florida the morning of August 31, with Tropical Storm Watches posted for Northeast Florida. Tropical Storm Warnings were upgraded to hurricane warnings for 12 counties in the Florida Big Bend beginning at 11 pm EDT on August 31 and continuing through September 1. In total, Dixie, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Hamilton, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Madison, Suwannee, Taylor, Wakulla counties were under a Hurricane Warning, with Walton, Washington, Holmes, Bay, Calhoun, Jackson, Hamilton, Suwannee, Lafayette, Columbia, Levy, Gilchrist, Citrus, Hernando, Pasco, Hillsborough, Sarasota, Manatee, Pinellas, Flagler, Holmes, Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Clay, Duval, Nassau, St. Johns, Union, Putnam and Marion Counties under a Tropical Storm Warning. Additionally, Storm Surge Warnings were issued for coastal locations of Franklin, Wakulla, Jefferson, Taylor, Dixie, Levy, Citrus, Hernando, Pasco, Pinellas, Hillsborough, Manatee and Sarasota Counties.

As a result, evacuation orders were initiated in Franklin, Wakulla, Jefferson, Taylor, Dixie, Levy and Citrus Counties. Damaging storm surge values in excess of 3 feet were recorded in Franklin, Levy, Taylor, Dixie, Citrus, Hernando and Pasco Counties. Evacuations by boat and Humvee were conducted in Hernando and Pasco counties due to storm surge entering homes. Initial reports indicated water levels reaching 3-5 feet above ground in Franklin County, 5-6 feet in Wakulla, 7-9 feet in Taylor, Dixie and Levy

Counties and 4-6 feet in Citrus, Hernando and Pasco Counties. These values are similar to those experienced during the 1993 "Storm of the Century."

A Tornado Watch was issued by the National Weather Service Storm Prediction Center on the afternoon of September 1 and included the counties of Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Citrus, Clay, Columbia, Dixie, Duval, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Hernando, Hillsborough, Jefferson, Lafayette, Levy, Madison, Marion, Nassau, Pasco, Pinellas, Putnam, St. Johns, Sumter, Suwannee, Taylor and Union Counties. Pasco County and Hillsborough County reported tornado touchdowns with minor damage to homes along with downed power lines and trees.

The National Weather Service issued Flood Watches and Flash Flood Watches on August 31 for much of North and Central Florida due to the potential for significant flooding. Rainfall amounts up to 4-6" was reported across the Florida Big Bend. Rainfall up to 8.5" was recorded in Hillsborough and Manatee Counties, with up to 9.23" in Levy County, 9.97" in Pasco County, 22.36" in Pinellas County. Nearly the entire Gulf Coast of Florida was already as much as 12 inches above normal rainfall for the past 30 days due to the heavy rainfall event in early August, which made most areas especially susceptible to flooding. Water rescues and stalled cars from flash flooding occurred in Pasco and Pinellas Counties due to heavy rain. Additionally, several rivers rose above flood stage including the St. Marks River, Steinhatchee River (which experienced a top 6 historic crest), Anclote River (which crested in major flood stage), Cypress Creek, Alafia River, Little Manatee River, Manatee River, Peace River, Horse Creek and Myakka River.

Sustained tropical storm force winds were observed across the Florida Big Bend, Nature Coast and Suwannee Valley, with gusts at hurricane force along the coast. As a result, extensive tree and power lines were downed in the warning area.

EVENT TIMELINE

Table 1: Event Summary (All times are EDT)

Date	Time	Action
8/25/2016	1115 hrs	Daily Conference calls with Counties and National Hurricane Center
8/30/2016	0700 hrs	EOC at a Level 2 Activation for Tropical Depression 9
8/31/2016		Executive Order 16-205 signed by Governor Scott
9/01/2016	0800 hrs	EOC at a Level 1 Activation for Tropical Storm Hermine
9/01/2016	1500 hrs	Tropical Storm Hermine upgraded to Hurricane Hermine

Date	Time	Action
9/02/2016	0130 hrs	Hurricane Hermine makes landfall east of St. Marks
9/08/2016	0800 hrs	EOC at a Level 2 Activation
9/12/2016	1130 hrs	EOC at a Level 3 Activation
9/28/2016		Presidential Declaration issued

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to analyze the actions of the State Emergency Response Team (SERT) by identifying strengths to be maintained and built upon, identifying potential areas for further improvement, and to support development of corrective actions.

MAJOR STRENGTHS AND BEST PRACTICES

Upon analysis of after-action information provided by Command and General Staff, Branches and Emergency Support Functions (ESFs), the items below were identified as major strengths:

Situational Awareness
The SERT began conducting conference calls on Hurricane Hermine on August 26—nearly a week before landfall—when the storm was still an invest moving through the Greater Antilles. The information provided during these calls and webinars, along with daily tropical weather briefings, were a benefit to both state and local emergency management personnel as it allowed for earlier decision making. A database was opened in EM Constellation prior to the first advisories being issued for the state to allow for the uploading of information messages and mission requests. Within EMC, the Essential Elements of Information (EEI) tool was better utilized to graphically portray information for the common operating picture. Each day the Regional Coordination Team (RCT) provided situational reports on the status of their respective counties. These reports proved useful in providing the most updated information. As the Regional Coordinators were traveling between county EOCs, there was limited time or internet connectivity for them to update the EEI tool in EMC, hence the genesis of these reports. The RCT manager, deployed to the SEOC, updated the EEI tool based upon the reports received from the RCs. In addition to the situational reporting, the RCT as well as other liaisons, enhanced the communications link between the county EOCs and the State EOC.

Once the storm passed, SERT reconnaissance teams provided valuable information on the scope of impacts. Aerial and ground-based Recon assets, including Civil Air Patrol, covered areas from Franklin County in Region 2 to Pinellas County in Region 4 and along coastal sections in Region 6. Going forward, efforts will be made to formalize the initial reconnaissance missions, working with ESFs 4, 9, and 13, to develop an entry plan that is scalable to any size storm. This will reduce the amount of planning required between the time the SEOC is activated and a storm's landfall.

Focus on Personnel Safety
Throughout the day on September 1, the day the storm was forecast to make landfall, the Meteorology Unit was tasked with monitoring the progress of the storm and the timing of impacts. Because it was determined that the onset of tropical storm impacts could occur before the normal shift change at 1900 hours, the decision was made to move the shift change to 1730 hours—following the conclusion of the scheduled 1715 conference call with the counties and the National Hurricane Center. This allowed ample time and adequate daylight for personnel to get to a place of safety, whether at home or the SEOC. Additionally, sections, branches, and ESFs were directed to schedule enough overnight staffing in the SEOC to ensure that critical functions would not be hindered in case day shift personnel were delayed in reporting to the SEOC.

Emergency Information and Communications
A new info page, http://floridadisaster.org/info, was created and successfully deployed to provide an easy URL with simple information and links to further information, a "one-stop shop." In addition, "robocalls" were conducted in areas being evacuated, with messaging stressing the importance of evacuating due to the threat of dangerous conditions.

Engagement with the Private Sector
With technical support from the SERT Technical Services/GIS Unit, ESF 18 developed alternate processes and reporting tools to publicly share the open/closed status of major retailers and lodging facilities in the impacted area. This tool was incorporated into the Virtual Business EOC (VBEOC) system, and just-in-time training on its use and capabilities was provided to members of the Human Services Branch. In addition, there was engaged participation of private businesses in fulfilling mission requests related to housing volunteers & obtaining donated ice. Offerings of assistance came from two prior private sector contributors (Uber & Airbnb). During the response operation there was discussion among certain sections, branches, ESFs and the SERT Chief on drafting protocols to be followed in the future when requesting private sector donations through ESF 18.

Food Safety Teams
Under the direction of the Florida Department of Agriculture, the Food Safety Rapid Response Team was activated and provided representation in the SEOC. These teams deployed to 32 counties and assessed over 2,000 food establishments. During these assessments, personnel provided the food establishments with boil water guidelines,

damaged food guides, and guidance for industry after a weather emergency.

Transparency/EOG Engagement with Public

During the response and into the initial recovery phase of operations, the Governor's Office was engaged throughout the entire process. Both the Governor and EOG staff participated in SEOC conference calls and briefings. Additionally, the Governor held daily press conferences and made numerous visits to impacted communities. Stakeholder meetings dedicated to electrical power restoration were held in the Governor's dedicated conference room in the SEOC and were televised, ensuring transparency.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

Several opportunities for improvement in the SERT's overall ability to respond to the incident were identified.

Executive Order

The Executive Order included counties that received minimal, if any, impacts from the storm. As the decision was made to dismiss state workers early on September 1 for the sake of safety, certain critical functions were affected in these counties. The most notable function mentioned was that of public school nurses in counties where schools were not closed. Historically, each county would determine if their respective schools and government offices would be closed. State offices would follow suit. Closing all state offices in the counties identified in the Executive Order caused State employees to assume that all state employees were off. Counties in the "sunshine" had county offices open while State offices in those same counties were closed. School nurses (state employees) in impacted counties still under the Executive Order assumed that as state employees, they too were excused from duty. Better analysis of meteorological data and county situation reports could have aided in preventing any unnecessary suspension of essential government functions.

There was also confusion/uncertainty about the Executive Order with respect to prescription refills and whether citizens could obtain early prescription refills due to the emergency conditions. Following the issuance of the Executive Order on August 31, the Office of Insurance Regulation (OIR) issued an email notification to all health insurers, managed care organizations, and other health entities that same afternoon reminding them about Florida's law allowing consumers in the 42 affected counties to obtain early prescription refills. When an amended Executive Order adding nine counties to the State of Emergency was issued later that same day, OIR issued a follow-up email notification to all health insurers, managed care organizations, and other health entities to alert them about the amended Executive Order and new counties added for consumers to obtain early prescription refills.

State Office Closures

The closure process and notification for state office closures was considered rough at the start. The Department of Management Services (DMS) had to quickly develop a

procedure and begin to collect information. A blind mail box was established for agencies to send information regarding closures. DMS provided daily updates on the status of State Office Closures, but is in the process of developing a more comprehensive process. Additionally, there is a need for each agency to ensure that its critical facilities and functions are identified, review its respective Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) and determine when to implement it in the event of office closures.

County-wide state office closures were effectively captured and tracked using EMC EEI; however, tracking individual buildings within counties remains problematic. It is recommended to use the legislatively mandated SOLARIS-FITS state building inventory system to better track status of individual building status/closures and display this information on maps and through feeds of data.

School Closure Information
Receiving consolidated school closure information was slow. Information was having to be obtained from multiple sources, increasing the risk for errors in situation reporting and an incomplete common operating picture. Delays were attributed to the approval process prior to distribution of this information and communication resource availability.

Utilities Outage and Restoration Information
ESF 12 (Electrical Power) produced reports three times a day on power outages across the state. During the response operations for Hermine, reports were, by request, produced hourly. Acquiring information on power outages and restoration times at hourly intervals was considered ineffective during this event as fluctuating numbers during such a time frame could be misleading. Additionally, the current reporting structure is not set up to report by individual municipal and cooperative utilities, and some utilities were delayed in their reporting. Smart meters were used by certain utilities; however, it was expressed that they were not giving an accurate representation of outage and restoral information. Eagle Eye, a system used by the U.S. Department of Energy for tracking power outages, is limited to tracking outages of major companies, not smaller cooperatives and municipals. This resulted in an underreporting of outages on its system. It is recommended that—as demand for information is increasing—a real-time outage/restoration reporting system be established, with all electrical utilities being a part of this system. In addition, it is recommended that—prior to a landfalling tropical cyclone—power companies that could be impacted by an event are identified, ascertain their area of operations, and gain from them an estimation of impact and restoration time prior to landfall. Also, priorities for power restoration need to be clearly communicated.

Mass Care
Several counties, primarily in Region 4, expressed a lack of shelter support staff from the American Red Cross (ARC). According to these counties, they were told that ARC staff could not respond because tropical storm warnings were in effect for those counties. This issue led to further conversation about alternatives to ARC shelter

support such as using state or local government employees. There did not appear to be a clear understanding of "standby" as well as the criteria for ARC volunteers to safely deploy. For future operations, there should be an overall understanding of what is meant by "standby" as well as a timetable for executing shelter operations to ensure that required staffing are in place prior to the onset of watches/warnings and hazardous travel conditions.

There were also issues identified with respect to human needs assessments, specifically with obtaining solid assessment numbers in order to support these missions. Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) were activated and deployed to conduct these assessments; however, there was concern that this was not the intended role of CERTs. In one instance, according a Region 4 county, a CERT was handing out business cards with FEMA on them, leading to public confusion and media issues. There was uncertainty about how these teams were requested and tasked with this particular assignment, but it was communicated that this came through the State EOC and was not well coordinated with the county EOCs.

With respect to pet sheltering, it was mentioned that ESF 17 does not track information regarding pet shelter locations and population count, begging the question about who is responsible for this information. ESF 17 does, however, provide support to these shelters if requested. It is recommended that shelter management agencies identify a need and report the need to the counties so that support can be requested through EM Constellation. Also, pet friendly shelters should be identified on floridadisaster.org when reporting shelter operations.

Fuel Station Status Information
During Hurricane Hermine two methods were used to track status of retail fuel stations and fuel availability:

- Phone Survey: During Hurricane Hermine, calls were made to individual retail fuel stations within the impacted area to gather information on the status of the station, such as whether they are open or closed, have power, and have fuel. Though useful, and ultimately effective, a phone survey of this type does have some distinct limitations, since most phones today are powered by electricity. There was a very limited response the first 24-hours after landfall, and that would only trend worse for a larger storm. The survey will always be dependent on someone answering the phone. Maintaining a current list of phone numbers for all the retail stations in Florida is also difficult.
- Gas Buddy: Gas Buddy is a crowd sourcing app. After Hurricane Hermine passed through the Big Bend area, information on stations that posted fuel availability on Gas Buddy were distributed.

ESF 12-Fuels is working with ESF 18 to leverage different ideas to monitor and provide retail fuel station open/closed and fuel/no fuel status:

- Outreach to fuel industry retailers to use their Virtual Business EOC (VBEOC) System.
- Outreach to retail industry corporations: Begin outreach and coordination with the major retail fuel chains in Florida to improve ways to communicated status during a disaster.
- Continue outreach to petroleum associations to partner with them to obtain information.
- Outreach to Department of Agriculture and Department of Environmental Protection to obtain their latest database of retail gas stations.
- Status of lottery terminals: The Florida Division of Emergency Management has been working with the Florida Lottery to utilize the connection status of Florida Lottery terminal to help estimate the extent of power outages during natural disasters.
- Using crowd sourcing applications: There are multiple mobile apps for fuel pricing with "Gas Buddy" being the most widely known. Work to leverage these "crowd sourced" applications to help provide more accurate and real time information on the retail fuel stations.

Federal Declaration Request

The time to submit a declaration request is too long. There is a sequential, bureaucratic process in which no step occurs until the step before it is accomplished. In the meantime, especially for an IA event, the impacted individuals are left with uncertainty and few options. Some potential remedies include:

- Beginning the accounting and data collection process earlier and making it more visible. This process started during this activation by including damage assessment numbers on the website.

- Assisting counties—especially the smaller and more fiscally constrained ones— with the damage assessment process, including deploying personnel to assist with the initial damage assessments.

- Write shorter and less complicated requests.

- Work with EOG to have them start reviewing it during the development process so that it doesn't sit there for several days

- Continue to work with the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA) to develop a repository of states' requests for purposes of comparing/contrasting

Some of the delay was in getting electrical costs, with FEMA insisting on seeing actual pole damage. It needs to be determined if there an established standard for cost of restoration per customer that the state and FEMA could agree, at least for the declaration phase. Actual costs would be used for the reimbursement.

Communications/Public Information

The Florida Emergency Information Line (FEIL) was activated on September 7, six days after landfall, to answer citizen inquiries. In past events in which the FEIL was activated, it was done so either before a storm's landfall or immediately afterwards. Prior to the FEIL activation, citizen calls were being handled by various desks in the SEOC. It is recommended that FEIL be stood up sooner and that expectations be clearly conveyed to all agencies supporting the FEIL. Additionally, provisions should be in place to provide emergency public information to citizens with disrupted power, and/or communications (phone/internet).

Finance & Administration

There was a difference in pricing opinions between what the state term contract had online for water than what Logistics had. This has resulted in delays in paying invoices. In order to address this for future events, it is recommended that the SEOC's representative from the Department of Management Services (DMS)-State Purchasing be consulted on such matters.

Due to the response operation extending into a weekend and the Labor Day holiday, the state's accounting system was not accessible. In order to address this for future events, Finance & Administration will be reaching out to the Florida Department of Financial Services (DFS) to request that the state accounting system be operational 24 hours during an activation. Also, MyFloridaMarketPlace (MFMP) cannot fully process a purchase requisition into a purchase order if the state's accounting system is not accessible. If the state's accounting system is made accessible for future events, Finance & Administration will reach out to DMS to ensure MFMP is operational 24 hours during an activation.

Due to the current contract with Bank of America regarding state Purchasing Card (P-Card) usage, there was an inability to increase limits over the weekend or on the state holiday for this event. In order to address this for future events, Finance will be reaching out to DFS to see if they can work with Bank of America to address this issue during activations.

Damage Assessment/Initial Recovery

There were inconsistencies reported in the numbers generated in the initial damage assessments and those obtained in the joint preliminary damage assessments. It was emphasized that initial assessments were never meant to be 100 percent accurate as they are quick "windshield assessments." Continued training on the damage assessment process was identified as a remedy along with ensuring that the most current products, plans, and procedures are being used while discarding outdated materials. Additionally, a tremendous effort was expended by GIS to prepare data and maps, and by IT and GIS to prepare tablets for use with damage assessments. These tablets, however, were not used. GIS will work with Recovery to investigate any issues and strategize on the path forward in the utilization of these devices. Further, there

needs to be additional strategizing on incorporating GIS data, tools and mobile applications to support the damage assessment process.

Technology
There was better use of the Essential Elements of Information (EEI) tool during this activation, including its utilization in graphically depicting state office closures, county-wide power outage and restoration information as well as preliminary damage assessment scheduling. As it was better utilized, more issues with the EEI and EM Constellation system as a whole were discovered:

- An issue was identified where notes in EMC EEI cannot be updated unless a change is made to the status of the element. Technical Services (Information Management) is already working on enhancements to EMC to enable the note for an element to be updated without requiring a status change necessarily being made.

- To assist in identifying damage assessments, a Damage Assessment category should be added to EMC Info Messages. This will help in quickly identifying those information messages that are relevant to damage assessments. Technical Services (Information Management) will work on implementing.

- A request was made to consider adding a new mission status of "Recurring". The idea is that leaving a mission status to "On Site" may not be an adequate description, as resources may leave at night and return the next day. Technical Services (Information Management) requests that this be considered by a larger body, and if decided to support, Technical Services (Information Management) will implement as directed.

Planning & Training
Hermine was the first hurricane to make landfall in Florida in over a decade, requiring execution of plans and procedures which may not have been executed in a real world event in some time. There is a need for all SERT partners to review and, if needed, refine decision matrices and key indicators, ensuring their alignment with the state's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan and the SERTs concept of operations. Also, plans and standard operating procedures/guides which have not been updated in several years need to be revisited and updated as some concepts may have changed. After action reports and improvement plans from exercises and real-world events should be reviewed to ascertain any impediments due to planning, organization, equipment, training, and/or exercises.

Disaster Volunteer Leave Law
Chapter 110.120, Florida Statutes, known as the "Florida Disaster Volunteer Leave Act", currently allows for state workers to volunteer for up to 15 working days in any 12-month period to participate in specialized disaster relief services for the American Red Cross. It is recommended that this law be revised to make it more inclusive, including

allowing state workers to work with agencies other than the Red Cross, making provisions for workers to attend required training for such volunteer work. The goal is to provide a more robust pool of personnel statewide to provide disaster assistance in areas including—but not limited to—shelter support.

Managing Expectations

As this was the first hurricane response the state has conducted since 2005, there are SERT partners at all levels of government and nongovernment who are new to a "real-world" hurricane response. As such, there were issues across multiple areas that can be summarized as managing expectations. Most notably, there was discussion about missions and how they are managed. For example, how would the absence of an Executive Order affect the way in which the SERT executes missions, if it would at all? Should counties be sourcing resources on their own before reaching out to the SEOC? What kind of resources and commodities can the SERT obtain and are there limitations to what will be obtained (e.g., ice)? There may be a disparity among leadership, branches, and counties about expectations, and who pays for resources. It is the need for a resource that should drive its purchase, not who is going to pay or get reimbursed. In addition to resource expectations, what kind of information is expected to be obtained and disseminated and at what frequency? These and other similar questions should be answered and made clear by SERT leadership prior to the start of hurricane season. This is to ensure that all partners at all levels of government as well as nongovernment partners are aware of expectations, with the goal of preventing or mitigating time-consuming confusion.

IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Below is a compilation of additional challenges along with opportunities and recommendations for improvement. Information was provided by Command and General Staff along with Branches and Emergency Support Functions. This table will serve as an improvement plan and should be considered as an outline for improving processes and procedures through planning, organization, equipment, training and/or exercises. This Improvement Plan has been developed specifically for the State Emergency Response Team as a result of the SERT's response to Hurricane Hermine.

Table 2: Improvement Plan Matrix

Challenges/Observations	Opportunities for Improvement / Recommendations	Primary Responsibility
Some missions were being handled through phone calls and emails; there were also instances of resources deploying without being tied to a mission (self-deploying)	Ensure that all personnel know that while phone calls and emails are appropriate in discussing the mission, all missions are to be handled through EM Constellation as that is the SERT's mission management platform. Retraining is needed on mission process management from Ops Support, to Sections, to Branch's to ESF's. How Supporting Missions work, and the need for follow up on tasked missions.	Operations
Many new personnel working in the SEOC were not familiar with EM Constellation's capabilities, including GATOR and EEI.	Continue to provide "blue-skies" training on how to use EM Constellation for mission tracking and information management/gathering.	Planning/Tech Services
There needs to be a way to coordinate and input to others the physical assessments conducted by the various NGOs (Salvation Army, Red Cross, Baptists, etc.).	Quicker joining up of NGO forces and coordination with food banks and USDA	Human Services Branch
Need to consider standing up Air Ops earlier rather than later. There was a need for it with some of the drone activity.	Stand up Air Operations Branch at the outset of an EOC activation	Operations
There is a question about using private sector sources to provide housing, which might have a fee involved, and how does that work legally.	Determine legalities related to using private sector sources for housing	ESF 18
There is a need for guidance on how ESFs request private sector involvement/resources.	Develop procedures for ESFs to request private sector services.	ESF 18
Providing more regular updates to congressional and legislative leadership will help better communicate the mission of the SERT and its activities during response and recovery operations.	Incorporate regular legislative and congressional updates into ESF 14's operational cycle. Re-activate Intergovernmental Relations Team.	ESF 14
There needs to be a clear and consistent message regarding ice.	Reinforce the message on ice requests, whether these missions will be supported only in certain circumstances or will not be supported at all.	SCO, SERT Chief

Clear activation procedures are needed for deployment of CERT/AmeriCorps teams	Develop standard operating procedures for deployment of these teams, including procedures on who activates these teams, how they are tracked in EM Constellation, who has authority over these teams, etc.	ESF 15 (Volunteer Florida)
There remains discrepancies between shelter status and population numbers being reported by the counties and numbers being reported by ARC.	Better coordination is needed between the state and county mass care functions to ascertain more accurate shelter status and population information.	ESF 6/Human Services Branch
NGOs felt that they were not trusted agents and that there was a hesitancy to provide services to the non-profits.	Develop pre-scripted mission requests—in coordination with other SERT partners—to hopefully eliminate any delays.	Human Services Branch
It was observed that there were resources available that could have been utilized earlier in the response operation, specifically with forestry teams that have the capability to conduct "cut and toss."	There needs to be better awareness of capabilities within the SERT prior to activation.	SERT
Reconnaissance was requested by counties for areas that were already reconnoitered, with the information uploaded to the GATOR common operating picture. There was no visibility on whether those missions were worked out between the counties and the agency performing the recon or was it a direct request to the SEOC. Phone calls to those counties were made to seek clarification.	Add language to the mission message indicating that the mission has been coordinated between the county and the agency performing the function and that the mission is being entered strictly for documentation purposes, with no action needed on our part.	Operations, Operations Support, Planning
Making decisions to activate the EOC later in the day and requiring immediate overnight staffing poses a safety issue for staff who have already worked throughout the day. While this is expected in no-notice events, there should be better lead time for incidents with advanced notice (e.g., hurricane).	For incidents with advanced notice, leadership should make the decision to require overnight staffing sooner so that supervisors can adjust staffing accordingly and allow adequate rest for personnel to prevent any safety issues.	SCO/SERT Chief
Mission processes went smooth, but counties need ongoing briefings on what resources are available through the State and how and when the responsibility falls on the county vs. the State especially when the State is not Presidentially Declared.	Counties needs to be more self-sufficient to include a Logistics Plan with Gap Analysis that outlines established contracts and vendors they can purchase or lease resources from, then develop pre-scripted mission requests to the State on known shortfalls.	Logistics, Counties
There was duplication of effort in terms of reporting boil water notices.	Process needs to be further investigated and streamlined, including visualization on maps and better notifying affected customers.	DOH, DEP, DEM
There is limited accountability for what staff is in the SEOC at any given time. Should the need arise to evacuate, there is no roster or phone list of personnel present in the SEOC. The EOC action plans contain an organization assignment list (ICS form 203), but it captures only lead staff.	Establish a sign-in system for personnel entering/exiting the EOC.	Operations, Planning

The SEOC did not receive any requests for infant or baby supplies for the first 4 days and not until the agencies organized outreach to the counties to determine requirements. Many county social service agencies had not reached out to their clients or other seniors on support programs for health and welfare checks. Elder Affairs, DCF and APD reached out and contacted county level social service agencies to ensure that they will conduct H&W checks on clients and also pre identify seniors not on formal support programs such as senior living homes and communities so that H&W checks can be conducted.	Counties need to address alternate feeding and support methods for seniors on meal supplement programs such as Meals on Wheels or food bank programs.	
There seemed to be confusion over being ready in the counties for the FEMA PDAs. FEMA only verifies damage; they do not look for it. There were several times on calls that county EM mentioned that FEMA would conduct the initial PDA. That jeopardizes the possibility of a thorough PDA.	Continue to provide awareness of and training in damage assessment policies and procedures.	Recovery
County emergency managers were not notified of press releases regarding Disaster Recovery Center openings in their respective counties.	Include county notifications in the recovery-related press release processes and procedures.	Recovery, ESF 14
Timing of National Guard support- in order to have guardsmen available immediately post-landfall, they have to be activated at least 24 hours prior to need.	Recommend an initial force package based on historical requirements and anticipated needs based on the size and location of the storm. The pre-landfall force package will normally include planners, liaisons (LNOs), Recon/Search & Rescue teams, aviation (AVN) crews, security forces, logistics support and high wheeled vehicles.	ESF 13
Initial entry forces must be flexible enough to solve problems and change outcomes. It's very difficult for counties to anticipate exactly what they'll need post-landfall so the first forces in must be flexible and able to adjust to the situation as it develops.	Utilize multi-purpose force packages during initial response.	ESF 13
Post-impact entry planning was conducted as the storm approached. While this effort had a level of success, there should be more advanced planning for such a situation, particularly if future storms provide little lead time for planning.	Develop a boilerplate entry plan that can be quickly tailored to adapt to any size storm.	Emergency Services Branch, Planning Section, ESF 13

CONCLUSION

While the response operation was deemed successful, there continues to be opportunity for improvement. Guidance, concepts, expectations, and personnel have changed in the 10+ years since the state has dealt with a real-world hurricane response. Plans and procedures should, accordingly, reflect these shifts. It was noted that the SEOC was working like a "super county EOC," and that while this model worked for Hermine—a category 1 hurricane—it would clearly not work for larger storms. Additionally, had Hermine been a much stronger storm, the State EOC likely would have executed its Continuity of Operations Plan and transferred operations to its alternate facility.

Florida has created a very strong organized structure in the State Emergency Response Team and State Emergency Operations Center. While there is continued room for improvement, there needs to be continued respect for the structure and acknowledgement of its feasibility.