

Tropical Storm Colin

June 5, 2016 – June 7, 2016

After Action Report/Improvement Plan

7/18/2016



Florida Division of Emergency Management

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ADMINISTRATIVE HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS

1. The title of this document is Tropical Storm Colin After Action Report.
2. This AAR was developed using the Department of Homeland Security – Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) processes.
3. The information gathered in this AAR is classified as “**For Official Use Only**” (FOUO) and should be handled as sensitive information not to be disclosed. This document should be safeguarded, handled, transmitted, and stored in accordance with appropriate security directives. Reproduction of this document, in whole or in part, without prior approval from The Florida Division of Emergency Management (DEM) is prohibited.
4. At a minimum, the attached materials will be disseminated only on a need-to-know basis and will be stored in a manner sufficient to provide protection against theft, compromise, inadvertent access, and unauthorized disclosure.
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EVENT SUMMARY

Tropical Storm Colin was the third named tropical cyclone of the 2016 Atlantic hurricane season. The storm caused flooding, high winds, and tornadoes, primarily over the Florida Big Bend and northeastern Florida. TS Colin was the first named storm to make landfall in Florida since 2013 (Tropical Storm Andrea).

The National Hurricane Center (NHC)—in its 2 PM EDT Tropical Weather Outlook on June 1—was forecasting the possibility of a low pressure area developing within the next 5 days near the Yucatan Peninsula, giving the chance of tropical cyclone formation of 20 percent through June 6. Subsequent outlooks gradually increased those chances, with the 8 AM EDT, Sunday, June 5 outlook giving a 90 percent chance of tropical cyclone formation. At 11 AM EDT, June 5, the NHC designated the low as Tropical Depression 3 and began issuing advisories. A Tropical Storm Warning was issued along the Florida Gulf Coast from Indian Pass in the eastern Panhandle to Englewood in Sarasota County as some strengthening was forecast prior to landfall. At 5:30 PM on June 5, the NHC upgraded TD 3 to Tropical Storm Colin, with maximum sustained winds near 40 mph. Tropical Storm watches and warnings were expanded to include portions of Florida's Atlantic coast. Maximum storm surge levels were forecast to be about 1-3 feet, with rainfall amounts as high as 3-6 inches with locally higher amounts. Landfall was forecast to occur late Monday, June 6, along Florida's Big Bend coastline.

The NHC did not issue a tropical cyclone update as TS Colin made landfall; however, analysis of the 11 PM EDT, June 6, the 2 AM EDT, June 7 public advisories, and archived radar data concludes that the storm made landfall before midnight EDT, June 6, along the Taylor County coast with maximum sustained winds of 50 mph. Because of the unorganized nature of TS Colin, the majority of the strongest weather occurred well to the east of the center of circulation. Maximum rainfall amounts were between 10 and 11 inches, primarily in a swath south of Gainesville and also north of Tallahassee. Two confirmed tornadoes were reported in Duval County, and a waterspout was observed moving onshore near Estero in Southwest Florida. In addition, flooding was reported in low-lying areas along the Florida Gulf Coast. Because of TS Colin's fast forward motion (23 mph at landfall), tropical storm conditions quickly abated during the day on June 7.

The State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) activated to a Level 2 on Sunday, June 5, at 11 AM EDT—coinciding with the NHC commencing advisories on TD 3/TS Colin. An Executive Order was signed by the Governor on June 6 declaring a state of emergency for Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Brevard, Citrus, Clay, Columbia, Dixie, Duval, Flagler, Franklin, Gilchrist, Hernando, Hillsborough, Jefferson, Lafayette, Lake, Levy, Manatee, Marion, Nassau, Orange, Pasco, Pinellas, Putnam, Sarasota, Seminole, St. Johns, Sumter, Suwannee, Taylor, Union, Volusia, and Wakulla counties. The SEOC returned to Level 3 Activation on Tuesday, June 7, at 5 PM EDT.

EVENT TIMELINE

Table 1: Event Summary (All times are EDT)

Date	Time	Action
June 5, 2016	1100hrs	State Emergency Operations Center activated to a Level 2 operation in response to Tropical Storm Colin.
June 6, 2016	N/A	Executive Order #16-136 was signed by the Governor to declare a State of Emergency due to Tropical Storm Colin. The order covers 34 counties.
June 7, 2016	1700hrs	State Emergency Operations Center returns to a Level 3 activation.

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

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:

Training and Exposure for New Staff and Verification of Plans and Procedures

Given the short and low-intensity nature of this particular activation, there was ample opportunity for new, less-experienced staff to learn how the State EOC operates in a real-world situation. Staffing was regularly rotated to allow as much exposure as possible to the EOC environment. Additionally, there was the opportunity to test and validate new, modified, and existing plans and procedures within the respective sections, branches, and ESFs.

Evacuation Discussion

While Tropical Storm Colin was a short-lived and relatively weak tropical cyclone, it provided an opportunity to discuss evacuations—particularly during larger and stronger tropical cyclone events—and how to better provide evacuation support to counties and regions. An area of discussion which was posed by the Department of Transportation was the utilization of roadway shoulders as additional travel lanes for evacuees. This is still in its research stage and plans for such an idea have yet to be developed.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

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

- There was confusion in the information gathering process. Duplication of effort in information gathering resulted in unnecessary increased workload all sections, branches and Emergency Support Functions. Information, much of which was included in the standard/existing reports, was being sought for other reports. The EOC information gathering/sharing process should be continuously communicated during briefings and make sure people know where to find information (EM Constellation, situation reports, EOC Action Plans/Incident Action Plans, etc.). Further, all personnel—regardless of agency or entity—who work in the State EOC should be properly trained and familiar with the State EOC's concept of operations and the Incident Command System.
- It should be expected that the Governor and Governor's Office staff will visit an impacted area for a period of time. The SERT should anticipate any resource needs of the Governor beforehand and have those resources available.
- Staff turnover continues to affect the area of emergency management. It is important that all new staff are provided clear expectations of their EOC activation role and that staff are assigned and properly trained in their activation role.
- Maintaining the interest of some entities was difficult as some felt it was "only" a tropical storm and, after the storm had dissipated, an interest in continued monitoring seemed to decrease. It should be emphasized that even the most disorganized tropical cyclones have the potential to cause riverine flooding after the storm passes, and monitoring should continue through the end of the activation and, if necessary, beyond.
- While the SEOC activation for TS Colin was short-lived, it gave the SERT an opportunity to consider county evacuation support if the event was larger and protracted as it has been a long time since such support has been rendered. Continued discussion on ESF roles in providing evacuation support is needed. Additionally, as the population expands and the message to evacuees is to drive tens of miles not hundreds of miles is reinforced, more real-time traffic counting capability within the regions is needed to monitor where roads are or may become congested.

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 Tropical Storm Colin.

Table 2: Improvement Plan Matrix

Challenges	Opportunities for Improvement / Recommendations	Primary Responsibility
Continued Everbridge notification issues. Some personnel reported not receiving a notification. Additionally, the call-back instructions in the notification voicemail were found to be cumbersome.	Work more closely with staff and SERT partners to better advertise personal responsibility regarding Everbridge accounts (i.e. updated registration email, regular reminders, and additional SEOC training).	Operations
Confusion in the information gathering process: Duplication of effort in information gathering resulted in unnecessary increased workload on ESF 5, other ESFs and Branches. Information, much of which was included in the standard/existing reports, was being sought for other reports. Additionally, coordination of state agencies regarding office closures during local emergencies was a challenge.	Better communicate the EOC info gathering/sharing process during briefings and make sure people know where to find information (EM Constellation, situation reports, EOC Action Plans/Incident Action Plans, etc.). Work with Department of Management Services to resolve the confusion of state and local government office closures.	Planning
Delay in activating Storm Tracker due to a delay in posting of EO to EMC.	Internal Department of Environmental Protection Communications issue; focus on time sensitive information.	ESF 10
Request for situation reports from ESFs was not consistent; three time deadlines in one morning.	Work with Planning Section to understand what information is needed for which report (i.e. SITREP, EOC Action Plan, etc.).	ESF 1&3
Incident Command System (ICS) Process/SERT Structure is not familiar to some of the ESF 14 partners.	Engage ESF 14 partners with the SERT ICS sections—particularly the Planning and Operations sections—in order to not duplicate efforts and help train on ICS and SERT concept of operations.	ESF 14
There is a need to provide staff training on new and different procedures outlined in the revised ESF-18 Standard Operating Guide.	Provide staff training on new and different procedures outlined in the revised ESF-18 Standard Operating Guide.	ESF 18
Alignment of state and local ESF 18 activities	Transform “Blue Sky” private sector relationships into “Gray Sky” private sector partnerships; Establish a process to align state ESF-18 operational activities with local ESF18 activities.	ESF 18

<p>There is a need to research other available funding resources.</p>	<p>Continue more in depth research on available funding resources when there is no Federal Declaration.</p>	<p>Recovery</p>
<p>There was some confusion in the Executive Order referencing the National Guard being ordered to activate. This is misleading and caused some confusion between FLNG/ ESF 13 and ESF14. FLNG stated that there were 6000 soldiers available but was misinterpreted as being activated and was initially on the news as such.</p>	<p>Work to clarify language in future executive orders to avoid confusion</p>	<p>Legal, ESF 13, ESF 14</p>