

Study Guide for Chapter 7

1. The Stafford Act constitutes the statutory authority for most Federal disaster response activities.
2. The Stafford Act vests responsibility for emergency preparedness jointly in the Federal government, state, tribal and territorial governments and their political subdivisions.
3. The Stafford Act also gives FEMA responsibility for coordinating Federal government response to support state, local, tribal, and territorial efforts.
4. Main provisions of the Stafford Act regarding Federal Government preparedness support to state and local governments:
 - a. The President is authorized to establish a program of disaster preparedness that coordinates with state and locals, and that uses services of all appropriate agencies.
 - b. The President shall insure that all appropriate federal agencies are prepared to issue warnings of disasters to state and locals.
 - c. The President shall provide technical assistance to States in developing preparedness, response, mitigation, and recovery plans for disasters/hazards.
 - d. The President is authorized to make grants to States for the development of preparedness plans.
5. To obtain disaster assistance from the Federal Government under the Stafford Act, state governors must request a declaration by the President that a major disaster exists that is beyond the capabilities of the state and local governments and that Federal assistance is necessary.

6. In a major disaster, the Stafford Act authorizes the President to direct any Federal agency to assist state and local response and recovery efforts, including precautionary evacuations.

7. A “major disaster” is defined in the Stafford Act as any natural catastrophe which the President determines causes damage of sufficient severity and magnitude to warrant assistance to supplement efforts by states, charitable organizations, etc., in alleviating the damage, loss, hardship, or suffering.

8. Under the Stafford Act the Federal Government may render assistance to state and local governments, and to private persons needed to meet immediate threats to life and property resulting from a natural disaster. Such assistance includes:

a. coordinating disaster relief assistance.

b. providing technical and advisory assistance to state/locals.

c. assisting state/locals in the distribution of meds, food, and consumable supplies, and other emergency assistance.

d. lending or donating federal equipment, supplies, facilities, personnel, and other resources.

e. providing rescue, care, and shelter.

f. providing work and services essential to save lives, preserve public health and safety, and to protect property.

9. The Stafford Act authorizes the President to help fund:

a. state/local hazard preparedness costs.

b. repair or replace public facilities damaged or destroyed by a major disaster.

c. private persons who as a direct result of a major disaster have necessary expenses and serious needs and are unable to meet such expenses.

This assistance may include food expenses, housing expenses, unemployment and/or reemployment assistance, etc.

10. The Stafford Act vests the Director of FEMA with powers and responsibilities under the Act, including to assist and encourage States to enter into interstate emergency preparedness compacts with each other (and even with neighboring nations – Canada and Mexico - through the State Department).

11. Any effective response, recovery, or other answer to a threat or catastrophe heavily depends upon preparedness.

12. Preparedness means that the agency, community, and constituency affected, and public and private partners, stand ready to deal with the threat in an effective manner.

13. Preparedness also means one has to have the capacity to plan, organize, train, equip, exercise, evaluate, and improve.

14. FEMA has extensive resources regarding preparedness and recovery that are available to the public and state/local authorities.

15. FEMA uses high-level technology to estimate and predict damage and potential harm. It has developed comprehensive software programs that are crucial to predicting the outcomes of particular events.

16. HAZUS is a FEMA software program that uses current scientific and engineering knowledge, coupled with the latest geographic information systems (GIS) technology, to produce estimates of hazard-related damage before, or after, a disaster occurs.

17. The term “mitigation” implies an intervention before the threat or catastrophe takes place.

18. Mitigation is the effort to reduce loss of life and property by lessening the impact of disaster.

19. FEMA encourages a variety of mitigation programs to minimize and limit damage and threat.

20. FEMA provides grants and other financial support to implement mitigation plans and programs.

21. The term “response” primarily means immediate actions to save lives, protect property and the environment, and meet basic human needs.

22. Response also includes the execution of emergency plans and actions to support short-term recovery.

23. The National Response Framework (NRF) is a guide for a national, all-hazards response—from the smallest incident to the largest catastrophe.

24. The chief aim of the NRF is to have communities, states, the federal government, the private sector, and nongovernmental partners apply key response principles so that there is a coordinated, effective national response to disasters.

25. NRF operates on the presumption that disaster response must be first and foremost a local one. As FEMA points out:

26. Incidents begin and end locally, and most are wholly managed at the local level. Many incidents require unified response from local agencies, NGOs, and the private sector, and some require additional support from neighboring jurisdictions or the State. A small number require Federal support.

27. However, the scope and magnitude of a disaster sometimes make the federal authorities the dominant force.