



Section 2 Executive Summary

2.1 Background

On October 20, 2000, the United States Congress passed the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, also known as DMA2K. A copy of the Act is included in this Plan as Appendix A. Among its other features, DMA2K established a requirement that in order to remain eligible for certain categories of federal disaster assistance and grant funds, States and localities must develop and adopt Hazard Mitigation Plans. On February 26, 2002, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) published an Interim Final Rule (IFR) that provided the guidance and regulations under which such Plans must be developed. The IFR provides detailed descriptions of both the Planning process that States and localities are required to observe, as well as the contents of the Plan that emerges. It is included as Appendix B.

New Jersey officially adopted its initial State Hazard Mitigation Plan in 2005. The State completed the current 2008 State Plan update to meet the requirements of Interim Final Rule Section 201.4(d), which mandates that States update their mitigation Plans every three years "to reflect changes in development, progress in Statewide mitigation efforts, and changes in priorities."

Hazard mitigation ensures that fewer New Jerseyans and fewer communities become victims of natural and technological disasters. It is sustained action taken to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk and impact to people and property from natural hazards. It results in safer communities that resist becoming victims when disaster strikes. Mitigation measures reduce risk for individuals, small and large businesses, and critical service locations such as hospitals, public safety facilities and utility stations.

The State Hazard Mitigation Plan is the demonstration of New Jersey's commitment to reduce risks from natural hazards and serves as a guide for both State and local decision makers as they commit resources to reducing the effects of natural hazards on lives and property. New Jersey's State Hazard Mitigation Plan (SHMP) is prepared in compliance with Federal requirements for Standard State Mitigation Plans in the **Stafford Act**, as amended by the **Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000** (42 U.S.C. 5165). It is designed to outline a strategy to reduce risks from natural hazards in New Jersey, and to aid State and local emergency management officials in developing hazard reduction programs. This Plan also establishes the framework for coordination between the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the State Hazard Mitigation Team (SHMT) for hazard mitigation programs.

44 CFR Part 201, Hazard Mitigation Planning, establishes criteria for State and local hazard mitigation planning authorized by Section 322 of the Stafford Act, as amended by Section 104 of the Disaster Mitigation Act. After November 1, 2004, local governments applying for Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) funds through the States must have an approved local mitigation plan prior to the approval of local mitigation project grants. States are also required to have an approved Standard State mitigation plan in order to receive PDM funds for State or local mitigation projects after November 1, 2004. Therefore, the development of State and local multi-hazard mitigation plans is key to maintaining eligibility for future PDM funding for:

- Property acquisition or relocation of hazard prone property for conversion to open space in perpetuity;
- Structural and non-structural retrofitting (including designs and feasibility studies when included as part of the construction project) for wildfire, seismic, wind or flood hazards (e.g., elevation, storm shutters, hurricane clips);



- Minor structural hazard control or protection projects that may include vegetation management, and stormwater management (e.g., culverts, floodgates, retention basins); and,
- Localized flood control projects, such as certain ring levees and floodwall systems, that are designed specifically to protect critical facilities and that do not constitute a section of a larger flood control system.

Further, approved State and local mitigation plans are now required for any applicant to be eligible to obtain funding assistance for any categories of "permanent work" under the FEMA Public Assistance Program:

- **Category C:** Roads and Bridges. Repair of roads, bridges and associated features such as shoulders, ditches, culverts, lighting and signs.
- **Category D:** Water Control Facilities. Repair of irrigation systems, drainage channels and pumping facilities. Repairs of levees, dams and flood control channels within the limitations of the Public Assistance Program.
- **Category E:** Buildings and Equipment. Repair or replacement of buildings, including their content and systems; heavy equipment and vehicles.
- **Category F:** Utilities. Repair of water treatment and delivery systems; power generation facilities and distribution lines; and sewage collection and treatment facilities.
- **Category G:** Parks; Recreational Facilities and Other Items. Repair and restoration of parks, playgrounds, pools, cemeteries and beaches, as well as any work or facility that cannot be characterized by Categories A-F

Note regarding the 2008 Plan Update: By consensus between NJOEM and FEMA Region II, the present plan update document constitutes a comprehensive re-write of the original 2005 document. As required by the FEMA IFR related to State Hazard Mitigation Plan updates, NJOEM has to the extent possible indicated where changes have been made, and the process that was used in its review and update. In many cases changes were so extensive that individual changes are not notated as they are in some other areas. The planning team has made every effort to highlight where changes have been made, and to clarify the updates. Throughout the document NJOEM has used green highlighting to indicate where updates have been made.

2.2 Organization of the Plan

The New Jersey Hazard Mitigation Plan is organized to parallel the structure provided in the Interim Final Rule (IFR). The Plan has nine sections.

1. Table of Contents
2. Executive Summary
3. Planning Process
4. Risk Assessment
5. Mitigation Strategy
6. Coordination of Local Planning
7. Plan Maintenance
8. Approval and Adoption

There are references to the IFR throughout the Plan. Where possible these provide specific section and subsection notations for the convenience of reviewers.



2.3 Highlights of the Plan

The purpose of the State Hazard Mitigation Plan is to rationalize the process of identifying and implementing appropriate hazard mitigation actions. The document includes

- Characterization of natural hazards Statewide, including occurrences, impacts and probability
- Vulnerability assessment and loss estimation
- Identification of jurisdictions most at risk
- Goals, objectives, strategies and actions that will guide the State's mitigation activities
- A comprehensive evaluation of progress towards achieving the original 2004 goals, strategies and actions
- A process for implementing and monitoring the Plan

The following paragraphs briefly describe each section of the updated Plan.

2.3.1 The Planning Process

Section 3 of the 2008 Plan includes a detailed description of the process and the individuals and agencies who were involved. The process used to develop the initial Plan was closely modeled on the FEMA "How-To" series for hazard mitigation Planning.

Note on 2008 Update: NJOEM developed a strategy for updating each section of the Plan under a very constricted schedule. NJOEM led the update of all sections of the Plan, with support from the Mitigation Core Team (MCT), the State Hazard Mitigation Team (SHMT) and consultants Jeffrey S. Ward and Associates, and Vissering Pardue and Associates. Subject matter experts were solicited for specific information regarding hazards, risks, capabilities and strategies. MCT and SHMT members reviewed the mitigation strategies identified in the original Plan, and provided feedback on progress towards achieving the goals and completing the actions. A key part of the update process was to reorganize and update the strategies portion of the HMP (Section 5). SHMT members provided interim reviews of draft sections as appropriate throughout the update process. After all sections were completed and comments incorporated, the Plan was submitted to FEMA and the SHMT for review.

2.3.2 Vulnerability Assessment and Loss Estimation

Section 4 includes a detailed description of the process that was used to identify, characterize and assess the natural hazards that can affect New Jersey. **Section 4.4** provides hazard profiles for the 10 natural hazards that are most likely to affect that State. These comprise:

- Floods
- Hurricanes and tropical storms
- Nor'easters
- Winter storms
- High winds and tornadoes
- Earthquakes
- Drought
- Wildfires
- Geological hazards
- Hail
- Extreme temperatures



Section 4.5 characterizes the State's vulnerabilities to natural hazards, and **Section 4.6** follows with a summary of the jurisdictions that are at risk from the effects of natural hazards. Because this Plan is partly intended as a resource for local and regional planners, NJOEM wished to avoid any ranking or scoring of hazards or jurisdictions, because this might suggest that planners should ignore some of the lower-ranking hazards or vulnerable areas. The State HMP provides a general framework to guide State-level mitigation strategies. In carrying out their own planning processes, jurisdictions should perform more detailed and locally-focused hazard profiles and risk assessments to develop appropriate strategies and actions.

New Jersey is comprised of 21 Counties, all of which have some risk of most of the natural hazards on the list above. It is important for local jurisdictions to understand that while State-level risk may appear to be concentrated in Counties where there are high populations and large infrastructure, there are areas of high risk in every County, and in many jurisdictions within the Counties. It should also be noted that a wide range of mitigation actions and strategies exist for most hazards, and that the costs and effectiveness of these measures also varies significantly. The implication of this is that both the State and local jurisdictions must be aware that the ultimate effectiveness of mitigation is based both on risk and the action that is used to reduce it.

2.3.3 Mitigation Strategy

Section 5 describes the State's mitigation strategy, goals, actions and capabilities. The Mitigation Core Team (MCT) and State Hazard Mitigation Team (SHMT) modified the 2005 version of the plan to remove two goals, and add one related to developing and maintaining an understanding of risks. The four goals for the Plan update are:

1. Protect life
2. Protect property
3. Increase public preparedness
4. Develop and maintain an understanding of risks

For the 2008 update, the MCT and SHMT reviewed the State's hazard mitigation goals and determined that two of them (Promote a sustainable economy, and Protect the environment) are outside the purpose of a mitigation plan, and should be deleted. The MCT added a goal to the list (Develop and maintain an understanding of risks). The Mitigation Core Team also completed a STAPLEE assessment for all of the updated strategies and actions.

As required by FEMA, the MCT and SHMT completed a comprehensive evaluation of the mitigation strategies and actions from the original plan, and reported on the status of each of them in a new, secondary table in the section.

2.3.4 Coordinating Local Planning

Section 6 describes how the State provides assistance and guidance to local jurisdictions for developing their hazard mitigation Plans, how information from the State and local Plans is linked and integrated, and how the State prioritizes funding opportunities for local jurisdictions. As noted in various places throughout the document, only a few local or regional mitigation plans had been approved at the time the 2008 State HMP update was completed. It is NJOEM's intent to use the State Plan as a way to provide data to local and regional governments to support their mitigation planning processes, and to provide guidance on best practices.



2.3.5 Plan Maintenance

Section 7 describes how the Plan will be periodically evaluated and updated. The Interim Final Rule requires that the State Hazard Mitigation Plan be updated and re-submitted to FEMA for review and re-approval every three years. In addition to meeting this requirement, the State, under the direction of NJOEM, will review the Plan annually, based on criteria that are described in **Section 7.2**. The criteria are:

- New Presidential Disaster or Emergency Declarations
- Progress in completing tasks listed in the Mitigation Strategies section of the Plan
- Changes in development
- Progress in Statewide mitigation activities, including meeting State Mitigation Goals
- Changes in priorities
- Changes in available funding sources and programs
- Advances in GIS, data acquisition and other technologies
- Increases in available information
- Changes in State or Federal laws, including amendments to FEMA rules and guidance; and
- Other factors affecting the Plan, as described in the section.

Other parts of **Section 7** describe how the State will monitor mitigation activities and measure progress toward achieving the goals that are described in **Section 6**.

2.3.6 Approval and Adoption

Section 8 of the Plan describes the Plan approval and adoption processes and provides assurances as required by the IFR. It also includes documents related to Plan adoption, including an approval letter from the Director of the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management (NJOEM), and a letter of endorsement and support from the Governor.

The New Jersey State Hazard Mitigation Plan was adopted by the Governor through the authority delegated to NJOEM. As noted elsewhere in the Plan (see Section 3), each State Hazard Mitigation Team (SHMT) member was provided a full draft copy of the Plan for review, comment and endorsement prior to adoption by the Governor. NJOEM retains the comments and changes. The Plan was approved by the Director of the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management through authority delegated by the Governor.

Upon completion, this Plan Update will be approved and adopted through the same mechanism used for the 2005 Plan.