

# York County, Maine Hazard Mitigation Plan Executive Summary



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**Prepared by:**

**York County Emergency  
Management Agency**

**and**

**Southern Maine Regional  
Planning Commission**



## **BACKGROUND**

The Federal Disaster Mitigation Act, passed in 2000, mandates that all localities that wish to continue receiving FEMA funding after hazard events must prepare a local hazard mitigation plan. Under this law any community without such a plan will no longer receive post-disaster relief funding after November 2004. The York County Emergency Management Agency decided that the best way to meet the requirements of the law was to complete a countywide Hazard Mitigation Plan. There were two reasons for making this decision: the county possesses greater hazard mitigation resources than do many of its municipalities and that the hazards faced by its municipalities are similar.

The lead agency for this plan is the York County Emergency Management Agency (YCEMA). YCEMA serves as the central coordinating agency for the 29 local EMAs in York County, and contributed considerable informational and professional resources to this plan. To write this plan, YCEMA contracted the Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission (SMRPC), the council of governments that serves all of York County. SMRPC staff took responsibility for assembling, writing, and presenting the plan, under the guidance of YCEMA.

In accordance with the state home rule laws, each of the 29 municipalities in the county has jurisdiction over all land use and planning regulations. Thus, this plan is written with local interests in mind, and it is being presented to the legislative bodies of all 29 cities and towns for adoption.

The York County Hazard Mitigation Plan contains five sections:

1. Prerequisites for FEMA Review
2. Planning Process
3. Risk Assessment
4. Mitigation Strategy
5. Plan Maintenance Procedures

To complete the Hazard Mitigation Plan, YCEMA contracted the Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission (SMRPC). SMRPC began work on the plan in January 2003 and completed a draft of the plan at the end of December 2003 for review by the FEMA Region I office in Boston and by each of the 29 municipalities in York County. YCEMA and SMRPC will take comments from this plan draft and will complete a final version of the plan, including individual annexes for each of the 29 municipalities, by March 1, 2004. The plan will then be sent to the York County Commission and to each municipal legislative body for adoption. A final public hearing will be held in 2004 to present the plan to the public and local press outlets.

## HAZARDS EXAMINED IN THIS PLAN

The Maine Emergency Management Agency lists 20 different types of hazards, both natural and man-made, faced by the state. After considering the entire range of potential hazard types, seven were identified as falling within the scope of the York County Hazard Mitigation Plan:

1. Earthquake
2. Flood
3. Hurricane and tropical storm
4. Severe winter storm
5. Tornado
6. Urban fire
7. Wildfire/forest fire

The following table summarizes the county's risk exposure for each of these seven hazard types.

### Expected Future Hazard Risks in York County

Type of Hazard	Expected Frequency		Likely Time of Year	Extent of Property Damage	Extent of Economic Damage	Loss of Life Potential
	Minor Events	Major Events				
<b>Earthquake</b>	10 years	200 years	Any	Minor damage to homes and buildings, more extensive damage to windows and household items	Destruction of businesses, extended loss of electrical power	Very High
<b>Flood</b>	Many times per year	10 years	April-December	Destruction and damage of homes, major property losses, washed out roads and bridges, potential dam failure, sewer system damage	Destruction of businesses, inability to access, losses of inventory	Moderate
<b>Hurricane/Tropical Storm</b>	3-4 years	12 years	July-October	Destruction and damage of homes, major property losses, extensive damage to roads and utility lines	Destruction of businesses, inability to access, destruction of trees and crops	High
<b>Severe Winter Storm</b>	Many times per year	10 years	November-April (highest risk in Jan-Feb)	Destruction and damage of homes, extensive utility line damage	Extended loss of electrical power, destruction of trees	High
<b>Tornado</b>	6 years	25 years	May-October (highest risk in August)	Isolated destruction of homes and utility lines	Isolated destruction of businesses and short-term losses of power	Moderate
<b>Urban Fire</b>	Many times per year	Unknown (insufficient data)	Any, but lower risk in summer	Destruction and damage of homes, major property losses, damage to utility lines	Destruction of businesses and short-term losses of power	Moderate
<b>Wildfire/Forest Fire</b>	Many times per year	50 years	July-September	Extensive destruction of buildings, major property losses, loss of public facilities	Destruction of businesses and inventories, inability to access, widespread destruction of trees, crops and livestock	Very High

# HAZARD RISKS BY TOWN

The cities and towns in York County range greatly in terms of population, amount of development, distance from the coastline and character. As such, they also differ in terms of the threat of damage from each of the seven hazard types examined in this countywide plan. For some of the hazards, the risk is the same for each town, but for others it can be very different.

The matrix below shows the expected future hazard risk level for each hazard type and each of the 29 cities and towns in York County.

**Hazard Risk by Town and Hazard Type**

No.	Town	Hazards						
		Earthquake	Flood	Hurricane/ Trop. Storm	Severe Wint. Storm	Tornado	Urban Fire	Wildfire
1.	Acton	Moderate	Low	Very Low	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
2.	Alfred	Moderate	Very Low	Low	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
3.	Arundel	Moderate	Very Low	Low	High	Moderate	Moderate	High
4.	Berwick	Moderate	Very Low	Low	High	Moderate	Low	High
5.	Biddeford	Moderate	Very Low	Moderate	High	Moderate	High	Moderate
6.	Buxton	Moderate	High	Low	High	Moderate	Low	Very High
7.	Cornish	Moderate	Very Low	Very Low	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
8.	Dayton	Moderate	Very Low	Low	High	Moderate	Moderate	High
9.	Eliot	Moderate	Very Low	Low	High	Moderate	Low	Moderate
10.	Hollis	Moderate	Very Low	Low	High	Moderate	Moderate	High
11.	Kennebunk	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	High	Moderate	High	Moderate
12.	Kennebunkport	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
13.	Kittery	Moderate	Low	Moderate	High	Moderate	High	Moderate
14.	Lebanon	Moderate	Low	Very Low	High	Moderate	Low	High
15.	Limerick	Moderate	Very Low	Very Low	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
16.	Limington	Moderate	Low	Very Low	High	Moderate	Moderate	High
17.	Lyman	Moderate	Very Low	Low	High	Moderate	Moderate	Very High
18.	Newfield	Moderate	Very Low	Very Low	High	Moderate	Moderate	Very High
19.	North Berwick	Moderate	Very Low	Low	High	Moderate	Moderate	High
20.	Ogunquit	Moderate	Very Low	High	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
21.	Old Orchard Beach	Moderate	High	High	High	Moderate	High	Very High
22.	Parsonsfield	Moderate	Moderate	Very Low	High	Moderate	Moderate	Very High
23.	Saco	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	High	Moderate	High	Very High
24.	Sanford	Moderate	Low	Low	High	Moderate	High	High
25.	Shapleigh	Moderate	Very Low	Very Low	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
26.	South Berwick	Moderate	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low	Moderate
27.	Waterboro	Moderate	Low	Low	High	Moderate	Low	High
28.	Wells	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	High	Moderate	High	Moderate
29.	York	Moderate	High	Moderate	High	Moderate	High	High

## MITIGATION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

In its manual entitled “Developing the Mitigation Plan,” FEMA defines Goals, Objectives and Actions as follows:

- **GOALS** are general guidelines that explain what you want to achieve. They are usually broad policy-type statements, long-term, and represent global visions.
- **OBJECTIVES** define strategies or implementation steps to attain the identified goals. Unlike goals, objectives are specific and measurable.
- **ACTIONS** are specific initiatives or programs that help you achieve your goals or objectives.

Following the completion of the inventory of hazards and assessment of risks from each, the planning team developed a series of Goals and Objectives to shape the mitigation plan. These Goals and Objectives in turn shape the individual Mitigation Actions proposed by this plan. The Actions are presented in the next section.

Through conducting the risk assessment for York County, five key goals of hazard mitigation were identified. These goals respond to the types of losses typically caused by hazards and the usual obstacles to enacting successful hazard mitigation strategies. Although the exact objectives for each hazard category will differ, the overarching goals will remain the same.

The five goals, the reasons for their selection, and the objectives that fall under each goal are listed below.

### **Goal #1: Minimize Damage, Injury and Loss of Life**

York County is at a relatively high risk for extensive damage from disasters due to its combination of extreme weather, substantial development in coastal and floodplain areas, heavy forest cover and old infrastructure. Large-scale disasters in the past have caused widespread property damage, injury and loss of life in the county, and it is therefore a goal of this hazard mitigation plan to reduce these impacts from future events.

#### **Objectives:**

1. Discourage future residential and commercial development in hazard-prone areas
2. Improve emergency evacuation routes and plans
3. Enact and enforce regulations that reduce the threat of hazard damage
4. Improve functionality of emergency shelter system
5. Improve post-disaster reporting systems

### **Goal #2: Protect Economic Vitality of Businesses**

About 65,000 people work in York County and many of its businesses are vulnerable to substantial damage from hazards. The county’s economic health could be greatly damaged by a major disaster. Thus, ensuring that businesses suffer as little economic loss as possible is the second goal of the plan.

**Objectives:**

1. Ensure that infrastructure is fully restored as quickly as possible after disasters occur
2. Encourage owners of commercial properties and businesses to conduct mitigation measures
3. Ensure that all workers and customers can access businesses
4. Prevent looting by maintaining security during and after hazard events

**Goal #3: Ensure Continuity of County and Local Government Operations**

The governments of York County and its 29 towns provide the nearly 187,000 citizens (as well as thousands of seasonal visitors/residents) public safety, human services, and in many communities, water supplies. Since residents and visitors need these basic governmental services to ensure their health and well-being, it is imperative to protect these services from the effects of disasters.

**Objectives:**

1. Enact strict mitigation standards for key public facilities
2. Develop formal arrangements for sharing of facilities and equipment in case of disasters
3. Encourage municipalities to develop, adopt and implement local hazard mitigation plans

**Goal #4: Make Efficient Use of Public Funds for Hazard Mitigation**

The State of Maine and the majority of municipal governments in the state are presently facing budget difficulties, thus raising the importance of efficiency in public spending. With this in mind, it is necessary that local and county funds used for hazard mitigation be invested wisely and efficiently.

**Objectives:**

1. Protect critical public facilities and services from hazard damage
2. Prioritize hazard mitigation activities by benefit-cost ratios
3. Use public funds to limit development of buildings and facilities in hazard prone locations
4. Preserve invaluable cultural and historic resources in hazard prone locations

**Goal #5: Raise Public Awareness of and Support for Hazard Mitigation**

Many of the mitigation measures against damage from hazards need to be done by individual residents and property owners, and will not come as a result of major public investments. Also, the larger public investments that will be needed cannot be undertaken without the support of the public. Raising public awareness will thus be needed for all types of mitigation, large or small.

**Objectives:**

1. Encourage property owners to undertake voluntary mitigation measures
2. Improve visibility and knowledge of evacuation routes and emergency shelters
3. Educate children about hazard mitigation

## MITIGATION ACTIONS BY GOAL AND OBJECTIVE

In this section the above goals and objectives are used to define specific mitigation actions that respond to each of the seven hazard types considered in the mitigation plan. For each Goal and Objective of the mitigation plan, specific recommended actions are put forth in the matrix below. The matrix also displays the priority level and time frame of each action.

Objectives	Actions	Priority	Time
No.	Description	Level	Frame
<b>GOAL 1: MINIMIZE DAMAGE, INJURY AND LOSS OF LIFE</b>			
<b>1.1. Discourage future residential and commercial development in hazard-prone areas</b>	1.1.1. Conduct detailed local inventories of hazard-prone areas	Low	1-2 yrs
	1.1.2. Limit public infrastructure expansions in hazard areas	Medium	Immediate
	1.1.3. Educate property owners and developers about risks of developing structures in hazard-prone areas	Medium	Immediate
<b>1.2. Improve evacuation routes and plans</b>	1.2.1. Develop local evacuation routes and plans	Medium	1-2 yrs
	1.2.2. Develop regional evacuation plan	Medium	2-3 yrs
<b>1.3. Enact and enforce regulations that reduce the threat of hazard damage</b>	1.3.1. Reduce allowable densities in hazard-prone areas	Medium	2-3 yrs
	1.3.2. Enact tougher dimensional standards in hazard-prone areas	Medium	1-2 yrs
	1.3.3. Strengthen building codes	High	1-2 yrs
	1.3.4. Ensure strong local enforcement of land use and building regulation	High	Immediate
<b>1.4. Improve functionality of emergency shelter system</b>	1.4.1. Equip more facilities for emergency shelter use	Low	2-3 yrs
	1.4.2. Require backup power generators in emergency shelters	Low	1-2 yrs
	1.4.3. Enact mitigation measures on shelter structures	Low	2-3 yrs
<b>1.5. Improve post-disaster reporting systems</b>	1.5.1. Create countywide post-disaster reporting system	Medium	1-2 yrs
	1.5.2. Establish volunteer corps of citizen reporters	Medium	1-2 yrs
<b>GOAL 2: PROTECT ECONOMIC VITALITY OF BUSINESSES</b>			
<b>2.1. Ensure that infrastructure is fully restores as quickly as possible after disasters occur</b>	2.1.1. Create and maintain database of critical infrastructure	Medium	1-2 yrs
	2.1.2. Enact plans for restoring functionality of priority infrastructure	Low	2-3 yrs
	2.1.3. Offer support services to businesses affected by hazards	Medium	Immediate
<b>2.2. Encourage owners of comm. properties and businesses to enact mitigation measures</b>	2.2.1. Document long-term economic benefits of mitigation	High	<1 yr
	2.2.2. Create and distribute how-to guide for hazard mitigation	Medium	1-2 yrs
	2.2.3. Offer financial incentives for mitigation	High	1-2 yrs
<b>2.3. Ensure that all workers and customers can access businesses</b>	2.3.1. Identify high priority commuter routes for protection	High	<1 yr
	2.3.2. Ensure that key transportation routes remain open	Medium	1-2 yrs
	2.3.3. Maintain a business information hotline for post-disaster periods	Medium	Immediate
	2.3.4. Encourage companies to promote telecommuting	High	ongoing
<b>2.4. Maintain security during and after hazard events</b>	2.4.1. Develop property security plans for all hazard types	Medium	1-2 yrs
	2.4.2. Coordinate with county and state law enforcement officials	Medium	ongoing

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Objectives		Actions		Priority Level	Time Frame
No.	Description	No.	Description		
<b>GOAL 3: ENSURE CONTINUITY OF COUNTY AND LOCAL GOV'T OPERATIONS</b>					
3.1. Enact strict mitigation standards for key public facils.	3.1.1. Identify key public facilities	High	Immediate		
	3.1.2. Develop minimum standards for public buildings	High	<1 yr		
	3.1.3. Seek financial assistance for public facility mitigation	Medium	1-2 yrs		
3.2. Develop formal arrangements for sharing of facilities and equipment in case of disasters	3.2.1. Create electronic database of countywide inventory of facilities and equipment	Medium	<1 yr		
	3.2.2. Identify inventory items most at risk for each hazard type	High	1-2 yrs		
	3.2.3. Institute procedures for sharing facilities and equipment	Medium	1-2 yrs		
3.3. Encourage municipalities to develop, adopt and implement local hazard plans	3.3.1. Provide each municipality with annexes and appendix data from countywide plan	High	Immediate		
	3.3.2. Assist localities with collection of inventory data	Medium	1-2 yrs		
	3.3.3. Offer matching grant program for developing and implementing local hazard mitigation plans	Low	2-3 yrs		
<b>GOAL 4: MAKE EFFICIENT USE OF PUBLIC FUNDS FOR MITIGATION</b>					
4.1. Protect critical public facilities and services from hazard damage	4.1.1. Use critical facilities inventory to identify potential mitigation projects for each hazard type	High	1-2 yrs		
	4.1.2. Identify potential funding sources for mitigation projects	Medium	1-2 yrs		
	4.1.3. Establish a central procurement resource for conducting mitigation projects in York Co.	Medium	1-2 yrs		
4.2. Prioritize hazard mitigation activities by benefit-cost ratios	4.2.1. Estimate public costs of mitigation projects	Medium	1-2 yrs		
	4.2.2. Estimate potential damage without mitigation measures	Medium	1-2 yrs		
	4.2.3. Compare ratio of public costs to potential damage avoided for potential mitigation projects	Medium	1-2 yrs		
4.3. Use public funds to limit development of buildings and facilities in hazard-prone locations	4.3.1. Identify properties that have suffered repetitive hazard damage	Medium	1-2 yrs		
	4.3.2. Acquire high-risk properties in hazard areas	Low	2-3 yrs		
	4.3.3. Purchase development rights to prevent further development in hazard areas	Low	2-3 yrs		
	4.3.4. Offer financial incentives to build on sites that are clear of vegetation	Medium	1-2 yrs		
4.4. Preserve invaluable cultural and historic resources in hazard-prone areas	4.4.1. Identify cultural and historic resources in hazard areas	Medium	1-2 yrs		
	4.4.2. Enact mitigation projects on properties of cultural and historic importance	Low	2-3 yrs		
<b>GOAL 5: RAISE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF AND SUPPORT FOR MITIGATION</b>					
5.1. Encourage property owners to undertake voluntary mitigation measures	5.1.1. Create and distribute how-to guide for hazard mitigation (same as 2.2.2.)	Medium			
	5.1.2. Offer financial incentives for mitigation (same as 2.2.3.)	High			
5.2. Improve visibility and knowledge of evacuation routes & emergency shelters	5.2.1. Create and distribute regional and local maps of routes and shelters	Medium	1-2 yrs		
	5.2.2. Develop distinctive and uniform signage for evacuation routes	Medium	2-3 yrs		
	5.2.3. Notify residents about locations of nearby emergency shelters and preferred evacuation routes	Medium	1-2 yrs		
5.3. Educate children about hazard mitigation	5.3.1. Develop hazard mitigation educational materials aimed at children	Medium	1-2 yrs		
	5.3.2. Incorporate materials into the Maine Learning Results	Medium	2-3 yrs		

# RESPONSIBILITIES FOR MITIGATION ACTIONS

Implementing the Actions of this Mitigation Plan will require cooperation from local, county and state governments, as well as the private sector. As a regional plan, much of the responsibility for coordinating these various partners will fall to either the York County Emergency Management Agency (YCEMA) or the Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission (SMRPC). Other Actions will require individual municipalities to take charge, though.

The list below assigns responsibility for each of the 54 Actions proposed by the plan to three different types of entities: YCEMA or SMRPC, Local EMAs, or Local Officials.

No	Action	Responsible Parties		
		YCEMA/ SMRPC	Local EMAs	Local Officials
1.1.1.	Conduct detailed local inventories of hazard-prone areas	✓	✓	
1.1.2.	Limit public infrastructure expansions in hazard areas			✓
1.1.3.	Educate property owners about risks in hazard areas		✓	✓
1.2.1.	Develop local evacuation routes and plans	✓	✓	
1.2.2.	Develop regional evacuation plan	✓		
1.3.1.	Reduce allowable densities in hazard-prone areas			✓
1.3.2.	Enact tougher dimensional standards in hazard areas			✓
1.3.3.	Strengthen building codes			✓
1.3.4.	Ensure strong enforcement of land use and building regs			✓
1.4.1.	Equip more facilities for emergency shelter use	✓	✓	
1.4.2.	Require backup power generators in emergency shelters			✓
1.4.3.	Enact mitigation measures on shelter structures			✓
1.5.1.	Create countywide post-disaster reporting system	✓	✓	
1.5.2.	Establish volunteer corps of citizen reporters	✓	✓	
2.1.1.	Create and maintain database of critical infrastructure	✓	✓	
2.1.2.	Enact plans for restoring functionality of infrastructure		✓	
2.1.3.	Offer support services to businesses affected by hazards	✓		
2.2.1.	Document long-term economic benefits of mitigation	✓		
2.2.2.	Create/distribute how-to guide for mitigation (see 5.1.1.)	✓		
2.2.3.	Offer financial incentives for mitigation (see 5.1.2.)	✓		✓
2.3.1.	Identify high priority commuter routes for protection	✓		
2.3.2.	Ensure that key transportation routes remain open	✓		
2.3.3.	Maintain a business info hotline for post-disaster periods	✓		
2.3.4.	Encourage companies to promote telecommuting	✓		
2.4.1.	Develop property security plans for all hazard types	✓		
2.4.2.	Coordinate with county and state law enforcement officials	✓		
3.1.1.	Identify key public facilities		✓	
3.1.2.	Develop minimum standards for public buildings	✓		✓
3.1.3.	Seek financial assistance for public facility mitigation	✓		✓
3.2.1.	Create electronic database of facility/equipment inventory	✓		
3.2.2.	Identify inventory items most at risk for each hazard type	✓	✓	
3.2.3.	Institute procedures for sharing facilities and equipment	✓		
3.3.1.	Provide each municipality with annexes and appendices	✓		
3.3.2.	Assist localities with collection of inventory data	✓		
3.3.3.	Offer grant program for local hazard mitigation plans	✓		

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No	Action	Responsible Parties		
		YCEMA/ SMRPC	Local EMAs	Local Officials
4.1.1.	Identify potential mitigation projects for each hazard type		✓	✓
4.1.2.	Identify potential funding sources for mitigation projects	✓		
4.1.3.	Establish a central procurement resource for mitigation	✓		
4.2.1.	Estimate public costs of mitigation projects		✓	
4.2.2.	Estimate potential damage without mitigation measures	✓	✓	
4.2.3.	Compare benefit-cost ratio for potential mitigation projects		✓	
4.3.1.	Identify properties that have suffered repetitive damage	✓	✓	
4.3.2.	Acquire high-risk properties in hazard areas			✓
4.3.3.	Purchase development rights in hazard areas			✓
4.3.4.	Offer financial incentives to build on clear sites	✓		✓
4.4.1.	Identify cultural and historic resources in hazard areas		✓	
4.4.2.	Enact mitigation cultural/historic properties	✓		✓
5.1.1.	Create/distribute how-to guide for mitigation (see 2.2.2.)	✓		
5.1.2.	Offer financial incentives for mitigation (see 2.2.3.)	✓		✓
5.2.1.	Create regional and local maps of routes and shelters	✓		
5.2.2.	Develop distinctive/uniform signage for evacuation routes	✓		
5.2.3.	Notify residents about shelters and evacuation routes	✓		✓
5.3.1.	Develop mitigation educational materials aimed at children	✓		
5.3.2.	Incorporate materials into the Maine Learning Results	✓		

## MAINTAINING AND UPDATING THE PLAN

The Disaster Mitigation Act stipulates that not only must localities develop Hazard Mitigation Plans; they must also take steps to ensure that these plans get implemented and updated as needed. It is therefore necessary to include procedures for maintaining and updating the plan.

Each year following the completion of this plan, the York County EMA will distribute a survey form to each of the 29 local EMA directors in the county. This form will ask each director to comment on how his or her town has or has not addressed the plan's objectives in that year. The County EMA will take the individual municipality results and compile an annual progress report that will be distributed to local officials and the media. The County EMA also intends to work with the Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission in periods following disasters to better understand how the region needs to respond to future disasters in order to ensure that roads, critical facilities and businesses can remain functional.

The York County EMA intends to update this plan five years from its adoption. Since the plan will be adopted in 2004, the target date for the updated plan is 2009, with work on it to begin in 2008. The update process should focus on evaluating the successes and failures of this plan. This would be done in two ways. First, the information gathered annually from each town would provide input on how each municipality has performed in terms of implementation. Secondly, new information collected between 2004 and 2008 on new or changing hazard conditions would provide the base for altering elements of the plan.

## CONTACTS AND MORE INFORMATION

A full copy of the plan and all appendices has been delivered to each municipal office in York County. If you would like to see a copy of the plan, please contact your Town or City Hall. Also, the plan is available for downloading from the Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission's project website at [www.smrpc.org/hazmit.htm](http://www.smrpc.org/hazmit.htm).

If you would like to speak with those responsible for creating this plan, the contacts are:

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