

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Port-of-Spain (POS), the Capital City of Trinidad and Tobago is located in the county of St. George. It has a residential population of 49,031 and a population density of 4,086. Moreover, it has an average transient population on any given day of 350,000 persons.

The Port of Spain Corporation (POSC) is vulnerable to a number of natural, man-made and technological hazards. The list of natural hazards includes, but not limited to, floods, earthquakes, hurricanes and landslides. Chiefly and most frequent among the natural hazards is flooding. When this event occurs, the result is excessive street flooding that inhibits the movement of individuals in and out of the City for approximately two-three hours, until flood waters subside. The intensity of the event is magnified by concurrent high tide.

The purpose of the City of Port-of-Spain Mass Egress Plan is to address the safe and strategic movement of the mass number of people from places of danger in POS to areas deemed safe. This plan therefore endeavours to facilitate planned and unplanned egress of persons when severe flooding occurs in the City.

Levels of Egress

Fundamentally, the City of Port-of-Spain Mass Egress Plan establishes a three-tiered egress process:

- **Level 1**

Egress is done using the regular operating mode of the resources of local government and non-government authorities.

- **Level 2**

Egress of the City overwhelms the capacity of the regular operating mode of the resources of local entities. At this level, the Disaster Management Unit (DMU) of the POSC will take control of the egress process through its Emergency Operations Centre (EOC).

- **Level 3**

The mass egress of persons out of POS has overwhelmed the capacity of the resources of the corporations to adequately transport persons out of the city. As such, the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management (ODPM) will take control of the egress process and will coordinate national resources to assist in the process through its National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC).

Egress Instructions

Plan implementation embraces the shelter-in-place policy which ensures that persons who are indoors will remain indoors; preferably on high ground. They will monitor radio and television broadcasts, until it is deemed safe for them to leave the building. The Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Downtown Owners and Merchants Association (DOMA) will make the necessary provisions for shelter-in-place operations that exceed the stipulated school and work hours respectively. When the ALL CLEAR instruction is given, persons sheltering-in-place will be given the option to leave the city, by zone, if they so desire.

The transient population requiring public transport to leave the City will be encouraged to make their way to one of the loading bays or transport hubs identified. Persons who are unable to get to the hubs, will be encouraged to proceed toward pre-determined locations along the emergency routes where designated emergency vehicles will transport them to their required hub. Those persons leaving the city via private vehicles will follow the directions provided in the plan.

Where necessary, concessions have been made for persons requiring shelter to be accommodated either within the POS region or neighbouring Corporations. In cases of the relocation of flood affected victims, rehabilitation and reoccupation is permitted as soon as deemed possible.

All emergency routes identified in the plan are to be used by emergency vehicles **ONLY**.

Incident Command System

The egress process will be managed utilising the unified command structure known as the Incident Command System (ICS). The emergency responders of the POSC would be required to follow this system in order to effectively manage and coordinate the egress of the city. Effective coordination among all responders at the scene of a response is a key factor in ensuring successful egress of all affected persons.

Public Notification and Information

The Incident Commander (IC) will coordinate the Information Task Group (ITG) to keep the media and the public updated on the nature of the flooding emergency and egress procedures. As egress becomes probable, the ITG will disseminate information to the public regarding egress preparation and operations. Emergency alert systems will link the internal structure of the ICS to the public.

Conclusion

It is recommended that the strategies documented in this plan be implemented. Moreover, it is advised that annual or post-incident plan maintenance is conducted to ensure that the plan remains relevant and becomes a scripted way of life for city dwellers and commuters alike.