

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RELIEF PLAN
FOR HEALTH

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MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY

JAMAICA

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RELIEF PLAN

FOR HEALTH

Introduction

This plan has been prepared by the joint effort of the Technical Staff in the health section of the Ministry of Health and Social Security. It is a first effort and it will be revised and perfected as the years go by. It is still incomplete in that it lacks the Parish and Hospital Plans, certain reporting forms and the guidelines for Disaster Drill. It is hoped that these will be completed and added when the first revision falls due in January 1981.

The document will be the guide for disaster preparedness and relief operations in the Ministry of Health and Social Security.

C.O. Moody
Ag. Chief Medical Officer.

D.E. Miller
Permanent Secretary.

Kingston, Jamaica
10th April, 1980.

Relief, telephone numbers and addresses of all key persons within the Ministry. This to be constantly reviewed so that it is always currently correct.

8. To prepare and circulate to the members of both Committees names, addresses and telephone numbers of Medical Officers in charge, Administrators and Matrons of all hospitals and Medical Officers of Health.
9. To prepare information regarding the location, telephone number etc. of major health services and institutions in the country e.g. hospitals, health centres and health offices and place one copy in the Disaster File and one copy on the wall beside the Map of Jamaica on the third floor.
10. To prepare and issue necessary directives and circulars especially those concerned with hurricane preparedness, to the responsible health personnel throughout the country.
11. To ensure that the required supplies of drugs, medical sundries and kits are available for nationwide distribution
12. To ensure that methods of communication and emergency lighting systems are in place and in working order. Particular attention should be paid to radio-telephones, flashlights and storm lanterns.
13. To prepare a list of transport which could be made available for emergency use in the event of a disaster
14. To ensure that the Health Plan for Disaster Preparedness and Relief is in harmony with and forms a part of the National Plan for Disaster Preparedness and Relief.
15. To mount a public education programme for disaster preparedness.

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PART 1

PRE-DISASTER - HURRICANES

**CHAPTER 1 - Standing Disaster Preparedness
Committee for Health**

and issued, that necessary drugs, supplies and medical equipment, have been acquired and are ready for issue and that the mechanism is activated to implement all steps in the action plan as per timetable.

2. The Committee will meet again in April to ensure that all necessary preparations have been made for the onset of the hurricane season. During the hurricane season the Committee will meet monthly in July, August, September and October, to ensure that a state of alertness is maintained nation-wide.
3. The Committee will maintain constant contact with the Central Emergency Relief Organization and the Emergency Operations Centre.

FUNCTIONS OF THE DISASTER PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE FOR HEALTH

1. To maintain a state of readiness for disaster in the Health Sector.
2. To appoint members of the Health Action Committee for Disaster Relief
3. To ensure that the roles of members of the Health Action Committee for Disaster Relief are clearly defined and known by all officers concerned, especially new members.
4. To ensure that Parish Health and Hospital Disaster Committees have clear and well defined plans with which they are fully familiar.
5. To ascertain that all health personnel know and understand the Guidelines for Disaster Preparedness and Relief and that all are ready to fulfill their assigned roles at short notice.
6. To ensure that practice Disaster Preparedness and Relief drills are implemented on a regular basis.
7. To prepare and circulate to members of both the Disaster Preparedness Committee for Health and the Health Action Committee for Disaster

CHAPTER 1 - STANDING DISASTER PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE
FOR HEALTH

MEMBERSHIP:

Chairman	Permanent Secretary
Vice-Chairman	Chief Medical Officer
Members	Director of Pharmaceutical Services
	Director of Bureau of Health Education
	Director of Administration

TERMS OF REFERENCE:

1. To ensure that Guidelines for Health for Disaster Preparedness and Relief are prepared and updated at least annually. The guidelines should include the plan of action prepared for the headquarters of the Ministry of Health, a copy of the plan prepared by the Medical Officer of Health for each Parish and copies of plans prepared for hospitals.
2. To ensure that all health personnel know and understand the Guidelines for Health for Disaster Preparedness and Relief.
3. To ensure that the members of the Health Action Committee for Disaster Relief are familiar with their functions and prepared to become effective at short notice.

ACTION PLAN FOR THE DISASTER PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE FOR HEALTH

1. The Committee will meet in January each year to review and update the Guidelines for Health for Disaster Preparedness and Relief with particular reference to Hurricanes. At this meeting procedures will be established for ensuring that all health personnel are familiar with the revised Guidelines, that necessary circulars are prepared

and issued/.....

CHAPTER 2 - Health Action Committee for
Disaster Relief

CHAPTER 2 - HEALTH ACTION COMMITTEE FOR DISASTER RELIEF

FUNCTIONS:

1. This Committee will become active immediately a hurricane 'watch' or other possible disaster is reported.
2. All meetings will be held in the second floor conference room.
3. As soon as a hurricane 'watch' is declared, all members will converge on 10 Caledonia Avenue and remain alert for information from the Permanent Secretary concerning the time of the meeting.
4. If the 'watch' is declared outside of working hours the meeting will take place at 8:30 a.m. the following morning.
5. This Committee will be responsible for activating the emergency preparedness plans, ensuring that all necessary actions have been or will be taken throughout the country, directing the immediate plans for the emergency and directing the post-disaster operations.

MEMBERSHIP:

Chairman	Permanent Secretary
Vice Chairman	Chief Medical Officer
Members	Principal Medical Officer (Primary Care)
	Principal Medical Officer (Secondary-Tertiary Care)
	Epidemiologist
	Principal Nursing Officer
	Director of Finance
	Director of Administration
	Director, Bureau of Health Education
	Director of Environmental Control
	Director, Pharmaceutical Services

Director of the Nutrition Division

Principal Public Health Officer

Ministry's representative on Central
Emergency Relief Committee

Country Representative, Pan American Health
Organization

Representative of the Agency for Public
Information

ACTION PLAN FOR PRE-DISASTER PHASE

1. The Committee will meet punctually at the time determined by the Permanent Secretary.
2. The Permanent Secretary will appoint a person to record all decisions taken by the Committee.
3. The Permanent Secretary will inform the Committee of the latest information concerning the hurricane or other anticipated disaster.
4. The name, address and telephone number of each member of the Committee will be listed or checked on an existing list for correctness. Similar information for other key personnel will be added to the list.
5. The Permanent Secretary will review the disaster preparedness arrangements made by the Disaster Preparedness Committee for Health and check that everything is in order. He will give assignments as necessary.
6. The Committee will discuss the pre-disaster activities detailed in Chapter 3, 4 and 5 and take the necessary decisions to activate them.
7. The Committee will decide when and where the Command Centre for Health will be established and during what hours it will operate during the pre-disaster phase. The Permanent Secretary will nominate the officer to take charge.
8. The Committee will decide what health messages should be sent out over the Media.

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9. The Committee will decide at what time to meet after the disaster has occurred and name an alternative site in case 10 Claedonia Avenue is damaged or destroyed.
10. Before adjourning the Committee will set the time for the next meeting

ACTION PLAN FOR POST-DISASTER PHASE

11. Activate the Command Centre in accordance with the standing procedures and give the officer in charge full authority to direct the relief operations.
12. Maintain close contact with the National Emergency Operations Centre.
13. Arrange daily meetings at the time and place determined by the Permanent Secretary to receive reports, evaluate the situation and plan action to be taken.
14. Evaluate reports received to determine the area affected by the disaster.
15. Survey the area to determine the extent of the disaster.
16. Establish means of communication with senior health personnel in the disaster area.
17. Assess casualties and evaluate the ability of local health staff to deal with the situation. Arrange for the deployment of additional health personnel into the area, if necessary. Alert hospitals outside the area to receive casualties, if necessary.
18. Note the estimated number of homeless people and ensure that measures necessary for the protection of health are established in the reception centres.
19. Implement prepared plans for providing safe drinking water. (Annex 1)
20. Liaise with the National Emergency Operations Centre to give all possible assistance to the Red Cross for the emergency distribution of food to those who need it.

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21. Identify and mobilize transport which can be detailed for immediate emergency use if needed.
22. Publicise the telephone number of the Command Centre and ensure that all requests for assistance and all health relief measures are channelled through the officer in charge of the Command Centre.
23. Approve requests for the acceptance or rejection of offers of international assistance for health.
24. Ensure that effective disease surveillance is established in the disaster area.
25. Decide when the emergency situation is concluded and programme the phasing out of relief operations for health and return to normal procedures.

CHAPTER 3 - Role and Functions of Key Personnel/
Divisions in Ministry of Health
Headquarters.

CHAPTER 3 - ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF KEY PERSONS/
DIVISIONS IN MINISTRY OF HEALTH HEADQUARTERS

Permanent Secretary:

1. Is Chairman of the Standing Disaster Preparedness Committee for Health and of the Health Action Committee for Disaster Relief.
2. Ensures that before the hurricane season commences, all health sectors have reviewed their arrangements and that all necessary actions have been taken.
3. Ensures that the Guidelines for Disaster Preparedness for health are reviewed and updated annually.
4. Nominates the representative from the Ministry of Health to sit on the Central Emergency Relief Committee for the current year.
5. Calls a meeting of the Standing Disaster Preparedness Committee for Health in January each year and arranges follow-up action as necessary.
6. On declaration of a hurricane 'watch' or other possible disaster, calls a meeting of the Health Action Committee for Disaster Relief.
7. Decides when a Disaster for Health has occurred and activates all the necessary procedures for health relief services to be implemented.
8. Consults with the Chief Medical Officer to designate the person to take charge of the Command Centre and direct the Control Operations.
9. Keeps the Political Directorate informed concerning the emergency health situation and action being taken by the Ministry.
10. Nominates an officer to sit on the Committee of the Central Emergency Operations Centre for the current disaster. This person should be either the Chief Medical Officer or a Principal Medical Officer.
Nominates persons to sit on other national emergency Committees as necessary.
11. Liaises with the Chief Medical Officer to decide what requests for assistance shall be sent to international agencies.

12. Authorises all releases to be made to the Media.

Chief Medical Officer:

1. Is Vice-Chairman of the Disaster Preparedness Committee for Health and of the Health Action Committee for Disaster Relief.
2. Is responsible for activating the decisions of the Disaster Preparedness Committee for Health as they relate to technical matters under her portfolio.
3. Before the hurricane season commences, reviews the disaster preparedness plan with heads of divisions under her control and obtains from them an assurance that all preparations have been made.
4. Consults with the Permanent Secretary for the nomination of the Ministry's Representative to the Central Emergency Relief Committee.
5. Keeps herself informed of all plans, proposals and decisions of the Central Emergency Relief Committee as they relate to health and ensures that this information is conveyed to the appropriate technical officers.
6. Consults with Permanent Secretary when hurricane 'watch' is declared to call the meeting of the Health Action Committee for Disaster Relief and to activate Disaster Preparedness Plans.
7. Consults with the Permanent Secretary to nominate the person to sit on the Committee of the Central Emergency Operations Centre for the current disaster. This person to be either the Chief Medical Officer or a principal Medical Officer.
8. Consults with the Permanent Secretary to decide when a disaster for health has occurred and to activate the necessary procedures for the implementation of health relief services.
9. Ensures that the Command Centre for Health is established according to the guidelines and that a duty roster is prepared and circulated.

10. Has final responsibility for the technical aspect of health relief services after the disaster.
11. Evaluates data collected after the disaster and determines what internal and external assistance is required for health.
12. Is responsible for coordinating health relief services with the relief services of the Central Emergency Operations Centre.

Principal Medical Officer (Primary Care)

1. Is a member of the Health Action Committee for Disaster Relief.
2. Will learn the provisions of the Disaster Preparedness and Relief Plan for Health and will be totally familiar with all aspects of the Plan.
3. Will ensure that each Medical Officer (Health) has prepared a Disaster Preparedness and Relief Plan for Health for the parish. During the period January to April each year will review each Parish plan with the Medical Officer (Health) and Senior Staff in the Parish to ensure that it is practicable, that all necessary drugs, equipment and supplies are available, and that all necessary action will be taken before the commencement of the hurricane season.
4. In the month of April/May each year will obtain written confirmation from each Medical Officer of Health that the necessary preparatory steps for Disaster Preparedness have been taken and that the Parish Disaster Preparedness Plan for Health can be fully activated at short notice.
5. When a hurricane 'watch' is declared will attend the first meeting of the Health Action Committee for Disaster Relief and following that meeting will -
 - a) call together heads of sections to inform them of the decisions of the Committee and to assign specific responsibilities; and

- b) make contact with each Medical Officer (Health) to ensure that the Disaster Preparedness Plan has been activated to fill any deficiencies, to review methods of post-disaster communication, and to establish time for next contact.
- 6. Assists in establishing the Command Centre.
- 7. Is responsible for coordinating the emergency relief services for health at the primary level.
- 8. Remains available to the Command Centre at all times
- 9. Receives reports from all parish Health Departments and area health administrations concerning extent of damage. This information will be as requested on the approved pro forma. (Annex 2)
- 10. Takes whatever action is necessary to make contact with parishes from which no report is received.
- 11. Travels with Permanent Secretary or his nominee to view the disaster area and make a rapid assessment of the extent and type of health relief services required.
- 12. Establishes lines of communication with Medical Officers (Health) of the affected parishes.
- 13. Monitors the Community Health aspects of the Disaster, for example, water supply and sanitation.
- 14. Will be the person through whom ALL communications between Headquarters and Parish Health Departments are made so that any conflicting observations, statements or requests may be immediately apparent and to facilitate the maintenance of the record of action taken and instructions given.
- 15. Will ensure that all Parishes implement a hurricane preparedness and relief drill at least annually.

Principal Medical Officer (Secondary/Tertiary Care)

1. Is a member of the Health Action Committee for Disaster Relief.
2. Will learn the provisions of the Disaster Preparedness and Relief Plan for Health and will be totally familiar with all aspects of the plan.
3. Will ensure that each hospital has a Disaster Preparedness and Relief Plan and that all members of the hospital staff are familiar with the Plan. During the period January-April each year will review each Hospital Plan with the Hospital Staff to ensure that it is practicable, that all necessary drugs, equipment and supplies are available and that all necessary action will be taken before the commencement of the hurricane season.
4. In the month of April/May each year will obtain written confirmation from the Medical Officer in charge of each hospital that the necessary preparatory steps for Disaster Preparedness have been taken and that the Hospital Disaster Plan can be activated at short notice.
5. When a hurricane 'watch' is declared will attend the first meeting of the Health Action Committee for Disaster Relief and following that meeting will inform all relative staff of the decisions of the Committee and will make contact with all Medical Officers in charge of Hospitals to ensure that the Disaster Preparedness Plan has been activated, to fill any deficiencies, to review methods of post-disaster communication and to establish time for next contact.
6. Assist in establishing the Command Centre
7. Is responsible for coordinating the Hospital Emergency Relief Services.

8. Remains available to the Command Centre at all times and in close and continuous contact with the Hospital Service in any area where there are major casualties either in numbers or seriousness of injuries.

Epidemiologist:

1. Is a member of the Health Action Committee for Disaster Relief
2. Will learn the provisions of the Disaster Preparedness and Relief Plan for Health, will be totally familiar with all aspects of the Plan and will ensure that all staff of the Epidemiological Unit are also familiar with the Plan.
3. Establishes procedures for disease surveillance in the event of a disaster and ensures that Parish Health Staff are familiar with and understand these procedures by meeting with the relative Parish Health Staff to review the procedures during the period January to April each year.
4. Ensures that lines of communication are clearly established between:
 - a) Medical Laboratories, the Government Chemist and the Epidemiological Unit
 - b) Parishes and the Epidemiological Unit
5. Liaises with the Director of the Planning and Evaluation Unit to establish procedures for monitoring the extent of the effects of the Disaster and the efficiency of the control and relief measures instigated after a disaster.
6. When a hurricane 'watch' is declared, activates the procedures established in 3 and 4.
7. Assists in establishing the Command centre
8. Ensures that all relevant epidemiological information is fed into the Command Centre and visually displayed there.

9. Remains available to the Command Centre at all times.
10. Ensures that morbidity and mortality data are accurately represented and readily available.
11. Advises the Health Action Committee for Disaster Relief and the Director of the Control Operations on the significance of the epidemiological findings and on epidemiological control measures indicated.

Principal Nursing Officer

1. Is a member of the Health Action Committee for Disaster Relief.
2. Will learn the provisions of the Disaster Preparedness and Relief Plan for Health, will be totally familiar with all aspects of the Plan and will ensure that all nursing staff are familiar with the Plan.
3. Will ensure that all Hospital Matrons, Nursing Supervisors and Senior Public Health Nurses are familiar with their Disaster Preparedness and Relief Plans and will meet with them during the period January to April each year to ensure that the nursing component of the plan is understood, is feasible and that all necessary drugs, equipment and supplies are available.
4. When a hurricane 'watch' is declared will attend the first meeting of the Health Action Committee for Disaster Relief and, following that meeting will call together heads of nursing sections to inform them of the decisions taken by the Committee and to assign specific responsibilities.
5. Assists in establishing the Command Centre
6. Is responsible for coordinating nursing relief activities nation-wide in accordance with the needs identified by the Director of the Command Centre and the Health Action Committee for Disaster Relief.
7. Remains available to the Command Centre at all times

8. Ensures the effective implementation of all nursing requests.

Director of Pharmaceutical Services:

1. Is a member of the Standing Disaster Preparedness Committee for Health and of the Health Action Committee for Disaster Relief.
2. Will learn the provisions of the Disaster Preparedness Plan for Health and will be totally familiar with all aspects of the Plan.
3. Will ensure that a list of emergency drugs, and medical supplies is prepared and regularly updated. (Annex 3)
4. During the period January to April each year checks that emergency medical supplies are in all places where they should be and all drugs are well within their expiry date for usage.
5. Ensures that the Island Medical Stores maintain emergency drugs according to the agreed schedule.
6. Establishes procedures for immediate delivery of emergency drugs and medical supplies when required.
7. When a hurricane 'watch' is declared will attend the first meeting of the Health Action Committee for Disaster Relief and will inform all relevant Pharmaceutical Staff of the Decisions of that Committee. He will designate the person responsible for maintaining close liaison with the Command Centre, the National Emergency Operations Centre and for maintaining a list of drugs and medical supplies received as donations from international sources
8. Will remain available to the Command Centre at all times
9. Will be responsible for coordinating the pharmaceutical services throughout the country.

Director of the Bureau of Health Education:

1. Is a member of the Disaster Preparedness Committee for Health and of the Health Action Committee for Disaster Relief
2. Will learn the provisions of the Disaster Preparedness Plan for Health and will be totally familiar with all aspects of the Plan .
3. Will prepare material for a public education programme for disaster preparedness and monitor its implementation
4. Will develop a plan for promoting community awareness and involvement for Disaster Preparedness and Relief
5. Will assist in the preparation of all health messages directed to the public before, during and after a disaster.
6. When a hurricane 'watch' is declared will attend the first meeting of the Health Action Committee for Disaster Relief and following that meeting will call together all headquarters staff of the Bureau to inform them of the decisions of the Committee, to assign responsibilities and to activate the necessary procedures for ensuring that necessary educational material can be produced without delay.
7. Will liaise with the Medical Officer (Health) to devise and implement special community health education programmes to meet special needs which may arise in the disaster areas.

Director of Administration:

1. Is a member of the Standing Disaster Preparedness Committee for Health Action Committee for Disaster Relief.
2. Will learn the provisions of the Disaster Preparedness Plan for Health, will be totally familiar with all aspects of the Plan and will ensure that all the staff of the Division are also familiar with and understand the Plan.

3. Will provide a secretary for the Standing Disaster Preparedness and Committee for Health.
4. Will convene the January meeting of the Standing Committee for Disaster Preparedness and arrange for the preparation and distribution of all circulars authorised by the Committee
5. Will convene all other meetings of the Standing Committee for Disaster Preparedness, take minutes of all meetings, and monitor the effective implementation of all decisions taken by the Committee.
6. Will prepare distribution lists for communications concerning disaster preparedness and relief and ensure that these lists are continuously updated so that they are always currently accurate. (Annex 4)
7. Prepares procedures for securing the property, records, drugs, food supplies, etc. of the Ministry of Health against possible damage in the event of a hurricane and ensures that copies of these procedures are familiar to and understood by health and other relevant persons at the local level. (Annex 5)
8. Prepares procedures for instituting effective emergency communications by telephone, radio telephone, road, air, etc.
9. Institutes a drill, at least annually, to ensure that the procedures prepared can be implemented speedily and effectively.
10. When a hurricane 'watch' is declared will attend the first meeting of the Health Action Committee for Disaster Relief and following the meeting activate all necessary procedures.
11. Assists in establishing the Command Centre.
12. Will remain available to the Command Centre at all times.

Director of Environmental Control:

1. Will be a member of the Health Action Committee for Disaster Relief
2. Will learn the provisions of the Disaster Preparedness Plan for Health and will be totally familiar with all aspects of the Plan.
3. Will liaise with the National Water Authority, the Water Commission and the Ministry of Local Government to prepare a plan for the emergency protection of water supplies and for the provision of safe drinking water after a disaster has occurred. (Annex1)
4. Will prepare plans for the provision of emergency sanitary arrangements when necessary following a disaster (Annex 6)
5. When a hurricane 'watch' is declared, will attend the first meeting of the Health Action Committee for Disaster Relief and following the meeting will inform his staff of the decisions taken. Ensures that water purification tablets are available according to the approved schedule and activates prepared plans and procedures. (Annex 7)
6. After the disaster, will monitor the provision of safe drinking water and solid waste management.
7. Remains available to the Command Centre at all times

Director of Finance:

1. Is a member of the Health Action Committee for Disaster Relief
2. Will learn the provisions of the Disaster Preparedness Plan for Health and will be totally familiar with all aspects of the Plan.
3. Monitors the financial aspects of the Health Plan for Disaster Preparedness and Relief to ensure that while adequate funds are made available to support the plan, strictest economy is maintained and unnecessary expense avoided.
4. Will ensure that adequate funds are made available to meet emergency expenditure/...

expenditures as deemed necessary by the Director of the Control Operations and the Health Action Committee for Disaster Relief

5. Will ensure the availability of sufficient petrol coupons to meet all emergency requirements.
6. Remains available to the Command Centre at all times.

Director of the Nutrition and Dietetic Division:

1. Is a member of the Health Action Committee for Disaster Relief
2. Will learn the provisions of the Disaster Preparedness and Relief Plan for Health, will be totally familiar with all aspects of the Plan and will ensure that the Plan is understood by all members of the Nutrition and Dietetic Division
3. Prepares a plan for the emergency distribution of food supplements to priority target groups affected by a disaster and liaises with the Director of Administration to ensure that supplies will be available (Annex 8)
4. Monitors the release and return of any food loaned to the Red Cross for immediate relief of hunger after a disaster
5. Motivates the Nutrition Advisory Council to make recommendations to Government for action to be taken to meet anticipated food shortages if large areas of agricultural land are damaged or destroyed by a disaster.
6. Prepares the dietary content of health educational material produced in connection with disasters.
7. Remains available to the Command Centre at all times.

Principal Public Health Officer:

1. Is a member of the Health Action Committee for Disaster Relief

2. Will learn the provisions of the Disaster Preparedness and Relief Plan for Health and will be totally familiar with all aspects of the Plan
3. During the months of January to April each year will check with the Chief Public Health Inspector for each Parish to ensure that the parish Disaster Preparedness and Relief Plan has been reviewed and that the component for which the Public Health Inspectorate is responsible is satisfactory, effective and practicable
4. Monitors the sanitary status in the disaster area and advises on emergency measures to be instituted to solve special problems in liaison with the Director of Environmental Control and Medical Officer (Health)
5. Coordinates the redeployment of Public Health Inspectors to meet specific emergency needs.

Transport Officer:

1. Will learn the provisions of the Disaster Preparedness and Relief Plan for Health and will ensure that he fully understands how, when and where transport may be required.
2. When a hurricane 'watch' is declared, he will immediately recall to base all vehicles attached to Ministry of Health Headquarters and to the Directors of special programmes and will place them at the disposal of the officer in charge of the Command Centre. He will keep an accurate record of their movements from the time the 'watch' is declared and until the emergency and/or relief operations have been concluded.
3. Will check on the road-worthiness of all vehicles and prepare a 'Master List' of the status of Ministry vehicles throughout the country.

4. He will prepare a contingency plan for moving vehicles into areas of need at short notice and have available for Medical Stores suitable vehicles for the movement of drugs, supplies and equipment
5. Will establish lines of communication with the Command Centre and will remain available to the Command Centre at all times.

CHAPTER 41 - Guidelines for the Establishment of
Communications

CHAPTER 4 - GUIDELINES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS

The satisfactory management of health relief requires the use of effective means of communication both within and beyond the disaster area to ensure:

1. contact between the Command Centre and the health staff in the disaster area and the National Emergency Operations Centre
2. contact between health workers engaged in relief in the disaster area
3. for survey and surveillance work
4. Internationally, for giving information and making requests for assistance
5. supplying regular reports to the media.

Communication with the Media

1. Channels for communication with the media should be established when a hurricane 'watch' is declared and regular information concerning health matters should be supplied through the Agency for Public information.
2. Reports on health in the disaster area should be as accurate as possible and should be approved by the Permanent Secretary before release. It is important that the public be kept informed.

Communications to International Agencies

Periodic bulletins should be prepared in the Command Centre and issued by the Permanent Secretary to the Pan American Health Organization and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, when indicated.

Communication by Radio-Telephone and Radio:

1. The Ministry network of radio telephones should be activated when

a hurricane/...

a hurricane 'watch' is declared and should remain active in the disaster area until the emergency situation has ended.

2. A list of "ham" radio operators should be prepared and made available to the Command Centre and the Medical Officer of Health of the Parish.
(Annex 9)
3. In the event of a disaster the services of those "ham" radio operators willing to cooperate should be used and other "hams" requested to stay off the air.
4. Arrangements should be made to send and receive messages through the Police Radio-Telephone system.
5. The Military radio-communications system can be used through the National Emergency Operations Centre centrally and the military relief stations established in the disaster areas.
6. Messages can be sent via the national broadcasting stations by arrangement.

CHAPTER 5 - GUIDELINES FOR THE COMMAND CENTRE

1. When the Permanent Secretary states that a disaster for health has occurred, he will also give instructions for the establishment of a Command Centre in the Ministry of Health & Social Security. He will state in which room the Command Centre will be located, and arrange for a direct telephone line to be installed or designated for the sole use of the Command Centre.
2. The Permanent Secretary will nominate the person to be "Director of Relief Operations for Health" (DROH). This person will be in charge of the Command Centre.
3. The DROH will have final authority in the direction of relief operations for health but will work in close liaison with the Chief Medical Officer and Permanent Secretary and will report to the daily meetings of the Health Action Committee for Disaster Relief (HACDR).
4. The Director of Personnel will assign a Secretary to the DROH and two clerical officers to answer the telephone and record all information received. Additional personnel for recording, charting, etc. should be brought in as and when necessary.
5. The Director of Administration/Office Manager will provide all necessary stationery, maps, furniture, etc. as requested by the DROH.

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CHAPTER 5 - Guidelines for Command Centre

6. The Epidemiologist, in consultation with the DROH, will prepare and maintain maps, charts, etc. to indicate the extent of the disaster, to monitor the development of the situation, the progress of relief activities and the incidence of disease, if any.
7. The DROH will collate all reports reaching the Command Centre and HACDR and will give a verbal report at the daily meetings of the HACDR. The DROH will prepare written reports as directed by the Permanent Secretary.
8. In the immediate post-disaster period, the Command Centre will be operational 24 hours a day if necessary. The DROH in consultation with the Permanent Secretary and Chief Medical Officer will prepare a roster of persons for relief duties. HACDR will decide when the 24 hour service is no longer necessary and for what hours the Command Centre should remain operational.
9. HACDR will decide when the emergency situation has ceased and give instructions for the closure of the Command Centre and the return of activities to the normal channels.