

The Natural Branch of the Alabama Emergency Management Agency is a branch of the Preparedness Division. This branch includes the following program and activities:

- Dam Safety and Response
- Earthquake
- Hurricane
- Maintenance of the State Emergency Operations Plan
- Program lead for any exercises, workshops, and conferences regarding the above programs

As mentioned above, we ensure that the State EOP is up to date. We do a full revision every four years and up date every two. If there is major changes that need to be done because of Federal regulations for example, we do a full revision that year as well. The State EOP is what state agencies use when responding to a disaster or an emergency.

Dam Safety and Response

The Alabama Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) monitors the Emergency Action plans (EAPs) of all high-risk hydroelectric dams in the state. The main purpose of the EAP is to protect the lives and property of individuals living downstream in the unlikely event of a dam failure or an event indicating the potential for a dam failure. The EAP is also a communication plan designed to maximize early warning and prioritize the notification of first responders and other outside agencies, as well as downstream residents. AEMA staff participates in dam inspections as well as tabletop and functional exercise to insure agency readiness in dealing with possible dam failures.

Owner/operators of hydroelectric dams that are regulated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) include Alabama Power Company, Georgia Power, and PowerSouth Energy Cooperative. Other hydroelectric dam owner/operators, not subject to FERC regulation, include the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) and the United States Army Corp of Engineers (USACE).

Earthquake Program

Alabama's primary partners in earthquake awareness are Geological Survey of Alabama, Central United States Earthquake Consortium (CUSEC), and FEMA. Since becoming a member state of CUSEC in 2003, Alabama has hosted several training opportunities and workshops, and participate in CUSEC hosted meetings. As a result of initial training opportunities, interest in more CUSEC sponsored training has increased. Alabama has made major progress in the past years with regards to earthquake awareness, but there is still much that needs to be done for preparedness.

Earthquakes are common in the eastern half of the United States. Four zones of frequent earthquake activity affecting Alabama are the New Madrid Seismic Zone (NMSZ), the Southern Appalachian Seismic Zone (SASZ), the South Carolina Seismic Zone (SCSZ),

and the Bahamas Fracture Seismic Zone (BFSZ). The majority of the earthquakes are associated with the SASZ and the BFSZ. The largest earthquake on record occurred in 1916 near Birmingham.

The main priorities of AEMA are to save lives, protect property, and safeguard the environment. With this in mind, Alabama is proactively involved in the catastrophic planning initiative for the New Madrid Seismic Zone. We have scheduled workshops with local and state personnel to better enhance our response capabilities and planning processes. These workshops prepare us for any major exercises that we may have in the future.

AEMA's all hazards public awareness campaign added an Alabama Earthquake brochure that was created by the Geological Survey of Alabama for the state's citizens. This document has been used to educate local and state personnel on the history of earthquakes in Alabama. As the program evolves, we may include activities such as Earthquake Awareness Day.

Hurricane Program

Alabama has two coastal counties (Baldwin and Mobile). At Alabama EMA, we strive to protect the lives of our citizens from hurricanes and all of the other hazards that come with it (tornadoes, storm surge, inland flooding, etc.). Our hurricane program partners with local National Weather Service (NWS) offices, NOAA, FEMA, U.S. Army Corp of Engineers and other local EMAs to ensure proper programmatic response planning and exercises. We also include the most up to date GIS technology to enhance our visibility of the situation when disaster occurs.

We have approximately three hurricane exercises a year including the Governor's Executive Level Workshop where Cabinet members and state agency heads come together to discuss their capabilities and preparations for the hurricane season. The other two are local and at the state EOC.

AEMA strives to have a more robust public information program. At this time, we contribute to the NWS Hurricane Awareness Brochure and prepare public service announcements to run during hurricane season. We will like to improve our public awareness strategy to also include other hazards that come with hurricanes.

Links:

Dam Safety and Response

ADECA Office of Water Resources
www.adeca.alabama.gov/water/

Dam Safety
www.damsafety.org
About the Dam Safety Program
www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/damfailure

Earthquake

U. S. Geological Survey
www.usgs.gov

Geological Survey of Alabama
www.gsa.alabama.gov

Central United States Earthquake Consortium
www.cusec.org

National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program
<http://www.nehrp.gov/>

Mid America Earthquake Center
<http://mae.cee.uiuc.edu/>

Test Your Earthquake Knowledge
<http://www.nwcn.com/sharedcontent/features/flash/quake/during.html>

Hurricanes and other Weather Hazards

National Hurricane Center
www.nhc.noaa.gov

NOAA's National Weather Service
www.weather.gov

JetStream - Online School for Weather (NWS)
http://www.srh.noaa.gov/srh/jetstream/tropics/tropics_intro.htm

Hurricane Research Division (AOML) - FAQs
<http://www.aoml.noaa.gov/hrd/tcfaq/tcfaqHED.html>

