

**Onondaga County
Department of Emergency Management**

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



COMMISSIONER'S STATEMENT

This past year, the Onondaga County Department of Emergency Management celebrated its 20th Anniversary since being established by the Onondaga County Legislature. Major incidents impacting both Onondaga County and the nation precipitated the department's creation and we have continued to experience major incidents and disasters that have had lasting impacts to the emergency management profession locally and nationally. These impacts have expanded the scope of what has been considered traditional emergency management functions and we have worked to evolve with expectations and the enlarged scope of responsibility.

The emergency management profession has been impacted by the 9/11 terrorist attacks, active shooter incidents, an increase in billion-dollar storms, and the COVID-19 pandemic to name a few. Locally, we have experienced the deadly Labor Day storms of 1998, significant flooding to communities, mass casualty incidents and countless fires. Each type of incident has had a profound impact on the emergency management industry, and we will continue to assess the risk and capabilities of Onondaga County to better prepare our communities for the potential local impacts.

Looking forward to 2024, we are excited about our future move into a renovated building that will not only have positive impacts for our department, but also many of our partner organizations. A new emergency operations center will increase the number of organizations who can be onsite during an activation and new training space will allow us to bring additional opportunities to partner agencies and organizations.

Together we will continue to improve our preparedness programs and enhance our response capabilities for the benefit of our community. Throughout 2024 we will continue to prepare for the Total Solar Eclipse in April, work together to prepare for construction related to Micron coming to Onondaga County and the impacts from significant changes to Interstate 81. We value and appreciate the support of all of our stakeholders and partner organizations that enable our success, and we are grateful for the continued support from County Executive McMahon and the Onondaga County Legislature.



DANIEL WEARS, MPA

ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT

To partner with stakeholders to promote life safety and preservation of property through a progressive cycle of emergency and disaster preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation.

OUR MISSION

ABOUT US

The Onondaga County Department of Emergency Management (OCDEM) leads Onondaga County and our partners in planning, preparedness, response, and recovery for daily emergencies, large-scale countywide events, multi-jurisdictional incidents, and major disasters. OCDEM is an important link in the coordination between emergency services, as well as the public and private stakeholders in order to collaborate with one another during preparedness for, response to, or recovery from major events and incidents.

The Department also has two bureaus within it: Fire and EMS. These bureaus are lead by the Director of Fire and Director of EMS, respectively.

A comprehensive, well-coordinated emergency response and recovery system that has the local capacity to effectively manage emergency situations and disasters.

OUR VISION



ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT CONT.

DEPARTMENT HISTORY

In 2003, the County Legislature recognized the importance of emergency management by combining the Department of Emergency Management, the Fire Coordinator's Office, and the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Bureau under one Department. Local Law 6-2003 created a Department of Emergency Management incorporating a Fire Bureau and EMS Bureau.

2003

DEPARTMENT

FOUNDED



FIRE BUREAU

Director: Gerald Payne

The Fire Bureau provides coordination and assistance to local fire departments in Onondaga County by:

- Overseeing fire mutual aid in Onondaga County
- Coordinating fire service training with New York State Office of Fire Protection and Control (OFPC) and local fire departments
- Overseeing the County Fire Investigation Unit
- *Project Concern: A Juvenile Firesetters Program*
- Overseeing code enforcement of County owned and operated property
- Supporting several special response teams

EMS BUREAU

Director: Jeffrey VanBeveren

To further the mission of the Department of Emergency Management, the EMS Bureau provides leadership, support, education, and coordination of pre-hospital emergency medical care within Onondaga County.

To achieve a collaborative and effective EMS system within Onondaga County, the EMS Division works closely with all EMS providers in Onondaga County by sharing information, maintaining a resource list for mutual aid purposes, supporting training programs, and working collaboratively with EMS agency directors and representatives from local and state public health departments.

ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

STAFFING

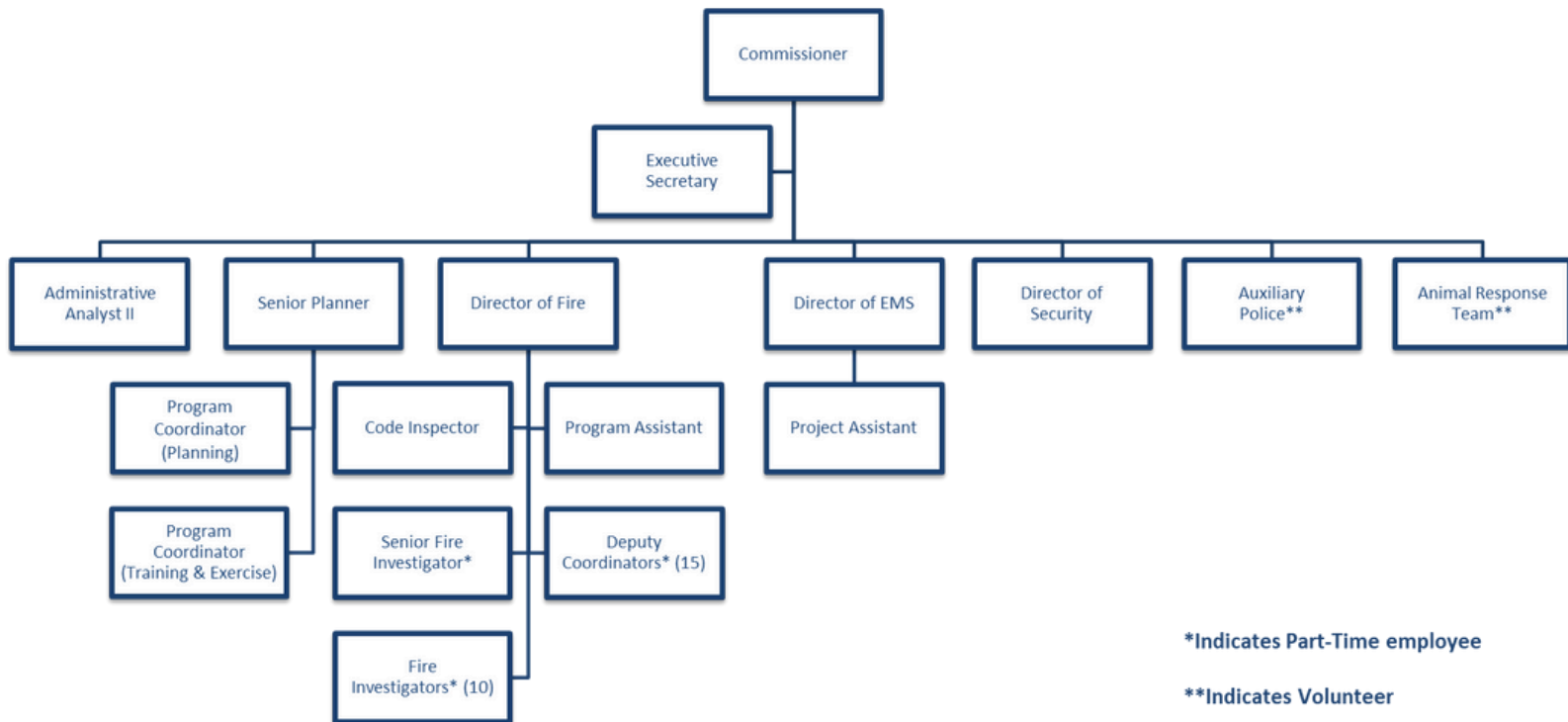
The Department of Emergency Management is staffed by 12 full-time employees, 26 part-time employees, and a variety of volunteers.

In addition to our staff, OCDEM annually hosts anywhere from 2-5 interns from local area colleges and universities with interest in emergency management and/or preparedness.

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FULL AND PART
TIME EMPLOYEES

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



PLANNING

Local Emergency Operations Planning

Emergency operations planning is a **core function** of the Department of Emergency Management, and one of our primary responsibilities in Onondaga County. Regular plan development and revision can facilitate efficient multi-agency and jurisdiction coordination in response to and recovery from a large-scale emergency or disaster.

In 2023, the department's focus was on continuing to **develop or revise** the following plans:

- Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan
- Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan
- Public Information and Warning
- Continuity of Operations Plan
- Mass Care/Human Needs
- Harmful Algae Blooms
- Flooding
- Dam Failure
- Winter Storms

Continuity of Operations Planning

In 2023, the department hired a contractor to assist in the development Continuity of Operations Plan for all County departments. These plans are of vital importance to our County, as we have seen most recently with the COVID-19 pandemic and major winter storms, we are not immune from disruptions to our daily operations. Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP) is an effort within an organization to ensure that its essential functions continue to be performed during a wide range of emergencies until normal operations can be resumed. The County is responsible for providing services to our citizens and we must be prepared to continually meet these responsibilities in the face of a major incident, as well as smaller, routine disruptions to our respective departments. All county departments were directed to participate in this countywide planning effort under the directive of the County Executive. This is an ongoing initiative.

Disaster Preparedness Committee

The Disaster Preparedness Committee (DPC) was officially reinstated in late January 2023, after having laid dormant since the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of the DPC is to help form partnerships between public and private organizations to help enhance everyone's ability to prepare for and respond to disasters or large-scale emergencies. The DPC meets on a quarterly basis, and one (1) meeting each year serves dually as the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) meeting. The LEPC is a federally required committee with a goal of preparing our county to respond to incidents and emergencies involving hazardous materials.

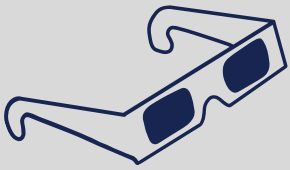
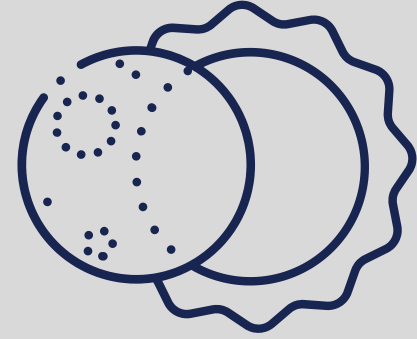


PLANNING CONT.

2024 Solar Eclipse Planning Committee

In 2023, the Onondaga County Emergency Preparedness Committee (OCEPC), a committee comprised solely of county department commissioners, or their designated representatives, and representation from organizations responsible for Emergency Support Function activities during an emergency/disaster, met to discuss the upcoming 2024 Total Solar Eclipse that will be impacting Onondaga County on April 8, 2024.

The OCEPC elected to form a 2024 Solar Eclipse Planning Committee (2024 SEPC), and invited additional local, county, and state stakeholders to unify and prepare for the implications of the event. After a review of after-action reports and improvement plans (AAR/IPs) from the 2017 Solar Eclipse and identifying possible implications, the 2024 SEPC was furthermore divided into sub-committees with focuses on Public Safety & Traffic, Hospitality & Events, and Public Information & Communications. OCDEM will be activating the EOC to support the county through this event.



TRAINING & EXERCISE

Staff Training

In 2023, 10 full-time staff members completed approximately **637 hours of training** and professional development, averaging out to nearly 64 hours per person. The trainings covered a wide array of Emergency Management disciplines including, but not limited to: EOC Functions, ICS/NIMS, Active Shooter Incidents, CPR, Critical Incident Stress Management, Code Enforcement, Mass Casualty Incident & Mass Fatality Incident Response.

Coordinated Trainings

OCDEM was able to coordinate over **80** Office of Fire and Prevention Control trainings in 2023, accounting for over **1,200** individuals trained. Trainings covered a variety of disciplines, including Fire, EMS, Hazardous Materials, and Incident Management.



TRAINING & EXERCISE CONT.

Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan

The plan aims to enhance the preparedness and response capabilities of emergency responders and organizations by providing comprehensive and repetitive training and exercising opportunities. The training and exercises will cover various scenarios, from natural disasters to man-made incidents, and will involve various response partners from the public and private sectors.

For all exercises conducted, AAR/IP will be completed following the Homeland Security Exercise Evaluation Program (HSEEP) best practices. The AAR/IP process allows for us to identify gaps, strengths, and weaknesses in capabilities, and provide a structure for improving those capabilities. The MYTEP also aligns with planning priorities, allowing for us to update plans, policies, and/or procedures, and then test, train, and exercise them prior to an emergency or disaster, leading to a more efficient and effective response.

The 2023 - 2025 Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan (MYTEP) focuses on **4 key priorities:**

1 EOC Operations

2 MCI Management

3 MFI Response

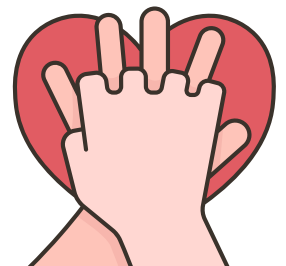
4 Active Shooter Response & Management

Exercise Overview

In 2023, the department coordinated and/or participated in **11 exercises** including workshops, tabletop, functional, and full-scale exercises. These exercises covered a variety of topics including: EOC operations, incidents at large-scale planned events, public points of dispensing (POD), evacuations, hazardous materials release, active shooter incident management, severe weather, dam failure, reception center activation, and improvised explosive devices (IED).

CPR Training

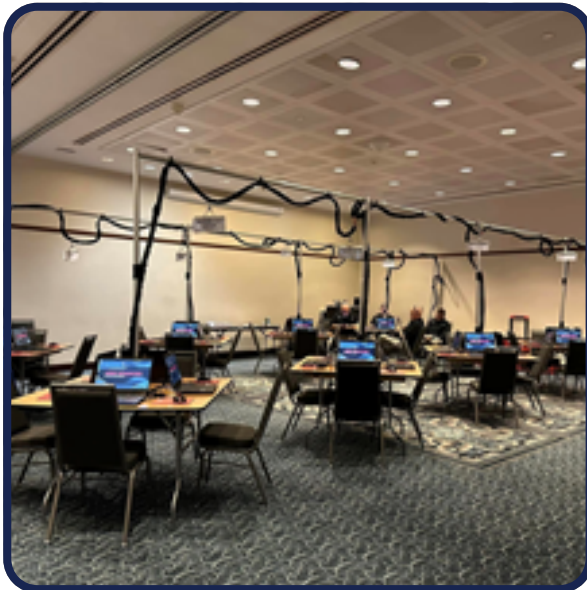
The Department of Emergency Management is an American Heart Association training center. In 2023, instructors with the department taught over **570 CPR classes reaching over 4,660 people**. In addition, all full-time staff members of the department attended a CPR/BLS refresher training.



TRAINING & EXERCISE CONT.

Active Shooter Incident Management Course

In late September, the department was the first in New York State to host the Active Shooter Incident Management with Complex Incidents (PER-353) course. This three-day course was held at the OnCenter and included **11 exercises** using a 3D virtual reality simulator that placed everyone “in the middle of the action”. Participants who attended this course included representation from local emergency management, law enforcement, fire, emergency medical services, and emergency communications. The purpose of the course was to help these agencies develop plans to assist with incident command and coordination during an active shooter incident. Together, we were able to gain hands-on incident management experience and confidence to manage an active shooter incident with a well-coordinated and integrated response.



TRAINING & EXERCISE CONT.

Snowstorm Tabletop

Following the devastation of the Buffalo Blizzard of 2022, the department spent a great deal of time reviewing AAR/IPs and the county's Winter Storms Annex. In 2023, it was a high priority for the department to exercise our county's capabilities to responding to a severe snowstorm incident. In utilizing a similar scenario to the Buffalo storms, a lake-effect snowstorm tabletop exercise was conducted in December, testing the **target capabilities** of Planning, Public Information & Warning, Operational Coordination, Mass Care Services, and Mass Search & Rescue. This was completed through assessing the effectiveness of the county's emergency response plans and capabilities to respond to a severe weather event; evaluating the decision-making process during the event; testing communication protocols and information sharing mechanisms; and identifying areas for improvement in coordination, communication, and resource allocation.

FIRE & EMS

Fire Investigation Unit

The Fire Investigation Unit (FIU) operates within the Department of Emergency Management, under the oversight of the Director of Fire. The FIU is a team of highly-trained individuals who play a crucial role in determining the circumstances that led to a fire. This information is used to support arson investigations, provide to insurance companies, and help prevent future fires.

Through NYS General Municipal Law Chapter 24, Article 10, Section 204-D, it is the responsibility of the Fire Chief of any department to determine the cause of a fire or explosion that their department responds to. The FIU serves as a resource to support county Fire Chief's and local law enforcement outside of the City of Syracuse. Fire Investigators use a combination of scientific and investigative techniques to determine the origin and cause of a fire, including examination of burn patterns and examination of the physical evidence at the fire scene. In 2023, the FIU conducted over **570 hours of investigations, investigating over 145 incidents.**



FIRE & EMS CONT.

Code Enforcement

In 2023, the code enforcement team continued to play an integral role in ensuring the safety and stability of our community through its rigorous inspections and permitting process for county owned or operated property. The division conducted **559 inspections** and issued **190 permits** for a total **approved** permit construction value of **\$109,513,059.00**. These efforts helped to ensure that all new construction and renovation projects met local and state regulations, as well as promoting public safety.



Fire Training Trailer

The department acquired a fire training trailer (FTT) which was loaned out to **seven (7) fire departments** throughout the county from April through November, reaching approximately **25 departments total** through mutual aid. The trailer allowed fire departments to conduct training in their areas of expertise, and in some cases, practice skills they would not have otherwise had the opportunity to exercise, including: forcible entry, vertical ventilation, horizontal ventilation, and emergency bailout procedures. The FTT is loaned out for a minimum of two (2) weeks at a time, and up to a maximum of two (2) months at a time, if there are no other requests.



We're moving!!

In 2022, the department was thrilled to announce our plans in renovating a former Army Reserve Center into a new, state-of-the-art EOC. The purpose of this major project is provide a centralized location for emergency management personnel and partners to coordinate the response to and recovery from emergencies or disasters that impact Onondaga County. Funding for this project was secured with the support of the Onondaga County Executive J. Ryan McMahon, II, as well as support and appropriation from the Onondaga County Legislature, who made \$1,100,000 in local funding available for this project. In addition to that, a \$1,000,000 grant was secured by former Representative John Katko.

Throughout 2023, construction has been underway to transform the former Army Reserve Center into a facility equipped with not only a new EOC, but also office spaces, conference areas, training rooms, and a designated media briefing room. The property also includes a detached garage and gated trailer lot. As we have begun transitioning to the new property, these spaces have allowed for most of the department's deployable assets to be stored securely and in one accessible location. The location of this facility is centrally located near major highways allowing for quick access to the facility, as well as shorter timeframes for resource deployments throughout the county.

Our department is packing up our things in the sub-basement and we are scheduled to make our big move in late January 2024. Our current location at the Civic Center will serve as the county's back-up EOC. We are looking forward to inhabiting this new space and increasing the county's response and recovery capabilities!



Portable Radio Distribution

In 2023, the department obtained and distributed **267 portable radios** to local law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services agencies, totaling **\$750,000 worth of radios**. This project allowed for us to replace outdated radios that were no longer serviceable and/or at the end of their useful life and subsequently strengthen communication capabilities between the county's public safety agencies.

WebEOC Information Sharing Platform

Throughout 2023, it was a high priority to integrate the WebEOC information sharing platform into the department's daily operations, as well as make continued improvements to EOC-related functions. The department worked closely to identify how the platform could bridge capability gaps, particularly associated with situational awareness. On an internal-basis, we were able to bridge this gap by incorporating contact lists, a file library, documentation of planned events, project management overviews, resource trackers, and incident management resources all into one location.

Beyond incorporating WebEOC into the department's daily operations, the department continued to develop uses for EOC-related functions and began conducting trainings & exercises for both office staff and EOC representatives on how to operate WebEOC during an EOC activation. As the department continues to build out uses for the platform, it is our goal to have county departments and local support organizations in the system on a regular basis to increase situational awareness and stakeholder engagement.



WebEOC



