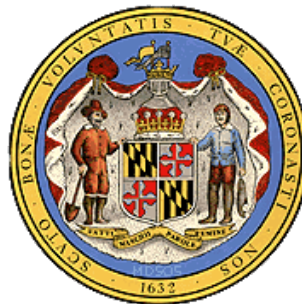


2023 Annual Report of the Governor's Emergency Management Advisory Council

A Report to the Governor and the Maryland General Assembly

In compliance with Maryland Code Annotated, Public Safety Article, §§ 14-105 (e) amended
by HB 990, Ch. 287, 2021 and SB 658, Ch. 288, 2021



Submitted by the Maryland

Department of Emergency
Management (MDEM)

Department of Emergency

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Executive Summary

In accordance with the Annotated Code of Maryland, Public Safety Article, § 14-105 (a) and (d), the Governor's Emergency Management Advisory Council (GEMAC) is authorized to advise the Governor on all matters that relate to emergency management in Maryland. Staffed by the Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM), the GEMAC continues to provide value to the Maryland State Executive Branch, and the citizens of Maryland, by offering an independent, non-partisan, and holistic perspective for a diverse host of emergency management topics. The depth and breadth of experience the GEMAC contains, across many different emergency-management-relevant disciplines, is impressive and a credit to the State. As always, the GEMAC strives to remain agile and pertinent in its ability to advise the Governor, his office, and his designated homeland security/emergency management representatives.

This year, the GEMAC focused on continued understanding of efforts to strengthen the emergency management system within MDEM. The GEMAC members have become increasingly well-versed on the many operational capabilities and programmatic initiatives across MDEM as well as their integration points with other entities. As in 2022, this continues to be a valuable use of time, as the GEMAC is empowered to ask penetrating questions and provide a variety of perspectives to ensure Maryland's emergency management system is equipped to provide comprehensive solutions to novel problems. As such, the GEMAC is, and continues to be, well-positioned to advise the Governor on the strengths and gaps of the emergency management system within Maryland, as necessary.

Building upon efforts in 2022, the GEMAC continued to monitor current and upcoming legislative requirements and analyze their impact on the emergency management system. The GEMAC continues to promote the State Disaster Recovery Fund to further mature the recovery capabilities and assistance services the State may provide to local Maryland governments that do not meet the damage thresholds for federal assistance.

The GEMAC remains abreast of its other statutorily-mandated duties (i.e., management of the State Emergency Response Commission [SERC]). Every meeting, the SERC Subcommittee Chair guides the Council through an adjudication of old and new business, as necessary.

Purpose, Mission, and Scope of Work

The GEMAC is authorized by statute and is charged with advising the Governor on all matters that relate to emergency management in Maryland.¹ In addition, Executive Order 01.01.1987.11 designates the GEMAC as Maryland's State Emergency Response Commission² (SERC) in accordance with Title III of the Federal Superfund Amendments.

¹ Maryland Code Annotated, Public Safety Article, §§ 14-105 (a) and (d)

² Code of Maryland Regulations 01.01.1987.11

A primary focus of the State's overarching emergency management strategy is a whole-community approach, working not only with government stakeholders at the federal, state, and local levels, but also with non-governmental organizations, private sector partners, communities, and individuals throughout the emergency management system. In keeping with this whole-community approach, the GEMAC brings together subject matter experts from a wide range of disciplines, backgrounds, and geographic areas to discuss and develop specific recommendations for further study or investigation. As an independent advisory body, GEMAC members are given the opportunity to provide input and comment on the State's activities in moving Maryland forward and developing a comprehensive emergency management program.

Representation

By law, the GEMAC must include: fair and reasonable representation from local government; representation from organizations that represent volunteer firefighters and rescue squads; and representation from manufacturing, utilities, and communications industries. There is no size limit or minimum membership requirement for the GEMAC; individuals appointed to the GEMAC serve two year terms.

The Chairman of the GEMAC is Ronald Gill, Director of the Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, Prince George's County. The current GEMAC is composed of 23 members, including the Chairman. Current GEMAC members began their terms in January 2020 with a two-year term commitment. Terms were renewed as of January 2022 with an additional two-year commitment. As such, GEMAC membership is scheduled to rotate no later than January 2024. For more information regarding membership, see Appendix A.

Discussion and Activities For 2023

March 22, 2023 Meeting

During this meeting, the GEMAC received briefings from its Subcommittees and the MDEM Senior Leadership team on the most important operational initiatives occurring throughout the organization during Quarter 1 (Q1) of 2023.

Within the State Emergency Response Commission (SERC) Subcommittee, the following was reported:

- GEMAC approved the appointment of a member to the Talbot County local emergency planning committee (LEPC)
- GEMAC discussed the role of the SERC in approving projects for the Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness (HMEP) grant in coordination with the grant administrative function held at MDEM.
- GEMAC discussed the future optimization of the HMEP grant. This includes the SERC developing annual priorities, within the scope of the grant guidance, to ensure local jurisdictions develop projects targeted towards statewide capability gaps.

No updates were provided by the GEMAC Legislative Subcommittee.

Consequence Management (CM) Directorate the following was reported:

- MDEM continues to support situational awareness and incidents across the State and FEMA Region III (R3)
- MDEM continues to support planning, training, and exercises as it relates to preparedness capabilities
 - Planning Unit is updating the Consequence Management Operations Plan (CMOP)
 - The Technical Hazards Unit is testing ingestion operations for its radiological program
 - Training & Exercise (T&E) Unit is working on a recovery exercise with FEMA R3
 - T&E Unit is working on a FEMA R3 Hurricane exercise
 - Continuity Unit updating the Continuity of Government (COG) plan
 - Cyber Unit working on the Cyber Resource database for the MDEM website and the guidance for the state cybersecurity grant.
 - Response Coordination Unit is expanding its crisis management system (i.e., WebEOC) capabilities and updating the distribution management plan as well as providing continual WebEOC and SEOC training
 - Emerging Initiatives Unit continues to support schools with reviewing EOPs and providing training and exercises.

Within the Disaster and Risk Reduction (DRR) Directorate, the following activities were reported:

- Hazard Mitigation and Public Assistance grant updates were provided
 - \$94 mil in COVID HMGP submitted
 - FY23 BRIC application submitted
 - End of COVID PA incident period is May 11th
- Private Sector Integration Program (PSIP) Summit scheduled for April 27th
- Communication and Outreach Unit is supporting Maryland Severe Storm Awareness in coordination with the National Weather Service from April 10-16th
- Mesonet continues to move forward
 - Initial scoping meetings are almost complete. Sites should start to be in place by the end of summer.

Within the Mission Support (DRR) Directorate, the following activities were reported:

- Provided general administrative and financial updates on MDEM's grant portfolio

The 911 Board shared the following activities:

- Executed two-day strategic session for the Board
- Several jurisdictions have switched to NextGen911. All local jurisdictions should transition by September 2023.

The MDEM Chief Development Officer (CDO) provided the following legislative updates:

- MDEM is tracking 50 bills related to Emergency Management and/or 911
- Additional information was provided on the State Disaster Relief Fund Bill, bills related to 911, the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council, a domestic terrorism task force, and a few other related bills.

MDEM Executive Leadership provided the following comments:

- We are in the 100 days of the new Administration, which started with a retreat to discuss priorities, the concept of leaving no one behind, and the governor's 12 values. We are going to be data driven and heart led, bold, and courageous.
- MDEM has new staff: AAG, Sabrina Chase and Chief Diversity Equity and Inclusion Officer, Monica Kindle.

June 28, 2023 Meeting

During this meeting, the GEMAC received briefings from GEMAC Subcommittees and MDEM Senior Leadership team regarding activities occurring throughout the organization during Quarter 2 (Q2) of 2023. In addition, the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS) and MDEM jointly presented on the "State of School Emergency Preparedness."

Within the State Emergency Response Commission (SERC) Subcommittee, the following was reported:

- The SERC Chair provided a brief overview for the GEMAC regarding the genesis of the SERC as well as their integration with the Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs). The value and composition of the LEPCs were discussed as well.

The Legislative Subcommittee had no updates.

MDEM Leadership provided the following updates:

- The Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (CDEI) Officer created an internal committee to ensure DEI principles are integrated into all MDEM programs.
 - A DEI newsletter is being developed and training courses will be developed and delivered in Q3 of 2023.
- MDEM is supporting local jurisdictions with resource management, planning, and operational support as it relates to the influx of migrants in the area. The Department of Human Services has the lead on this effort.
- Air Quality Working Group has been formed in response to the poor air quality from the Canadian wildfire.
- MDEM is working with FEMA to plan the evacuation of vulnerable populations and the State's role in evacuations.
- CMOP revisions are slated for July 2023.
- Exercising with the National Guard for hurricane season

- MDEM continues to work in coordination with DoIT and sits on several forums as it relates to cybersecurity, cyber preparedness, and the integration of artificial intelligence.
- COVID incident period ended on May 11th.
- FEMA is shifting to free training, building capacity, and focusing on traditional disasters.
- MDEM and FEMA are collaborating on the biannual Risk Reduction Consultation.
- Mesonet stations projected to open in September
- Private Sector Team has developed workshops that are posted on the MDEM website
- MDEM PMO was established in Jan 2023. Since that time the PMO has established cost, scope, and schedule baselines for every project and funding source in the Department, totaling over \$100 million.
- 911 Board Executive Director position is open and hiring.

MDEM and MCSS jointly briefed on school emergency management and preparedness. The discussion may be captured as follows:

- MCSS provided the GEMAC with an overview of the Maryland school system as well as the genesis of MCSS over the past decade.
- MCSS provided GEMAC with the governance structure of the agency as well as agency responsibilities, requirements, programs, training, and lessons learned (state and national).
- The GEMAC discussed policies and statutes as it related to integration between MCSS and law enforcement responsibilities, specifically use-of-force and de-escalation methods.
- The GEMAC also discussed reunification plans and the fact that at times plans may conflict when multi-entity coordination is required. MCSS acknowledged this fact and noted this is the reason exercising plans is of paramount importance in the near future.
- MCSS noted that the current priorities are as follows:
 - Emergency Preparedness
 - Exercising State Coordination
 - Expanding knowledge and skills through training and resources
 - Safe Schools Maryland Anonymous Reporting System
 - Increasing media and public awareness.
 - Developing training content
 - Behavior Threat Assessment
 - Expanding knowledge and skills through training and resources
 - Ensuring school personnel and law enforcement coordination
- MCSS noted that the current needs are related to planning, training, and exercising to ensure capabilities are tested and refined to ensure effective coordination
- MDEM followed the MCSS presentation by providing a high-level overview of the Grant for School Emergency Management (GSEM) program, a federally-funded initiative.
- GSEM provides funding for schools to develop, implement, and evaluate high-quality Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs). MDEM and MCSS work collaboratively to leverage GSEM funding to ensure schools have funding for planning and training

initiatives. Currently, MDEM/MCSS have worked with over 900 schools in 19 counties with the GSEM funding.

- MDEM also discussed the integration of the MDEM-managed Tipline service which gathers tips on suspicious or dangerous behaviors happening in school. Since October 2018 MDEM has received over 2600 tips, the majority of which have been legitimate.

Outstanding Discussion Points:

- Investigating, at a local level, the necessity for emergency management to support law enforcement as it relates to marijuana laws/policies
- The need to fill the law enforcement representative slot for the GEMAC
- Should the GEMAC consider civil defense discussions in the near future and the integration/parallels with emergency management?
- How best can the Council continue to provide actionable recommendations to the Governor?

September 27, 2023 Meeting

During this meeting, the GEMAC received briefings from GEMAC Subcommittees and MDEM Senior Leadership team regarding activities occurring throughout the organization during Quarter 3 (Q3) of 2023. In addition, the Department of Information Technology (DoIT) and MDEM jointly presented on “How MDEM and DoIT are Building Operational Resilience.”

The SERC Subcommittee had no updates.

The Legislative Subcommittee Chair experienced a significant change to day-to-day position responsibilities. Furthermore, MDEM has increased its capability to provide legislative updates, which has been of benefit to the GEMAC. The MDEM Secretary emphasized that the GEMAC is an independent body that must provide advice independent of MDEM’s internal priorities. MDEM will continue to provide transparent facts related to legislation. As such, it was recommended, voted, and approved by the GEMAC members that the GEMAC discontinue its Legislative Subcommittee.

MDEM Legislative Update:

- High-level update on MDEM legislative timelines
- Bills that are likely to return are Statewide Panic Button in Schools, Voluntary Special Needs Registry, State Disaster Recovery Fund (SDRF) funding

MDEM Directors and Executive Leadership Update:

- The Consequence Management (CM) Directorate continues to support real-world incidents/events. Increased State Response Activation Level (SRAL) for Tropical Storm (TS) Ophelia.
- The Risk Analysis team is developing an analysis on the impacts/consequence of a federal shutdown. Scope is limited to workforce or loss of services that may create additional high-risk impacts/emergencies.
- Joint exercise with FEMA’s National Exercise Division slated for Summer 2025 to test statewide capabilities
- Hiring a number of new positions through Consequence Management Directorate
- MDEM discussed the new liaison program and its integration with multiple state programs to act as a force multiplier to local operations
- The Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Directorate is shepherding the STORM Act funding. The first bit of funding has been approved by FEMA at \$6.5mil, 2nd largest award in the Nation. We submitted \$25mil in projects.
- Immediate Needs Funding (INF) policy from FEMA may delay awarding for disaster funding. If the award has not been awarded and obligated by the state and is not an immediate need it is put on an indefinite hold.
- Community Disaster Resilience Zones (CDRZ) are used to target assistance from FEMA and affect cost shares. Maryland has several of these zones established.
- The Mesonet project continues to move forward. We will have 72 sites when the project is completed. The University of Maryland is still identifying sites. We have 3

land use agreements signed currently. We are pending construction quotes on these sites. 13 other land use agreements are under review.

- The Mission Support Directorate provided other high-level financial updates and hiring initiatives throughout the directorate.

How MDEM and DoIT are Building Operational Resilience

- MDEM's Cyber Preparedness Unit (CPU) is designed to enhance local government cyber posture.
- CPU was codified in law last year (2022)
- CPU can assist with plan development, cyber incident response planning, EOP checklist, multi-jurisdictional response plans for cyber disruptions, training and exercise for cyber disruption and incident response focusing on integration with the Incident Command System (ICS), linking jurisdictions to vulnerability assessment resources
- MDEM CPU has trained for hundreds of hours to ensure they can provide incident management assistance, act as advisors to jurisdictions on incident command structure and managing a cyber incident, and support staff augmentation for cyber incident planning.
- MDEM State Continuity Unit is designed to ensure continuity of operations for state departments and agencies, continuity of government, enduring constitutional government planning, continuity communications & IT, and records management/retention.
- DoIT Office of Cyber Resilience provides a range of proactive, operational, and reactive services as it relates to cyber resilience.
 - Proactive - Adversary emulation, threat hunting, and cyber continuity
 - Operational - MDOC, MD-ISAC, and Managed SIEM
 - Reactive - Mass Comms, incident response, MD CERT (CSIRT)
- MDSOC was established in 2021. How do we create cyber fusion by 2025?
- Analyst Training Process - defining training and software nodes to understand what skills are required for each situation/need
- Resilience is achieved through alignment of operations, technology, and leadership
- DoIT and MDEM are seeking to collaborate, cooperate, and engage each other and all other stakeholders
- Operational Resilience is the ability to deliver and execute operations, including essential functions and critical business functions, through a disruption from any threat or hazard.
- The components of operational resilience have been defined as:
 - Continuity
 - Disaster Recovery
 - Essential Records
 - Risk Management
 - Cyber Resilience

- Crisis Management
- Consequence Management
- Are these services offered to higher education institutions in Maryland? Yes (from DoIT), though there are legislative constraints. Yes (from MDEM), from a continuity perspective.
- GEMAC discussed how DoIT will reinvigorate trust with local jurisdictions. DoIT noted a Local Cyber Director has been hired to “work tirelessly” until this is accomplished.

Comments from the MDEM Secretary

- MDEM has demonstrated that the organization can virtually manage state incidents. Planning, training, and exercises have paid back enormous returns, operationally.
- The MDEM Secretary is the current President of the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA). NEMA is great at monitoring and advocating for federal legislation in the emergency management sphere.
- There have been discussions of moving FEMA from under the Department of Homeland Security. MDEM will continue to monitor these events.

Learning from the Past & Planning for the Future

Overview

After several years of virtual and hybrid meeting formats, the GEMAC successfully transitioned back to an in-person meeting model. GEMAC members will continue to be provided with a virtual, call-in option as this has proven to increase participation and provide needed flexibility for members. The GEMAC has found a cadence to its meeting agendas, always including briefs from MDEM Directors and Senior Executives, to obtain quarterly program updates as well as the most prevailing challenges the Department is currently tackling. Furthermore, the GEMAC has pivoted to focus on multi-entity coordination and integration efforts between state entities and its impact and operational translation to the local jurisdictions (e.g., coordination between MDEM and MCSS and MDEM and DoIT)

The transition of MDEM to a principal department of the executive branch of state government continues to place an increased demand for services and performance across the organization. Even so, MDEM has maintained a level of dedicated staff support to the GEMAC. Overall, the GEMAC continues to position itself as an effective advisory body to the Governor and MDEM.

Upon the decision to disband the Legislative Affairs Committee, the GEMAC will depend primarily upon MDEM to provide legislative updates, however, it should be noted that several GEMAC members are heavily involved with MACo and MML legislative groups. The GEMAC will also continue to refine the timing and content of recommendations to the Governor’s Office, commensurate with its current ability to produce such documents. The

GEMAC will continue to provide all-hazards advice to the Governor, MDEM, and the Maryland emergency management discipline. As stated in the 2022 Annual Report, the GEMAC investigated topics of cyber preparedness and security, COOP, terrorism, and resilience. Given the importance of these topics, the GEMAC will likely continue to drill into these same concepts in 2024, along with a special focus on 911 and other programmatic initiatives that appear within MDEM. Other possible topics could include the parallels between civil defense, humanitarian aid, and emergency management as well as defining the programmatic/operational overlaps between the GEMAC, SERC, and HMEP grant.

Upcoming Meetings

The GEMAC traditionally meets on a quarterly basis, with meeting schedules tailored to fit current events. The GEMAC has based its annual meeting schedule around the legislative requirement to provide this report on 01 December of every year. Anticipated meeting dates for 2024 are as follows:

- December 2023 (virtual)
- March 2024
- June 2024
- September 2024

Appendix A: Membership Roster

Name	Position Title	Designation
Adrian Grieve	Division Disaster State Relations Director (PA, MD, DE, DC & FEMA RIII), American Red Cross	Member
Bruce Wahl	Former Mayor of Chesapeake Beach	Member
Clay Stamp	County Manager, Talbot County	Member
David Willenborg	Sr. Engineer, Technical Support, Department of Defense, NAVAIR	Member
Douglas Brown	Deputy Director, Carroll County Department of Public Works	Member
Dwayne Freeman	Director of High Homeland Security, Washington County Public Schools	Member
Earl "Buddy" Hance	Commissioner, Calvert County	Member
Jasper Jones	Budget Analyst, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	Member
Jennifer Martin	Deputy Commissioner, Population Health and Disease Prevention, Baltimore City Health Department	Member
Jonathan Bratt	Executive Director, UMB Office of Emergency Management	Member
Jonathan Dayton	Maryland State Firemen's Association	Member
Jonathan Favorite	Director of Technical Services, Communications Electronics, Inc.	Member
Joseph LaFleur	Manager, Crisis Management/Business Continuity/IT Disaster Recovery, GP Strategies Corporation	Member
Kevin Simmons	Director, Office of Emergency Management, City of Annapolis	Member
Mike Berna	Fire Chief, Maryland Fire Chiefs Association	Member
Robert Poole	Retired Special Agent, ATF; ODNI, Insider Threat SME	Member
Ronald "Ronnie" Gill	Director, Office of Homeland Security and Office of Emergency Management, Prince George's County	Chairperson
Ryan Miller	Principal, Critical Functions, LLC	Member
Stephen Wantz	Commissioner, Carroll County	Member
Thomas Moran	Executive Director, All Hazards Consortium	Member
Tiffany Green	Fire Chief, Prince George's County Fire and EMS Department	Member
Timothy Cameron	Sheriff, St. Mary's County	Member
Marverly Nettles	Exercise Planner, Government Consulting Firm	Member
Ex-Officio & Support Staff		
Russell Strickland	Secretary, MDEM	Ex-officio
MG Janeen L. Birckhead	The Adjutant General	Ex-officio
BG Adam Flasch, (USA), Ret.	Director, Maryland Governor's Office of Homeland Security	Ex-officio
Brittany Cook	Executive Associate to Secretary Strickland	Staff Support
Blake Langford	Chief Program Management Officer, MDEM	Staff Support