



Pennsylvania
Emergency Management Agency

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**Shapiro Administration Highlights Continued Commitment to Building
an Effective Emergency Management System Across the
Commonwealth**

*Thousands of hours of training provided to dozens of emergency management
personnel and first responders at all levels of government*

Harrisburg, PA – Today the **Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA)** highlighted the **Shapiro Administration's** ongoing work to build a robust and effective emergency management system in Pennsylvania to mitigate against, prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters and other emergencies.

“A comprehensive state-wide emergency management program requires a professionally trained workforce to meet the needs of the communities and people in Pennsylvania that could be affected by disasters,” said **PEMA Director Randy Padfield**. “Some of this training happens in a classroom, sometimes it’s on-line, and sometimes it’s hands-on learning while working with partner organizations.”

From 2023 – 2025, PEMA delivered nearly **150 courses totaling more than 2,700 hours** of training for state agency plus county and municipal emergency partners, and first responders. During that same period, **214** emergency managers across the state completed certification requirements and were issued **certifications** at either the associate or professional level in accordance with the requirements set by the agency.

The certification process requires specialized coursework and exercises to demonstrate knowledge and proficiency in emergency management preparedness, response, mitigation, and recovery functions. Emergency management professionals need to recertify every five years by completing 75 hours of continuing education and demonstrating active engagement in emergency management program administration.

Response

While we train and exercise to primarily respond to disasters in the Commonwealth, since 2023, more than **100 personnel** and specialized response teams have deployed to [California](#), [Vermont](#), [Hawaii](#), [North Carolina](#), [Florida](#), [Alaska](#) and most recently [Rhode Island](#) to support response and recovery operations after natural disasters through the **Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC)**. These deployments were

staffed by workers from **PEMA, Department of Transportation, PA State Police, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources**, and the **Pennsylvania National Guard**.

“These deployments provide invaluable opportunities for our teams to refine the very skills they would need to respond effectively to a major disaster here in the Commonwealth,” said **PEMA EMAC Coordinator Jonathan Anschutz**. “By supporting other states in their time of need, our personnel and teams have the ability to continue to hone their skills, we have the ability to build greater depth of capacity, and we strengthen the interstate partnerships that we can call upon when Pennsylvania faces its own emergencies.”

“During Alaska’s October 2025 Ex-Typhoon Halong storm disaster, Pennsylvania joined over 20 other states to come to Alaska and help. Alaska’s disaster covered over 1,000 miles of Alaskan coastal communities and forced the emergency air evacuation of over 1,000 survivors to shelters in Anchorage,” said **State of Alaska Emergency Operations Center Incident Commander Mark W. Roberts**. “This was the largest air evacuation in the United States since Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and mutual aid emergency management personnel from Pennsylvania, who came through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, were a key part in moving and supporting survivors as they faced destroyed homes and total property loss.”

[EMAC](#) is a formal agreement that allows states to share resources, such as personnel or equipment, during disasters, with the requesting state covering all costs. EMAC was created to serve as an all-hazards national mutual aid system and has been ratified by the U.S. Congress with participation from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Northern Mariana Islands.

Recovery

In the ongoing effort to recover quicker after a disaster, recovery staff at PEMA recently delivered **eight training sessions** to emergency management professionals across Pennsylvania to familiarize them with the Commonwealth’s new damage assessment tool that is fully integrated into the state’s crisis management system. Accurate local damage assessments are completed at the municipal level and are critical to recovering faster for both individuals and communities affected by disasters, and identifying any potential federal disaster relief that may be available.

“Damage assessments are the backbone of the recovery process,” said **PEMA Deputy Director for Recovery Larry West**. “They set the foundation for recovery and they help in determining which areas may qualify for federal or state disaster assistance.”

Governor Shapiro’s [2026-27 budget proposal](#) includes a **\$5 million** allocation for the commonwealth’s **Disaster Recovery Assistance Program ([DRAP](#))**. Since **DRAP** was established in 2023, the program has provided more than **\$450,000** in assistance direct

to Pennsylvanians after a variety of disasters, including [Somerset County flooding](#) and apartment building fires in [Philadelphia](#) and [Pittsburgh](#).

PEMA also has been authorized to establish a new **Commonwealth Public Assistance Program** to assist communities recovering from disasters. As the infrastructure damage thresholds to request federal assistance rise, Pennsylvania will stand ready to help eligible municipalities make needed repairs to damaged critical public infrastructure not paid for by insurance or other funding sources.

Learn more about the **Shapiro Administration's** efforts to support Pennsylvanians in the [Governor's 2026-27 budget](#).

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