

# Town of Portsmouth Rhode Island

## Hurricane Irene After Action Review

August 31, 2011

Town Private

Cover Page

**Hurricane Irene After Action Review      August 31, 2011      Town Private**  
**Page 1 of 4****Portsmouth EMA / EOC****Strengths**

- Hurrevac software tool provided very accurate forecast model 3 days in advance of Irene
- Red Cross shelter (PMS) was fully operational by evacuation time
- PMS shelter staffed by two volunteer Amateur Radio operators at all times
- EOC had sufficient comms equipment redundancy to maintain radio communications with all units in spite of hardware failures
- EOC had backup power within 3 seconds of commercial power fail (09:30 Sunday)
- Amateur Radio field report was very valuable in discovering broken pole on main electric power transmission line to Island
- Good job from volunteers
- RCI radio network stayed up (Amateur state-wide network)

**Weaknesses**

- WiFi Internet connectivity poor in EOC
- EOC room lights not wired to emergency power generator
- No 800 radios at PMS shelter – all Shelter to EOC comms conducted via Amateur Radio
- Unable to contact RIEMA Saturday night (Multiple attempts on RISCON 800 RIEMA1 channel and MSTARs beginning at 21:20)
- Unable to contact PMS shelter via radio (10 minute duration) Radio op at PMS not familiar with overly complex radio
- Initial EOC staffing was one person per shift – not sufficient
- Multiple, prolonged System-busy failures on RISCON TownWide channel and RIEMA1 channel.
- WebEOC requires an additional person, which we did not have (RIEMA would not honor resource requests unless submitted by WebEOC.)
- Total telephone failure (19 minutes after commercial power fail) Hard failure for duration of event. Unable to make outgoing calls from EOC.
- Total Internet failure (coincident with phone fail) Duration same as above.
- RICON 800 TownWide channel unusable (44 minutes after power fail)
- Generator issue at Lawton Valley water plant – came within 24 hours of a no-water situation
- Portsmouth EOC did not have radio contact with any other local EOC.
- Inability to get timely Skywarn info from NWS via Amateur Radio (WX1BOX Taunton NWS)
- Insufficient staffing at EOC
- Insufficient staffing at shelter
- RIEMA lack of support – hindrance rather than help
- RIEMA conference calls poor scheduling and poor quality
- Did not bring in Water, Building Inspector soon enough
- EOC should have been used to report damage and lines down
- Natl Grid reporting wants detail info not available to EOC (address, pole number)
- Media notifications insufficient
- Evacuation – people didn't regard seriously      (continued on next page)

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- Presidential Declaration – When is an emergency not an emergency? Emergency – disaster? Reimbursement issues

**Police Dept****Strengths**

- Good coordination between departments
- 800 MHz radios worked well for local PPD
- Officers performed well
- Sufficient resources
- Good meals provided by PFD
- Parking Ban effective

**Weaknesses**

- No town notification (code red or similar)
- Not enough public notice (broadcast media and other) – went through RIEMA
- Get PIO on line sooner (2 day advance)
- Mandatory vs advisory evacuation
- Re-entry plans
- Sailboat problem in Island Park impacted power to large area – plan for mitigation – legal?
- Telephone system
- RIEMA resource bottleneck – WebEOC
- Need fleet card for fuel

**Dept of Public Works****Strengths**

- Excellent cooperation / interoperability between departments
- Storm weather forecasting helpful
- DPW Safety meetings before event – saved a serious injury (chainsaw mishap)

**Weaknesses**

- Early notification (code red or similar)
- Need staff augmentation
- Need to know about reimbursement sooner to apportion resources (post event cleanup)
- Residents unclear about cleanup (related to above)
- Should have opened town transfer station Wednesday (normally closed on Wed)
- Prudence resources
- Chip n go – National Grid

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**School Dept**

**Strengths**

- Staffing good
- Kudos to Red Cross
- Generator good

**Weaknesses**

- Communications
- Need more outlets on emergency power
- Secondary shelter (PHS) :?
- Internet failure

**Wind Turbine**

**Strengths**

- Performed shutdown well
- Could get real time weather info to EOC

**Weaknesses**

- Battery recharge time excessive (after power fail)

**Town Administrator**

**Strengths**

- Cooperation among agencies
- Conference calls useful
- Forecasting useful for evacuation timing

**Weaknesses**

- Communications at town level (Town council, Water)
- Notifications

**Prudence Island Fire**

**Strengths**

- Good cooperation on PI
- Good communication with mainland
- Station manned 24 hours
- Good success supporting O2-dependent patients
- Generators worked well

**Weaknesses**

- Needed one additional senior officer
- Power line down – no way to remediate

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**Building Inspection Dept**

**Strengths**

- Good cooperation with State building Commission
- Able to asses damage single handed

**Weaknesses**

- Internet failure
- Phone failure

**Electrical Dept**

**Strengths**

- Communications (cell)

**Weaknesses**

- Power lines down – reporting through civilian number

**Finance Dept**

**Strengths**

- Good response from DEM

**Weaknesses**

- Phone failure
- Unsure of reimbursement

**Fire Department**

**Strengths**

- Good personnel response
- Fire channel radio communications good
- Backup generator worked well
- No injuries
- Special needs registry

**Weaknesses**

- Manpower thin
- Need a clerical person during incidents
- 800 MHz failures
- Quarters tight
- Phone failure
- Internet failure
- Station domestic hot water not on emergency power
- Station central A/C not on emergency power