

# **NFPA 1600® Handbook: Emergency Management and Continuity Programs**

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# NFPA 1600® Handbook: Emergency Management and Continuity Programs

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1<sup>st</sup> Edition

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With the complete text of the 2016 edition of *NFPA 1600®, Standard on Disaster/Emergency Management  
and Business Continuity/Continuity of Operations Programs*



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# Preface

“By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail,” is a quote commonly accredited to Benjamin Franklin. Although the origin of this saying is often called into question, the meaning behind it is not. Preparation is a key component of a community’s resilience. Today, *NFPA 1600* is the only standard in the world that integrates both emergency management and continuity elements into a single program that focuses on making entities more resilient. It is the culmination of many years of hard work and improvements. With the world around us ever changing, the *NFPA 1600* standard has been evolving with the times as well. *NFPA 1600* first came out in 1995 with the title “Recommended Practice for Disaster Management.” In 2004, *NFPA 1600* was recognized by the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (the 9/11 Commission) as a national preparedness standard and has been adopted by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security as a voluntary consensus standard for emergency preparedness.

Although emergency management is not a new field, it was not until events such as the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami, Hurricane Katrina in 2005, and the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster that was triggered by the Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami in 2011 that emergency management hit the mainstream media. Images of the destruction of these events came into everyone’s home and affected citizens throughout the world. In 2005, Hurricane Katrina affected the Southeastern coast of the United States causing death and destruction; residents of New Orleans were evacuated from their homes and sheltered throughout the country. A little-known fact is that during the Hurricane Katrina response, the Mexican Army provided humanitarian efforts in San Antonio, Texas, by supplying meals to evacuees and responders.

The White House report in 2006, *The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned*, reported that Hurricane Katrina developed from a Category 4 to a Category 5 storm over a 6-hour period. The National Weather Service issued warnings to Louisiana residents — of certain death — if they remained in the area, and of possible power outages that could last for weeks. Although some evacuated the area, others did not, and post-storm residents of New Orleans were part of one of the largest search and rescue operations in the United States.

As a result of the White House report and the vivid media coverage, need for emergency management in the United States was thrust into the public eye, as were the importance of an all-hazard approach to emergency management and the benefits of pre-planning for disasters.

With all of the improvements made to *NFPA 1600* in this recent revision cycle, the document is revitalized and ready to continue to inform people, businesses, organizations, and communities. It is a valuable resource for any emergency manager, continuity expert, student, or anyone interested in learning about what goes into developing and assessing these programs.

Users of this handbook should understand that the commentary provided does not reflect the official position of the NFPA. The commentary reflects the views of the editors and contributors to this handbook. This NFPA standard cannot be written to address every possible situation that may occur, so it must be applied in good judgment and good sense with an awareness of the context, constraints, and rationale.





# Acknowledgments

This first edition of the *NFPA 1600 Handbook* was built from the ground up and took a great deal of work. Creating this book was truly a team effort, and we would like to thank all of those who have contributed. Your knowledge, dedication, and passion are appreciated, and we could not have done this alone.

This handbook and the commentary in it are a testament to the dedication and the leadership of the committee members who selflessly work to help countless people they will never meet. Many of those committee members who helped develop the standard also contributed to the development of this handbook, and we would like to acknowledge their efforts.

Producing this handbook has taken a tremendous amount of effort from a number of people on the NFPA staff. Specifically we would like to thank the production team of this handbook, including Cheryl Langway, interior design and art production manager; Tracy Gaudet, permissions editor; and Ellen Cosgrove, copy editor and proofreader. We would also like to thank Debra Rose, senior product manager, and Khela Thorne, development and production editor, whose dedication and hard work have kept this project moving forward through thick and thin. We also thank Ken Willette and Ryan Depew for their invaluable advice and instrumental guidance in bringing this handbook into reality.

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