



World Bank/OECS Emergency Recovery and Disaster Management Project

Government of Saint Lucia

Emergency Shelter Policy for Saint Lucia

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**EMERGENCY SHELTER MANAGEMENT POLICY
FOR
SAINT LUCIA**

CONTENTS	PAGE
1.0 Introduction	3
2.0 Authority	3
3.0 Purpose	4
4.0 General Policy	4
5.0 Goals of Shelter Management Policy	4
6.0 Detailed Policy	4

EMERGENCY SHELTER MANAGEMENT POLICY FOR SAINT LUCIA

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The protection of life and property and the alleviation of suffering and hardships caused by disasters is the fundamental responsibility of government. Being cognizant of these responsibilities the government of Saint Lucia is determined that they are met. The overall policy of the government regarding disaster management is to establish and maintain the optimum system for mitigating the effects of disasters. The government has therefore established and implemented program for disaster preparedness and response coordinated by the national office, which has responsibility for coordinating all disaster management activities.

The impact of disasters on our Communities has highlighted the need for coordinated shelter management programs at the national level. Communities in the review of their response efforts, highlighted the need for technical and other support to address the shelter issues which arose. The absence of a clearly articulated shelter policy has resulted in the lack of an organized program to adequately address emergency shelter needs. Sectors of the population made homeless by past disaster events were without adequate temporary shelter reiterating the need to put in place a coordinated program informed by a policy.

The absence of a coordinated national shelter program also resulted in the lack of trained personnel, insufficient quantities of temporary shelter materials and an inability to meet the requirements of homeless persons.

In an effort to ensure that policy for shelter management is addressed at the national level on the island, the National Emergency Management Organisation [NEMO] is proposing a model policy, which can be adapted for use here. The policy addresses areas of shelter management such as training, maintenance and retrofitting of shelters, responsibility of shelter occupants, government and the private sector, the staffing of shelters.

2.0 AUTHORITY

The **EMERGENCY SHELTER MANAGEMENT POLICY FOR SAINT LUCIA** as part of the National Disaster Management Plan, documents Government's commitment to disaster preparedness, prevention, mitigation and effective response. It defines the organizational and functional mechanisms and procedures for carrying out a disaster program should an event occur.

This Plan was designed under the guidance of the Saint Lucia National Disaster Coordinator as a responsibility conferred by the Cabinet of Ministers on **August 1, 1996** by decision No: **1149 of 1996**.

3.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to define the context for the establishment, maintenance and provision of emergency shelter within the national emergency management system and available resources.

4.0 GENERAL POLICY

It is the policy of the Government to take action to mitigate the effects of natural and other disasters within its available resources. The shelter management policy is designed to be of service to the community augmenting the resources of the private sector and non-government organizations to cope with the emergency shelter needs resulting from a threatened alert or the aftermath of a disaster. Persons rendered homeless by natural or other disasters will be provided with temporary shelter giving priority attention to vulnerable groups, particularly the physically and mentally challenged, and the elderly and low-income groups.

The functions and services of the national emergency shelter management programme will be maintained in a constant state of readiness in accordance with the national policy for disasters.

5.0 GOAL OF SHELTER MANAGEMENT POLICY

The goal of the shelter management policy is to:

- 5.1 Ensure that victims of disasters who have been made homeless are provided with temporary shelter or support for expediting their rehabilitation.
- 5.2 Establish minimum shelter requirements for facilities, which are potential emergency shelters.
- 5.3 Establish a mechanism for the provision of services for emergency shelter.
- 5.4 link shelter management with the national evacuation and relief programmes.
- 5.5 To establish the mechanism for the management, identification, maintenance and upkeep of shelters.

6.0 DETAILED POLICY

On the coming into force of this policy the Government shall within its means and available resources organize and manage a national program for emergency shelter. Emphasis will be placed on taking precautionary and mitigative measures to strengthen and retrofit building providing equipment supplies and staff for shelters. The necessary legislation will be enacted to support all aspects of the Emergency Shelter Program.

The first priority for the government is to ensure that all citizens have shelter, which can withstand the effects of disasters. In the event of a threatened alert that a disaster results in the need for emergency shelters, the selection of structurally sound buildings is the chief priority.

The Government will encourage cooperation and consultation between the appropriate government agencies, the private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOS) to ensure the provision of adequate temporary shelter for persons rendered homeless as a result of a threatened alert or emergency disaster.

The Government will establish a national group with the responsibility for managing and supervising the national emergency shelter programme.

Structurally sound and fully stocked emergency shelters as recommended by the National Emergency Shelter Programme, will be provided.

The necessary action in support of programmes to expedite the rehabilitation of the homeless victims of disasters particularly in situations where there are long term sheltering requirements will be undertaken.

The cost of retrofitting emergency shelter buildings fully owned by Government will be sustained and also the necessary retrofitting of privately owned buildings would be arranged to ensure emergency shelters meet the required standards.

The necessary action will be taken to ensure public buildings which are potential emergency shelters Schools, Churches and Community Centres are sited and constructed according to established building codes being use in the country and the region and they are equipped with the standard internal provisions recommended by the emergency shelter programme.

Provide in the annual budget estimates for the maintenance, stocking and outfitting of emergency shelters.

The necessary action will be taken to ensure that the relevant government departments and agencies conduct an annual evaluation of shelters, according to the standard guidelines defined by the emergency shelter programme.

Arrange for the repairs of privately owned buildings pre-designated as shelters if any damage is done to them by occupants of the building while they are being used as such.

Maintain a list of public and private buildings suitable for use as emergency shelters during a disaster alert or in the aftermath of a disaster and issue regulations governing their use.

Designate the periods for which shelters can be used during a threatened disaster alert or in the aftermath of a disaster.

Provide a mandatory programme of training for personnel designated as shelter managers or potential managers to ensure they are full equipped for their responsibility.

Mandate that the National Emergency Shelter body meets before the activation of the national emergency operations centre or at the earliest practical time thereafter.

The necessary action will be taken to ensure that information is disseminated on:-

- Government's role and responsibility in shelter management
- The activation and closure of shelters
- Location of shelters
- Liability of government and shelter occupants
- Shelter regulations
- The law concerning shelters and shelter management