



Government of Saint Lucia



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Ministry of External Affairs Guidelines in Case of Disasters

Document of the Saint Lucia National Emergency Management Plan

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Modeled on upon a PAHO Document

[sgd] Cosmos Richardson

*Approved by
[Permanent Secretary]*

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*Approved by
[NEMAC]*

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INTRODUCTION

In June 2001, the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Barbados hosted a workshop on the “Role of Foreign Affairs in Disaster.” The objectives of the Workshop included inter alia:

1. Defining with Representatives of Ministries of Foreign Affairs their role in disaster management; and
2. Drafting guidelines for Ministries of Foreign Affairs and their Missions.

The guide agreed to and which formed the basis for this document – Disaster Plan of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Civil Aviation of St. Lucia - is the result of the collective effort of the several International and Regional Organisations.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE DISASTER PLAN

1. To establish principles and procedures for the Ministry of External Affairs, International Trade and Civil Aviation and its Missions in disaster situations.
2. To ensure coordination of international assistance for national disaster.
3. To facilitate timely mobilization of appropriate disaster relief assistance.

The National Emergency Management Organisation (NEMO) is the central agency responsible for co-ordination of disaster relief exercises in Saint Lucia. Every government ministry has a NEMO contact official who is responsible for liaising with NEMO. The NEMO contact person in the Ministry of External Affairs, International Trade and Civil Aviation is the Deputy Permanent Secretary.

The Permanent Secretary represents the Ministry at NEMO Headquarters before, during and after a storm/hurricane and after other disasters such as earthquakes, fires and plane crashes.

THE DISASTER PLAN

The responsibilities of the Ministry are:

1. Being the official spokesperson for the Government to communicate to the international community requests for international assistance and information on the extent of damage and casualties.
2. Answering queries from governments regarding foreign nationals living or visiting the country/area during the disaster.
3. Coordinating relief efforts of Saint Lucian nationals overseas through its Missions.
4. Coordinating international assistance with the assistance of its missions.
5. Assisting foreign nationals living or visiting Saint Lucia who wish to leave the country after a disaster with visas and travel documents.
6. Coordinating the repatriation of fatalities of foreigners.

THE DISASTER TEAM

All staff of the Ministry (headquarters and missions) are responsible for execution of the Disaster Plan in the event of a disaster.

The Disaster Team of the Ministry and its missions comprises of:

Headquarters (Ministry)

Minister

Permanent Secretary

Deputy Permanent Secretary

Heads of Divisions

Assistant Secretary

Administrative Assistant

Accountant

Missions

Head of Mission

Deputy Head of Mission

Consular Officer

Accountant

ACTION PROCEDURE

PRE DISASTER

STORM/HURRICANE

1. In the event that Saint Lucia is threatened by a storm / hurricane, the chair of the National Emergency and Advisory Committee (NEMAC) the Prime Minister, will summon a meeting of NEMAC members of which the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, International Trade and Civil Aviation is a member.
2. **The Permanent Secretary** will:
 - ❖ Inform the minister and the NEMO official contact in the ministry, the Deputy Permanent Secretary, of the NEMAC meeting.
 - ❖ Obtain from NEMO a preliminary list of supplies which will be required within the first twenty-four hours after the disaster.
3. **The Deputy Permanent Secretary** will:
 - ❖ Immediately put all members of the Disaster Team (both locally and overseas) on the alert and will keep them apprised of developments as received from the Permanent Secretary.
 - ❖ Forward NEMO's preliminary list of supplies to the mission and regional friendly governments, the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), the CARICOM Secretariat and other regional organisations as

directed by NEMO.

The minister will meet with the resident diplomatic corp to apprise them of the situation and inform them of the list of supplies which will be required the first twenty-four hours after the storm/hurricane.

4. **The Chief Information Officer** will ensure that:

- ❖ Information received from the Deputy Permanent Secretary regarding the threat is immediately and correctly dispatched to the missions and resident diplomatic corp.
- ❖ Information received from external sources is immediately passed to the Permanent Secretary and Deputy Permanent Secretary.

5. The Disaster Team will immediately follow the Ministry's "Plan for the Protection of Documents and Equipment". The Assistant Secretary assisted by the Administrative Assistant will ensure that all aspects of the Plan are followed and there is easy access to offices, particularly the communications room, in the post disaster period.

The Accountant is responsible for the following:

- ❖ Ensuring that all vehicles are filled with gas and in working order;
- ❖ Waterproof covering is available to ensure safety of all equipment and documents;

- ❖ Staff of the disaster team has phone cards to allow for communication during and after the disaster;
- ❖ Staff has sufficient stationary to allow for swift communication during and after the disaster.

The Chief Information Officer is responsible for:

1. Ensuring that all photocopying and fax machines are in working order and are adequately equipped with stationery.
2. There is easy access to the required official stamps to allow for rapid dispatch of correspondence.

OVERSEAS MISSIONS

On notification of the threat of disaster, the Head of Mission will:

- Activate the Mission's Disaster Team;
- Alert the Saint Lucia Associations in their area and establish a core group with which it will liaise regarding information dissemination and coordination of assistance;
- Notify key organisations and agencies in their area e.g. the United Nations

and its agencies in New York; The Commonwealth Secretariat in London; the Organisation of American States in Washington;

- Notify friendly governments;
- Inform all of the above of NEMO's preliminary supplies list for the post disaster period.

Heads of Missions are to liaise only with the Ministry of External Affairs (Minister/Permanent Secretary/Deputy Permanent Secretary) so as to prevent duplication of requests and confusion of information.

EARTHQUAKE

In the event of an earthquake staff **should not flee** from the building. Staff must **seek shelter in doorframes or under desks** until the quake has passed. After the quake staff should **immediately** vacate the building using **only** the stairs and congregate in the **car park in front of the Greaham Louisy building closest to the waterfront for a headcount**. In the event that it is not possible to congregate in the car park staff should proceed to the Vigie field grounds for the headcount by the Assistant Secretary.

FIRE

The presence or threat of a fire must be dealt with immediately. The Deputy Permanent Secretary and the Assistant Secretary must be informed immediately.

The Assistant Secretary and the Administrative Assistant will be responsible for alerting staff and visitors via telephone and requesting that they vacate the building **immediately**. The Assistant Secretary will alert persons on the fifth floor, the Administrative Assistant will alert persons on the seventh floor.

Staff must vacate the building **using only the stairs and should congregate in the car park at the side of the Bank of Saint Lucia on the John Compton Highway where a headcount will be done** by the Assistant Secretary. **The elevator must NOT be used.** The **register of visitors** to the building **must be collected** by the Assistant Secretary to be used during the headcount in the car park. Should the stairs be impossible to use due to smoke/fire staff should use the rear doors of the office which lead to the car park.

The Deputy Permanent Secretary will be responsible for immediately contacting the Fire Service, the ambulance, the Ministry of the Public Service and other occupants in the building. The Ministry of the Public Service will be requested to inform NIPRO so as to alert its security and other staff to prevent persons from entering the building.

Staff will return to the offices on the advice of officials of the Fire Service and the Ministry of Health, Human Services Family Affairs and Gender Relations.

BOMB THREAT

Bomb threats should be brought to the immediate attention of the Minister, the Permanent Secretary and the Deputy Permanent Secretary.

The Assistant Secretary and the Administrative Assistant will be responsible for requesting staff and visitors via telephone to immediately vacate the building using **ONLY** the stairs. The Assistant Secretary will contact staff and visitors on the fifth floor, the Administrative Assistant will contact staff on the seventh floor.

The Deputy Permanent Secretary will alert other organisations which occupy the building and will immediately contact the police, the fire and the ambulance services and the Ministry of the Public Service which will be responsible for contacting NIPRO (the managers of the building). The Register of visitors will be collected from the Security Officer by the Assistant Secretary.

Staff will **congregate in the car park on the side of the Bank of Saint Lucia on the Castries Waterfront** for a headcount by the Assistant Secretary. Staff will return to the offices on the advice of the police.

PLANE CRASH

NEMO will inform the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, International Trade & Civil Aviation of the plane crash.

The Civil Aviation Officer will:

- Liaise with the Saint Lucia Air and Sea Ports Authority (SLASPA) to obtain details regarding nationalities, injuries and fatalities and will forward this information to the Minister and the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry;

- Maintain contact with SLASPA and the Government Information Service.

The **Consular Division** of the Ministry will be responsible for the following:

1. Informing the overseas missions of the crash and providing information on injuries and fatalities;
2. Liaising with foreign governments on arrangements for the repatriation of their nationals;
3. Liaising with the Ministry of Health, Human Services and Family Affairs and foreign governments regarding medical treatment overseas for injuries which can not be treated locally;
4. Maintaining accurate records of foreign nationals injured or killed in the crash.

The Minister / Permanent Secretary will meet with the resident diplomatic corp to provide them with information on the plane crash.

GENERAL POST DISASTER PROCEDURE

1. Members of Post Disaster Team will communicate with each other and report to the Ministry to assess the damage and to receive reports from Permanent Secretary for urgent dispatch to the overseas missions. The Permanent Secretary will report to NEMO Headquarters.
2. The Permanent Secretary will keep the Minister and Deputy Permanent Secretary informed as to the extent of the damage and the nature of international assistance required by the government. In the event the Permanent Secretary is unable to report to NEMO he/she will be replaced by the Deputy Permanent Secretary.
3. Government ministries and private sector agencies who wish to liaise with the missions must direct all communication through the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, International Trade and Civil Aviation.
4. The **Deputy Permanent Secretary** will:
 - ❖ Immediately contact the missions to confirm the disaster;
 - ❖ Supervise and coordinate the post disaster operations of the ministry;
 - ❖ Apprise the Minister and Permanent Secretary all offers of assistance received by the ministry.

5. **The Assistant Secretary and the Administrative Assistant** are responsible for:

- ❖ Liaising with Heads of Division/staff of the divisions regarding the extent of damage to their division and to the building at large;
- ❖ Forwarding as soon as possible a costed damage report to the costing and forward a copy to the Permanent Secretary and Deputy Permanent Secretary for information;
- ❖ Clear up/clean up exercise, repairs;
- ❖ Identifying and obtaining new equipment and furniture and other supplies.

6. **The Accountant** will be responsible for identifying funds for the purchase of equipment, furniture and supplies.

The ministry as the governments' official contact with foreign governments and regional and international organisations will be one of the first ministries to receive the following:

- The official preliminary damage assessment report from NEMO and the final damage report;
- The Government Information Service press releases ;
- Requests for assistance from NEMO.

The **Deputy Permanent Secretary** will immediately forward the above to its

overseas missions, the diplomatic corp in Saint Lucia and regional organisations such as CARICOM and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS).

Staff of the Political and Development Cooperation Division will assist with the processing of assistance offers to and from friendly governments and regional and international organizations.

The Minister, Permanent Secretary, accompanied by **the Deputy Permanent Secretary** and **Chief Consular Officer** will meet with members of the resident diplomatic corp for the purpose of briefing them on the damage and informing them of the needs of the country. Members of the diplomatic corp will inform of the casualties of their nationals and the assistance required.

7. **The Chief Consular Officer** will be responsible for assisting foreign nationals living and visiting Saint Lucia during the disaster with the necessary travel documents to facilitate their return to their countries, if they so require. A committee comprising officials from the police, the Ministry of Health, Human Services, Family Services and Gender Relations, Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs and National Security, airlines and other transportation owners will be responsible for attending to fatalities of foreigners and repatriations. The committee will be coordinated by the Ministry of External Affairs, International Trade and Civil Aviation. The Consular Division of the ministry will be responsible for liaising with the foreign governments to obtain details regarding arrangements for repatriations and transfers of casualties and fatalities among foreign nationals.

Staff of other divisions of the ministry will be called upon to assist the staff of the Consular Division.

8. The Information Officer will be responsible for:

- Ensuring swift and efficient distribution of correspondence from all sources to the Permanent Secretary and the Deputy Permanent Secretary;
- Swift and efficient distribution of copies of documentation to staff as directed by the Permanent Secretary and Deputy Permanent Secretary.
- Ensuring constant and effective communication with external agencies.
- Ensuring that separate records are maintained and secured for all communication pertaining to the post disaster period.
- Ensuring that all outgoing communication has been cleared by the Permanent Secretary or the Deputy Permanent Secretary

9. The Permanent Secretary is responsible for:

- Ensuring that proper records are maintained of assistance received from external sources, and that cash donations are deposited with the Office of the Accountant General and or Banks as specified by the Office of the Accountant General.
- Keeping NEMO informed of all assistance which the ministry has been

offered and apprising the ministry of which offers NEMO has accepted.

- 10. The Protocol Division** will be responsible for organizing and coordinating all visits by foreign government and officials of international and regional organisation whose visit is directly related to the disaster.

MISSIONS

Heads of Missions on receipt of confirmation/information of a disaster and receipt of the preliminary report will inform with officials of the international organisation and foreign governments in their areas and the core group of Saint Lucian Association representatives of the occurrence of a disaster and will meet with them to discuss the extent of damage and provide them with the list of relief items required, as presented by the Ministry.

Heads of missions are responsible for:

1. Coordination of all external assistance from their jurisdiction;
2. Maintaining accurate records of all assistance given as follows:
 - Description of donation
 - Name, address and contact detail of the donor
 - Responsibility of delivery costs
 - Type of delivery
 - Cost of the donation

Heads of missions must refrain from accepting unsolicited and unnecessary items. Heads of missions must in the interest of reducing duplication of tasks and requests must liaise only with the Ministry of External Affairs, International Trade and Civil Aviation (Minister and or Permanent Secretary)

Cash Donations

The Heads of Missions should ensure, in the case of cash donations that accurate records must be kept as follows:

1. Name, address and contact details of donor
2. The amount of cash donated
3. Government agency or banking institution to which cash denotation has been deposited.
4. As directed by the Office of the Accountant General.

The Deputy Head of Mission is responsible for ensuring that:

1. All packages are addressed to the Director, National Emergency Management Office, Castries, Saint Lucia;
2. All packages are marked Relief Supplies- (name of disaster);
3. Labels on packages are all in ENGLISH;
4. Packaging is done based on type of item to facilitate easy and quick distribution in Saint Lucia;
5. Size and weight of packages are clearly marked;

6. Advance notice is given to the Ministry of External Affairs, International Trade and Civil Aviation of the following:

- Name of vessel/flight number;
- List of contents including size;
- Value in currency;
- Date of arrival and port of arrival;
- Instructions regarding special requirements for handling and sorting.

The Ministry of External Affairs, International Trade and Civil Aviation is responsible for forwarding the above information to director of NEMO. NEMO will be responsible for clearing the packages from customs and for transportation to and storage in its warehouses.

The Permanent Secretary will be guided by the Director of NEMO as to the stand down phase and will inform staff accordingly.