

Key Definitions

Disaster: an event in which a community undergoes severe danger and incurs, or is threatened to incur, such losses to persons and/or property that the resources available within the community are severely taxed.

Disaster Behavior: behavioral acts induced by actual, or threat of, disaster, including those of victims, potential victims, helpers, governmental and non-governmental agencies, and private sector organizations.

Accident: an unexpected or undesirable event, especially one causing injury to a small number of individuals and/or modest damage to physical structures.

Emergency: an unexpected event which places life and/or property in danger and requires an immediate response through the use of routine community resources and procedures.

Mass Emergency: an unexpected or undesirable event which requires the resources from most or all municipal departments and limited assistance from outside agencies may be needed.

Catastrophe: an event in which a society incurs, or is threatened to incur, such losses to persons and/or property that the entire society is affected and extraordinary resources and skills are required, some of which must come from other nations.

Calamity: a massive or extreme catastrophic disaster that extends over time and space.

Hazard: a condition with the potential for harm to the community or environment.

Disaster Agent: a class or category of phenomena that cause disasters, such as hurricanes, earthquakes, or tornadoes.