

PARISH DISASTER COMMITTEES (cont'd)

Each Parish has a Parish Disaster Coordinator, who is responsible for coordinating all activities geared towards awareness, prevention and response. Each Parish Disaster Committee has the responsibility of formulating a parish plan for local emergencies in keeping with the guidelines set out by ODPEM. They also forge links with the response agencies, community groups and community-based organizations.

ZONAL PROGRAMME

A National Zonal Programme was instituted by ODPEM to give communities the ability to manage local interventions in preparedness and response, for at least the first 72 hours, until further assistance could reach them. This programme works by dividing the island into clusters of communities called zones.

Each zone is monitored by a zone chairman who will pass on information on disasters or threats to the Parish Disaster Coordinator and the members of the Zone. The ODPEM trains these community groups in skills such as basic disaster management, first aid and search and rescue techniques.

Some zonal committees are now responsible for operating community flood alert systems.

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

- Implementation of Community and Vulnerability Reduction Programme in Portland
- Development of National Disaster Management Plan and Policies
- Relocation of vulnerable persons as a mitigation measure
- Coordination of response, assessment and clean up activities for disasters and major incidents.
- Establishment of a National Zonal Programme of community-based disaster management structures and procedures.
- Completion and maintenance of a National Disaster Catalogue and Hazard Data Base.
- Completion of Damage Assessment Reports for disaster incidents
- Establishment of a National Emergency Operations Centre
- Establishment of a National Shelter Programme.
- Establishment of Community Flood Warning Systems.
- Establishment of a National Relief and Procurement Policy.
- The development of websites, including one specifically dedicated to children.

For further information contact
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WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE DO





HISTORY OF THE ODPEM

After the June 1979 Floods, which devastated sections of Western Jamaica, the Government of Jamaica recognised the need for the establishment of a permanent disaster management organization. This organization would be responsible for coordination and monitoring the response to hazards as well as educating the nation on all aspects of disaster management.

The Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Relief Coordination (ODIPERC), was established in July 1980. In 1993, the name ODIPERC was changed to the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM), a statutory body, under the provisions of Section 15 of the Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management Act.

The ODPEM operates out of the Ministry of Local Government and Environment. A Board of Management oversees the activities of the ODPEM.

MISSION STATEMENT

ODPEM is committed to leading the process of reducing the impact of disaster on Jamaica through Comprehensive Disaster Management.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM) is responsible for:

- taking action to reduce the impact of disasters and emergencies on the Jamaican population and economy
- coordinating warning, emergency response and relief operations in major emergency events.

ACTIVITIES OF THE ODPEM

- 1** Public information, education and training through meetings, workshops, seminars and mass media programmes on disaster related issues. A documentation center is also maintained where disaster and emergency information may be obtained by the public and for use in awareness, training and research programmes.
- 2** The establishment and maintenance of websites one of which features information specifically designed for children
- 3** Hazard management programmes covering the following areas:
 - a** Identification and mapping of high risk areas
 - b** Hazard mitigation strategies and programmes.

- c** Formulation and monitoring of Emergency Plans and Policies.
- d** Compilation of Reports following major incidents.

- 4** Maintaining the National Emergency Stores
- 5** Management of National Shelter and Zonal Programmes
- 6** During times of emergencies, the ODPEM is responsible for activating, operating and deactivating the National Emergency Operations Center (NEOC).

This involves:

 - Coordinating the activities of the relevant operational agencies
 - Supporting the operational agencies by facilitating access to available resources
 - Providing communication resources
 - Handling requests for external assistance
 - Monitoring the emergency event and assessing the long term physical impact
- 7** The development of project proposals and the sourcing of funds for national disaster management programmes.

PARISH DISASTER COMMITTEES

ODPEM also coordinates activities at the parish and community level. At the parish level, ODPEM works through Parish Disaster Committees, which operate out of the Parish Council Offices. These are responsible for disaster management at the parish level.