

Hurricane Ida Disaster-Initiated Review September 2021: After-Action Report

FEMA Technological Hazards Division | March 2022



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Hurricane Ida

- A powerful storm that impacted the State of Louisiana, St. Charles and St. John the Baptist Parishes, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region 6, and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) Region 4.
- Made landfall near Port Fourchon in southeastern Louisiana at 11:55am CT on Sunday, August 29, 2021, as a powerful Category 4 hurricane.
- Given the impact of the storm on local emergency preparedness surrounding Waterford Steam Electric Station, Unit 3 (Waterford 3), it was determined that a Disaster-Initiated Review (DIR) was warranted to ensure reasonable assurance around the plant could be maintained.



Event Overview

- Event name: Hurricane Ida
- Event dates: Formed – August 26, 2021; dissipated – September 4, 2021
- Location/landfall: Louisiana
- Threat or hazards: Natural disaster/hurricane
- Participating organizations:
 - St. Charles Parish, LA
 - St. John the Baptist Parish, LA
 - State of LA Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ)
 - State of LA Governor’s Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP)
 - FEMA Region 6
 - NRC Region 4



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Disaster-Initiated Review

Disaster-Initiated Review

- FEMA’s interim standard operating guide (SOG), “*Assessment of Offsite Emergency Preparedness Infrastructure and Capabilities Following an Incident in the Vicinity of a U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission Licensed-Nuclear Power Plant,*” contains guidelines and procedures for the FEMA Radiological Emergency Preparedness (REP) Program to conduct and document the results of a FEMA-led Preliminary Capabilities Assessment (PCA)/DIR.
 - FEMA implements this SOG consistent with the agreements in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between FEMA and the NRC “*Regarding Radiological Response, Planning and Preparedness*” dated December 7, 2015.
- If an event affects the area around an NPP to the point where FEMA seriously questions offsite emergency response capabilities, the NRC/FEMA MOU calls for a DIR to be performed.



After Action Review

After Action Review Process

- One-on-one interviews were conducted between the FEMA THD Policy and Doctrine Branch and the following entities:
 - St. Charles and St. John Parish staff
 - State of LA LDEQ and GOHSEP staff
 - FEMA Region 6 REP staff
 - NRC Region 4 staff
- Questions were asked to each group in order to identify strengths and areas for improvement in the Hurricane Ida DIR process.
- The responses from the interviews were collected and put into an after-action report that includes and improvement plan matrix.



Strengths and Areas for Improvement

Overarching Identified Strengths

Despite the catastrophic nature of Hurricane Ida, FEMA Region 6 provided a strong response throughout the entirety of the operation.

- Waterford 3 was able to get back online in a timely manner.
- Waterford 3 representatives were incredibly helpful with the initial DIR information request to the Parishes and the State.
- FEMA headquarters and Region 6 and NRC headquarters and Region 4 staff have a very strong relationship.



Overarching Identified Areas for Improvement

During any response, certain areas are identified as those that can benefit from additional coordination and development.

- The timeliness of information requests from FEMA HQ to FEMA Region 6 and FEMA Region 6 to the State of LA and the Parishes was unsatisfactory given the local, state, and regional staff were still responding to the event in real-time.
- The current PCA/DIR process, as outlined in FEMA's interim SOG, is does not account for ad hoc actions that may interfere with the process.
- FEMA senior leadership and White House and Congressional staff would benefit from an education on the PCA/DIR process, from the local, state, and regional level.



Questions?

Points of Contact

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