

APPENDIX 18
(SOUTH CAROLINA WINTER WEATHER PLAN)
TO THE SOUTH CAROLINA EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. As required by state and federal law, South Carolina’s policy is to be prepared for any emergency or disaster, including winter weather. Winter weather includes snow, sleet, and freezing rain (ice).
- B. South Carolina State Regulations 58-1 and 58-101 require contingency plans and implementing procedures for major hazards, such as winter weather, coordinated by the State with Counties that have a potential of being impacted.
- C. The South Carolina Winter Weather Plan provides a framework methodology for the coordinated and efficient response to, and recovery from, the effects of a winter weather event within the state of South Carolina.
- D. The Winter Weather plan defines the roles and responsibilities for intergovernmental and State Emergency Response Team (SERT) personnel to save lives, protect property, and assist the private sector in facilitating their ability to recover from a winter weather event.

II. PURPOSE

- A. To provide coordinated emergency response and to reduce potential loss of life within the affected communities during a winter weather event.
- B. Endeavor to maintain essential services during a major winter storm.
- C. Identify duties and responsibilities by Emergency Support Function (ESF) for the response to a winter weather event.

III. SCOPE

- A. The South Carolina Winter Weather Plan addresses winter weather operations to be conducted in coordination with the South Carolina Emergency Operations Plan (SCEOP), Appendix 9 (South Carolina Catastrophic Incident Plan) of the SCEOP, and Appendix 6 (South Carolina Recovery Plan) of the SCEOP.
- B. This plan complements the SCEOP and identifies responsibilities, processes, and actions specific to winter weather events.
- C. Provides guidance to departments and agencies involved in winter weather response activities.

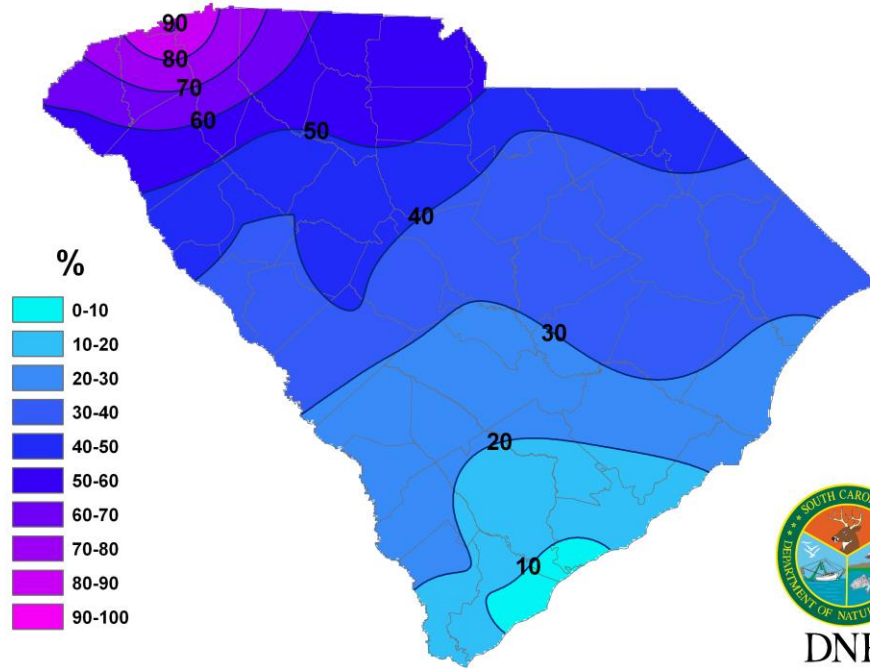
IV. FACTS AND ASSUMPTIONS

- A. South Carolina is vulnerable to winter storms, especially the western part of the state bounded by the North Carolina /Georgia borders.
- B. Large-scale loss of life and property does not normally occur because of a winter storm; however, any person exposed to a winter storm may be in danger. Isolated farms and individual residences are also threatened. Power outages can result in a lack of communication and the failure of heating sources. Medical assistance may become critical.
- C. County response will differ in accordance with communication and transportation capabilities and the availability of snow/ice removal resources.
- D. Past winter weather events have resulted in county resource requests for generators, law enforcement assistance, personnel and military support.
- E. Livestock losses will vary depending upon shelter and availability of feed.
- F. Winter storms will differ in size and intensity, and may affect only part of a county, the entire state, or the region.
- G. Citizens and authorities will be advised of winter weather conditions through a variety of means; e.g., smart phones, National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather radio, standard radio and television.
- H. Transportation by road or air will become more hazardous because of snow, ice and limited visibility.
- I. An ice storm occurs when rain falls and freezes immediately upon impact with the ground or other structures. All winter storms make driving and walking extremely hazardous. South Carolina is particularly susceptible to ice storms.
- J. The aftermath of a winter storm can affect the region, state and our communities for days, weeks, and even months. Storm impacts such as extreme cold, ice and snow accumulation can cause hazardous conditions for people in the affected area.
- K. Snow can trap motorists in their cars for prolonged periods.
- L. Efforts to restore roads and airport transportation will be an ongoing effort but may be hindered by continued precipitation.

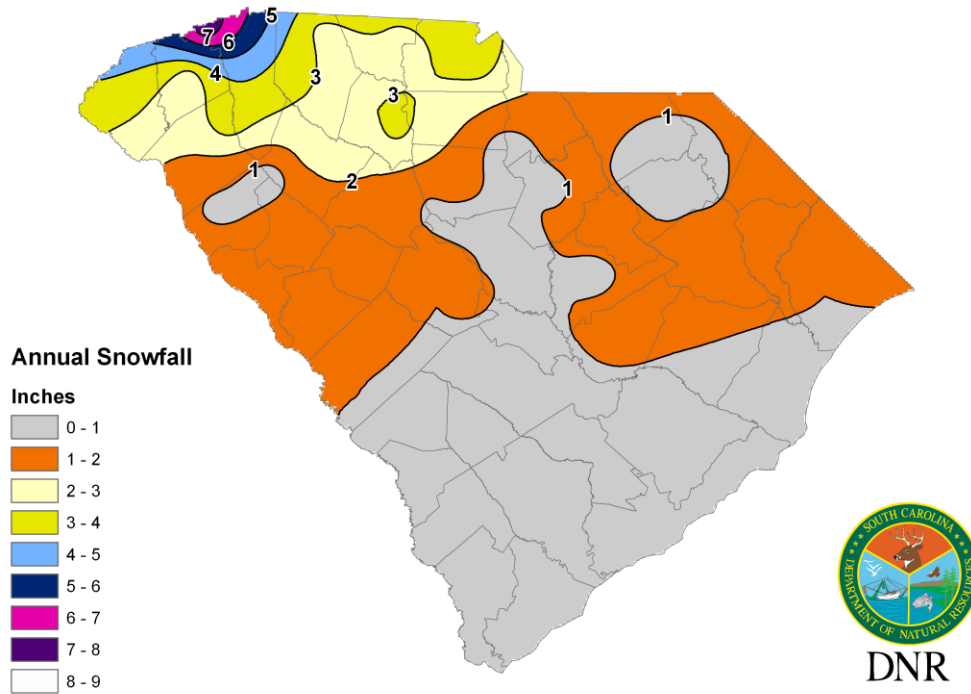
V. SITUATION

- A. Some winter storms may be large enough to affect several states while others may affect only a single community.
- B. A winter storm can last for several days and be accompanied by freezing rain, sleet, snow, high wind, and cold temperatures. People can become stranded on roads or trapped in home without utilities or other services.
- C. Winter Weather Impacts
 - 1. Freezing Rain (Ice): Ice is the most crippling winter weather for the state. The presence of ice in amounts of a 1/10 inch or less creates hazardous driving conditions. Accumulations of a 1/4 inch or greater impacts energy infrastructure that results in power outages and can disrupt the flow of natural gas and propane. Other impacts include falling debris that may affect roads and, in some cases, cause damage to homes. Wind, temperature, and antecedent conditions will affect the overall impacts.
 - 2. Snow and/or sleet: Snow and sleet can affect operations across the state. Accumulations of greater than 2 inches will also affect transportation and energy sectors with potential damage to homes due to falling limbs and trees. Wind, snowfall rate, temperature, and antecedent conditions will affect the overall impacts of snow and/or sleet.
 - 3. Geography: The state routinely has snow (figure 1). Areas most likely to see annual snowfall events are in the higher elevations of Oconee, Pickens, and Greenville counties. The average annual snowfall in these areas is 4 – 7 inches (figure 2). These events typically do not interrupt government services, commerce, or require additional state assets to support county response.

**South Carolina Snowfall Climatology
Percent Chance of Annual Snowfall**



Station Period of Record Mean Annual Snowfall



VI. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

- A. A **winter storm watch** means that snow, sleet and/or freezing rain is possible. Watches are usually issued for events in the 36 to 48-hour period from the start of the storm.
- B. A **winter storm warning** means that snow, sleet and/or freezing rain is expected. Warnings are usually issued for events in the 12 to 36-hour period from the start of the storm.
- C. An **ice storm warning** means that freezing rain is expected. Warnings are usually issued for events in the 12 to 36-hour period from the start of the storm.
- D. A **winter weather advisory** means that snow, sleet, and/or freezing rain is expected. Advisories are usually issued for events in the 12 to 36-hour period from the start of the storm
- E. This information is passed to counties and appropriate response agencies (i.e., law enforcement, fire districts, medical services, search and rescue organizations, American Red Cross, school districts, etc.).
- F. Plan Activation Thresholds
 - 1. National Weather Service warnings and advisories: The following accumulation threshold amounts are used to establish regional winter weather warnings and advisories.

Region	Winter Storm Warning	Ice Storm Warning	Winter Weather Advisory
Upstate (GSP)	12hr Period 3"/ 24hr Period 4"	1/4" Whole State	12hr Period 1"/Trace Ice Whole State
Midlands (CAE)	12hr Period 2"/ 24hr Period 3"	1/4" Whole State	12hr Period 1"/Trace Ice Whole State
Pee Dee (ILM)	12hr Period 2"/ 24hr Period 3"	1/4" Whole State	12hr Period 1"/Trace Ice Whole State
Low Country (CHS)	12hr Period 2"/ 24hr Period 3"	1/4" Whole State	12hr Period 1"/Trace Ice Whole State
Statewide/Cold roads	2hr Period <2" at rush hour	1/4" Whole State	12hr Period 1"/Trace Ice Whole State

- 2. Upon receiving information of a winter storm affecting the state, or upon notification of a winter storm watch, warning, or advisory, the State Warning Point (SWP) will immediately notify the Duty Officer, the Director, Chief of Operations, duty Public Information Officer and select ESFs.

3. When the National Weather Service issues a Winter Storm Warning that will potentially impact South Carolina, SCEMD will draft a State of Emergency Declaration, consider moving the State Emergency Operations Center to OPCON 2 (partial activation) and partially activate key elements of the SERT in their respective ESF roles; ESF-1 Transportation, ESF-2 Communication, ESF-3 Critical Infrastructure Systems, ESF-4 Firefighting, ESF-6 Mass Care, ESF-8 Health and Medical, ESF-9 Search and Rescue, ESF-12 Energy, ESF-13 Law Enforcement, ESF-16 Emergency Traffic Management, ESF-17 Agriculture and Animals, ESF-19 Military Support, and ESF-24 Business and Industry.
4. SCEMD, in conjunction with other key state agencies, may recommend a State of Emergency Declaration if one or more of the impacts are expected in the state. This will provide additional time to organize, deploy and stage required resources to mitigate impacts to transportation, energy, communications, and mass care and water and wastewater services.
5. The Emergency Management Division will activate the State Emergency Operations Center at OPCON 1 (full activation), recommend the SCNG be moved onto State Active Duty and notify elected officials if necessary. The Department of Transportation and Department of Public Safety will determine which components of their snow response/removal plans will be activated. Should a life-threatening situation arise, law enforcement, local search and rescue teams and snow removal crews will work to reach stranded individuals. Emergency shelter locations may be activated.

G. State Government Office Status Reporting

1. The Governor has directed that when winter storms occur in South Carolina, state government offices and their employees will follow the same weather hazard decisions made by county government officials where the state offices are located. When county officials make an office schedule change determination, SCEMD serves as the coordination agency to notify state employees and residents through established state reporting tools and the commercial media.
 - a. County office schedule changes are reported by the Regional Emergency Managers through the closings & delays function in Palmetto.
 - b. Unless otherwise noted, any change in county office opening status can be automatically interpreted as a change in state office open status.
 - c. Any closing/delay status is confirmed in Palmetto automatically appears live online at scemd.org/closings and in the SC Emergency Manager mobile application.
 - d. SCETV and SC Public Radio then broadcast the information that appears at scemd.org/closings via on-air text and over-the-air announcements.

- e. SCEMD PIO or ESF-15 representatives communicate any closings or delays involving state government offices to commercial media outlets through traditional communication methods or through the unique closings systems that some media have established.
2. In some situations, state and county office status may differ and thus require additional coordination with the Executive Branch for approval. In these situations, SCETV, scemd.org and the SC Emergency Manager mobile app will serve as the primary means of informing both residents and state employees of any change in openings of state government offices.

VII. ORGANIZATION AND ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

A. General

1. Select state agencies involved in winter weather response will provide representatives to staff the SEOC and employ plans to address the event as required.
2. See the SCEOP, Section IX (Organization and Assignment of Responsibilities) for the general roles and responsibilities of County, State, and Federal agencies in preparation, response, and recovery from a disaster affecting the State.
3. Roles and responsibilities found in this plan are specifically for a winter weather event, for all hazards, roles and responsibilities, such as sheltering for example, refer to the SCEOP base plan, and specific Emergency Support Function annexes.

B. South Carolina Emergency Management Division

1. SCEMD is the primary agency for the coordination of all winter weather efforts.
2. Coordinate operations to assist local government resources when they exceed their capacity to respond to the effects of winter weather within their counties.
3. Coordinate with state and federal agencies and the private sector to develop a shared common operational picture.
4. Establish the Unified Coordination / Executive Group to provide executive oversight of winter weather response and recovery efforts if required.
5. Coordinate with other state agencies to develop public information messaging.

C. ESF-1 - Transportation

1. Prior to the storm's anticipated arrival, pre-treat elevated bridges and roads that are in the expected impacted area with salt, chemical treatment, etc.
2. Monitor impacted highway infrastructure.

3. Clear affected highway infrastructure by appropriate means (salt, chemical treatment, etc.)
4. Provide wrecker support as needed.
5. Assist private sector restoration crews and ESF-12 in their movement of key critical electric infrastructure to re-establish electric service.

D. ESF-2 - Communications

1. Share forecast information and lifeline sector analysis with wireline and wireless communication providers regarding potential storm impacts.
2. Coordinate with communication providers to ensure pre-storm inventory and provision of fuel for emergency backup power as required.
3. Coordinate with local jurisdictions in forecasted impact areas to assess potential communication/radio augmentation requirements.

E. ESF-4/9 Firefighting and Search and Rescue

1. Support Firefighter Mobilization activities regarding resource requests and equipment pre-staging.
2. Support and coordinate search and rescue activities to include possible activation of the search and rescue planning cell (SARCELL).
3. Support four-wheel drive transportation capabilities for critical infrastructure employees.
4. Support resource requests related to personnel support for debris clearing as it pertains to life safety.

F. ESF-12 - Energy

1. Share information with fuel providers and utilities on potential cascading effects from the winter weather event.
2. Share information on private sector utility and Fuel Company plans to address the event that will provide situational awareness to the SEOC.
3. Provide winter weather information as it relates to the impacts other states are experiencing that could create negative effects within South Carolina.
4. Monitor and report on power and pipeline outages due to winter weather.

G. ESF-13 - Law Enforcement

1. Develop plans and procedures for responding to traffic control duties related to winter weather to include, but not limited to, maintaining current rosters of assigned equipment and personnel.
2. Provide vehicle and personnel support as designated by SC Department of Public Safety.

H. ESF-16 - Emergency Traffic Management

1. Implement and coordinate traffic control and management measures during and after the winter weather event.
2. Coordinate the patrolling of impacted highways among supporting agencies (State Law Enforcement Division, SC Department of Natural Resources, SC Forestry Commission, and SC National Guard).
3. Coordinate with SC Department of Transportation (SCDOT) to ensure the monitoring of road conditions on impacted highway infrastructure and the timely clearance of affected highway infrastructure.
4. Coordinate any necessary aviation support and/or assets with support agencies.

I. ESF-17 – Agriculture and Animals

1. Coordinate resource needs for the livestock and poultry industry, trade stakeholders, and agribusiness to mitigate effects on industries or any secondary effects due to impacted energy sectors.
2. Maintain situational awareness within agriculture and conduct agricultural damage assessments.
3. Coordinate resources for local jurisdictions to respond to any affected animal populations as appropriate and when requested.

J. ESF-19 – Military Support

1. Develop plans and procedures for responding to traffic control duties related to winter weather to include, but not limited to, maintaining current rosters of assigned equipment and personnel.
2. Provide vehicle and personnel support as designated by SC Department of Public Safety (SCDPS).
3. Provide Wrecker Team support as designated by SCDPS.

K. ESF-24 – Business and Industry

1. Publish communiques to private sector partners, trade groups, and related associations on potential storm impacts to manufacturing and small business.
2. Monitor and report disruptions to supply chain integrity and be prepared to assess potential economic injury across the lifeline sectors.

L. Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES)

- a. Amateur Radio Operators will establish communications with the National Weather Service during a NWS call up for winter weather situations.
- b. Respond to the SEOC and county EOCs upon activation and as requested.
- c. Radio Operators will assist with and provide backup for overall communications, as well as health and well-being messages.

VIII. PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

- A. This Plan is the principal source of documentation concerning the State’s winter weather activities.
- B. The SERT will review this Plan prior to the start of each winter weather season either as part of a dedicated review or in conjunction with the annual winter weather workshop. Recommended changes will be sent to the SCEMD.
- C. SCEMD will coordinate the efforts of all responsible departments and agencies for plan revisions and updates.
- D. At a minimum, SCEMD will review this plan on an annual basis and update/revise the plan as necessary throughout the period. SCEMD will complete the annual review prior to winter weather season each year.

IX. ADMINISTRATION, LOGISTICS AND FINANCE

- A. See the SCEOP Basic Plan, Section X (Administration, Logistics and Finance).
- B. See SCEOP Basic Plan, Attachment A (SC Logistics Plan).

X. AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES

See the SCEOP Basic Plan, Attachment C (Authorities and References).

XI. ACRONYMS AND GLOSSARY

See SCEOP Base Plan, Attachment B (Acronyms and Glossary).