

## **STATE OF EMERGENCY AND DISASTER RECOVERY**

**(SAF7)**

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

The New Orleans Regional Transit Authority (RTA) is committed to protecting the safety, security, and continuity of transit services for the New Orleans region. This State of Emergency and Disaster Recovery Policy authorizes the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), or designee, to issue an Emergency Declaration for rapid protective actions, continuity of operations, and reimbursement eligibility. It also establishes a structured transition into Disaster Recovery Operations to support response, repair, and cost recovery.

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to define the authority, procedures, and documentation requirements associated with Emergency Declarations. It outlines the conditions under which a declaration may be issued, the responsibilities it activates, and the documentation required to ensure accountability and audit readiness. This policy further establishes how the agency will formally conclude an emergency declaration and transition into Disaster Recovery Operations.

### **APPLICATION**

This policy applies to all RTA departments, personnel, and operations, including bus, streetcar, paratransit, and ferry services. It governs actions taken before, during, and after an incident when an Emergency Declaration is issued by the CEO or designee, and it is binding on all staff and contractors engaged in emergency response, recovery, or continuity of operations. If a conflict occurs between this policy and a Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), the CBA will prevail.

### **ADOPTED BY:**

The RTA Board of Commissioners on xx/xx/2025, Resolution 25-\_\_\_\_\_.

### **APPROVED BY:**

---

Lona Edwards Hankins  
Chief Executive Officer



*Regional Transit Authority*

## **1.0 GENERAL**

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) may issue an Emergency Declaration to support emergency operations, ensuring the agency responds decisively and recovers effectively. An Emergency Declaration is used to activate preparedness and response measures ahead of or during imminent threats, and upon rescission, it also initiates Disaster Recovery Operations to maintain continuity of transit services following a disruptive incident. This approach allows RTA to clearly distinguish between immediate response actions and longer-term recovery needs, while preserving eligibility for reimbursement and ensuring transparency in agency operations.

This Policy and any Emergency Declarations are issued only to the extent such power resides with RTA. To the extent any applicable disaster or emergency declarations are reserved by law to other political or legal authorities, this policy shall be intended and interpreted to not interfere or contravene such laws or declarations.

No emergency need be declared under this Policy for emergency procurements or contracting to occur so long as such procurements follow the requirements of applicable law and RTA's Procurement Manual.

### **1.1 Common Definitions**

**All Hazards Plan (AHP):** RTA's primary emergency operations plan, which outlines agency-wide preparedness, response, recovery, and continuity of operations procedures. The plan addresses prevention, preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery actions for technological and accidental, adversarial/human-caused, and natural hazards.

**City-Assisted Evacuation Plan (CAEP):** The City of New Orleans' plan to support evacuation of residents without personal transportation, in which RTA plays a critical role.

**Disaster Recovery Operations:** Actions taken after rescission of an Emergency Declaration to assess damage, restore services, document costs, and pursue state or federal reimbursement.

**Emergency:** Any incident, natural or human-caused, that threatens or disrupts the safe and continuous operation of RTA services, facilities, or personnel, and requires extraordinary actions beyond routine operations. Emergencies may include severe weather, flooding, public health crises, cyber incidents, utility failures, civil disturbances, or other events that pose an immediate risk to life, property, or the agency's ability to provide essential transit services.



*Regional Transit Authority*

**Emergency Declaration:** A formal internal statement issued by the CEO, or their delegate, to activate preparedness and response measures ahead of or during imminent threats.

**Emergency Pay:** Additional compensation authorized for eligible employees performing emergency-related work during a declared emergency or disaster recovery period, as specified in union contracts and this policy.

**Emergency Procurement:** The expedited acquisition of supplies, services, or equipment necessary to support emergency operations during a declared emergency and/or disaster recovery period.

**Emergency Work:** Duties performed during a declared emergency or disaster recovery period that are necessary to save lives, protect public health and safety, protect improved property, or eliminate or lessen an immediate threat of damage. Within RTA, this includes extraordinary actions beyond normal job responsibilities or routine operations, such as storm ride-out, evacuation or REAP support, emergency fueling and logistics, damage assessment, debris clearance at transit facilities, cost documentation for FEMA/FTA reimbursement, or other protective measures directed by the CEO or Incident Management Team. Routine preparedness activities (e.g., vehicle tie-downs, inspections, or service restarts conducted during regular shifts) are not considered Emergency Work unless specifically designated as such under an Emergency Declaration.

**Essential Personnel:** Employees designated by RTA to remain on duty or report during declared emergencies to ensure continuity of operations and critical transit services.

**FEMA Audit Standards:** Documentation and cost-tracking requirements established by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to ensure compliance and reimbursement eligibility.

**Force Account Labor:** RTA employee labor costs that are directly tied to emergency response or recovery activities and eligible for reimbursement under FEMA Public Assistance guidelines.

**Incident Command System (ICS):** A standardized organizational structure used for managing emergencies, applied within RTA through its All Hazards Plan and Incident Management Team (IMT).

**Incident Management Team (IMT):** The cross-functional group of RTA personnel activated under the All Hazards Plan to coordinate emergency response and recovery operations using the Incident Command System (ICS).



*Regional Transit Authority*

**National Incident Management System (NIMS):** A standardized national framework for managing emergencies, which RTA follows to ensure coordination and reimbursement eligibility.

**Residential Evacuation Assistance Program (REAP):** Part of the CAEP, the REAP is designed to support the evacuation of residents with access and functional needs, in coordination with city and state agencies.

**Rescission:** A formal termination of an Emergency Declaration issued when the emergency phase has concluded. A rescission signals a return to normal or modified transit operations.

## **1.2 Authority and Delegation**

The CEO, as appointed by the RTA's Board of Commissioners, is authorized to issue emergency declarations pertaining to emergency operations. These declarations support RTA's mission to protect transit-dependent populations, safeguard infrastructure, and maintain continuity of operations.

This authority aligns with the Robert T. Stafford Act, which governs federal disaster assistance. Under the Act, agencies like FEMA may reimburse eligible emergency measures, including transit support, labor, equipment use, and sheltering of essential personnel. The CEO's authority allows for rapid action before, during, and after major incidents ensuring both operational readiness and compliance with reimbursement requirements.

To ensure continuity during emergencies, the CEO may delegate this authority to a member of the Executive Leadership Team. Delegation may rotate among Chiefs based on availability or expertise. All delegations must be documented and shared with Emergency Management and General Counsel, and may be revoked at any time.

## **1.3 Declaration of Emergency**

A Declaration of Emergency may be issued by the CEO, or designee, in anticipation of, or in response to, an imminent threat that poses a risk to public safety, disrupts transit services, or endangers RTA personnel or transit assets. These threats may include hurricanes, tropical storms, flooding, civil unrest, infrastructure failure, or any hazard identified in the agency's All Hazards Plan.

The CEO may issue an emergency declaration concurrently with or independent of an emergency declaration by the Governor of Louisiana or the Mayor of New Orleans. While alignment with state or local emergency declarations is preferred for coordination and funding purposes, the CEO is empowered to declare an emergency unilaterally based on operational conditions, predictive modeling, threat forecasts, or



*Regional Transit Authority*

direct observations that justify protective action. This authority ensures RTA can act swiftly to safeguard life, protect property, and preserve operational continuity without unnecessary delay.

Emergency Declarations will normally be reserved for Category III+ hurricanes or other major incidents. For tropical storms and Category I–II hurricanes, the CEO may direct preparedness activities without issuing an Emergency declaration. See Appendix A – Tropical Storm Decision Matrix.

Once an Emergency Declaration is issued, the following actions may be authorized:

- Activation of the Incident Management Team (IMT) per the RTA’s All Hazards Plan to coordinate agency-wide emergency response;
- Suspension, modification, or curtailment of regular transit services;
- Deployment of resources to support the City-Assisted Evacuation Plan (CAEP) and Residential Evacuation Assistance Program (REAP);
- Emergency procurement of supplies, services, or transportation equipment;
- Activation of emergency pay provisions for eligible union-represented employees under the ATU and IBEW;
- Initiation of shelter-in-place logistics, including procurement of hotel accommodations and food for essential personnel;
- Staging, fueling, and securing of transit vehicles and facilities in advance of anticipated impacts;
- Issuance of emergency notifications via ReadyOp text alerts and Microsoft Outlook email with the signed declaration attached;
- Temporarily suspend or pause ongoing construction, maintenance, or capital projects when continuation poses safety, security, or operational risks, or when contractor access to sites may be limited due to emergency conditions.

The CEO or designee shall notify the Board of Commissioners in writing within 24 hours of issuing any Emergency Declaration. This notification will include the effective date and time, the nature of the incident, and the scope of authority exercised. The notification ensures the Board is promptly informed of the agency’s emergency posture, operational impacts, and any anticipated emergency procurement or pay actions.

If any emergency procurement exceeds the Board approval threshold in the RTA Procurement Manual, the CEO will notify the Board in writing within 24 hours of any such procurement and provide a briefing at the next scheduled meeting.



*Regional Transit Authority*

An emergency declaration remains in effect until formally rescinded by the CEO or their designee, typically when emergency conditions have stabilized, response operations are demobilized, and the agency transitions to recovery. All actions taken under this declaration must be documented in accordance with FEMA audit standards and consistent with the Incident Command System (ICS) and the National Incident Management System (NIMS). Operational activity shall be logged using ICS Form 214s, maintained by the Emergency Management Department to ensure transparency, accountability, and reimbursement readiness.

#### **1.4 Emergency Declaration Rescission**

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO), or their designee, will issue an Emergency Declaration Rescission when the emergency phase has concluded and RTA transitions toward recovery. The rescission formally ends the agency's emergency posture, including any extraordinary response measures and the broad authorization for emergency pay, while ensuring continuity of recovery and reimbursement activities.

Issuing a rescission provides a deliberate and documented shift from immediate response to Disaster Recovery Operations. This approach aligns RTA with FEMA's phased disaster lifecycle of Response, Recovery, Mitigation, and Preparedness.

An Emergency Declaration Rescission should be issued when:

- Immediate threats to life and safety have subsided;
- Transit operations are returning to normal or modified service;
- Remaining work consists primarily of damage assessment, service restoration, cost recovery, or mitigation;
- Ongoing coordination with FEMA, NOHSEP, GOHSEP, or FTA is required to support reimbursement and recovery.

After rescission, RTA may initiate or continue the following actions:

- Transition into Disaster Recovery Operations under the All Hazards Plan;
- Assign a Project Manager from Infrastructure and Capital Projects to oversee documentation and coordination with FEMA consultants;
- Establish a disaster-specific cost center in Finance to track eligible expenditures;
- Collect and submit ICS Form 214s, labor logs, procurement records, and material usage for reimbursement;
- Prioritize restoration of critical routes and access to Emergency Resource Centers and other essential facilities;



*Regional Transit Authority*

- Communicate with the public regarding service restoration and recovery progress.

Once an Emergency Declaration Rescission is issued, the declaration is considered closed. RTA will continue operations under Disaster Recovery or normal conditions, as appropriate. All documentation must comply with ICS, NIMS, and FEMA standards to ensure accountability and audit readiness.

### **1.5 Emergency Pay**

The issuance of a Emergency Declaration may trigger eligibility for emergency pay. To ensure equity, transparency, and audit-readiness, this policy outlines the specific conditions under which emergency pay may be granted.

Each declaration issued by the CEO (or their designee) must explicitly state:

- The effective start time and date of emergency pay; and
- The categories of employees or work assignments eligible for emergency compensation under that declaration.

**Union Employees** - Employees represented under collective bargaining agreements with the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU), the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), and United Labor Union (ULU) are eligible for emergency pay in accordance with the terms of their respective CBAs.

These provisions apply to:

- Essential personnel activated and reporting for duty;
- Work performed under modified or emergency operations;
- Duties supporting evacuation, sheltering, continuity of service, or the provision of critical transportation during a declared emergency, as long as conditions are deemed safe.

Union emergency pay is activated once declared by the CEO and processed using established payroll codes. These costs are tracked for potential reimbursement under FEMA Public Assistance guidelines.

**Hourly, Non-Union Employees** - Hourly employees who are covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act's overtime rules (i.e., non-exempt) are eligible for emergency pay when:



*Regional Transit Authority*

- They are formally activated for emergency operations by agency leadership or the Emergency Management Department; and
- They perform duties that directly support declared emergency or disaster operations.

Emergency pay for this category will be applied as specified in RTA Policy HC-35.

**Salaried, Non-Union Employees** - Salaried employees who meet the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) criteria are normally not eligible for overtime compensation. However, during declared emergencies, they may be eligible for post-incident emergency pay when:

- They are formally activated for emergency operations by the RTA's Emergency Management Department; and;
- They perform duties outside the scope of their regular job description, directly in support of emergency response or recovery operations.

These duties may include, but are not limited to:

- Coordinating the procurement and delivery of emergency food, shelter, or fuel;
- Managing staging areas or logistics hubs;
- Supporting the City-Assisted Evacuation Plan (CAEP) or REAP program;
- Serving in an assigned role within the Incident Command System (ICS), such as Public Information Officer, Logistics Section Chief, or Operations Liaison;
- Assisting with 24/7 operational coordination, documentation management, or FEMA, NOHSEP, and GOHSEP interface roles.

Emergency pay for this category will be applied as specified in RTA Policy HC-35.

## **1.6 Emergency Procurement**

Emergency procurement authority under this policy permits expedited purchasing in line with applicable federal and state law and relevant portions of RTA's Procurement Manual. Reasonable efforts should be taken to achieve competition in line with agency needs and circumstances.

## **1.7 Documentation and Recordkeeping**

All actions taken under an Emergency Declaration must be rigorously documented in accordance with FEMA audit standards, the Incident Command System (ICS), and



*Regional Transit Authority*

the National Incident Management System (NIMS). Documentation shall include, but not be limited to:

- **ICS Form 214s:** All emergency activities, including activation of personnel, resources deployed, and incident milestones, must be logged on ICS Form 214s. The Emergency Management Department shall collect and maintain these forms as part of the official incident record.
- **Cost Center Records:** The Finance Department shall establish a dedicated cost center for each declared incident to track all expenditures related to emergency response, recovery operations, and emergency pay
- **Activation Records:** Documentation verifying which employees were activated, the specific roles they performed, and the effective start times for emergency pay, as stated in the declaration.
- **Supporting Documentation:** Any additional records necessary to support reimbursement requests, including procurement orders, labor logs, and relevant correspondence with FEMA, NOHSEP, GOHSEP, and FTA.

These records will be maintained for the duration of the emergency and for the period required by federal and state regulations, ensuring that RTA is prepared for any audits or reimbursement claims.

## **1.8 Notification and Activation**

Upon issuance of an Emergency Declaration, the Emergency Management Department shall ensure timely and coordinated notification of the declaration across the agency. The following procedures shall be used to ensure full organizational awareness and activation

- **Emergency Notification Systems:** The declaration will be transmitted to designated personnel via the ReadyOp system as a text alert.
- **Mass Communication:** A Microsoft Outlook email with the signed declaration attached will be sent to all RTA employees, with instructions on activation status, reporting requirements, and response expectations.
- **Executive Team Cascade:** Department Chiefs and Directors are responsible for confirming receipt and cascading operational instructions to their respective divisions.



Regional Transit Authority

- **Personnel Activation Tracking:** The RTA’s activated Incident Management Team (IMT) will maintain an internal activation roster, identifying which employees are activated, for what roles, and for what duration. This will support pay eligibility, role assignments, and documentation requirements.
- **Documentation of Notification:** All notifications and confirmation receipts will be documented and retained to support after-action reporting and audit readiness.

### 1.9 Policy Integration and Maintenance

This Policy shall be maintained as part of the RTA’s All Hazards Plan. The Emergency Management Department is responsible for ensuring the policy remains current and reflective of best practices, legal guidance, and operational lessons learned. Updates to this policy shall be documented in accordance with RTA’s plan maintenance procedures and subject to review by the CEO, ELT and the Board of Commissioners as appropriate.

### 2.0 FLOWCHART

N/A

### 3.0 REFERENCES

- Agency Safety Plan
- All Hazards Plan
- City Assisted Evacuation Plan

### 4.0 ATTACHMENTS

- Resolution 25-113
- Appendix A – Tropical Storm Decision Matrix
- Appendix B – Template – Emergency Declaration
- Appendix C – Template – Emergency Declaration Rescission

### 5.0 POLICY HISTORY

Date	Revision No.	Resolution No.	Comments
02/24/26	Adoption		Replaces Resolution 20-022

### 6.0 SPONSOR DEPARTMENT

Safety

## Appendix A – Tropical Storm Decision Matrix

### Tropical Storm Decision Matrix

Storm Category Forecast	Emergency Declaration	EM Activation	TRRT Location	CAEP Ordered	Transit Service Suspension	CEOC Liaison Location	Emergency Pay*
TS/CAT I	No	VEOC	SIP (home)	No	10 hrs pre-TS winds	City Hall	No
TS/CAT I + RI	No	VEOC	SIP (home)	No	10 hrs pre-TS winds	City Hall	No
CAT II	No	VEOC	SIP (home)	No	18 hrs pre-TS winds	City Hall	No
CAT II + RI	Yes	VEOC	SIP (home)	Maybe Limited/SLR	18 hrs pre-TS winds	City Hall	Yes
CAT III	Yes	Full IMT	SIP (NOLA hotel)	Yes	18 hrs pre-TS winds	REL (NOLA hotel)	Yes
CAT III + RI	Yes	Full IMT	SIP (NOLA hotel)	Maybe Limited/SLR	18 hrs pre-TS winds	REL (NOLA hotel)	Yes
CAT IV/V	Yes	Full IMT	REL (outside hotel)	Yes	18 hrs pre-TS winds	REL (NOLA hotel)	Yes
CAT IV/V + RI	Yes	Full IMT	SIP (NOLA hotel)	No	18 hrs pre-TS winds	REL (NOLA hotel)	Yes

TS= Tropical Storm    CAT = Category    RI = Rapid Intensification    CAEP = City Assisted Evacuation Plan    VEOC = Virtual Emergency Operations Center    SIP = Shelter in Place  
REL = Relocation    SLR = Shelter of Last Resort    IMT = Incident Management Team    CEOC = City Emergency Operations Center    TRRT = Transit Response and Recovery Team

**Disclaimer:** For tropical storms and Category I–II hurricanes, no Emergency Declaration will normally be issued. However, the CEO retains authority to declare an emergency under extraordinary circumstances for any storm category, such as rapid intensification, significant flooding, or compounding incidents, in order to protect life safety, preserve critical assets, or maintain eligibility for reimbursement.

\* Activation of emergency pay will be contingent upon the date and time the CEO’s emergency declaration is promulgated.



## **Appendix B – Template: Emergency Declaration**

TO: Board of Commissioners, New Orleans Regional Transit Authority

FROM: [CEO Name], Chief Executive Officer

DATE: [Insert Date]

RE: Emergency Declaration – [Insert Event Name]

Pursuant to the RTA's State of Emergency and Disaster Recovery Policy, I am formally declaring a State of Emergency for the New Orleans Regional Transit Authority, effective [Insert Date and Time].

This declaration authorizes the activation of our Incident Management Team in accordance with the RTA's All Hazards Plan, including the mobilization of staff, adjustment of transit services, implementation of shelter-in-place measures for essential personnel, and initiation of emergency procurement and emergency pay procedures.

This declaration is being made [concurrently with / independent of] emergency declarations by local and state officials, and is based on [brief justification, e.g., hurricane forecast, operational disruption, threat assessment].

Emergency pay is authorized for all eligible employees performing emergency work. Salaried staff may be considered for emergency pay if they are formally activated and meet the outlined criteria.

This declaration remains in effect until formally rescinded. The Board will be briefed at the next scheduled meeting.

Sincerely,

[CEO Name]

Chief Executive Officer

New Orleans Regional Transit Authority

cc: RTA Executive Leadership Team

cc: RTA Emergency Management



*Regional Transit Authority*

## **Appendix C –Emergency Declaration Rescission**

TO: Board of Commissioners, New Orleans Regional Transit Authority

FROM: [CEO Name], Chief Executive Officer

DATE: [Insert Date]

RE: Emergency Declaration Rescission – [Insert Event Name]

Pursuant to the RTA’s State of Emergency and Disaster Recovery Policy, I am formally issuing an Emergency Declaration Rescission for the declaration dated [Insert Original Declaration Date], covering the event identified as [Insert Event Name].

RTA’s emergency operations have been demobilized, and transit services are returning to normal or modified schedules. This rescission formally concludes the emergency response phase.

Employees who performed emergency duties during the declaration remain eligible for emergency pay, provided documentation requirements are met. All ICS Form 214s, labor logs, and cost tracking records must be submitted to the Emergency Management Department to ensure accountability and reimbursement.

(Optional Recovery Clause) Although the emergency posture has concluded, RTA will continue Disaster Recovery Operations, including service restoration, damage assessment, emergency procurement, and cost recovery activities in coordination with local, state, and federal partners. Emergency pay and procurement actions may still be authorized, as appropriate, to support these recovery efforts.

Sincerely,

[CEO Name]

Chief Executive Officer

New Orleans Regional Transit Authority

cc: RTA Executive Leadership Team

cc: RTA Emergency Management