



EMERGENCY VOLUNTEER UTILIZATION PROGRAM

“Neighbors serving neighbors—ready when it matters most.”

CITY OF EDGEWATER – 104 NORTH RIVERSIDE DRIVE

A LETTER FROM THE CITY MANAGER

Dear Residents of the City of Edgewater,

As we prepare for the upcoming hurricane season, I want to take a moment to speak directly to the strength of our community and the role each of us plays in ensuring the safety and resilience of our city.

The City of Edgewater is proud to announce the establishment of a Volunteer Disaster Response Program, coordinated through our Police Department. This initiative reflects our commitment to a whole-community approach to emergency management, where government and residents work side by side to prepare for, respond to, and recover from natural disasters.

Volunteers are an essential component of any effective disaster response. Their willingness to step forward during times of uncertainty strengthens our operational capabilities, expands our reach, and reinforces the spirit that defines Edgewater. Whether assisting with preparedness efforts, supporting distribution of critical supplies, or aiding in post-storm recovery, volunteers provide a level of service that cannot be replicated by government resources alone.

At the same time, it is important to emphasize that participation in this program is entirely voluntary and rooted in the well-being of each individual. The safety of our volunteers, along with the safety of their families, will always remain our highest priority. No one is expected to place themselves at risk, and all volunteer activity will be structured, supervised, and coordinated to ensure a safe and organized response.

This program is designed to provide clear direction, meaningful roles, and proper coordination so that those who wish to serve can do so effectively and responsibly. Under the leadership of the Police Department and in coordination with city administration, volunteers will be utilized in a manner that supports our mission while maintaining accountability and safety.

I want to personally thank those who are willing to step forward and serve. Your commitment reflects the very best of Edgewater. In times of challenge, it is not just our infrastructure or resources that carry us forward, it is our people.

Together, we will continue to build a stronger, more resilient community.

Respectfully,



Joseph Mahoney
City Manager
City of Edgewater

PURPOSE & PRINCIPLES

The police department is establishing a structured, safe, and accountable method to utilize community volunteers in support of the City of Edgewater before and after natural disasters, with primary emphasis on hurricanes. This program is designed to strengthen our operational capacity while protecting the dignity, autonomy, and wellbeing of every volunteer.

This program is built on nationally recognized incident management doctrine. The National Incident Management System provides a common framework so government, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector can work together across all phases of incident management.

The Incident Command System model within NIMS is essential because it allows a scalable structure where volunteers can be assigned, supervised, and tracked as managed resources rather than informal labor.

This program also follows the whole community concept: preparedness and resilience are shared responsibilities, and the public is a partner in preparedness, response, and recovery.

Florida doctrine reinforces this by acknowledging that survivors are often the most readily available resources immediately after a disaster and that sustained preparedness reduces immediate demands on response organizations.

“Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they have the heart.”

– ELIZABETH ANDREW



Volunteer participation is voluntary in every sense of the word. A volunteer may decline an assignment, pause their participation, or withdraw from the program at any time for any reason. I will not accept participation that compromises a volunteer's safety, family obligations, medical needs, employment realities, or general welfare. National VOAD guidance emphasizes that volunteers should be treated with care, should have safe working conditions, and should have access to care resources such as food, water, rest, and appropriate support.

This is not only ethically required, it is an operational necessity: exhausted, pressured, or improperly placed volunteers create preventable risk for themselves and others.

This program is designed for support functions only. Volunteers will not be used as a substitute for sworn law enforcement authority and will not be assigned enforcement activities. Volunteers will not self deploy to disaster sites. Florida ESF 15 doctrine specifically calls for public messaging that discourages self deployment and directs prospective volunteers through coordinated volunteer management channels.

The operational window for volunteers is intentionally limited around hurricane impact to protect lives. Volunteer functions are active only in the pre landfall support window and in the controlled post landfall recovery period when the Police Department determines conditions are safe enough for limited, supervised tasks.

PROGRAM GOVERNANCE AND COMMAND STRUCTURE

This program operates under the City Manager's authority and is executed through the Police Department. All volunteer activation and tasking occurs at the direction of the Chief of Police or designee, consistent with the administration of the City Manager.

Command intent is simple: every volunteer is accounted for, properly briefed, assigned to an appropriate task, supervised by a designated city lead, and demobilized in a documented manner.

To align with NIMS and the operational realities of hurricanes, the program will use a standardized, scalable structure:

PROGRAM EXECUTIVE AUTHORITY

The Chief of Police or designee serves as the executive authority for volunteer utilization during city disaster operations.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM COMMANDER

A Police Department supervisor will serve as the Volunteer Program Commander and the single point of command for all city managed volunteers. This role will coordinate directly with the City Manager or Emergency Management leadership as assigned during an activation.

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

A designated city employee or trained designee will serve as the Volunteer Coordinator. This role is responsible for volunteer intake, documentation, staging, assignment tracking, and demobilization processes. Formal volunteer management doctrine emphasizes organized processes to register and connect volunteers to needs, supported by documentation of work performed.

VOLUNTEER SAFETY LEAD

A designated Safety Lead will implement task specific safety controls, ensure safety briefings occur before any work begins, and has authority to pause or stop volunteer operations whenever conditions become unsafe. Hurricane cleanup environments commonly include serious hazards such as floodwater exposure, carbon monoxide risks, mold, and infectious disease concerns; safety controls must be treated as core operations rather than optional guidance.

HOST DEPARTMENT SUPERVISORS

For any assignment outside the Police Department, volunteers will be placed under a Host Department Supervisor for direct task supervision. For example, post storm park and roadway cleanup will be supervised by Parks and Recreation or Public Works leadership while remaining under Police Department volunteer program accountability.

LIAISON FUNCTION FOR NONPROFIT AND PARTNER COORDINATION

In major events, and especially in catastrophic events, coordination with voluntary organizations is essential. Florida ESF 15 is built around coordination of voluntary agencies and management of spontaneous volunteers and donations, with Volunteer Florida serving as the lead agency for statewide ESF 15 coordination and with Volunteer Reception Centers used when needed.

FEMA also supports this model through Voluntary Agency Liaison capability that fosters relationships among government and whole community partners and supports volunteer coordination.

For Edgewater, the Police Department will maintain an operational liaison relationship with county emergency management and state volunteer coordination structures, including Volunteer Florida and Florida VOAD partners, so our volunteer actions complement and do not conflict with broader regional plans.

RECRUITMENT, ONBOARDING, AND TRAINING CYCLE

HURRICANE SEASON FRAMEWORK

For planning purposes, Atlantic hurricane season is recognized as beginning June 1 and ending November 30. The program calendar is built backwards from June 1 each year.

PRE SEASON OUTREACH AND RECRUITMENT TIMELINE

No less than forty-five days before June 1, the Police Department will initiate a proactive social media and community engagement campaign to recruit volunteers. Florida ESF 15 doctrine emphasizes public awareness and education to support readiness and appropriate actions during the initial seventy-two hours following a disaster. Our campaign is designed to do both: recruit volunteers and also reinforce personal preparedness expectations.

RECRUITMENT MESSAGING WILL BE EXPLICIT AND REPEATED:

Volunteering is voluntary and at will. Volunteers can step back at any time, especially if their household circumstances change. Family and personal preparedness comes first. We will actively tell prospective volunteers to secure their home, evacuation plans, medications, and family needs before agreeing to serve the city. This aligns with the whole community approach that emphasizes shared responsibility and the role of individuals and families in preparedness.

NO SELF DEPLOYMENT

Volunteers must not self deploy to impact areas, shelters, or distribution points. They must wait for direction through the Police Department volunteer process. Florida ESF 15 doctrine explicitly calls for discouraging self deployment through coordinated public information.

WHERE VOLUNTEERS FIT

We will clearly communicate that volunteer assignments are primarily logistical and community support, not enforcement. National VOAD guidance supports having an organized system that matches skills to tasks and provides clear expectations and supervision.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To participate in this program, volunteers must meet the following minimum standards:

Age requirement: Volunteers must be at least eighteen years of age.

Transportation requirement: Volunteers must have their own reliable means of transportation to and from staging locations. This requirement exists because city transport capacity must be prioritized for response operations and because volunteers may need to demobilize rapidly if conditions change.

Basic capability and conduct requirement: Volunteers must be capable of performing assigned tasks safely and must agree to follow city instructions, remain within assigned areas, and comply with all safety rules and conduct expectations.

Intake meeting within thirty days of June 1: Within thirty days of the start of hurricane season, the Police Department will conduct an in person volunteer intake and orientation meeting. The meeting objective is to transition interested residents into a known, documented, and trainable volunteer pool rather than unmanaged spontaneous volunteer flow. FEMA Emergency Management Institute doctrine emphasizes that spontaneous volunteer management is separate from management of affiliated volunteer organizations and that large numbers of unaffiliated volunteers can become counterproductive if not coordinated.

AT THE INTAKE MEETING, THE POLICE DEPARTMENT WILL ACCOMPLISH THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS

Identity and contact capture: Collect full name, address, primary phone, secondary phone, email, emergency contact, and preferred method of contact. Volunteers will also be asked about availability constraints and daytime versus evening availability.

Skills and limitations inventory: Collect skills and certifications relevant to hurricane support such as forklift experience, logistics, language capability, medical training, radio familiarity, customer service, data entry, and prior disaster volunteer experience. Volunteers will also identify physical limitations, heat sensitivity, allergies, and mobility considerations so the city can place them safely and effectively. This supports the National VOAD principle that volunteer opportunities should match skill sets and that volunteers should not accept assignments beyond their ability.

Role briefing and boundaries: Provide a role brief describing what volunteers can do and what they will not do. Volunteers will be told that volunteer operations stop at twenty-four hours before expected landfall and that post storm deployment occurs only after the Police Department determines conditions are safe.

Safety orientation: Provide a baseline safety briefing tailored to hurricane conditions, including the reality that hurricane aftermath includes hazards such as floodwater exposure, carbon monoxide poisoning risk from generators, and mold issues.

Documentation and waivers: Volunteers will sign required city documentation covering voluntary participation, conduct expectations, media and confidentiality expectations, and acknowledgement of safety rules. A municipal volunteer program example used in volunteer and donations management planning includes registration and release processes, plus the expectation that volunteer assignment requires screening, training, assignment matching, and record keeping.

All Edgewater documentation will be approved through the City Manager and City Attorney process to align with current city risk and insurance requirements.

BASELINE TRAINING EXPECTATIONS

The program will use a layered training approach that is realistic for community volunteers:

Orientation level training: Required for all volunteers. Includes program rules, communications, check in procedures, safety basics, and task boundaries.

Optional readiness training through CERT: The FEMA Community Emergency Response Team program exists specifically to educate volunteers about disaster preparedness and basic response skills, making it a natural training pathway for residents who want a higher level of readiness and capability.

Volunteers who complete CERT training will be prioritized for more complex but still non hazardous support roles, such as assisting with volunteer staging, community information support, and facility support.

Just in time task training: Before each operational period, volunteers will receive task specific direction, including what success looks like, what hazards are present, what protective equipment is required, and what conditions trigger immediate stop work. Florida ESF 15 planning calls for detailed job descriptions and just in time training to prepare volunteers for disaster service.

Activation timeline and operational assignments: This program is designed around predictable decision points. Hurricane volunteer operations are divided into four phases: readiness, pre landfall support, landfall stand down, and controlled post landfall support.

Phase one readiness status: Readiness begins at the start of hurricane season and increases as storm probability increases. During readiness, the Police Department will maintain the volunteer roster, validate contact methods, and keep a ready list of pre drafted public messaging. Florida doctrine emphasizes regular public awareness and education programs and whole community engagement, and our readiness messaging will reinforce self sufficiency and disciplined preparedness.

TRIGGERS FOR VOLUNTEER ACTIVATION

The Police Department may activate volunteers when the following conditions are met:

- A credible storm threat exists with a forecast track or probability that suggests City of Edgewater impacts or regional impacts that will drive supply and shelter support needs.
- City departments request support through the City Manager's operational chain and the tasks requested are appropriate for volunteer assistance.
- Adequate supervision, staging, and safety controls can be provided.

PHASE TWO PRE LANDFALL OPERATIONS WINDOW

The pre landfall operational window is forty-eight to twenty-four hours before expected landfall. This window exists because it provides meaningful time to support protective actions while avoiding the period where evacuation, wind onset, and first responder staging create unacceptable risk.

PRIMARY PRE LANDFALL ASSIGNMENTS

The program will focus volunteers on a short list of high value, low complexity tasks:

Sandbag support operations Volunteers will assist city personnel with sandbag operations during the forty-eight to twenty-four-hour window. Because sandbag filling is increasingly automated, volunteer focus will be on staging tasks: loading filled sandbags, moving pallets, organizing traffic and lines through non traffic control support roles, replenishing supplies at the point, and supporting limited delivery when explicitly approved and controlled. Assignment will depend on the volunteer's physical capability and skills inventory.

Sandbag site monitoring and supply support: Volunteers may support sandbag site operations by monitoring supply levels, communicating shortages to the Volunteer Coordinator, and assisting with distribution of water and basic supplies to residents waiting in line. This type of role should be treated as a customer service and logistics task, not a security role.

Water and basic commodity support: If the city activates distribution of water or other essentials before landfall, volunteers may be used to hand out supplies under direct supervision. This aligns with established volunteer and donations management concepts that include distribution points and coordinated volunteer assignment.

Phone and information support: If the city activates enhanced public inquiry capacity, volunteers with appropriate skills may be used to answer phones, support scripted public information dissemination, and route requests to appropriate departments. Volunteer and donations management planning commonly includes use of a phone bank as a core capability, because public demand for information becomes immediate and sustained in disaster conditions.

PRE LANDFALL ACCOUNTABILITY REQUIREMENTS

Every volunteer will be treated as a tracked resource. Each operational period will include documented check in and check out, assignment documentation, and a safety brief.

The Incident Check In List process is a recognized ICS tool for tracking personnel arrival, initial location, assignment, and demobilization support. The Police Department will adapt this concept into a volunteer version that captures the same operational essentials: who is present, where they are assigned, how they can be contacted, and when they demobilize.

PHASE THREE LANDFALL STAND DOWN

At twenty-four hours before expected landfall, volunteer services are suspended. This is a firm operational boundary.

PURPOSE OF SUSPENSION

The city must move into protective posture, complete staff staging, address evacuation and shelter needs, and reduce exposure to rising winds, debris hazards, and traffic risks. This boundary is also consistent with the principle that volunteer involvement should not create emergency operations interference or hamper response. Volunteer and donations management doctrine emphasizes organizing donations and volunteer processes so they do not interfere with emergency operations.

During suspension, the volunteer program will shift to communications only. Volunteers will receive periodic updates, and they will be told explicitly not to travel, not to enter restricted areas, and to focus on their household safety.

Phase four controlled post landfall volunteer operations: Post landfall volunteer utilization begins only after the Police Department determines conditions are safe enough for limited community support tasks. Determination criteria will include, at minimum, wind reduction, roadway clearance priorities, downed line hazards, availability of supervision, and the status of curfews or restricted zones.

Post landfall assignments are intentionally limited to supervised, lower hazard tasks:

Parks and public space cleanup support: Volunteers may be assigned to Parks and Recreation personnel to assist with cleaning parks and public spaces, staging debris into designated areas, and supporting basic restoration tasks. Assignments will avoid chainsaw work, heavy equipment operations, and overhead hazard areas unless the volunteer is specifically credentialed and assigned under direct qualified supervision.

Roadway edge cleanup support: Volunteers may assist Public Works with clearing light debris from roadway edges in neighborhoods once the area is deemed safe and utilities have addressed immediate hazards. Volunteers will not be used for roadway traffic direction unless trained and assigned under a traffic control plan.

Evacuation point and distribution site support: Volunteers may be stationed at evacuation support points or commodity distribution sites to assist with water disbursement. In large scale events, volunteers may support food distribution, recognizing that many nonprofit organizations also operate mass feeding capability. Florida ESF 15 doctrine recognizes that voluntary agencies and partners provide services including food distribution and volunteer mobilization, and that Volunteer Reception Centers may be used to recruit and train volunteers near large shelters.

Phone and information support: Volunteers may assist with call taking, routing, and public information delivery using scripted guidance approved through the City Manager and Public Information structure. Florida ESF 15 operations include a volunteer and donations hotline and coordinated public messaging, reflecting the importance of accurate information flow during disasters.

Placement based on ability and training: Volunteer placement will be determined by the Volunteer Coordinator and Volunteer Program Commander using the skills and limitations inventory collected during onboarding. National VOAD guidance emphasizes the right to an organized system that matches skills with tasks, clear expectations, supervision and training, and a safe work environment.

SAFETY, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND LEGAL RISK CONTROLS

SAFETY PRIORITY POLICY

Volunteer safety is the first operational priority. If a task cannot be accomplished safely with volunteer labor, it will not be assigned to volunteers.

Hurricane and flood cleanup hazard reality: Hurricane aftermath work can expose workers and volunteers to serious hazards. OSHA provides hurricane and flood cleanup safety resources that emphasize hazard recognition and the need for appropriate protective measures. CDC and NIOSH guidance for storm cleanup highlights hazards such as floodwater exposure, carbon monoxide poisoning risk, mold, and infectious disease concerns, and is designed to protect workers and volunteers during hurricane aftermath conditions.

MINIMUM SAFETY CONTROLS FOR ALL VOLUNTEER TASKS

Every volunteer task will include the following controls:

A safety briefing before work begins: Briefing includes task hazards, heat and hydration reminders, stop work triggers, and reporting procedures.

Appropriate protective equipment: At minimum, volunteers will be required to use closed toe footwear and gloves for debris and sandbag tasks; additional equipment such as eye protection may be required depending on the assignment. OSHA hurricane cleanup guidance emphasizes use of appropriate PPE as part of safe disaster cleanup operations.

Work rest cycles and hydration: Volunteers will be given access to water and rest periods. National VOAD guidance recognizes volunteer care as a core principle, including access to food, water, and care resources.

Hard boundaries on high hazard activities: Volunteers will not be assigned into floodwaters, into structures with unknown integrity, near downed power lines, or into areas restricted by law enforcement or emergency management direction. Volunteers will not be used for chainsaw operation, heavy equipment operation, or roofing activities unless the city has a formal credentialing process and qualified supervision in place. OSHA hurricane cleanup resources emphasize that these environments involve significant hazards requiring proper training and protective controls.

Accountability and documentation policy: No volunteer will work unless they are checked in, assigned, and supervised.

Check in and check out discipline: The Police Department will maintain a daily roster of volunteers physically on duty, with assignment location and supervisor name. ICS check in discipline exists specifically so arriving personnel can be tracked, assigned, and later demobilized with accurate records.

Assignment clarity and supervision: Volunteers have the right to clear expectations and supervision, and they should know who their direct supervisor is and how to resolve issues. Edgewater will deliver this by issuing each volunteer a simple assignment card or written direction that includes: the task, the supervisor, the work location, the expected duration, and the safety requirements.

Hours tracking and reporting: The Volunteer Coordinator will maintain daily hours worked for each volunteer and total volunteer hours by task category. Volunteer and donations management planning commonly requires maintaining a log of volunteer hours and keeping accurate records for accountability and potential reimbursement documentation.

Confidentiality and social media discipline: Volunteers will be instructed not to post operational details, survivor information, or sensitive site information during activations. National VOAD guidance includes confidentiality as a volunteer right and responsibility area and emphasizes prudent handling of information.

Legal and liability framework for volunteer use: This plan is operational, not legal advice. The City Manager and City Attorney will determine final documentation, insurance, and liability posture. That said, the program structure is designed to reduce legal risk by placing volunteers within defined scope, supervision, and documented procedures.

Federal volunteer liability context: Federal law includes volunteer liability protections under the Volunteer Protection Act for volunteers serving nonprofit organizations and governmental entities when acting within scope and not engaging in willful misconduct or gross negligence, with important limitations including activities involving motor vehicles where licensing and insurance requirements apply.

This is one reason the program restricts volunteer driving responsibilities as part of assigned tasks unless specifically authorized and controlled.

Florida volunteer liability and benefits context: Florida has its own volunteer protection concepts for nonprofit volunteer service, and Florida statutes also address volunteer benefits and coverage concepts such as liability protection and workers compensation coverage in specified volunteer contexts. The city will confirm how municipal volunteer coverage is structured through its insurance, risk management, and legal processes, and will communicate clearly to volunteers what coverage exists, what does not exist, and what claims processes apply.

Vehicle and delivery controls: Because volunteers must have transportation, program policy will distinguish between commuting and task driving.

Commuting: Volunteers are responsible for their own commuting to staging areas.

Task driving and delivery: Volunteers will only deliver supplies or sandbags when specifically assigned, when routing is controlled, and when the city determines that liability, safety, and operational coordination requirements are met. Where possible, deliveries will be handled by city employees or established partner organizations to reduce risk, consistent with best practice that prioritizes using established volunteer and donation management structures.

COORDINATION WITH NONPROFIT PARTNERS AND CATASTROPHIC EVENT INTEGRATION

Routine coordination posture: In larger disasters, voluntary agencies and nonprofit partners become a major component of feeding, distribution, cleanup, and unmet needs support. Florida ESF 15 is explicitly designed to coordinate voluntary agency activity and manage spontaneous volunteers and donations, including use of Volunteer Reception Centers and coordinated public information.

Volunteer Florida is identified as the lead agency for statewide ESF 15 coordination and provides planning support, training, and exercises to help counties maintain readiness.

For Edgewater, the Police Department will support the City Manager by ensuring our local volunteer effort complements, rather than competes with, nonprofit and city/county/federal led resources. This includes coordinating availability of volunteers for nonprofit distribution efforts when requested through the City Manager's operational chain.

CATASTROPHIC EVENT POSTURE AND THE VOLUNTEER LIAISON FUNCTION

In a catastrophic event, unaffiliated volunteers will surge. Florida ESF 15 doctrine anticipates this by calling for mobilizing local volunteers and even disaster survivors in nontraditional roles, while using all available media and voluntary agency networks to communicate where volunteers are needed and to discourage self deployment.

In catastrophic conditions, the City of Edgewater will establish an official Volunteer Liaison function through the city to organize and coordinate volunteer activity. This liaison will serve as the city's coordinating point for:

VOLUNTEER FLORIDA INTERFACE

Volunteer Florida can assist county emergency management agencies in assessing the need for spontaneous volunteer management and can support operation of Volunteer Reception Centers when local capacity is insufficient.

VOAD and partner integration: National VOAD emphasizes volunteer efforts are most effective when volunteers are part of established organizations trained in disaster response, while also recognizing unaffiliated volunteers as valuable when appropriately cared for and coordinated. The city will actively route willing volunteers toward established disaster organizations when appropriate, while maintaining a city managed volunteer pathway for clearly defined municipal support roles.

FEMA voluntary agency coordination support if present: FEMA describes the Voluntary Agency Liaison role as building and maintaining relationships among government and voluntary, faith based, community based, private sector, and philanthropic partners that support communities before, during, and after disasters. If FEMA personnel are deployed into the region, the Volunteer Liaison will coordinate through the City Manager and emergency management structure to align with VAL supported coordination.

Volunteer Reception Center concept for catastrophic events: In catastrophic events, the city will consider establishing a Volunteer Reception Center process, potentially in coordination with county, Volunteer Florida, and partner organizations. Florida ESF 15 anticipates Volunteer Reception Centers in proximity to large shelters to recruit and train volunteers and even survivors to assist local authorities and relief organizations.

FEMA Emergency Management Institute training identifies the Volunteer Reception Center as the backbone of a well organized spontaneous volunteer management program, because it provides a place and process for registering volunteers, connecting them to opportunities, and documenting their work.

For Edgewater, a Volunteer Reception Center capability does not change the reporting relationship. Volunteers still report into the Police Department volunteer accountability system, but the reception and matching process becomes a higher tempo, more formalized intake, screening, and assignment pipeline suitable for a surge environment.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND RECORD KEEPING

Program evaluation standard: Every hurricane activation will include a short after action assessment led by the Volunteer Program Commander, with input from host departments and volunteer feedback. This is consistent with the NIMS emphasis on structured incident management processes and continuous improvement across capabilities.

Core performance measures: The Police Department will track measures that directly relate to readiness and impact:

Volunteer bench strength: Number of verified volunteers available at season start and number reachable within a defined notification window.

Training completion: Percent completing program orientation and percent completing CERT training where available. FEMA notes CERT is designed to educate volunteers about disaster preparedness and response basics, making it a measurable pathway to strengthen capability.

Operational output: Total volunteer hours by mission category such as sandbag support, supply distribution, phone support, and cleanup support. Volunteer and donations management planning emphasizes maintaining records and logs for accountability.

Safety performance: Number of safety incidents, near misses, and stop work events. The goal is not to hide incidents but to reduce risk through learning. OSHA and CDC emphasize hazard recognition and mitigation in hurricane cleanup environments.

Volunteer care and retention: Volunteer feedback, demobilization satisfaction, and willingness to return. National VOAD guidance emphasizes volunteer care, supervision, and clear communication, all of which influence retention and safe performance.

Annual sustainment actions: Each year, beginning forty five days before June 1, the Police Department will conduct the recruitment and engagement campaign, followed by the within thirty day intake meeting. The program will also update job descriptions, refresh safety messaging, and ensure the volunteer roster remains current. Florida ESF 15 planning explicitly calls for preparedness activities including planning, training, and exercises, and for maintaining readiness of volunteer management capability.

BACKGROUND CHECK NOTICE

All volunteers participating in the City of Edgewater Volunteer Disaster Response Program will be subject to a background screening process prior to activation. This requirement is necessary due to the potential for volunteers to access controlled or restricted facilities, interact directly with vulnerable populations, and operate in roles that represent the City of Edgewater. At a minimum, background checks will include a review of criminal history with specific attention to sex offender registry status, violent felony convictions, and other offenses that may impact the safety, trust, or operational integrity of the program. The City reserves the right to evaluate any additional criminal history, pending charges, or concerning patterns of behavior on a case-by-case basis, as determined by the Chief of Police or the City Manager. Screening procedures will be conducted in a manner consistent with applicable Florida law and recognized volunteer management best practices, ensuring both due diligence and fairness in the selection process. Participation in the program is contingent upon successful completion of this screening process.

CLOSING STATEMENT OF LEADERSHIP INTENT

This program exists to help Edgewater residents help Edgewater residents, without putting good people in preventable danger. We will treat volunteers with respect, protect their safety, match them to appropriate tasks, and maintain disciplined accountability. When the storm is coming, we will use volunteers only in the safe pre landfall window. When the storm has passed, we will use volunteers only when conditions are stable and supervision is in place. This approach is consistent with established emergency management best practice: coordinated volunteer systems increase impact, while uncoordinated volunteer activity can impede operations and strain disaster areas.

