



MEMORIAL DAY TORNADOES EMERGENCY OPERATIONS



MONTGOMERY
C O U N T Y

Tornadoes Touch Down



On May 27, from 10:41 to 11:34 p.m., a thunderstorm produced four tornadoes (EF-4, EF-3, EF-2, EF-0) that touched down in Montgomery County.

Heavily Populated Areas



Photo courtesy Montgomery County Sheriff's Office



Photo courtesy National Weather Service

Timeline: Emergency Declarations

May 27 at 11:55 PM: Montgomery County EMA oral emergency declaration.

May 28 at 12 PM: Press Conference as County Commissioners pass resolution to declare local emergency.

May 28 at 2:58 PM: State of Ohio issues state disaster declaration.

June 11: State of Ohio requests federal disaster declaration.

June 22: Federal disaster declaration received.



Emergency Operations Center

Montgomery County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was on standby and activated at 11:55 p.m.

Emergency Management Agency PIO was woken by national news, first statement by 1:20 a.m. Sheriff PIO woken also by national news by 2:00 a.m.



Tuesday, May 28 • 1:25 AM



Hello, I'm reaching out from ABC News/Good Morning America. I was hoping to speak to someone about the storm damage tonight in the Dayton area. Thank you so much for your time!

I will do my best to get info, but we are still assessing the extent of the damage and I have few details. Here is a current statement if that will help: "Montgomery County is focused on supporting life saving measures in multiple jurisdictions, such as shutting down gas lines or locating people who are trapped by debris. Please call 911 or contact your local fire station for immediate assistance if you are trapped or need emergency assistance."

Text message



The First Hour...

The Good

We didn't know much, so we responded with the same info to each request.

The Bad

Initial statement lagged because staff did not notify lead PIOs.

Initial Messaging

It was extremely dark, so situational assessments were difficult.

Destroyed utilities hindered access and made the area extremely unsafe:

- Downed power lines
- Broken gas lines
- No water
- Raw sewage

PRIMARY MESSAGE: Stay away from the area unless you are a first responder. We are focused on search and rescue and life saving measures.

Search and Rescue



EOC activated the FEMA Ohio Task Force One Urban Search and Rescue team.

Strike Team Coordinator immediately began supporting search and rescue operations from the EOC, which were conducted by Rescue Strike Teams (Regions 3, 4, 6).

1,600 structures searched:

- **68 people evacuated**
- **166 people injured**
- **1 death**

Search and Rescue



MISSING

FROM HARRISON TWP

LAST SEEN: 5/27/19



Catherine Clayburn

CALL

937-225-HELP

Catherine Clayburn

- Missing hours before the storm
- Notices sent to news media and placed on online channels.
- Daily Updates Sent Out
- Press Conferences (2)

Life Saving Measures



Photos courtesy DP&L

EOC Director responded to requests from Fire Chiefs and worked with Vectren to shut down damaged **gas lines**. EOC coordinated with first responders and DP&L to repair and remove **power lines**.

Montgomery County Engineer's Office **debris removal** to allow search & rescue and utility crews access to hard hit areas.

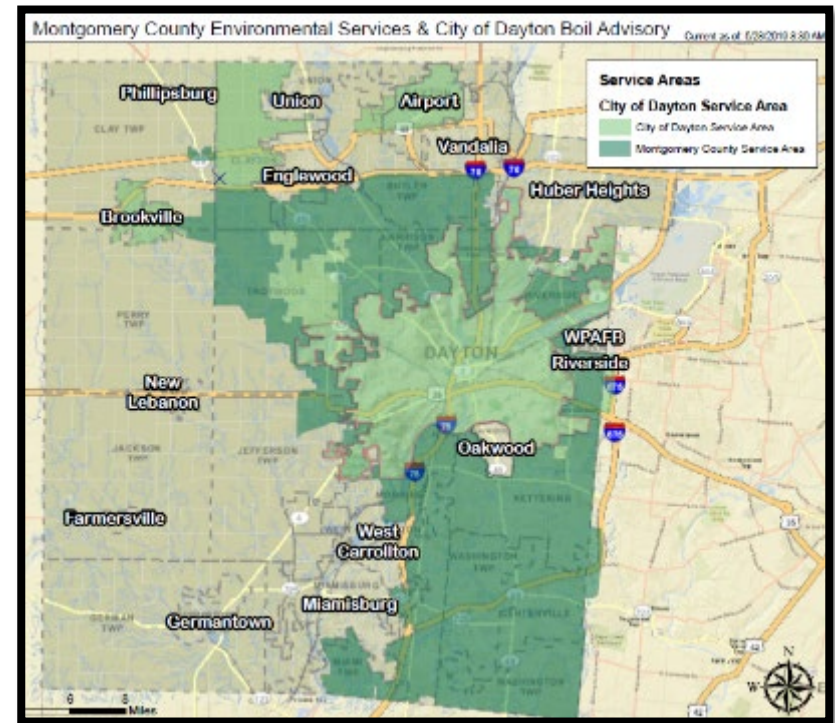
Water System Failure

Combined system. Power lost to City of Dayton plants. Inadequate power backup to provide pressure for system.

Leads to water loss, low pressure, and boil advisory.

Selective isolation and shutoff procedures.

Boil advisory in place for 3 days, lasting until May 31.



Primary Message: *Conserve water or we will lose the whole system.*

Sewer Lift Stations Destroyed



N-7 Stillwater Lift Station
BEFORE



N-7 Stillwater Lift Station
AFTER

- **Raw sewage diverted into river. Bypass pumping.**
- **Combined messaging with Public Health.**



Shelter, food and water locations were some of the most important info and required constant updates.

Sheltering, Food, Water

Sheltering, Food, Water



6 shelters
25,000
hot meals



Value of food
distributed =
\$1,127,699
Value of
water:
\$1,735,452



Requested
and received
2,339,560
bottles
of water from
the State of
Ohio.

Debris Removal



County Engineer dedicated staff and vehicles to remove debris. Engineer's Office became site to dump, process, remove yard waste.

Solid Waste District **new industrial shredder** on site to process yard waste. SWD also extended hours and waived fees for residents.

Damage Assessments

May 28-31: Montgomery County led initial damage assessment. 27 building inspectors from County, Dayton and Vandalia participated.

June 5-6: EOC personnel organized Preliminary Damage Assessment with FEMA to gather data, which supported Presidential Disaster Declaration.

Note: Media was extremely interested in quantifying impact, so data was constantly rehashed.



Managing Volunteers & Donations

The Foodbank, Inc. – Food, water donations for first week

Volunteers:

- Volunteer Reception Center: Sinclair College
- Community groups (e.g., Rebuilding Together Dayton)
- Homeowner sign-up service (match requests & volunteers)

Donations

- Nonprofits were a huge help! (Matthew 25, St. Vincent de Paul)
- *You'll need warehouse space!*



Go to the PEOPLE!

Mobile Job & Family Services

- SNAP
- Medicaid

Mobile Workforce:

- Job placement & training
- Unemployment Assistance

Mobile Public Health:

- Cribs
- Birth Certificates
- Vaccines

Family Assistance Center:

- ADAMHS
- Red Cross
- Ohio BMV
- St. Vincent De Paul
- Public Health



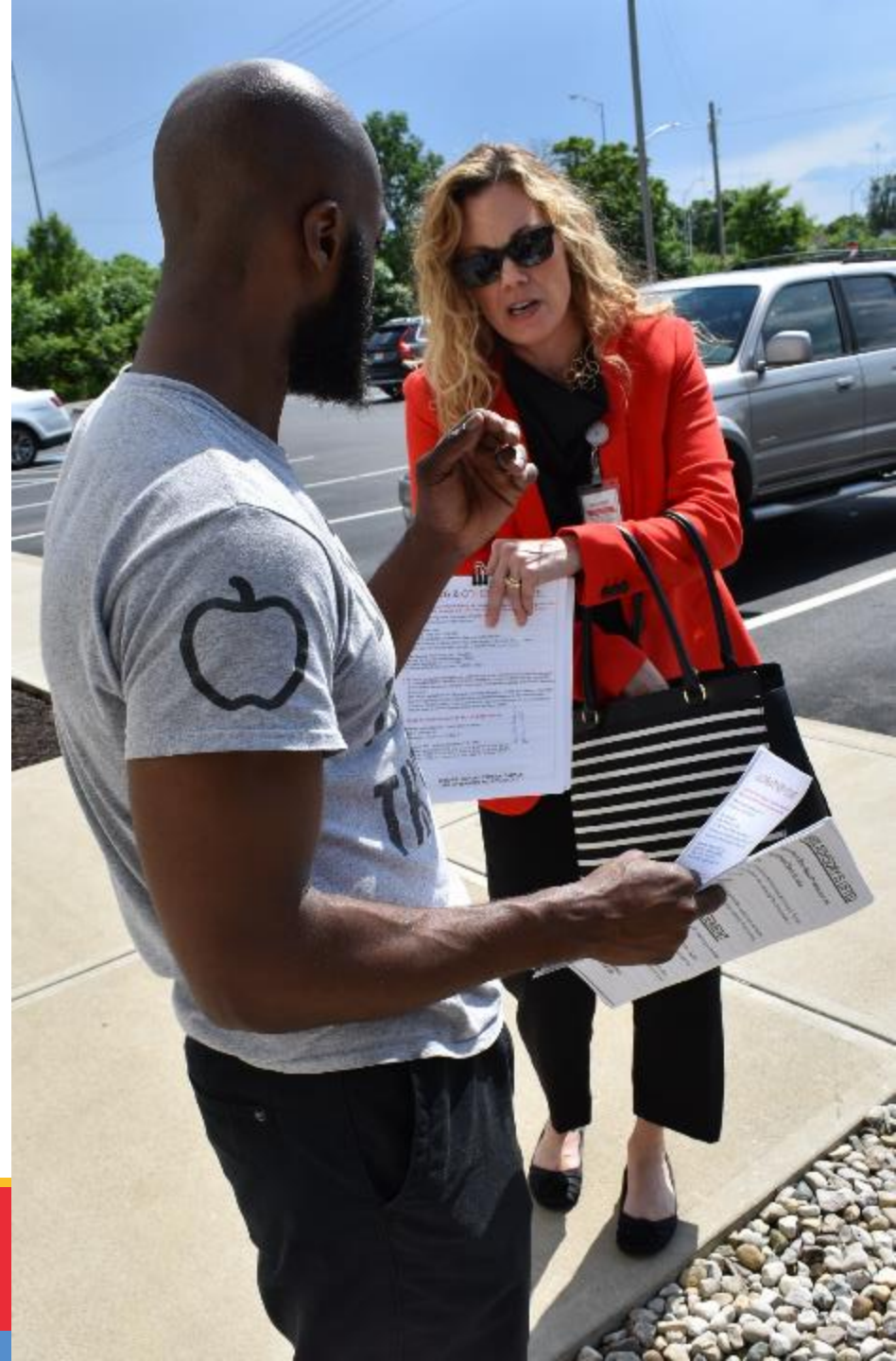
Tactics: Press

- Most media requests were phone calls or written statements.
- Few press conferences.
- Media was in the field, so they interviewed folks on the spot (e.g., Sheriff, Jurisdictions).
- More local media engagement several weeks later (re: long-term recovery, disaster declarations, damage assessments).



Tactics: Flyers

- Flyers needed because no one had access to other channels.
- Printing had to be fast!
- They were ugly. Very ugly. It was okay.
- Info was constantly changing, so there were multiple iterations.



Tactics: Outdoor Advertising



- Used donated resources and paid digital billboards
- Digital displays at County facilities
- Provide same benefit as flyers

Tactics: Internal Comm

- Employees are an important stakeholder group. Don't forget them!
- We had staff directly impacted by the storms who still came to work. HR needed to support them.
- **Effective tactics:** flyers, emails, special newsletter edition, social media posts



Tactics: Contact (e-mail) Lists



DO NOT WAIT. Do this right now. Seriously.

We used every email and contact list imaginable:

- Jurisdictions
- Media contacts
- Regional PIOs
- Churches & Nonprofits
- Public Safety

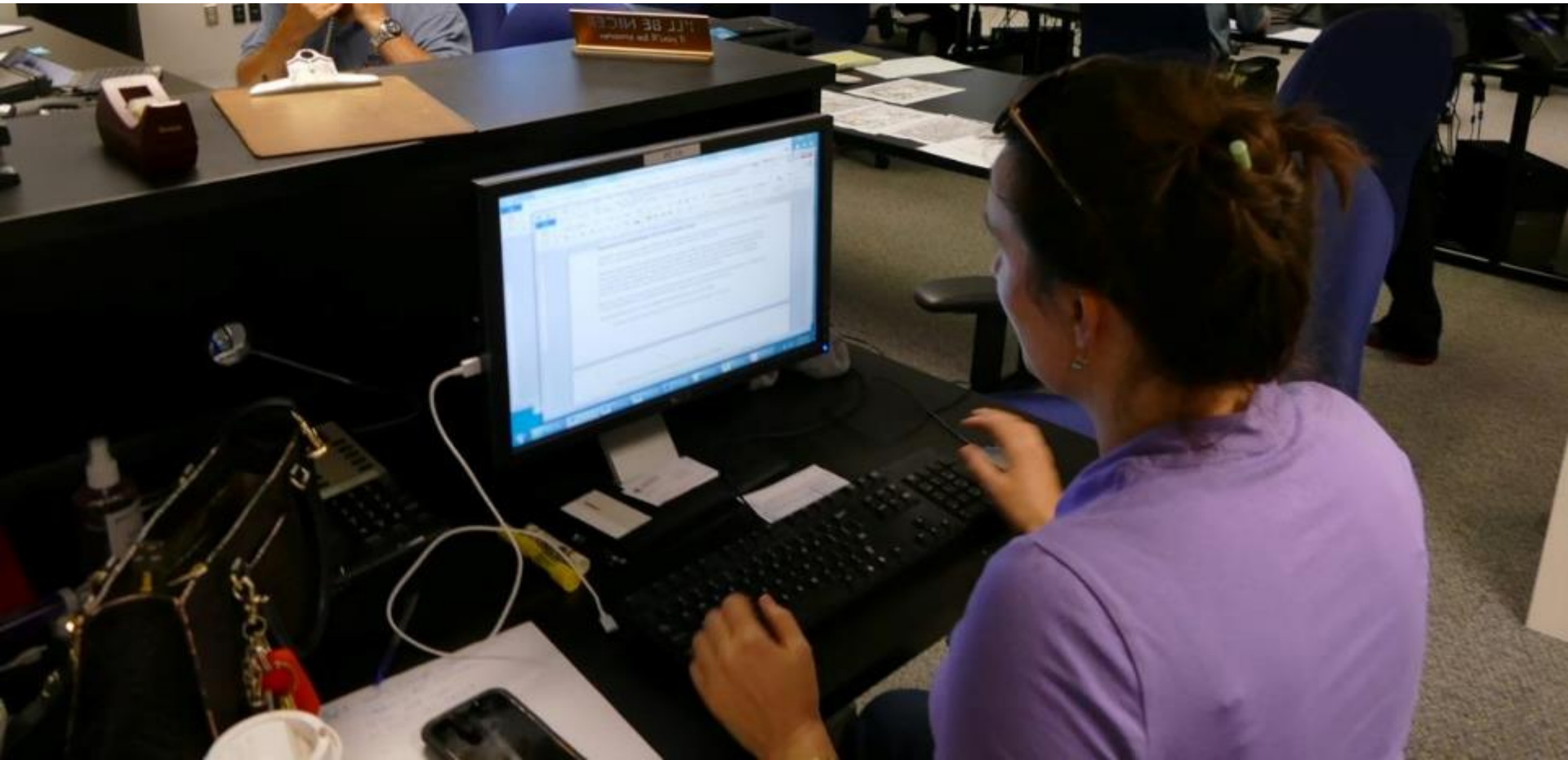
Tactics: Phone Bank

- Operated phone bank (aka Rumor Control) 8:30 AM to 6 PM daily
- Provided up-to-date info to operators
- Questions and resource requests were provided to EOC resource desk or appropriate agency



Tactics: Website

- Created special alert section immediately.
- Updated website every couple of hours or as new info became available.



Tactics: Social Media

Monitored:



- Keywords on social media
- Local and national news outlets
- Stakeholder websites (e.g., DP&L, Red Cross)

Resources: Kept DP&L outage map, combined water outage map, and other resources open at all the times on computer and displayed on larger screens.

Lesson Learned: Don't wait for a big update, rather share small bites of info. Or share same info multiple times. It should be constant.

Aggregate Social Media Data

| Category | Number |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Total Impressions (Unique Imp.) | 3,015,429 (1,485,588) |
| Total Engagements | 266,420 |
| Engagement Rate (engagement/reach) | 8.8% (17.9%) |
| Total # of Posts | 236 |
| Total # FB Messages | 88 |



2019 Was Rough



- February water outage
- KKK rally (600+ law enforcement response)
- Memorial Day tornadoes
- Oregon District Mass Shooting
- Officer Del Rio murder

Take Care of Your Team

“Compared to the last emergency, this was much bigger and more serious, yet I actually got to go home and sleep.”



What went well...

One Lead PIO at all times in the EOC. Established roles/shifts immediately to prevent burnout. Met daily for assignments. All staff kept up-to-date, so passing the torch was easy.

Collaboration between agencies was well established.

February water outage was a great “dry run.”

We consolidated social media beforehand, so responses were timely, personalized, and accurate.

We had recently updated contact lists for jurisdictions and included those contacts on all communication updates.

Used varied, diverse distribution channels.

Easy to get info with everyone in one place at EOC.

Call center was regularly updated.

...what didn't.

We were slow to make new updates in the first 48 hours. People were terrified and needed to be reassured that we were doing something, even if it was the same thing.

We met virtually for the water outage and boil advisory, but a formal Joint Information Center (JIC) would have been better.

Printing flyers was a great idea. We should have thought of it sooner.

Make sure equipment and software is updated to avoid issues with printing, retrieving files, and software access.

Too many old versions of talking points floating around caused confusion at times, so be sure you cull old documents throughout EOC.

We had trouble getting out in the field at first.

We forgot to capture enough video/photos, for both social and posterity, and now I wish we had them!

Lessons Learned.

Consolidate social media beforehand if you don't have resources to manage it. (Or hide pages!) Social was a 24/7 job for first two weeks.

Manage and update your contact lists every quarter.

Develop relationships before crisis hits. Like, today.

- Set up mutual sharing with key agency Facebook pages.
- Seek out mutual aid agreements with local jurisdictions for communications support (not just ops)

Does your EOC have current equipment and software? Better check now!

Ask for help early and often. Use floaters.

Create PIO Go Bags.

Thank you for your time!



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