

Mississippi Code 1972

Annotated Title 33. Military Affairs (Chs. 1 — 15)

Chapter 15. Emergency Management and Civil Defense (Arts. 1 — 7)

Article 1. Emergency Management Law. (§§ 33-15-1 — 33-15-53)

§ 33-15-1. Short title.

This article may be cited as the “Mississippi Emergency Management Law.”

§ 33-15-2. Legislative findings and declaration of intent.

(1) The Legislature finds and declares that the state is vulnerable to a wide range of emergencies, including natural, technological and man-made disasters, all of which threaten the life, health and safety of its people; damage and destroy property; disrupt services and everyday business and recreational activities; and impede economic growth and development. The Legislature further finds that this vulnerability is exacerbated by the growth in the state’s number of persons with special needs. This growth has greatly complicated the state’s ability to coordinate its emergency management resources and activities.

(2) It is the intent of the Legislature to reduce the vulnerability of the people and property of this state; to prepare for efficient evacuation and shelter of threatened or affected persons; to provide for the rapid and orderly provision of relief to persons and for the coordination of activities relating to emergency preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation among and between agencies and officials of this state, with similar agencies and officials of other states, with local and federal governments, with interstate organizations and with the private sector.

(3) It is further the intent of the Legislature to promote the state’s emergency preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation capabilities through enhanced coordination, long-term planning and adequate funding. State policy for responding to disasters is to support local emergency response efforts. In the case of a major or catastrophic disaster, however, the needs of residents and communities will likely be greater than local resources. In these situations, the state must be capable of providing effective, coordinated and timely support to communities and the public. Therefore, the Legislature determines and declares that the provisions of this article fulfill an important state interest.

§ 33-15-3. Policy and purpose.

(a) Because of the existing and increasing possibility of the occurrence of disasters or emergencies of unprecedented size and destructiveness resulting from enemy attack, sabotage or other hostile action, and from natural, man-made or technological disasters, and in order to insure that preparations of this state will be adequate to deal with, reduce vulnerability to, and recover from such disasters or emergencies, and generally to provide for the common defense and to protect the public peace, health and safety, and to preserve the lives and property of the people of this state, it is hereby found and declared necessary: (1) To create a state emergency management agency, and to authorize the creation of local organizations for emergency management in the municipalities and counties of the state, and to authorize cooperation with the federal government and the governments of other states; (2) to confer upon the Governor, the agency

and upon the executive heads or governing bodies of the municipalities and counties of the state the emergency powers provided herein; (3) to provide for the rendering of mutual aid among the municipalities and counties of the state, and with other states, and with the federal government with respect to the carrying out of emergency management functions and responsibilities; (4) to authorize the establishment of such organizations and the development and employment of such measures as are necessary and appropriate to carry out the provisions of this article; and (5) to provide the means to assist in the prevention or mitigation of emergencies which may be caused or aggravated by inadequate planning for, and regulation of, public and private facilities and land use.

(b) It is further declared to be the purpose of this article and the policy of the state that all emergency management functions of this state be coordinated, to the maximum extent, with the comparable functions of the federal government, including its various departments and agencies, of other states and localities, and of private agencies of every type, to the end that the most effective preparation and use may be made of the nation's manpower, resources, and facilities for dealing with any disaster or emergency, or both, that may occur as enumerated in this section.

§ 33-15-5. Definitions.

The following words, whenever used in this article shall, unless a different meaning clearly appears from the context, have the following meanings:

(a) "Agency" means the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency, created by Section 33-15-7.

(b) "Director" means the Director of Emergency Management, appointed pursuant to Section 33-15-7.

(c) "Emergency management" means the preparation for, the mitigation of, the response to, and the recovery from emergencies and disasters. Specific emergency management responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

(i) Reduction of vulnerability of people and communities of this state to damage, injury and loss of life and property resulting from natural, technological or man-made emergencies or hostile military paramilitary action.

(ii) Preparation for prompt and efficient response and recovery to protect lives and property affected by emergencies.

(iii) Response to emergencies using all systems, plans and resources necessary to preserve adequately the health, safety and welfare of persons or property affected by the emergency.

(iv) Recovery from emergencies by providing for the rapid and orderly start of restoration and rehabilitation of persons and property affected by emergencies.

(v) Provision of an emergency management system embodying all aspects of preemergency preparedness and postemergency response, recovery and mitigation.

(vi) Assistance in anticipation, recognition, appraisal, prevention and mitigation of emergencies which may be caused or aggravated by inadequate planning for, and regulation of public and private facilities and land use.

(d) “Civil defense,” whenever it appears in the laws of the State of Mississippi, shall mean “emergency management” unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

(e) “State of war emergency” means the condition which exists immediately, with or without a proclamation thereof by the Governor, whenever this state or nation is attacked by an enemy of the United States or upon receipt by the state of a warning from the federal government indicating that such an attack is probable or imminent.

(f) “State of emergency” means the duly proclaimed existence of conditions of disaster or extreme peril to the safety of persons or property within the state caused by air or water pollution, fire, flood, storm, epidemic, earthquake, hurricane, resource shortages, or other natural or man-made conditions other than conditions causing a “state of war emergency,” which conditions by reasons of their magnitude are or are likely to be beyond the control of the services, personnel, equipment and facilities of any single county and/or municipality and requires combined forces of the state to combat.

(g) “Local emergency” means the duly proclaimed existence of conditions of disaster or extreme peril to the safety of persons and property within the territorial limits of a county and/or municipality caused by such conditions as air or water pollution, fire, flood, storm, epidemic, earthquake, hurricane, resource shortages or other natural or man-made conditions, which conditions are or are likely to be beyond the control of the services, personnel, equipment and facilities of the political subdivision and require the combined forces of other subdivisions or of the state to combat.

(h) “Emergency” means any occurrence, or threat thereof, whether natural, technological, or man-made, in war or in peace, which results or may result in substantial injury or harm to the population or substantial damage to or loss of property.

(i) “Man-made emergency” means an emergency caused by an action against persons or society, including, but not limited to, emergency attack, sabotage, terrorism, civil unrest or other action impairing the orderly administration of government.

(j) “Natural emergency” means an emergency caused by a natural event, including, but not limited to, a hurricane, a storm, a flood, severe wave action, a drought or an earthquake.

(k) “Technological emergency” means an emergency caused by a technological failure or accident, including, but not limited to, an explosion, transportation accident, radiological accident, or chemical or other hazardous material incident.

(l) “Local emergency management agency” means an organization created to discharge the emergency management responsibilities and functions of a political subdivision.

(m) “Disaster” means any natural, technological or civil emergency as defined in this section that causes damage of sufficient severity and magnitude to result in a declaration of an emergency by a county or municipality, the Governor or the President of the United States. Disasters shall be identified by the severity of resulting damage, as follows:

(i) “Catastrophic disaster” means a disaster that will require massive state and federal assistance, including immediate military involvement.

(ii) “Major disaster” means a disaster that will likely exceed local capabilities and require a broad range of state and federal assistance.

(iii) “Minor disaster” means a disaster that is likely to be within the response capabilities of local government and to result in only a minimal need for state or federal assistance.

(n) “Disaster Reservist” means any person hired on a temporary basis pursuant to State Personnel Board policies and procedures regulating personal service contracts, that is hired to perform specific tasks related to a Governor’s State of Emergency, or by an emergency or disaster declaration of the President of the United States, by the agency, and is assigned to perform such duties as may be required under the direction of the appropriate agency supervisor.

(o) “Emergency impact area” means the area of the state in which market conditions exist due to a state of emergency creating a likelihood that prices ordinarily charged for goods and services could be raised unfairly due to the underlying emergency.

(p) “Political subdivision” means a local government created by the State of Mississippi to assist in fulfilling the state’s obligations. The term “political subdivision” includes levee districts.

§ 33-15-7. Mississippi Emergency Management Agency established; director and other personnel.

(a) There is hereby created within the executive branch of the state government a department called the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency with a director of emergency management who shall be appointed by the Governor; he shall hold office during the pleasure of the Governor and shall be compensated as determined by any appropriation that may be made by the Legislature for such purposes.

(b) The director, with the approval of the Governor, may employ such technical, clerical, stenographic and other personnel, to be compensated as provided in any appropriation that may be made for such purpose, and may make such expenditures within the appropriation therefor, or from other funds made available to him for purposes of emergency management, as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this article.

(c) The director and other personnel of the emergency management agency shall be provided with appropriate office space, furniture, equipment, supplies, stationery and printing in the same manner as provided for other state agencies.

(d) The director, subject to the direction and control of the Governor, shall be the executive head of the emergency management agency and shall be responsible to the Governor for carrying out the program for emergency management of this state. He shall coordinate the activities of all organizations for emergency management within the state, and shall maintain liaison with and cooperate with emergency management agencies and organizations of other states and of the federal government, and shall have such additional authority, duties, and responsibilities authorized by this article as may be prescribed by the Governor.

§ 33-15-9. Repealed.

Repealed by Laws, 1995, ch. 333, § 15, eff from and after July 1, 1995.

§ 33-15-11. Emergency management powers of Governor.

(a) The Governor shall have general direction and control of the activities of the Emergency Management Agency and Council and shall be responsible for the carrying out of the provisions of this article, and in the event of a man-made, technological or natural disaster or emergency beyond local control, may assume direct operational control over all or any part of the emergency management functions within this state.

(b) In performing his duties under this article, the Governor is further authorized and empowered:

(1) To make, amend and rescind the necessary orders, rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this article with due consideration of the plans of the federal government, and to enter into disaster assistance grants and agreements with the federal government under the terms as may be required by federal law.

(2) To work with the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency in preparing a comprehensive plan and program for the emergency management of this state, such plan and program to be integrated into and coordinated with the emergency management plans of the federal government and of other states to the fullest possible extent, and to coordinate the preparation of plans and programs for emergency management by the political subdivisions of this state, such local plans to be integrated into and coordinated with the emergency management plan and program of this state to the fullest possible extent.

(3) In accordance with such plan and program for emergency management of this state, to ascertain the requirements of the state or the political subdivisions thereof for food or clothing or other necessities of life in the event of attack or natural or man-made or technological disasters and to plan for and procure supplies, medicines, materials and equipment, and to use and employ from time to time any of the property, services and resources within the state, for the purposes set forth in this article; to make surveys of the industries, resources and facilities within the state as are necessary to carry out the purposes of this article; to institute training programs and public information programs, and to take all other preparatory steps, including the partial or full mobilization of emergency management organizations in advance of actual disaster, to insure the furnishing of adequately trained and equipped forces of emergency management personnel in time of need.

(4) To cooperate with the President and the heads of the Armed Forces, and the Emergency Management Agency of the United States, and with the officers and agencies of other states in matters pertaining to the emergency management of the state and nation and the incidents thereof; and in connection therewith, to take any measures which he may deem proper to carry into effect any request of the President and the appropriate federal officers and agencies, for any action looking to emergency management, including the direction or control of (a) blackouts and practice blackouts, air raid drills, mobilization of emergency management forces, and other tests and exercises, (b) warnings and signals for drills or attacks and the mechanical devices to be used in connection therewith, (c) the effective screening or extinguishing of all lights and lighting devices and appliances, (d) shutting off water mains, gas mains, electric power connections and the suspension of all other utility services, (e) the conduct of civilians and the movement and cessation of movement of pedestrians and vehicular traffic during, prior and subsequent to drills or attack, (f) public meetings or gatherings under emergency conditions, and (g) the evacuation and reception of the civilian population.

(5) To take such action and give such directions to state and local law enforcement officers and agencies as may be reasonable and necessary for the purpose of securing compliance with the provisions of this article and with the orders, rules and regulations made pursuant thereto.

(6) To employ such measures and give such directions to the state or local boards of health as may be reasonably necessary for the purpose of securing compliance with the provisions of this article or with the findings or recommendations of such boards of health by reason of conditions arising from enemy attack or the threat of enemy attack or natural, man-made or technological disaster.

(7) To utilize the services and facilities of existing officers and agencies of the state and of the political subdivisions thereof; and all such officers and agencies shall cooperate with and extend their services and facilities to the Governor as he may request.

(8) To establish agencies and offices and to appoint executive, technical, clerical and other personnel as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this article including, with due consideration to the recommendation of the local authorities, part-time or full-time state and regional area directors.

(9) To delegate any authority vested in him under this article, and to provide for the subdelegation of any such authority.

(10) On behalf of this state to enter into reciprocal aid agreements or compacts with other states and the federal government, either on a statewide basis or local political subdivision basis or with a neighboring state or province of a foreign country. Such mutual aid arrangements shall be limited to the furnishings or exchange of food, clothing, medicine and other supplies; engineering services; emergency housing; police services; national or state guards while under the control of the state; health, medical and related services; firefighting, rescue, transportation and construction services and equipment; personnel necessary to provide or conduct these services; and such other supplies, equipment, facilities, personnel and services as may be needed; the reimbursement of costs and expenses for equipment, supplies, personnel and similar items for mobile support units, firefighting and police units and health units; and on such terms and conditions as are deemed necessary.

(11) To sponsor and develop mutual aid plans and agreements between the political subdivisions of the state, similar to the mutual aid arrangements with other states referred to above.

(12) To collect information and data for assessment of vulnerabilities and capabilities within the borders of Mississippi as it pertains to the nation and state's security and homeland defense. This information shall be exempt from the Mississippi Public Records Act, Section 25-61-1 et seq.

(13) Authorize any agency or arm of the state to create a special emergency management revolving fund, accept donations, contributions, fees, grants, including federal funds, as may be necessary for such agency or arm of the state to administer its functions of this article as set forth in the Executive Order of the Governor.

(14) To authorize the Commissioner of Public Safety to select, train, organize and equip a ready reserve of auxiliary highway patrolmen.

(15) To suspend or limit the sale, dispensing or transportation of alcoholic beverages, firearms, explosives and combustibles.

(16) To control, restrict and regulate by rationing, freezing, use of quotas, prohibitions on shipments, price-fixing, allocation or other means, the use, sale or distribution of food, feed, fuel, clothing and other commodities, materials, goods or services.

(17) To proclaim a state of emergency in an area affected or likely to be affected thereby when he finds that the conditions described in Section 33-15-5(g) exist, or when he is requested to do so by the mayor of a municipality or by the president of the board of supervisors of a county, or when he finds that a local authority is unable to cope with the emergency. Such proclamation shall be in writing and shall take effect immediately upon its execution by the Governor. As soon thereafter as possible, such proclamation shall be filed with the Secretary of State and be given widespread notice and publicity. The Governor, upon advice of the director, shall review the need for continuing the state of emergency at least every thirty (30) days until the emergency is terminated and shall proclaim a reduction of area or the termination of the state of emergency at the earliest possible date that conditions warrant.

(18) To declare an emergency impact area when he finds that the conditions described in Section 33-15-5(o) exist. The proclamation shall be in writing and shall take effect immediately upon its execution by the Governor. As soon as possible, the proclamation shall be filed with the Secretary of State and be given widespread notice and publicity. The Governor shall review the need for continuing the declaration of emergency impact area at least every thirty (30) days until the emergency is terminated, and shall proclaim the reduction of the emergency impact area or termination of the declaration of emergency impact area at the earliest date or dates possible.

(c) In addition to the powers conferred upon the Governor in this section, the Legislature hereby expressly delegates to the Governor the following powers and duties in the event of an impending enemy attack, an enemy attack, or a man-made, technological or natural disaster where such disaster is beyond local control:

(1) To suspend the provisions of any regulatory statute prescribing the procedures for conduct of state business, or the orders, rules or regulations of any state agency, if strict compliance with the provisions of any statute, order, rule or regulation would in any way prevent, hinder or delay necessary action in coping with a disaster or emergency.

(2) To transfer the direction, personnel or functions of state agencies, boards, commissions or units thereof for the purpose of performing or facilitating disaster or emergency services.

(3) To commandeer or utilize any private property if necessary to cope with a disaster or emergency, provided that such private property so commandeered or utilized shall be paid for under terms and conditions agreed upon by the participating parties. The owner of said property shall immediately be given a receipt for the said private property and said receipt shall serve as a valid claim against the Treasury of the State of Mississippi for the agreed upon market value of said property.

(4) To perform and exercise such other functions, powers and duties as may be necessary to promote and secure the safety and protection of the civilian population in coping with a disaster or emergency.

(d) This section does not authorize the Governor or a designee of the Governor to act in contravention of Section 33-7-303.

§ 33-15-13. Emergency powers of Governor.

(a) In the event of actual or impending enemy attack, as determined by the President, against the United States and the State of Mississippi, the Governor may proclaim that a state of war emergency exists, and thereafter the Governor shall have and may exercise for such period as such state of war emergency exists or continues, the following additional emergency powers:

(1) To enforce all laws, rules and regulations relating to emergency management and to assume direct operational control of all emergency management forces and helpers in the state;

(2) To purchase supplies and services for emergency management purposes, including aiding the populace, without necessity for advertising therefor; to call upon all persons, firms and corporations to furnish such supplies, services and facilities as they may control which may be needed for the protection of the public, and to enter into all necessary contracts and agreements as may be necessary with relation thereto, all or any provisions of law with reference to advertisements in such matters being expressly waived for this purpose;

(3) To utilize or commandeer any private property for the protection of the public or at the request of the President, the Armed Forces or the Emergency Management Agency of the United States including:

(A) For use during emergency only, all means of transportation and communication, except newspapers, or publications, or wire facilities leased or owned by news services, newspapers and other news publications;

(B) Food, clothing, equipment, materials, medicines, any supplies and stocks of fuel of whatever nature;

(C) Facilities including buildings and plants, for use during emergency only; in the event it shall become necessary to utilize any such facilities, plants or services, the operation thereof, if possible, shall be left in the hands of the owner, subject to direction of the Governor, and only such portion as may be essential for the protection of life and property, or the national defense, shall be commandeered or utilized;

(4) To sell, lend, give or distribute all or any such personal property utilized among the inhabitants of the state and to account to the State Treasurer for any funds received for such property;

(5) To perform and exercise such other functions, powers and duties as may be deemed necessary to promote and secure the safety and protection of the civilian population.

(b) Adequate compensation shall be paid for any property so utilized, taken or condemned. In case it shall become necessary to take or use any private property as provided above, the full faith and credit of the State of Mississippi shall be pledged to pay just compensation therefor. In case the Governor and the owner of any such property so utilized or taken shall not be able to agree on the compensation to be paid for use, damage or taking thereof, the amount of such compensation to be paid shall be determined in conformity with the statutes of this state relating to eminent domain procedures.

(c) All powers granted to the Governor by this section with respect to a state of war emergency shall terminate when the state of war emergency has been terminated by proclamation of the Governor or by concurrent resolution of the Legislature declaring it at an end.

§ 33-15-14. Preparation and maintenance of state comprehensive emergency management plan.

(1) The agency is responsible for maintaining a comprehensive statewide program of emergency management. The agency is responsible for coordination with efforts of the federal government with other departments and agencies of state government, with county and municipal governments and school boards and with private agencies that have a role in emergency management.

(2) In performing its duties under this article, the agency shall:

(a) Work with the Governor, or his representative, in preparing a State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan of this state, which shall be integrated into and coordinated with the emergency management plans of the federal government and of other states to the fullest possible extent, and to coordinate the preparation of plans and programs for emergency management by the political subdivisions of the state, such local plans to be integrated into and coordinated with the emergency plan and program of this state. The plan must contain provisions to ensure that the state is prepared for emergencies and minor, major and catastrophic disasters, and the agency shall work closely with local governments and agencies and organizations with emergency management responsibilities in preparing and maintaining the plan. The State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan will be operations oriented and:

(i) Include an evacuation component that includes specific regional and interregional planning provisions and promotes intergovernmental coordination of evacuation activities. This component must, at a minimum: ensure coordination pertaining to evacuees crossing county lines; set forth procedures for directing people caught on evacuation routes to safe shelter; and establish policies and strategies for emergency medical evacuations.

(ii) Include a shelter component that includes specific regional and interregional planning provisions and promotes coordination of shelter activities between the public, private and nonprofit sectors. This component must, at a minimum: contain strategies to ensure the availability of adequate public shelter space in each region of the state; establish strategies for refuge-of-last-resort programs; provide strategies to assist local emergency management efforts to ensure that adequate staffing plans exist for all shelters, including medical and security personnel; provide for a postdisaster communications system for public shelters; establish model shelter guidelines for operations, registration, inventory, power generation capability, information management and staffing; and set forth policy guidance for sheltering people with special needs.

(iii) Include a postdisaster response and recovery component that includes specific regional and interregional planning provisions and promotes intergovernmental coordination of postdisaster response and recovery activities. This component must provide for postdisaster response and recovery strategies according to whether a disaster is minor, major or catastrophic. The postdisaster response and recovery component must, at a minimum: establish the structure of the state's postdisaster response and recovery organization; establish procedures for activating the state's plan; set forth policies used to guide

postdisaster response and recovery activities; describe the chain of command during the postdisaster response and recovery period; describe initial and continuous postdisaster response and recovery actions; identify the roles and responsibilities of each involved agency and organization; provide for a comprehensive communications plan; establish procedures for monitoring mutual aid agreements; provide for rapid impact assessment teams; ensure the availability of an effective statewide urban search and rescue program coordinated with the fire services; ensure the existence of a comprehensive statewide medical care and relief plan administered by the State Department of Health; and establish systems for coordinating volunteers and accepting and distributing donated funds and goods.

(iv) Include additional provisions addressing aspects of preparedness, response and recovery, as determined necessary by the agency.

(v) Address the need for coordinated and expeditious deployment of state resources, including the Mississippi National Guard. In the case of an imminent major disaster, procedures should address predeployment of the Mississippi National Guard, and, in the case of an imminent catastrophic disaster, procedures should address predeployment of the Mississippi National Guard and the United States Armed Forces. This subparagraph (v) does not authorize the agency to call out and deploy the Mississippi National Guard, which authority and determination rests solely with the Governor.

(vi) Establish a system of communications and warning to ensure that the state's population and emergency management agencies are warned of developing emergency situations and can communicate emergency response decisions.

(vii) Establish guidelines and schedules for annual exercises that evaluate the ability of the state and its political subdivisions to respond to minor, major and catastrophic disasters and support local emergency management agencies. Such exercises shall be coordinated with local governments and, to the extent possible, the federal government.

(viii)

1. Assign lead and support responsibilities to state agencies and personnel for emergency support functions and other support activities.

2. The agency shall prepare an interim postdisaster response and recovery component that substantially complies with the provisions of this paragraph (a). Each state agency assigned lead responsibility for an emergency support function by the State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan shall also prepare a detailed operational plan needed to implement its responsibilities. The complete State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan shall be submitted to the Governor no later than January 1, 1996, and on January 1 of every even-numbered year thereafter.

(b) Adopt standards and requirements for county emergency management plans. The standards and requirements must ensure that county plans are coordinated and consistent with the State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan. If a municipality elects to establish an emergency management program, it must adopt a city emergency management plan that complies with all standards and requirements applicable to county emergency management plans.

(c) Assist political subdivisions in preparing and maintaining emergency management plans.

(d) Review periodically political subdivision emergency management plans for consistency with the State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan and standards and requirements adopted under this section.

(e) Make recommendations to the Legislature, building code organizations and political subdivisions for zoning, building and other land use controls, safety measures for securing mobile homes or other nonpermanent or semipermanent structures; and other preparedness, prevention and mitigation measures designed to eliminate emergencies or reduce their impact.

(f) In accordance with the State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan and program for emergency management, ascertain the requirements of the state, its political subdivisions and the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians for equipment and supplies of all kinds in the event of an emergency; plan for and either procure supplies, medicines, materials and equipment or enter into memoranda of agreement or open purchase orders that will ensure their availability; and use and employ from time to time any of the property, services and resources within the state in accordance with this article.

(g) Anticipate trends and promote innovations that will enhance the emergency management system.

(h) Prepare and distribute to appropriate state and local officials catalogs of federal, state and private assistance programs.

(i) Implement training programs to improve the ability of state and local emergency management personnel to prepare and implement emergency management plans and programs, and require all local civil defense directors or emergency management directors to complete such training as a condition to their authority to continue service in their emergency management positions.

(j) Review periodically emergency operating procedures of state agencies and recommend revisions as needed to ensure consistency with the State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan and program.

(k) Prepare, in advance whenever possible, such executive orders, proclamations and rules for issuance by the Governor as are necessary or appropriate for coping with emergencies and disasters.

(l) Cooperate with the federal government and any public or private agency or entity in achieving any purpose of this article.

(m) Assist political subdivisions with the creation and training of urban search and rescue teams and promote the development and maintenance of a state urban search and rescue program.

(n) Delegate, as necessary and appropriate, authority vested in it under this article and provide for the subdelegation of such authority.

(o) Require each county or municipality to designate an agent for working with the agency in the event of a natural disaster. The county or municipality may designate any person as agent who has completed training programs required of emergency management directors.

(p) Report biennially to the Governor and the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, no later than January 1 of every odd-numbered year, the status of the emergency management capabilities of the state and its political subdivisions.

(q) In accordance with Section 25-43-1 et seq., create, implement, administer, promulgate, amend and rescind rules, programs and plans needed to carry out the provisions of this article with due consideration for, and in cooperating with, the plans and programs of the federal government.

(r) Have the sole power and discretion to enter into, sign, execute and deliver long-term or multiyear leases of real and personal property with other state and federal agencies.

(s) Do other things necessary, incidental or appropriate for the implementation of this article.

(t) In accordance with Section 33-15-15, create, implement, administer, promulgate, amend and rescind rules regarding the development of the Mississippi Disaster Reservist Program.

(u) Unless otherwise instructed by the Governor, sponsor and develop mutual aid plans and agreements between the political subdivisions of the state and the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians similar to the mutual aid arrangements with other states referenced in Section 33-15-11(b) (10).

§ 33-15-15. Mobile support units.

(a) The agency is authorized to provide, within or without the state, such support from available personnel, equipment and other resources of state agencies and the political subdivisions of the state as may be necessary to reinforce emergency management agencies in areas stricken by emergency. Such support shall be rendered with due consideration of the plans of the federal government, this state, the other states and of the criticalness of the existing situation. Emergency management support forces shall be called to duty upon orders of the agency and shall perform their functions in any part of the state, or, upon the conditions specified in this section, in other states.

(b) Personnel of emergency management support forces while on duty, whether within or without the state, shall:

(1) If they are employees of the state, have the powers, duties, rights, privileges and immunities and receive the compensation incidental to their employment;

(2) If they are employees of a political subdivision of the state, and whether serving within or without such political subdivision, have the powers, duties, rights, privileges and immunities and receive the compensation incidental to their employment; and

(3) If they are not employees of the state or a political subdivision thereof, be entitled to compensation by the state at a rate commensurate with their duties and responsibilities and to the same rights and immunities as are provided by law for the employees of this state.

All personnel of emergency management support forces shall, while on duty, be subject to the operational control of the authority in charge of emergency management activities in the area in which they are serving, and shall be reimbursed for all actual and necessary travel and subsistence expenses, and for death, disability or injury to such personnel while on such emergency duty as a member of an emergency management support force, the state shall pay compensation to the heirs in event of death or the individual in event of injury or disability in accordance with payment schedules contained in the Mississippi Workers' Compensation Law.

(c) The state shall reimburse a political subdivision for the actual and necessary travel, subsistence and maintenance expenses of employees of such political subdivision while serving as members of an emergency management support force, and for all payments for death, disability or injury of such employees incurred in the course of such duty, and for all losses of or damage to supplies and equipment of such political subdivision resulting from the operation of such emergency management support force. The state may also reimburse a political subdivision for employees' overtime while deployed as members of an emergency management support force and backfill of deployed forces when determined by the director to be necessary to avoid serious financial consequences for the political subdivision providing support and when requested by the chief elected official of the political subdivision stating the circumstances for the request.

(d) Whenever an emergency management support force of another state shall render aid in this state pursuant to the orders of the governor of its home state and upon the request of the Governor of this state, the personnel thereof shall have the powers, duties, rights, privileges and immunities of emergency management personnel serving in similar capacities in this state, except compensation, and this state shall reimburse such other state for the compensation paid and actual and necessary travel, subsistence and maintenance expenses of the personnel of such emergency management support force while rendering such aid, and for all payments for death, disability or injury of such personnel incurred in the course of rendering such aid, and for all losses of or damage to supplies and equipment of such other state or a political subdivision thereof resulting from the rendering of such aid; provided, that the laws of such other state contain provisions substantially similar to this section.

(e) No personnel of emergency management support forces of this state shall be ordered by the Governor to operate in any other state unless the laws of such other state contain provisions substantially similar to this section.

§ 33-15-17. Local organization of emergency management.

(a) Each county and municipality, or counties and the municipalities therein acting jointly, or two (2) or more counties acting jointly, of this state are hereby authorized and directed to establish a local organization for emergency management in accordance with the state emergency management plan and program, if required and authorized so to do by such state emergency management plan. Each local organization for emergency management shall have a director who shall be appointed by the governing body of the political subdivision, or political subdivisions acting jointly, and who shall have direct responsibility for the organization, administration and operation of such local organization for emergency management, subject to the direction and control of such governing body. Each local organization for emergency management shall perform emergency management functions within the territorial limits of the political subdivision within which it is organized, and, in addition, shall conduct such functions outside of such territorial limits as may be required pursuant to the provisions of the state emergency management plan. Each county shall develop an emergency management plan and program that is coordinated and consistent with the State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan and program. Counties that are part of an interjurisdictional emergency management agreement entered into pursuant to this section shall cooperatively develop an emergency management plan and program that is coordinated and consistent with the state emergency management plan and program.

(b) In carrying out the provisions of this article each county and municipality, or the two (2) acting jointly, or two (2) or more counties acting jointly, where there is joint organization, in which any disaster as described in Section 33-15-5 occurs, shall have the power to enter into contracts and incur obligations necessary to combat such disaster, protecting the health and safety of persons and property, and providing emergency assistance to the victims of such disaster. Each county and municipality is authorized to exercise the powers vested under this section in the light of the exigencies of the extreme emergency situation without regard to time-consuming procedures and formalities prescribed by law pertaining to the performance of public work, entering into contracts, the incurring of obligations, the employment of temporary workers, the rental of equipment, the purchase of supplies and materials, the levying of taxes and the appropriation and expenditure of public funds.

(c) Each county and each municipality, or two (2) or more counties acting jointly, shall have the power and authority:

(1) To appropriate and expend funds, make contracts, obtain and distribute equipment, materials, and supplies for emergency management purposes; provide for the health and safety of persons and property, including emergency assistance to the victims of any enemy attack or man-made, technological or natural disasters; and to direct and coordinate the development of emergency management plans and programs in accordance with the policies and plans set by the federal and state emergency management agencies;

(2) To appoint, employ, remove, or provide, with or without compensation, air raid wardens, rescue teams, auxiliary fire and police personnel, and other emergency management workers;

(3) To establish, as necessary, a primary and one or more secondary emergency operating centers to provide continuity of government, and direction and control of emergency operation during an emergency;

(4) To donate public funds, supplies, labor and equipment to assist any governmental entity in a county or municipality in which a disaster as described in Section 33-15-5 occurs;

(5) Subject to the order of the Governor, or the chief executive of the political subdivision, to assign and make available for duty, the employees, property or equipment of the subdivision relating to firefighting, engineering, rescue, health, medical and related services, police, transportation, construction, and similar items or services for emergency management purposes either within or outside of the limits of the subdivision;

(6) Subject to the order of the chief executive of the county or municipality or the Governor to order the evacuation of any area subject to an impending or existing enemy attack or man-made, technological or natural disaster;

(7) Subject to the order of the chief executive of the county or municipality or the Governor, to control or restrict egress, ingress and movement within the disaster area to the degree necessary to facilitate the protection of life and property;

(8) To enter into mutual aid agreements in the manner authorized by Section 33-15-19.

(d) A local emergency as defined in Section 33-15-5 may be proclaimed by the mayor or governing body of a municipality, or the president of the board of supervisors of a county or the governing body of a county. In the event a local emergency is proclaimed by the mayor of a municipality or the president of the board of supervisors of a county, the governing body of such municipality or the governing body of such county shall review and approve or disapprove the need for continuing the local emergency at its first regular meeting following such proclamation or at a special meeting legally called for such review. Thereafter, the governing body of such municipality or the governing body of such county shall review the need for continuing the local emergency at least every thirty (30) days until such local emergency is terminated, and shall proclaim the termination of such local emergency at the earliest possible date that conditions warrant. During a local emergency, the governing body of a political subdivision may promulgate orders and regulations necessary to provide for the protection of life and property, including orders or regulations imposing a curfew within designated boundaries where necessary to preserve the public order and safety. Such orders and regulations and amendments and rescissions thereof shall be in writing and shall be given widespread notice and publicity. The authorization granted by this section to impose a curfew shall not be construed as restricting in any manner the existing authority to impose a curfew pursuant to police power for any other lawful purpose.

§ 33-15-19. Mutual aid arrangements.

(a) The governing body of a municipality or county of the state is authorized to participate in the Statewide Mutual Aid Compact (SMAC) established by the agency as a mechanism to standardize mutual aid arrangements between jurisdictions within the state. The agency is authorized to present the SMAC to the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians' Tribal Council for its consideration and approval. SMAC provides guidelines for requesting and receiving mutual aid, liability protection and reimbursement procedures for providing such aid. The governing body of each political subdivision of the state is strongly encouraged to sign and ratify the SMAC for mutual aid between their jurisdiction and other cities or counties within the state as well as the Mississippi Band of the Choctaw Indians. A copy of this agreement must be signed by the senior elected official of the jurisdiction and the director and will be maintained on file by the agency.

(b) Political subdivisions of the state, including their fire service agencies, are also authorized to develop and enter into mutual aid agreements with other jurisdictions outside the state for reciprocal emergency aid and assistance in case of emergencies too extensive to be dealt with unassisted. This shall also include emergencies outside the state in which it is geographically reasonable for a political subdivision of this state, or its fire service, to respond. Copies of the agreements shall be sent to the agency and shall be consistent with the State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan and program, and in time of emergency it shall be the duty of each local emergency management organization to render assistance in accordance with the provisions of such mutual aid agreements.

(c) The Governor may enter into compacts with any state or group of states if he finds that joint action with that state or group of states is desirable in meeting common intergovernmental problems of emergency management planning or emergency prevention, mitigation, response and recovery.

(1) Political subdivisions of the state, including their fire service agencies, shall not be liable for the death of or any injury to persons, or damage to property and all other protections provided in Section 33-15-21(a), as a result of mutual aid agreements entered into pursuant to this section.

(2) Employees of a political subdivision of this state shall have the powers, duties, rights, privileges and immunities and receive the compensation incidental to their employment and all other benefits provided by Section 33-15-15.

§ 33-15-21. Immunity.

(a) Neither the state nor any political subdivision thereof, nor other agencies, nor, except in cases of willful misconduct, the agents, employees, or representatives of any of them engaged in any emergency management activities, while complying with or attempting to comply with this article or any rule or regulation promulgated pursuant to the provisions of this article, shall be liable for the death of or any injury to persons, or damage to property, as a result of such activity. The provisions of this section shall not affect the right of any person to receive benefits to which he would otherwise be entitled under this article, or under the workmen's compensation law, or under any pension law, nor the right of any such person to receive any benefits or compensation under any act of congress.

(b) Any person owning or controlling real estate or other premises who voluntarily and without compensation grants a license or privilege, or otherwise permits the designation or use of the whole or any part or parts of such real estate or premises for the purpose of sheltering persons or providing assistance to persons during or in recovery from an actual, impending, mock or practice attack or any man-made, technological or natural disaster, together with his successors in interest, if any, shall not be civilly liable for negligently causing the death of, or injury to, any person on or about such real estate or premises by virtue of its use for emergency management purposes, or loss of, or damage to, the property of such person.

§ 33-15-23. Funds.

For the purpose of paying any expenses of its local emergency management organization, or for paying any expenses of the emergency management program, any board of supervisors of a county or any governing body of a municipality is authorized to expend any available funds from the general fund of such county or municipality.

§ 33-15-25. Matching funds.

(a) The Governor of the State of Mississippi is authorized to enter into agreements with the federal government for the purpose of matching any federal funds that may be made available for emergency management purposes, which shall include purchasing emergency management equipment and supplies, to the state on a matching basis. Provided, that no agreement shall obligate the state for an amount greater than the appropriation available for such purpose. The state's portion of the purchase price of any emergency management equipment may be made available from any appropriation made for such purposes.

(b) Any county board of supervisors or municipal governing body may enter into agreement with the federal government with approval of the State Director of Emergency Management for matching funds which may be made available for emergency management purposes, which shall include purchasing emergency management equipment and supplies, by such county or municipality in conjunction with any federal matching program and funds may be expended from the general fund of such county or municipality or from such other funds as may be available to such county or municipality for emergency

management purposes in order to provide the county or municipal portion of funds necessary to carry out such matching agreement.

(c) The agency may withhold from any county board of supervisors, municipality or not-for-profit entity a portion or all of a subgrant whenever the agency determines that the county, municipality or not-for-profit entity owes a refund on any past subgrant project that was not completed as required.

§ 33-15-27. Authority to accept services, gifts, grants and loans.

(a) Whenever the federal government or any agency or officer thereof shall offer to the state, or through the state to any political subdivision thereof, services, equipment, supplies, materials, or funds by way of gift, grant or loan, for purposes of emergency management, the state, acting through the Governor, or such political subdivision, acting with the consent of the Governor and through its governing body, may accept such offer and upon such acceptance the Governor of the state or governing body of such political subdivision, may authorize any officer of the state or of the political subdivision, as the case may be, to receive such services, equipment, supplies, materials, or funds on behalf of the state or such political subdivision, and subject to the terms of the offer and the rules and regulations, if any, of the agency making the offer.

(b) Whenever any person, firm or corporation shall offer to the state or to any political subdivision thereof, services, equipment, supplies, materials, or funds by way of gift, grant or loan, for purposes of emergency management, the state, acting through the Governor, or such political subdivision, acting through its governing body may accept such offer and upon such acceptance the Governor of the state or governing body of such political subdivision may authorize any officer of the state or of the political subdivision, as the case may be, to receive such services, equipment, supplies, materials, or funds on behalf of the state or such political subdivision, and subject to the terms of the offer.

§ 33-15-29. Utilization of existing services and facilities.

(a) In carrying out the provisions of this article, the Governor and the executive officers or governing bodies of the political subdivisions of the state are directed to utilize the services, equipment, supplies and facilities of existing departments, offices, and agencies of the state and of the political subdivisions thereof to the maximum extent practicable, and the officers and personnel of all such departments, offices, and agencies are directed to cooperate with and extend such services and facilities to the Governor and to the emergency management organizations of the state or such subdivisions upon request.

(b) State agencies in carrying out their assigned disaster or emergency assignments shall be reimbursed their expenses for emergency or disaster-related duties which may include the payment of overtime and the employment of temporary personnel by such agencies in the same manner as authorized in Sections 33-15-301 et seq., 43-41-17 [repealed] and 43-41-319 [repealed], and as provided by Section 43-41-701 [repealed].

§ 33-15-31. Orders, rules and regulations.

(a) The governing bodies of the political subdivisions of the state and other agencies designated or appointed by the Governor are authorized and empowered to make, amend, and rescind such orders, rules, and regulations as may be necessary for emergency management purposes and to supplement the carrying

out of the provisions of this article, but not inconsistent with any orders, rules and regulations promulgated by the Governor or by any state agency exercising a power delegated to it by him.

(b) All orders, rules, and regulations promulgated by the Governor, the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency or by any political subdivision or other agency authorized by this article to make orders, rules and regulations, shall have the full force and effect of law, when, in the event of issuance by the Governor, or any state agency, a copy thereof is filed in the office of the Secretary of State, or, if promulgated by a political subdivision of the state or agency thereof, when filed in the office of the clerk of the political subdivision or agency promulgating the same. All existing laws, ordinances, rules and regulations inconsistent with the provisions of this article, or of any order, rule, or regulation issued under the authority of this article, shall be suspended during the period of time and to the extent that such conflict, disaster or emergency exists.

(c) In order to attain uniformity so far as practicable throughout the country in measures taken to aid emergency management, all action taken under this article and all orders, rules and regulations made pursuant thereto, shall be taken or made with due consideration to the orders, rules, regulations, actions, recommendations, and requests of federal authorities relevant thereto and, to the extent permitted by law, shall be consistent with such orders, rules, regulations, actions, recommendations and requests.

§ 33-15-33. Political activity prohibited.

No individual employed by or for an organization for emergency management established under the authority of this article shall, while acting under authority of his position or representing himself in his official capacity, participate in any form of political activity, and no such organization shall be employed directly or indirectly for political purposes.

§ 33-15-35. Repealed.

Repealed by Laws, 1980, ch. 491, § 37, eff from and after May 9, 1980.

§ 33-15-37. Enforcement.

It shall be the duty of every organization for emergency management established pursuant to this article and of the officers thereof to execute and enforce such orders, rules and regulations as may be made by the Governor under authority of this article. Each such organization shall have available for inspection at its office all orders, rules and regulations made by the Governor, or under his authority.

§ 33-15-39. Peace officers.

Any county or municipality, through its governing board, and with the approval of the sheriff in a county, or the chief of police in a municipality, may confer upon members of emergency management auxiliary police units, the powers of peace officers, subject to such restrictions as shall be imposed.

§ 33-15-41. Arrests.

Any emergency management auxiliary policeman who has had conferred upon him the power of a peace officer, as provided in Section 33-15-39 and when in full and distinctive uniform or displaying a badge or other insignia of authority, may arrest without a warrant any person violating or attempting to violate in

such officer's presence any order, rule, or regulation made pursuant to this article. This authority shall be limited to those rules and regulations which affect the public generally.

§ 33-15-43. Penalties.

Any person violating any provision of this article or any rule, order, or regulation made pursuant to this article shall, upon conviction thereof, be punishable by a fine not exceeding Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) or imprisonment for not exceeding six (6) months or both.

§ 33-15-45. Local emergency management councils continued.

All local emergency management councils heretofore created under the provisions of former Sections 8610-8620, Mississippi Code of 1942, are hereby continued, subject to the provisions of this article.

§ 33-15-49. Emergency use of state or local personnel and equipment authorized; limitation of liability.

In the event an impending enemy attack, an enemy attack, or a man-made, technological or natural disaster occurs within the state or within any portion of it and a proclamation is issued by the governing authorities of the county, the governing authorities of the municipality, the office of the Governor of the state or the President of the United States declaring such affected areas to be disaster areas, the governing authorities of any county or municipality adversely affected by such disaster may:

- (a) Use county or municipally owned equipment and such public employees as necessary to venture onto private property to aid in removing debris and to prevent further damage to such property at the request of the property owners;
- (b) Use county or municipally owned equipment and such public employees as necessary to venture onto private property to remove debris and to perform any other necessary and needed services to prevent the spread of disease or any other health hazard to the community at large.

If the governing authorities of such adversely affected counties or municipalities are unable to perform such necessary and needed functions with their own equipment and personnel, they may request aid from other counties and municipalities not adversely affected by such impending enemy attack, enemy attack, or man-made, technological or natural disaster, and capable and willing to furnish needed services.

Provided, however, if the Governor determines that the governing authorities of such adversely affected counties or municipalities still lack sufficient equipment and personnel under such circumstances to perform such functions, any state agency or instrumentality, when directed by the Governor, is authorized to enter upon publicly or privately owned land or water and to use state-owned equipment and state employees as necessary to clear or remove debris and wreckage. Whenever the Governor provides for clearance of debris or wreckage pursuant hereto, employees of the designated state agencies or instrumentalities are authorized to enter upon private or public land or water and perform any tasks necessary to the removal or clearance operation. Except in cases of willful misconduct, gross negligence or bad faith, any state employee or agent complying with and performing duties pursuant hereto shall not be liable for death or injury to persons or damage to property.

§ 33-15-51. Grand Gulf Disaster Assistance Trust Fund.

The Grand Gulf Disaster Assistance Trust Fund is hereby created as a special fund in the State Treasury to be administered by the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency. Monies paid into the fund shall be derived from Sections 27-35-309(3)(b)(i) and (ii) and 27-35-309(3)(d). All monies deposited therein shall be available for expenditure, transfer and allocation by the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency for state and local preparedness activities directly related to the Grand Gulf Nuclear Generating Plant, with at least fifty percent (50%) of the monies in the fund earmarked for use in conducting such activities in the geographic area falling within a thirty-mile radius of the plant.

§ 33-15-53. State emergency coordination officers.

The head of each state department, agency or commission shall select from within such agency a person to be designated as the emergency coordination officer for the agency and an alternate. The emergency coordination officer is responsible for coordinating with the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency on emergency preparedness issues, preparing and maintaining emergency preparedness and postdisaster response and recovery plans for such agency, maintaining rosters of personnel to assist in disaster operations and coordinating appropriate training for agency personnel. These individuals shall be responsible for ensuring that each state facility, such as a prison, office building or university, has a disaster preparedness plan that is approved by the applicable local emergency management agency or the division. The head of each agency shall notify the Governor and the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency in writing of the person initially designated as the emergency coordination officer for such agency and his alternate and of any changes in persons so designated thereafter.

Article 2. Individual Assistance and Emergency Temporary Housing Act. (§§ 33-15-201 — 33-15-223)

§ 33-15-201. Short Title.

This article shall be known and may be cited as the Individual Assistance and Emergency Temporary Housing Assistance Act.

§ 33-15-202. Legislative declaration of purpose.

It is the intent of the Legislature and declared to be the policy of the state that funds to meet emergencies or major disasters shall always be made available.

§ 33-15-203. Definitions.

The following words wherever used in this article shall, unless a different meaning clearly appears from the context, have the following meanings:

(a) “Necessary expense” means the cost of an item or service essential to an individual, family or household to mitigate or overcome an adverse condition caused by an emergency or major disaster.

(b) “Serious need” means a requirement for an item or service essential to an individual, family or household to prevent or reduce hardship, injury or loss caused by an emergency or major disaster.

(c) “Family” means a social unit, comprised of husband and wife and dependents, if any, or a head of a household, as these terms are defined in the Internal Revenue Code of 1954.

- (d) “Individual” means a person who is not a member of a family as defined in paragraph (c).
- (e) “Household” means a dwelling containing a single family or single family and other relatives not otherwise considered family as defined in paragraph (c).
- (f) “Assistance from other means” means aid, including monetary or in-kind contributions from other governmental programs, insurance, voluntary or charitable organizations or from any sources other than those of the individual, family or household.
- (g) “The Act” means the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Public Law 93-288, as amended by PL 100-707 and PL 106-390).
- (h) “Individuals and households program” means the federal assistance available to eligible individuals under a major disaster declaration by the president pursuant to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act.
- (i) “Other Needs Assistance” means that component of the IHP program that provides a grant for individuals that requires the state share twenty-five percent (25%) of the total cost according to Section 408 of the Stafford Act (42 USCS 5174).
- (j) “Federal regulations” means those regulations published in the Federal Register relating to the specific subject.
- (k) “Emergency” means any occasion or instance for which, in the determination of the Governor or President, federal assistance is needed to supplement state and local efforts and capabilities to save lives and to protect property and public health and safety, or to lessen or avert the threat of a catastrophe in any part of the United States.
- (l) “State of emergency” means that a state of emergency has been declared by the Governor pursuant to Section 33-15-11(b)(17) to exist as a result of a man-made, technological or natural disaster and the local government has exhausted local resources and requires state assistance.
- (m) “Federal assistance” means aid to disaster victims or state and local governments by federal agencies under the provisions of the Act.
- (n) “Major disaster” means any hurricane, tornado, storm, flood, high water, wind-driven water, tidal wave, earthquake, volcanic eruption, landslide, snowstorm, drought, fire, explosions, acts of terrorism or other man-made, technological or natural disaster or catastrophe in the State of Mississippi which, in the determination of the President, causes damage of sufficient severity and magnitude to warrant major disaster assistance under the Federal Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act and beyond emergency services of the state, local governments and disaster relief organizations in alleviating the damage, loss, hardship or suffering caused thereby.
- (o) “Director” means the Director of Mississippi Emergency Management Agency, appointed pursuant to Section 33-15-7.

(p) “Governor’s authorized representative” means the person appointed by the Governor to administer federal disaster assistance programs on behalf of the state and local governments and are responsible for the state compliance with the FEMA-State Agreement.

(q) “State coordinating officer” means the person appointed by the Governor to act in cooperation with the federal coordinating officer appointed under Section 303(c) of the Act.

(r) “Temporary housing program” means rental of existing housing, apartments or commercial lodging provided by assistance from state government either individually or jointly to individuals, families or households made homeless by emergency or major disaster.

(s) “Voluntary organization” means any chartered or otherwise duly recognized tax-exempt local, state or national organized group that has provided or may provide services to states, local governments or individuals in a major disaster or emergency.

§ 33-15-205. Presidential declaration of emergency; power of Governor to accept assistance.

Whenever the President of the United States, at the request of the Governor, has declared an emergency or a major disaster to exist in this state and the declaration includes Individual Assistance, the Governor is authorized:

(a) To accept a grant by the federal government, subject to such terms and conditions as may be imposed, including the required final audit by the State Auditor’s Office, upon determination and with concurrence by the director that financial assistance is essential to meet disaster-related necessary expenses or serious needs of individuals, families or households adversely affected by a major disaster that cannot be otherwise adequately met from other means of assistance.

(b) To enter into an agreement with the federal government, or any officer or agency thereof, pledging the state to participate in the funding of the Other Needs Assistance (ONA) program authorized in the Act, in an amount not to exceed twenty-five percent (25%) thereof, and if state funds are not otherwise available to the Governor, to accept an advance of the state share from the federal government to be repaid when the state is able to do so when appropriated for that purpose.

§ 33-15-207. Filing request for federal assistance.

In order to make federal Individual Assistance and Other Needs Assistance available to major disaster victims under this article, the Governor must request such assistance from the President of the United States. The Federal Emergency Management Agency must approve such a request and recommend the President of the United States make a major disaster declaration.

§ 33-15-209. Administration of grant programs.

(1) The director shall develop a plan for the administration and implementation of the Individuals and Households Program and Other Needs Assistance pursuant to subsections 408(e) and (f) of the Act to be included in the Mississippi Emergency Operations Plan (MEOP), and it shall include, but not be limited to:

(a) Individuals, families or households who incur a necessary expense or serious need in the major disaster area may be eligible for assistance under this article without regard to their residency in the major disaster area or within the state.

(b) Individuals, families or households otherwise eligible for assistance under this article must obtain flood insurance as required by flood insurance regulations.

(2) Assistance under this article may be made available to meet necessary expense or serious needs by providing essential items or services that cannot be provided from other sources and except those covered by insurance as provided in current federal regulations.

(3) Under this article grants will not be made available for any item or service in the following categories:

(a) Business losses, including farm businesses.

(b) Improvement or additions to real or personal property.

(c) Landscaping.

(d) Real or person property used exclusively for recreations.

(e) Financial obligations incurred prior to the disaster.

(f) Any necessary expense or serious need or portion thereof for which assistance is available from other means but is refused by the individual, family or household.

(g) Should a case arise where it is determined that an individual, family or household has an expense or need not specifically identified as eligible; the state will provide a factual summary and forward it to the regional director, FEMA, for determination prior to making a state commitment.

(4) The director shall also develop a plan for administration and implementation of the Mississippi Temporary Housing Program (THP) to be included in the MEOP, and it shall include, but not be limited to:

(a) Establishing emergency conditions that warrant program activation.

(b) Developing application procedures and applicant eligibility criteria.

(c) Verifying applicant certification process.

(d) Establishing grant award limits based on fair market rent rates as identified and published by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

(e) Maintaining program progress and financial reporting and budget requirements.

§ 33-15-211. Amount of grants.

(1) In the case of a federally declared disaster, the state cost-share under this article shall be equal to twenty-five percent (25%) of the actual cost of implementing the Other Needs Assistance Program, and shall be made only on the condition that the federal government provides the remaining seventy-five

percent (75%) of the ONA grant. In the event of a Governor's state of emergency declaration, the state grant under this article shall be equal to an amount established by the Director of the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency.

(2) An individual, family or household shall not receive a grant or grants under the provisions of this article aggregating more than the amount specified annually by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and published in the Federal Register with respect to any one (1) major disaster declared by the President. In the case of a federally declared disaster, such aggregate amount shall include both state and federal share of the grant. With respect to any one (1) disaster declared by the Governor's state of emergency, such amount of assistance shall not exceed an amount equal to one-half (½) of the amount of the Other Needs Assistance Program specified annually by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and published in the Federal Register and shall include the total amount of rental assistance provided an applicant under the Mississippi Temporary Housing Program.

§ 33-15-213. Limitations of time for requesting assistance.

(1) The time limitation for the Governor to request federal emergency or major disaster assistance shall be in accordance with current federal regulations.

(2) The time limitation for disaster applicants to request assistance and file applications under current federal regulations is sixty (60) days from the date of declaration of disaster by the President. The time limitation for applicants to request state rental assistance under the State Temporary Housing Program is thirty (30) days following the declaration of an emergency by the Governor.

§ 33-15-215. Federal temporary housing authorized; powers of Governor.

Whenever disaster conditions arise that affect the lives and safety of a substantial number of residents of the State of Mississippi and the governing authority of the political subdivision wherein said disaster conditions exist makes a request to the Governor for federal major disaster assistance, and the Governor requests, and the President of the United States declares an emergency or a major disaster to exist in this state, the Governor is authorized:

(a) To arrange with any agency of the United States to provide for temporary housing units to be occupied by disaster victims and to make such units available to any political subdivision of the state.

(b) To assist any political subdivision of this state which is the locus of temporary housing units for disaster victims by coordinating with any agency of the United States for such temporary housing to locate and prepare such sites to receive and utilize temporary housing units.

(c) Under such regulations as he shall prescribe, to temporarily suspend or modify for not to exceed sixty (60) days any public health, safety, zoning, transportation (within or across the state) or any other requirement of law or regulation within this state when, by proclamation, he deems such suspension or modification essential for any agency of the United States to provide temporary housing for disaster victims.

§ 33-15-217. State temporary housing authorized; powers of state and political subdivisions.

State Temporary Housing Assistance under this article may be made available to those victims of an emergency or localized disaster who, as a result of a state of emergency declared by the Governor, require temporary housing assistance for reasons including, but not limited to, the following:

- (a)** Physical damage to the dwelling to the extent that it has been rendered uninhabitable for a period of no less than three (3) days.
- (b)** The dwelling has been determined uninhabitable as a result of an authorized governmental entity requiring evacuations of an area though the structure may be unharmed. This does not include subsequent condemnations for redevelopment of an area following a disaster.
- (c)** Impeded access to the dwelling that cannot be quickly alleviated by debris removal even though the structure may be unharmed.
- (d)** Extended interruption of essential utilities sufficient to constitute a health hazard.
- (e)** Eviction from a residence by the owner because of the owner's perennial need for housing as a direct result of the disaster.
- (f)** Eviction from residence by owner because of a financial hardship that is a direct result of the disaster.
- (g)** Other circumstances which cause temporary housing to be required and which are approved by the director.

§ 33-15-219. Description of temporary housing.

Temporary housing shall be limited to minimum accommodations necessary for adequate housing for periods longer than that provided through the operation and use of community emergency shelters. Temporary housing accommodations may include, but not be limited to:

- (a)** Unoccupied, available housing of the United States when made available by the appropriate federal agency.
- (b)** Mobile homes, travel trailers or other readily fabricated dwellings provided by the appropriate federal agency.
- (c)** Rental properties when deemed by the appropriate federal agency to be the most economical means available.
- (d)** Rental properties and apartments or commercial lodging obtained with state temporary housing program grant proceeds.

§ 33-15-221. Conditions precedent for obtaining state temporary housing program assistance.

When temporary housing assistance is provided based on the guidelines outlined in Section 33-15-217, the following conditions are imposed:

(a) An applicant is expected to expend the grant proceeds to secure adequate temporary housing for purposes stated in their application for assistance. Refusal by the applicant to abide by this provision shall result in his forfeiture of eligibility for additional temporary housing assistance.

(b) Temporary housing assistance proceeds shall not be provided for nor expended for providing minimal home repairs or replacing lost or damaged personal property.

(c) Temporary housing assistance shall not be made available to those individuals, families or households with insurance coverage which provides full cost of alternate living arrangements except when, as determined by the appropriate authority, adequate alternate housing is not readily available or the receipt of insurance benefits are uncertain or inadequate to meet temporary housing needs. Individuals, families or households who qualify for and accept state assistance under the exception shall repay or pledge to repay to the state government, from any insurance proceeds for temporary housing to which they are entitled, an amount equivalent to the fair market value of the housing provided by the state. Temporary housing assistance shall not be made available to any individual, family or household for use as a vacation or recreational residence.

§ 33-15-223. Period of eligibility for receiving temporary housing assistance.

(1) The period of eligibility for any individual, family or household applicant receiving assistance under the State Temporary Housing Program shall be from one (1) to three (3) months determined on the basis of need. Each temporary housing applicant shall endeavor to place himself in adequate alternate housing at the earliest possible time during the period assistance is being provided.

(2) Each occupant's eligibility for continued assistance shall be recertified every thirty (30) days. Thereafter, provided no adequate alternate housing exists, assistance shall be continued for another thirty-day period, not to exceed ninety (90) days. All rental assistance is based on the fair market value of rental rates in the applicant's particular area according to the rate schedule published by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Article 3. Interstate Civil Defense and Disaster Compact [Repealed]. (§ 33-15-101)

§ 33-15-101. Repealed.

Repealed by Laws, 1995, ch. 333, § 16, eff from and after July 1, 1995.

[Codes, 1942, § 8610-31; Laws, 1952, ch. 313]

Article 5. Disaster Assistance Act of 1993. (§§ 33-15-301 — 33-15-317)

§ 33-15-301. Short title.

This article shall be known and may be cited as the Disaster Assistance Act of 1993.

§ 33-15-303. Policy and intent.

It is the intent and declared to be the policy of the state that funds to meet emergencies or major disasters shall always be made available when needed.

§ 33-15-305. Definitions.

The following terms shall have the meanings ascribed in this section, unless the context requires otherwise:

- (a) “Director” means the Director of the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency.
- (b) “Disaster” means a fire, flood, storm, tornado, hurricane, earthquake or other similar public calamity affecting homeland security resulting directly from man-made, technological or natural causes.
- (c) “Local agency” means any municipality, county or special district.
- (d) “Local emergency” means the existence of conditions of disaster or extreme peril to the safety of persons and property within a county or municipality proclaimed by the local governing body in accordance with Section 33-15-17(d).
- (e) “Governor’s authorized representative” means the primary and alternate emergency management official designated by the Governor to administer federal assistance programs on behalf of the state and local governments and other grant or loan recipients and is responsible for the state compliance with the FEMA-State Agreement.
- (f) “Project” means the repair or restoration, or both, other than normal maintenance, or the replacement of public real property of a local agency or a state agency, including, but not limited to, buildings, schools, levees, flood control works, channels, irrigation works, city streets, county roads, bridges and other public works, including those facilities used for recreation purposes, that are damaged or destroyed by a disaster.
- (g) “Project application” means the written application made by a state or local agency to the director for federal and state financial assistance, which shall include all damage to public property that resulted from a disaster within the jurisdiction of the agency making application.
- (h) “Project worksheet” means the appropriate federal form that must be used to prepare each eligible public assistance project identifying the scope of work and a quantitative estimate for the eligible work.
- (i) “Regional response team” means the local government regional response teams, the state response team and the capitol complex response team.
- (j) “State agency” means any agency, department, commission, board, institution or special district of the state.
- (k) “State of emergency” means the existence of conditions of disaster or extreme peril to the safety of persons or property within the state declared by the Governor in accordance with Section 33-15-11(b)(16).
- (l) “Trust fund” means the Disaster Assistance Trust Fund.

§ 33-15-307. When provisions of article invoked; Disaster Assistance Trust Fund.

(1) The provisions of this article shall be invoked only pursuant to a state of emergency declared by the Governor or an emergency or major disaster declared by the President, or pursuant to an executive order of the Governor, or administrative order of the director, in order to provide state or local government resources and personnel in compliance with the provisions of the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, Section 45-18-1 et seq., or in nondeclared times for administrative and training costs associated with state disaster response and recovery programs. Each declaration shall cite the cause for the declaration and define the area eligible for assistance and the type of assistance to be provided.

(2) The Disaster Assistance Trust Fund is created as a special fund in the State Treasury into which shall be paid any funds appropriated or otherwise made available by the Legislature for disaster assistance, any funds transferred from the Working Cash-Stabilization Reserve Fund as provided under subsection (5) of this section, any income from investment of the funds in the trust fund, and federal reimbursement for administrative costs for management of the Individuals and Households Program (IHP), the Public Assistance Program, the Hazard Mitigation Program and Disaster Reservist Program.

(3) Income from investment of the funds in the trust fund, and all other funds deposited therein pursuant to law, shall be available for expenditure, transfer and allocation pursuant to this article.

(4) The Disaster Assistance Trust Fund shall be used only for the following purposes:

(a) The state's portion of the cost share for public assistance under a major disaster declaration.

(b) The state's cost share of the Individuals and Households Program (IHP) pursuant to Section 33-15-209(1) under a major disaster declared by the President.

(c) Administrative costs for managing the IHP Program.

(d) Administrative costs for managing the Public Assistance Program.

(e) The State Temporary Housing Program pursuant to Section 33-15-217 under a state of emergency declared by the Governor.

(f) Out-of-pocket expenses, including travel, per diem, overtime and other similar expenses, of state or local agencies when so tasked by the Governor or the director for emergency response under the provisions of Section 33-15-11(b)(7) and current executive orders. This includes actual emergency response and recovery activities, and applies to mobilization and deployment of personnel from state or local agencies to another state under the provisions of the Emergency Management Assistance Compact. At the discretion of the director, this may include reimbursement of costs to local governments for overtime and backfill of deployed personnel within the state under the provisions of Section 33-15-15(a) and to jurisdictions who are signatories of the Statewide Mutual Aid Compact (SMAC).

(g) Costs incurred as a result of state active duty for the Mississippi National Guard when so tasked by the Governor to provide support to other agencies and local governments in a major disaster or emergency situation, or when tasked by the Governor to provide support to another state under the provisions of the Emergency Management Assistance Compact.

(h) The state's portion of the cost share for hazard mitigation under a major disaster declaration.

- (i) Administrative costs of the Hazard Mitigation Program.
- (j) Costs incurred as a result of the implementation of the Disaster Reservist Program under a major disaster declaration.
- (k) Administrative costs of the Disaster Reservist Program.
- (l) Costs incurred as a result of the implementation of public assistance, and/or individual assistance, and/or Disaster Reservist Program, and/or hazard mitigation, and/or temporary housing under a Governor's state of emergency.
- (m) The state's portion of the cost share for public assistance under a major disaster declaration for tornado or other storm damage to public facilities and infrastructure occurring on November 10, 2002, as provided in Sections 1 through 16 of Chapter 3, Third Extraordinary Session 2002.
- (n) Actual costs, including personnel call-back wages, base and overtime wages, travel, per diem and other out-of-pocket expenses incurred by regional response teams as a result of being mobilized or deployed when so tasked by the Governor pursuant to Section 33-15-11(b)(7), or by the director for emergency response pursuant to Section 33-15-15(a).
- (o) The state's portion of the cost share for public assistance under the Presidential Declaration of Major Disaster for the State of Mississippi (FEMA-1604-DR) dated August 29, 2005, for hurricane or other storm damage to public facilities and infrastructure as a result of Hurricane Katrina, as provided in Section 3 of Chapter 538, Laws of 2006.
- (5) Whenever the director determines that funds are immediately needed in the Disaster Assistance Trust Fund to provide for disaster assistance under this article, he shall notify the Executive Director of the Department of Finance and Administration of his determination and shall requisition the amount of funds from the Working Cash-Stabilization Fund that are needed in the trust fund, which shall be subject to the limitations set forth below in this subsection. At the same time he makes the requisition, the director shall notify the Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the respective Chairmen of the Senate Appropriations Committee, the Senate Finance Committee, the House Appropriations Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee of his determination of the need for the funds and the amount that he has requisitioned. Upon receipt of such a requisition from the director, the Executive Director of the Department of Finance and Administration shall ascertain if the amount requisitioned is available in the Working Cash-Stabilization Reserve Fund and is within the limitations set forth below in this subsection and, if it is, he shall transfer that amount from the Working Cash-Stabilization Reserve Fund to the trust fund. If the amount requisitioned is more than the amount available in the Working Cash-Stabilization Reserve Fund or above the limitations set forth below in this subsection, the executive director shall transfer the amount that is available within the limitations. The maximum amount that may be transferred from the Working Cash-Stabilization Reserve Fund to the trust fund for any one (1) disaster occurrence shall be Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$500,000.00) and the maximum amount that may be transferred during any fiscal year shall be One Million Dollars (\$1,000,000.00).
- (6) Unexpended state funds in the Disaster Assistance Trust Fund at the end of a fiscal year shall not lapse into the State General Fund but shall remain in the trust fund for use under this article for as long as the funds are needed for the particular purpose for which they were appropriated, deposited or transferred into

the trust fund. After any state funds in the trust fund are no longer needed for the particular purpose for which they were appropriated, deposited or transferred into the trust fund, the director may use those funds for any other purpose under this article for which they currently are needed and for which other funds are not available. If there is no current need for such funds for any purpose under this article, the funds and the income earned from the investment of the funds shall be transferred back to the particular fund or funds in the State Treasury from which they were appropriated or transferred into the trust fund, upon certification of the director to the Executive Director of the Department of Finance and Administration that the funds are not currently needed; however, if such funds are derived from the proceeds of general obligation bonds issued by the state under Section 3 of Chapter 538, Laws of 2006, such excess funds and the income earned from such funds shall be utilized to pay the debt service on such bonds.

§ 33-15-308. Requisition of additional funds for Disaster Assistance Trust Fund to provide for disaster assistance.

It is the intention of the Legislature that whenever the Director of the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency determines that funds are immediately needed in the Disaster Assistance Trust Fund to provide for disaster assistance under this section, he shall notify the Executive Director of the Department of Finance and Administration of his determination and shall requisition the amount of funds from the Working Cash-Stabilization Reserve Fund (Fund No. 3992) and/or the Budget Contingency Fund (Fund No. 3177) that are needed in the trust fund, which shall be subject to the limitations set forth below in this section. At the same time he makes the requisition, the director shall notify the Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the respective Chairmen of the Senate Appropriations Committee, the Senate Finance Committee, the House Appropriations Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee of his determination of the need for the funds and the amount that he has requisitioned. Upon receipt of such a requisition from the director, the Executive Director of the Department of Finance and Administration shall ascertain if the amount requisitioned is available in the Working Cash-Stabilization Reserve Fund (Fund No. 3992) and/or the Budget Contingency Fund (Fund No. 3177) and is within the limitations set forth below in this section and, if it is, he shall transfer that amount from the Working Cash-Stabilization Reserve Fund (Fund No. 3992) and/or the Budget Contingency Fund (Fund No. 3177) to the trust fund. If the amount requisitioned is more than the amount available in the Working Cash-Stabilization Reserve Fund (Fund No. 3992) and/or the Budget Contingency Fund (Fund No. 3177) or above the limitations set forth below in this section, the executive director shall transfer the amount that is available within the limitations. The maximum amount that may be transferred from the Working Cash-Stabilization Reserve Fund (Fund No. 3992) and/or the Budget Contingency Fund (Fund No. 3177) to the trust fund for any one (1) disaster occurrence shall be Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$500,000.00) and the maximum amount that may be transferred during any fiscal year shall be One Million Dollars (\$1,000,000.00).

It is the intention of the Legislature, that during the subsequent legislative session, consideration shall be given to provide an appropriation equal to the amount transferred from the Working Cash-Stabilization Reserve Fund (Fund No. 3992) and/or the Budget Contingency Fund (Fund No. 3177) to the Disaster Assistance Trust Fund under the provisions of this section as repayment to the Working Cash-Stabilization Reserve Fund (Fund No. 3992) and/or the Budget Contingency Fund.

§ 33-15-309. Director to administer; state agencies to comply; state held harmless in connection with certain project applications; director's annual report as to trust fund; presentment to Department of Finance for payments from trust fund.

(1) The director shall administer this article and shall have the authority to adopt reasonable rules and regulations to effectuate the purposes of this article.

(2) A state agency, when requested by the director in accordance with Section 33-15-11(b)(7) or 33-15-11(c)(2) and current executive orders, shall render services and perform duties within its areas of responsibility necessary to carry out the purpose of this article.

(3) Each project application executed between a local agency and the director pursuant to subsection (4) of Section 33-15-313 shall contain a provision under which the local agency agrees to hold the state harmless from damages due to the work for which funds were allocated.

(4) Before the convening of the Legislature each year, the director shall submit a written report to the Governor and the Legislature relating to the operation of the trust fund.

(5) When certified by the director, requests for reimbursements, advances or final payments from local or state agencies shall be presented to the Department of Finance and Administration for payment out of the trust fund.

§ 33-15-311. Allocations from trust fund to state agencies; agencies receiving allocations to request escalations of budgets.

(1) The director shall make allocations from the trust fund in such amounts as he determines to be necessary to state agencies for out-of-pocket expenditures incurred for emergency response, preliminary damage assessments, estimates, reports and training of state agency personnel. Allocations also may be made from the trust fund for the purpose of preparing project worksheets, estimates and reports as may be necessary to enable state or local agencies to obtain federal aid for disaster assistance purposes. The director may make allocations to any state agency or office from the trust fund or other funds available therefor in such amounts as are necessary to administer the provisions of this article.

(2) State agencies that are to receive allocations from the trust fund for carrying out the purposes of this article shall request the Department of Finance and Administration for escalations of their budgets as necessary for the expenditure of the allocated funds, in the same manner as the department escalates budgets for federal funds under Section 27-104-21(1).

§ 33-15-313. Project applications; requirements for allocation of trust fund monies.

(1) Subject to the conditions specified in this section, the director shall allocate funds from the trust fund to meet the cost of any one or more projects. The completion of all or part of a project before application for funds under this article shall not disqualify such project or any part thereof.

(2) To be eligible for state and/or federal funding, the governing body of the local agency must declare a local emergency and forward such declaration to the Governor.

(3) A state or local agency shall make application to the director for state and/or federal financial assistance within thirty (30) days after the date of the declaration of a major disaster or emergency declared by the President or a state of emergency declared by the Governor; however, the director may extend the time for such filing, but only under unusual circumstances. No financial aid shall be provided until an applicant has filed a Notice of Interest and a Request for Federal Assistance and a state and/or federal team has first investigated and reported upon the proposed work, has estimated the cost of the work, and has filed a project worksheet thereon with the Governor's authorized representative and a project application has been prepared. The estimate of cost of the work may include expenditures made by the state or local agency for such work before the making of such estimate. "Unusual circumstances," as used in this subsection, means unavoidable delays that result from recurrence of a disaster, prolonged severe weather or other conditions beyond the control of the applicant. Delays resulting from administrative procedures are not unusual circumstances that warrant extensions of time.

(4) No funds shall be allocated from the trust fund to a state or local agency until the agency has indicated in writing its acceptance of the project application and the cost-sharing related thereto in such form as the director prescribes. The project application shall provide for the performance of the work by the state or local agency, shall provide for the methods of handling the funds allocated and the matching funds provided by the local agency, and shall contain such other provisions as are deemed necessary to ensure completion of the work included in the project application and the proper expenditures of funds as provided herein.

§ 33-15-315. Work performed by contract with state or local agency.

Work performed by contract with a state or local agency shall be subject to the provisions of Title 31, Chapter 5, and Title 31, Chapter 7, Mississippi Code of 1972 Neither the state or any officer or employee thereof shall have any responsibility in connection with any work performed by a local agency.

§ 33-15-317. Advance on funds to initiate projects; disposition of certain federal funds; certain contributions reduced by amount of insurance settlements.

(1) Under procedures prescribed by the director, a state or local agency may receive an advance of funds to initiate a project. Such advances shall be limited to not more than seventy-five percent (75%) of the estimated federal share of the project under the President's state of emergency, or fifty percent (50%) of the estimated share of the project under the Governor's state of emergency.

(2) Disaster assistance funds provided from federal sources under the provisions of Public Law 93-288 as amended by Public Law 100-707 and Public Law 106-390 shall be deposited in the trust fund, and the director shall make advances or reimbursement therefrom for expenditures for eligible work or for payment for performance.

(3) State and federal contributions for the repair and restoration of facilities shall be reduced by an amount equal to the insurance settlement received or an amount equal to the amount the local agency would have recovered from an insurance settlement if necessary, adequate and reasonably available insurance had been maintained.

§ 33-15-401. Legislative findings and declarations.

The Legislature finds and declares the following: When a major natural disaster such as Hurricane Katrina occurs in Mississippi, there are various types of assistance that are available to individuals and public entities through the federal and state governments to help them recover from the disaster. The majority of that assistance comes from the federal government, and most of the federal assistance is provided through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). At the state level, most of the assistance is provided through the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA). However, there are also programs in other federal and state agencies that provide assistance and benefits to disaster victims, as well as disaster assistance programs run by public and private entities and disaster-related in-kind donations made by private entities and individuals. Because these other disaster assistance programs and in-kind donations are spread out among a number of agencies and entities, disaster victims sometimes are not aware of the existence of these programs and in-kind donations other than those provided through FEMA and MEMA. After a disaster has occurred, it would be very beneficial for the victims of the disaster to have a single entity in the state, one point of contact, where individuals and public entities would be able to obtain information about those other disaster assistance programs and disaster-related in-kind donations, obtain all of the forms and materials necessary in order to receive the benefits of those programs and in-kind donations, and receive assistance in completing and filing the applications for those programs and in-kind donations.

§ 33-15-403. Office of Disaster Assistance Coordination established; duties and responsibilities.

There is established within the Office of the Governor a separate and distinct office to be known as the Office of Disaster Assistance Coordination. The office shall be the primary entity responsible for coordinating information regarding disaster assistance provided by federal agencies other than the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), by state agencies other than the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), and by other public and private entities that provide various types of assistance and benefits to victims of major natural disasters. The duties and responsibilities of the office shall be as follows:

- (a)** To serve as a single point of contact where individuals and public entities that are victims of major disasters may obtain information about all federal and state programs that provide assistance and benefits to disaster victims other than those provided by FEMA or MEMA, as well as information about the availability of disaster-related in-kind donations by private entities and individuals;
- (b)** To provide victims of major disasters with all of the forms and materials necessary in order to receive the benefits of those disaster assistance programs and disaster-related in-kind donations, and provide them with assistance in completing and filing the applications for those programs and in-kind donations;
- (c)** To coordinate and cooperate with FEMA, MEMA, other federal and state agencies and other public and private entities in providing and sharing information, forms and materials related to disaster assistance programs and disaster-related in-kind donations;
- (d)** To work with MEMA in coordinating information, revenues, programs and assistance made available in Mississippi by FEMA, whether directly through FEMA or through MEMA; and
- (e)** To perform such other duties relating to disaster assistance information as may be prescribed by the Governor.