



NATIONAL EMERGENCY SHELTER MANAGEMENT POLICY

Republic of Guyana



JULY 2014

National Emergency Shelter Management Policy



**Strengthening National and Local Capacities for Disaster Response and
Risk Reduction**

**VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT AND EVACUATION AND SHELTER
MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR REGION 4
CONSULTANCY**

July 2014

NATIONAL EMERGENCY SHELTER MANAGEMENT POLICY

Prepared by



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1. EMERGENCY SHELTER MANAGEMENT POLICY

1.1 Introduction

Guyana is a country situated on the mainland continent of South America bordered to the East by Venezuela, West by Suriname, South by Brazil and in the North by the Atlantic Ocean. (See figure 1 below) The population is concentrated in the country's capital, Georgetown and across other towns and communities as identified in figure 1.



Figure 1 Guyana's constitutional borders, capital and towns

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A high percentage (approx. 80-90%) of our country's population, live in buildings and communities that are highly vulnerable to the effects of disasters. The vulnerability of these homes is often the result of the use of inappropriate structural elements, poor practices and techniques employed during construction, or poor maintenance of built structure. As a consequence, such homes are severely impacted by hazardous events, which lead to their total or partial destruction or a state of being inhabitable, thus displacing persons who may then require an emergency shelter.

The protection of life and property and the alleviation of suffering and hardships caused by disasters is a fundamental responsibility of the government. Being cognizant of these responsibilities, the government of the Republic of Guyana with the population as a whole is determined to fulfil these responsibilities.

The overall policy of the government is to establish and maintain a system for mitigating the effects of disasters. To this end, the government has established and implemented a programme for disaster preparedness and response coordinated by Civil Defence Commission (CDC) with the responsibility for organizing all national disaster management programme activities.

This Policy is intended to provide an overall framework for the development of a detailed shelter management plan. The Policy outlines necessary action areas that contribute to an effective Emergency Shelter Management System. The document lists the roles of key stakeholders whose responsibility it is to implement and execute the action areas effectively to achieve the goals of the Emergency Shelter Management System.

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As part of this national disaster preparedness and response programme, a national emergency shelter programme is also being established to secure support by legislation for all emergency shelters. This is to ensure that all emergency shelters will be properly equipped with available trained shelter management personnel in sufficient numbers and adequate temporary shelter materials to serve victims of disasters. Existing shelters can be found along the coastal areas as shown on a map in [Appendix 1](#). The primary buildings used as shelters are educational institutions. (Please see table in [Appendix 2](#))

1.2 Authority

The Emergency Shelter Policy for the Government of Guyana is defined within the context of the national disaster plan and the Integrated Disaster Risk Management Plan. These document the government's commitment to disaster preparedness, prevention, mitigation and effective response actions to address needs arising from a disaster. The policy outlines the organizational, operational and functional mechanisms and procedures for carrying out an emergency shelter programme should a disaster event occur in Guyana.

1.3 Objective

To create the framework for national arrangements to manage emergency shelter needs arising from the impact of the hazards that threaten our country and to expedite the rehabilitation of citizens that are made homeless by these hazardous events.

2. Emergency Shelter Policy

2.1 Policy Rationale

It is the policy of the government to take actions to prevent and mitigate the effects of natural and manmade disasters within the confines of available resources. In keeping with the national disaster policy, the emergency shelter programme is designed by government to establish a mechanism that provides emergency shelter for members of the public. This is done by augmenting the resources of the private sector and non-government organizations to cope with the emergency shelter needs resulting from a threatened alert or the impact of a disaster. Persons rendered homeless by natural or other disaster will be provided with temporary shelter giving priority to vulnerable groups, particularly:

- The physically and mentally challenged
- The elderly
- Children
- Low-income groups

Emphasis will be placed on taking precautionary measures to strengthen and retrofit buildings and provide equipment, supplies and staff. The necessary legislation will be enacted to support the programme.

2.2 Goals of the Shelter Management Policy

The goals of the shelter management policy are to:

1. ensure that victims of disasters who have been made homeless are provided with temporary shelter or support for expediting their rehabilitation;
2. establish minimum shelter requirements for facilities that are potential emergency shelters;
3. establish a mechanism for the provision of services for emergency shelters;
4. link shelter management with the national evacuation and relief programmes; and
5. establish the mechanism for the management, identification, maintenance and upkeep of shelters.

2.3 The Policy

Government's first priority is to ensure that all citizens have shelters which can withstand the effects of disasters. In the event that a threatened alert or a disaster results in the need for emergency shelters the selection of structurally sound buildings is the chief priority.

Government will encourage and facilitate cooperation and consultation between the appropriate government ministries and agencies, the private sector and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to ensure the provision of adequate temporary shelter for homeless victims of disasters.

Government will establish a national body with the responsibility of managing and supervising the national emergency shelter programme.

Government will provide fully stocked emergency shelters as recommended by the national emergency shelter programme.

Government will take the action necessary to support programmes to expedite the rehabilitation of the homeless victims of disasters, particularly in protracted emergency situations where long-term sheltering is required.

To ensure that all emergency shelters meet the required standards, government will sustain the cost of retrofitting fully owned government shelters and in consultation with owners, contribute to the retrofitting of those emergency shelters that are privately owned.

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Government will take the actions necessary to ensure public buildings such as schools, community centres and purpose built shelters are sited and constructed according to established building codes used in Guyana and the region, and that they are equipped with the standard internal provisions recommended by the national shelter programme.

Government will make provisions in the annual budget estimates for the maintenance, stocking and outfitting of emergency shelters.

Government will take the necessary action to ensure that the relevant government departments and agencies conduct annual emergency shelter evaluations according to the standard guidelines.

Government will arrange for the repairs of government and privately owned shelters, if they are damaged during occupancy as an emergency shelter.

Government will maintain a list of public and private buildings identified as suitable for use as emergency shelters and issue regulations concerning their use.

Government will designate the periods for which emergency shelters can be used during a threatened alert or in the aftermath of a disaster.

Government will provide a mandatory programme of training for personnel designated as shelter managers and shelter officers or potential shelter management personnel to ensure that they are fully equipped to discharge their responsibilities.

It will be mandatory that the national emergency shelter body meets before the activation of the emergency operations centre or as soon as possible thereafter.

Government will take the necessary action to ensure that information is disseminated regarding:

National Emergency Shelter Management Policy

1. Its role and responsibility in shelter management
2. The activation and closure of shelters
3. Location of shelters
4. Liability of government and shelter occupants
5. Shelter regulations
6. The law concerning shelter and shelter management

2.4 Policy Objectives

The emergency shelter policy provides the framework for the programme activities and is the basis for realizing the policy objective. Effective policy implementation will result in:

- i. the establishment of a national shelter body with responsibility for managing the programme;
- ii. the provision of temporary shelters and/or support for rehabilitation of homeless victims of disasters;
- iii. shelters that meet the established requirements;
- iv. the establishment of a national mechanism for the provision of services for emergency shelters;
- v. the establishment of linkages between the emergency shelter management and other disaster response programme activities such as evacuation relief and rehabilitation;
- vi. the establishment of a mechanism within the emergency shelter programme for selection, identification, maintenance and upkeep of shelters;
- vii. trained personnel for shelter operations whose roles and responsibilities are clearly defined;
- viii. a programme that caters for long term sheltering needs; and
- ix. a public that is knowledgeable about the emergency shelter programme.

3. NATIONAL EMERGENCY SHELTER PROGRAMME

The effective implementation of the national emergency shelter programme is determined by the commitment of all parties involved in the planning and implementation stages of the programme. Action will be required in the preparedness phase (Pre-disaster Phase), the immediate response phase (Emergency Phase) and the rehabilitation phase. Disasters resulting from meteorological and seismic hazards are the events that will most likely displace sections of the population resulting in emergency sheltering needs. A successful programme includes key elements such as:

- a. Supporting legislation
- b. Services for emergency shelter
- c. Regulations for the siting and construction of shelters
- d. Defined roles and responsibilities of government, private sector, non-government organisations and other bodies.
- e. A national shelter management body
- f. Linkages with other disaster response programme activities
- g. Guidelines for Retrofitting, Repair, Maintenance and Evaluation and the Outfitting and stocking of shelters
- h. Personnel to staff and manage emergency shelters
- i. A training and public education programme
- j. Budgetary support for programme implementation

3.1 Strategy for implementation

The CDC will coordinate the emergency shelter programme. The assignment of a programme officer who has responsibility for the programme and the establishment of a national emergency shelter body are important for the successful implementation of the programme. An annual programme and plan is necessary for effectively addressing the needs identified.

The recommended composition of the national shelter management body includes the following:

- The Ministry of Health
- The Civil Defence Commission
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security
- Ministry of Public Works
- Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development
- Public Information
- Ministry of Housing
- The Private Sector
- Non-governmental organizations

The lead agency should be the agency tasked with the overall responsibility for the programme.

The overall responsibilities include:

- i. General oversight of the programme
- ii. Oversee the rehabilitation of homeless victims especially in the case of protracted emergencies

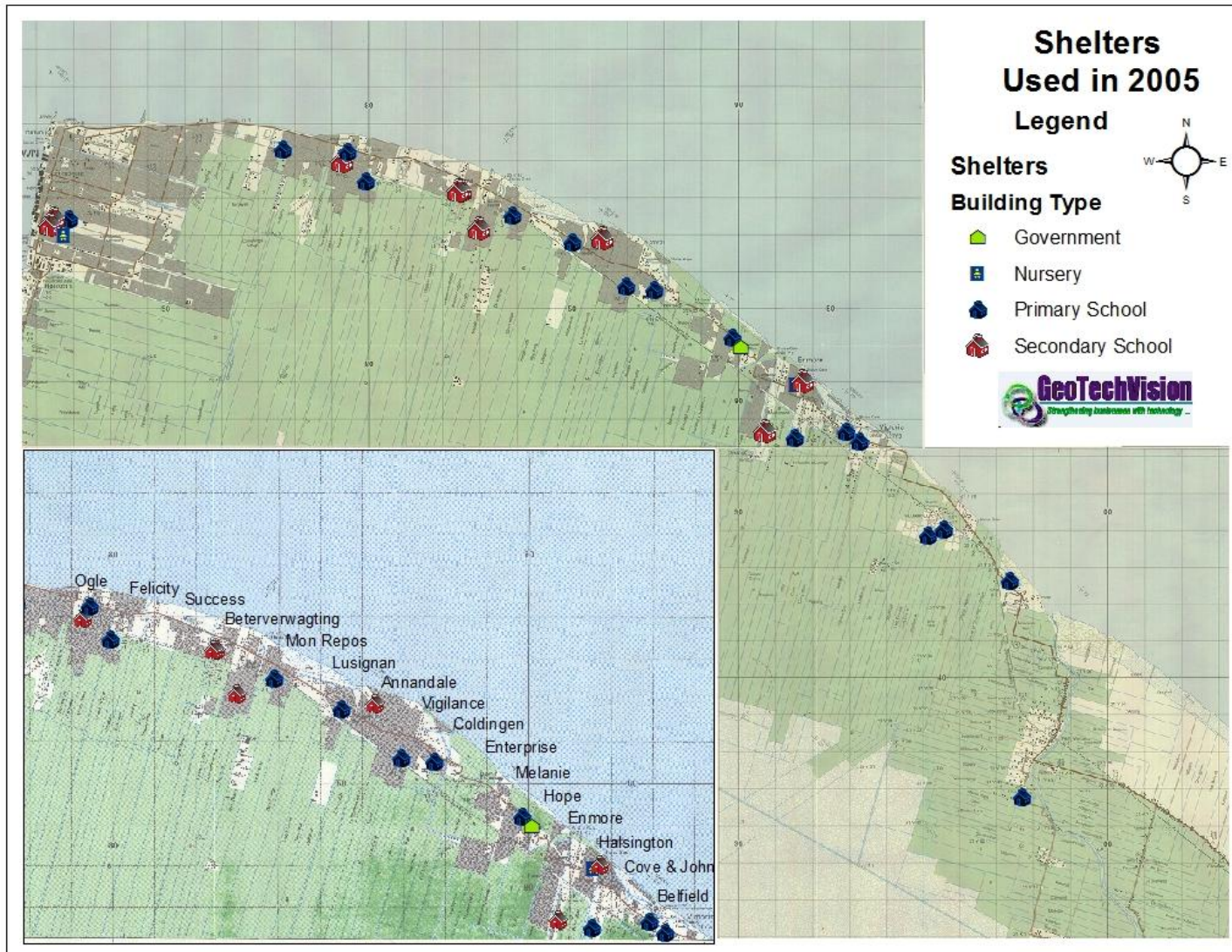
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- iii. Working with the national disaster office for programme implementation
- iv. Oversee the activities of local emergency shelter management groups
- v. Establish the criteria for identification of shelter management personnel
- vi. Establish a mechanism for mobilizing resources for outfitting shelters
- vii. Establish the minimum standards for buildings used as emergency shelters
- viii. Develop and implement the training programme for shelter personnel.
- ix. Works with the different agencies to ensure shelter selection, maintenance, inspection, repairs, retrofitting and evaluation of emergency shelter in accordance with the regulations and guidelines
- x. Develop and review shelter guidelines and manuals including standing operational procedures.
- xi. Maintain regular contact with local shelter committees.
- xii. Develop and implement public education and public awareness programmes to support the emergency shelter programme.
- xiii. Endorse certificates of inspection before issuance
- xiv. Develop an appropriate shelter information programme.

Arrange regular exercises to test operational procedures.

4. APPENDIX

4.1 Shelters used in Guyana



4.2 Schools used as shelters

Table 1 Schools used as shelters

Name	Building Material	Kitchen	Capacity	Fire Safety	Bathroom	Floors	Rooms	Water Tanks	Open Space
St Stephens Primary School	Wood	No	400	Yes	Toilet and Shower	3	3	4	Yes
St Stephens Primary School Annex	Wood	No	200	Yes	Toilet only	2	2	1	Yes
Dolphin Secondary School	Wood	Yes	713	Yes	Toilet only, outside	2	19	15	Yes
Carmel Secondary School	Mixed	Yes	232	Yes	Toilet only, outside	2	9	5	Yes
Selman Fraser Nursery	Mixed	No	105	Yes	Toilet and Shower	2	2	4	Yes
Guyana Relief Council	Mixed	No	60	Yes	Toilet and Shower	2	6	8	

Figure 2 Location of shelters used in Guyana - 2005

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Plaisance Secondary School	Wood	Yes	365	Yes	Toilet only, outside	2	14	7	
St Pauls Primary School	Concrete	Yes	289	Yes	Toilet only, outside	2	9	4	Yes
Vryheid's Lust Primary School	Wood	No	500	No	Toilet only, inside	2	20	0	No
LBI Secondary School	Wood	No	350	Yes	Toilet only, in/out	2	11	5	Yes
LBI Secondary New Wing	Concrete	Yes	150	Yes	Toilet only, outside	2	8	5	No
Beterverwagting Secondary School	Wood	No	500	Yes	Toilet only, in/out	2	11	8	Yes

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Mon Repos Primary School	Wood	No	1000	No	Toilet and Shower	2	23	6	
Lusignan Primary School	Wood	No	1000	Yes	Toilet and Shower	2	3	8	Yes
Annadale Secondary School	Wood	Yes	850	No	Toilet and Shower	2	21	6	
Friendship Primary School	Concrete	Yes	450	Yes	Toilet only, inside	3	24	8	Yes
Strathspey Primary School	Mixed	No	450	Yes	Toilet only, outside	2	3	3	Yes
Paradise Primary School	Wood	Yes	300	No	Toilet and Shower	2	3	8	Yes
Regional Health Office	Mixed	No	0	Yes	Toilet only, inside	2	9	3	No
Enmore Secondary School	Wood	No	500	Yes	Toilet only	2	4	5	Yes

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Haslington Nursery	Wood	Yes	90	Yes	Toilet and Shower	1	3	3	Yes
Golden Grove Secondary School	Mixed	Yes	0	Yes	Toilet and Shower	2	13	8	
Golden Grove Primary School	Concrete	Yes	1150	Yes	Toilet only	2	35	22	
St Andrews Primary School	Mixed	Yes	0	No	Toilet only	2	5	2	Yes
Victoria Primary School	Wood	No	300	No	Toilet only, in/out	2	3	5	Yes
Ann's Grove Primary School	Concrete	Yes	250	No	Toilet only	2	9	0	
Clonbrook Primary School	Concrete	Yes	500	Yes	Toilet only	2	6	4	Yes
Gibson Primary	Mixed	Yes	0	Yes	Toilet and Shower	2	7	3	Yes

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Supply Primary School	Concrete	Yes	400	Yes	Toilet only	2	16	8	
Grahams Hall Primary School	Concrete		0			2	0	0	

Other shelters mentioned during the project:

Ketley Primary School

Redeemer Primary School

Friendship Primary (EBD)

Providence Primary School

Plaisance Primary School

Grove Primary School

Grove High School

Cane Grove Primary and Nursery School

Virginia Primary and Nursery School