

The City of Sanibel, FL



Emergency Operations Plan Executive Summary

February 2026

Table of Contents

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN: PLAN COMPONENTS..... 2
 HOW TO USE THE PLAN..... 2

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 3
 INTRODUCTION..... 3
 EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN PURPOSE (MISSION)..... 4
 EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN SCOPE 4
 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PROGRAMMATIC GOALS..... 4
 CITY OF SANIBEL EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN (EOP) UPDATES (HIGH-LEVEL) 5
 REVIEW OF EXISTING EOP (2019) 5
 SITUATION OVERVIEW 5
 VULNERABLE POPULATIONS AND ACCESS AND FUNCTIONAL NEEDS (AFN)..... 5
 ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES 6
 COMMAND AND CONTROL 6
 CITY OF SANIBEL POLICE DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS CENTER 6
 LEE COUNTY EOC AND EOC ACTIVATION LEVELS 7
 COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC INFORMATION 7
 CONCLUSION 7

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN: PLAN COMPONENTS

How to Use the Plan

This Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) was developed alongside five supporting Annexes with a distinct purposes and scopes. The EOP outlines Sanibel's guiding principles and approach, while the Prevention/Mitigation, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery Annexes provide detailed, actionable guidance for personnel across the four mission areas and during a hurricane. The table below summarizes the EOP and Annexes and key information.

Plan	Purpose
EOP Basic Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides an overview of Sanibel's approach to emergency operations. • Explains emergency response policies. • Describes the response organization. • Assigns responsibilities. • Provides a solid foundation for development of functional annexes.
Action Plan Annex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides departmental hurricane tasks by time windows.
Prevention/Mitigation Annex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defines protective actions to reduce the impacts of a pending disaster or emergency situation. • Provides guidance for the development of post-disaster/post-exercise After Action Reports (AARs) and Improvement Plans (IPs).
Preparedness Annex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defines ongoing emergency management preparedness activities. • Defines training and exercise/testing requirements.
Response Annex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defines specific hazards, their characteristics, and impacts. • Provides checklist of response actions for the City's departments. • Identify which strategies and capabilities of the emergency management organization are called on during a response. • Defines the disaster declaration process.
Recovery Annex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides instructions for the completion of the Damage Assessment process. • Provides a checklist of recovery actions and instructions for tracking the costs associated with the emergency or disaster.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The City of Sanibel, Florida sought emergency management planning services from The Olson Group, Ltd. (OGL) to conduct a 2025 update to the City's 2019 Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). OGL was honored to have the opportunity to once again work with the City of Sanibel and its departments. The planning team completed the City's Hurricane Ian After-Action Report (AAR) which supported the identification and development of Sanibel's emergency processes and procedures.



OGL facilitated the City's EOP Initial Planning Meeting (IPM) on August 6, 2025, with departmental stakeholders. To complete the EOP update, OGL completed the following planning components:

- Completed City of Sanibel EOP Update Communications;
- Deployed and reviewed City of Sanibel EOP Departmental Stakeholder Questionnaires;
- Conducted City of Sanibel EOP Departmental Stakeholder Meetings;
- Reviewed City of Sanibel Departmental Emergency Plans, Policies and Procedures;
- Completed Draft City of Sanibel EOP Basic Plan and the following Supporting Annexes:
 - Annex A: Action Plan Annex,
 - Annex B: Prevention/Mitigation Annex,
 - Annex C: Preparedness Annex,
 - Annex D: Response Annex, and
 - Annex E: Recovery Annex.
- Received, reviewed, and incorporated feedback and modifications for the Draft City of Sanibel EOP and Supporting Annexes.

This 2025 EOP update includes how the City will manage and coordinate incidents using an all-hazards approach to emergency response and recovery. The 2025 EOP update incorporates the City's lessons learned from prior emergencies to include the COVID-19 pandemic and Hurricane Ian. The goal of the EOP is to coordinate Sanibel's emergency response efforts using whole-community resilience planning to save lives and protect property and the environment. Overall, the 2025 EOP update is more actionable and better aligned with today's operational and community needs.

Emergency Operations Plan Purpose (Mission)

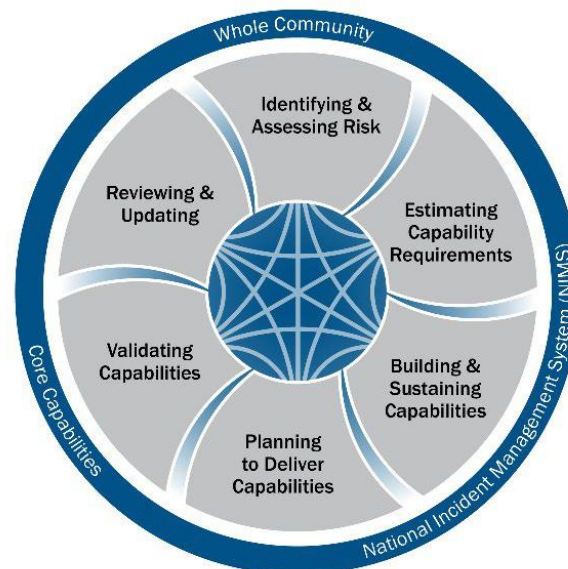
The purpose of the Basic Plan is to establish the legal and organizational basis for emergency operations in Sanibel to effectively respond to and recover from disasters and/or emergency situations. This EOP contains basic information that provides a framework for response to any disaster regardless of its size, scope, or cause. The EOP serves as the primary tool for city emergency management to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters by defining disaster-specific procedures and outlining roles and responsibilities. EOP components and supplemental plans serve specific purposes in supporting Sanibel's emergency management program.

Emergency Operations Plan Scope

The City of Sanibel EOP is an **all-hazards** plan that covers all personnel and equipment needed to respond to disasters or emergencies. It establishes an emergency organization for Sanibel and defines the responsibilities of everyone involved in the emergency management phases: prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery.

The Sanibel **"Whole Community"** includes city staff, residents, business owners, vendors, visitors, travelers, and those passing through. It also covers staff families, who may need help.

During emergencies, the Incident Commander (IC) leads the City's emergency organization. Any requests not ordinarily coordinated through dispatch will be made through the Lee County EOC. If local needs cannot be met, they will request resources through mutual aid agreements. If those resources are unavailable, Sanibel will follow internal procedures to acquire resources at the county, regional, state, or federal levels.



Emergency Management Programmatic Goals

The ultimate goals of the City of Sanibel's Emergency Management Program are to:

- Provide effective communications, coordination and application of municipal resources regarding life safety measures and property loss reduction.
- Provide for the rapid resumption of impacted mission-essential functions and services.
- Provide inclusion emergency policies that ensure persons with access and functional needs can access the public safety and emergency management services of the City.
- Provide accurate documentation and records required for future cost recovery and future mitigation efforts.

City of Sanibel Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) Updates (High-Level)

Review of Existing EOP (2019)

The Olson Group, Ltd. conducted an in-depth review of the City's Emergency Operations Plan and Annexes. The planning team identified the City's 2019 EOP provided a basic framework for Sanibel's response and recovery to emergencies. During that timeframe, the operational environment was simpler, the most recent hurricanes to impact the City during the 2019 EOP development were Hurricanes Wilma (2005) and Irma (2017). Additionally, the Nation had not faced the COVID-19 pandemic and Hurricane Ian wouldn't impact the City of Sanibel and Lee County until September 2022.

During the City's 2019 EOP review, the planning team identified many city departments were not yet integrated into Sanibel's emergency management program (i.e., Whole Community approach). The 2019 EOP utilized outdated references and authorities and relied heavily on primary responders from the City's Police Department, Sanibel Fire-Rescue District, Public Works Department and the Building Department; however, there appeared to be less involvement from other departments, such as Information Technology, Human Resources, Finance, Planning, Natural Resources and Recreation. The planning team identified these city departments were functioning within the emergency organization; however, their roles and responsibilities will be defined by the City Manager as the conditions of the emergency dictate.

Situation Overview

Since 2019, the Situation Overview has changed. The planning team has performed updates to the areas of the City's demographic and community data. A comprehensively updated Situation Overview uses 2020 Census and 2023 ACS data to present current demographics: population size, seasonal variation, age, languages, housing, transportation, economics and reliance on the Causeway. This demographic analysis guides accurate evacuation, sheltering, resource management, communications, and recovery planning. It also describes Sanibel's natural resources, protected species, wildlife habitats, and the area's water and land geography. Additionally, it provides the roles of Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation (SCCF), Clinic for the Rehabilitation of Wildlife (CROW), and J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge in emergencies. It also addresses transportation networks, utilities, airport proximity, and commercial areas to better support response and recovery.

Vulnerable Populations and Access and Functional Needs (AFN)

The updated EOP covers Access and Functional Needs (AFN) and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) considerations and requirements. It identifies people who may need extra help, including older adults, those with mobility or medical needs, residents with limited English, low-income families, children, pet owners, and visitors. This EOP now includes guidance for service animals and outlines the distinction between service and emotional support animals. The EOP aligns with Lee County's mass care and pet sheltering systems to ensure access to appropriate services during evacuations. This focus on accessibility strengthens support for all community members in emergencies.

Assignment of Responsibilities

The 2025 update to the City of Sanibel Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) provides a clear and integrated framework for how the City prepares for, responds to, and recovers from emergencies. The EOP is based on current FEMA doctrine; ICS/NIMS standards; and updated references, authorities and guidance. During the stakeholder engagement process, OGL obtained clarity on departmental roles and responsibilities based on how Sanibel performs emergency operations. This process included Departmental Stakeholder Questionnaires and Departmental Stakeholder Meetings. During both processes, many departments provided updates to their response processes and roles and responsibilities. Departments often referenced prior incidents to include lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and Hurricane Ian during their departmental meetings. Additionally, the planning team obtained departmental Emergency Action Plans for review which provided tasks by function for EOP incorporation.

Command and Control

This EOP describes a clear Command and Control structure. The City Manager is the Incident Commander during response, and the Local Disaster Recovery Manager (LDRM) during recovery operations. The City Manager has the authority to manage and coordinate all City of Sanibel emergency operations. The Police Chief serves as the Emergency Management Director, under the City Manager, and leads and coordinates all response operations and non-expanding incidents. The City's 2025 EOP update clearly outlines how all emergency operations will be managed to include the City's Liaison and the coordination role with the Lee County Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

The planning team received an updated (September 2025) City of Sanibel Emergency Mobilization Organization Chart which outlined the current emergency organization to include Command and General Staff, and Operations, Logistics and Recovery, and Temporary City Hall Operations. The EOP introduces Departmental Operations Staff and outlines emergency roles for Information Technology, Human Resources, Planning, Finance, Natural Resources, Recreation, Building, and Public Works. The Lee County Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (HIRA, 2024 update) identifies and ranks hazards—including hurricanes, storm surge, flooding, tornadoes, wildfires, pandemics, infrastructure failures, and cyber incidents, to guide operational planning, mitigation, and resource (monetary) allocation. Each department's responsibilities are defined from this assessment for actions pertaining to prevention/mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery, offering practical guidance before, during, and after a disaster. This EOP update (EOP Basic Plan and Annexes) now provides positional/departmental job-action sheets and checklists to be utilized throughout emergency response and recovery efforts.

City of Sanibel Police Department Operations Center

During the EOP review and development process, the planning team realized the 2019 EOP discussed the use of a City of Sanibel Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The City does not have an EOC; however, the EOP was updated to reflect the City of Sanibel Police Department Operations Center which can be quickly activated for small, isolated city emergencies. The Police Department Operations Center is located at Sanibel City Hall – 800 Dunlap Rd. Sanibel, FL 33957.

Lee County EOC and EOC Activation Levels

As previously mentioned, the City of Sanibel does not have a city-owned EOC. Updates to the EOP have been incorporated to reflect if necessary and for larger emergency operations, the City will coordinate with Lee County to obtain EOC support for incident response and recovery efforts. The illustration below identifies the City of Sanibel and Lee County's EOC activation levels.



Normal Operations /
Steady State



Enhanced Steady-State /
Partial Activation



Full Activation

- Activities that are normal for the EOC when no incident or specific risk or hazard has been identified.
- Routine watch and warning activities if the EOC normally houses this function.
- Certain EOC team members / organizations are activated to monitor a credible threat, risk, or hazard and/or to support the response to a new and potentially evolving incident.
- EOC team is activated, including personnel from all assisting agencies, to support the response to a major incident of credible threat.

Communications and Public Information

The Communications and Public Information sections offer guidance for redundant communications, cloud systems, satellite and HAM radio, WebEOC workflows, and AFN-compliant messaging. The Public Information Officer (PIO) section outlines outreach across multiple platforms. These platforms include livestreaming, template-based messaging, rumor control, and coordination with the Lee County Joint Information Center (JIC). Also included in this section are the free downloadable applications of AlertLee and LeePrepares provided by Lee County, Florida.

Conclusion

This updated Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) equips the City of Sanibel with a comprehensive, actionable, and realistic emergency management framework. The EOP and its Annexes provide a strong foundation for a coordinated all-hazards response and recovery to save lives, protect property and the environment, and ensure the resiliency of the City and its whole community.