

BOX 4-2

Illustration of Roles Played by Transit in Emergency Evacuation

Houston Case Study

Among the important roles played by METRO in advance of and during Hurricane Rita were the following:

- Coordinated bus transport for those without access to or who chose not to use a personal vehicle in the evacuation from Galveston and Houston; 500 METRO buses and 500 other vehicles transported approximately 20,000 individuals in 4,500 trips.
- Supplemented bus transport with rail by arranging for use of Amtrak and Trinity Railroad (Dallas commuter rail) trains to move people out of Galveston and Houston.
- Provided logistics support to stranded motorists along freeways, using 18 METRO buses, bus operators, police, and 350 volunteers to distribute 45,000 bottles of water.
- Provided shelter, food, and facilities for its critical employees and their families when needed.

New York–New Jersey Case Study

In the event of an advance-notice hurricane or major coastal storm, the primary roles of transit and related agencies would be as follows:

- Evacuate those in flood zones who lack access to or choose not to use a private vehicle to safe locations with friends and family or to public evacuation centers (primary role for New York City Transit). In the worst-case scenario—a Category 3+ hurricane—the mayor would order 2.3 million New Yorkers to evacuate before the storm made landfall; 1.2 million persons would be expected to travel by transit.
- Transport up to 395,000 people by school buses under contract to the New York City Office of Emergency Management (NYCOEM) from their transit destination at public evacuation centers the short remaining distance to local shelters.

In the event of a no-notice emergency, the primary roles of transit and related agencies would be as follows:

- Return customers (commuters and residents) of New York City Transit to their final destinations if possible, or to the next transit connection or to reception centers if necessary.

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- Return customers (commuters and residents) of the Staten Island Ferry, operated by the New York City Department of Transportation, from Manhattan to Staten Island.
- Return commuters from Manhattan back to New Jersey via (a) New Jersey Transit, either by rail from Pennsylvania Station in Manhattan or by bus from the Port Authority Bus Terminal (also in Manhattan) to the main reception center in northern New Jersey—Liberty State Park—where provision would be made for further passenger transport or shelter, if necessary; (b) the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey using the PATH trains from two terminals in Manhattan and three in New Jersey; and (c) private ferries through a joint agreement in process between NYCOEM and the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management to provide transport for commuters to new docking berths at Liberty State Park.

Chicago Case Study

In a no-notice major emergency, transit, commuter rail, and intercity passenger rail would play the following roles:

- Transport passengers away from the incident site by converting Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) trains to shuttles and redeploying buses to move passengers from assembly and transportation centers to preidentified staging areas, whose locations would depend on the location, severity, and designated perimeter of the incident. According to CTA, in excess of 100,000 people per hour could be evacuated by rail and about 40,000 people per hour by bus, exceeding the system's peak-hour capacity.
- Transport Metra (commuter rail) passengers in trains away from the incident site. Supplement CTA service, coordinating changes in schedule and routes with the City of Chicago Office of Emergency Management and Communication, CTA, Cook County Sheriff's Police, and other suburban law enforcement officials.
- Provide supplemental Amtrak equipment from a major downtown maintenance facility and another near Indianapolis.

Los Angeles Case Study

In a no-notice major emergency, transit providers would assume the following roles:

- Coordinate with other major transportation providers (Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority), but play a limited role in evacuation. The top priority is maintenance of operations in areas unaffected by an emergency incident.
- Evacuate transit-dependent residents to schools and parks on higher ground along designated evacuation routes in the event of a tsunami (Los Angeles Department of Transportation and Long Beach Transit).

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BOX 4-2 (continued)

Illustration of Roles Played by Transit in Emergency Evacuation

- Evacuate residents in the event of an emergency incident at the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station; plans include transportation assembly points, bus transport for those without access to private vehicles, and provision for other special-needs populations (Orange County Transportation Authority).

Tampa Case Study

In the event of an advance-notice hurricane, the primary roles of transit would be as follows:

- Evacuate residents without a car to regular, in-county shelters on designated premarked evacuation routes, increasing bus service on some lines, such as public housing areas, where large numbers of residents are known to need transport.
- Provide transport by school buses on evacuation routes to shelters for those without a car in unincorporated county areas without transit service, use school buses as shuttles to relieve evacuee overflow at crowded shelters, and provide special school bus transport for the homeless to several shelters that are “homeless friendly.”
- Evacuate special-needs populations, using paratransit providers and school buses, to special-needs shelters.
- Return residents from area shelters or friends and family to their point of departure.

types of emergency, transit operators would attempt to continue regular service patterns (unless the transit system itself had been compromised) so as to minimize any confusion among customers or operating personnel and simplify customer information requirements.

In Chicago, emergency planners have focused on no-notice emergencies. CTA is considered a primary support agency in the event of an evacuation. In contrast to New York, however, Chicago would operate CTA trains as shuttles in a major emergency, and buses would be redeployed to move passengers from assembly and transportation centers to preidentified staging areas whose actual locations would be determined by the location, severity, and designated perimeter of an incident (see Box 4-1).