

NC-FIRST Emergency Management Training Program

<http://nc-first.renci.org>

THE NEED

Emergency managers and first responders in North Carolina are often faced with natural hazards and weather-related emergencies, including thunderstorms, hurricanes, winter storms and wildfires. Part of the challenge of responding to these events is understanding the meteorological basics and dangers behind them, and many of North Carolina's emergency managers were lacking in this necessary knowledge.

SERVING THE NEED

Based on a similar program created for Oklahoma emergency managers, the NC-FIRST training program was created by the Renaissance Computing Institute (RENCI) in 2007. The program has two parts. The first is an online portal that provides county-level weather data and monitoring information, including hazard-specific data and resources, such as forecast hurricane tracks under the Tropical Weather heading. The second part is a series of PowerPoint slideshows designed to teach emergency managers and first responders the basic meteorological background of each hazard, show them how to find and use the information on the web portal, and walk them through a case study of an historical event, with the focus on applying the background information and efficiently using the web portal.

A) Storm Surge
iv) Surge in NC

- In North Carolina, surge is usually worst with a direct hit
– Hurricane Fran in 1996



IMPACT

The NC-FIRST slideshows were reviewed and finalized in late 2008. Since then, 405 people have been trained in classroom courses and 490 people have been trained through online courses. Those who have taken the course noted it was useful, timely and informative.

For one Emergency Preparedness Manager of several hospitals in eastern North Carolina, the training was especially valuable when strong thunderstorms came through. As watches and warnings were issued, she monitored the storms through the online portal and alerted her staff to the potential hazards. "NC-FIRST has been a great help!" she remarked after the storms passed and her hospitals stayed safe.

PARTNERS & SUPPORT

Data for the NC-FIRST web portal was acquired from sources including the State Climate Office, the National Weather Service, and the US Drought Monitor. Development of the web portal and guidance for the training program was provided by RENCI, with training materials created by undergraduate interns at the State Climate Office. Review of all training materials was provided by RENCI, the State Climate Office, the National Weather Service offices in Raleigh and Greenville-Spartanburg, and officials from the North Carolina Emergency Management Association.