BROWARD COUNTY
RAPID IMPACT ASSESSMENT (RIA)

Handbook – Course Guide

Broward County Emergency Management Division (BEMD)
August 2009
Table of Contents

1. Introduction ........................................................................3
2. Purpose ..............................................................................3
3. Rapid Impact Assessment Process .................................4
   3.1. When to Start .................................................................4
   3.2. Information Gathering ..................................................4
   3.3. Primary Contact Form ..................................................4
   3.4. Secondary Contact Form ..............................................5
   3.5. Type of Information Gathered .......................................5
   3.6. Home Damage Assessment .........................................6
4. Damage Categories ...............................................................6
   4.1. Category 0 - No Damage ..............................................6
   4.2. Category 1 – Minor .......................................................6
   4.3. Category 2 – Moderate ...............................................6
   4.4. Category 3 – Severe .....................................................7
   4.5. Category 4 – Catastrophic ............................................7
Attachment A: Rapid Impact Assessment Checklist ......8
**Introduction**

The Rapid Impact Assessment (RIA) is a quick drive by or windshield survey undertaken by municipal representatives to identify the impact of an event to designated areas in order to provide Broward County’s ESF #5 – Information /Planning, an overview of damaged areas through the use of a geographic map. As the map is populated with field information, support and resource needs are better understood and decisions made where to be deployed. A completed RIA provides a status report on the physical condition of the county after the event which starts the process to assess eligibility for a federally declared disaster.

The County Rapid Impact Assessment (RIA) should not be confused with The State RIAT which stands for Rapid Impact Assessment Team. It is important to note that the state RIAT is not directly related to the county RIA. This handbook discusses the County’s Rapid Impact Assessment procedures.

This training will cover the following:

- Review of the overall RIA process and how to access the program,
- Guidance on category classification for flooding and wind damage, and
- Technical instruction in accessing the RIA map for input and viewing (passwords to be distributed.)

**Purpose**

The RIA is a quick indicator of the observed damage specific to geographical areas. The RIA divides the County into ¼ mile grids, also known as fire grids. There are approximately 1,700 grids in the county. The RIA is a tool designed to rapidly:

- Assess the location of visible damage;
- Assess the need to conduct more detailed damage assessment and whether to begin considering a request for Mutual Aid at: the Regional, and/or State, and/or Federal level(s); and
- Assist in the effective management of emergency response resources.

Each municipality is responsible for those grids that are located within their jurisdiction. The county is responsible for those grids located within unincorporated areas. The Broward EOC maintains and centralizes the information provided by the municipalities and other agencies in order to evaluate the physical conditions of the county as a whole and identify those areas of heavy impact.

Municipal and county crews are expected, where possible, to start their RIA within one hour after the event. The RIA requires that all grid information be collected by municipalities and provided to the county within 4-6 hours after an event, longer if the RIA is at night.

Rev. 8/7/09
Rapid Impact Assessment Process

Remember that this process does **NOT** take priority over any emergency response or life safety issues. See the attached checklist (Attachment A) for standard procedures.

**When to start**

As soon as life safety issues and weather conditions are permitting, each assigned agency should assess their area and report the situation to the Broward EOC immediately. This will include whether or not the municipality will be able to conduct the RIA at all. The information collected will allow the Broward EOC to do preliminary planning regarding rescue and recovery. Due to the time sensitive nature of this information the RIA has a general benchmark lasting only 4-6 hours from initiation. Should assessments start at night, it is generally understood that notification time may have to be extended to guarantee the safety of the assessment teams. If for some reason assessment teams are not able to go out, it is imperative that they notify Broward EOC and their own municipal EOCs as soon as possible.

**Information Gathering**

The information gathered through the RIA should be gathered in relation to the Broward County Fire Services grid mapping system which is an internet based Grid Map accessible at [http://eoc-maps.bc-eoc.org/ria.htm](http://eoc-maps.bc-eoc.org/ria.htm). Important to note that since the Fire Grid Map is Web enabled it is **password protected** and each municipality will have its own password that will permit access only to those grids within its jurisdiction. Agencies that have a direct role in the RIA will be provided with a password for their municipality to use during this Hurricane Season.

The information as reported will be placed on a Geographic Information System map via colors indicating the degree of wind and water damage sustained within the County. The GIS component of this assessment will be conducted by personnel at the Broward EOC. The GIS map and entry screen are available from an internet accessible location of the Municipalities’ choosing.

Each Municipality is responsible for coordinating and reporting the RIA for the grids falling within their jurisdiction. Broward County Sheriff’s Office is responsible for reporting RIA information for unincorporated Broward and in Municipalities covered by BSO unless otherwise determined by the City. Municipal agencies should be prepared with applicable grids and staff assignments in advance.

The information gathered should be reported to the BEOC through the following methods (in order of preference):

**Primary Contact Form**

- Via the internet based Grid Map at [http://eoc-maps.bc-eoc.org/ria.htm](http://eoc-maps.bc-eoc.org/ria.htm) using password;
• Through the Municipal Emergency Management Coordinator at the municipalities’ EOC, or;

• Municipal Branch Services’ Representative at the Broward EOC who would in turn enter the information via the web based input screen.

Secondary Contact Form (As a Last Resort)

• By telephone (954)-831-3852 or (954)-831-3855

• By FAX (954)-382-5839 The Phone, FAX, and internet address are subject to change (These numbers are effective as of August 1,2009)

• By radio: For normal radio operations, use mutual aid system/talk groups:
  o 12I if the grid is north of Broward Blvd., or
  o 12J if the grid is located South of Broward Blvd.

These correspond to “BCM-12-JOP9” (also called BC12 JO9) and “BCM-12-JOP10” (also called BC12 JO10) on the Broward EOC radio template. They are talk groups in the Broward County Fire-Rescue Joint Operations “Zone”. The Broward EOC personnel in the planning room (ESF#5) would have a radio scanning these frequencies.

IF, due to the severity of the situation and the Broward EOC moves to limited radio use after a storm (when cell towers and land/cable lines are down) – reporting teams will need to use the “BCM-Omega-5” talk group.

Type of Information Gathered

The grid information map (on line) contains a broad overview of the grid, and it does NOT include assessments of individual homes, individual businesses, etc. It is the same grid used by County/Municipal Fire Departments. The information to be reported is:

1. Name of reporting jurisdiction
2. Grid map numbers
3. Category of damage from water
4. Category of damage from wind

Example: Unincorporated Broward County, grid 1200, category 1 for flood damage, category 3 for wind damage

Although it is acceptable for a Municipality to gather all the information from the grids and submit them as a package once all of the reporting agencies have submitted reports; it is preferable, due to the time sensitive nature of this activity, to submit information frequently instead of at one single sitting. However, whichever method is
chosen, it is vital that the information be received at the Broward EOC in a timely fashion.

**Important Note:** In an area with extensive damage the RIA assigned agencies may be overwhelmed with response activities. If this is the case **response and life safety outweigh the RIA and** the Broward EOC and Municipal EOC should be notified of the grid requiring this response and need for additional assessment teams.

**Home Damage Assessment Program (HDA)**

Broward County is also implementing the Home Damage Assessment Program to help quickly identify areas of devastation after an emergency, in some cases even before damage assessment teams are able to canvass the County. It is directed at the residents of the County, as opposed to the RIA which is geared towards Municipal agencies.

The HDA Program asks residents to report hurricane damage to their home as soon as it is safe to go outside by either logging on to the Broward County Web site at [www.broward.org/hurricane](http://www.broward.org/hurricane) and clicking on Home Damage Assessment Program (“Report Your Damage”), or calling 3-1-1 and reporting the damage by phone.

Resident reports will provide a critical early indication of where major damage has occurred. These reports do not constitute a request for individual assistance and do not replace the Rapid Impact Assessment Program.

**Damage Categories**

Not all of the elements within a description need to be observed when determining the category of impact. Use the following guidelines and your judgment in the decision making process.

- **Category 0-No Damage**
  
  No flooding or significant wind damage

- **Category 1-Minor**

  **Flood:** Minor flooding. Able to discern roadways and where the roads end, water is not entering structures, no obvious erosion of roadways or landscape.

  **Wind:** Minor wind damage. Minor amounts of debris and no significant signs of structural damage. Small tree branches, signage, and some downed power lines.

- **Category 2-Moderate**

  **Flood:** Moderate flooding. Often impassible in a vehicle. Flooding of yards and minimal home flooding. There may be areas where roadways, landscape and bodies of water cannot be discerned due to the flooding.
**Wind:** Moderate damage to structures. Shingles missing from roofs and some roof failure. Infrastructure including electric, telephone, water systems, and roadways sustained moderate damage. Most small and some large trees are downed.

**Category 3-Severe**

**Flood:** Severe flooding. Flooding making roadways impassible by cars and trucks. Substantial flooding in many homes causing structural damage or collapse.

**Wind:** Severe wind damage. Most structures sustaining damage with many sustaining major damage to include total building collapses and many structures without roofs or windows. Much of the foliage has been destroyed. Extensive damage to infrastructure and large amounts of debris present. Emergency vehicles may not be able to navigate immediately after a storm in an area like this.

**Category 4-Catastrophic**

**Flood:** Catastrophic flooding. Streets are impassible via truck or car. Most homes have substantial flooding.

**Wind:** Catastrophic wind damage. Total building collapses, structures with extensive damage. Foliage and infrastructure destroyed and extensive debris.

**Note:** The Broward EOC is activated as a 24 hour operation during large scale emergency or disaster situations. However, during a localized event the Broward EOC may not be activated. If this is the case, the RIA information should be sent directly to the agency requesting the assessment.
Rapid Impact Assessment Checklist

Pre-Activation/Incident Preparation

Identify Staff responsible for each grid within the jurisdiction.
Pre-print grid map and field data collection form for each staff assigned that details the grids to be collected
Selected Staff should be acquainted with their designated grids.
The Municipal Trainer/Emergency Coordinator is responsible for making sure that selected staff is trained in implementing the RIA and identifying the degrees of impact.
Staff should know how to provide information to complete their RIA assessment.
Be able to access, via internet, the Grid Map at http://eoc-maps.bc-eoc.org/ria.htm and input information electronically into the RIA Map.
Note that the Fire Grid Map is Web enabled and access to it is password protected. Agencies that have a direct role in the RIA must know their municipal password in order to access the program.
Should electronic means not be available staff should have access to its Municipal EOC and provide RIA data or contact municipal representative at Broward EOC and provide information to them for data entry.

Post-Activation/Incident Preparation

This process should NOT take priority over any emergency response or life safety issues.
As soon as life safety issues and weather conditions are permitting each assigned agency should assess their area and contact Broward EOC that the team has begun RIA in its municipality and provide an estimate of when it will be completed. It is also imperative that the team notify Broward EOC/Municipal EOC that it will not be able to provide the assessment for whatever reason. The sooner the better so that replacements can be found.
Due to the time sensitive nature of this information the RIA must be completed within 4-6 hours of initiation.
The information should be reported to the Broward EOC through the following methods (in order of preference):
Primary Contact form for reporting information:
  o Via the internet on the Grid Map at http://eoc-maps.bc-eoc.org/ria.htm.
    (use municipal login and municipal password at this point)
o Through the Municipal Emergency Coordinator at the Municipalities’ EOC who would in turn input the information via internet based Grid Map at http://eoc-maps.bc-eoc.org/ria.htm. (using login and password)

o OR through the Municipal Representative at the Broward EOC who would in turn forward the information via the Grid Map at http://eoc-maps.bc-eoc.org/ria.htm (using login and password) and found in the WebEOC Links.

Secondary Contact form for providing information: Should for any reason there is no possibility of providing the information electronically to either municipal representatives at Municipal EOC or Broward EOC, the information should be provided as follows:

o By telephone (954)-831-3852 or (954)-831-3855

o By FAX (954)-382-5839  * The Phone, FAX, and internet address are subject to change(These numbers are effective as of August 1,2009)

o By radio For normal radio operations, use mutual aid system/talk groups:
  ▪ 12I if the grid is north of Broward Blvd., or
  ▪ 12J if the grid is located South of Broward Blvd.
  ▪ These correspond to “BCM-12-JOP9” (also called BC12 JO9) and “BCM-12-JOP10” (also called BC12 JO10) on the Broward EOC radio template. They are talk groups in the Broward County Fire-Rescue Joint Operations “Zone”. The Broward EOC personnel in the planning room (ESF#5) would have a radio scanning these frequencies.
  ▪ IF, due to the severity of the situation and the Broward EOC’s move to limited radio use after a storm (when cell towers and land/cable lines are down) – reporting teams will need to use the “BCM-Omega-5” talk group.

Contact Broward EOC and Municipal EOC and let them know that RIA has been completed.

Important: Should the Municipality find that it will not be able to conduct an assessment, or provide any/or incomplete information, it is the responsibility of that municipality to notify ESF-5 as soon as possible so that alternate steps may be taken in a timely manner.