The Norton area, as all areas, is subject to natural disasters. These guidelines focus primarily on how the Authority shall react to such a disaster. While the preparations we can make for a disaster are limited, the Authority will take all reasonable steps to enable it to act promptly and effectively in an emergency.

The Norton Public Safety Agencies shall be the first responders and decision makers in any public emergency situation, including natural disaster. If evacuation is necessary, a list of community shelters will be provided by the Norton Public Safety Agencies.

**Preparation:**

The following steps will be taken to prepare for a natural disaster:

The Executive Director shall serve as the coordinator of the Norton Housing Authority’s disaster response efforts. As such, the Executive Director shall serve as the liaison to any community-wide disaster planning efforts. If the Executive Director is unavailable, his/her designee will serve as NHA coordinator.

By adopting these guidelines, The Board of Commissions recognizes that extraordinary efforts will be needed if a natural disaster strikes the Authority. Therefore, employees will be encouraged to potentially operate outside their job descriptions in any way required to assist in the recovery effort.

**Reaction:**

The following steps will be taken in order to react to a natural disaster:

* If a disaster occurs during working hours, all employees will immediately report to the main office for assignment. If the main office is damaged beyond usage, they shall report to the maintenance garage or the nearest un-damaged building to coordinate efforts with the Norton Public Safety Agencies.
* Outside of normal working hours, employees shall contact the Executive Director for instructions. Employees are expected to ensure the safety of their own families prior to reporting to work. If traveling to the NHA site is safe, and the Executive Director requires NHA staff on site, staff will be expected to report to work as needed.
* NHA staff and residents shall follow any and all command decisions made by the Norton Public Safety Officer in charge.
* If an employee/resident suspects a trapped resident/individual they will summons local emergency crews to enter and provide logistical support to the rescue/recovery. Structures will be searched for trapped survivors. Survivors shall be freed if possible without endangering the lives of others.
* In accordance with the utility company’s expertise, electric shall be disconnected from any building with severe structural damage by National Grid or their successor. Water shall be disconnected from any building with severe structural damage by NHA staff or the Town of Norton if necessary.
* Lists of non-habitable buildings or units and trapped survivors shall be delivered to the main office as soon as practicable.
* Work assignments will be made based upon reports received regarding damage sustained.
* As soon as practical, the Executive Director as Secretary of the Board, with the consent of the Chairperson, will call a Special Emergency Board Meeting on the situation and apprise the Board of emergency decisions made arising from the disaster and recovery activities.

Policy Dated:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Chairman Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_