

## PREFACE

Chapter 252, Florida Statutes, charges the Division of Emergency Management with the responsibility of maintaining a comprehensive statewide program of emergency management. A critical component of this program is the sheltering of Florida's vulnerable populations in the face of an impending hurricane. The Division is responsible for administering a shelter survey program with the goal of eliminating the deficit of "safe" public shelter space. As a component of this shelter survey program, the Division is responsible for establishing model shelter guidelines. The Division has adopted the guidelines established by the American Red Cross in *MASS CARE -- Preparedness and Operations* (ARC 3031, April 1987), and its supplement *Guidelines for Hurricane Evacuation Shelter Selection*, (ARC 4496, July 1992).

To meet the responsibilities defined in Florida Statutes, the Division has developed a multifaceted strategy to eliminate the statewide shelter deficit. This strategy includes promoting the use of public shelter design criteria when constructing new facilities; surveying existing buildings, both public and private, to identify additional shelter capacity; and recommending appropriate retrofitting and mitigation projects to increase available shelter space in existing buildings. An integral component of this strategy is to provide technical assistance and training to local and state officials in shelter selection and, where appropriate, retrofitting and mitigation techniques. The publication of this manual provides the basis for the Division's shelter selection and retrofitting technical assistance programs and a supplementary training program.

Though the focus of this manual is hurricane evacuation shelter selection, the hazards assessment procedures outlined are relevant to any structure critical to a community's ability to respond to, and recover from, a major hurricane. As such, the Division recommends use of the procedures established in this manual as the **minimum** level of hazard evaluation for other types of critical facilities; e.g., police departments, hospitals, communications centers, fire stations, etc.

During the preparation of this manual, an effort was made to maintain consistency with terms prescribed in both ARC 3031 and ARC 4496. To maintain consistency with ARC 4496, this document repeatedly uses the term Hurricane Evacuation Shelter. In the interest of succinctness, this term has been abbreviated to HES. The acronym HES is more commonly ascribed to Hurricane Evacuation Studies, which also are referenced in this text. Therefore, where used in this document, HES pertains only to Hurricane Evacuation Shelters and NOT to Hurricane Evacuation Studies.