



News Release

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New Emergency Management Department Director

Charleston County has selected Joe Coates to serve as director of the Emergency Management Department. Coates began working with the County in 2008 and has served as interim director for Emergency Management since July 2021. He has a bachelor's degree in Emergency and Disaster Management from American Military University. His experience includes:

- Acting as coordinator with the Sheriff's Rural Search and Rescue Team.
- Former Secretary for the Disaster Recovery Network after the 1000 Year Flood in 2015.
- Former sUAS (Drone) Chairman under the Public Safety Coordinating Committee.
- Planning Section Chief under the Low Country Incident Management Team.
- South Carolina Emergency Management Association Legislative Delegation member.
- Incident Commander for Charleston County Emergency Operations Center.



"Joe has tried and true experience in managing the County's emergency operations," says Deputy County Administrator of Public Safety Eric Watson. "Not only has he led our staff and residents through numerous emergency events, but his dedication to public safety began at a very young age. I am confident in Joe's ability to run this crucial department, no matter what emergencies arise."

The director of Emergency Management oversees the County's all-hazards emergency management program by developing preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation planning. Additionally, Coates will oversee the operations of the Emergency Preparedness Division, Hazardous Materials Division, Marine Incident Response Team, and the Volunteer Rescue Squad. He will also serve as an Advisor on the Citadel's James B Near Center for Climate Studies.

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