

## **Organizational History**

The Burlington County Division of Emergency Management evolved from the Burlington County Office of Civil Defense in the early 1980's. In 1979, President Jimmy Carter created the Federal Emergency Management Agency, recognizing that the greatest threat to the American people were natural disasters. The State of New Jersey followed the federal initiative and emergency management was created in New Jersey in 1980.

Initially, the Division of Emergency Management was a department level entity known as the Department of Public Safety and later the Department of Emergency Management Services. It encompassed responsibility for the Police Academy, Fire Academy, First Aid Academy, Fire Marshall's Office, Forensics Lab, Fire Arms Range and the County Communications Center. The Director of Public Safety served as the Emergency Management Coordinator.

In 1996, the department was restructured. The Police Academy functions were placed under the County Prosecutor's Office. The Fire Marshall's Office became a department and was responsible for the Fire Academy as well as investigations and inspections. The Department of Emergency Management Services retained oversight of the County Communications Center, Forensics Lab and Range operations. It was at this time that the position of Public Safety Director and Emergency Management Coordinator were split into two full time job titles.

In 2001, the department was once again restructured as the Department of Public Safety Services. The Department has four divisions, Emergency Management, Communications, Inspections and Investigations and Training. The Department is headed by the Director of Public Safety and each division has a director in charge. There were also three groups or units created under the department, Forensics Lab, Range Operations and the Radio Equipment Maintenance Unit. This is the current structure of the Department today.