



## 4.2 Hazard Identification

This section discusses past disaster declarations related to Westmoreland County and summarizes hazards of concern addressed in the Westmoreland County Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP).

### 4.2.1 Disaster Declarations

In reviewing and updating Westmoreland County’s hazards of concern, the Hazard Mitigation Working Group (HMWG) and Planning Team reviewed additional information and historical records from a wide range of sources. This section discusses the Presidential Disaster and Emergency Declarations, Gubernatorial Disaster Declarations or Proclamations, and Small Business Administration Disaster Declarations that have affected Westmoreland County.

Presidential Disaster and Emergency Declarations are issued when authorities have determined that state and local governments need assistance in responding to a disaster event. Since 1955, declarations have been issued for various hazard events including hurricanes or tropical storms, severe winter storms, and flooding. Summaries of declarations that have affected the County are provided in the tables below.

Table 4.2-1 lists Presidential Disaster and Emergency Declarations issued between 1972 through February 2019 that have affected Westmoreland County. Additional declarations beyond February 2019 can be found on the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) website at: <https://www.fema.gov/disasters> (FEMA 2019).

**Table 4.2-1. Presidential Disaster and Emergency Declarations affecting Westmoreland County**

Declaration Number	Date	Event
DR-340	June 23, 1972	Flood: Tropical Storm Agnes
EM-3026	January 29, 1977	Snow: Snowstorms
DR-537	July 21, 1977	Flood: Severe Storms and Flooding
EM-3081	June 3, 1980	Tornado: Severe Storms and Tornado
DR-721	August 27, 1984	Flood: Severe Storms and Flooding
DR-754	November 3, 1985	Flood: Severe Storms and Flooding
EM-3105	March 13-17, 1993	Snow: Severe Snowfall and Winter Storm
DR-1015	January 4 – February 25, 1994	Severe Storms: Severe Winter Storms
DR-1085	January 6-12, 1996	Snow: Blizzard of 96
DR-1093	January 19-30, 1996	Flood: Severe Storms and Flooding
EM-3180	February 14-19, 2003	Severe Storms: Snow
DR-1555	September 8-9, 2004	Severe Storms: Severe Storms and Flooding Associated with Tropical Depression Frances
DR-1557	September 17 – October 1, 2004	Hurricane: Tropical Depression Ivan
EM-3232	August 29 – October 1, 2005	Hurricane: Hurricane Katrina
DR-1898	February 5-11, 2010	Snow: Severe Winter Storms and Snowstorms
EM-3356	October 26 – November 8, 2012	Hurricane: Hurricane Sandy
DR-4267	January 22-23, 2016	Snow: Severe Winter Storm and Snowstorm



In addition to these Presidentially-declared events, 25 events warranted Gubernatorial Disaster Declarations or Proclamations. Table 4.2-2 lists all Gubernatorial Disaster Declarations or Proclamations that have been issued for Westmoreland County between 1958 and 2017 (including those for events listed in Table 4.2-1), according to the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) (PEMA 2018).

**Table 4.2-2. Gubernatorial Disaster Declarations or Proclamations affecting Westmoreland County**

Date	Event
January 1966	Heavy Snow
February 1972	Heavy Snow
February 1974	Truckers Strike
July 1976	High Winds/Flooding
January 1978	Heavy Snow
February 1978	Blizzard
July 1999	Drought
February 2000	Flooding
September 2006	Proclamation of Emergency – Hurricane Katrina
September 2006	Proclamation of Disaster Emergency – Tropical Depression Ernesto
February 2007	Proclamation of Disaster Emergency – Regulations
February 2007	Proclamation of Disaster Emergency – Severe Winter Storm
April 2007	Proclamation of Disaster Emergency – Severe Winter Storm
February 2010	Proclamation of Emergency – Severe Winter Storm
January 2011	Proclamation of Emergency – Severe Winter Storm
August 2011	Proclamation of Emergency – Severe Storms and Flooding (Lee/Irene)
April 2012	Proclamation of Emergency – Spring Winter Storms
October 2012	Proclamation of Disaster Emergency – Hurricane Sandy
June 2013	Proclamation of Emergency – High Winds, Thunderstorms, Heavy Rain, Tornado, Flooding
January 2014	Proclamation of Disaster Emergency – Extreme Weather, Utility Interruption
February 2014	Proclamation of Emergency – Severe Winter Storm
February 2014	Proclamation of Emergency – Severe Winter Storm
February 2014	Proclamation of Emergency – Severe Winter Storm
January 2015	Proclamation of Disaster Emergency – Severe Winter Storms
August 2015	Proclamation of Disaster Emergency – Severe Storms
January 2016	Proclamation of Disaster Emergency – Severe Winter Storm
March 2017	Proclamation of Disaster Emergency – Severe Winter Storm
March 2017	Proclamation of Disaster Emergency – Severe Winter Storm
January 2018	Proclamation of Disaster Emergency – Opioid Crisis Emergency Proclamation
March 2018	Proclamation of Disaster Emergency – Opioid Crisis, Severe Winter Storms

Westmoreland County has also received Small Business Administration Disaster Assistance for a number of disaster events. A Small Business Administration Disaster Declaration qualifies communities for access to



affordable, timely, and accessible financial assistance. Table 4.2-3 lists Small Business Administration (SBA) Disaster Declarations issued for Westmoreland County between 1989 and 2018 (PEMA 2018; SBA 2019).

**Table 4.2-3. Small Business Administration Disaster Declarations affecting Westmoreland County**

Date	Event
November 1985	Flash Flood
August 2000	Flooding
August 2002	Severe Storms – May 31
July 2008	Fire
July 2013	Severe Storms and Flooding
July 2013	Severe Storms and Flooding
September 2013	Storms and Severe Weather
July 2016	Flash Flooding
September 2016	Flash Flooding
June 2017	Fire
June 2018	Flooding
July 2018	Rain, Flash Flooding
September 2018	Flooding

### 4.2.2 Summary of Hazards

As part of the plan update process, the HMWG and Planning Team reviewed the hazards of concern detailed in the 2014 version of the HMP, as well as those identified in the State HMP. They also considered the history of hazard events that have occurred in Westmoreland County, as well as events that occurred after the completion of the 2014 version of the plan. This review of historical events included an evaluation of all emergency and disaster declarations in the Commonwealth, with a focus on those events that warranted federal assistance for Westmoreland County.

Further, all jurisdictions participating in the plan update process were provided a Hazard Identification/Evaluation of Risk worksheet to help identify the hazards—natural and non-natural—that each community believed posed significant risk to Westmoreland County, including hazards that may not have been considered in either the 2014 version of the plan or the State HMP. Completed worksheets submitted by the municipalities are included in Appendix D. Based on the review of the 2014 hazards list and completion of the Hazard Identification/Evaluation of Risk worksheet, additional hazards were considered in need of a risk assessment. The HMWG and Planning Team decided to keep all 2014 hazards of concern and add Illicit Drug Use.



Based on all available information and input from the municipalities, the HMWG and Planning Team selected the following natural and non-natural hazards for consideration in this HMP:

**Natural Hazards**

- Avalanche
- Drought
- Earthquake
- Extreme Temperature
- Flood, Flash Flood, Ice Jam
- Hailstorm
- Hurricane, Tropical Storm
- Landslide
- Lightning
- Radon Exposure
- Subsidence and Sinkholes
- Tornadoes and Windstorms
- Wildfire
- Winter Storm

**Non-Natural Hazards**

- Dam Failure
- Environmental Hazards
- Illicit Drug Use
- Nuclear Incident
- Structural Fire
- Terrorism
- Transportation Accident
- Utility Interruption

These hazards have been profiled individually in Section 4.3 of this plan.