



University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Coast Research Laboratory Hurricane Preparedness Plan

January 4, 2019

The Gulf Coast Research Laboratory (GCRL) Director and/or Associate Director, in consultation with the COA Department Chair, GCRL Center and administrative directors, and University administration, will determine whether the GCRL will enact full hurricane (or storm) emergency procedures. These procedures may include securing offices, teaching/research laboratories, vehicles and boats and necessary computer data backup. In addition, the GCRL Director and/or Associate Director will determine whether the Dormitory, Faculty House and cottages will be evacuated. *Depending on the nature of the storm and its threat, less stringent preparations may be in order.*

Faculty members, Center directors, principal investigators and supervisors are responsible for seeing that their offices, laboratories and equipment (particularly items stored outside) are secured. Faculty, students and staff will be called upon to help secure the remainder of the GCRL.

The alert levels given below shall serve as guidelines. All final decisions on enactment of response levels will be coordinated with the USM Incident Commander. *This plan is specific to storm preparedness actions for the GCRL sites and supplements the Hurricane Preparedness Information provided by the University via email on 07 June 2018 (Appendix A).*

NOTICE: In the event a mandatory evacuation is issued, no building at the Halstead or Cedar Point campuses is to be used as a shelter.

Level 1 Alert

There is tropical storm or hurricane activity with a potential for landfall along the northern Gulf of Mexico.

1. The GCRL Director or Associate Director will notify GCRL faculty, staff, and students of the storm activity. (Monty Graham, Read Hendon)
2. In advance of a predicted Tropical Storm or Category 1-2 Hurricane, the USM Residence Life Coordinator will verify that evacuation accommodations at the Hattiesburg campus are available for students when the Summer Field Program is in session; for a predicted Category 3+ Hurricane, Summer Field Program students will be alerted that they may be discharged for relocation on their own accord. Assistance with accommodations for other overnight visitors will be provided as appropriate. (Sam Clardy, Katie Weldon)
3. Computer data and files should be backed up and secure any equipment. (All individuals)
 - a. Eagle Backup (<https://www.usm.edu/itech/eagle-backup>)
 - b. MS Office 365 OneDrive (<https://www.usm.edu/itech/microsoft-office-365>)
 - c. External hard drives
4. Chain saws and supplies are to be checked. (Luke Applewhite)
5. Fuel for emergency generators will be obtained. (Luke Applewhite)

6. Sand bags and sand will be obtained for doorways. (Luke Applewhite)
7. The GCRL Physical Plant Director will notify contractors of activities required from them; this relates primarily to construction and renovation activities being managed by an outside contractor. (Luke Applewhite)
8. The Halstead Campus secondary drive and route will be checked to ensure it is in safe condition and fully accessible, if needed. (Luke Applewhite)
9. All communications plans will be verified. (All individuals)

Level 2 Alert

The storm has entered the Gulf of Mexico with a possibility of striking Mississippi but is still greater than three days away from landfall. The GCRL Director or Associate Director makes the declaration for Level 2 precautions.

1. All small boats will be moved to higher ground and secured. The large vessels will be moved to Stennis Space Center or an alternate safe location as determined by the GCRL Vessel Operations Manager, in coordination with the primary vessel captains.
 - a. GCRL Physical Plant will coordinate with the Center for Fisheries Research & Development for the movement of the small boats on GCRL campus. (Luke Applewhite, John Anderson)
 - b. GCRL Captains will be responsible for movement of the *R/V Tommy Munro*, *R/V Jim Franks*, *R/V Hermes*, and *Miss Peetsy B.* (Tiffany Bosarge; Ronnie Williams and Josh White for the *R/V Tommy Munro*; Rick Block, John Wentworth and Jody Peterson for all other non-trailerable vessels)
2. Equipment and all materials outside of GCRL facilities will be secured.
 - a. Shop and storage areas will be secured. (Luke Applewhite)
 - b. Faculty and staff are responsible for securing items outside of areas they use. (All individuals)
3. All GCRL vehicles are to be topped off with fuel.
 - a. GCRL Physical Plant will be responsible for motor pool vehicles. (Dale Fremin)
 - b. Unit-managed vehicles are the responsibility of the unit operating them. (Directors and principal investigators)
4. SOSE Finance Administration Director will obtain documentation paperwork for itemized costs (direct and manpower) associated with hurricane preparations; see Appendix B. (Amanda Seymour)
5. GCRL Physical Plant Director will notify contractors to enact security measures for materials and equipment associated with construction and renovation activities under their management on GCRL property. (Luke Applewhite)
6. For a predicted Category 3+ Hurricane (or as otherwise deemed necessary based on the intensity and direction of a lesser storm), the contracted food service provider will be notified to make preparations to remove all perishable food items from the Dining Hall facility (and any auxiliary storage areas); this includes frozen items which will spoil under a prolonged power outage scenario. (Amanda Seymour)
7. GCRL EHS Officer will assess chemical storage areas and coordinate with faculty and lab managers on securing chemicals and other hazardous materials. (Binnaz Bailey)
8. All leave is cancelled.

Level 3 Alert

The storm continues its approach toward the Mississippi coast and there is a significant possibility that it will make landfall in the Biloxi/Ocean Springs region within 48 hours. The GCRL Director or Associate Director notifies staff to conduct Level 3 precautions.

1. On-site students and visitors being housed in the Dormitory, Faculty House and cottages are to be evacuated, as necessary, to Hattiesburg campus (Tropical Storm, Category 1-2 Hurricane) or otherwise discharged (Category 3+ Hurricane). (Sam Clardy, Katie Weldon)
2. For a predicted Category 3+ Hurricane (or as otherwise deemed necessary based on the intensity and direction of a lesser storm), the contracted food service provider will be instructed to remove all perishable food items from the Dining Hall facility (and any auxiliary storage areas), including frozen items which will spoil under a prolonged power outage scenario. (Amanda Seymour)
3. Emergency generators will be moved via trailer to a secure site. (Luke Applewhite)
4. Tools and equipment required for clearing roadways (chainsaws, fuel/oil, tow straps, etc.) will be placed in designated Physical Plant vehicles (one for Halstead and one for Cedar Point) and staged with UPD personnel in order to provide access to GCRL campuses once safe weather conditions prevail. (Luke Applewhite)
5. GCRL vehicles will be moved to higher ground on the GCRL campuses or to the Halstead Road tennis court parking area, depending on the severity of the storm. (Luke Applewhite)
6. The Davis Bayou floating pier will be detached and removed from the water and relocated to higher ground. (Luke Applewhite)
7. High-voltage electrical contractor will be contacted to shut off power to the main electrical panel at the Halstead Harbor. Electrical panel components, to include electrical panel interior components and breakers, will be removed from the Halstead and Point Cadet harbors, and supply lines will be secured; the electrical transformer will also be removed from Point Cadet. (Luke Applewhite)
8. All computers and sensitive electronic equipment will be covered with plastic, unplugged and placed on a table or lab bench. Sensitive equipment will be removed from floors and away from windows.
 - a. Each faculty member and Center Director is responsible for securing his/her laboratory and equipment.
 1. Each faculty member will be responsible for his/her ultra-cold freezers and refrigerators. (Directors and principal investigators)
 2. GCRL Physical Plant Director will coordinate the consolidation of important materials that must be frozen or refrigerated. The number of freezers and refrigerators on emergency backup power may be minimized. (Luke Applewhite)
 3. GCRL Physical Plant Director will coordinate providing extension cords to freezers, refrigerators and other critical equipment that requires power for connection to portable generators for the Caylor Building and other necessary GCRL facilities. (Luke Applewhite)
 - b. iTech will be responsible for institutional computers and technology equipment.

1. Secure the lab servers and network equipment (John Hart, in coordination with USM iTech).
2. Secure computers and technology equipment in computer labs, classrooms, and Caylor Auditorium (John Hart, in coordination with USM iTech).
- c. Important files (i.e., hardcopies) will be moved to 2nd floor hallway of Caylor Building. Boxes with materials will be clearly labeled to facilitate return to the original location once the storm has passed. Boxes will be covered with plastic. (All individuals)
9. Sandbags are to be filled and placed by each exterior doorway. (Luke Applewhite)
10. COA Chair, Center directors and administrative unit directors will ensure documentation paperwork is being completed for itemized direct costs, fuel and manpower associated with hurricane preparations. (Directors and principal investigators)
11. GCRL Physical Plant Director will verify that contractors have enacted security measures for materials and equipment associated with construction and renovation activities under their management on GCRL property. (Luke Applewhite)
12. Supervisors and subordinates should communicate their evacuation plans to each other, and supervisors must ensure that necessary contact information has been exchanged. (All individuals)
13. GCRL EHS Officer will secure all chemical storage areas and verify with lab managers that pertinent chemicals and hazardous materials have been properly secured in other laboratories. (Binnaz Bailey)
14. In accordance with MSDH Radiation Division's directive, GCRL EHS Officer will transport any items that produce radiation to the Hattiesburg campus until it is safe for them to be returned to GCRL facilities. (Binnaz Bailey)
15. As applicable, Emergency Operation Center Staff members will ensure that emergency communication radios (and additional batteries) are fully charged and remain in those individuals' possession for the duration of the storm and until campuses re-open.
16. The *GCRL Emergency/Storm Preparation Protocol – Key Personnel* spreadsheet will be completed with the names of all “essential personnel” for each department who will need access to campuses once initial inspections are made by UPD and Physical Plant and safe conditions are confirmed. The intention of this list, which will be provided to UPD prior to the storm's landfall, is to provide a means of access for research and support personnel ***absolutely necessary*** to enter GCRL facilities to assess the status of critical research areas and/or to tend to feeding for live animals. (Directors)
 - a. The Key Personnel list will be supplemental to the ER-ITN re-entry forms necessary for campus access during closures associated with major storm events; this list will not take precedent over ER-ITN access control in the event of significant damage as a result of a major storm.
 - b. The Key Personnel list will be provided to the Associate Director for GCRL in digital format (.xlsx) by a deadline to be established for each event. Individual lists will be compiled, and a comprehensive list for that particular storm will be provided to UPD; a hard-copy example is provided in Appendix C.
17. All leave is cancelled.

Level 4 Alert – Evacuation

The storm continues its approach toward the Mississippi coast. Warnings and/or watches have been issued for the Biloxi/Ocean Springs region. There is a high probability that the storm will make landfall within approximately 24 hours. The GCRL Director or Associate Director notifies staff that Level 4 evacuation procedures should begin.

1. Non-indigenous species held at GCRL aquaculture and wet laboratories will be destroyed as per operating protocols and permit requirements. (Joe Griffitt, Kelly Lucas)
2. All other organisms held in wet laboratories should have backup air supplies functioning. All organism holdings should have the responsible individual's name clearly marked. (Joe Griffitt, Kelly Lucas)
3. The power to all non-essential equipment (excluding refrigerators or freezers) should be turned off. (All individuals)
4. The outside doors will be locked and sandbags put in place. (Luke Applewhite)
5. All personnel **MUST** leave the GCRL campuses.
6. If storm surge or related high water conditions inundate the primary entrance road at the Halstead Campus, the UPD Officer on duty will barricade that road and control access to campus via the secondary access road; emergency access to campus will be as depicted in Figure 1. UPD will notify the GCRL Associate Director when the primary access road is closed and re-opened. *Note that this procedure for use of the secondary access road will also apply during high water levels not associated with a named storm system (i.e., use as primary access point for faculty, staff and students during periods of non-closure).*
7. Once a Level 4 evacuation is ordered, UPD will not allow anyone back onto campus until an assessment of the GCRL grounds and buildings has been conducted. (Chief Hopkins, Lt. Williams, Luke Applewhite, Read Hendon, Binnaz Bailey)

Post-Storm

After a Level 4 evacuation, no one will be allowed back onto campus until an assessment of the grounds and buildings has been conducted and specific areas are deemed to be safe for access and occupancy. Update emails and Eagle Alert notifications (<http://www.usm.edu/safety/eagle-alert>) will be provided to University faculty, staff and students. Information on campus openings and accessibility will also be available through the communication chain below.

1. Call the GCRL switchboard at 228-872-4200 and speak to someone or listen for a recorded message. If the GCRL phones are not operational, then go to #2.
2. Call the USM Gulf Park switchboard at 228-865-4500. A message with information on conditions at the GCRL campuses will be recorded or relayed by the operator. If this line is not operational, then go to #3.
3. Call USM Main Campus switchboard at 601-266-1000.
4. Please make every effort possible to contact your immediate supervisor once storm conditions subside.

IMPORTANT: Only individuals who have completed the necessary ER-ITN re-entry forms - and received subsequent approval - will be allowed on to USM/GCRL property prior to the campus closure(s) being lifted.



FIGURE 1. Alternate access route at GCRL Halstead via secondary access road.

USM-GCRL Emergency Operations Center Staff

Director of Emergency Operations for GCRL

SOSE/GCRL Director, Monty Graham - 228-818-8813, 228-341-1020

SOSE Associate Director for GCRL, Read Hendon - 228-818-8804, 228-238-3326

USM Incident Command

Primary - Chief Bob Hopkins, University Police - 601-266-4947, 601-520-0373

Secondary - Capt. Patrick Williams, University Police (Gulf Park) - 228-223-5650

GCRL Physical Plant Director, Luke Applewhite - 228-818-8019; 228-547-6132

GCRL Physical Plant Office Manager, Dale Fremin - 228-818-8044, 228-219-2229

GCRL Vessel Operations Manager, Tiffany McNeese - 228-872-4277, 228-238-7686

- Small Vessel Coordination through John Anderson - 228-872-4250, 228-238-3726

GCRL Environmental, Health & Safety Officer, Binnaz Bailey - 228-818-8029, 228-669-4796

SOSE Finance Administration Director, Amanda Seymour - 228-872-4205, 228-209-3649

Marine Education Center Director, Chris Snyder - 228-818-8096, 228-365-3386

Summer Field Program Coordinator, Sam Clardy - 228-818-8089, 228-238-5784

Housing & Conference Services Manager, Katie Weldon - 228-990-0654

Department of Coastal Sciences Chair, Joe Griffitt - 228-818-8027, 228-365-5639

Center for Fisheries Research & Development Interim Director, Jill Hendon - 228-872-4242,
228-235-4601

Thad Cochran Marine Aquaculture Center Director, Kelly Lucas - 228-818-8026, 228-990-
0338

SOSE Director of External Relations, Pam Moeller - 228-818-8847, 228-217-5687

GCRL iTech, John Hart - 228-872-4227

APPENDIX A: USM Hurricane Preparedness Information (from 07 June 2018 email)

The 2018 hurricane season began on June 1 and will continue through November 30. Students, faculty and staff should prepare now in the event a hurricane threatens The University of Southern Mississippi's campuses, teaching and research sites.

You can download the 2018 Hurricane Preparedness Guide provided by the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) at <http://www.msema.org/hurricane2018/>. You should also be aware of the following institutional protocols that will be in effect for the entire hurricane season.

Institutional Protocols

If a tropical weather system emerges, University officials will monitor weather closely to determine if a school closure or cancellation of classes is warranted.

If a hurricane or other significant weather system is expected to impact the University, advance information will be distributed through University email accounts, and relevant emergency advisories will be shared through the [Eagle Alert](#) emergency notification system.

If a major hurricane is predicted to threaten the University, all USM locations will be evacuated for your safety, as well as the safety of local emergency responders. If these extreme circumstances occur:

- USM will provide as much notice as possible, with the goal of initiating evacuation procedures at least 48 hours prior to landfall.
- You will be **required to evacuate** USM campuses, teaching and research sites until the threat has passed or the University has completed its initial recovery.
- Students who live in USM residence halls will be asked to notify their resident assistants of their evacuation plans before they leave campus.
- Assistance may be provided for international students and others who need help identifying temporary housing in locations away from the storm.

If you would need assistance prior to the University closing for such an emergency, please contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 601.266.6028.

Hurricane Preparedness: What You Should Do Now

[MEMA](#) recommends four steps to individual hurricane preparedness:

1. Know Where to Go
2. Put Together a Disaster Supply Kit
3. Set Up Emergency Alerts
4. Establish a Communication Plan with Family and Friends

Please review additional details at <http://www.msema.org/be-prepared/hurricanes/>.

Students, faculty and staff should also consider the following actions:

- Check **now** to make sure your contact information is up-to-date in the University's Eagle Alert system: <https://www.usm.edu/safety/eagle-alert>.
- Monitor emergency communication channels outlined below.
- Comply with preparedness and emergency safety advisories issued by University officials or other local or state agencies.
- Back up electronic files on portable drives or, for University-owned computers, through [Eagle Backup](#).
- If the University closes, take valuable **personal** property with you as you leave campus.

Emergency Communication Channels

Eagle Alert is the official emergency communication channel for the University. Faculty, staff and students are required to receive alerts via email. You may also receive alerts via phone call and/or text message. Review and update your contact information at <https://www.usm.edu/safety/eagle-alert>.

You may add other phone numbers, including parent or family member phone numbers, into the system under your record.

All USM emergency messages are posted at [SouthernMiss.info](https://southernmiss.info). Related information may also be communicated through University accounts on Facebook and Twitter, media outlets and emergency notifications at usm.edu.

APPENDIX B: Storm Preparation & Damage Financial Tracking Documentation

Even before a storm hits, FEMA eligible expenses can start incurring. FEMA allows us to seek reimbursement (up to 75%) for expenses incurred while prepping and evacuating for a storm in addition to damage caused the storm; as such, expense tracking should start as soon as the orders are given from the SOSE Director for storm prep mobilization. In Appendix I, each storm category type is listed with some general ideas on what qualifies to help ensure proper expense tracking.

Some general notes for all work performed are to track and document everything. Document, document, document. Maintain up-to-date maintenance records for all buildings, equipment, or anything else tangible that can be maintained. We need to be able to prove that we maintained whatever we are claiming costs for. Use the GCRL FEMA Workbook Excel spreadsheet to track expenses. This is exactly how FEMA tracks their expenses and will reduce duplication of effort as well as wasted effort which will hopefully expedite reimbursement claims.

Appendix I **Expense Tracking by Category of Damage/Project Type**

Category A – Debris Removal

- Expenses are incurred AFTER the storm has passed.
- Regular and over-time charges may be reimbursed.
 - Track hours by type of pay as well as by person.
 - Keep track of work orders for employees.
- Use of equipment (trucks, tractors, etc) may be reimbursed.
 - Track time spent in equipment while moving only; e.g., just because a person has the equipment/vehicle for 8 hours does not mean they can claim all 8 hours unless they were driving for that entire time.
- Any contract work to help with debris removal is allowable following USM procurement guidelines.
- Any commodities purchased for debris removal is allowable following USM procurement guidelines.
- Be sure to collect GPS coordinates and truck diameters for all trees that need to be removed.
- Keep all invoices, timesheets, purchase orders, PSAs and other related documents for Category A together and separate from all other categories.

Category B – Emergency Protective Measures (EPM)

- Category B expenses include activities prepping for the storm to immediate reactionary protective measures after the storm.
- Only overtime charges may be reimbursed for Category B projects.
 - Keep track of work orders for employees.
- Vessel evacuation is included in Category B, as well as any other evacuation expenses (include map/GPS locations for beginning and ending points of evacuation trips).
- Be sure to collect GPS coordinates on all generator locations.

- Student housing evacuation should be tracked (are we paying for them to stay somewhere, transportation, etc.).
- Any expenses for security are also reimbursable.
- Use of generators falls under Category B.
- Any contract work to help with Emergency Protective Measures is allowable following USM procurement guidelines.
- Any commodities purchased for Emergency Protective Measures removal are allowable following USM procurement guidelines. Fuel for equipment is not allowable since fuel cost is included in the FEMA equipment rate.
- Keep all invoices, timesheets, purchase orders, PSAs and other related documents for Category B together and separate from all other categories.

Category C – Roads and Bridges

- If the storm caused damage to roads, culverts and/or bridges, related expenses may be reimbursed.
- Regular and over-time charges may be reimbursed.
 - Track hours by type of pay as well as by person.
 - Keep track of work orders for employees.
- Use of equipment (trucks, tractors, etc.) may be reimbursed.
 - Track time spent in equipment while moving only; e.g., just because a person has the equipment/vehicle for 8 hours does not mean they can claim all 8 hours unless they were driving for that entire time.
- Any contract work to help with road and bridge repair is allowable following USM procurement guidelines.
- Any commodities purchased for road and bridge repair is allowable following USM procurement guidelines.
- Keep all invoices, timesheets, purchase orders, PSAs and other related documents for Category C together and separate from all other categories.

Category D – Water Control Facilities

- If any of the following received damage from the storm, FEMA may reimburse the repair expenses:
 - Levees or floodwalls
 - Drainage channels
 - Canals
 - Sediment or debris basins
 - Storm water retention or detention basins
 - Irrigation facilities
 - Pumping facilities
 - Navigational waterways
- Regular and over-time charges may be reimbursed.
 - Track hours by type of pay as well as by person.
 - Keep track of work orders for employees.
- Use of equipment (trucks, tractors, etc.) may be reimbursed.

- Track time spent in equipment while moving only; etc., just because a person has the equipment/vehicle for 8 hours does not mean they can claim all 8 hours unless they were driving for that entire time.
- Any contract work to help with water control facilities is allowable following USM procurement guidelines.
- Any commodities purchased for water control facilities is allowable following USM procurement guidelines.
- Keep all invoices, timesheets, purchase orders, PSAs and other related documents for Category D together and separate from all other categories.

Category E – Buildings and Equipment

- If the storm caused damage to buildings, contents, or equipment, FEMA may reimburse the replacement/repair costs.
- Regular and over-time charges may be reimbursed.
 - Track hours by type of pay as well as by person.
 - Keep track of work orders for employees.
- Use of equipment (trucks, tractors, etc.) may be reimbursed.
 - Track time spent in equipment while moving only; e.g., just because a person has the equipment/vehicle for 8 hours does not mean they can claim all 8 hours unless they were driving for that entire time.
- Any contract work to help with buildings and equipment is allowable following USM procurement guidelines.
- Any commodities purchased for buildings and equipment is allowable following USM procurement guidelines.
- Keep all invoices, timesheets, purchase orders, PSAs and other related documents for Category E together and separate from all other categories.

Category F – Utilities

- If the storm caused damage to utilities that are the jurisdiction of USM, FEMA may reimburse the replacement/repair costs.
- Regular and over-time charges may be reimbursed.
 - Track hours by type of pay as well as by person.
 - Keep track of work orders for employees.
- Use of equipment (trucks, tractors, etc.) may be reimbursed.
 - Track time spent in equipment while moving only; e.g., just because a person has the equipment/vehicle for 8 hours does not mean they can claim all 8 hours unless they were driving for that entire time.
- Any contract work to repair/replace utilities is allowable following USM procurement guidelines.
- Any commodities purchased for utilities is allowable following USM procurement guidelines.
- Keep all invoices, timesheets, purchase orders, PSAs and other related documents for Category F together and separate from all other categories.

Category G – Parks, Recreational, Other

- If the storm caused damage to any parks or recreational facilities (fences, piers, etc.), FEMA may reimburse repair/replace costs.
- Regular and over-time charges may be reimbursed.
 - Track hours by type of pay as well as by person.
- Use of equipment (trucks, tractors, etc.) may be reimbursed.
 - Track time spent in equipment while moving only; e.g., just because a person has the equipment/vehicle for 8 hours does not mean they can claim all 8 hours unless they were driving for that entire time.
- Any contract work to repair/replace any parks, recreational, or other facility is allowable following USM procurement guidelines.
- Any commodities purchased for parks, recreational, or other facility is allowable following USM procurement guidelines.
- Keep all invoices, timesheets, purchase orders, PSAs and other related documents for Category G together and separate from all other categories.

Purchasing Guidelines

Even in an emergency, we are required to follow USM purchasing guidelines. Some general rules, as provided on USM's Procurement website, follow.

Purchases which involve an expenditure of more than five thousand dollars (\$5000.00) but not more than fifty thousand Dollars (\$50,000.00), exclusive of freight and shipping charges, may be made from the lowest and best bidder without publishing or posting advertisement for bids, provided at least two (2) competitive written bids have been obtained. The term "competitive written bid" shall mean a bid submitted on a bid form furnished by the buying agency or governing authority and signed by authorized personnel representing the vendor, or a bid submitted on a vendor's letterhead or identifiable bid form and signed by authorized personnel representing the vendor.

Purchases which involve an expenditure of more than fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000.00), exclusive of freight and shipping charges, may be made from the lowest and best bidder after advertising for competitive sealed bids once each week for two (2) consecutive weeks in a regular newspaper published in the county or municipality in which such agency or governing authority is located. The date as published for the bid opening shall not be less than seven (7) working days after the last published notice; however, if the purchase involves a construction project in which the estimated cost is in excess of fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000.00), such bids shall not be opened in less than fifteen (15) working days after the last notice is published and the notice for the purchase of such construction shall be published once each week for two (2) consecutive week. The notice of intention to let contracts or purchase equipment shall state the time and place at which bids shall be received, list the contracts to be made or type of equipment or supplies to be purchased, and, if all plans and/or specifications are not published, refer to the plans and/or specifications on file. Specifications pertinent to such bidding shall be written so as not to exclude comparable equipment of domestic manufacture.

Purchases may be made from the lowest and best bidder. In determining the lowest and best bid, freight and shipping charges shall be included. No agency or governing authority shall accept a bid based on items not included in the specifications.

No contract or purchase as herein authorized shall be made for the purpose of circumventing the provisions of this section requiring competitive bids, nor shall it be lawful for any person or concern to submit individual invoices for amounts within those authorized for a contract or purchase where the actual value of the contract or commodity purchased exceeds the authorized amount and the invoices therefore are split so as to appear to be authorized as purchases for which competitive bids are not required. Submission of such invoices shall constitute a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not less than five hundred dollars (\$500.00) nor more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00), or by imprisonment for thirty (30) days in the county jail, or both such fine and imprisonment. In addition, the claim or claims submitted shall be forfeited.

For the purposes of this section, the term "purchase" shall mean the total amount of money encumbered by a single purchase order.

