FEMA Manpower Model

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Abstract

FEMA is charged with supporting the United States public with food, water, shelter, and other supplies during and after hazards. This paper will discuss a Bayesian Network approach to determining the amount of people to be employed by FEMA for disaster recovery support. The model built to accompany this paper will use information on eight hazard categories to determine the amount of personnel required compared to the amount of personnel available. Netica is used to build the model and display the prioritized options for personnel decisions.

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Introduction

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has the mission to support the United States citizens and first responders in times of emergency. These emergencies are defined as acts of terrorism, tornadoes, earthquakes, hurricanes, blizzards, floods, fires, or other natural disasters. FEMA provides multiple services and supplies during these times including personnel, water, food, shelter and other miscellaneous needs of the area.

FEMA has several pieces of information on each of these events. This information includes required resources for each event given the size, place, and timing of the event. There are storage areas for supplies allowing for additional stock during periods of likely events. However, the number of trained personnel available is more constant. This implies that trained personnel can be very limited during events, especially if there is more then one event at a time.

This project will look at the several factors that FEMA considers when a emergency occurs. The main focus will be on personnel required per event. Given the uncertainty of events, their size, and the actual amount of people required for each event it is very hard to plan how many people should be trained and ready for deployment at anyone time. FEMA currently employs approximately 3,700 full time employees and 4,000 standby employees. This project will concentrate on the 4,000 standby employees and try to determine how many of them are necessary.

Background

FEMA has many historical records on the different natural and man-made disasters that have occurred in the United States over the past decade. Through the collection of data, they have partitioned each event into one of eight categories. These categories include Hurricane, Earthquake, Fire, Flood/Storms, Snow/Ice, Tornado, Typhoon, and other natural disasters. Each event is classified as either a minor, moderate, or severe event. Each record contains info on an event size, time and the resources required for the event. However, the data can be inconsistent and incomplete. This provides a great deal of uncertainty into the requirements and frequency of each hazard type.

Several models have been built using this data to help determine the amount of necessary people each year. These models include simple EXCEL based workbooks that take the probabilities and consequences for each hazard and look at each one individually. Other model types include integer programming or generalized linear programming models but have proven to be time consuming and inaccurate. The problem with either approach is that it ignores the joint probabilities of events. In other terms, what the requirements would be if two events were to occur at the same time or within close proximity.

The information collected in the reports is still useful. Through some data mining and organization, joint probabilities can be determined for this group of events. Excel has its limitations for efficient calculations and data manipulation. In addition, Excel has trouble representing probabilities and creating user-friendly interfaces.

Model

A number of factors need to be considered when evaluating the number of people required to handle an emergency event. The uncertainty around each of the factors drives the problem's complication. This problem's uncertainty and relationships between variables implies that a Bayesian Network (BN) will provide insight problem.

A high level look at the model shows that given some inputs, a break down of how many personnel are required is produced. With the current number of personnel introduced in another node, the utility for the situation is produced. The utility of the situation is a relative value that defines the "happiness" FEMA will have given the situation. For example, the hazards required more people than currently available would produce a negative utility to reflect the lack of personnel.

There are several data requirements for this model including: types of hazards, regions of the United States, severity of each hazard, and timing of each hazard. This model breaks down the relationship of each hazard based on the region, timing, and severity. The US is broken down into thirteen regions based on the occurrence of natural hazards and their frequency. A detailed breakout of the regions can be found in the Appendix. The timing of each event is broken down by month within the year. The severity of each event is categorized as three different intensities. Each of the severity categories is dependent on the hazard for how it is defined.

Available data for each of the hazards allowed for these relationships to be developed easily. Each hazard will be broken down in detail due to the uniqueness of each one. Conditional probability tables for each node and partition can be found in the Appendix.

Hazard Nodes

Hurricane

Hurricanes commonly occur on the Atlantic coast or in the Gulf of Mexico. Therefore, only regions bordering those two bodies of water have a probability of a Hurricane. This allows for a partition on the Region node to separate the regions into states that are susceptible to hurricanes and a state for regions that will not be affected by hurricanes.

Hurricanes are typically categorized by wind speed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Using these categories, the three severity categories for hurricanes are defined as groups of categories. The table below defines the relationship between the severity states and the hurricane categories.

Severity	NOAA Category
Major	CAT 4, CAT 5
Moderate	CAT 2, CAT 3
Minor	Tropical Storm, CAT 1

Hurricanes are unique to the timing during the year. Hurricanes are known to occur during certain months in a year often referred to as the "hurricane season." The hurricane season is defined as starting in June and lasting through December. It is very rare to see one between January and May, therefore a partition was created to help decrease the distributions involved.

The data for the likelihood of a hurricane is based upon those three categories. Each of the partitions helps decrease the amount of data that needed to be collected and entered into the model. The data for hurricane occurrences, strength, and locations came from a combination of data sources including NOAA's website and a program provided by FEMA called HAZUS-MH.

Earthquake

Earthquakes differ from Hurricanes in that any region in the US is susceptible to an earthquake. Therefore, there is no partition that can be used to limit the number of distributions entered into the model by region. In addition, there is no particular time of year that are more common for earthquakes. This allows for the distributions of an earthquake occurrence to be based upon severity and region only. The severity of an earthquake is determined by the United States Geological Society. They use the Richter Scale that measures the magnitude of each earthquake in a logarithmic scale. The table below displays the relationship between the model's severity node and the corresponding measurements on the Richter Scale. The data for earthquake occurrences can be found through either the USGS or HAZUS-MH.

Severity	Richter Scale Magnitude
Major	7 - 10+
Moderate	4 - 7
Minor	1 - 3

Wild Fire and Flood

Wild fires and floods have some shared properties to them regardless of the differences in the actual hazard. Both of these hazards have similar areas of occurrences. Neither hazard is known for occurring within the continental US. Both Alaska and Hawaii are not known for having floods or wild fires. There is no generalization that can be made on timing of either event. Both events are possible to occur throughout the year. Therefore, there needs to be a unique distribution for each month of the year for each hazard. The severity of each of the

hazards is based upon the square mileage of area affected by the hazard. Data for both hazards is collected by NOAA, however HAZUS-MH has information on frequency on floods across the US. Distributions for the likelihood of each hazard is calculated based upon this data.

Winter Storm

Like the hurricane hazard, winter storms are only possible where the weather can get cold enough to sustain the storm long enough to accumulate snow and ice. The partition used for winter storms groups the regions into places with winter events and places that do not have them. Some of these locations are known to have the possibility of having winter events throughout the year. Therefore a partition on the months would not be useful. The data for these events can be found through NOAA's website.

Tornado

Tornadoes are possible in every region in the United States even though they might be very unlikely. Therefore a partition on the region variable is unnecessary. The same can be said about the timing of tornadoes. This results in the likelihood for a tornado to be based upon all twelve months, thirteen regions, and three severities. The data for the tornado occurrences can be found through NOAA's website.

Typhoon

Typhoons are a unique hazard due to the conditions required for the hazard to happen. There is only one region in the United States that has the potential for a typhoon. Given that fact, a partition was used to separate the regions into the twelve regions that are not susceptible to typhoons and Hawaii. Unfortunately for Hawaii, typhoons have a possibility of happening every month during the year. The data to create the probability table for typhoon occurrence came from NOAA's website.

Other

There are several other hazards that are important to FEMA including chemical disasters, terrorist attacks, volcano eruptions, hazardous material situations, landslides and others. Most of these events are very unlikely. For the purpose of this project, what data can be found on these were grouped together into a single node. The data for these hazards came mostly from NOAA.

Personnel Nodes

Personnel Required

Given the information in the hazard nodes, a single node is created on the frequency of each hazard. This is helpful since the data provided by FEMA is aggregated by hazard type. The data ignores the parent information of what time of year the event took place or the severity of the event. Although the data seems limited, a distribution can be made on how many people are required for each type of event. However, the data provided by FEMA is sensitive. For this project, a sanitized dataset is used to illustrate the behavior of the model.

Personnel Available

Similar to the personnel required, information on the data for personnel available is limited. FEMA provided only the personnel counts at the beginning of each month. This data can then be transformed into a distribution of personnel available given the month. Due to the sensitive nature of this information, a representative set of distributions is used.

FEMA's Utility

The goal of this project is ultimately to identify if the correct number of people is employed by FEMA to handle the current situation. One way of determining this is to use a utility node. The utility node determines the current number of personnel available minus the amount required. If this amount of personnel is negative, meaning that FEMA is lacking personnel, the utility will be negative. The complement of this situation is also possible. If the amount of personnel determined in the utility node is positive, then the utility value will be positive. However, there is one consideration that is made. FEMA is concerned with employing too many personnel compared to the amount that is actually required. Therefore there is a penalty associated with having too many personnel available compared to the amount of personnel required. Ideally the function to determine the change in utility would be elicited from management. Due to availability and timing of this project, a simple function was used to imitate the thinking of a typical FEMA manager.

FEMA's Personnel Decision

Using the information from the Utility node, it is expected that FEMA could make a decision on whether to let go of some personnel or hire some more. Netica allows for the decision node to be populated with the utility values for each of the situations. In every case, the proposed best decision on how many people to hire (or fire if that is the case) will be the highest utility value.

Analysis

After several iterations of building nodes and connections, data was entered into the model. The best way to evaluate the efficiency and validity of the sample data was to enter in some test situations. Through these cases, the model should produce some expected solutions. There were two main cases that were evaluated to test the model.

The first case involved testing an extreme case in the model. This case involved having five hazards take place with a minimal amount of people available for support. The expected result is that FEMA would require to hire as many people as possible. In fact, the state of the decision node with the highest utility was not to hire as many people as possible. Given that there were a number of hazards and minimal amount of people available, it was still not that beneficial to hire that many people. It was still beneficial to hire people but not quite as many as was expected.

The second case involved testing the extreme of being during the summer without a hazard taking place. The expected result of the model would be that we would lay off as many people as possible. The results from entering this knowledge is exactly this situation.

Given the results from the two test evaluations, the model seems to be reasonable accurate. However, the model could benefit from some real world data and perhaps some structure learning from the addition of new hazards. The results from the test cases can be found in the Appendix.

Conclusion

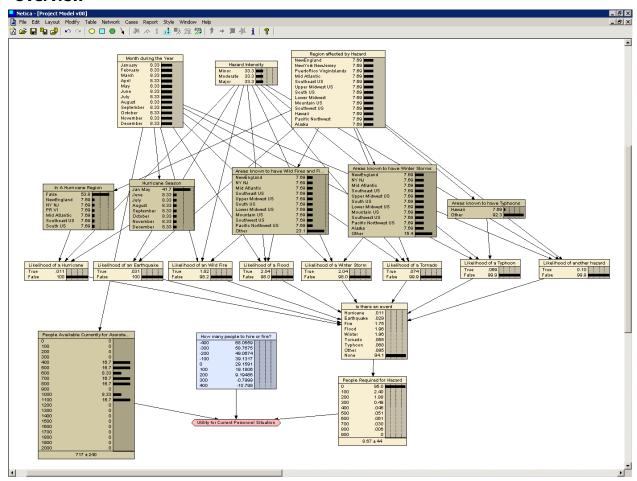
Using a Bayesian Network to determine the correct personnel decisions to make appears to be a viable approach to the problem. The separation of hazards and resources allows the user to concentrate on the area in question. The results can then be easily interpreted given the knowledge entered into the model.

The model can be used for several purposes or by users with different perspectives on the same problems. The intended purpose of the model is to estimate the decision that should be made on how many people to fire or hire given the current situation of amount of hazards and timing of the decision. However, the model can also be used in a predictive manner. A user can input a scenario in which they wish to estimate the amount of people needed given the timing and a specific hazard. The use of Netica allows both situations to be easily configured and entered into the model.

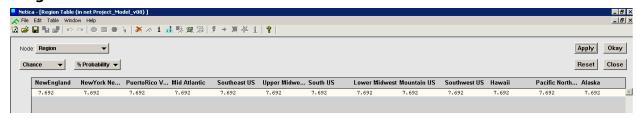
Appendix

Netica Model

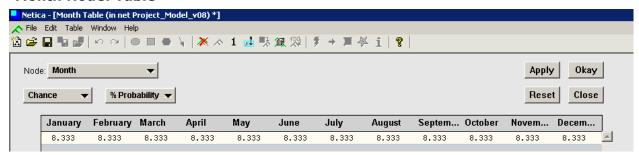
Overview



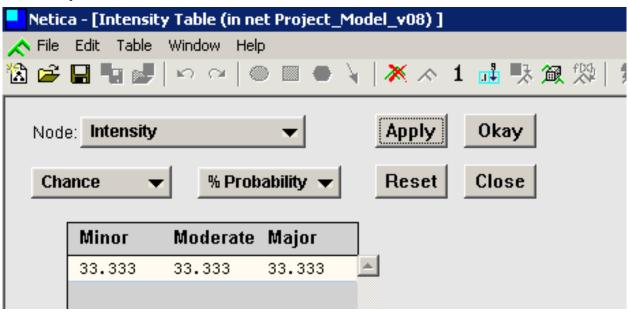
Region Node: Table



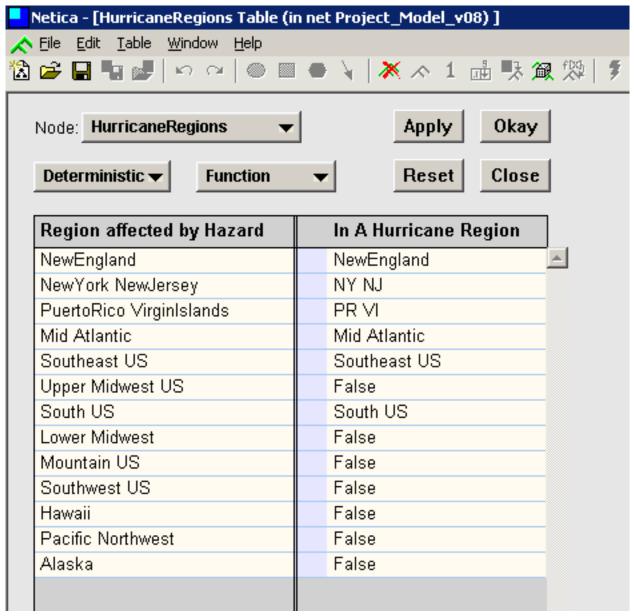
Month Node: Table



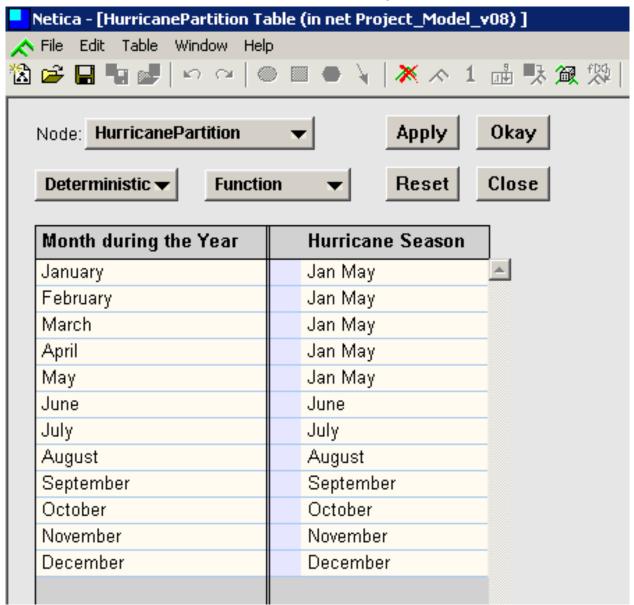
Intensity Node: Table



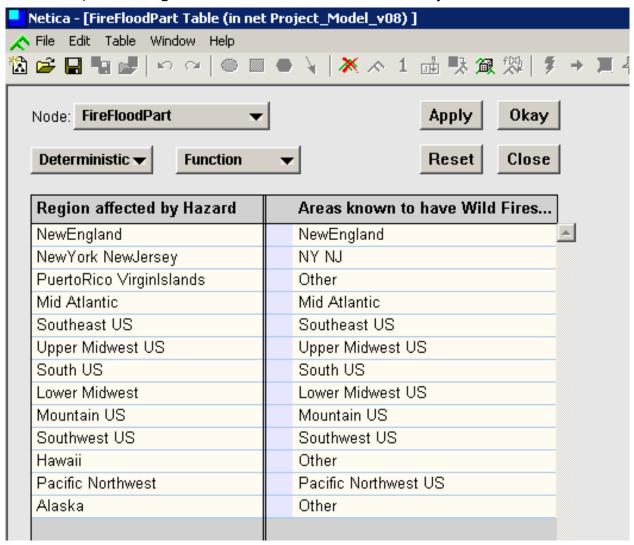
Hurricane Region Partition: Conditional Probability Table



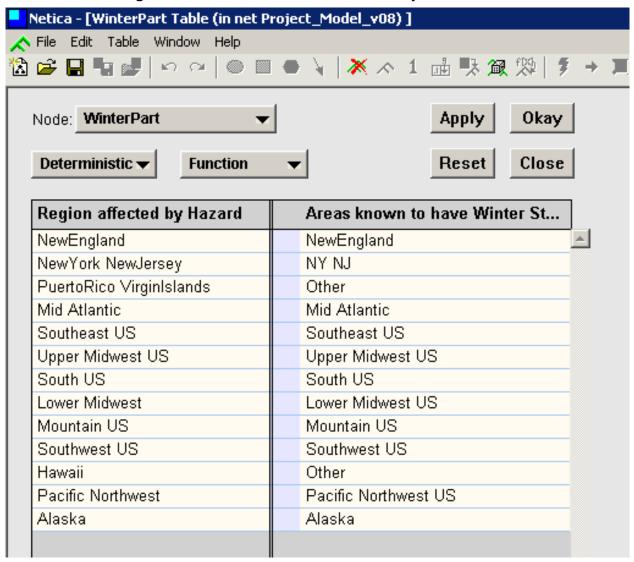
Hurricane Season Partition: Conditional Probability Table



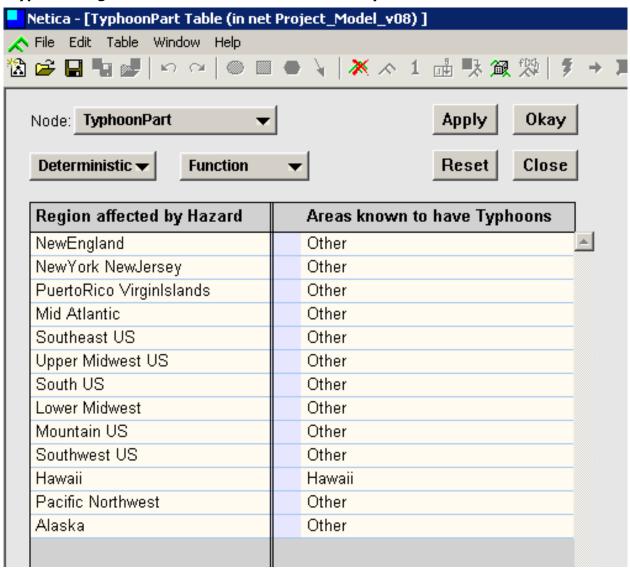
Wild Fire / Flood Region Partition: Conditional Probability Table



Winter Storm Region Partition: Conditional Probability Table



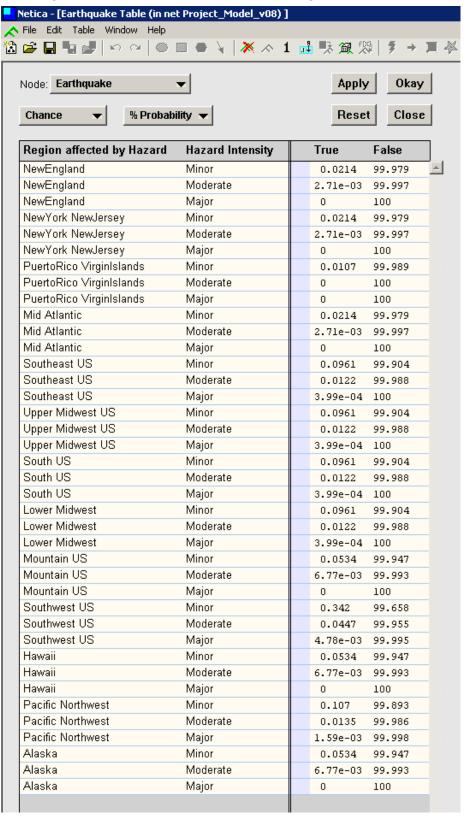
Typhoon Region Partition: Conditional Probability Table



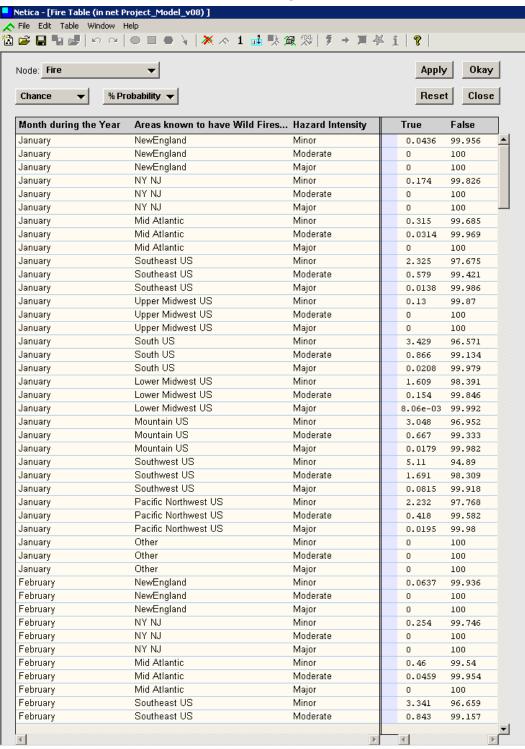
Hurricane Node: Conditional Probability Table



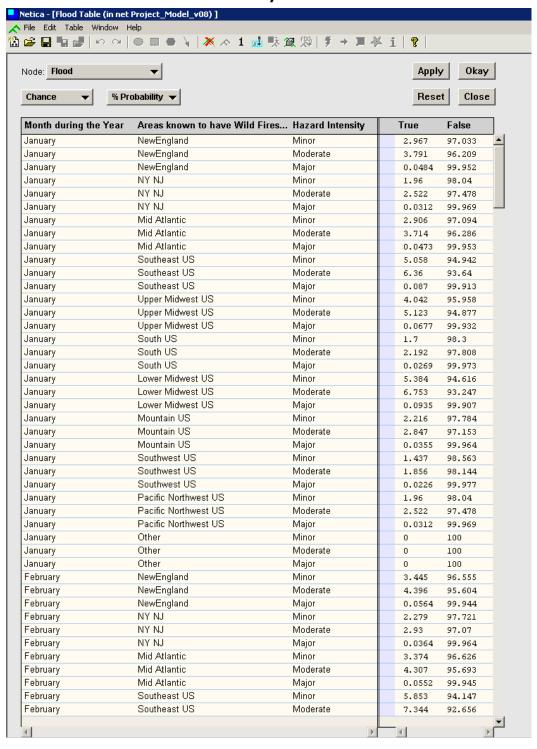
Earthquake Node: Conditional Probability Table



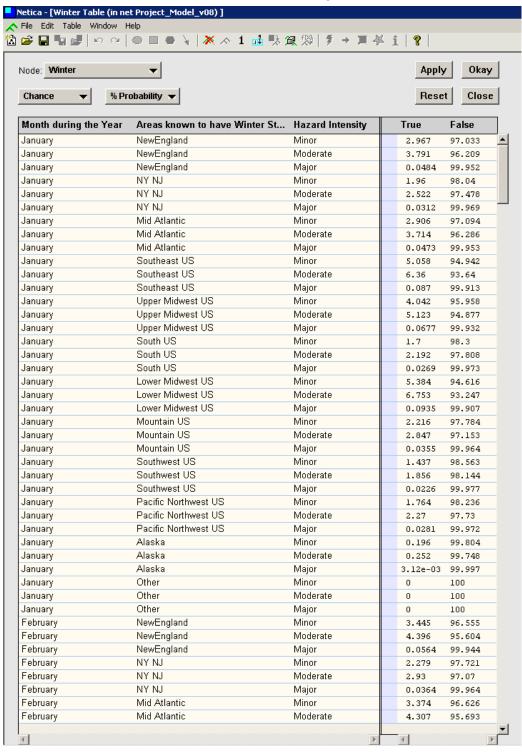
Wild Fire Node: Conditional Probability Table



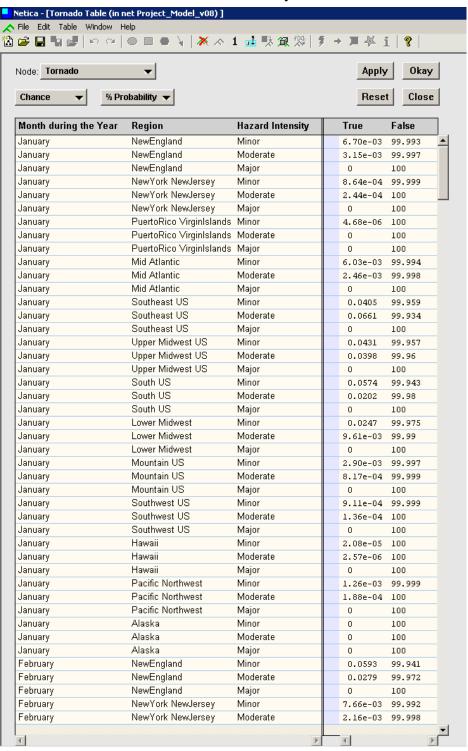
Flood Node: Conditional Probability Table



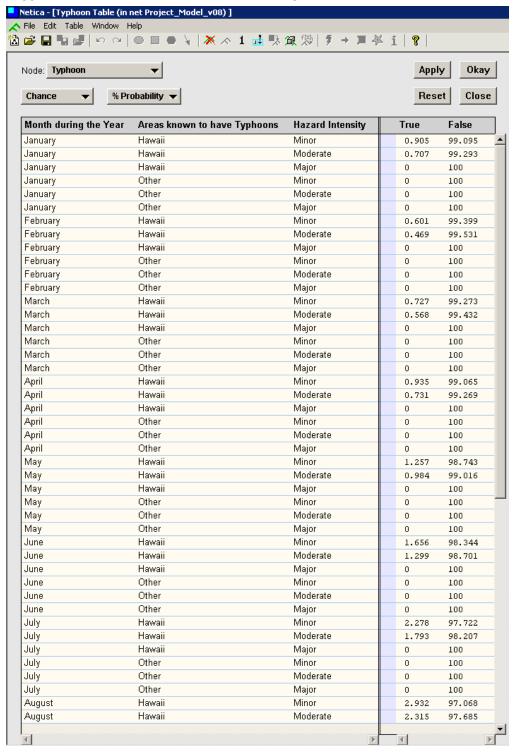
Winter Storm Node: Conditional Probability Table



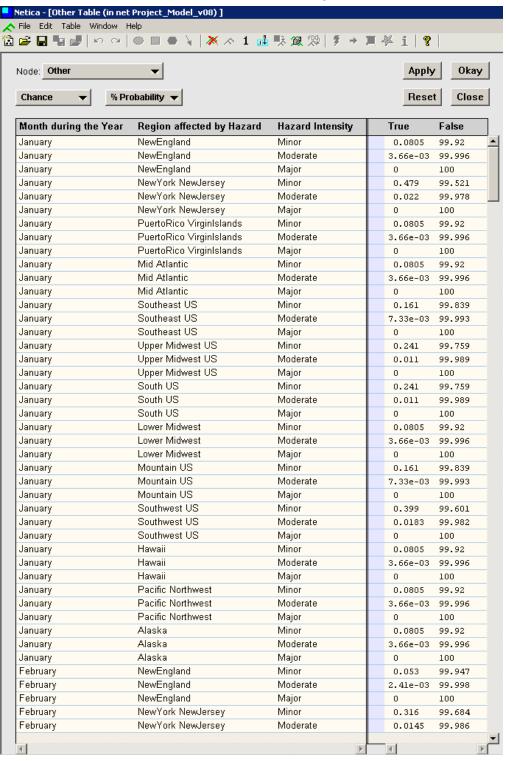
Tornado Node: Conditional Probability Table



Typhoon Node: Conditional Probability Table



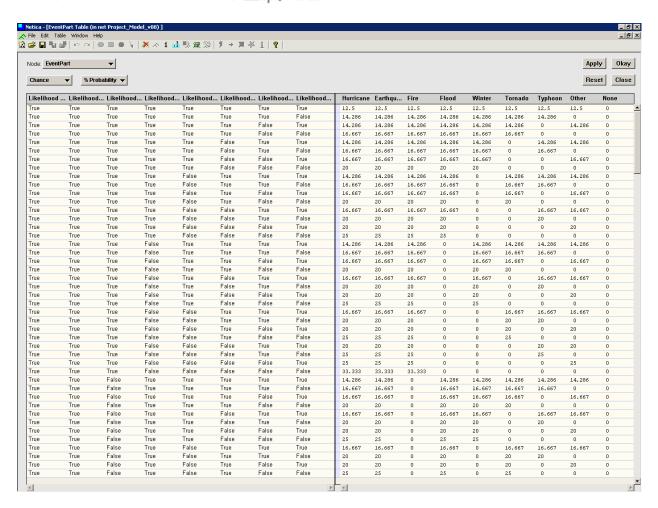
Other Hazard Node: Conditional Probability Table



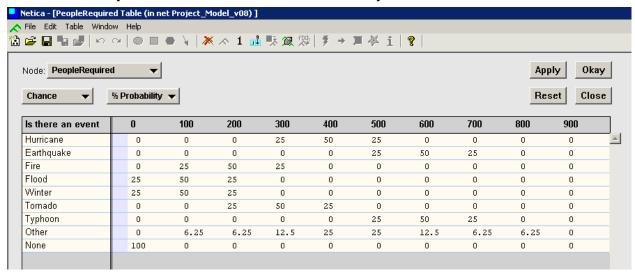
Event Node: Conditional Probability Table

The values in the table take on the general form of the equation below.

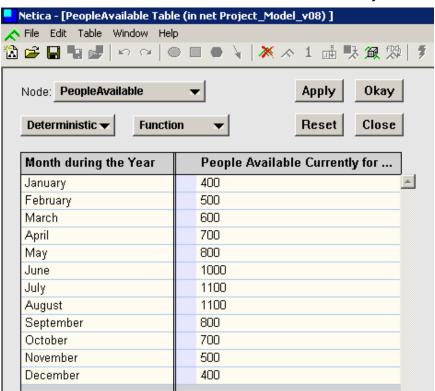
$$\begin{array}{l} h_i\!=\!hazard_i\\ P(h_i|h_j)\!=\!if(h_i\!=\!TRUE,\!1/\sum_{i|h_i=true}\!1,\!0) \end{array}$$



Personnel Required Node: Conditional Probability Table



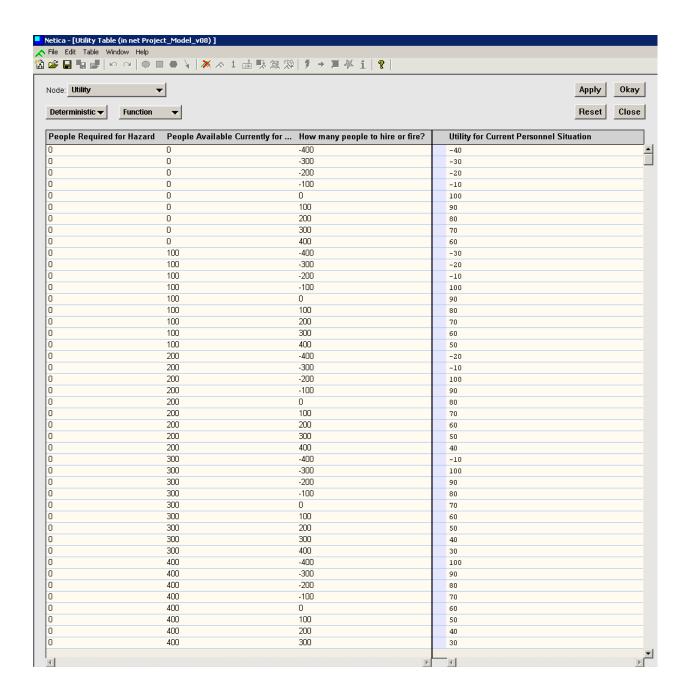
Personnel Available Node: Conditional Probability Table



Utility Node: Conditional Probability Table

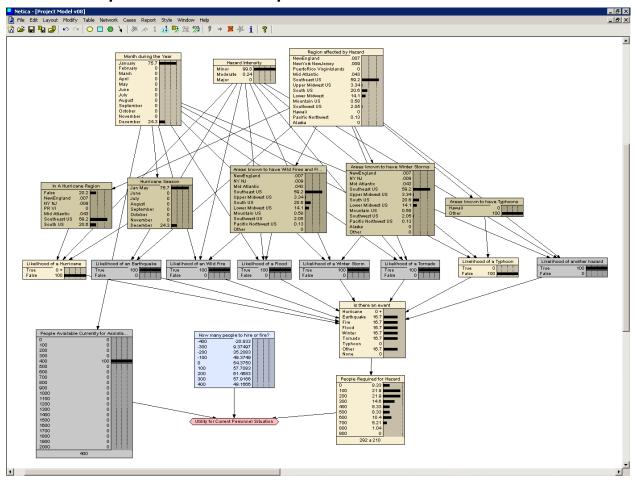
This node is based upon the function of the three inputs. The generalized equation is listed below:

$$\begin{array}{l} x = available - required + hired fired \\ if(x == 0.100, if(x < 0.x \, / \, 10.100 - x \, / \, 10)) \end{array}$$

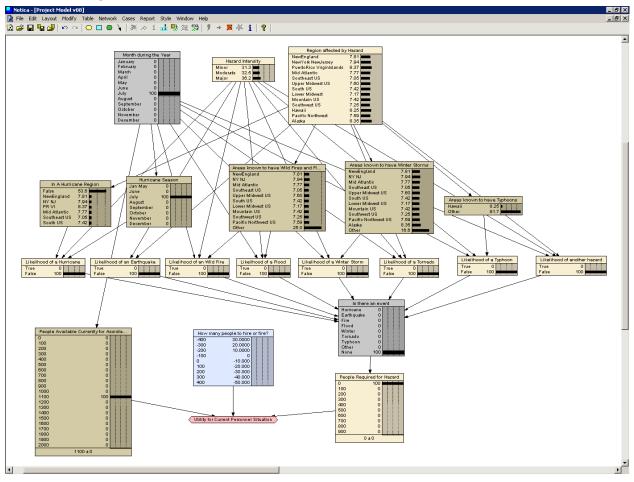


Test Cases for Model Analysis

Case 1: Multiple hazards with little personnel available



Case 2: Busy time with no event



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