# Emergencies and Disasters in Gunnison County

# The Role of the Board of County Commissioners

Gunnison County
COLORADO

UPDATED JANUARY 2019

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## Role of the Board of County Commissioners

The role of the Board of County Commissioners during large-scale emergencies is very important. A few of the critical responsibilities the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) may be faced with during a disaster:

- Approval of incident expenditures exceeding the limit set in Resolution 2015-2, Section E.1.c
- Evaluate policy level decisions
- Meeting with citizens

As a background to the process and structure of managing large disasters in Gunnison County, there are several Resolutions previously passed by the BOCC that current members of the BOCC should be familiar with. These resolutions may be directly or peripherally tied to disaster management, and include:

- 1988-10 (Emergency Management Program)
- 2006-17 (Adoption of National Incident Management System)
- 2007-26 (Authority to Execute Contracts)
- 2008-36 (Emergency Operations Plan)
- 2015-2 (Disaster Management Procedures)

The most important of these resolutions from an incident management perspective is 2015-2(attached).

These resolutions are based wholly or in part on Colorado Revised Statute 24-32-2109 Local Disaster Emergencies, the Colorado Disaster Emergency Act of 1992 (SB 92-36) and the Federal Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistant Act and Amendments.

Gunnison County and all public safety agencies within Gunnison County utilize the **Incident Command System** (ICS) for managing all incidents and events. Further, the ICS, as a part of the **National Incident Management System** (NIMS) has been formally adopted as the incident management system by all jurisdictions and public safety agencies in Gunnison County.
For further information on the Incident Command System please visit:

- http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/AboutNIMS.shtm
- http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is700a.asp
- http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/IS800b.asp

It is recommended that County Commissioners take the online Independent Study Courses listed above, as well as the ICS 402 Course for Elected Officials. The ICS 402 is a two-hour course and is offered regularly throughout the region.

Some important notes about the Incident Command System: When appropriate, the **Incident Commander** (IC) will appoint **Command Staff** positions. All Command Staff positions are critical to the safe and effective management of an incident; however, for purposes of this guide, only two will be discussed here – the **Safety Officer** and the **Public Information Officer**. If an Incident Commander does not appoint these two positions, then the IC is responsible for those duties.

- The Safety Officer reviews and approves/disapproves all operational plans for the incident, and has the authority to shut down an incident's operations or portions of operations should responder health/safety be unduly jeopardized. **Responder health and safety are the primary objectives of all incidents.**
- The Public Information Officer (PIO) is responsible for all press releases and official interaction with the press. The PIO prepares public information and clears it with the Incident Commander prior to release. It is critical that public information is clear, consistent and accurate. As such, BOCC members are discouraged from talking to the press about incident management or operations.

In most instances, incidents are handled on scene at the Incident Command Post (ICP). The ICP is a very busy and somewhat chaotic place, and as such only necessary and authorized personnel are permitted. The ICP is where most decisions are made in regards to operations and managing the incident. Unless specifically invited, elected and appointed officials should refrain from entering the ICP. Even with the best intentions, the unexpected appearance of elected/appointed officials can cause unnecessary distractions for Incident Command Staff, potentially leading to mistakes being made.

**Emergency Operations Center:** Some incidents may be large and/or complex enough to require activation of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The EOC is located in the Public Safety Center.

The primary purpose of the EOC, when activated, is generally in support of the Incident Commander and the ICP. All operational decisions related to the incident are approved by the IC and General Command Staff. Staffing the EOC depends on the type and scale of the incident – and will usually consist of positions similar to that in the ICS structure. Typically, the EOC may be tasked with fulfilling resource orders that are not within the normal mutual aid agreements for the involved agencies, tracking those resources, situation awareness, long-range planning, long-term logistical considerations, financial planning, recovery planning and making emergency notifications to the public.

While the positions and tasks assigned to EOC staff may resemble what is taking place in the ICP, it is important to note that in these situations, the EOC has no role in actual operations or decision making at the incident level. It is important to note that the last phase of any incident – the recovery phase – can be the most time consuming and expensive portion of large disasters.

In rare situations, the EOC may actually serve dual roles: that of an EOC as well as an ICP. Types of situations necessitating this dual role could be a large-scale incident involving a large portion of the County, or multiple smaller incidents, each with an Incident Commander, operating under the Unified Command – meaning that the Unified Command begins prioritizing and allocating resources that may be scarce.

Depending on the type and scale of an incident, or as smaller incidents increase in size and complexity, it may be necessary for the **Board of County Commissioners** (BOCC) to take certain types of **formal action(s)**.

**Declaring an Emergency:** The most critical of these actions would be a resolution declaring an emergency, which would take place when an emergency or disaster is exceeding the County's capabilities in terms of resources and/or finances. The emergency declaration is then communicated to the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. Depending on the type of emergency, a formal declaration may do the following: Activate other County resolutions regarding disaster management; provide access to TABOR reserve; initiate regional and State resource aid; and ensure that required processes and documents are complete should Federal financial aid become available for the disaster.

During an emergency, the Incident Commander or other Command Staff will communicate regularly with the County Manager or their designee in regards to incident status, progress reports, resource needs and projections. The County Manager or their designee will then communicate that information to the BOCC. In some cases, BOCC members may be asked to report to the EOC for decisions regarding expenditures or policy decisions.

Review and familiarity with the Gunnison County **Emergency Operations Plan** (EOP) and supplemental Annexes, Hazard Mitigation Plan, Wildfire Protection Plan and other related documents is also recommended. These documents and discussions with the Gunnison County Emergency Manager can further detail expectations and resources for our area. Participation in the All Hazards Planning Response Committee and other like groups will also help implementation and understanding of the important role that the Board serves to our community before, during and after an incident.

**Incident Management Teams:** Please reference Resolution 2015-2. Section C: Direction and Control, bullet #5: *"In the event that the incident has exceeded (or is expected to exceed) Gunnison County's capacity and capability to effectively respond to and manage the incident, it may be necessary to request operational assistance from an incident management team (IMT). The decision to request an IMT will be made by the Incident Commander and Incident Command Staff. Requests for an IMT should be initiated through the Colorado Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, and will require a written* ***Delegation of Authority****, to be signed by the IMT Incident Commander and appropriate representative(s) from Gunnison County. Depending on the type of incident, signatory authority for the County may be the County department having operational control of the incident. In some cases it may be advisable to have jurisdictions with overlapping operational responsibility (i.e. a fire district) also sign the delegation."*

# Confidential Emergency Contact Information

## Public Safety Agencies – Facilities (Listed Alphabetically)

- City of Gunnison Police Department ..... (970) 641-8000
- City of Gunnison Public Works ..... (970) 641-8020
- Colorado State Patrol (Montrose) ..... (970) 249-4392
- Crested Butte Fire Department ..... (970) 349-5333
- Crested Butte Marshall ..... (970) 349-5321
- Gunnison Airport Admin/ARFF ..... (970) 641-2304
- Gunnison Communications Center ..... (970) 641-8201
- Gunnison County Electric Association ..... (970) 641-3520
- Gunnison County EOC analog line ..... (970) 641-5700
- Gunnison County EOC primary phone ..... (970) 641-7607
- Gunnison County Public Health ..... (970) 641-0209
- Gunnison County Public Works ..... (970) 641-0044
- Gunnison County Sheriff's Office ..... (970) 641-1113
- Gunnison EMS Station ..... (970) 641-7276
- Gunnison Fire Station (staffed during incidents) ..... (970) 641-8030
- Gunnison Valley Health Hospital ..... (970) 641-1456
- Mt. Crested Butte Police Department ..... (970) 349-6516
- WSCU Security ..... (970) 209-8798

## Shelters (Incident Dependent)

* Red Cross Approved Shelters *

- * City of Gunnison Recreation Center .....(970) 641-8060 *
- Crested Butte Community School ..... (970) 641-7720
- Fred Field Western Heritage Center .....(970) 641-8561
- * Gunnison Community School .....(970) 641-7710 *
- * Gunnison High School .....(970) 641-7700 *
- River of Life Fellowship Church..... (970) 641-0864
- * WSCU (contact WSCU Security) .....(970) 209-8798 *

## County Personnel (Listed Alphabetically)

- Airport Director ..... Rick Lamport .....(909) 907-2799
- Assistant to County Manager Katherine Haase .....(970) 275-5208
- BOCC ..... John Messner .....(970) 901-6708
- BOCC ..... Jonathan Houck.....(970) 275-9625
- BOCC ..... Roland Mason..... .....(970) 922-9653
- Community Development ..... Cathie Pagano .....(970) 275-9369
- County Attorney..... David Baumgarten .....(970) 209-4539
- County Manager..... Matthew Birnie .....(970) 901-1928
- Deputy Attorney..... Matt Hoyt..... .....(505) 264-1348
- Deputy County Manager ..... Marlene Crosby .....(970) 209-8825
- Deputy Emergency Manager. Bobbie Lucero .....(970) 640-2443
- Emergency Manager ..... Scott Morrill .....(970) 275-1370
- Facility & Grounds ..... John Cattles .....(970) 275- 0768
- Fairgrounds Manager ..... Melody Roper .....(970) 275-2087
- Finance Director ..... Linda Nienhueser.....(970) 275-0496
- Fleet Manager ..... Lee Partch .....(970) 209-8830
- HHS Director ..... Joni Reynolds.....(303) 903-3467
- HR Director..... Cheryl Seling .....(303) 249-1985
- IT Director..... John Felix .....(970 590-3700
- Public Works Director ..... Marlene Crosby .....(970) 209-8825
- Public Works Director ..... Sparky Casebolt .....(970) 209-7919
- Sheriff ..... John Gallowich.....(970) 209-5806
- Undersheriff..... Scott Jackson .....(970) 209-2585

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**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF GUNNISON, COLORADO**
**RESOLUTION NO. 2015-2**

**A RESOLUTION AMENDING GUNNISON COUNTY EMERGENCY AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND PROCEDURES**

This resolution supersedes Resolution 2008-15.

WHEREAS, on May 8, 2008, the Board of County Commissioners of the County of Gunnison, Colorado approved and adopted Resolution 2008-15, A Resolution Establishing Gunnison County Emergency and Disaster Management and Procedures to provide for the effective direction, control and coordination of Gunnison County government during an emergency or disaster; and

WHEREAS, on June 4, 2013, the Board of County Commissioners of the County of Gunnison, Colorado approved and amended Section D.1.b. of Resolution 2008-15 by Resolution No. 2013-10, and

WHEREAS, the Board desires to amend Resolution 2008-15 to add a new paragraph 5 to Section C. Direction and Control, to include the Delegation of Authority;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Gunnison County, Colorado that Gunnison County adopts the amendments identified in italics to the Gunnison County Emergency and Disaster Management and Procedures and reaffirms all other provisions and amendments thereto, as fully restated below, of Resolution No. 2008-15 as follows:

A. GENERAL OPERATIONS.

1. This plan is based on the concept that emergency functions for various groups involved in Gunnison County government will generally parallel their normal day-to-day functions. To the extent possible, the same personnel and material resources will be employed in both non-emergency and emergency circumstances.

2. In an emergency circumstance, it is desirable, and always attempted, to maintain organizational continuity and to assign familiar tasks to personnel. In large scale disasters, it may be necessary to draw on people's basic capacities and use them in areas of greatest need. Day-to-day functions that do not contribute directly to the emergency operation may be suspended for the duration of any emergency. Personnel and resources that would normally be required of those functions may be redirected to accomplish the emergency task.

3. In keeping with the current strategy of integrated emergency management, this Resolution is concerned with all types of emergency situations that may develop. It also accounts for activities before, during, and after emergency operations.

4. Each department and office has emergency functions in addition to its normal duties. Each department is responsible for developing and maintaining its own procedures and continuity of operations plans. In addition, each department is responsible for maintaining the appropriate level of National Incident Management System/Incident Command System competencies.

B. PHASES OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT.

1. Preparedness. Preparedness activities, programs and systems are those that exist prior to an emergency, and are used to support and enhance response to an emergency or disaster. Planning, training, and exercising are among the activities conducted under this phase.

2. Response. Response is activities and programs designed to address immediate and short-term effects of the onset of an emergency or disaster. It helps to reduce casualties and damage and to speed recovery. Response activities include direction and control, warning, evacuation and other similar operations.

3. Recovery. Recovery is the phase that involves restoring systems to normal. Short-term recovery actions are taken to assess damage and return vital public health, safety and welfare systems to at least minimum operating standards; long-term recovery actions may continue for many years.

4. Mitigation. Mitigation activities are those designed to either prevent the occurrence of an emergency or long-term activities to minimize the potentially adverse effects of an emergency from happening again.

C. DIRECTION AND CONTROL.

1. The Board, consistent with C.R.S. 24-32-2109, Local Disaster Emergencies, identifies the County Manager as the only person with authority to declare a Gunnison County emergency. That declaration shall not be continued or renewed for a period in excess of seven days except by or with the consent of the Board of County Commissioners. In all events, the County Manager shall make all reasonable efforts to convene, by any reasonable methods, a quorum of the Board within 24 hours of the initial declaration of emergency, and shall continue those efforts until a quorum is convened. Any order or proclamation declaring, continuing, or terminating a Gunnison County emergency or disaster shall be given prompt and general publicity and shall be filed promptly with the Gunnison County Clerk and Recorder and with the State of Colorado Division of Emergency Management. Each Gunnison County Department Head and staff shall provide support to and cooperation with the County Manager.

2. a. Until a quorum of the Board has been convened, pursuant to a declaration of emergency by the Gunnison County Manager, the Manager shall have the full legal authority of the Board of County Commissioners. In addition, the County Manager shall have the authority to activate the Gunnison County Emergency Operations Plan and to request assistance from each appropriate entity through the activation of their respective plans.

b. After twenty-four hours has elapsed from the initial declaration of emergency, the succession of authority to act for the Board shall be the following in order:

i. A majority of the Board;
ii. The chairperson;
iii. The vice chairperson;
iv. The third commissioner;
v. County Manager;
vi. Deputy County Manager;
vii. Assistant County Manager
viii. County Attorney

3. A template for a declaration of emergency by the County Manager is attached hereto and incorporated herein as Appendix A.

4. A template for an order, by the Board of County Commissioners, continuing or renewing the Emergency Declaration in excess of seven days is attached hereto and incorporated herein as Appendix B.

*5. In the event that the incident has exceeded (or is expected to exceed) Gunnison County's capacity and capability to effectively respond to and manage the incident, it may be necessary to request operational assistance from an incident management team (IMT). Requests for an IMT should be initiated through the Colorado Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, and will require a written* ***Delegation of Authority****, to be signed by the IMT Incident Commander and the appropriate Gunnison County representative as designated in section D.1 "Succession of Operational Command" in this resolution. In some cases it may be advisable to have jurisdictions with overlapping operational responsibility (i.e. a fire district) also sign the delegation.*

*The Delegation of Authority assigns incident related operational and tactical activities and responsibility for those activities to the IMT. The Delegation should reflect all issues and objectives County leadership determines to be in its best interests, as determined by the County Policy Group, which may consist of, but not limited to, Commissioner(s), County Manger, Finance, Department having operational control etc. The delegation should specifically identify date and time of transfer/delegation. The Incident Commanders (outgoing and incoming) are responsible for ensuring that all involved agencies and personnel are notified of the delegation. The Delegation does not preclude the County from participating in incident planning, nor does it absolve the County of its responsibilities during the incident. Typically, the Delegation will not include IMT management of peripheral incident activities such as management of shelters, evacuations, road closures, donations and volunteers, as these activities usually remain the responsibility of the county.*

*The Delegation is amendable, as incident conditions and strategies change. The Delegation is revocable, should the IMT not perform to the County's expectations. At the conclusion of the incident, or at which time the County determines it has sufficient capacity and capabilities to manage the incident, the IMT shall be released by termination of the Delegation.*

*A template for a Delegation of Authority is attached hereto and incorporated herein as Appendix C.*

D. CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS.

1. Succession of Operational Command.

(a) All authority vested in the County Manager by Resolution No. 1968-10, Resolution No. 2007-26, and any other then current delegation of authority to the County Manager shall be exercised, first, by the County Manager.

(b) The emergency, interim line of succession, in the absence of the County Manager ("Chain of Command"), shall be the Deputy County Manager, Assistant County Manager, then the Public Works Fleet Manager, then the Health and Human Services Director; each of those persons shall have the full authority, in succession, as the County Manager. These emergency, interim successors shall

relinquish such authority as directed by a person higher in the Chain of Command when such person becomes available.

(c) The line of succession in each department is according to the written continuity of operations procedures established by that department.

E. EFFECTS OF DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY.

The effects of an Emergency Declaration shall include but not be limited to:

1. Enhanced County Manager Authority.

(a) Authority to redeploy personnel from normal job duties to assist in emergency response.

(b) Authority to suspend or temporarily alter Personnel Policies;

(c) Increase in contracting authority to $250,000;

(d) Authority to delegate all or a portion of operational authority to Incident Command.

2. Ability to request and authorize assistance from all appropriate entities and individuals (e.g. local elected officials, other local governments, State of Colorado, federal government).

F. PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER.

1. The Incident Commander shall designate a Public Information Officer.

2. If a multi-agency event occurs, or multiple events occur, simultaneously, the Gunnison County Manager or next in chain of command may appoint a County PIO to coordinate with the Incident(s) PIO.

3. Only the designated Public Information Officer is authorized to speak on behalf of Gunnison County.

4. Each Commissioner shall defer to the designated Public Information Officer relative to public announcements.

5. All Gunnison County staff shall defer to the designated Public Information Officer relative to public announcements.

INTRODUCED by Commissioner Houck, seconded by Commissioner Chamberlard, and passed on this 27th day of January, 2015.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF GUNNISON, COLORADO

By _____
Paula Swenson, Chairperson

By _____
Phil Chamberland, Commissioner

By _____
Jonathan Houck, Commissioner

ATTEST:
Deputy County Clerk

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## Definition of Disaster from C.R.S.A. 24-33.5-703:

""**Disaster**" means the occurance or imminent threat of widespread or sever damage, injury, or loss of life property resulting from any natural cauise or cause of human origin, including but not limited to fire, flood, earthquake, wind, storn , wave action, hazardous substance incident, oil spill or other water contamination requiring emergency action to avert danger or damage, volcanic activity, epidemic, air pollution, blight, drought, infestation, explosion, civil disturbances, hostile military or paramilitary action, or a condition of riot, insurrection or invasion exisiting in the state or in any county, city, town, or district in the state."

## Do you and your family have an Emergency Plan?

- How will you communicate?
- Do your family members know what to take?
- Where will you meet?
- Have you gathered extra supplies?
- Are important documents easily accessible?
- Don't forget about pets in emergency planning.
- Have appropriate preparations in place for your family and home will enable you to focus on and fulfill your responsibilities at work during emergecny situations.
- For additional information visit www.readycolorado.com