

Douglas County
All-Hazards
Severe Weather Annex



An Annex of the Douglas County

Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan

2021 –Version 2.0

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Schedule for Review

The Douglas County Office of Emergency Management will complete a comprehensive review of this plan every two (2) years or more frequently if areas of improvement are identified following major incidents or exercises.

Record of Changes

When Changes are made to this plan, the following procedures will be followed:

1. Changes will be issued by the Douglas County Office of Emergency Management (DCOEM) and transmitted to agencies, personnel, and other designees specified by the DCOEM Director.
2. When a change is made, an entry will be made on the following log.

Change Number	Date Entered	Pages or Section Changes	Entered by

I. INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW

It is the responsibility of local government to protect the lives and property of its local citizens (C.R.S. 214-33.5-707). Severe weather is a serious hazard of concern for Douglas County. There is a high likelihood that each year Douglas County may encounter a variety of severe weather incidents.

The Severe Weather Annex describes the necessary steps the County will take to prepare and respond to a severe weather incident. It describes the actions taken by the County's agencies and departments that have been assigned emergency support function roles in the Douglas County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). This annex is meant to be a guide, in that it allows the County to adjust its response based upon the size and scope of the incident.

The type of weather incidents that will be addressed by this annex include winter storms, blizzards, tornadoes, and severe thunderstorms (which may include high winds, hail, lightening & flooding). Effects of severe weather may require one or more additional Plans or Annexes to be activated such as:

- Evacuation, Alert & Warning Annex
- Emergency Sheltering Operations Plan
- Rapid Needs Assessment Annex
- Damage Assessment Annex
- Debris Management Plan
- Recovery Plan

ANNEX ACTIVATION AND TERMINATION

The Severe Weather Annex may be activated by the Director of the Office of Emergency Management or his/her designee, as required, upon identification of an active or imminent emergency incident that may require support, coordination, resources and consequence management.

A disaster through its nature or severity may automatically initiate activation of this Annex. Activation may be in support of a county level emergency, a local jurisdiction or municipal EOC, in support of the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC), or any other incident/mission requiring resource support from Douglas County.

The Douglas County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) outlines procedures intended to help manage and coordinate available resources to safeguard the County's populations during all-hazard emergencies or disaster posing an immediate or potential hazard and/or threat.

During such events, prudent actions required to protect the population may include incident command, emergency managers and/or local officials recommending evacuations, shelter-in-place or road closures.

The Douglas County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) is the Lead Agency for this Severe Weather Annex to the County EOP.

II. PURPOSE & SCOPE

PURPOSE

The purpose of the severe weather annex is to provide for an effective, well-coordinated, efficient response, and recovery in the event of a severe weather emergency occurring within Douglas County. It also provides a basic overview of roles, responsibilities and actions that may be taken in response to these types of incidents. This Annex supplements the Douglas County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) by providing an effective and coordinated response to potential or actual severe weather emergencies.

SCOPE

The Severe Weather Annex supports the Douglas County EOP. This Annex covers all unincorporated areas of Douglas County as well as incorporated cities and towns. It addresses all types of hazardous weather that may impact Douglas County. The annex outlines details associated with severe weather planning, preparedness, response, and recovery. It includes descriptions of the hazards and threats the County is susceptible to and the actions the County will take in the event of a severe weather event or incident. It also identifies the roles, responsibilities, and coordination lines for a severe weather incident. This annex will guide the response to the potential threat and subsequent damage from severe weather including flooding, thunderstorms, high winds, tornadoes, and winter storms.

While each type of severe weather is different in scope, magnitude and complexity, the effect of all of these events can be reduced to:

- High Winds

- High Water
- Snow/Ice
- Temperature Extremes

III. SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS

SITUATION

A disaster or large-scale emergency situation can result from a natural or human-caused occurrence resulting in the loss of life or property. During such a situation, it is the responsibility of local government to protect the lives and property of its citizens.

Douglas county is vulnerable to a variety of severe weather hazards, all of which have the potential for disrupting communities, causing damage, and producing casualties. Primary concerns are, but are not limited to, severe thunderstorms, hail, tornado, wind, winter snow storms and blizzard events.

HAZARD ANALYSIS

SEVERE THUNDERSTORMS

The National Weather Service (NWS) defines a severe thunderstorm as any storm that produces one or more of the following: a tornado, damaging wind speeds of 58 mph (50 knots) or greater, and/or hail 1 inch in diameter or larger. While most severe weather events are limited in terms of their impact, duration, and spatial extent, these hazards remain some of the most common in in Douglas County.

HAIL

As stated in the severe thunderstorm definition above, hail is considered severe when it reaches 1 inch in diameter. Hail can reach sizes much larger than the severe threshold size. While property is typically at greatest risk for hail damage, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) estimates that 24 people are injured from hail each year.

TORNADO

Within Douglas County, tornadoes are most likely to occur in the eastern half of the County but have also historically been recorded west of the I-25 corridor as well as western foothill areas. However, the level of damage from tornadoes have been generally low and the areas of impact are fairly isolated, typically ranging from a few hundred feet to a half-mile across. Tornadoes affect far smaller areas than larger meteorological events such as severe thunderstorms, winter storms and blizzards.

There is no exact season for tornadoes (May 15 to July is the most likely 2-month period); however, most occur within the time period of early spring to middle summer (May to August, between the hours of 2-7pm when thunderstorms are most active).

WIND

Severe thunderstorms in Douglas County have the potential to cause extensive wind damage. Severe winds are defined as having an intensity of 58 mph (50 knots) or greater. Straight-line winds can reach speeds of up to 100 mph and produce damage similar to a tornado and are more likely during spring and summer months and in mid-afternoon to early evening, but can also occur in the fall/winter under certain circumstances absent of snow with winds typically from the W to NW.

WINTER STORM

A winter storm may refer to a combination of winter precipitation, including blowing snow, sleet, freezing rain, etc. Winter storm conditions include an accumulation of at least a half inch of sleet, and/or a significant accumulation (1/4 inch or more) of ice due to freezing rain, and/or heavy snow accumulation. Snow accumulations must be at least 2 inches within a 12-hour period.

BLIZZARD

The NWS defines a blizzard as a severe snowstorm characterized by strong winds causing blowing snow that results in low visibilities. The difference between a blizzard and a snowstorm is the strength of the wind, not the amount of the snow. To be a blizzard, a snow storm must have sustained winds or frequent gusts that are greater than or equal to 35 mph with blowing or drifting snow which reduces visibility to ¼ mile or less and must last for a prolonged period of time – at least three or more hours.

ASSUMPTIONS

- Severe weather-related hazards can occur at any time throughout the year.
- The diverse nature of severe weather poses a challenge to maintaining adequate monitoring of potential threats.

- The fast-moving nature of severe weather, such as thunderstorms, flash floods, snowstorms, ice storms, blizzards and tornadoes require constant monitoring of conditions in order to provide an adequate response.
- Severe weather can cause other conditions, such as power outages or transportation slowdowns that may last well beyond the actual weather event.
- The destructive nature of severe storms makes the total damage threshold difficult to estimate.
- Severe weather tends to be seasonal. Blizzards generally happen from November-March however, Douglas County has experienced blizzards in September and in April. Tornadoes & severe thunderstorms typically happen from April-September but can happen in other months as well.
- Most blizzards and severe thunderstorms are short lived, and recovery occurs within days. However, Douglas County has experienced blizzards that have lasted several days and have caused severe infrastructure damage; and severe thunderstorms that have caused hundreds of millions of dollars of damaged infrastructure from hail and flooding.
- Tornadoes can cut a path of destruction killing or injuring people, destroying infrastructure, businesses and residents.
- Heavy wet snow loads will bring down trees and utility lines, can collapse roofs and other structures, and contribute to ponding or inland flooding. Minor landslides may occur, damaging buildings, roads and utilities.
- The most probable damage is downed trees, blocked roads and driveways, power outages, and localized flooding. Secondary problems will be extended power outages, inability to pump potable water or pump motor fuels, flooding of septic systems, water damage, and resulting mold/mildew health hazards.
- Most citizens will be made aware of the threat of a winter storm through a variety of means, including (but not limited to) the NWS, The Weather Channel and other outlets for weather news, local TV news broadcasts, local newspapers, social media, Emergency Alert System broadcasts, and Wireless Emergency Alerts.
- The Douglas County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) may not be activated when severe weather impacts the County.
- Critical facilities, such as hospitals and nursing homes, will develop and maintain functional contingency plans to protect their residents and to ensure critical workforce continuity of operations.

- The School District will maintain situational awareness concerning changing weather forecasts and make appropriate decisions to close schools.
- Severe weather may impact a large geographic area and may not be limited to just Douglas County or a portion of Douglas County.
- A winter storm event will typically affect multiple counties and possibly span numerous regions throughout the State. The severity of impacts may vary locally due to excessive snow or ice accumulations in certain areas, the presence of vulnerable populations, the location of critical facilities impacted by snow and ice, the location of transportation routes impacted by the severe weather, or the isolation of certain communities.
- Douglas County may utilize mutual aid agreements as a part of its response to a severe weather incident. However, mutual aid partners may also be responding to the same incident within their jurisdiction.
- The EOC will facilitate on-going planning and communications efforts with the private sector utility partners to provide for enhanced coordination and collaboration during a winter weather event.
- Pre-planning of sheltering needs is difficult due to great uncertainty in predicting the location, amount, timing, and impact of winter weather on citizens. The Douglas County Shelter Operations Plan will be activated when it is apparent that severe weather sheltering is needed.
- When large numbers of motorists are stranded in an unexpected storm, private businesses, fire stations, and police stations may open as refuges of last resort. The entity that opens the facility will be responsible for staffing and managing the facility. It is not expected that spontaneous refuges of last resort will have food, water, blankets, or cots; people may be moved to a better equipped shelter as soon as it is feasible and safe to do so.
- Douglas County may request resources from the State as the severe weather incident evolves.
- The impacts of weather events may be severe enough that the County may declare a State of Emergency or make a Disaster Declaration.

IV. AUTHORITIES

This document is an Annex to the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) (R-016-096) as part of the Douglas County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan or CEMP (C.R.S. 24-33.5-707(8)).

For purposes of this section, an “emergency” is defined as:

- Any emergency formally declared by Douglas County, the State of Colorado, or the Federal Government, including storm, and other disaster situations, in which a person’s life is placed at risk.
- Winter storms, blizzards, thunderstorms, high-wind events, tornadoes and other acts of God which place a person’s life at risk.

V. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

The Concept of Operations summarizes the operational response activities of the County and includes the typical operating conditions for a severe weather event. The Severe Weather Annex establishes pre-event protective actions that may be taken by the County to prepare for, respond to and recover from a severe weather event. All activities performed under this annex will conform to the Douglas County Emergency Operations Plan.

The Annex covers a number of severe weather events. They are combined into one annex since severe weather rarely presents a single threat. For example, blizzards and tornadoes are uniquely different events, however they can both produce damage from high winds and create power outages.

Severe Weather operations begins with daily monitoring of the NWS and Skyview Weather forecasts by OEM. On a daily basis, OEM receives a tailored forecast from Skyview Weather which includes a 5-day forecast. OEM also monitors major media outlets, the Emergency Management Weather Information Network (EMWIN) and via direct observation (staff and trained weather spotters). When there is an indication from any of these sources that severe weather is a possibility, OEM closely monitors the weather updates and takes actions accordingly.

INITIAL PROTECTIVE ACTIONS

First responders are responsible for determining initial protective actions before emergency management personnel have an opportunity to convene or EOCs are activated. Initial protective actions should be shared/communicated to OEMs/EOCs and necessary support agencies as soon as possible for situational awareness to ensure an effective, coordinated response.

Initial protective action considerations may include:

- Deployment of trained weather spotters by OEM or Skyview Weather.
- Rapid Needs Assessment
- Shelter-in-place, lockdown or evacuation actions implemented for the following:
 - Critical Infrastructures and Key Resources (CIKR)
 - Schools
 - Healthcare facilities
 - Residents
 - Large workforce facilities
- Examination of how unmet needs of AFN individuals or other special needs individuals has been addressed.
- Any initial protective action occurred for transportation, if necessary.
- Examination of what additional protective actions should be considered, recommended and coordinated with emergency management and identify who else should be involved.

EOC ACTIVATION

In the event of a severe weather event or incident the decision to activate the EOC is made by at least one of the following individuals: the Douglas County Sheriff, Douglas County Commissioner(s), Douglas County Manager, or the Douglas County Director of the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) or their designee.

The EOC will be activated at the appropriate level to support the complexity of the severe weather incident. The level of activation will be determined by the EOC Manager.

- **Level 3 Activation:** The EOC is activated with OEM Staff only. The EOC is opened and staff begins to monitor the incident and assumes basic roles in the EOC. This level of activation is used in the early phases of an incident that has potential to grow large enough to require EOC coordination capability but does not currently require it. The EOC is in a “leaning forward” mode, ready to call in additional staff if the situation escalates.
- **Level 2 Activation:** The incident has grown and requires EOC coordination and support, however not all ESFs are required to manage the incident. The EOC Manager will determine which ESFs will be activated depending on the incident.
- **Level 1 Activation:** The incident has grown to a level of complexity requiring support from most, if not all, ESFs.

BLIZZARD

Blizzards are generally predicted several days in advance which allows OEM the ability to prepare. If a blizzard is predicted, FFESS (Facilities) will be contacted to prepare Kirk Hall at the Fairgrounds. Other partner agencies with shelters will also be contacted depending upon the pattern and severity of the storm. The Red Cross will be contacted to staff facilities. Snowcat availability (Castle Rock Fire and South Metro Fire Rescue) may also be requested. The EOC Team will be queried to determine availability to staff the EOC. The day before the storm, the County Manager is contacted to determine if an early morning (generally 4:30AM) conference call should be scheduled with key leadership to determine if the County should impose a delayed opening or closure. OEM confers with Public Works Operations to determine what the impact may be on roadways. Once the storm has begun, OEM confers with Skyview Weather and Public Works Operations on a regular basis to determine if the EOC should be opened. If the EOC is opened at Level II or I, it is likely that shelters will be opened. The EOC will field requests for information and resources. The EOC will coordinate with the State EOC (SEOC) for greater situational awareness.

TORNADO

Although there is very little notice for a tornado, OEM will generally have a good idea that conditions are conducive to tornado formation. Often severe weather is predicted in advance and a tornado watch will be issued by the NWS. Once a tornado warning is issued, Skyview Weather, major media outlets, NWS and trained weather spotters are used to gather situational awareness as to what areas are impacted by the storm. OEM will coordinate with DHSEM to determine how widespread the damage is. OEM will notify citizens who have signed up in advance in affected areas via our Emergency

Preparedness Network (EPN) through the Douglas Regional Dispatch Center and internal protocols (Douglas County Emergency Response Procedures) for County employees. Once the tornado has landed, OEM will monitor the path in order to anticipate where damage may occur. After the tornado has dissipated, a Rapid Needs Assessment Team will be assembled to do an immediate assessment of the damage. Depending upon the severity, the EOC may be activated. Requests for assistance will be managed by the Douglas Regional Dispatch Center or the EOC (if activated).

SEVERE THUNDERSTORM

Severe thunderstorms may include high winds, hail, lightening & flooding. The potential for severe thunderstorms is generally predicted in the daily forecast. OEM receives information directly from Skyview Weather as these storms begin to form about location, lightening, hail and flash flooding potential. Trained weather spotters may be used to determine flooding issues. Other potential damage will be referred to OEM as information becomes available, generally through the Douglas Regional Dispatch Center. If damage is severe, the EOC may be activated.

VI. ORGANIZATION, ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

ORGANIZATION

Severe and hazardous weather incident response may fall to a wide variety of law enforcement agencies, fire departments, public works departments and private sector utilities. Severe and hazardous weather incident support is provided from municipal and County OEMs and EOCs. Severe weather alert information generally flows from the National Weather Service (NWS) to county agencies, news media, organizations and the general public. Douglas County departments, including OEM also receive localized weather forecasting from Skyview Weather. As possible threats are identified, information on those threats begin to flow in both directions to help further define the threat and to allow better and more detailed warning information to be issued.

As with all incidents, the National Incident Management System (NIMS) will be used to organize weather-related incidents. Depending upon the severity and geographical range of the weather-related incident, the EOC may or may not be activated. One of the peculiarities of weather-related incidents such as a blizzard is that there may not be an Incident Command Post (ICP) in the field because the incident is more global in nature. In these situations, the EOC responds to requests for assistance and information and provides resources as appropriate.

In other weather-related incidents such as a tornado, depending upon the damage, there may be multiple ICPs. Responders in the field will determine the Incident Command System (ICS) organizational structure that will be followed (Single ICP, Unified Command, Area Command). The field ICS component will then coordinate with the EOC.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The following describes the overarching roles and responsibilities of county, municipal, state, federal, non-governmental and volunteer organizations.

Local Jurisdictions

- Each incorporated jurisdiction is responsible for developing severe weather annex as part of its EOP.
- Impacted jurisdictions will be responsible for activating their EOC during an incident and for communicating and coordinating resources with the County EOC.

Douglas County Office of Emergency Management (OEM)/Emergency Operation Center (EOC)

- Responsible for the development, maintenance, and testing of the Douglas County Severe Weather Annex.
- Coordinate disaster planning and operations with the community's emergency response organizations, public utilities, welfare agencies, adjacent jurisdiction emergency management, and the Colorado Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management.
- Activate the EOC when:
 - The need for support for ICP/Field Response becomes apparent.
 - The need for ordering multiple resource becomes apparent.
 - Internal and external communication (including Public Information) coordination becomes critical.
 - The number of agencies or the scale of the event needs overhead support for multiple requirements.
 - Coordination is needed between local, State or Federal Response.
- Activate the necessary staff to support field operations.

- Coordinate and communicate with local municipalities, partners, supporting agencies and the State EOC/DHSEM.
- Coordinate evacuation efforts with local jurisdictions/municipalities that may be affected by the evacuation.
- Direct and coordinate resources in support of evacuation efforts.
- Approve and coordinate release of warnings, instructions, and other emergency public information related to the evacuation effort.
- Contact American Red Cross (ARC) for potential and confirmed evacuation and shelter needs of displaced populations.
- Contact the DCART for potential and confirmed evacuation and shelter needs of companion animals and backyard, non-commercial livestock.
- Report situation and damage assessments to Colorado DHSEM.
- Activate the Reentry Plan
- Maintain expenditure records to facilitate reimbursement.
- Coordinate and maintain files of all initial assessment reports.
- Coordinate the development of after-action reports.
- Request mutual aid assistance from other OEMs.
- Provide mutual aid to municipal OEMs through the EOC Operations Section.

Douglas County Sheriff's Office

- During an evacuation effort, the designated County Evacuation lead is the Sheriff's Office.
- Procurement and allocation of resources will be accomplished by the Sheriff's Office and Public works in conjunction with EOC Logistics if the EOC is activated.

- Provide Public Information Officers/Joint Information Center (JIC) personnel to ICP and EOC
 - Provide evacuation notification and advisory to unsafe areas
 - Ensure that the public is informed about the identification required for reentry
 - Ensure that the public is notified once reentry begins
 - Convey information regarding disaster sheltering – locations, animals, etc.
- Coordinate evacuation of people and animals to safe areas with other agencies.
- Monitor road conditions and report traffic flows and counts.
- Search evacuated areas to ensure that all people have received warnings.
- Provide initial field situation reports, size-ups, aerial surveys and updates from field units.
- Coordinate transportation resources to assist in the evacuation of individuals with disabilities and other with access and functional needs.
- Provide traffic control measures for evacuation efforts.
- Provide law enforcement, crowd control and security measures at transportation points, evacuation points and mass care facilities.
- Enforce curfews within unincorporated areas, if required.
- Provide security and access control to evacuated areas.
- Establish traffic control and other measures to permit Reentry into the impacted areas/communities.
- Request mutual aid assistance from other law enforcement agencies.
- Provide mutual aid to municipal law enforcement through the EOC Operations Section.

Douglas County Regional Communications Center/MetCom Communications Center

- Issue initial CodeRED, EAS, WEA, IPAWS alerts/notifications for pre-evacuations and evacuations based on requests from Incident Command.
- Communicate with other Communications Centers as needed.
- Responding to initial public request for evacuation information and assistance.
- Dispatching of emergency transportation services for evacuees requesting assistance.
- Responsible for collecting, documenting, ordering and tracking resources as requested by the IC until those tasks are transferred to the EOC.

Douglas County Government

- Provide overall direction and control through the Director of the Office of Emergency Management (OEM).
- Issue State of Emergency or Disaster Declarations as recommended by the Director of OEM.
- Request assistance from and through the state when it necessary or desirable to protect the public health, safety, or welfare.
- Establish mutual aid agreements, memoranda of understanding, contracts and other relationships, if indicated, to maintain departmental emergency activities.
- Provide provisions for the support of local municipalities, unincorporated portions of the county, public shelters (general population and medical), critical facilities, county staging areas.
- Develop procedures to assist in the logistical management of alert, warning, and evacuation of citizens.

Douglas County Public Works

- At the direction of law enforcement, open and close county roads.

- Provide signage as necessary.
- Support emergency egress and ingress by directing debris removal in unincorporated areas.

Fire Agencies/Districts

- Assist Incident Command in determining the evacuation area.
- Assist with evacuation efforts and medical response.
- Coordinate rescue operations.
- Provide fire protection, suppression and hazardous materials response in affected areas.
- Provide search and rescue in affected areas at the direction of law enforcement.
- Support public safety in evacuation execution.
- Assist Incident Command in determining if the evacuation area is safe for reentry.

Douglas County Search and Rescue

- Provide search and rescue in affected areas at the direction of law enforcement.

Animal Control

- Direct emergency animal control operations during a disaster in unincorporated areas.
- Develop and implement a system to identify and track animals rescued during a disaster.
- Coordinate the transportation of animals to animal care/emergency animal shelters as requested.
- Clear any dangerous at-large animals from impacted area prior to re-entry of citizens.

Douglas County Animal Response Team (DCART)

- Coordinate care and emergency shelter provisions for evacuated household pets, non-commercial backyard livestock and service animals.

Tri-County Health Department

- Provide health assessments of the affected area and provide guidance on the following:
 - Asbestos
 - Household Hazardous Waste
 - Water Quality Standards
 - Potable Drinking Water
 - Safe Clean-up
 - PPE
 - Tetanus and First Aid Guidance
 - Food Safety Guidance
 - Infectious Diseases
- Provide support to Emergency Shelter Facilities
 - Facility Inspections
 - Medical Staffing
 - Behavioral Health
 - Other ESF 8 – Public Health Functions as outline in the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)

Colorado State Patrol (CSP)

- Monitor traffic conditions on state and federal highways and report information to the County EOC.

Colorado Department of Transportation

- At the direction of law enforcement, open and close state roads and highways.
- Provide signage as needed.
- Support emergency egress and ingress by directing debris removal from state roads and highways.

VII. COMMAND AND CONTROL

Basic command and control of a severe weather incident in the County will follow the provisions outlined in the Douglas County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). All jurisdictions within the County will operate according to National Incident Management System (NIMS) and respond utilizing the Incident Management System (ICS).

Response to an emergency or disaster is managed at the lowest level possible. Accordingly, local governments have the primary responsibility for severe weather response activities and should develop individual plans or annexes in coordination with their respective EOPs. NIMS and ICS dictate that response to any incident is initiated by local resources. If the event escalates beyond the capability of the local jurisdiction or expands to affect multiple jurisdictions, then County, State, and possibly Federal resources will be requested through mutual aid systems, EMAC or the National Response Framework (NRF).

Any large-scale response to an incident will be coordinated through Incident Command (although in a severe weather event an ICP in the field may not be established), local law enforcement and fire agencies and the EOC. It is critical that local jurisdictional EOCs coordinate in large-scale incident with the County EOC in order to avoid potential conflicts, support appropriate allocation of resources and allow the County EOC to provide support if necessary.

BLIZZARD

Since blizzards tend to be more regional in nature and generally do not have ICPs in the field, the control and coordination occurs in the EOC. The EOC will also coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions. Requests will be directed from responders in the field to the appropriate Section Chief or ESF in the EOC. Resources will be ordered through the Logistics Section Chief to ensure single point ordering. The EOC PIO will coordinate with other agency PIOs and the media using traditional news releases, social media and website updates. Regular updates will be obtained from Skyview Weather and the National Weather Service. If shelters are opened, FFESS, shelter partner agencies, the Red Cross and ARES will be contacted to provide staffing. OEM will coordinate with the FFESS to transport the Shelter Trailers (including the Red Cross Trailer) where needed. Cots, blankets, food and water are available at each of the shelters. Additional supplies can be requested through the EOC. If a Policy Group is activated, the EOC will coordinate information through the Policy Group Liaison. OEM will post updates on WEBEOC and will coordinate with the SEOC for additional resources. Information will be shared with CDEM through WEBEOC, conference calls and other forms of electronic media.

TORNADO

Once a tornado has touched down, OEM will gather intelligence through Skyview Weather, NWS, trained Weather Spotters, reports from the field and through the media. A rapid needs assessment will be performed if the damage appears to be extensive. The EOC will be activated at the appropriate level and will coordinate with responders in the field and infrastructure partners. Tornado's tend to damage infrastructure (buildings and utilities). Because of this damage pattern, there may be multiple ICPs. The EOC will prioritize requests and fill these requests as appropriate through the Logistics Section. In the event that the damage is widespread, a Damage Assessment will be completed. A Policy Group will be activated and the EOC will coordinate information through the Policy Group Liaison. The EOC may be open for multiple operational periods until the County transitions into Recovery.

SEVERE THUNDERSTORM

Severe thunderstorms may include high winds, hail, lightening & flooding. As severe thunderstorms move in, OEM will gather intelligence through Skyview Weather, NWS, trained Weather Spotters and reports from the field and through the media. Of particular concern with thunderstorms are fires and injuries caused by lightening, flooding and damage caused by

hail. Fires will involve coordinating with the appropriate fire department and response will vary depending upon whether the fire is structural or wildland.

Flash flooding caused by thunderstorms generally follows predictable patterns. Depending upon the Skyview Weather forecast, trained Weather Spotters will be deployed to provide reports back to OEM. Typical areas of concern are: Deckers (including the YMCA Camp, Cherry Creek (particularly Castlewood Canyon), Plum Creek (particularly Sedalia and Louviers). OEM will coordinate with Public Works if flooding occurs and streets are impacted.

VII. INFORMATION COLLECTION AND DISSEMINATION

During a severe weather response effort, the Douglas County EOC will utilize information provided by the incident commander and/or Unified Command, and local jurisdictional EOCs to support a response within the County.

Situational Awareness is crucial to an effective and successful evacuation. The County EOC will coordinate with first responders, local jurisdictional EOCs, and other supporting agencies to gather incident-related information. Information including but not limited to the type of incident, where it occurred, when it occurred, estimates of injuries, fatalities, and damage estimates are all factors that are relevant to a severe weather incident. Situational awareness also includes identifying if there are any facilities (schools, hospitals, etc.) in the affected/hazard area, jurisdictions that need to be evacuated, estimates on number of evacuees, and potential transportation and sheltering solutions. The County EOC can support local jurisdictions in obtaining incident information and provide recommendations regarding a severe weather response and/or evacuation of the local jurisdiction. The County EOC is responsible for supporting the direction of response in the unincorporated area.

IX. COMMUNICATIONS

Effective, interoperable, reliable, timely, and redundant communications and information management are essential to a successful evacuation effort. Communications considerations include the initial evacuation notification to the public, inter-jurisdictional and intra-agency communication, situation report updates, real-time communication updates to evacuees, and communications to individuals and others with access and functional needs.

Inter-Jurisdictional and Intra-Agency

Inter-jurisdictional and intra-agency coordination will be conducted through the ICPs, County EOC, and local jurisdictional EOCs utilizing available communication equipment and infrastructure and using established protocols.

Agency liaisons may be present in the County EOC and in impacted local jurisdictional EOCs to facilitate communication between agency operation centers. Situational awareness will be supported through data-sharing systems such as MS Teams, WebEOC, C-COP or other systems to expedite the transfer of information regarding the status of the incident.

Emergency Public Information, Notification and Communications

Effective, accessible, and informative notifications to the public is critical in convincing individuals to evacuate or to shelter-in-place.

Critical information needed for individuals to make appropriate evacuation decisions include:

- Why they need to evacuate or shelter-in-place
- How long they will need to do so
- Location of transportation and evacuation points
- Availability and location of shelters
- How pets will be accommodated
- How to secure their homes and businesses
- Level of security that will be provided to their homes and businesses while evacuated
- During school hours – reliable information on how parents can be reunified with their children

Public notification methods will include CodeRED, EAS, WEA, IPAWS, social media, and local media through television, radio and internet. It is expected that the majority of evacuation advisories will be based on a “no-notice” or “short-notice” incident. Without proper information, the public may evacuate toward a hazard, putting them in greater danger, or may evacuate unnecessarily and create additional congestion along identified evacuation routes.

Updates must be communicated to evacuees, including location of transportation, evacuation points, evacuation routes, road and area closures, traffic conditions and shelter locations. Other essential information includes security measures, ongoing weather conditions, and any changes to evacuations plans.

PIOs or the JIC is responsible for providing informational updates to the public and to the media. Depending on the duration of the evacuation, communication methods may vary from the onset of the evacuation to the conclusion of the evacuation. Therefore, it is important that the public is aware how they can access updated information for the duration of the incident.

X. ADMINISTRATION, FINANCE AND LOGISTICS

Special districts are considered local jurisdictions. As such, they are included in the emergency planning efforts and considerations throughout the County. Mutual aid, including personnel, supplies, and equipment is provided in accordance with mutual aid agreements.

The private sector is an important part of emergency planning and support. Businesses and industry own or have access to substantial response and support resources. Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) provide valuable resources before, during and after a disaster. The resources of CBOs and NGOs for a disaster event should be coordinated through EOC Logistics in order to assure that all resources and financial decisions and impacts can be comprehensively managed and tracked in a standardized, orderly and efficient manner.

XI. ANNEX DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

The Severe Weather Annex is designed to be the principal source for guidance concerning severe weather incidents in Douglas County.

The Douglas County Office of Emergency Management is responsible for developing and maintaining this Severe Weather Annex.

This annex is a product of the Douglas County Office of Emergency Management and serves as an annex of the Douglas County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). As such the policies, procedures and practices outlined in the County EOP govern this annex. OEM coordinates the maintenance and updates of this annex as necessary on a schedule deemed appropriate by the OEM Director. An update of this annex may or may not coincide with the maintenance and update schedule of the EOP. Record of changes, approval, and dissemination of the County EOP will also apply to this annex.

Updates to this annex can be made independently to updates to the EOP for multiple reasons, including but not limited to changes in policy/procedure, improvements and recommendations based on real life events, exercises, etc., or required changes or additions to local evacuation map information. In addition, evacuation procedures are ever-changing as new technology, resources, best practices, lessons learned, etc. are updated and included in this annex.

XII. ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT 1 – NWS WATCH/WARNING/ADVISORY DEFINITIONS

WINTER STORM WATCH

A Winter Storm Watch is issued when there is the potential for significant and hazardous winter weather within 48 hours. It does not mean that significant and hazardous winter weather will occur...it only means it is possible.

Significant and hazardous winter weather is defined as a combination of:

- 1) 5 inches or more of snow/sleet within a 12-hour period **or** 7 inches or more of snow/sleet within a 24-hour period
AND/OR
- 2) Enough ice accumulation to cause damage to trees or powerlines.
AND/OR
- 3) a life threatening or damaging combination of snow and/or ice accumulation with wind.

BLIZZARD WARNING

A Blizzard Warning means that the following conditions are occurring or expected within the next 12 to 18 hours.

- 1) Snow and/or blowing snow reducing visibility to 1/4 mile or less for 3 hours or longer
AND
- 2) Sustained winds of 35 mph or greater or frequent gusts to 35 mph or greater.

There is no temperature requirement that must be met to achieve blizzard conditions. Also, snow does not have to be falling for a blizzard warning.

WINTER STORM WARNING

A Winter Storm Warning is issued when a significant combination of hazardous winter weather is occurring or imminent.

Significant and hazardous winter weather is defined as a combination of:

- 1) 5 inches or more of snow/sleet within a 12-hour period **or** 7 inches or more of snow/sleet within a 24-hour period
AND/OR
 - 2) Enough ice accumulation to cause damage to trees or powerlines.
AND/OR
 - 3) a life threatening or damaging combination of snow and/or ice accumulation with wind.
-

ICE STORM WARNING

¼ inch or more of ice accumulation.

WINTER WEATHER ADVISORY

A Winter Weather Advisory will be issued for any amount of freezing rain, or when 2 to 4 inches of snow (alone or in combination with sleet and freezing rain), is expected to cause a significant inconvenience, but not serious enough to warrant a warning.

HIGH WIND WATCH

A High Wind Watch is issued when the following conditions are possible:

- 1) sustained winds of 40 mph or higher for one hour or more
- OR
- 2) wind gusts of 58 mph or higher for any duration.
-

HIGH WIND WARNING

A High Wind Warning is issued when the following conditions are expected:

- 1) sustained winds of 40 mph or higher for one hour or more
- OR
-

- 2) wind gusts of 58 mph or higher for any duration.
-

WIND ADVISORY

A Wind Advisory is issued when the following conditions are expected:

- 1) sustained winds of 31 to 39 mph for an hour or more.

AND/OR

- 2) wind gusts of 46 to 57 mph for any duration.
-

SEVERE THUNDERSTORM WATCH

A Severe Thunderstorm Watch is issued when severe thunderstorms are possible in and near the watch area. It does not mean that they will occur. It only means they are possible.

Severe thunderstorms are defined as follows:

- 1) Winds of 58 mph or higher

AND/OR

- 2) Hail 1 inch in diameter or larger.
-

SEVERE THUNDERSTORM WARNING

A Severe Thunderstorm Warning is issued when severe thunderstorms are occurring or imminent in the warning area.

Severe thunderstorms are defined as follows:

- 1) Winds of 58 mph or higher

AND/OR

- 2) Hail 1 inch in diameter or larger.
-

TORNADO WATCH

A Tornado Watch is issued when severe thunderstorms and tornadoes are possible in and near the watch area. It does not mean that they will occur. It only means they are possible. A tornado watch also implies Severe Thunderstorms are possible.

TORNADO WARNING

A Tornado Warning is issued when a tornado is imminent as detected by NWS Doppler Radar indications or occurring. When a tornado warning is issued, seek safe shelter immediately.

ATTACHMENT 2 – ACRONYMS

ARC – American Red Cross

CBO – Community Based Organization

C-COP – County Common Operating Picture (GIS Tool)

D-CART – Douglas County Animal Response Team

DHSEM – Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (Colorado)

EAS – Emergency Alert System

EOC – Emergency Operations Center

EOP – Emergency Operations Plan

EPN – Emergency Preparedness Network

FFESS – Fleet, Facilities & Emergency Support Services

ICP – Incident Command Post

ICS – Incident Command System

IPAWS – Integrated Public Alert & Warning System

JIC – Joint Information Center

NGO – Non-governmental Organization

NOAA – National Oceanic and Aeronautical Administration

NWS – National Weather Service

OEM – Office of Emergency Management

SEOC – State Emergency Operations Center

WEA – Weather Emergency Alert

WEBEOC – State of Colorado Situational Awareness and Resource Ordering System