

**HIGHLANDS RANCH
METRO DISTRICTS**

**EMERGENCY
OPERATIONS
PLAN**

October, 2003

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EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT POLICIES

As an unincorporated community in Douglas County, Highlands Ranch receives many of its services from Douglas County Government. These services include police and emergency response services through the Douglas County Sheriff's Office and Douglas County Public Works. As metropolitan districts created to serve the residents of Highlands Ranch, Metro Districts No.'s 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 provide services to the extent authorized in the Service Plan for each District. The District's are responsible for Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services and provide these services through a contract with the City of Littleton.

With respect to emergency disaster response, the Metropolitan Districts' role is one of support and providing resources as requested by the primary response agencies before, during and after major emergencies and disaster events that affect areas within the boundaries of the District.

The Incident Command System (ICS) is the adopted method and organizational structure for managing emergency response operations in the field, usually at the scene of an emergency. In larger incidents, the ICS structure will be extended and supported by the activation of the Highlands Ranch Emergency Operations Center (EOC) (located at the Metro District's Administrative Offices, 62 W. Plaza Drive) or the Alternate EOC (located at the Parks Service Center at Redstone Park). The EOC will be staffed to serve as the coordination point for supplemental resources and intergovernmental assistance.

1.2 Concept of Operation

Disasters and large-scale emergencies are rarely confined to one jurisdiction. Therefore, a multi-jurisdictional effort will be required to effectively manage most major incidents. Accordingly, emergency plans and exercises should consider procedures for the integration of the resources of the District, surrounding communities, Douglas County, Arapahoe County, Jefferson County, volunteer agencies, the business sector and the State and Federal governments.

1.3 Chain of Command

If the District General Manager is not present during an emergency situation, the authority and responsibilities of the District Manager will be assumed by the senior ranking public official available and able to do so. The Chain of Command, in order, is:

District General Manager
Director of Parks & Open Space
Director of Public Works
Director of Finance
Manager of Park Operations
Manager of Development Engineering

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS

The functions outlined in this section are common emergency operations in most disaster incidents, regardless of the type of incident (flooding or tornado). Some of these functions may be exercised in the field using ICS measures in place and in response to specific resource requests from Incident Commanders.

2.1 Warning

In some cases, there may be advance warning of an impending disaster. (i.e. heavy rain producing flooding along the South Platte River). However, generally, there will only be a short time to put out a warning (Tornado Warning), or no time at all (train wreck, explosion, etc.).

In these cases, the Douglas County Communication Center will alert the appropriate District officials using telephones, pagers and the other communication tools available to them. The Center is a 24/7 operation that, generally, will receive the first alert of an emergency or impending emergency.

Uniformed law enforcement personnel are responsible for warning the citizens and for conducting emergency evacuations, if necessary, and providing for security and traffic control measures with the assistance of fire and emergency medical personnel, if available. For some emergencies, Fire Department and Public Agency vehicles may also be used to warn the citizens.

2.2 Communications

In large-scale emergencies and disasters, a coordinated response depends on the ability of emergency agencies and personnel to communicate with each other, regardless of location. The challenge to communications systems in a disaster is to handle emergency radio traffic and a large influx of telephone communications in such a way as to not overload any of the communications systems. Each agency will use its own radio system. Experience has shown that the use of cellular phones may be limited because of overload of their systems. Thus, radio and landline communications become imperative, if available.

2.3 Direction and Control

The overall direction and control of a disaster will, generally, be determined by the nature of the incident –

- Douglas County Emergency Services Coordinator for severe natural disasters.
- Senior fire personnel for any incident in their primary response spectrum – i.e. fire emergency, emergency medical incident, etc.
- District General Manager and staff for incidents involving District property or facilities and to assist with response to a major disaster or multiple incidents – i.e. local flooding, major winter storm, etc.

Requests for mutual aid assistance and supplemental assistance from other cities, Counties, State and Federal agencies will be made if local resources are limited or must be expanded.

2.4 Incident Command System

The Incident Command System is a predetermined flexible command structure for safely directing all of the emergency response activities at the scene of an emergency in situations that go beyond routine, single-agency response.

The Incident Commander (IC) is the individual responsible for overall management of an emergency event.

2.5 Emergency Operations Center

The EOC is the facility designated as a central location for coordinating emergency management activities in support of Incident Command forces in the field. The EOC, in most situations, is staffed by representatives with authority to direct the use of their respective resources and representatives from communications, industrial and volunteer agencies.

The severity of an incident dictates the level or degree of emergency response and the need for the activation of the EOC. The following emergency condition levels provide a Standardized Classification System for use by personnel in identifying appropriate response and resource mobilization levels.

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| Mode (Level) 1 | Single, routine incident or one responding agency or a single incident requiring limited mutual aid and/or multiple response agencies. |
| Mode (Level) 2 | Single or multiple incidents requiring full mobilization of local or regional resources and at least a partial activation of the EOC. |

- Mode (Level) 3 A disaster which exceeds local and regional resources, requiring state and/or Federal assistance with full activation of the EOC.

- Mode (Level) 4 An area wide disaster with full command and control from a Regional EOC – with the Incident Commander functioning out of the EOC.

At this time, the EOC for Highlands Ranch is the Metro District Offices on Plaza Drive. The Alternate EOC is located at the Parks Service Center at Redstone Park. In the event that there is a widespread power outage, the designated EOC will be the Joseph B. Blake Water Treatment Plant, which has auxiliary power.

2.6 Emergency Public Information

The objective of emergency public information is to provide timely, accurate and comprehensive information about an emergency situation to the public and to the news media. Emergency public information can include general information about an incident, including a summary of governmental response actions and the projected duration of the emergency, as well as specific information and instructions regarding street closures, shelter locations, hazardous areas to avoid, or where to call for additional information.

3.0 SPECIFIC EMERGENCY RESPONSES

The primary response agencies, Douglas County Sheriff and Littleton Fire Department, are responsible for initial response and assessment of any situation. If requested, District personnel will support the primary response agencies as directed.

3.1 Flooding

There are no large bodies of water on Highlands Ranch with the exception of stormwater detention areas that are typically dry. The probability of an embankment failure involving these detention areas that would release large amounts of water along various gulches, causing major flooding and damage, is unlikely. The response would be the same as a flood as outlined below.

The release of water would constitute a major hazard to life, general health and property from the point of release at the north edge of Highlands Ranch and would impact heavily on Littleton, Centennial, and other cities to the North.

If early warning of a potential incident is necessary, the condition will be determined as follows –

FLOOD WATCH. Severe upstream or local flooding results from an isolated thunderstorm, rain, snow or general rain. One or more of the detention areas may be threatened by the flooding.

FLOOD WARNING. Embankment is partially or totally failing when the condition is discovered – failure cannot be prevented. (Overtopping, sudden increase in seepage, serious earthquake damage, large down-stream slope slides, serious piping through embankments, etc.)

FLOODING UNDERWAY. Heavy rains or failure of embankment have resulted in flooding. Homes and property may not be immediately threatened but potential exists.

Drainage channels (including flood plains) within Highlands Ranch are clearly defined and no residential or commercial development has been permitted within these areas. Flooding as a result of excessive rainfall could however exceed the limits of a 100-year storm and therefore present a hazard to life, general health and property. This effect could also continue north into Arapahoe County, Littleton and Centennial. In an extreme situation, flooding within Dad Clark Gulch could affect McLellan Reservoir, which is a key component of the community's water supply.

3.1.1 Warning

Warnings will be issued by the National Weather Service through broadcasts on police and fire units.

3.1.2 Security & Evacuation

If the flooding occurs along drainageways, trails heading into the flooded area should be closed and staff assigned to enforce closure. Additional staff shall enter the flooded area to look for victims in the flood zone. If flooding occurs in populated areas, perimeter security should be established. An outer perimeter to stop traffic on all access roads and a flexible inner perimeter along the boundaries of the floodwater. Personnel on the inner perimeter should be searching for victims in the flood zone.

3.1.3 Condition Assessment

Staff should be assigned to continually assess the status of flooding (is it rising or receding). Key bottlenecks, such as culverts across major roadways should be frequently checked to determine if debris may be obstructing culverts, which could create potential to overtop the road.

3.1.4 Recovery and Restoration

When the flooding has subsided, crews shall conduct a thorough inspection of all areas impacted by the event. Particular attention should be directed to all trail crossings, bridges, and culverts across roadways. Any significant erosion or degradation of the

facilities should be noted for repair. Inspections should also be conducted on steep slopes along drainage ways and outlets from storm drain systems into the Open Space. In the event any damage may present a safety risk to the public, the area should be secured with the appropriate barrier such as fencing until the area can be stabilized.

3.2 Earthquake

An earthquake in the area would produce two extraordinary conditions. (1) Probable widespread damage. (2) Probable lack of outside support from surrounding communities. As a result, few specific guidelines can be developed for this type of situation. People normally staffing the EOC should make every effort to respond – bringing food and extra clothing. Since there will probably be no specific incident area, command of the situation should be from the EOC or Alternate EOC from the start.

3.2.4 Initial Response

- Contact key staff and use ANY District personnel who can respond.
- Check communications facilities to determine what is working.
- If phones are in operation, establish a “hot line” for citizen information.
- Announce location of emergency care and relocation sites that are established.

3.2.5 Damage Assessment

Assign crews to conduct a thorough inspection of all areas impacted by the event. Particular attention should be directed to all District facilities that involve structures such as park shelters, bridges, and restrooms. Any significant damage should be noted for repair. In the event any damage presents a safety risk to the public, the area should be secured with the appropriate barrier such as fencing until the structure can be stabilized.

3.3 Major Summer Storm

Summer storms typically result in short term problems such as local flooding, wind and hail damage. District staff response should follow the procedures established for flooding and tornados.

3.4 Tornado

The Denver Metro area has numerous tornado watches each spring and summer. Police, Fire, Public Service and Emergency Planning personnel watch from different locations around the community with no activation of the EOC.

3.4.1 Warning

- In the event of severe thunderstorm or tornado warning, notify key personnel of condition.

- Contact field crews to advise of condition, possibly recall units if conditions merit.
- If a tornado is sighted, it should be reported to the Douglas County Sheriff with the location of the reporter and the direction of the tornado from that location.
- In the event of touchdown on Highlands Ranch, the EOC will be activated and key personnel contacted.

3.4.2 Damage Assessment

Assign crews to conduct a thorough inspection of all areas impacted by the event. Particular attention should be directed to all District facilities that involve structures such as park shelters, bridges, and restrooms. Any significant damage should be noted for repair. In the event any damage presents a safety risk to the public, the area should be secured with the appropriate barrier such as fencing until the structure can be stabilized.

3.5 Blizzard

While some major snowstorms are predicted, Colorado's Front Range has a reputation for producing major blizzards out of storms anticipated to be normal. Some steps can be taken in advance of a forecasted storm, however, continual monitoring perhaps over several days by several staff members is necessary to determine when to respond.

3.5.1 Warning

When a winter storm is forecasted with snowfall in excess of 12" in Highlands Ranch, the chain of command will be notified of the potential storm. Additional personnel may be contacted based on the judgment of the officials in the chain of command.

3.5.2 Pre-Storm Preparation

- Start calls for 4-wheel drive and over snow vehicles
- Contact the Amateur Radio Emergency Service for additional communication systems
- Contact contractors with heavy equipment to establish availability. Possibly have equipment moved to most accessible site that has direct access to arterial roadway system.
- Check supplies such as fuel and food at the Parks Service Center to assure adequate supplies

3.5.3 Response During Event

- Douglas County Public Works is responsible for snow plowing of all public roadways in Highlands Ranch. The role of the Metro District is to provide snow removal for emergency facilities (fire stations), District facilities, and

assist with efforts at community facilities such as HRCA Recreation Centers and schools as requested.

- As storm progresses, General Manager and Director of Parks and Open Space will assess the accumulation and rate of snowfall in order to decide when to deploy crews for snow removal.

3.6 Wildland Fire

Several wildland fires occur (typically grass fires) throughout the year in Highlands Ranch. Almost all are contained immediately and do not escape initial attack. Periods of low humidity, lack of precipitation, and high winds provide ideal conditions for ignition. Preventative measures, such as mowing of prairie grasses adjacent to populated areas, reduce the potential for damage to personal property. Coordination with local fire agencies to determine appropriate access routes and identify sources of water should be established by the Open Space Department and updated annually.

3.6.1 Staff Response During Fire

Specific employees of the Parks and Open Space Department have been trained to fight wildland fires and have been certified accordingly. These individuals are available to assist fire department personnel upon request. Upon notification of a fire on District property, the Manager of Open Space or their designee may direct on duty, certified personnel to the site to assist the responding fire department personnel. Direction of field operations shall be the responsibility of the supervisory fire department official on site.

Additional personnel may also be assigned on site to secure perimeter and prevent public access into fire area.

3.6.2 Recovery and Restoration

Upon conclusion of wildfire suppression operation, Open Space Staff shall initiate a damage assessment of the affected area. This assessment shall include measurement of the burn area, inventory of any damaged or destroyed facilities and evaluation of any public risk in use of the area. Any areas that present a risk to the public should have access restricted until the damage has been mitigated. This assessment is important in order to develop a restoration plan as well as documentation for possible outside funding from State or Federal Sources. Large burn areas and areas near streams will require an erosion control plan that can be prepared by the District's Public Works Staff in order to mitigate contamination of local waterways. Long-term restoration plans should be developed and implemented as soon as weather and conditions allow.

Pagers for On-Call Staff			
	Primary	Secondary	Third
Parks	634-8042	509-7809	509-4696
Parkways	634-8042	508-7656	509-4696
CWSD	686-6398	686-6399	686-6389
Redstone	559-8723	510-8214	509-3202

Metro Districts	Phone	Fax	Centennial	Phone	Fax
Service Center	791-2710	791-3047	CWSD WTP	791-2789	791-6549
DOB-Downstairs	791-0430	791-3290	CWSD WWTP	791-7182	791-8395
DOB-Upstairs		791-0437	CWSD Cust. Service	791-2185 x 545	

