

## Annex D – Evacuation and Public Safety

### Purpose

This annex describes the provisions that have been made to ensure the safe and orderly evacuation/sheltering-in-place of people threatened by the hazards the jurisdiction faces including:

- Evacuation options and timing;
- Special exclusion zones for a specific hazard (e.g., downwind and crosswind areas for chemical plants; areas subject to flooding, etc.);
- Evacuation routes; and
- Transportation resources to support mass evacuation.

The overall responsible parties for implementing and amending this annex are the Sheriff's Office and the Emergency Management Director.

### STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

<sup>(41, 60)</sup>[Evacuation](#) of any part of Houston County can potentially mean evacuation is necessary for those with access and functional needs. This can include disabled or assisted living, institutionalized, and other such people. Pets can also be an important part of evacuation, because people who have pets may be less inclined to evacuate without them; therefore, it's important to plan for the evacuation process of pets as well.

- a. Populations with access and functional needs will be evacuated by pre-set plans with other family members or relatives, caregivers, or with the assistance of responders if there is knowledge of the need prior to the need for evacuation. During an evacuation, it may not be possible for responders to evacuate such populations unless there has been prior planning to assist the populations in evacuating.
  - i. The main assisted living facilities in the county are located in Caledonia, Spring Grove, Houston, and La Crescent. There are currently approximately 7 assisted living facilities in the county. In addition to this, there are nursing homes throughout the county as well.
- b. There is currently one county jail in Houston County, located in Caledonia. In the event that an evacuation is necessary, the correction officers and Sheriff's Office will coordinate an evacuation.
- c. The majority of pets that will be evacuated will be evacuated with their respective families. It is the responsibility of the families to have the necessary equipment (leashes, kennels/cages, collars, food) to evacuate their pets with. However, if necessary and with enough warning time, there is a cache of pet supplies located in the southeast Minnesota region 1 that may become available to the county.

## Situation and Assumptions

### Situation

- Limited evacuation of specific geographic areas might be needed as a result of a hazardous materials transportation accident, major fire, natural gas leak, or localized flash flooding.
- Large-scale evacuation could be required in the event of a major hazardous materials spill, terrorist attack with chemical agent, or extensive flooding.
- <sup>[42]</sup>The primary evacuation method in Houston County is by road. Houston County has many state highways going through the county in various directions, including 44, 76, 16, and 26. These state highways are primary evacuation routes within the county. Secondary evacuation routes include other city and county roads. These are further detailed on the ArcGIS Collector Map.

### ASSUMPTIONS

- Most people at risk will evacuate when local officials recommend that they do so. A general estimate is 80 percent of those at risk will comply when local officials direct an evacuation. The proportion of the population that will evacuate typically increases as a threat becomes more obvious to the public or increases in severity.
- Some individuals will refuse to evacuate, regardless of the threat.
- When there is sufficient warning of a significant threat, many individuals who are not at risk will evacuate.
- Evacuation planning for known hazard areas can and should be done in advance.
- While some emergencies are slow to develop, others occur without warning. Hence, there may be time for deliberate evacuation planning or an evacuation may have to be conducted with minimal preparation time. In the case of short notice evacuations, there may be little time to obtain personnel and equipment from external sources to support evacuation operations.
- The need to evacuate may become evident during the day or at night and there could be little control over the evacuation start time.
- In most emergency situations, the majority of evacuees will seek shelter with relatives or friends or in commercial accommodations rather than in public shelter facilities.
- Most evacuees will use their personal vehicles to evacuate; however, transportation may need to be provided for evacuees without personal vehicles or who have access and functional needs.
- When confronting a major disaster or catastrophic incident, it may be necessary to employ all modes of transportation to include state and/or federal assistance to effectively evacuate our population.

## CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

### General

Evacuation is one means of protecting the public by moving people away from a hazard. In planning for an evacuation, the characteristics of the hazard and its magnitude, intensity, speed of onset, and anticipated duration are all significant factors. These will determine the number of people needing to be evacuated, the distance people must be moved to ensure their safety, the need for reception facilities, and the extent of traffic control and security required.

The county and each municipality must be prepared to conduct both small-scale and large-scale evacuations at all times of the day both from known hazard areas and from unexpected incident locations. A General Evacuation Checklist, provided in Attachment 1, has been developed to guide the execution of evacuation operations.

### <sup>(59)</sup>Evacuation & Shelter-in-Place Decisions

Evacuation directives should be issued only where a clear and immediate threat to the health and safety of the population or responders exists. Evacuation directives are designed to remove all occupants from a specific area within a specified time by pre-designated routes.

The Incident Commander or, for large-scale evacuations, the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) will assess the need for evacuation, plan evacuations, and coordinate support for the evacuation effort. Not all emergencies will require evacuation. Careful evaluation of the situation is critical before initiating an evacuation. A number of factors must be considered when deciding whether or how to evacuate an incident scene to include:

- The nature of the hazardous material, condition, or threat (if applicable)
- Weather conditions, wind speed and direction, drainage
- Location of the incident scene
- Density of the population, housing and businesses involved, and nature of the affected location
- Traffic patterns and routes of egress from the affected area
- Means of transportation for stranded persons or those with access and functional needs
- Suitable locations for providing temporary shelter of displaced persons
- Hazards associated with evacuating versus not evacuating

Evacuation planning should resolve the following questions:

- What areas or facilities are at risk and should be evacuated?
- How will the public be advised of what to do?
- What do evacuees need to take with them?
- What travel routes should be used by evacuees?
- What transportation support is needed?
- What assistance will the access and functional needs population require?

- What traffic control is needed?
- Does the anticipated duration of the evacuation make it necessary to activate shelter and mass care facilities?
- How will evacuated areas be secured?

Evacuations that must be conducted because of incidents that occur without warning may have to be planned quickly and carried out with only those resources that can be mobilized rapidly.

The decision to recommend an evacuation or sheltering in place of the populace in and around the area of an incident site rests with the Incident Commander managing the incident. In general, the County Commissioner Chair and/or city Mayor will issue the order for large-scale evacuations. The shelter-in-place notification can be lifted by the Incident Commander managing the incident, the Emergency Operations Center, or a member of law enforcement who has the facts to make the determination.

### Transportation

#### *Individuals*

It is anticipated that the primary means of evacuation for most individuals will be personal automobiles. There are those without personal automobiles as well as others who may need assistance in evacuating. Provisions should be made to furnish public transportation during an emergency evacuation. Public schools normally maintain transportation resources, and private schools and day care centers may also have limited transportation assets. Local public schools and bus companies will be contacted by the Logistics Chief to assist in the event an evacuation is needed. Individual cities may have evacuation transportation procedures already in place for municipal evacuations.

#### *Facilities Addressing Access and Functional Needs*

Most facilities providing for access and functional needs rely on commercial or contract transportation companies for their specialized transportation needs. Unfortunately, many of these providers cannot provide sufficient equipment to evacuate a sizeable facility on short notice. Hence, local responders may be requested to assist in providing transport.

Emergency transportation may be provided by school buses, rural transportation system buses, ambulances, and other vehicles. In the case of large-scale evacuations with advance warning, pickup points may be designated or a telephone bank established to receive and process requests for transportation.

Public information messages emphasizing the need for citizens to help their neighbors who lack transportation or need assistance can significantly reduce requirements for public transportation during an evacuation.

### *Schools & Day Care Centers*

If schools are affected during the school day, they have buses to transport children; however, these resources may be stretched if all students have to evacuate at once. Day care centers and private schools will also most likely need assistance to evacuate.

If evacuation of public schools is required, students will normally be transported on school buses to other schools outside of the risk area, where they can be picked up by their parents. It is essential that the public be provided timely information on these arrangements. In the case of a large-scale incident with advance warning, schools will generally be closed and students returned to their homes so they can evacuate with their families. The primary agencies will work with schools within Houston County in order to have a plan in place for evacuating schools.

### *Correctional Facilities*

If evacuation of these facilities is required, inmates should be transported, with appropriate medical or security support, to a comparable facility. The facility operator is responsible for arranging for suitable transportation and coordinating use of appropriate host facilities. In the case of short-notice or no-notice incidents, facilities may be unable to make the required arrangements for transportation and may need assistance from local government with transportation and in identifying suitable reception facilities.

Registered sex offenders and prisoners should not be housed in shelter and mass care facilities with the public.

### [\[38\]](#) *Traffic Control*

Actual evacuation movement will be controlled by local law enforcement agencies. When possible, two-way traffic will be maintained on all evacuation routes to allow continued access for emergency vehicles. For large-scale evacuations when time permits, traffic control devices, such as signs and barricades, will be provided by the Highway Department or City Public Works Department upon request.

Law enforcement will request wrecker services when needed to clear disabled vehicles from evacuation routes.

### [\[39\]](#) *Security & Protection*

Security of affected areas, including disaster sites, shelters, and other needed centers, will be provided by or coordinated by the agency in charge of said centers.

- a) Perimeter control of disaster affected areas will be primarily provided by the local law enforcement jurisdiction with secondary assistance provided by the Houston County Sheriff's Office. Supplemental perimeter control can be provided by other law enforcement agencies and the Sheriff's Posse as available.
- b) Shelter security will be provided by the jurisdiction or agency in charge of the shelter. If a local city is in charge of a shelter, local law enforcement will provide security as able with assistance by the Sheriff's Office, Sheriff's Posse, and mutual aid partners. If the

American Red Cross is in charge of the shelter, they have requested the Sheriff's Office be in charge of all shelter security as needed.

- c) Family Assistance Center security will be provided by the Houston County Sheriff's Office and Sheriff's Posse, with supplemental assistance by mutual aid partners. Some security may be provided by members of the Houston County Health & Human Services Department as required.
- d) Security for mass prophylaxis sites in Houston County will be provided by the Houston County Sheriff's Office, to include security of transportation of vaccines/pills to and from the facility, security at the facility, and security of home deliveries by authorized personnel.

### Warning & Public Information

#### *Advance Notice of Possible Evacuation*

For slow, developing incidents, advance warning should be given to affected residents as soon as it is clear evacuation may be required. Such advance notice is normally disseminated through the media. Advance warning should address suitable preparedness actions, such as securing property, assembling disaster supplies, fueling vehicles, and identifying evacuation routes.

Advance warning should be made to access and functional needs facilities in a threatened evacuation area as early as possible. Facility staff should also report their periodic status and any requirements for assistance to the EOC.

The access and functional needs population should also be given advance notice. Notifying and preparing this segment of the population for evacuation will likely require additional time and resources. Any special circumstances or requests for assistance should be reported to on-scene authorities or EOC.

#### *Evacuation Warning*

In the case of immediate evacuation in and around an incident site, siren and speaker-equipped vehicles moving through the affected area is usually effective. When possible, two vehicles should be employed—the first to get the attention of the people and a second will deliver the evacuation message. Door-to-door notification should be considered for large buildings and in rural areas where residences may be some distance from the road.

Access and functional needs facilities may be notified directly by on-scene authorities or by the EOC staff. However, if both the incident command staff and the EOC will be making notifications, a specific division of responsibilities for notification should be made so that no facilities are inadvertently overlooked.

Law enforcement personnel with the assistance of local fire department personnel should sweep the evacuation area to insure all those at risk have been advised of the need to evacuate and have responded. Persons who refuse to evacuate will be left until all others have been warned and then, time permitting, further efforts may be made to persuade these individuals to leave.

Amplifying instructions for an evacuation may include information on the location of shelter and mass care facilities, specific evacuation routes, guidance on securing their homes, and the need for evacuees to take certain items with them during an evacuation. When school children are evacuated, parents need timely information on where to pick them up.

When the incident that generated the need for evacuation is resolved, evacuees must be advised when it is safe to return to their homes and businesses.

#### *Refusal to Evacuate*

In some instances, people will decline to leave the evacuation area even when advised of the evacuation order. People may not be evacuated against their will. Persons who refuse evacuations should be warned that the refusal to evacuate may be hazardous or lethal to those remaining in the threat area. Regardless of the method of evacuation used, all refusals should be logged, so that there will be a record of what addresses may have remained occupied following the evacuation. This information should be given to the Incident Commander and the EOC. Also, if time permits, the name and contact information of the next of kin of those refusing to evacuate should be obtained.

Access and functional needs facilities and correctional facilities are responsible for the welfare and safety of their students, clients, patients, and inmates. Virtually all of these facilities are required to maintain an emergency plan that includes provisions for an emergency evacuation; however to effectively implement those plans, they must be warned of impending emergencies.

#### [Handling Pets During Evacuations](#)

*See Annex R, Animal Protection, for further information.*

#### [Post-Evacuation Procedures](#)

##### *Roadblocks*

Once the area is evacuated, roadblocks should be put into place to prevent outsiders and any nonessential personnel from entering or reentering the evacuation zone.

##### *Search*

When the evacuation is complete, the evacuated area should be searched for persons who are injured or have otherwise been left behind.

Injured persons should be moved from the incident area and conveyed to a location where they can receive medical attention. If it is known or suspected that the incident involves radiological, chemical, or biological substances, then during the process of moving the victim's precautions should be taken to minimize contamination of the rescue personnel. These precautions may include the donning of protective gear by officers, if such gear is not already being worn, and the limiting of direct physical contact with the victims. If it is known or suspected that the incident involves radiological, chemical, or biological substances, responding hospitals should be notified that the incoming patients may be contaminated with a hazardous substance or may have contracted a communicable disease.

### *Mass Care Facilities*

It is estimated that approximately 20 percent of an evacuated population will require shelter at a mass care facility. Although evacuation shelters are normally intended only for temporary use, under certain disaster conditions it may be necessary for evacuees to remain in the shelters for some time.

### *Status reports to the public*

Offering regular status reports to the public through media and press briefings will assist in keeping all concerned entities aware of the status of the incident.

### *Inquiries from concerned persons*

In many instances, concerned relatives and friends may come to the scene or otherwise attempt to obtain information of persons missing during the emergency. A plan for dealing with these inquiries should be developed prior to the occurrence of any incident, and initiated when an incident occurs, and maintained after the conclusion of the emergency for as long as is necessary.

### *Investigation*

Once the evacuation is complete and the site is deemed no longer to pose any immediate threat, investigative teams should be sent in to determine and evaluate the cause of the threat, if the cause is not already known or the extent of the damage. Any hazardous materials discovered during this inquiry should be dealt with in an appropriate manner. This investigative process, and the disposal of any hazardous materials found, should be done in cooperation with other local, state, and federal agencies.

### *Re-Entry*

If an evacuated area has sustained damage and cannot be reoccupied for an extended period of time, it may be desirable to implement a permit system to limit access to emergency workers, homeowners, business owners, utility workers, and contractors restoring damaged structures and removing debris.

The following conditions should prevail in the evacuated area before evacuees are authorized to return:

- The threat prompting the evacuation has been resolved or subsided
- Sufficient debris has been removed to permit travel and roads and bridges are safe to use
- Downed power lines have been removed; ruptured gas, water, and sewer lines have been repaired; and other significant safety hazards have been eliminated. However, utility services may not be fully restored
- Structures have been inspected and deemed safe for occupancy
- Adequate water is available for firefighting



For return and re-entry, it may be necessary to provide transportation for those who lack vehicles. Traffic control along return routes may also be required by local law enforcement, the Sheriff's Office, or mutual aid law enforcement.

Public information intended for returnees should address such issues as:

- Documenting damage for insurance purposes
- Caution in reactivating utilities and damaged appliances
- Cleanup instructions
- Removal and disposal of debris

#### *Debriefing and Report*

After the incident is over and all emergency operations have been concluded, a debriefing should be conducted of all key personnel who have participated in the evacuation or other emergency response. A report should be prepared based upon this debriefing and forwarded to the chief executive officer of the department.

The report should include an evaluation of the evacuation procedures employed, the quality of area and perimeter security, the coordination with other emergency services, and other pertinent aspects of the incident and the department's response to it.

## ORGANIZATION & ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

### *Organization*

The incident command system will be used to manage any evacuation. In most cases, the incident commander will be local law enforcement or fire department. If the affected area is large, the evacuation may need to be coordinated through the EOC.

A division of responsibility for evacuation tasks should be agreed upon between the Incident Commander and the EOC. The Incident Commander will normally manage evacuation operations at the scene, while the EOC coordinates operations beyond the incident site, such as coordinating traffic control along evacuation routes, arranging for the activation of shelter and mass care facilities, and advising other jurisdictions of the evacuation.

### *Assignment of Responsibilities*

The County Commissioner Chair/Mayor will:

- Coordinate evacuation efforts with other local governments that may be affected by the evacuation, where appropriate

The Incident Commander will:

- Identify risk areas in the vicinity to the incident site and determine protective actions for people in those risk areas
- If evacuation of risk areas and access and functional needs facilities is required, plan, organize, and conduct the evacuation with the resources assigned
- Request support from the EOC to assist in coordinating evacuation activities beyond the incident site, such as activation of shelter and mass care facilities, if required

- Direct the relocation of at risk essential resources (personnel, equipment, and supplies) to safe areas
- Issue the order directing citizens to evacuate, when appropriate

The Sheriff/Emergency Management Director will:

- Develop and maintain evacuation planning information for known risk areas, including population of the area, and primary evacuation routes. Provide a copy to EOC
- Review evacuation plans of access and functional needs facilities within known risk areas and determine possible need for evacuation support
- Approve release of warnings, instructions, and other emergency public information relating to evacuation

Law Enforcement will:

- Recommend evacuation routes to the Incident Commander or EOC staff.
- Assist in evacuation by providing traffic control
- Protect property in evacuated areas and limit access to those areas
- Secure and protect or relocate prisoners if needed
- Coordinate law enforcement activities with other emergency services
- Assist in warning the public
- Provide information to the PIO for public news releases on the evacuation routes

The local Fire Departments will:

- Be responsible for fire protection in the vacated area
- Assist in warning the public
- Assist in evacuating access and functional needs groups, as requested

The Public Information Officer (PIO) will:

- Disseminate emergency information advising the public of evacuation actions to be taken
- Coordinate with area news media for news releases

The County Highway/Municipal Public Works Department will:

- Provide traffic control devices upon request
- Assist in keeping evacuation routes open
- Provide barricades and barriers to restrict entry to evacuated areas and other areas where entry must be controlled

At-Risk Facilities will:

- Close and supervise evacuation of their facilities
- Coordinate appropriate transportation for evacuees and en route medical or security support
- Arrange for use of suitable host facilities

- Request emergency assistance from local government if assistance cannot be obtained from other sources
- Ensure assigned personnel are trained and knowledgeable of evacuation procedures
- Disseminate public information to advise relatives and the general public of the status of their facilities and the patients, students, or inmates served by those facilities

## ADMINISTRATION AND LOGISTICS

### Activity Logs

The Incident Commander and, if activated, the EOC, shall maintain accurate logs recording evacuation decisions, significant evacuation activities, and the commitment of resources to support evacuation operations.

### Documentation of Costs

Expenses incurred in carrying out evacuations for certain hazards, such as radiological accidents or hazardous materials incidents, may be recoverable from the responsible party. Hence, all departments and agencies will maintain records of personnel and equipment used and supplies consumed during large-scale evacuations.

### Resources

General emergency response resources that may be required to conduct an evacuation are listed in the Resource Management annex.

## PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

This annex will be revised annually and updated in accordance with the schedule outlined in the Basic Plan.

### Post Incident Review

For large-scale evacuations, the Emergency Management Director will organize and conduct a review of emergency operations by those tasked in this annex. The purpose of this review is to identify needed improvements in this plan, procedures, facilities, and equipment.

### Exercises

Local drills, tabletop exercises, functional exercises, and full-scale exercises shall periodically include an evacuation scenario based on the hazards faced by this jurisdiction.

## REFERENCES

FEMA, Guide for All-Hazard Emergency Operations Planning (SLG-101).

# Attachment 1

## General Evacuation Checklist

<b>PLANNING:</b>	
Determine area(s) at risk:	
Determine population of risk area(s)	
Identify any access and functional needs facilities and populations in risk area(s)	
Determine evacuation routes for risk area(s) & check the status of these routes.  Note: During an evacuation, bridges can be a major issue especially during flooding or another natural or man-made hazard that may undermine the structural stability of a bridge. If there is any doubt, check the integrity of a bridge on an evacuation route.	
Determine traffic control requirements for evacuation routes.	
Estimate public transportation requirements & determine pickup points.	
Determine temporary shelter requirements & select preferred shelter locations.	
<b>ADVANCE WARNING:</b>	
Provide advance warning to access and functional needs facilities & advise them to activate evacuation, transportation & reception arrangements. Determine if requirements exist for additional support from local government.	
Provide advance warning of possible need for evacuation to the public, clearly identifying areas at risk. See Annex I, Emergency Public Information.	
Develop traffic control plans & stage traffic control devices at required locations	
Coordinate with access and functional needs facilities regarding precautionary evacuation. Identify and alert access and functional needs populations.	
Ready temporary shelters selected for use.	
Coordinate with transportation providers to ensure vehicles & drivers will be available when and where needed.	
Coordinate with school districts regarding closure of schools.	
Advise neighboring jurisdictions that may be affected of evacuation plans.	
<b>EVACUATION:</b>	
Advise neighboring jurisdictions & the local municipality that evacuation recommendation or order will be issued.	
Disseminate evacuation recommendation or order to access and functional needs facilities and populations. Provide assistance in evacuating, if needed.	
Disseminate evacuation recommendation or order to the public through available warning systems, clearly identifying areas to be evacuated.	

<p>Provide amplifying information to the public through the media. Emergency public information should address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What should be done to secure buildings being evacuated</li> <li>What evacuees should take with them</li> <li>Where evacuees should go &amp; how should they get there</li> <li>Provisions for access and functional needs population &amp; those without transportation</li> </ul>	
Staff and open temporary shelters	
Provide traffic control along evacuation routes & establish procedures for dealing with vehicle breakdowns on such routes.	
Provide transportation assistance to those who require it.	
Provide security in or control access to evacuated areas.	
Provide Situation Reports on evacuation to the local Disaster District.	
<b>RETURN OF EVACUEES</b>	
If evacuated areas have been damaged, reopen roads, eliminate significant health and safety hazards, & conduct damage assessments.	
Determine requirements for traffic control for return of evacuees.	
Determine requirements for & coordinate provision of transportation for return of evacuees.	
Advise neighboring jurisdictions and local Disaster District that return of evacuees will begin.	
Advise evacuees through the media that they can return to their homes and businesses; indicate preferred travel routes.	
Provide traffic control for return of evacuees.	
Coordinate temporary housing for evacuees that are unable to return to their residences.	
Coordinate with access and functional needs facilities regarding return of evacuees to those facilities.	
<p>If evacuated areas have sustained damage, provide the public information that addresses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documenting damage &amp; making expedient repairs</li> <li>Caution in reactivating utilities &amp; damaged appliances</li> <li>Cleanup &amp; removal/disposal of debris</li> </ul>	
Terminate temporary shelter & mass care operations.	
Maintain access controls for areas that cannot be safely reoccupied.	