

EVACUATION AND RE-ENTRY ANNEX

PURPOSE

The purpose of this annex is to ensure the safe and orderly evacuation of people threatened by hazards in Larimer County, and to provide for the safe re-entry of the affected area. This annex outlines provisions to quickly evaluate and assess the immediate human and animal needs (food, water, health / medical, and housing), the operational status of vital community infrastructure (transportation, communications and utility systems), and to assist impacted localities with the restoration of essential services.

SCOPE

This annex adopts an all-hazards approach to preparing for and managing evacuations. It establishes a methodology that is applicable to any threat, hazard, or event that results in the need to evacuate. This Annex includes all areas of unincorporated Larimer County including public land areas. This annex provides considerations for the evacuation of populations affected by large or small incidents within Larimer County.

AUTHORITY

C.R.S. 24-33.5-700 Colorado Disaster Emergency Act outlines the powers of local and state governments to respond to emergencies and disasters, including the authority to evacuate residents and visitors in order to provide for public safety. Evacuation orders of local authorities and Sheriffs are enforced by criminal sanctions, and a person disobeys an evacuation order at his or her own peril. This authority was backed by an official Attorney General Opinion on June 27, 2002.

See the attached Attorney General Opinion for more details.

SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS

Larimer County is capable of conducting large scale evacuations as well as supporting municipalities through existing agreements if necessary. However, during a large event, either within Larimer County or the region, it may be necessary for Larimer County to request regional or state support. These events will require actions and support by many agencies, multiple local jurisdictions and nongovernmental organizations.

Planning Assumptions

- The primary means of evacuation for most individuals will be personal vehicles. Individuals who rely on other means of transportation (carpool, vanpool, public transportation, etc.) may require assistance in evacuating.
- Individuals with access and functional needs or people with disabilities may require evacuation assistance and/or transportation coordination.
- Spontaneous evacuation will occur.
- Some individuals will resist an order to evacuate.

- Residents will utilize all available public information sources to acquire emergency information.
- More than one incident could cause evacuation.
- There is a potential that public transportation and roadways could be disrupted or damaged. This will demand maximum flexibility in responses.
- Adequate rental cars may not be available in a large-scale evacuation from a tourist area for tourist and business travelers.
- It may be difficult to locate and inform seasonal visitors and people experiencing homelessness, and to estimate the scope of the transportation requirements.
- Information that is available to the public may be conflicting amongst various sources and may cause credibility issues with official information sources.
- Some percentage of the population automatically assigns suspicion to the motives of government agencies, particularly regarding evacuations.

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

Evacuation

The authority for evacuation in Larimer County rests with the Larimer County Sheriff's Office, who will make determinations regarding the evacuation of residents and visitors from affected areas within Larimer County. Additionally, Fire Districts have the authority to issue evacuations within their jurisdictions according to C.R.S. 24-32-2109.

The Emergency Operations Plan establishes the use of the Incident Command System to manage events in Larimer County. All evacuation plans will be accomplished in coordination with the ICS structure established for the incident to ensure safety and accountability of personnel.

Evacuation Orders and Notifications

Evacuation Orders will be issued by the Larimer County Sheriff's Office through the LCSO Dispatch Center or the Larimer Emergency Telephone Authority. Everbridge is used as the primary system for emergency notifications and evacuation orders. Additionally, orders will be sent through other public alert and warning systems (WEA, IPAWS), through local media, and social media as required. Provisions will be made for translation services for people who are deaf or hard of hearing and those who do not speak English. Dispatch Centers and LETA will coordinate as needed with neighboring counties to ensure communities along the Larimer County line are given consistent evacuation information.

Larimer County uses two types of notification:

- Voluntary Evacuation – To alert residents and businesses (when time is available) that evacuation may occur and to be ready for the order. People who are unable to self-evacuate, those with large animals, or others requiring additional time should evacuate when a voluntary evacuation order is sent by authorities.

- **Mandatory Evacuation** – The mandatory evacuation order of the affected population includes everyone in the mandatory evacuation area due to immediate threats to life and property. Exceptions would include public safety officials, disaster response personnel and organizational / agency employees designated as “essential” to emergency operations.

Refusal to Evacuate

Persons who refuse to comply with a mandatory evacuation order will not be arrested nor forcibly removed from their homes. Those who refuse to evacuate will be informed that they should not expect rescue or other lifesaving assistance during the incident if they refuse to leave when an order is given by authorities. If minor juvenile children are present and under the care of those who refuse to evacuate, the children may be taken into protective custody if law enforcement believes the children are in imminent danger of serious bodily injury or death. According to County policies, the Human Services Department will be contacted for continued care and custody of juvenile children. Additionally, and depending on the circumstances, those who refuse to evacuate that are under the influence of alcohol, drugs or displaying severe behavioral health issues may be taken into protective custody.

A primary reason people refuse to evacuate may be due to pets not being allowed to transport with their owner, or a lack of provisions for the shelter and care of pets. Larimer County recognizes this need and has plans in place to ensure the evacuation of pets with people.

Evacuation Centers and Shelter Destinations

Larimer County OEM has established priority evacuation centers and shelter locations for communities throughout Larimer County. This list is used as a first measure to determine sites and inform the public. The Mass Care and Human Services Branch is the lead for mass care operations in the Larimer EOC and will designate evacuation sites and shelters as appropriate.

Larimer County uses the following terminology for evacuation and sheltering activities:

- **Evacuation Site** – A location designated by the incident personnel to lead people out of the hazard area. This could be an intersection, parking lot, or other facility where community members can go to get more information once safe and out of the hazard area.
- **Evacuation Center** – A physical facility where evacuees can go to get out of the elements and get basic information about the incident and other services.
- **Comfort Center** – Typically used in extreme heat or extreme cold events where community members can go to get out of the elements and receive basic services.
- **Emergency Shelter** – A facility that is activated overnight to provide safe shelter for those without the means for shelter elsewhere. The American Red Cross is a lead volunteer organization that partners with Larimer County to run these facilities.

Transportation – Transportation issues include outbound traffic volumes and routes, inbound emergency access routes, traffic control, motorist communication and disabled vehicle removal.

- **Evacuation Routes** - will be established as soon as practical following an emergency and will be assessed regularly as the incident unfolds. Due to the two largest hazards in Larimer, wildfire and flood, these routes may change as the incident grows and/or changes.
- **Inbound Emergency Access Routes** - If possible, one lane on every evacuation route will be kept available for inbound emergency vehicles. The inbound routes will be used for authorized emergency travel including ambulances, buses, fuel trucks, tow trucks etc. There may be circumstances where both lanes of any given road/highway will be used for evacuation purposes or circumstances where the road is not wide enough for two-way traffic.
- **Means of Controlling Flow of Evacuees** - The evacuation of large numbers of people from vulnerable areas will stress the limited capabilities of roadways available for this purpose, potentially requiring additional time to complete an evacuation. Consequently, evacuation must be initiated as soon as feasible upon recognition of the threat, and must continue to function efficiently until completion. In order to manage the flow of evacuees in a safe and orderly manner, evacuation zones will be established by Incident Command. These zones will be identified in advance of a threat whenever possible.
- **Motorist Communication** – Highway message signs, radio broadcasts, weather alert radio broadcasts, and law enforcement will direct the flow of traffic and communicate information on evacuation routes.
- **Disabled Vehicle Removal** - Tow trucks and/or those resources that can provide similar services may be essential during an evacuation. The function of this service would be to remove disabled vehicles and assist with the repair of vehicles so the evacuation routes are kept moving. Limited fuel supplies could also be delivered.

Provisions for People Unable to Self-Evacuate

Larimer County is home to several populations that may be unable to self-evacuate. These populations include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **People with Disabilities** – Community members with decreased mobility or other disabilities may require assistance with transportation out of evacuated areas and back into affected areas once the emergency is stabilized. Service Animals are allowed to remain with their people throughout evacuation, shelter and re-entry.
- **Hospitals and Care Centers** – There may be an increased need for buses with wheelchair lifts, ambulances, and ambulances with advanced life support capability for transfers in the event a care center or hospital is impacted by an evacuation order.
- **Schools** – Planning includes arrangements for family reunification and availability of school buses and drivers for transportation out of impacted areas.

- Daycare Providers – In addition to family reunification plans, infant seats and close supervision will be required during and following evacuation until the minor children are reunited with their families.
- Jails and Prisons – Secure transportation and reception facilities will be arranged to ensure safe evacuation.
- Tourist and Business Travelers – Transportation may be required to assist travelers and tourists without adequate transportation.
- Seasonal and Homeless Populations – Additional transportation and information requirements will be needed to locate and inform seasonal visitors and people experiencing homelessness, and to estimate the scope of the transportation requirements.
- Air Transport – Air ambulances may be needed for evacuation of patients that may otherwise go by ground transport, due to evacuation route congestion or other travel delays and difficulties.

Provisions for Animals at Risk

The Larimer Humane Society is the lead agency for evacuation and shelter of domestic animals. Domestic animals are not allowed in human shelters because of the risk of animal allergies and phobias, potential bites and scratches, food hygiene and other public health issues. Service animals are the exception. Whenever possible, however, domestic animals will be sheltered near human shelters to allow pet owners to care for their pets while evacuated.

The Sheriff's Posse is the lead agency for large animal evacuation and sheltering. They are supported by the CSU Veterinary Teaching Hospital, the Ranch Events Complex, and the Horseman's Association. Please see the Animal Response Plan for more details on animal response, evacuation, and sheltering.

Perimeter Control Requirements

During any incident involving the evacuation of community members, Traffic Control Points (TCPs) will be established by law enforcements to control traffic in and out of the hazard area. This also decreases the threat of theft or other crimes in the area.

Accountability

Data collection and dissemination regarding evacuation areas will be made by the EOC Planning Section at the Larimer County EOC. The following events, resources, or information must be accounted for in an evacuation operation:

- Where and when evacuation warnings have been issued
- Number evacuated
- Number remaining in the risk area, including provisions for functional needs and people with disabilities (medical conditions, medications, mobility, etc.)
- Number of evacuees in shelters

- Locations of individuals evacuated from nursing homes, assisted living centers, schools, hospitals, and the jail

Return to the Risk Area – Re-Entry

The process for re-entry into the evacuated areas must be coordinated to ensure safety of the public, protection of property, and the continuation of response and recovery activities. The Sheriff's Office will be responsible for notifying residents when it is safe to return to their homes and businesses. Law enforcement will be responsible for ensuring the return occurs in an orderly and safe fashion.

Re-Entry Decision - The decision of when to permit residents to return to the affected area will be made cooperatively between the Incident Commander, Sheriff, EOC and municipalities in the impacted areas. The decision to allow re-entry will be based on an overall evaluation of the situation, including the following major factors:

- **Access** – Following a major event, a survey (ground or aerial) of the impacted areas will be conducted immediately to identify and prioritize the most seriously damaged areas of the incident. This can determine the level of damage to major routes into the area and help to determine the time needed for debris clearance from those routes.
- **Essential Emergency Services** – Emergency Services agencies are able to return back to their service areas and resume the delivery of their emergency service function.
- **Damage Assessment Notifications** – When feasible, impacted community members will be notified of damages to structures prior to re-entry into damaged areas. With the advent of Ring cameras and other technology, this isn't always possible.
- **Water Levels** – Floodwaters have receded from most of the area allowing for safe re-entry.
- **Wildfire Areas** – Wildfire activity is no longer an imminent threat to the public.
- **Utilities** – Lifeline utilities are operating or information is available about when they will be available in the affected area. If utilities cannot be restored in a timely manner, community members will be notified and reasonable accommodations will be available to ensure the safety of the public.
- Existing services can support the people already in the impacted area as well as an additional influx of people.

Pre-Reentry Teams – These groups will begin the process of clearing access to critical facilities and roads to facilitate the reentry process. The Pre-Reentry Teams consist of but are not limited to:

- Public Works Team with heavy equipment (wheel loader, backhoe, etc), and chain saw crews to clear roads and other obstacles for safe re-entry and egress.
- Utility Crews to identify and remove downed utility lines (Power, Cable, etc).
- Emergency Medical Services crews to provide medical support to victims that are located while opening up roadways.
- Fire Service Agencies to provide incident, evacuation and re-entry support.

- Law enforcement to provide security, traffic management, and access control.

It needs to be understood that the Pre-Reentry Teams are not Search and Rescue Teams, they are only tasked with opening up roads to gain access so Search and Rescue Teams and Damage Assessment teams can gain access to areas of destruction.

Informing Evacuees of Re-Entry Procedures – Public Information Officers at the Incident Command Post, EOC and JIC will coordinate messaging regarding re-entry procedures. This will be done through multiple means, including news releases, public briefings, social media, website messaging and Everbridge notifications.

Phased Re-Entry

Once the decision to permit re-entry has been established, law enforcement personnel will set up checkpoints and roadblocks as needed based upon the level of damage that has occurred. Re-entry can proceed as recommended based upon a phased re-entry. This can ensure primary access to essential personnel and help to manage the number of people entering the disaster area.

Phase A – Phase A allows the re-entry of agencies and groups that play key roles in restoring critical infrastructure in the impacted areas following a disaster. Law enforcement personnel should restrict access during this phase to provide for area safety and security. Phase A agencies and groups may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Security agencies (including private security for facilities and residential communities)
- Facility/Industry Emergency Response Teams
- Debris Clearing and Removal Crews
- Infrastructure and Utility Personnel
- Official Damage Assessment Teams
- Other personnel at the direction of Incident Command or EOC

Phase B – Phase B allows for the short-term limited re-entry of other critical groups as well as residents and business owners to assess damages. The local EOC in coordination with public safety personnel should determine when it is safe to begin Phase B entry. These groups may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- All agencies and personnel listed under Phase A
- Resident and Business Owners (with Insurance Adjusters and Contractors) to conduct insurance assessments (access may be temporary)
- Relief Workers
- Health Agencies

Phase C – Phase C allows for the re-entry of only those residents and business owners who can prove they live, own, rent, lease or otherwise have a need to be allowed into the affected areas. It includes all agencies and personnel from Phase A and B, as well as residents and

business owners within the evacuated area. Phase C may still involve roadblocks and areas where access is limited.

Temporary Housing

If the impacted areas cannot support the return of evacuated residents, temporary housing may be established in the non-impacted areas near the disaster area. The Larimer EOC will make decisions on the location and operation of temporary housing facilities in coordination with our non-profit and non-governmental partners.

Assisted Living Centers and Nursing Homes

Nursing Homes, Assisted Living Centers, Home Health Agencies, and other care facilities should NOT bring residents back to the community until all services have been restored to normal, to include lifeline utilities, communications and local suppliers of commodities used by the facilities.

Checkpoints and Roadblocks

The strategic location of roadblocks is an important part of the re-entry process. Roadblocks can be utilized to seal entry points into devastated areas for two main reasons:

- Roadblocks can be used to prevent mass entry of the civilian population, which can clog rescue routes for people in the impacted areas who may require medical attention.
- Roadblocks are a method to help curtail acts of unlawfulness such as looting.

Pre-established Traffic Control points will be used to verify residents or workers have a need to re-enter a restricted area or to serve as a roadblock to deny entry for those looking to sight-see or other undesirable intent. Local law enforcement officers will be responsible for establishing and staffing checkpoints for re-entry. Local check points may be supplemented by county, state, and mutual aid assistance. Secondary check points may be established by the county where required.

Identification Procedures

Identification procedures are intended to provide guidance for law enforcement personnel who may be directing access to disaster-impacted localities. Residents should have proper identification that proves residence within the disaster area, such as a driver's license, voter's registration, utility bills, property tax receipts, etc. Relief workers and business owners should have a company ID card, and/or Dash Pass with agency information to enter an impacted area.

Larimer County may use incident ID badges for those who require re-entry access. This decision will be made on an incident-by-incident basis depending on the complexity of the event.

Curfews

Curfews may be initiated as a crime prevention measure depending on the intensity of the disaster and the level of damage sustained. The decision to implement a curfew and the duration rests with the local governing body. The Larimer County Sheriff and Board of

Commissioners will coordinate to ensure continuity. Curfews may be implemented countywide, regionally or within a municipality depending on the impact of the emergency.

Evacuation and Re-Entry Public Information

The Public Information Officer, in coordination with the Joint Information Center (if activated), will lead the public information process for evacuation from and re-entry to disaster affected areas. The PIO will issue news releases to local, state and national media outlets to inform the public of evacuation status and the county's re-entry policy.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Larimer County Sheriff's Office

- Activate and coordinate evacuations in the impacted areas
- Establish, coordinate and monitor checkpoints and roadblocks in unincorporated areas of the county, as specified by Incident Command or the Operations Section of the EOC
- Provide security
- Support re-entry activities as needed in the impacted areas
- Conduct search and rescue in impacted areas within their jurisdictions
- Enforce curfews within unincorporated areas, if required.
- Monitor road conditions and report traffic flows and counts.
- Conduct aerial surveys of the impacted areas of the County
- Provide mutual aid to municipal law enforcement through Incident Command or the Operation Section of the EOC

B. Larimer County Office of Emergency Management

- Activate the Re-Entry Plan
- Communicate with municipalities and the State EOC
- Organize Damage Assessment Teams
- Organize Evacuation Credentialing Teams
- Coordinate with all partners and supporting agencies

C. Larimer County Road and Bridge

- Provide resources for debris removal for primary routes

D. Larimer County Department of Health and Environment

- 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
 - Health Masks
 - Tetanus and First Aid Guidance
 - Food Safety Guidance
 - Infectious Diseases


- E. Municipal Law Enforcement Agencies
 - Establish and monitor checkpoints and set up roadblocks in their jurisdictions or provide support to County checkpoints
 - Provide security within their jurisdictions
 - Enforce curfews, if required, in their jurisdictions in coordination with other law enforcement agencies to avoid confusion
- F. Colorado State Patrol
 - Monitor traffic conditions on state and federal highways and report to the county EOC
 - Provide staffing to support County checkpoints
- G. Larimer Humane Society, Sheriff's Posse and Horseman's Association
 - Provide for the safe and effective evacuation and shelter of small and large animals affected by the emergency or disaster
- H. Fire and Rescue Departments
 - Conduct evacuation support and search and rescue in impacted areas within their jurisdictions
 - Provide fire protection, suppression and hazardous materials response
- I. Public Information Officers / Joint Information Center
 - Ensure that the public is informed about the identification required for re-entry
 - Ensure that the public is notified once re-entry begins

PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

This plan is the principal source for guidance concerning evacuation and re-entry in Larimer County following an event that forces a significant evacuation of community members from any area within the county. The Larimer Office of Emergency Management is responsible for developing and maintaining this annex. This annex will be reviewed annually and updated as needed to remain current.

APPROVAL SIGNATURES

The Evacuation and Re-Entry Annex has hereby been reviewed and approved by the Director for the Larimer County Office of Emergency Management this 3rd day of March, 2025, and will be added to the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan for Larimer County.

BY:  _____
Lori R. Hodges, Director Office of Emergency Management