

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND WARNING PLAN

2023-2025

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND WARNING

PURPOSE

To provide accurate, coordinated, consistent, timely and easy to understand information about an impending emergency through a variety of information and warning systems to enhance the well-being of the community before, during and after the emergency.

SCOPE

This annex to the Eagle County Emergency Operation Plan serves to describe the roles and responsibilities of various agencies who contribute to the processes of providing public information and warnings to the citizens and visitors of Eagle County, Colorado.

AUTHORITIES

Pursuant to Colorado Revised Statutes, Title 29, Article 11, and in accordance with the Intergovernmental Agreement Concerning the Implementation of an E911 Telephone Service entered into on January 14, 1991, and most recently revised August 30, 2005, between Eagle County, the towns of Avon, Eagle, Gypsum, Minturn, Red Cliff and Vail along with the Eagle County Health Service District, Western Eagle County Ambulance District, Greater Eagle Fire Protection District and Gypsum Fire Protection District, which created an “Emergency Telephone Service Authority”.

The Eagle County Board of County Commissioners through the appointment of an “Emergency Telephone Service Authority Board” collects fees from a telephone surcharge and provides the funding and oversight of the 9-1-1 and public warning systems.

ASSUMPTIONS

PUBLIC INFORMATION

- Citizens have the responsibility to prepare themselves and their families to cope with emergencies and to manage their affairs in ways that will aid in managing emergencies.
- Eagle County governmental entities will assist people in carrying out these responsibilities by providing public information and instructions before, during and after emergencies.
- Eagle County has established a Joint Information System to be used to gather, analyze, produce, and disseminate information in the event of a threat or disaster affecting the County.
- Public Information Officers from all agencies may be called upon to assist the Joint Information System during an emergency.
- A Joint Information Center will be established during a high-visibility or high severity incident to serve as the central contact point for all news media and to coordinate all incident-related public information activities in order to provide consistent and coordinated release of information. All agencies including non-government organizations releasing information concerning their emergency actions will coordinate through the EOC or the Joint Information Center.
- Eagle County agencies will ensure that emergency information is transmitted to the public providing at a minimum the following information:
 - The nature of the emergency
 - The location of the emergency

- How the emergency can affect them
- What protective action to take
- Where to get help
- Approximately when the situation is expected to be remedied
- The County will use its best efforts to release timely and accurate emergency information to the public concerning emergency preparedness, response, and recovery.
- Public briefings will be held at evacuation centers and shelters and written notices will be posted to provide means for people to obtain accurate information.
- Translation services will be available for persons with limited English proficiency.

WARNING

- 100% notification cannot be guaranteed. If people feel at all threatened, they should be prepared to take appropriate actions even without the direction of their governmental agencies.
- Eagle County employs numerous warning systems and operates under the theory that no one method is effective at reaching all of its residents and visitors.
- The County strives to ensure that emergency notifications include methods accessible to persons with disabilities including text messaging, door-to-door notifications, mobile loudspeakers and other available means.
- Citizens and businesses have a responsibility to familiarize themselves, their families and their guests with available emergency notification methods and the best way for them to access these systems.
- Eagle County will coordinate warnings with the State of Colorado and adjacent counties when appropriate.

The matrix on the following page identifies the tools and systems used to provide information and warning to the public.

Type of Incident or Event	Everbridge (911 call back)	ECALERT (text alerts)	EAS (radio broadcasts)	VMS (High way signs)	CDOT/VP SCC low power Radio	Local Access TV	Vehicle Public Address	Web Sites	Media Release	Weather Radio	Social Media
Evacuation Notice	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Hazardous Materials Release	X	X	X	X	X			X		X	X
Shelter in place instructions	X	X	X			X		X			X
Weather Alerts (severe)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Armed Suspect (lockdown)	X	X	X	X	X			X	X		X
Crime Trends		X									X
Robbery		X						X	X		X
Airport traveler information		X		X		X		X	X		X

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Parking issues																					X								X
Road Closures	**																				X								X
Road Maintenance																													X
Traffic Accident																					X								X
Flood information																					X							X	X
Prescribed (controlled) burns																					X								X
School Activities																												X	X
Special Event updates																					X							X	X
Utility disruptions																					X							X	X
Weather Alerts (general)																													X
Missing persons	X																				X								X
Public Health Emergency	X																				X								X
Wildland/Structure Fire																												X	X

** - Significant road closures in areas without cell coverage will be notified via phone messaging

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- The Authority Having Jurisdiction (i.e. fire department, law enforcement, etc.) is responsible for designating an Incident Commander (IC) who has the responsibility for overall management of an event or emergency incident. One of the roles of the IC is to recognize the need to provide accurate and timely information and warnings to the public and initiate the process. At a minimum this process should include directing the appropriate Public Safety Answering Point (dispatch center) to initiate the warning/information process.
- When an IC requests an evacuation it is their responsibility to identify an “Evacuation Center” and ensure that staffing is arranged to manage public information for evacuees at that location.
- The Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) is responsible for providing all necessary notifications and activating the appropriate warning tools at their disposal. The primary PSAP serving Eagle County are the Pitkin County Regional Emergency Dispatch Center and the Vail Public Safety Communications Center.
- The Eagle County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is activated for large incidents and events or when there are numerous smaller incidents requiring extra coordination and support services. Concurrent with activation of the EOC, a Joint Information Center will be activated and these two groups assume the responsibility for coordination and dissemination of public information and warning.