

SEP 15 2020

September 15, 2020

Board of Commissioners
Cass County Government
211 9th Street South
Fargo, ND 58103

RE: Cass County Commission Policy Updates – Disaster Situations, Emergency Evacuation Procedures, Facility Emergency Procedures,

Commissioners,

As part of a review of the County Emergency Operations Plan, minor changes and updates were performed on the applicable commission policies dealing with disaster situations so the two documents accurately align.

Although the changes are minor, listed below are the reasons for the updates:

- 1) Aligns the commission policy wording with updated requirements of the Emergency Management Performance grant.
- 2) Consistent language with National Weather Service terminology.
- 3) Update from CodeRed to CassClayAlerts.

It is my request that the commission accept and approve these updates.

Thank you.

Jim Prochniak
Emergency Manager

SUGGESTED MOTION:

Move to amend Commission Policy Manual Sections 16.00 and 16.01 Disaster Situations, 16.20 Facility Emergency Procedures, and 16.50 Emergency Evacuation Procedures.

SUBJECT: DISASTER SITUATIONS

ADOPTED DATE: MAY 4, 1992

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GENERAL INFORMATION

The County Commission has the overall responsibility to supervise and control local government operations from the County Emergency Operations Center (EOC), and meet the dangers to the county and its people presented by an emergency or disaster.

The County Commission delegates authority to coordinate emergency operations to the County Emergency Manager, who will perform primarily from the county EOC.

Local government emergency and disaster operations will be guided by the Cass County Emergency Operations Plan which consists of: the Basic Document; nine (9) Functional Annexes, which include policies; procedures; specific hazard appendices; and a resource library. When the Local Emergency Operations Plan is activated, all or part of the documents, plans, and procedures may be implemented.

Entities of local government are assigned responsibilities in nine (9) functional areas as Functional Coordinators and/or Task Coordinators. Functional Coordinators are assigned responsibility for coordinating all activities within a particular function and shall perform these duties either remotely or from the county EOC.

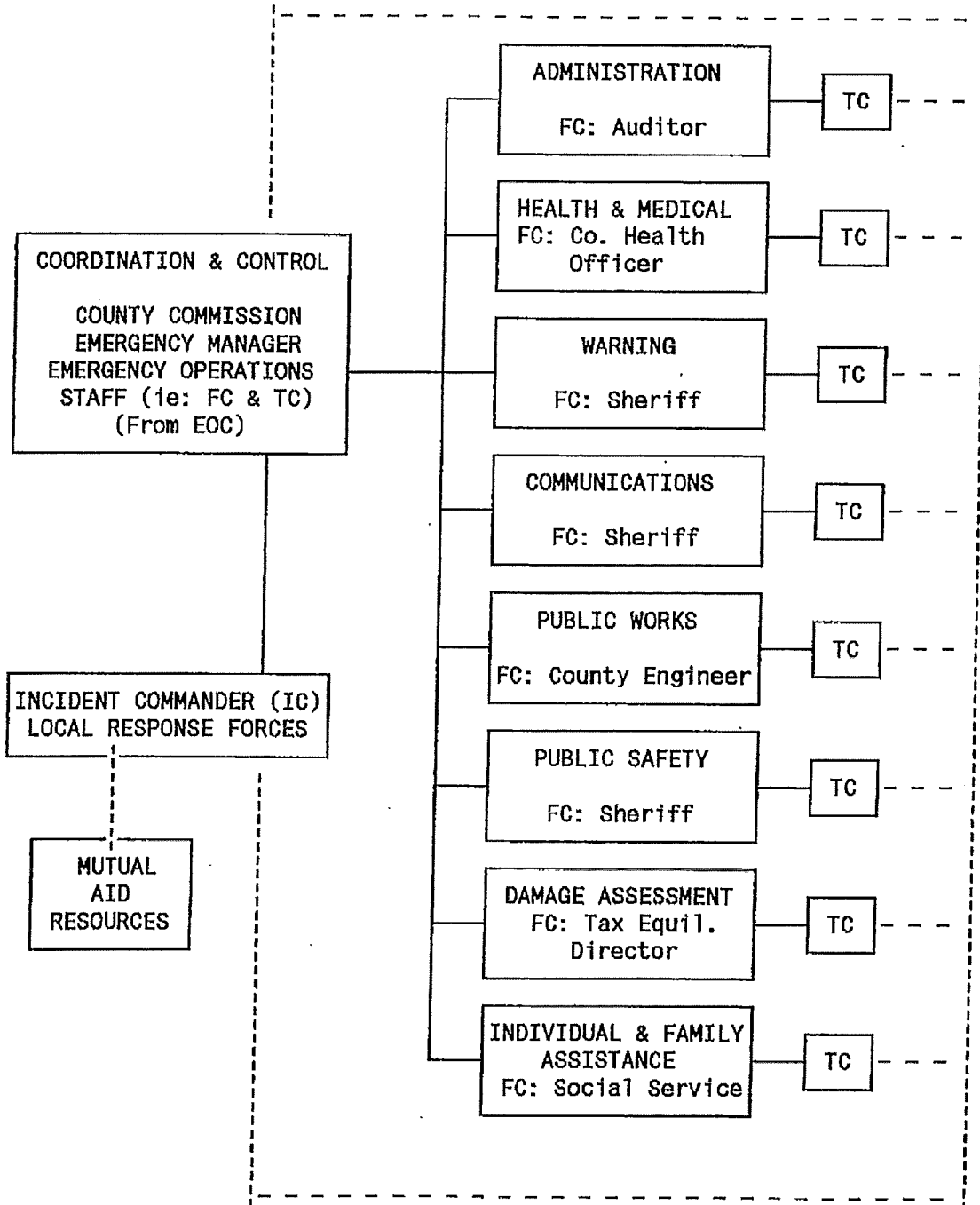
The Emergency Management Organization Chart which follows graphically illustrates the coordination and control relationship between the County Commission, the County Emergency Manager, County Departments (Function and Task Coordinators), and the on-scene Incident Commander. (Exhibit 3 is available for reference)

HISTORICAL REFERENCE DATE: APRIL 15, 1986

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION CHART

LEGEND

- EOC - Emergency Operations Center
- FC - Functional Coordinators
- TC - Task Coordinators (Optional based on size of Jurisdiction.)
- - Direct Coordination
- - - - - Indirect Coordination



SUBJECT: DISASTER SITUATIONS

ADOPTED DATE: AUGUST 15, 2005

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Cass County
Hazardous Weather Operations Plan

- I. Local Warning System Activation
- II. Tornado Warning
- III. Flood Warning
- IV. Severe Summer & Winter Weather Warning
- V. SkyWarn Weather Spotter Activation
- VI. Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Activation
- VII. Reporting damage to the National Weather Service
- VIII. Installation of outdoor weather sirens
- IX. Warning - Evacuation - Shelter Plans for the Disabled

LOCAL WARNING SYSTEM ACTIVATION CRITERIA

The Outdoor Warning Sirens in Cass County may be activated for any of the following conditions:

- The National Weather Service has issued a tornado warning for West Fargo, Fargo, Moorhead or Dilworth or any portion of Cass County.
- A trained weather **spotter** has observed a tornado in Cass County, including the West Fargo, Fargo, Moorhead, or Dilworth vicinity and requested activation of the sirens. The weather **spotter** will relay this information to an amateur (ham) radio operator stationed within either the Red River Regional Dispatch Center or the West Fargo Dispatch Center.
- A trained Law Enforcement Officer has observed a tornado in the Cass County area, and requested siren activation. (Such a request should go through an agency/department supervisor if time permits).
- An on-scene Fire Department Incident Commander has requested activation of the sirens to alert the public of a hazardous materials or other life-threatening incident. The Incident Commander should have an evacuation plan, or other instructions such as “sheltering in-place,” for the public prepared and transmitted to the Dispatch Center or the media, prior to requesting siren activation.
- A Cass Fargo Emergency Manager has requested activation of the sirens.
- Testing and maintenance operations.

If any city in the metro area (Moorhead, Dilworth, Fargo or West Fargo) activates its warning sirens for a weather or hazardous material incident, **all the other cities in the area will also activate their sirens**. Whichever city decides to activate its sirens first will contact the other cities in the area and advise them of their decision.

If Fargo, Moorhead or Dilworth are the first cities to activate their sirens, they will coordinate through the Red River Regional Dispatch Center for this activation. RRDC will notify the West Fargo Dispatch Center, advise them they are activating the sirens, and give the reason for activation.

- **NOTE: In the event that a community has no siren system or the local outdoor warning siren system is inoperable, the RRDC will dispatch law enforcement and fire units to use their siren and PA systems to warn citizens.**

TORNADO WARNING

The National Weather Service in Grand Forks is the primary source of severe weather information for the public. The National Weather Service will issue tornado watches and warnings to the public and local emergency response agencies as conditions dictate.

The Red River Dispatch Center is the siren activation control point for Cass County.

The National Weather Service will release information on siren activation related to tornado warnings based on information supplied by the RRDC and the West Fargo Dispatch Center.

Both RRDC and the National Weather Service in Grand Forks will release information to the media via the use of the Emergency Alert System (EAS), media paging, and fax. This information will be released as soon as possible so the public will be informed of the reason for the siren activation.

PROCEDURE:

Rural Cass County

When notified of a tornado warning for all or parts of Cass County, the RRDC will implement the following dissemination plan defined in the RRDC Outdoor Warning Siren Manual including:

- Activate the sirens for all affected cities.
- Broadcast by radio to Cass County mobile units, repeating the message EXACTLY as received.
- Page and notify all rural Cass Ambulance Services.
- Page or phone and notify all rural Cass Fire Departments.
- Notify a Cass Fargo Emergency Manager in case of a confirmed touchdown with damage.

City of Fargo

When notified of a tornado warning for the City of Fargo, or if included in a Cass County-wide warning, the communication operator shall implement the plan according to the RRDC Outdoor Warning Siren Manual including:

- Activate the sirens for the City of Fargo
- Notify NDSU PD by radio or phone to activate the siren located on NDSU Campus.
- Simulcast to the following agencies by radio, repeating the message EXACTLY as received. If radio traffic prohibits simulcast, notify by phone.
 1. Cass County Sheriff's Jail (Booking)
 2. West Fargo Police Department
 3. Fargo Fire Department
 4. NDSU Police Department
 5. FM Ambulance Service
 6. Fargo Police/Fire, Cass County Mobile Units
- Page via the Fargo Fire Department Media pager and announce that they will be receiving a weather related fax.
- Fax the Media fax form with the weather message announcement.
- Notify a Cass Fargo County Emergency Manager in case of a confirmed touchdown with damage. (Fargo EM primary)

FLOOD WARNING

Advance warning for flood events is critical in allowing communities in Cass County to prepare for and respond to flooding situations. Cass County communities are responsible for preparing their own flood response plans.

Potential floods in Cass County fall into two general categories:

➤ Annual Spring Snowmelt

This typically occurs around the end of April, and is influenced by a combination of snow pack, temperature, and additional moisture during the melt cycle. Communities typically have adequate advanced warning for these events.

➤ Summer Rain Events

Heavy rains can create localized flooding including flash floods in a short time. These situations do not often provide advance warning.

Flood watches and warnings originate from the Grand Forks Office of the National Weather Service. The NWS provides real time and advanced flood prediction information through regular news releases.

RRDC will disseminate flash flood information to all law enforcement and fire units:

Simulcast to the following agencies by radio, repeating the message EXACTLY as received. If radio traffic prohibits simulcast, notify by phone.

1. West Fargo Police and Fire Departments
2. NDSU Police Department
3. Fargo Police and Fire Departments
4. Cass County Sheriff's Department

Detailed flood prediction information and real-time river gauge data for the Red River Valley is available through the National Weather Service Advanced Hydrologic Prediction Service at: <https://water.weather.gov/ahps2/index.php?wfo=FGF>. Another resource is the US Army Corps of Engineers web site at: www.mvp-wc.usace.army.mil/.

SEVERE SUMMER & WINTER WEATHER WARNING

The National Weather Service Office in Grand Forks will provide advance summer and winter weather advisories to the public through the media and to local emergency response agencies through the Emergency Alert System (EAS).

RRDC will disseminate severe summer or winter weather warning information to all law enforcement units:

Simulcast to the following agencies by radio, repeating the message EXACTLY as received. If radio traffic prohibits simulcast, notify by phone.

1. West Fargo Police & Fire Departments
2. NDSU Police Department
3. Fargo Police & Fire Departments
5. Cass County Sheriff's Department

SKYWARN WEATHER SPOTTER ACTIVATION CRITERIA

SkyWarn is a group of individuals made up of **trained weather spotters** and Red River Radio Amateurs - RRRA (ham radio) that are trained to weather observe for the National Weather Service.

Before or during severe weather when weather spotters are needed, the National Weather Service will contact RRDC by phone or on the NAWAS frequency (Fargo Warning Point) and request the activation of the SkyWarn weather spotters. RRDC will page SkyWarn personnel according to the procedures established in the RRDC Outdoor Warning Siren Manual.

Ham radio operators will report to RRDC and West Fargo Police Department to communicate with SkyWarn personnel in the field.

EOC ACTIVATION

The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) will be activated for all incidents requiring a significant dedication of resources and/or extraordinary interagency coordination. The Cass County Commission Chairperson will make the decision regarding EOC activation. Not all disasters require full activation, in those instances, partial EOC activation will be ordered, and only relevant agencies and functional coordinators will be activated

Upon request of the Emergency Manager, the County Administrator, or the Cass County Commission Chair or Vice Chair, the RRDC will initiate a call back of the Functional Coordinators listed in the Cass County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) Appendix B.

PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING STORM DAMAGE TO THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

In an effort to enhance the ability of the National Weather Service to understand the characteristics of severe weather activity as it happens, it is important to provide basic storm damage reports from observers on the ground in "real time".

In an effort to provide this information to the NWS, all SkyWarn personnel and emergency responders in Cass County will provide the RRDC with "real time" preliminary damage reports from the field.

This information will be passed on to the National Weather Service Office in Grand Forks via normal established channels.

INSTALLATION OF OUTDOOR WARNING SIRENS

The weather warning siren system for Cass County is radio controlled from the RRDC. This single coordinated system operates the warning sirens in Fargo, Moorhead and several rural Cass and Clay County communities.

Rural Cass County communities desiring to connect to this radio controlled system must coordinate the connection with the siren installer and the RRDC. The system controller must be programmed to accept the new siren. Communities are responsible for any fees associated with the connection to the RRDC.

Communities connecting their siren system must also coordinate an activation protocol for their city with the RRDC for testing and actual events.

WARNING-EVACUATION-SHELTER PLANS FOR THE DISABLED

Warning

- Emergency warning systems within Cass County include a combination of local outdoor warning sirens, the Emergency Alert System (EAS), along with emergency vehicle siren and public address systems.
- This combination of warning devices provides the broadest level of notification to residents of Cass County in the event of an imminent disaster emergency. These systems however do not guarantee that everyone will receive the warnings. This may be especially true for those with sight and hearing impairments.
- As a result, it is imperative that the sight and hearing impaired together with community organizations and facilities that provide the disabled services, along with neighbors, friends and relatives develop emergency notification plans that compliment existing warning systems.

Evacuation and Shelter

- During a contained disaster emergency local law enforcement and fire departments will provide search and rescue and evacuation services as resources allow. They may be assisted by health and engineering officials together with personnel from other local organizations including the American Red Cross.

SUBJECT: FACILITY EMERGENCY/SECURITY PROCEDURES PLAN

ADOPTED DATE: NOVEMBER 4, 2013

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Introduction

Cass County Government strongly believes that the employees of the Cass County Courthouse and Annex should be prepared for any emergency that may arise within any Cass County Government facility.

Emergency procedures are necessary to save lives and protect property. All employees should be aware that emergency procedures exist, and with the assistance of department heads and employees, can be implemented quickly to minimize potential losses.

A Cass County Facility Emergency/Security Procedures Handbook has been created to identify procedures for building evacuation, shelter and safety/security during events including fire, tornado/severe thunderstorms, HAZMAT, biologic agent, bomb threat and intruder situations. The handbook addresses safety and security issues for employees and members of the public while in Cass County government facilities.

This handbook is maintained by the Cass County Emergency Manager in coordination with all department heads. The handbook will be reviewed on an **semi-annual** basis and training and testing of the procedures will be done on a regular basis. The handbook will be maintained within each department and available on the Cass County Intranet.

Each department head is responsible to insure that all employees are knowledgeable of the provisions of the handbook and to develop individual department policies tailored to their unique circumstance.

HISTORICAL REFERENCE DATE: APRIL 15, 1986
AUGUST 15, 2005

SUBJECT: EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES

ADOPTED DATE: OCTOBER 21, 2013

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The need to evacuate portions of Cass County may arise in a number of varying situations. Hazardous material releases, fire, plane crashes, terrorist activities, and civil disorder may require the evacuation of a contained area. Likewise, flooding or other large weather events may require the evacuation of very small or large area.

An Incident Commander from the Sheriff's Department or local fire department has the authority to evacuate all or part of a small number of buildings during smaller emergency incidents.

The Cass County Evacuation Plan is maintained in Annex II of the Cass County Emergency Operations Plan and is reviewed and updated on a semi-annual basis by the Cass County Emergency Manager. The plan provides the framework to ensure the safe and orderly evacuation of residents who are threatened by hazards. It identifies roles, responsibilities, and capabilities to specific departments and agencies.

The Governor of North Dakota has the authority to issue a declaration of Disaster Emergency under Chapter 37 of the N.D.C.C. During the state of emergency or disaster the governor has the authority to direct and compel the evacuation of all or part of the population from any stricken or threatened area within the state if the action is necessary for the preservation of life or other disaster mitigation, response or recovery.

Chapter 37 of the N.D.C.C. requires that a local mandatory evacuation order may only be declared by the principal executive officer of the county or city. It may not be continued or renewed for a period in excess of seven days except by or with the consent of the governing board of the county or city. The N.D.C.C. also requires that a mandatory evacuation order must be given prompt and general publicity and be filed promptly with the county auditor.

The Cass County Commission has the authority to order (that is command or direct), but not to compel, evacuation in the event of a disaster emergency. This authority should be exercised after a local disaster or emergency has been declared by the county governing body upon finding that a disaster has occurred or is imminent.

The request for evacuation will originate with the Incident Commander at the scene in charge of a specific incident who is well aware of the potential consequence to lives and property of the local citizens. The request for evacuation is forwarded to the EOC, (if it is activated), or through proper channels. The County Emergency Manager or Incident Commander will contact the Commission Chair or in the chair's absence, the Vice Chair requesting an evacuation order. The order may be continued beyond seven days only with the full consent of the county commission.

SUBJECT: EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES

ADOPTED DATE: OCTOBER 21, 2013

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Cass County may issue two types of evacuation notices: voluntary and mandatory.

Voluntary Evacuation

Residents are encouraged to evacuate when there is a significant potential threat of flooding to life or property. This will be issued when the expected time frame for the threat is six to 48 hours. Notification will be through **CassClayAlerts** and media outlets. A voluntary evacuation may target specific populations, such as nursing home residents or hospital patients or specific geographical locations.

Cass County will also use voluntary evacuations as a precursor to mandatory evacuations to reduce the number of people when the likelihood of a mandatory evacuation order is high but timing is not precise or predictable. Voluntary evacuations may also be used for locations at greater risk and those prone to higher levels of congestion that would hinder mitigation activities.

Officials will provide reasons for a voluntary evacuation, enabling citizens to make informed decisions based on personal situations.

Mandatory Evacuation

This is a warning that an imminent threat to life and property exists and individuals **MUST** evacuate in accordance with the instructions of local officials. This will be issued for immediate threats with an anticipated timeframe of zero to six hours. Notifications will be routed through all available means including warning sirens, door-to-door notification, **CassClayAlerts**, and media outlets. A mandatory evacuation may target vulnerable populations such as nursing home residents or hospital patients as well as populations in specific geographical locations.

Individuals who choose not to evacuate need to be prepared to accept the consequences of limited or no access to food, water, or basic services for an extended period of time. In addition, people must understand that rescues into areas previously evacuated may not be timely or possible.

Cass County will attempt to secure all areas under mandatory evacuation orders by restricting access and increasing patrols by law enforcement officers or requesting support through mutual aid or state support.

Cass County will not be responsible for individual costs relating to an evacuation. Under voluntary evacuation conditions, there are no programs that citizens may access to recoup costs. If mandatory evacuations are ordered during a declared presidential disaster, FEMA may reimburse expenses during the timeframe the order was in effect.

HISTORICAL REFERENCE DATE: MARCH 15, 2010
MARCH 21, 2011