

DATE: April 18, 2018

TO: Montana Association of Counties
League of Cities and Towns

FROM: Delila Bruno, Administrator, Montana Disaster and Emergency Services, DMA
Steve Story, Bureau Chief, Water Resources Division, DNRC

SUBJECT: Pre-Flood Coordination

Commissioners and Mayors:

With the historic 2017 wildfire season only a few months old, we are preparing for another significant event that may potentially impact communities across the State of Montana. Most of the state has received near-record snowfall and the snow water equivalent in mountain basins are 130 to 180 percent above average. Additionally, most of Montana has received more snow than in 2011, which was the last significant flood year for the state. Additionally, the National Weather Service is predicting flood activity across watersheds statewide.

As a result, the Governor has authorized the establishment of a Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (MACG) to review flood preparedness. The MACG is committed to providing information to local officials that may be useful during a local response. The list below contains some tips and considerations for city and county elected officials. The following information should all be coordinated through your Emergency Manager.

PRIOR to FLOODING

1. Have your Emergency Manager (EM) coordinate with the local Flood Plain Manager, Road Supervisor, Sanitarian, Public Works Manager and MT DES District Field Officer, etc. to discuss historical damages and possible prevention methods.
2. Follow your regional National Weather Service (NWS) for current flooding updates, conditions, and stream statistics.
3. If flooding is imminent, prepare an Emergency Declaration to activate portions of your Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). An Emergency 2-Mill Levy is not needed to prepare or issue a declaration.
4. Acquire sandbags for critical infrastructure and for residents, if desired. Sandbags will need to be purchased by county or municipality.
5. Ensure your local EM reviews the Local Government Disaster Information Manual (LGDIM.)
6. Remind homeowners that Flood Insurance takes 30 days to become effective, if there is a flooding concern then they should consider purchasing insurance now. Understanding if an event happens during this 30-day period, the home will not be covered.
7. Plan public information strategies to include evacuations, sheltering, community meetings and response to public and business questions and needs.

DURING FLOODING

1. Provide response for life safety.
2. If flooding is already occurring in your area, please let the NWS know ASAP by calling 406-952-3790 or e-mailing them at tfx.spotters@noaa.gov.
3. Notify the MT DES Duty Office at 406 324-4777 to provide flooding situational awareness, updates or resource requests.
4. Identify a single POC to consolidate reports related to flood damage.
5. Provide a system for public and businesses to report property damages and needs.
6. Identify damaged facilities to include public roads, streets, bridges, infrastructure systems and buildings.
7. Consider issuing a disaster declaration. At this time it does not require an Emergency 2-Mill Levy. However, before the State can potentially provide financial reimbursement you must exhaust your emergency fund and levy your Emergency 2 Mills within the State fiscal year. The MT DES Duty Officer is available 24/7 for technical assistance and coordination.
8. If an event rises to a Governor declared State Declaration, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has sandbags and other resources available for critical infrastructure protection only.
9. Track all employee and equipment hours working on emergency actions and all related expenditures.
10. Document flooding in progress by taking photographs, marking and recording of high water marks.
11. Ensure your Floodplain Administrator is prepared to process Emergency Floodplain Permits where activities are necessary in regulatory floodplains.

AFTER FLOODING

1. If damage has occurred resulting in actual or estimated expenditures above the value of your Emergency 2-Mill Levy, you may request state assistance.
2. Document all damaged facilities with photos, latitude/longitude, maps, actual/estimated costs of materials and personnel needed to fix damage and provide information on Floodplain Permitting Application requirements.
3. Identify any community economic recovery issues.
4. MT DES Recovery staff will coordinate with you or your staff on the specifics of recovery programs.

Please share this letter with any staff you feel appropriate. While we all know that disasters start and end locally, we are committed to helping navigate emergency situations and doing all we can to prepare for flooding.

Thank you for your time, and if you have any questions, please contact your local Emergency Manager, or Montana Disaster and Emergency Services at 406-324-4777.

Respectfully,



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