

## WARNING ANNEX N

### **N1. Purpose, Situation, and Assumptions**

#### **N1.1 Purpose**

The purpose of this Warning Functional Annex is to guide and coordinate agencies and organizations in warning the public of potentially life-threatening situations within Park County. Rapidly evolving events can necessitate the notification of people in the county; protective actions may preserve life and property.

#### **N1.2 Situation Overview**

Warnings in Park County, the City of Livingston, and the Town of Clyde Park may occur for a variety of reasons, including, but not limited to, bioterrorism, communicable disease, dam failure, flood, hazardous material release, hazardous weather, terrorism, civil disturbance, violence, utility outage, volcano, wildland fire, or any other hazard that leads to a situation requiring protective actions by the public. Warnings are most often issued for weather events.

[Base Plan, Table 1.3B](#) shows the populations within Park County. Depending on the incident, all or a subset of the populations may be targeted with warnings.

As technology improves, the number of methods to disseminate warnings effectively is increasing. The options currently available to Park County include:

- Emergency Alert System (EAS)
- NOAA Weather Radio
- Reverse calling through Livingston / Park County 911 Dispatch (note: this option currently does not exist for the Cooke City, Gardiner, Jardine, and Silver Gate areas)
- Public address systems / Loud speakers
- Door-to-door/Face-to-face notifications

In many cases, a combination of methods may be most effective.

The Emergency Alert System radio station in Park County is KPRK 1340 AM in Livingston. KGLT 91.9 FM in Bozeman may also provide some coverage in Park County. EAS activation may trigger alerting through radio, television, and electronic media methods. A NOAA Weather Radio transmitter is located in Livingston.

### **N1.3 Planning Assumptions**

- An incident within or affecting Park County may threaten lives and/or property if warning is not provided.
- The need for warnings differs from the need for public information based on the immediacy and potential for life-saving actions.
- A single warning dissemination system is not capable of effectively warning everyone in the county.

## **N2. Concept of Operations**

The decision points that follow are the responsibility of incident management. Note that not all decision points may be necessary and some decision points may be combined during rapidly escalating situations.

- Decision Point: *Public warning is needed for a weather event.*

The National Weather Service is the only agency authorized to issue weather warnings. Park County, the City of Livingston, and the Town of Clyde Park are served by the National Weather Service office located in Billings. If local officials feel weather warnings are needed (i.e. a tornado is spotted, flooding is occurring, etc.), this information should be relayed and/or discussed with the National Weather Service.

In some cases, language can be added to weather warnings to alert and provide the public with additional information such as emergency travel only restrictions and road closures during winter weather or other hazardous weather events.

Weather related emergency messages are typically disseminated through the Emergency Alert System (EAS) over designated broadcasters, NOAA Weather Radios, and electronic media. Local officials may supplement these warnings through the use of other dissemination methods such as reverse calling or vehicle mounted public address systems, as needed.

- Decision Point: *Public warning is needed for a non-weather event.*

The public may need warning for events that are not weather-related such as hazardous material releases and escaped prisoners. In cases where local officials need to issue the warning, the following information should be included:

- Brief description of the hazard
- Geographic extent and locations included in the warning
- Duration of the warning
- Protective actions recommended

If using the Emergency Alert System (EAS), the message should be less than two minutes in broadcast length. (Montana Emergency Alert System (EAS) State Plan, July 2008.) See the attachment for an [EAS message template](#).

See the [Special Needs Annex](#) for additional information regarding providing warnings to those with special needs such as visual, hearing, language, and cognitive impairments.

Generally, the Incident Commander or designee develops the warning and chooses the method(s) of dissemination. Decision points follow for the various dissemination methods.

- *Decision Point: Door-to-door and/or public address system notifications are needed.*

Door-to-door notifications are typically used for incidents affecting a relatively small geographic area or when other methods fail, time factors do not allow for the use of other methods, or the imminent threat warrants personal notification. Obvious limitations to door-to-door notifications include the level of personnel resources needed to perform the notifications. If possible, notification strike teams should be assembled. Vehicle mounted public address systems may also be used in this capacity; this is a primary warning method in outlying communities.

- *Decision Point: Reverse calling is needed.*

Reverse calling allows Livingston / Park County 911 Dispatch to call multiple phone numbers relatively quickly in an emergency situation and provide a recorded message, usually the warning information. To implement reverse calling, the following process is used:

- Incident Commander or designee notifies Livingston / Park County 911 Dispatch of the need for reverse calling and provides the warning message and geographic area to receive the message.
- Livingston / Park County 911 Dispatch then records the message and initiates the calls through their reverse calling system and procedures.
- Livingston / Park County 911 Dispatch notifies the Incident Commander or designee when the calling begins and when the calling is completed.
- Incident Commander or designee may choose to verify receipt of the messages and success of the system by checking with those in the warned area.

Note that Livingston / Park County 911 Dispatch currently has reverse calling capabilities, but the Yellowstone National Park Communications Center that serves the Cooke City, Gardiner, Jardine, and Silver Gate areas does not. Those rural communities may have some neighbor-to-neighbor calling possibilities, if enough people in the communities are notified through fire department phone trees and such and then subsequently call neighbors, friends, and family to informally get the message to others.

- *Decision Point: Activation of the Emergency Alert System (EAS) and/or NOAA Weather Radio is needed.*

The Emergency Alert System (EAS) is a system that interrupts regular programming and broadcasts a signal and emergency information over designated radio stations and NOAA weather radios. This

information is also frequently re-broadcast by other radio and television stations. NOAA weather radios may provide tone alerts, depending on the type of message and receiver features. Internet and cell phone users may additionally receive alerts through email, text messages, and software applications, depending on user preferences.

To activate EAS and/or NOAA Weather Radios in Park County, the following process is used:

- Incident Commander or designee determines that the risk to life or property warrants immediate notification of the general public.
- Incident Commander or designee creates the warning / emergency message (see [attachment](#)) and notifies the Livingston / Park County 911 Dispatch and Park County Disaster and Emergency Services Coordinator of the need for EAS activation in Park County.
- The Livingston / Park County 911 Dispatch or the Incident Commander or designee (depending on the transmission capabilities) sends the message to the National Weather Service (NWS) in Billings. (Note: If the NWS Billings office is unreachable, their back-up office is the National Weather Service in Glasgow, then Great Falls, then any other NWS office.)
  - The individual contacting the NWS should state, “This is (name and title) of (organization). I request that the Emergency Alert System be activated for Park County because of (description of emergency).”
  - The message is preferably sent to the NWS via fax, but other methods can be used.
- The National Weather Service will authenticate the request, and if authenticated, will activate the EAS.
- Designated broadcasters and NOAA Weather Radios transmit the message.

Source: Montana Emergency Alert System (EAS) State Plan, July 2008.

### **N3. Organization and Assignment of Responsibilities**

The responsibilities listed here are specific to this function. Note that all entities, whether listed or not, are also responsible for their basic disaster and emergency responsibilities as outlined in the [Base Plan, Section 3.2](#), as applicable.

The following entities are not specific to jurisdiction. Therefore, in an emergency, the jurisdiction(s) affected will have the responsibility for these roles, and other non-affected jurisdictions may also be involved through mutual aid.

#### **Disaster and Emergency Services**

- Maintain emergency contact information for the National Weather Service and key media outlets.

#### **911 Dispatch**

- Facilitate activation of the Emergency Alert System (EAS), as requested by Incident Command or the Disaster and Emergency Services Coordinator.
- Implement reverse calling procedures, as requested by Incident Command or the Disaster and Emergency Services Coordinator.

### Other Entities

- Provide warning to the public on hazardous conditions, as applicable.
- Perform other duties as needed and assigned.

## **N4. Direction, Control, and Coordination**

Depending on the type of incident requiring warning, the Incident Command and/or Unified Command may lie with law enforcement and/or fire departments/districts. Additional information on the direction and control function can be found in the [Direction and Control Annex](#) and [Base Plan, Section 4](#).

State and federal plans related to this annex (vertical coordination) include:

- Montana Emergency Alert System (EAS) State Plan
- National Warning System Operations Manual

## **N5. Information Collection and Dissemination**

### **N5.1 Information Collection for Planning**

Table N5.1A lists the key information needed and possible sources for warning activities.

*Table N5.1A Possible Information Sources*

<i>Information Type</i>	<i>Source</i>
Weather Warnings and Forecasts	– National Weather Service, Billings
Non-Weather Warnings and Recommended Protective Actions	– Incident / Unified Command
Homeland Security Threats	– Law Enforcement – Montana All Threat Intelligence Center – National Warning System

### **N5.2 Public Information**

Information regarding the public information function can be found in the [Public Information Annex](#).

All warnings issued to the public should include the following information:

- Brief description of the hazard
- Geographic extent and locations included in the warning
- Duration of the warning
- Protective actions recommended

When clear, factual, and trustworthy information is provided in warnings, the public is more likely to take the protective actions listed in the warning. Less urgent public information following the event or

after the warning period is over is often needed. See the [Public Information Annex](#) for more information.

## **N6. Communications**

See the [Communications Annex](#) for more details on emergency communications in Park County.

## **N7. Administration, Finance, and Logistics**

### **N7.1 Finance/Administration**

For additional information on the Finance/Administration function, particularly the importance of recordkeeping, see the [Base Plan, Section 7.1](#).

### **N7.2 Logistics**

For additional information on disaster and emergency logistics, see the [Base Plan, Section 7.2](#).

## **N8. Plan Development and Maintenance**

See the [Base Plan, Section 8](#) for additional information on annex development, review, revision, and exercise.

## **N9. Authorities and References**

### **N9.1 Authorities / References**

- Montana Emergency Alert System (EAS) State Plan, July 2008
- United State Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Title 47, Part 11: Emergency Alert System (EAS)

### **N9.2 Acronyms**

See the [Base Plan, Section 9.4](#) for the list of acronyms used in this plan.

## **N10. Attachments**

EAS Activation Form for an Emergency Message

**EAS Activation Form for an Emergency Message**

**This message will override TV and Radio Station Broadcasting. Keep message to no more than 2 minutes of airtime.**

Date\Time \_\_\_\_\_

Person Making Request \_\_\_\_\_

Agency of Person Making Request \_\_\_\_\_

Specific Type of Emergency (Hazmat, etc) \_\_\_\_\_

Affected Counties \_\_\_\_\_

Specific Affected Area (if available) \_\_\_\_\_

Duration of Emergency \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number to Verify or Contact for More Information \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person Completing This Form \_\_\_\_\_

**Exact Message for Broadcast** (should include nature of emergency, what area is affected, specific instructions to the public, where to obtain more information, etc.)

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