

**KING COUNTY WASHINGTON  
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN  
EMERGENCY SUPPORT FUNCTION (ESF) 24  
EVACUATION**

**PRIMARY AGENCY:** King County Office of Emergency Management

**SUPPORT AGENCIES:** King County Sheriff's Office  
Seattle/King County Department of Public Health  
King County Department of Development and Environmental  
Services  
King County Department of Executive Services (Facilities  
Management Division)  
King County Department of Transportation  
King County Department of Community and Human Services  
King County Department of Natural Resources & Parks  
Dispatch Agencies for First Responders  
Fire Service Agencies  
Municipalities  
US Coast Guard  
Washington State Patrol  
Washington State Department of Health  
American Red Cross  
Salvation Army  
Harborview Hospital  
City, County and State Transportation Departments  
School District Transportation Divisions  
Military Branches of Services

**I. INTRODUCTION:**

**A. Purpose**

This ESF is intended to assist King County Government, as well as other governmental agencies, businesses and first responders in conducting evacuations impacting communities in King County. Evacuations may result from naturally occurring events such as earthquakes, mudslides, health related incidents, flooding, volcanic activity, fires or from industrial accidents, dam failure, terrorism or illegal activities like drug labs and waste dumping. Protection of populations by sheltering in place as well as the traditional movement of people are considered.

**B. Scope**

The scope of this plan includes King County Government's focus on transportation activities and evacuations in unincorporated King County, areas and cities contracting for services provided by King County Government.

This ESF is intended to be coordinated with federal, state and other local plans, should the event require inter-jurisdictional coordination. In addition to the contents of this ESF, please refer to Mass Care ESF 6.

## **II. POLICIES**

Response agencies and municipalities in King County maintain their own implementing procedures for incidents requiring Evacuation or Shelter in Place. These procedures have differences primarily in the jurisdictional area covered and the detail/scope of the contents. Under the Emergency Powers granted the King County Executive for Proclaimed Emergencies (K.K.C. 12.52), evacuations may be conducted. Usually, these evacuations would affect only areas of unincorporated King County. In situations requiring routine evacuations, the fire, police or other incident commander may call for the evacuation of a limited area. Usually, these involve relatively brief periods of time (less than overnight). Where an emergency operations center (EOC) has been activated, evacuations and associated resources should be coordinated with the EOC.

King County Governmental facilities are required to maintain evacuation plans under RCW 296-24-567. The content and scope of these plans is the obligation of the agency maintaining the facility.

## **III. SITUATION**

### **Emergency/Disaster Conditions and Hazards**

The presence of the deep-water harbor in Seattle and Seattle's exposure to the Pacific Rim makes it a natural location for a major city. A mild climate and natural resources attracted an initial population that itself became a resource of available skilled labor. Transportation of people and goods is hampered by the many rivers and lakes in King County. Mountains restrict movement of people and goods from eastern to western Washington. The climate of the northwest results in heavy rain at lower elevations and snow at higher elevations during the fall, winter and spring. This precipitation results in regular flooding in the river basins and low-lying areas. Other challenges exist for accommodating transient populations, pets and non-English speaking peoples.

People in King County are vulnerable to the effects of the following possible natural and technological events: Hazardous Materials releases, Flooding, Terrorism and Illegal Activities, Volcanic and Earthquake Activity, Urban/Wildland Interface Fires, Health Emergencies, and Dam Failures. For more information on these vulnerabilities see: King County Hazard Identification and Vulnerability Analysis (August 1997).

In King County, warning the public of evacuations is limited to: door-to-door notifications, the Emergency Alert System (formerly the Emergency Broadcast System) and commercial news agencies. The method of warning is governed by the personnel available, the challenge of communicating in multiple languages, time available, and safety of the personnel making the

announcement. King County Office of Emergency Management is one of three agencies in King County with authority to activate and use EAS. The Emergency Alert System is designed to warn people in King County of an imminent threat to life safety. It is not designed for repeating or updating information regarding an event.

## **B. Planning Assumptions**

Evacuation Notification Response teams have been able to conduct “routine” evacuations, such as high-rise fires or moderate sized hazardous materials incidents. Problems arise for large and sudden impact events like earthquakes, dam failures, volcanic activity and hazardous materials releases. It is possible that fire crews, police and other responders assigned to assist with evacuation may be called to other priority events like medical emergencies, fires, search and rescue and other operations making organized evacuation on a case by case/as available basis. Roads may be impassable for any organized response team.

“Incident command” in a jurisdiction does not imply any innate ability to provide response resources or trained response manpower for evacuation notification within the jurisdiction. It is meant solely to provide trained leadership and management of the existing and available resources to respond to the emergency or disaster event.

On scene organization will utilize the Incident Command System, ICS (also called the Incident Management System, IMS) as published by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

## **IV. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS**

### **A. General**

#### Local Response

The type of incident, the geographic scope of the incident and the resources available will determine local response. Any agency listed in this ESF may initiate an evacuation in the interest of public safety. If the event is small and local in nature, the local fire, police or other official may recommend a limited evacuation and request resources directly through the dispatch agency operating on behalf of the jurisdiction. Mutual aid may also be effected for larger events. When multiple agencies and/or multiple jurisdictions are involved, emergency management organizations and emergency operations centers (EOCs) may be activated. If this is the case, resources may be coordinated and accounted for by the city, county or state at the appropriate EOC.

Shelter in Place may be initiated by these same agencies and the Public Health Department of Seattle-King County may call for quarantine.

Support of local evacuations may be provided by other listed primary or support agencies.

#### Federal Response

With the exception of the United States Coast Guard, federal agencies are generally not directly involved in evacuations. Federal Agencies may be utilized in the recovery phase of an event that involves evacuations. In limited circumstances, local military commanders may assist local authorities in evacuation efforts without a presidential disaster declaration.

#### Washington State Response

Where local resources are exhausted, the State of Washington may provide assistance to local authorities for large-scale evacuations. This may involve the Washington State Patrol, National Guard, Washington State Health officials, and members of other State agencies, as determined by the Washington State EOC.

### **B. Organization**

Coordination of the response and recovery efforts for large-scale evacuations of King County Government facilities or unincorporated areas will be coordinated from the King County Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The organizational structure for the King County EOC is contained in Appendix 1, Direction and Control.

### **C Procedures**

When resources from outside the County are requested, or transportation of evacuees and long term sheltering are needed, mutual aid requests between contiguous counties will be activated, as well as a formal proclamation and request for assistance from the Washington State EOC. The activation of the King County EOC may include the involvement of a joint information center and the notification or involvement of the King County Executive.

### **D. Mitigation Activities**

Current activities include road and bridge seismic retrofits, the development of a lahar warning system on Mt. Rainier, purchase of flood plain areas, and flood proofing homes and businesses.

### **E. Preparedness Activities**

Preparedness efforts include the identification of major transportation evacuation routes and alternate routes. These routes should be coordinated between the cities, county and state departments of transportation. Agreements with organizations capable of providing shelter to evacuees and stranded travelers might be considered (see ESF 6 – Mass Care). Preparedness efforts would include ongoing planning, training, and exercises of plans.

### **F. Response Activities**

Evacuations are cumbersome and time-consuming endeavors. They are resource and manpower intensive and may disrupt local commerce, transportation and school activities. The official considering evacuation must choose between taking no action, evacuation, or shelter in place.

#### Shelter in Place:

Most commonly used during hazardous materials incidents or terrorist chemical attacks, where there may not be enough time or resources to move a population for a short duration event. The following steps are taken to effect Shelter in Place:

- Go inside a building and remain until you are notified by television, radio, or other means that the danger has passed. Use the downwind side of the building, up/downstairs depending on the situation.
- Close all doors and windows
- Shut off all ventilation, heating and cooling systems
- Use wet towels over mouth and nose as instructed (hazardous materials events only)
- Do not use fireplaces or wood stoves. Put out any burning fires and close damper

Listen to your local radio or television stations for further instructions

Evacuations:

- An Incident Commander (IC) or local official recommends evacuation of a population or shelter in place
- The IC initiates the warning of affected populations by appropriate methods available
- The IC may request activation of the local city or King County EOC
- The IC requests assistance through the appropriate communications/dispatch center or EOC if activated
- The KC EOC may initiate the Emergency Alert System (EAS)
- The IC or the EOC incident manager may notify the chief local elected official
- Local department of transportation supports road closures, provides barricades and transportation of evacuees with vehicles and drivers
- The American Red Cross, King County Parks or other designated organization may provide shelter as needed
- Salvation Army and American Red Cross support local responders
- Local Law Enforcement supports area security, road closures and warning of citizens if appropriate
- Sheltered populations are accounted for and possibly, are reunited with others
- Evacuated areas may need to be cleared by appropriate officials before residents are allowed to return.
- Evacuated populations must be notified of an “all clear” to return
- Evacuated populations may require transportation to return
- All agencies are responsible for their own facility evacuation procedures

**E. Recovery Activities**

See ESFs 21 (Recovery) and 23 (Damage Assessment).

**V. RESPONSIBILITIES**

The agencies and entities described in this section may be called upon to send a representative(s) to the King County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) or other EOCs of municipalities. The Emergency Operations Center is a focal point for coordination of response efforts and resources during an emergency such as flooding, large earthquakes or hazardous materials releases. The lead agency calling for evacuation usually makes recommendation for return to the area. The

agency with responsibility for re-occupancy may be designated by law, as is the Public Health Department for drug lab evacuations and lifting of quarantines.

### **Primary King County Government Agency for Evacuation Incidents**

#### **King County Office of Emergency Management shall:**

When the Emergency Operations Center is operational

- Record information received by the EOC, related to an evacuation
- Distribute the information and messages related to the incident to appropriate members of the EOC activation team
- Support local coordination of transportation for evacuated persons
- Support local coordination of accounting for evacuees with families and friends
- Support local coordination of short and long term shelter and feeding of evacuees
- Support local coordination of resource support for field commanders
- Support the appropriate return of evacuees to their homes and businesses
- Contact cities affected for/with situation reports
- Work with the Joint Information Center to inform the public
- Activate the Emergency Alert System (EAS) as needed to warn citizens of dangers requiring evacuations in time critical situations
- Maintain evacuation plans for its own facilities
- Coordinate with and support cities with evacuation resources, if available

#### **Support Agencies for Evacuation**

##### **King County Executive shall:**

Per Emergency Powers identified under K.C.C. 12.52

- Order evacuations and curfews in areas of unincorporated King County

##### **King County Sheriff's Office shall:**

- Assist with or call for an evacuation per Unusual Occurrences Manual
- Provide crowd and traffic control, site security, emergency aid and safety programs
- Assist with warning and emergency information
- Investigate crime scenes and collect evidence
- Maintain evacuation plans for its own facilities
- Provide a representative to the Emergency Operations Center as requested

##### **Seattle-King County Department of Public Health shall:**

- Recommend evacuation of a population where health concerns are an issue
- Recommend quarantine of a population due to health related emergencies
- Recommend re-occupancy of structures evacuated due to health issues
- Communicate recommendations to the King County EOC, PIO and King County Executive as appropriate
- Maintain evacuation plans for its own facilities
- Send a representative to the King County Emergency Management EOC as requested

- Activate the Public Health Department EOC as needed

**King County Department of Development and Environmental Services shall:**

- Coordinate the inspection of buildings for structural integrity
- Tag unsafe buildings as appropriate or call for their evacuation
- Recommend evacuation where structural safety is an issue
- Coordinate security of affected areas with the King County EOC
- Maintain evacuation plans for its own facilities
- Send a representative to the King County Emergency Management EOC as requested

**King County Department of Executive Services, Facility Management Division shall:**

- Inspect or coordinate the inspection of King County Governmental Structures for safe occupancy
- Communicate the status of those buildings to the King County EOC
- Make evacuation recommendations to occupants
- Maintain evacuation plans for its own facilities
- Provide a representative to the King County Emergency Management EOC as requested

**Fire Service Agencies may:**

- Initiate evacuations or shelter in place where deemed necessary
- Coordinate activities with the King County Emergency Operation Center or municipal EOC as appropriate
- Act as the incident commander where identified by local ordinance
- Act as Public Information Officer where appropriate
- Perform urban search and rescue when protective equipment is required
- Perform decontamination at the scene when available an appropriate
- Coordinate with EMS personnel
- Request transportation as need for evacuees through the communications agency or EOC
- Request the opening of a shelter for displaced persons
- Provide a Fire Zone representative to the King County EOC for activation's as requested

**Municipalities may:**

RCW 38.52 requires all municipalities to have a designated emergency manager

- Coordinate evacuation efforts within their jurisdiction
- Request assistance from adjacent jurisdictions and use mutual aid agreements
- Notify the King County EOC of the situation and coordinate assistance as needed
- Maintain evacuation plans for its own facilities
- Proclaim an emergency as appropriate
- Activate and/or evacuate the city EOC as needed

**The United States Coast Guard may:**

- Request evacuation of a population within their jurisdiction
- Assist with evacuation of populations where resources are available
- Communicate efforts to the King County EOC as necessary

**Washington State Patrol may:**

- Act as Incident Commander where designated by local ordinance
- Assist with or call for evacuation and site security for evacuations per Unusual Occurrences manual
- Provide crowd and traffic control, emergency aid and safety programs
- Assist with warning and emergency information
- Investigate crime scenes and collect evidence
- Maintain evacuation plans for its own facilities
- Provide a representative to the Emergency Operations Center as necessary

**Washington State Department of Health may:**

- Make recommendations on health or radiological related evacuations
- Provide technical assistance where possible
- Maintain evacuation plans for its own facilities

**Utility Special Purpose Districts and Industry may:**

- Communicate warning and notifications where prescribed by law
- Provide for timely evacuation and site security for their facilities
- Provide for worker training, safety and shutdown of operations as needed
- Coordinate activities with emergency management when evacuations affect utilities
- Provide information to media
- Maintain and coordinate plans per law
- Provide a representative to the Emergency Operations Center as requested

**King County Department of Transportation shall:**

- Provide transportation if resources are available, for evacuees to designated public shelters when requested by the King County EOC, King County Sheriff's Office, a fire agency in King County, the Seattle-King County Public Health Department, King County Department of Development and Environmental Services or municipality
- Provide transportation if resources are available to shelter occupants returning to the evacuated area once that area is deemed safe
- Coordinate and notify the King County EOC of the resources used, destination and number of people transported
- Support the identification of safe evacuation routes
- Communicate identification of those routes to the King County EOC
- Maintain evacuation plans for its own facilities
- Provide a representative to the King County Emergency Management EOC as requested

**King County Department of Natural Resources & Parks shall:**

- Assist in providing for the mass care and food and water needs of people displaced from their homes and living in King County shelters.
- Make available County Park facilities, equipment and personnel for emergency shelters in coordination with the American Red Cross



- Provide personnel and equipment to support emergency operations of other County Departments
- Provide assistance in dissemination of public information through the JIC
- Maintain evacuation plans for its own facilities
- Provide a representative to the Emergency Operations Center as requested

**King County Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) shall:**

- Provide mental health counseling and psychological support programs as required
- Maintain evacuation plans for its own facilities
- Provide a representative to the Emergency Operations Center as requested

**Other King County Governmental Agencies shall:**

- Maintain evacuation plans for their own facility
- Communicate resource needs and building status to the Department Management
- Communicate resource needs and building status to the King County EOC
- Provide a representative to the King County EOC as requested

**The American Red Cross may:**

- Provide temporary housing and feeding facilities for displaced persons when requested by a fire commander, police commander, the King County EOC or other representative of a political jurisdiction
- Provide information & financial assistance for essential immediate needs to evacuees
- Provide feeding stations for first responders
- Provide a representative to the Emergency Operations Center as requested

**Harborview Hospital may:**

- Receive and treat evacuees needing acute medical attention
- Distribute patients to area hospitals based on the hospital's capabilities
- Maintain evacuation plans for its own facilities

**Other Agencies and Entities may:**

- Volunteers may register as emergency workers in support of search and rescue, communications, site security and management of shelter operations

## **VI. RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS**

Resources required for evacuation may require transportation vehicles and drivers, a place to take evacuees (shelter), food and other accommodations, critical incident stress management and other human services, major or minor medical assistance, and interpreters

## **VII. REFERENCES**

**King County**

King County Code 12.52 Emergency Powers, March 1996

King County Emergency Management Plan (EMP), January 1997

King County Hazards Identification and Vulnerability Analysis (HIVA), September, 1997

King County Sheriff's Office Procedures Manual, February 1996

**VIII. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS**

Evacuation	Movement of a population from an area like a building
Isolation	Removal of a population from a room or immediate structure
Triage	The sorting of victims done by their critical care needs
Shelter In Place	Where appropriate, people may remain in a structure until the danger has passed
Hazardous Materials	Any material that may do harm to a population or the environment when outside its container or intended use
ICS/IMS	The incident command system was developed to manage events in a flexible manner with common terminology
PSAPs	A term used to identify communications centers responsible for the dispatch and support of emergency field personnel

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**AGENCY APPROVAL:**

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**DATE:**