

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS PLAN

Legal Authorities

In addition to the county, state and federal authorities cited in the Basic Plan section of this document, the following statutes are directly applicable to hazardous materials incidents:

- **Fixed Facilities**
 1. Title 29, Article 22 of the Colorado Revised Statutes (CRS), “Hazardous Substance Incidents.”
 2. Title III, Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know, Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986 (SARA), U.S. Public Law 99-499.

- **Transportation**
 1. Title 43, Article 6 of the Colorado Revised Statutes (CRS), “Transportation of Hazardous Materials by Motor Vehicle.”
 2. 49 CFR, Part 179

- **Delegation of Authority**
 1. Delegation of Authority between Grand Junction Fire Department, Colorado State Patrol and Mesa County for DERA/SARA responsibilities.
 2. Memorandum of Understanding between Grand Junction Fire Department and the Bureau of Land Management and Department of Energy.

References

- Emergency Response Guidebook, (Current Edition) U.S. Department of Transportation
- ICS Incident Management Guide/SOP (Emergency Management Dept.)
- Colorado River Response and Contingency Plan, 1998, Environmental Protection Agency

Designated Emergency Response Authorities (DERA)

All political jurisdictions in Colorado (counties, cities and towns) are required by state law to have a **Designated Emergency Response Authority**, or **DERA**, to respond to hazardous materials occurring within their borders. In the event of an accidental chemical release, the DERA is responsible for coordinating and requesting assistance from law enforcement agencies, fire departments and other government agencies that have pre-established mutual aid agreements or written plans for responding to hazardous materials incidents in Mesa County (Title 29, Article 22, Section 103, CRS).

The Grand Junction Fire Department has been designated by Mesa County as the DERA for transportation accidents involving hazardous materials on Local, State and Federal Highways as well as fixed site facilities within Mesa County.

First responders at the scene of a hazardous materials incident will request that the DERA be notified to assess response needs and assume on-scene control of the incident, in cooperation with the Incident Commander. The Incident Commander will control overall response activity at the scene, while the hazardous materials response team(s) will be responsible for technical aspects of the response to the incident. Local, State and Federal hazardous materials response teams will respond with technical expertise and resources as requested by the DERA.

The Grand Junction Fire Department serves as the response team and DERA within Mesa County. Emergency response personnel on the department are trained at the Technician Level to meet the competencies as outlined in NFPA 472 standards. These standards include control techniques, use of personal protective and containment equipment and other specialized resources. Hazardous Materials Team response vehicles are equipped with emergency response reference materials, guidebooks and specialized equipment, including computers and data management software.

Hazard Analysis

The population of Mesa County is susceptible at any time to accidents involving hazardous materials on roads, highways, rail lines, and at fixed facilities that manufacture, use or store dangerous chemical substances. The release of hazardous materials can threaten people and natural resources in the immediate vicinity of the accident. Air releases can prompt large-scale population evacuations and spills into water or onto the ground can adversely affect public water and sewer systems.

A **fixed-facility incident** is an uncontrolled release of chemicals or other potentially hazardous materials from a facility. A **transportation incident** refers to accidental and uncontrolled releases of chemicals or other hazardous materials during transport (i.e., highways, rail, pipelines and airways). A hazardous materials incident may occur at any time during routine business operations or as a result of a natural disaster.

Transportation accidents involving hazardous materials are most likely to occur along the routes designated for hazardous substance carriers by the Colorado State Patrol, although accidents can occur on other routes used to transport chemicals between facilities and designated routes. The designated routes for transporting hazardous materials through Mesa County are highways 139, 141, 50, and Interstate 70.

The Union Pacific Railroad operates two rail lines in Mesa County. Their main line is located primarily along the Colorado River through the County. The secondary line (Southern leg) branches off of the main line near the confluence of the Gunnison and Colorado Rivers and is located along the Gunnison River.

Approximately 139 facilities manufacture, store or transport hazardous materials in Mesa County and
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are subject to the requirements of SARA Title III. In addition, the potential for hazardous materials exists due to Mesa County having main transportation routes for transporting chemicals from outside the County. Facilities subject to SARA Title III are required to report chemical inventories to state and local officials and to cooperate with local agencies in preparing for hazardous materials accidents. Due to non-compliance, not all hazardous substances are reported to local fire departments and hazardous materials authorities. Ongoing efforts are being made by Mesa County hazardous materials authorities to bring non-complying facilities into conformance with the requirements of SARA Title III.

The U.S. Department of Transportation (CFR) regulates the packaging, handling, labeling and transportation of hazardous materials. SARA Title III and the Uniform Fire Code (UFC) require facilities to furnish information about hazardous and toxic chemicals used in their operations to local and state officials and to local fire departments. The UFC regulates the storage of Hazardous Materials. The law requires facilities to report information regarding the identity, quantity, location and properties of hazardous substances and to immediately notify local and state officials whenever a significant release of hazardous materials occurs.

When an accident occurs in Mesa County, hazardous materials response teams can gain immediate access to specific information about a facility from the jurisdictional fire department/district or the Designated Emergency Response Authority (i.e., building plans and chemical inventories) to guide response efforts and to help ensure the safety of responders and others near the site.

Local Government Response

The overall authority for providing direction and control at the scene of an emergency or disaster rests with the DERA and the Incident Commander. A unified command approach will be used in incidents that overlap jurisdictional authorities. Requests for local mutual aid assistance will be requested through the Incident Commander. Supplemental assistance from State and Federal agencies will be made through the DERA and Mesa County Emergency Management Office.

The Mesa County Emergency Coordination Center is the facility designated as a central location with personnel coordinating emergency management activities in support of incident command resources wherever they are needed. The ECC facility in most situations is staffed by county department officials (with authority to direct the use of county resources), incident management group representatives and responding representatives from cooperating agencies and jurisdictions, including volunteer and private organizations. In addition to supporting ICS actions, ECC personnel coordinate intergovernmental and supplemental assistance, gather and document disaster information and perform damage assessment activities.

DESIGNATED EMERGENCY RESPONSE AUTHORITY STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES FOR RESPONSE TO HAZARDOUS MATERIALS INCIDENTS

- SAFELY RESPOND:** Placement of your apparatus upwind, uphill and upgrade of the incident.
- ISOLATE AND DENY ACCESS/ENTRY:** Disallow anyone from entering or accessing the hazard area. Use of banner tape, vehicles, and law enforcement to accomplish.
- NOTIFICATION:** Notify 911, NRC, EPA and CDPH&E.
- COMMAND:** Establish ICS and appoint Safety Officer, initiate perimeter control including atmospheric monitoring.
- IDENTIFICATION OF MATERIAL:** Placards, shipping papers, consists, tank/container types, license plate numbers and electronic and hard copy resource materials(s).
- ASSESSMENT/ACTION PLAN:** Assessment should include bullet points below. Action plan must be in writing and conveyed to the entire response team through a field briefing.
- PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT:** Selection of PPE based on hazards presented, establish zones and maintain continuous air monitoring.
- CONTROL:** Eliminate ignition sources, consider confinement/containment options.
- PROTECTIVE ACTIONS:** Evacuation and/or shelter in place options (consider immediate needs, including manpower and logistical considerations). Establish and maintain adequate safety zones for the duration of the incident.
- DECONTAMINATION:** IC will establish and provide for an adequate level of decontamination.
- DISPOSAL:** IC will assume appropriate disposal of all recovered product(s) and contaminated soils.
- TERMINATION:** Emergency phase closure, equipment status evaluation, personnel debriefing and assignments for post incident analysis (within 72 hours).
- MEDICAL:** All exposures to personnel will be documented. Field medical evaluations on all exposed personnel and recommendations for further medical attention.
- EVALUATION:** IC will schedule a post incident analysis within 72 hours and inform all personnel.
- DOCUMENTATION:** IC will assure all necessary emergency phase documentation is gathered and secured.

Evacuations and Shelters

The Incident Commander may request law enforcement to initiate evacuation orders in the area surrounding a hazardous materials accident, based on protective actions recommendations made by the DERA. For most incidents, law enforcement and fire services personnel will use the best available measures to warn people in the immediate area of the need to evacuate (door-to-door, bull horns, car public address systems, etc.). In larger incidents requiring extensive evacuation operations, the Incident Commander will coordinate activation of the Emergency Public Notification (EPN) system and/or the Emergency Alert System (EAS) through the Grand Junction Regional Dispatch Center.

Evacuation decisions must take into account population density and the existence of particularly sensitive institutions (e.g., schools, hospitals, nursing homes) in the hazard area. The American Red Cross may arrange for the opening and management of shelters based on estimates of the number of evacuees by the Incident Commander. The number of people per shelter is based on a sleeping space of 40 square feet per person. The American Red Cross is not equipped to shelter nursing home residents and hospital patients. Nursing homes are encouraged to pursue cooperative agreements with neighboring nursing homes for sheltering of residents during an emergency.

In some hazardous materials incidents (e.g., rapidly moving plume), it may be safer to instruct people in the hazard zone to remain indoors with doors and windows closed rather than to attempt to evacuate them. Instructions to the public regarding “in place” shelter measures should advise residents to shut off all heating and air conditioning systems until officially notified that the threat is passed.

Compensation and Reimbursement

Response and recovery costs associated with hazardous materials incidents are the responsibility of the owner or shipper of the materials involved. When the DERA determines that a hazardous materials accident on private property presents “an imminent danger to public health and safety beyond such property,” the response costs then fall to the party or parties responsible for the incident. Costs recovered by the DERA are distributed proportionately among the agencies that rendered assistance. When costs cannot be recovered from the responsible party, the agencies that responded to the DERAs’ request for assistance may apply for reimbursement of eligible expenses from the Emergency Response Cash Fund, managed by the Colorado Department of Local Affairs, Division of Local Government.