

Teller County Emergency Response Agencies

After the September 11, 2001 attacks, emergency management and response was placed center-stage in our Nation as massive reviews led to lessons learned, and reforms for how emergency response operations were to be conducted before, during and after an emergency or disaster situation. Teller County emergency first responders consist of multi-jurisdictional, multi-discipline full-time and volunteer professionals that makeup our countywide law enforcement, fire and emergency medical services agencies. Teller County's Emergency Response Agencies include:

- Teller County Office of Emergency Management
- Teller County Sheriff's Office
- City of Cripple Creek Police Department,
- City of Woodland Park Police Department
- City of Victor Police Department
- NE Teller County Fire Protection District
- Cripple Creek Fire Department
- Victor Fire Department
- Divide Fire Protection District
- Florissant Fire Protection District
- Four Mile Fire Protection District
- Mountain Communities Fire Protection District
- Green Mountain Falls Fire Protection District
- Southwest Teller County Ambulance District
- Ute Pass Ambulance District



Emergency Response Operations

Emergency response operations work under a defined command and control system, referred to as an Incident Command System (ICS). Incident Command Systems are designed to coordinate the activities of responding agencies and ensure that all forces work toward the single goal of resolving the emergency situations as quickly and efficiently as possible. The Incident Command System is a model for organizing a chain of command. It is expandable and flexible to adapt to any type or size of emergency.

ICS includes many different groups under one command. An effective ICS includes six major components that are established and incorporated into the total response program for any given incident.

1. Integrated communications using common terminology is the most important factor in the success of any operation. All units must be clearly understood, and every unit must be able to contact and communicate with every other unit, directly or indirectly, both verbally and in writing.
2. A modular organization allows the ICS to expand and contract as necessary. The modular organization of the ICS is divided into five functional areas: Command, Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance.
3. A Unified command structure provides critical collaboration for situations that are multijurisdictional in nature. The Unified Command structure provides effective coordinated actions of separate agencies.
4. Consolidated action plans are vital in the preparedness phase of any operation. The plans entail written actions that are designed to define and achieve all goals and objectives during the entire operation.
5. Span-of-control deals with the effective management of personnel. Under the ICS, the number of personnel under any supervisor ranges from three to seven; five is optimal.
6. Designated incident facilities are critical locations for staging and command. The Incident Command Post is the location from which all operations are directed.

In the event of a large emergency or disaster incident, the Teller County ICS chain of command structure will generally consist of five of response personnel groups that are integrated as necessary. Not all groups are activated at all times. The ICS is similar to an "on-call" system, in which only the minimal number of personnel are mobilized for a given situation. The groups consist of:

1. The Command group comprises of the Incident Command and general Staff, which usually is based at the Command Post. The Command and General staff includes several representatives, each with specific responsibilities:

Command Staff

- A. Incident Commanders are the designated individuals from the public agencies or other responsible parties who have the authority to act on behalf of their respective groups.
- B. Safety Officers assess safety hazards and unsafe situations, and they have the authority, when necessary, to bypass the chain of command to correct unsafe acts immediately.
- C. Liaison Officers are the points of contact for assistance and to coordinate activities among agencies.
- D. Public Information Officers are responsible for interfacing with the media.
- E. Legal Counsel is appointed to represent the involved agencies and to ensure that legal issues do not impede response effectiveness.

General Staff

- A. Operations, Planning, Logistics and Finance Section Chiefs responsible for the management of the agencies that are assigned to a respective section.
 - The Planning Section is responsible for collection, evaluation, dissemination, and use of information about the development of the incident and the status of resources. Effective planning ensures an aggressive, comprehensive approach to problems that may be encountered.
 - The Operations Section and its various branches manage tactical operations at the incident scene.
 - The Logistics Section is responsible for providing facilities, services, and materials for the response forces.
 - The Finance Section monitors costs, evaluates financial considerations, and prepares required personnel, equipment and material tracking and reimbursement documents for obtaining emergency relief funds.

Teller County Emergency Response agencies are committed to providing the highest levels of protection and response to ensure the safety of all citizens. Emergency response is predicated on the desire to resolve situations as quickly and efficiently as possible. All Teller County first responder personnel are trained in their respective disciplines to ensure effective performance of critical services that quickly resolve emergency situations.