

Evacuation and Transportation Functional Annex

Updated: September 12, 2024

I. PURPOSE

These operating procedures provide for an orderly, coordinated evacuation of the County population during emergencies and disasters while outlining the organization and direction of transportation resources.

II. SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS

A. Situation

1. Several emergencies may require the evacuation of all or part of the County. Small-scale, localized evacuations may be needed as a result of a hazardous materials incident, major fire, or other incident. Large-scale evacuation may be needed in the event of a severe storm or other county-wide disaster.
2. A hazard analysis and vulnerability assessment has been completed throughout the County, which identifies types of threats, and the areas and the population that are most vulnerable to these threats.
3. A demographic analysis has been completed. Facilities and populations within the County that pose special evacuation problems have been identified.
4. An evacuation may require substantial physical resources for transportation, communication, and traffic control. Available public and private resources have been identified.
5. Large-scale disasters may necessitate the rapid evacuation of nursing homes, assisted living facilities, group homes, and non-ambulatory populations.
6. Alexander County Schools Transportation has approximately 68 buses; of those, five (5) can assist with mobility issues with accessibility lifts.
7. Greenway Public Transportation provides a variety of public transportation options to the citizens of the Unifour region, including buses and transit vans, many of which have accessibility lifts.
8. The decision on re-entry into damaged or isolated areas will be made by the Control Group(s) function in the Alexander County EOC.
9. Highways 64, 90, and 127 are major traffic routes in and out of the county. These routes could become impassable due to heavy rainfall and traffic congestion, negatively impacting evacuations.
10. The key bridges within the County for evacuation are Hwy. 16 and 127 spanning the Catawba River.

B. Assumptions

1. Sufficient warning times may not be available to evacuate the threatened population.
2. Traffic Control resources must be coordinated before the public release of an evacuation order.
3. Evacuations and re-entry will be coordinated with the County PIO to ensure all communication means are utilized.
4. The principal mode of transportation will be private vehicles.

5. Particular areas of the County or special populations within the County will need additional time to accomplish an evacuation.
6. The public will both receive and understand official information related to evacuation. The public will act in its own interest and will evacuate dangerous areas promptly when advised to do so.
7. If there is sufficient advanced warning, some residents will evacuate before being advised to do so by public officials.
8. Most evacuees will seek shelter with relatives or friends rather than accept public shelter.
9. Some residents may refuse to evacuate, regardless of warnings.
10. Some people will lack transportation. Others who are ill or disabled may require vehicles with special transportation capabilities.
11. Debris or damage to the roadway could hamper re-entry.
12. Evacuation should be completed during daylight hours, whenever possible.
13. Surrounding county evacuations could impact Alexander County.

III. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

A. General

1. The ultimate responsibility for ordering an evacuation rests with the local government. If the Town of Taylorsville is to be evacuated, the Mayor will issue the order. If the evacuation involves more than one jurisdiction, or an area outside of a municipality, the order will be issued on a County level by the Chairman of the County Commissioners, or his designated elected representative.
2. By monitoring the progress of the evacuation, any impediments to the evacuation can be recognized and contingency options can be implemented.
3. The Incident Commander at the scene of an isolated emergency in Alexander County has the authority to order an evacuation of the specific area affected by the incident. The Emergency Management Coordinator or staff should be made aware immediately regarding any isolated evacuation.
4. Regional coordination of traffic control, shelter/mass care, and public information will enhance the total evacuation and re-entry process. The Western Regional Coordination Center through NCEM will assist in coordinating regional evacuation activities.

B. Specific

1. Movement Control and Guidance
 - a. The size of the threatened area to be evacuated will be determined by conditions at the time of the emergency.
 - b. Traffic movement during evacuation will be controlled by use of pre-designated routes and traffic control points. The evacuation area will identify at least two routes of egress. One lane of each route will be kept open to permit the ingress of emergency vehicles.
 - c. Vehicle capacity for the major evacuation route (US 64) is estimated at 1,000 vehicles per lane per hour.
 - d. Traffic movement is directed to reception areas and shelters within the County and in adjacent counties.

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- e. Vehicles experiencing mechanical problems during the evacuation will be moved off the roads. Stranded evacuees will be picked up by other evacuating vehicles, or by emergency response personnel.
 - f. Access to the defined evacuation areas will be denied to non-essential personnel once an evacuation order has been issued.
 2. Staging Areas, Pick-up Points, and Routes
 - a. The County will determine staging areas as mobilization points to organize the emergency personnel and equipment entering from areas outside the County.
 - b. Pick-up points and/or routes will be established as needed. Evacuees without vehicles will be instructed to go to the nearest pick-up point. Emergency vehicles will travel these routes at least twice during the evacuation to ensure all evacuees without vehicles are assisted.
 3. Evacuation of Special Populations (Institutions, Facilities, and Individuals with Disabilities)
 - a. Institutions within the County should develop procedures for evacuation.
 - b. Most patients and staff of medical facilities will be evacuated by buses. Available ambulances and vans will be provided for the evacuation of non-ambulatory individuals. Procedures for rapid evacuation and/or in-place sheltering have been included for facilities in the danger zone for hazardous materials spills.
 - c. Schools will develop evacuation procedures. Pre-designated buses will be utilized for students without their vehicles. Schools within the danger zone for hazardous materials spills will develop procedures for in-place sheltering and “walk-away” evacuations. Parents will be advised of the location of reception centers.
 - d. The public will be given a telephone number(s) for individuals with mobility issues without transportation. The EOC will arrange pick-up of these individuals by Greenway Public Transportation or Alexander County Schools’ buses. The County Department of Social Services will need to advise the EOC of individuals known to need transportation assistance.
 - e. Each prison and detention center within the County will develop procedures for the relocation of prisoners to detention facilities outside of the threatened area.
 - f. Evacuation from County parks and recreation areas will be coordinated by the County. Parks and Recreation representatives will advise the EOC of any scheduled special events, which may draw crowds to the parks or recreation areas.
 - g. Large employers within the County have procedures for evacuation of their employees. These procedures include, if needed, the temporary shutdown of their facilities.
 4. Emergency Public Information Procedures
 - a. Emergency public information materials will be prepared. They should identify staging areas for people requiring transportation as well as reception areas, and provide movement guidance for the public.
 - b. Warnings to the public and information concerning evacuation will be broadcast over the EAS network and/or the County's Emergency Communications Network and/or by emergency vehicles equipped with sirens, warning lights, and/or loudspeakers moving through the threatened areas. For localized evacuations, warning and evacuation instructions may also be given door-to-door.
 5. Re-entry

- a. The decision to allow re-entry to any evacuated/restricted areas of Alexander County will be made by the Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners in coordination with the Mayor of the Town of Taylorsville, based on consideration of public health and safety.
- b. Evacuated emergency service equipment and personnel will re-enter before the re-entry of the public for a safety assessment.
- c. The Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners, in coordination with the Mayor, will establish the order for the re-entry of the public.
- d. Staging areas for incoming resources will be established.
- e. The use of privately owned sites for forward staging throughout the County will be negotiated and utilized, as needs dictate.
- f. Certain regional staging areas will be used as mobilization points to receive and organize emergency relief personnel and equipment.
- g. Sections of the County may remain isolated or closed to the public even after re-entry begins based on safety and security concerns of that jurisdiction.

IV. ORGANIZATION AND ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Organization

1. The County Emergency Management Coordinator is responsible for implementing the County Evacuation and Transportation operating procedures to facilitate the evacuation process during emergencies.
2. During an evacuation, County emergency operations will be directed by the Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners and coordinated by Emergency Management.

B. Assignment of Responsibilities

1. Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners, in addition to duties outlined *elsewhere in the County Emergency Operations Plan*, will:
 - a. Declare and terminate a state of emergency when appropriate.
 - b. Issue and terminate the evacuation order when appropriate.
 - c. Authorize emergency workers to support evacuation and to enter and leave the threatened area(s).
 - d. Request the assumption of State direction and control of the evacuation, if required.
 - e. Assure the protection of public documents and public facilities during the emergency.
2. Emergency Management Coordinator, in addition to duties outlined *elsewhere in the County Emergency Operations Plan*, will:
 - a. Identify potential evacuation areas per the County's hazard analysis.
 - b. Maintain and update evacuation and transportation planning and guidelines
 - c. Identify population groups requiring special assistance during evacuation. (e.g., senior citizens, disabled, nursing homes, prison population, etc.).
 - d. Assure that institutions within the County have evacuation procedures.
 - e. Coordinate with private industry for the use of privately owned vehicles, communication, or other resources needed for evacuation management.
 - f. Select staging areas or routes for pick-up of persons without transportation.
 - g. Coordinate the transportation of emergency workers into and out of the hazard area.
 - h. Ensure evacuation of the disabled, elderly, and other special population groups.

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- i. Coordinate the evacuation movement including the relocation into other jurisdictions.
 - j. Designate and activate reception and shelter areas within the County and coordinate with EOC from adjoining counties to ensure that reception areas and shelters have been designated in their counties and activated to receive evacuees.
 - k. Monitor the progress of the evacuation and modify evacuation procedures when needed.
 - l. Brief EOC staff and executive group on evacuation status.
 - m. Establish disaster assistance centers if appropriate.
 - n. Initiate the return of the population as soon as conditions are safe at the direction of the Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners.
3. The Sheriff, in addition to duties outlined *elsewhere in the County Emergency Operations Plan*, will:
- a. Identify primary and alternate evacuation routes and the traffic control mechanisms (e.g., roadblocks) needed to ensure proper utilization of those routes.
 - b. Establish staging areas in conjunction with fire departments, rescue squads, and other emergency services agencies.
 - c. Assist in warning dissemination by distribution and/or enforcement of the evacuation order.
 - d. Provide traffic control for the diversion of traffic away from threatened areas.
 - e. Maintain law and order and protect property in the evacuated areas.
 - f. Provide traffic and perimeter control for the evacuation where needed.
 - g. Provide traffic control and security at reception centers and parking areas.
 - h. Provide communications support to Emergency Services.
 - i. Direct re-entry traffic into the evacuated area during recovery.
4. The Public Information Officer, in addition to duties outlined *elsewhere in the County Emergency Operations Plan*, will:
- a. Develop and implement, when necessary, a public information program to increase citizen awareness and responsiveness to evacuation instructions.
 - b. Conduct a public information campaign to disseminate disaster assistance information as necessary.
 - c. Inform the public about evacuation routes, destinations, and other vital information.
5. Greenway Public Transportation, in addition to duties outlined *elsewhere in the County Emergency Operations Plan*, will:
- a. Develop procedures for intra- and inter-county transportation systems to move critical supplies and equipment from the hazard areas to reception areas and the transport of key emergency workers to and from the hazard area. Procedures will include the movement of key workers on designated evacuation routes in either publicly or privately owned vehicles and/or buses.
 - b. Provide buses and vans for evacuation.
 - c. Coordinate with law enforcement on establishing staging areas, as well as with fire departments and rescue squads on designating pick-up points and routes.
 - d. Coordinate with, and support, law enforcement in establishing evacuation routes and traffic control points.

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- e. Provide transportation support to fire departments and the rescue squad for the evacuation of individuals without transportation.
 - f. Advise the Emergency Management Coordinator of roadway conditions that could impede evacuation.
 - g. Obtain additional transportation resources, as needed from adjacent jurisdictions, the State, and private sources.
6. Superintendent of Schools, in addition to duties outlined *elsewhere in the County Emergency Operations Plan*, will:
- a. Maintain school transportation resources and provide fuel support when refueling is necessary.
 - b. Direct the evacuation of school populations.
 - c. Provide buses and other school vehicles if required for evacuation of the public.
7. North Carolina Department of Transportation
- a. Advise the Emergency Management Coordinator of roadway conditions and update the NC Travel Information Management System.
 - b. Support the removal of debris, disabled vehicles, or other roadblocks to evacuation.
 - c. Support with traffic barriers and signs, and setting up detours of roadblocks that are unable to be quickly cleared.
8. The Mayor, in addition to duties outlined *elsewhere in the County Emergency Operations Plan*, will:
- a. Develop plans for the security of municipal public documents and facilities.
 - b. Develop a roster of key workers who must remain during an evacuation or return after the evacuation to relieve other key workers. Provide, as requested, municipal personnel and equipment resources to the County to support an evacuation.
9. Military Support Liaison will:
- a. Coordinate with Emergency Management regarding the availability of personnel and equipment resources from military resources responding to assist in the County.
 - b. Coordinate the use of facilities for military support personnel assigned to the County.
 - c. Arrange for logistics support for evacuation operations and supplies when requested.
 - d. Coordinate available military personnel to assist law enforcement in providing security for evacuated areas.

V. DIRECTION AND CONTROL

- A. Direction and control of evacuation is the responsibility of the Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners. In the Chairman's absence, the Commissioner next in line of succession will serve as the replacement representative. Duties may be delegated to the County Manager or the Emergency Management Coordinator.
- B. During large-scale evacuations involving the relocation of the population from an entire municipality, County, or several counties, the Governor may declare a State of Emergency. At that point, the Governor assumes direction and control of the situation, and evacuation operations will be coordinated by the State Emergency Response Team (SERT) upon activation of the State EOC.
- C. When an emergency requires timely evacuation and before the EOC can be activated, the "on-scene" commander can call for evacuation following the County's State of Emergency Management ordinance.

VI. CONTINUITY OF GOVERNMENT

A. The line of succession is:

1. Evacuation
 - a. Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners
 - b. County Manager
 - c. Emergency Management Coordinator
2. Continuity of government will be maintained by relocating government operations. Lines of succession to all key positions will be established and all essential records will be protected.
3. When evacuees are relocated outside the County, a representative will be appointed to act as liaison between the County and the reception area government. The evacuees will be subject to the regulations and policies of the reception area for the duration of their stay.
4. Lines of succession to each agency that supports the evacuation/transportation operation are per the agency's established policy.

VII. ADMINISTRATION AND LOGISTICS

- A.** Instructional materials identifying evacuation zones, routes, parking facilities, and shelters will be developed for evacuees.
- B.** Emergency public information instructions for the disaster will be prepared in advance as much as possible, and distributed as necessary.

VIII. PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

- A.** This plan will be reviewed on an annual basis by the listed responsible parties.
- B.** Emergency response forces which participate in an evacuation effort are responsible for maintenance of departmental SOPs, mutual aid agreements, equipment inventories, and personnel rosters including 24-hour emergency notification telephone numbers.

IX. AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES

- A. Authorities**
 1. NC General Statue 166-A
 2. Alexander County Emergency Management Ordinance