

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Between

STILLWATER COUNTY and the CITY OF COLUMBUS, MONTANA

Purpose

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) establishes the framework for coordinated Disaster and Emergency Services (DES) between Stillwater County and the City of Columbus. Both entities recognize that effective emergency management—encompassing preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery—requires sustained collaboration and shared resources.

Authority

This agreement is executed pursuant to Title 10, Chapter 3, Montana Code Annotated (MCA), which authorizes local governments to form interjurisdictional agreements for disaster and emergency services.

Specifically:

- 10-3-201(1), MCA – Each political subdivision shall establish a local or interjurisdictional agency responsible for emergency and disaster planning, coordination, and response.
- 10-3-201(4), MCA – Each jurisdiction shall notify the Montana Division of Disaster and Emergency Services (MT DES) of how it fulfills emergency and disaster responsibilities.
- 10-3-401, MCA – Each jurisdiction shall prepare and maintain an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP).

Mutual Understanding

Stillwater County and the City of Columbus agree that public safety and community resilience are best achieved through a unified approach to emergency management. This partnership enables consistent planning, coordinated response operations, and efficient recovery efforts for all hazards impacting the community.

Responsibilities

Stillwater County Disaster and Emergency Services (DES) shall:

1. Develop, maintain, and implement the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) for Stillwater County and the City of Columbus.
2. Maintain and update the Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan (MHMP) to reduce long-term disaster risks.
3. Coordinate and integrate additional emergency and hazard-specific plans (e.g., Continuity of Operations, Debris Management, Wildfire Evacuation, Hazardous Materials Response, Recovery Framework).

4. Lead preparedness, response, and recovery coordination between county and municipal departments, local jurisdictions, and partner agencies.
5. Serve as the local on-scene coordinator during large or complex incidents that involve state or federal resources, ensuring unified command, coordination, and integration with the Montana DES, DNRC, FEMA, and other supporting agencies.
6. Facilitate the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) as required under Section 301 of the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA).
7. Provide ongoing training, exercises, and public outreach to enhance readiness and resilience across the community.

Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC)

The LEPC shall operate under joint oversight of Stillwater County and the City of Columbus. Membership shall, as appropriate, include representatives from:

- Local elected officials (city, county, and state)
- Law enforcement agencies
- Fire and emergency medical services
- Public health and hospitals
- Emergency management
- Public works and infrastructure
- Local environmental and community organizations
- Media representatives
- Owners and operators of regulated facilities

A single member may represent multiple stakeholder categories. The LEPC will review all major emergency management plans prior to submission to the Stillwater County Board of Commissioners and the Columbus City Council for formal adoption.

Governance and Review

- The Stillwater County DES Chief serves as the primary coordinator for implementation of this MOU.
- The MOU shall be reviewed every three years (or following a significant incident or organizational change) to ensure alignment with current laws, best practices, and operational needs.
- Amendments shall be made in writing and approved by both the Stillwater County Board of Commissioners and the Columbus City Council.

Effective Date and Term

This MOU shall take effect upon approval and signature by both parties and shall remain in force until amended, superseded, or terminated in writing by either party with at least 30 days' written notice.

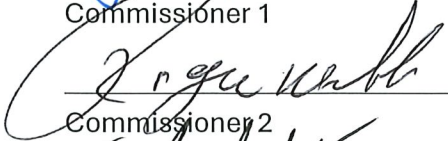
Signatures

For Stillwater County:



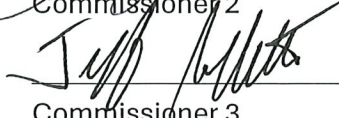
Commissioner 1

Date: 11-24-25



Commissioner 2

Date: 11.24.25



Commissioner 3


Date: 11/24/25

For the City of Columbus:



Mayor

Date: 11/17/2025



Council Member 1

Date: 11/17/25



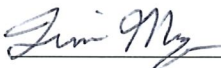
Council Member 2

Date: 11/17/25



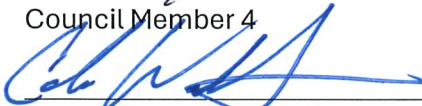
Council Member 3

Date: 11/17/25



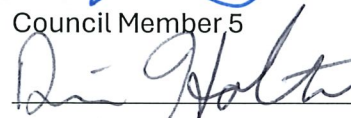
Council Member 4

Date: 11-17-25



Council Member 5

Date: 11-17-25



Council Member 6

Date: 11-17-25

Attested:



Stillwater County DES Chief

Date: 25 NOV 25

Attested:



Stillwater County Clerk

Date: 11.25-25



