

Section III: Hazard Specific Annexes

Annex 7: Utility Interruption

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Introduction:

Primary Agency: Unified Command

Support Agencies:

- Fire Agencies
- Stillwater County Disaster and Emergency Services
- Stillwater County Fire Warden
- Law Enforcement Agencies
- City/County 911 Dispatch Center
- Emergency Medical Services
- Public Works Agencies
- Public Health Agencies
- Montana DOT
- Montana Highway Patrol
- Montana National Guard
- Montana DES
- National Weather Service
- American Red Cross of Montana

Purpose

Resource shortages of drinking water, electrical power, natural gas, gasoline and heating oil, food supplies, and loss of telephone and sanitary sewer services could occur in Stillwater County. While causes of these shortages may be natural or manmade, the severity of the incident must be measured by how seriously the shortage amount and duration impacts life and property.

Situation & Assumptions

1. An energy or fuel shortage can occur without adequate warning. Fuel shortage effects production and transportation shipping, which can cause severe food and merchandise shortages. Heating fuels and electrical supplies are critical during severe winter weather. Lack of fuel for emergency operations could cause life safety problems.
2. Water / sewer treatment plant's without power can cause health and sanitation problems.
3. A coordinated response to an energy emergency is required.

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4. Certain hazard-specific emergencies may require automatic emergency alerting, warning and notification of the general public and emergency response organizations. (*see Annex: Alert & Warning for further information*).

5. Telephone communications may be disrupted or overloaded. Local and regional radio/television stations without emergency power may be off the air for lengthy periods of time.

Concept of Operations

A. General

Resource shortages caused by utility failures can occur with little or no warning. Fortunately, they will likely be more isolated and of a shorter duration. If the incident involves a City or County utility, i.e., water or sanitary sewer, the appropriate Public Works Department's responsibilities include all phases of the planning process including the development of procedures for the maintenance, repair, and restoration of vital functions within the community. For other utility failures, i.e., natural gas and electrical power, and telephone service the planning responsibility includes coordination with the utility(s) affected as well as evacuation and shelter planning for the affected population. (*See Annexes, Evacuation and Mass Care & Shelter as needed.*)

Planning can occur to deal with resource shortages that develop over time such as drought, inadequate natural gas, gasoline and heating oil, and food supplies. During incidents of this nature, the resource shortage(s) will be wide spread and conservation planning will likely occur on a regional or statewide basis. In this type of incident, the primary operations role is to coordinate the dissemination of information, compliance monitoring within the City and County, and securing sufficient supplies to ensure the public safety, delivery of emergency services, and continuity of government. This will require a collaborative effort on the part of the DES office, Public Works, Law Enforcement, and Public Health.

B: Direction & Control

◆ See the Direction and Control Annex in Section II: Functional Annexes.

◆ Protective action decision making and implementation will be accomplished using the Incident Command System. Decisions will be made based on the scope and "pace" of the incident.

◆ Incident Command:

Response: Unified Command is recommended. Representatives may include: PW, PH, LE, Fire, CEOs, and Private Utilities.

Recovery: Senior **Public Works** official or designee.

*Unified Command (*suggested*): PW, PH, and NGOs/Private Industry

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◆ The Incident Commander will establish an Incident Command Post (ICP) as soon as possible and ensure that the location of the ICP and identity of the IC is disseminated to all responders.

◆ The IC will adapt the management structure to reflect the need and complexity of the incident. In accordance with other annexes, this may include, but is not limited to activating the EOC, establishing unified command, and requesting mutual aid support from neighboring jurisdictions.

C: Operational Roles & Responsibilities

The activities and responsibilities for each department will vary depending on the type of resource in short supply, the length of warning period, and the duration of the incident. Some suggested general actions may include, but are not limited to the following:

◆ Incident Commander

- Verify the expected extent and duration utility failure or resource shortage.
- Determine the need for mitigation actions or response measures.
- Prioritize emergency response and restoration activities.
- Seek legal advise from County/City Attorney, as needed.

◆ Safety Officer

- Determine actions or behaviors that are at risk due to utility failures or resource shortages.
- Coordinate safety messages with the Public Information Officer for public release.

◆ Public Information Officer

- Determine media outlets for public information.
- Coordinate the dissemination of information.
- Keep CEOs and all departments informed of developing.
- Keep the public informed.
- Conduct “rumor control” efforts and verify information with the Planning Section.

◆ Operations Section Chief

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- Allocate resources for restoration efforts, as determined by Incident Command priorities.
- Monitor for compliance with mandatory conservation/curtailment actions, if needed.
- Monitor vulnerable populations, if needed.
- Implement response and restoration actions, based upon Incident Commander's priorities.

◆ Planning Section Chief

- Verify list of industries, facilities, and special populations that might be impacted by or vulnerable to in this event.
- Determine need for conservation or curtailment planning.
- Determine planning partners such as adjacent jurisdictions, utility providers, social service agencies, community representatives, business representatives, etc.
- Determine whether resource cutbacks/curtailments will be voluntary or mandatory.
- Determine potential for price gouging and need for anti-price gouging ordinance.
- Determine need for disaster declaration or other action by CEOs to implement mandatory conservation or curtailment actions or to request additional resources (see MCA 90-4-3).
- Determine need for evacuation and shelter planning for the affected population.
- Work with Law Enforcement, Fire, County Emergency Operations Center, and the American Red Cross.
- See the Evacuation Annex in Section II: Functional Annexes
- Determine need for monitoring compliance with mandatory conservation/curtailment measures, and develop a plan for accomplishing it.
- Determine need for volunteers to assist in operations.
- Existing volunteer groups may be easiest to activate.
- Contact DESC for a listing of existing volunteer groups and a VOAD representative.
- Coordinate response and restoration priorities with the EOC and utility representatives.

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- Develop a phased plan to implement mitigation and response activities, according to the severity of the incident, with trigger points for implementing each of the phases.
- Identify actions needed to preserve delivery of emergency services and continuity of government.
- Identify any resulting security or safety issues, and actions to deal with them.
- Coordinate plan with EOC staff, then submit to Policy Group for approval.
- Submit plan to City/County Attorney for review, then to CEOs for adoption as appropriate.
- Notify regulatory agencies of actions, as appropriate.

◆ Logistics Section Chief

- Collect resource requirement information from all departments and research sources of needed resources.
- Determine minimum utility & resource needs for Public Safety, delivery of emergency services, and continuity of government.
- Identify additional sources of scarce resources.
- Coordinate with Incident Commander to allocate scarce resources.

◆ Finance Section Chief

- Document incident actions and costs incurred.
- Assist in determining whether “price gouging” is occurring within the affected jurisdiction.

◆ Disaster & Emergency Services Coordinator (DESC):

- Keep CEOs briefed on the developing situation.
- Consider declaration of emergency/disaster in accordance with the law.
- Consider activation of the EOC.
- Assist the PIO in the development of public information.

◆ All Departments:

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- Alert personnel of developing conditions.
- Assess department's minimum resource needs to maintain operations and communicate shortages to Logistics Section.
- Review department SOPs as they relate to the developing incident.
- Develop and implement department action plan.
- Evaluate potential safety issues and make recommendations to the Planning Section.
- Document incident actions and costs incurred.

D: Authorities and Limitations

◆ MCA 90-4-3.

◆ The Incident Commander (IC) has authority to coordinate the use of resources and personnel.

◆ The CEOs have the authority to declare a State of Emergency within their jurisdiction and the responsibility to request a state or federal declaration if appropriate.

◆ CEOs have the authority to enter into mutual aid agreements between their jurisdictions and other jurisdictions.

◆ MCA 10-3-104 and 10-3-406 give the Governor and local chief elected officials the authority to *"direct and compel the evacuation of all or part of the population from an emergency or disaster area.....when necessary for the preservation of life or other disaster mitigation, response, or recovery;"* and to *"control the ingress and egress to and from an emergency or disaster area, the movement of persons within the area, and the occupancy of premises therein."*

◆ The MTDOT and the Federal Highway Administration have the authority to close state and federal highways and bridge structures.

◆ The County Health Officer has broad authority over matters of public health to include air and water quality concerns, food supplies, wastewater systems, and disease prevention.

E: Warning and Notification

Information about utility failures and resource shortages would be obtained by a variety of sources. If it is an incident that occurs without warning, like a utility failure, notification could occur through 911 dispatch, telephone calls coming into the office, or observance by utility crews or responders in the field. For resource shortages that are likely to develop over time,

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notification and planning would most likely be facilitated through the County Disaster & Emergency Services Office.

F: Public Information

Requests for voluntary cutbacks in consumption of scarce resources should be disseminated when appropriate. The distribution of such notices should be coordinated by the designated Public Information Officer as directed by the Incident Commander.

Mandatory rationing or curtailment instructions may be issued by the Chief Elected Officials (CEOs) as authorized by local ordinance. Such instructions should be carefully coordinated with other affected jurisdictions and agencies.

G. Considerations and Implementation Responsibilities

◆ Rumor Control

Rumor control is vital during emergency operations. Sensitive or critical information should be authorized and verified before release. Unconfirmed rumors or information from unauthorized sources should be addressed immediately.

Do not release information that might hinder emergency response or pose a further threat to public safety. Examples include:

- Personal conjecture about the course of the emergency or the conduct of response.
- Speculation.
- Demeaning information/statements.
- Information that might compromise the effectiveness of response and recovery.

◆ Priorities

If the utility system is damaged, restoration is critical with emphasis on water treatment, storage, and distribution followed by wastewater systems and sanitation, power/electricity, and then fuels. The Planning Section should work closely with Incident Command and Operations to develop restoration priorities based on the particular incident and shortages faced.