



ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

SECTION: 200 – General Administration	POLICY: 214
TITLE: Workforce Readiness for Emergencies	IMPLEMENTED BY PROCEDURE County Emergency Operations Plan County Continuity of Operations Plan
SPONSORING DEPARTMENT County Emergency Management	R&O
ADOPTED 09/18/2026	REVIEWED

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the County workforce is prepared to respond to emergencies by:

- a. Setting expectations for County departments and employees for responding to emergencies.
- b. Enabling County employees to accept emergency assignments.
- c. Ensuring that County emergency workers are adequately supported.

The County needs to be prepared to meet the critical emergency needs of its employees and the community. To meet this need, the County must have an available workforce consisting of employees that understand their roles and responsibilities in emergency response and recovery and understand that their emergency roles may differ from their routine roles. This policy sets the framework to ensure the availability and readiness of its workforce during emergencies and ensure the workforce is supported.

AUTHORITY

The authority to establish and enforce this policy is granted by the Washington County Board of Commissioners and the County Administrator.

APPLICABILITY

This policy and the implementation procedures apply to all elected public officials, employees, volunteers, interns and contractors of the County (referred to collectively herein as 'Staff').

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are applicable to this policy only.

1. "Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP Plan)" refers to the County's plan for continuing or restoring essential functions, such as legally mandated services, when these services are impacted by emergency conditions. The COOP Plan includes plans for each department.
2. "Emergency" means a human created or natural event or circumstance that causes or threatens widespread loss of life, injury to person or property, human suffering or financial loss, including but not limited to wildfire, flood, severe weather, landslides, earthquake, or chemical spills.
3. "Emergency Assignment" is the role or function the employee is tasked to perform in support of the response to and immediate recovery from an emergency.
4. "Emergency Operations Center (EOC)" is the County's center for the coordination and support of incident response and immediate recovery.
5. "Emergency Reassignment" is a temporary change to the allocation or distribution of an employee's work during an emergency, that is outside the scope for their job classification and may be outside of their home program, division, or department.
6. "EOC Responders" are the personnel and volunteers that fill positions in the EOC.
7. "Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)" refers to the County's plan for responding to an emergency. The EOP describes the County's concept of operations for emergency response and sets roles and responsibilities for response and immediate recovery activities.
8. "Emergency Worker" refers to any County employee fully or partially engaged in emergency response or recovery assignments. Assignments may include:
 - a) Emergency tasks that are part of routine position duties, such as those carried out by LUT Maintenance and Operations, Sheriff's Office, and County Emergency Management personnel
 - b) Supporting continuity of operations when County essential functions are disrupted or degraded
 - c) Working in the County Emergency Operations Center, department operations center, or incident management team
 - d) Providing other community emergency services such as working in a shelter, family assistance center, or point of distribution
9. "Internal Operations Management Team (IOMT)" is the multi-department team responsible for responding to internal, cross-departmental challenges resulting from disruptive emergencies affecting daily operations.
10. "Personnel Accountability Report (PAR)" is a critical, systematic assessment conducted by Incident Commanders (ICs) or supervisors to confirm the safety, location, and total count of all personnel.

11. "Priority Essential Functions" refers to the County functions that must be restored promptly and continued to support public health and safety, legal requirements, and government legitimacy. These include at least the level 1 and 2 functions (i.e., must be restored in 72 hours) described in the COOP Plan.

GENERAL POLICY

Washington County is committed to the effective and efficient use of its resources and services to meet the critical emergency needs of its community members. To meet this commitment, the County must be ready to maximize the use of its workforce during emergencies. To ensure sufficient personnel are available, Washington County employees shall support the continuity of essential County functions and support emergency response and recovery activities in accordance with the guidelines below.

The County recognizes that emergency conditions may present unique hazards to County employees, such as dangerous travel conditions and extreme weather. Emergency response activities may also require that employees work long, demanding hours, including evenings, weekends, and holidays. The County is committed to ensuring that, to the greatest degree possible, its workforce continues to have a safe and supportive work environment during emergencies.

POLICY GUIDELINES

1. Preparedness:
 - 1.1. Appointing authorities are responsible for setting expectations of staff regarding their emergency roles. This includes expectations for responding to workplace emergencies (injuries, fires, active threats, etc.), disruptions to essential County functions, and emergencies impacting the community. Expectations will be based on position roles, the EOP, and COOP Plan and, where applicable, should address:
 - a. Emergency notification and Personnel Accountability Reporting
 - b. Safely reporting to primary or alternate work locations
 - c. Primary and alternate communications methods
 - d. Emergency roles and responsibilities
 - e. Reassignment to cover critical duties
 - 1.2. Department directors are encouraged to include emergency roles and responsibilities in job classifications.
 - 1.3. Human Resources will coordinate with departments and County Emergency Management to include consistent language in job classifications pertaining to general expectations for emergency response and the potential for emergency reassignments. Language will not suggest the need for a different classification level.
 - 1.4. Policy 201: Facility Closure or Curtailment Due to Hazardous Conditions, states "When hazardous conditions exist and County facilities are open, all scheduled employees will make a good-faith effort to report to work, including when there are hazardous

conditions.”

1.5. Given the necessity of having a safe, healthy, and prepared workforce, the County strongly encourages staff to prepare themselves and their families for emergencies.

1.6. County Emergency Management is responsible for:

- a. Coordinating with County departments to define emergency roles and responsibilities of departments and staff in the EOP and COOP Plan.
- b. Training and preparing staff that will work in the EOC, shelters, family assistance centers, call centers, and other special emergency functions.
- c. Providing training and other support for personal and family preparedness to the County workforce. This will include providing preparedness information and resources that are accessible, culturally responsive, and inclusive of employees with varying needs

2. Adjustment of Remote Work Arrangements

2.1. During an emergency, the County Administrator may modify remote work policies to ensure a sufficient workforce is available to support emergency operations and continuity of priority essential functions.

3. Emergency Reassignment:

- 3.1. Emergencies may lead to vacancies in critical positions or require additional staffing in departments involved in emergency response activities (i.e., surge staffing). Departments with critical vacancies or priority staffing needs should submit their requests to the IOMT. The EOC may also request staffing support or support for other lifesaving and life-sustaining functions (e.g., mass care and shelter operations) from the IOMT.
- 3.2. Departments will retain staffing to ensure the continuity of Priority Essential Functions. Otherwise, to the extent possible, departments should support the Emergency Reassignment of staff to critical emergency functions (e.g., supporting lifesaving or life-sustaining activities and EOC operations).
- 3.3. If necessary to meet critical emergency needs, in coordination with County departments, the County Administrator may authorize and direct employees to take on duties beyond the scope of their job classification and that may be outside of an employee’s home department.
- 3.4. If an employee is given an emergency reassignment, the supervisor shall allow and support the employee’s participation in the assignment, knowing it will take them away from their primary job duties for the duration of the assignment.
- 3.5. Emergency reassignments should be made based on operational needs, employee qualifications, safety considerations, and applicable legal protections. Assignments should not unnecessarily disadvantage employees based on protected characteristics or disability-related needs.

3.6. Per County Personnel Rules and Regulations, a supervisor may assign an employee of one class to perform the duties of a higher or lower class for a limited period. This may apply to emergency assignments. Accepting assignments to perform work of a higher or lower class for a limited period is a requirement of work in all classes.

4. Emergency Worker Compensation:

4.1. According to the County Personnel Rules and Regulations, supervisors may authorize and approve overtime for FLSA non-exempt employees. This may apply to emergency assignments.

4.2. The County Administrator may give approval of alternative compensation for FLSA exempt personnel involved in emergency assignments if:

- a. The emergency is likely to require employees to work substantial hours beyond a normal workday for 10 consecutive days or longer, or
- b. The emergency requires the reassignment of employees outside of their home department, and
- c. The County has declared an emergency, or a declaration is imminent, and
- d. Approval by Chief Financial Officer and Chief Human Resource Officer.

4.3. Tracking, allocation, and reimbursement of personnel and other emergency costs are addressed in Finance procedures.

EXCEPTIONS:

Any part of this Policy that conflicts with a collective bargaining agreement that specifically contradicts this policy are waived for covered employees. Any part not specifically covered in a collective bargaining agreement shall be governed by this policy.

Other exceptions may only be granted by the County Administrator or designee.

IMPLEMENTATION:

The County EOP and COOP Plan and associated emergency plans and procedures serve as the implementing procedures for this policy.

Elected officials and department directors are expected to be knowledgeable of, and shall be responsible for, implementing this policy within their respective departments.

PERIODIC REVIEW:

This policy shall be reviewed by Human Resources and County Emergency Management at least every three years to ensure accuracy, relevance, and compliance with County, state, and federal requirements.