ROGUE VALLEY FIRE CHIEFS' ASSOCIATION

Document:	**Evacuations**
Section & #:	Model Operational Guidelines #3.02
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Developed / Updated By:	Chief Karns / BC Cohee
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<u>Purpose</u>

The purpose of this guideline is to assist personnel in management of incidents involving evacuations.

<u>Scope</u>

Any incident involving the evacuation of civilians from a hazard area requires a close coordination with multiple agencies. A unified command will be established between the various jurisdictions having authority and PIOs will be fully utilized to facilitate public and other notifications.

<u>General Provisions</u>

1. Beyond the legal authority given to Law Enforcement pursuant to ORS 401 under a declared state of emergency, evacuation recommendations are a collaborative decision under Unified Command between the Law Enforcement and Fire agencies having jurisdiction. Unless deemed necessary to order evacuations for imminent public safety, Law Enforcement will generally only deny entry and restrict movement within the identified hazard areas.

2. Incident Commanders should utilize the Evacuation Checklist for emerging incidents.

3. Early and timely communication with Emergency Management on evacuation needs and the use of available alerting platforms is critical. Details of the area affected and levels being applied will be required. The county Fire Defense Board Chief can provide liaison support to Emergency Management.

4. The Incident Commander shall identify the current situation, prioritize problems, and order resources in a timely manner to facilitate orderly evacuations.

5. Command Staff needs shall be evaluated upon arrival. Rogue Valley Incident Management Team/Pool of resources may self-dispatch or be formally activated. Fire Defense Board Chief can provide resource support.

   a. Establish a command structure that meets the current needs. One that can be expanded to incorporate the future needs of the incident and is designed to effectively manage evacuations.

6. A PIO shall be requested and an Evacuation Group/Branch (if anticipating forming divisions or groups) shall be formed if evacuations are currently underway, or are imminent. Evacuation information must be disseminated to first responders, residents, businesses, media, dispatch centers, and other stakeholders.

Pre-Incident Considerations

1. Prepare local residents using public education in advance of known event (when applicable), such as a predicted storm, anticipated flooding, or annual start of fire season. **Emphasis placed on self-readiness**, enrollment in Citizen Alert and staying connected with reliable information outlets.

2. All agencies are encouraged to conduct preplanning for identified target hazard evacuation risks inclusive of potential event types (i.e. large gathering evacuation for a special event or a known potential for a localized flood event etc.). Educating residents on **"Be Ready/Be Set/Go"** is highly encouraged.

3. Preplanning should include but not be limited to: Identified local evacuation/sheltering locations; local protocols for requesting immediate evacuation support resources; developing necessary agreements and MOU's for resource access and use; alternative travel routes and traffic control plans; identification of Citizen Refuge Areas; and a contact list of critical partners, planning and operational templates to be used during the event.

4. Conduct localized exercises and train in-house responders in evacuation processes and incident management.

5. Develop local response protocol for formation of Evacuation Group/Branch for IA/emerging incident evacuation processes that can lay a successful foundation for an expanding incident.

6. All preplanning should be done in accordance with RVFCA, ORAlert and OSFM recommended best practices.

Evacuation Group/Branch Considerations

- IA or Emerging Event: The IC or Unified Command will most likely be faced with limited resources for executing mitigation efforts <u>and</u> evacuations. Early critical decision-making will be required to address the highest incident priority, and initial response resources may be required to engage in early evacuation processes rather than mitigation efforts. Every effort should be made to ensure clear communications of the priority, the need for a shift in strategy and tactics, and maintaining effective incident management. The formation of an Evacuation Group/Branch with appropriate levels of overhead and coordination will be key.
  - Consider Unifying the Evacuation Group/Branch with LE.

- Early resource ordering and organization is key. Task Force/Strike Team or Divisional/Group resources may be called upon to quickly transition as the incident dictates from mitigation to evacuation. This may continue to occur until such time as relief resources arrive or the incident threat is mitigated.
  - Resource considerations include but not limited to:
    - Law Enforcement
    - Animal Control/Large Animal Rescue Teams
    - Public Works
    - Bulk Transportation Options (buses)

- Local Search and Rescue or Trained CERT Teams where available.

- Consider the pros/cons of evacuation vs. sheltering in place.
  - Evacuation: reduced road congestion during firefighting efforts, pets and livestock can be removed, first responders less tempted to risk more.
  - Shelter in place: reduced road congestion early, less risk being caught in the open or in a vehicle, residents can protect their structures, may often be the safest location.

- Be prepared to manage:
  - Re-entry of residents
  - Refusal to evacuate
  - Road closures / Road Blocks

- Utilize the "**Be Ready/Be Set/Go**" (Level 1,2,3) program for tiered evacuations in the affected and adjacent zones of concern:
  - *Be Ready –* Level 1
    - Be ready for the potential to evacuate
    - Have a "go kit" ready
    - Have an evacuation plan for your family and pets
    - Have route of travel (and alternatives) pre-determined
    - Be Fire wise and create a defensible space
  - *Be Set –* Level 2
    - This level indicates significant danger, if you decide to stay, be ready to evacuate at a moment's notice
    - This may be the only notice you receive if conditions worsen
    - Supply your "go kit" with all the essentials to last 2 weeks
    - Stay connected with reliable emergency information and evacuation routes
  - *Go –* Level 3
    - If you chose not to evacuate, emergency services may not be able to assist you
    - Grab your "go kit" and leave immediately
    - Follow your evacuation plan and stay informed

RVFCA Evacuation Checklist √

Considerations for a small localized event that affects less than 10 structures and can be handled with minimal resources:

___Incident Command location established and announced to all stakeholders (use Unified Command)

___Prioritize problems /order resources (Fire, LE, Animal Control, Public Works, Transportation, etc.)

___Notify Emergency Management

___Command Staff/RVIMT Page Requested

     ___Yes
     ___No

___Request PIO **(Consider 2 for larger incidents - 1 w/ IC and 1 w/ Evacuation Group/Branch)**

     ____ Team up a local PIO with any OSFM or State Team PIO where applicable

___Establish Evacuation Group/Branch with PIO and Law assigned

___Establish Divisions/Groups as necessary

___Establish Structural Branch if Unified Command

___Incident Commander or Branch Director to determine (**Based on size of incident**)

     ___Number of structures threatened

     ___Determine level of evacuation (1, 2, or 3)

     ___Identify area to evacuate

          Street name   _____

          Address block _____

          Mile marker   _____

          Zone/Other_____

___Method of notifying residents

     ___I/A resources   ___Law   ___Citizen Alert in Jo/Jack County   ___Other

___Consider shelter in place/citizen refuge areas vs evacuation

___Keep PIO and Evacuation Group/Branch informed

___Consider a request for EOC activation for sheltering coordination and call center operations

___Shelter location/s for people and animals

___Evacuation Routes/Roadblocks/Security

___Special considerations (i.e.: Disaster Registry)

     *Elderly   *Handicapped   *Animals

     *Care facility   *Other vulnerable populations

___Plan for return of residents (utilize PIO/Emergency Management/Law)

___Coordinate timing of down-grades and/or cancellation of any evacuation levels