

SUBJECT: AREA EVACUATION	SECTION: 304.02
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PURPOSE

To provide a means of closing an area or moving people from an area in which life safety conditions have become unsafe or may become unsafe due to an emergency situation. An area is defined here as anything more than a single structure.

POLICY

In a variety of possible situations, it may be necessary to evacuate an area of the City. An evacuation of any thing more than a single structure requires a coordinated effort between Fire and Police supervisors at the scene to ensure that evacuation is rapid, complete, and without unnecessary duplication of effort. It requires a definite plan and a method of reporting progress.

- A. When evacuation of an area is indicated due to an imminent hazard, the limits of the evacuation area will normally be determined by Fire Department Command at the scene in consultation with the Police Supervisor at the scene. The practical considerations of what resources are available and what degree of risk is involved will necessarily be factors in the determination of evacuation limits.
- B. The Incident Commander should, upon determination of the necessity for evacuation, coordinate with the Police Supervisor on the scene to plan and execute evacuation of an area.
- C. Fire personnel may advise people to leave an area but they cannot force them to evacuate.
- D. Fire companies and units will not normally be utilized for evacuation operations. However, they may be utilized if available and not needed for control operations.

AUTHORITY

The City of Reading code gives authority to all emergency departments within the city limits the authority to close disaster areas and order evacuation.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

Any major evacuation will require and benefit from complete Public Information notification. A Public Information Officer should be assigned to communicate with radio and television stations as quickly as possible to explain exactly what the situation is and what people involved should do.

EMERGENCY OPERATING CENTER

In situations where the Emergency Operations Center (E.O.C.) has been activated, the Fire Department Command Post at the scene may be required to report information to and receive direction from the E.O.C.

EVACUATION CENTERS

- A. In most situations it is desirable to have a procedure for contacting people responsible for opening buildings designated as disaster shelters.
- B. When long term evacuation (more than two to three hours) is anticipated, contact Red Cross to set up a temporary shelter. This is usually best accomplished by using one of the pre-determined sites.
- C. The Command Post must have direct communications with the evacuation center.
- D. The Fire Chief and the dispatcher have a list of disaster shelters for use in an emergency situation.

ORGANIZATION OF EVACUATION

Once the desired area of evacuation and the operational perimeter have been established, a plan is necessary to actually effect the desired evacuation. This will be dependent on the resources available (Fire, Police, other agencies) and the type situation. Personnel from one or several agencies may be involved in actually alerting citizens and assisting them to evacuate.

- A. Establish a Unified Command Post. Utilize maps of the area to make assignments and report progress jointly to avoid duplication or omissions. If it is infeasible to have the Fire and Police Command Posts together, liaison will have to be established.
- B. Assign units or companies (if they are available) to evacuate specific objectives (a building, a block, a street, etc.) and report completion.
- C. Start with areas in most immediate danger first. Assign priorities according to degree of risk.
- D. Advise personnel if evacuees are to be directed to particular Evacuation Centers.
- E. Use the following means for notification of the public:
 - 1. NOAA weather radios – contact Hamilton County Dispatch
 - 2. Outdoor warning sirens – contact Hamilton County Dispatch
 - 3. Emergency Broadcast System – PIO
 - 4. Door to door – for small scale evacuations
 - 5. Vehicle public address system – for large scale evacuations

ADDITIONAL SITUATIONS

In addition to conventional evacuations, some situations may indicate different approaches.

- A. Atmospheric Hazard: Some hazardous materials situations may pose a problem to persons exposed to outside air only. This may be caused by a wind-carried irritant vapor or gas. In this case the best alternative may be to advise people to Shelter-in-Place.
- B. Advisory Notification: In some situations it may be necessary to notify citizens of potential risk and suggest that they relocate for their own convenience. As an example, this situation could occur when street flooding is expected, but no immediate threat to physical safety is indicated.
- C. Some special populations such as, schools, health care facilities, and some industry occupancies have their own Shelter-in-Place and evacuation plans.

RESPONSIBILITY

- A. The Police Department will be responsible for securing the perimeter of the evacuation area, and for coordination of the evacuation.
- B. The Fire Department Incident Commander will be responsible for assessment of the degree of danger and the need for evacuation, and for the physical safety of personnel operating within the evacuation zone.