

PUBLIC AWARENESS AND EDUCATION ANNEX

Introduction

The safety and security of our citizens and visitors to Larimer County is a priority. Emergency preparedness is part of this effort. Larimer County works with local, regional, state and federal agencies to prevent, protect against, mitigate for, respond to, and recover from incidents to minimize the impact on life, property and the economy.

Purpose

The purpose of this annex is to outline public awareness and education programs available to citizens and visitors of Larimer County to assist in preparing them for the diverse set of emergencies and disasters that occur throughout the county.

Public Awareness and Education Authority

The authority for preparedness activities involving the public is granted by the Board of Commissioners within their responsibilities as outlined in the Colorado Revised Statutes, Title 24, Article 33.5, Colorado Disaster Emergency Act, as amended June 2012.

Assignment of Responsibilities

Community members, citizens, and visitors to Larimer County are ultimately responsible for their own safety and well-being. Each should have an emergency plan based upon individual and family needs and should be aware of the hazards within their area.

The Larimer County Office of Emergency Management has primary responsibility for executing the provisions of the CEMP and for providing adequate preparedness information and programs to the public for emergencies and disasters within the county.

Preparedness and Education Materials

Larimer County has developed a Community Preparedness Guide for citizens and visitors to assist in educating them on the hazards that exist throughout the county. The guide outlines various weather-related events, weather-specific education, and actions by the community to ensure individual safety. Additionally, the guide provides information about managing emergencies and disasters with pets, emergency planning for home emergencies, planning for people with access or functional needs, and planning considerations for children. The Preparedness Guide is available electronically on the Larimer County website.

Many valuable resources are available online for citizens and visitors to Larimer County. These websites provide valuable preparedness information and resources to decrease risk and improve overall safety. A few of these programs relevant to Colorado include:

- Larimer Emergency Telephone Authority (LETA) – LETA is the 911 communications telephone authority in Larimer County and they have a program that allows citizens to register phone numbers to obtain emergency information. Many programs only allow for notifications to landline phones, but through LETA, citizens can register cellular

phones as well so that they can get notifications even if they are away from home. www.leta911.org

- Larimer.org/Emergency – For ongoing incidents, a website has been set up for notifications about emergencies throughout Larimer County. This is also a subscription service, where citizens can register for specific types of alerts. www.larimer.org/emergency
- READYColorado - READYColorado is Colorado's official source for homeland security and all-hazards preparedness information. This campaign is supported by numerous public and private partners. With READYColorado, community members can discover the risks in their specific area, and the steps they can take to help themselves or their family face the challenges presented. www.readycolorado.com
- Emergency Management Website – The Larimer County Emergency Management website provides information about a variety of programs throughout the county, along with hazards and actions. www.larimer.org/sheriff/emerg.htm

Awareness and Education Programs

In addition to the key materials that exist to help prepare citizens and visitors, several programs exist to educate community members about how to reduce their overall risk. A few of these programs include:

- Larimer Connects – Larimer County received funding in 2016 to develop the Larimer Connects program to increase the level of OEM public outreach and education. The core goal of the Larimer Connects program is to develop resilient and self-sustainable communities county-wide. Larimer Connects works in a bottom-up approach, allowing the community to define their needs, strengths, and gaps as it pertains to preparedness and resilience, with the program itself serving the role of providing technical advice, training, connection to resources, and guidance to develop skills, knowledge, and empower local citizens to take ownership of the future resilience of their communities and/or neighborhoods.
- Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Training – Larimer County Emergency Management is able to provide a one-day preparedness course for citizens and visitors. This course provides hands-on skills training in emergency medical care, firefighting, and search and rescue. Additionally, the course can be tailored to the specific area to include information about terrorism, disaster psychology, evacuation planning, etc. Courses are available by request through the Larimer County Office of Emergency Management.
- FIREWISE - During the last few years, with the number and intensity of wildfires increasing in many parts of Colorado, it is more important than ever to begin working on ways to reduce the risk of damage and injuries from these fires. The Firewise Program

through the National Fire Protection Association, teaches communities about wildfire mitigation and allows for positive action to decrease the risk of wildfire in the future. www.firewise.org

- FEMA Courses for the Public – The Federal Emergency Management Agency has a comprehensive list of online training courses for citizens, emergency responders and emergency management personnel. These courses cover a wide range of subjects and interest areas. www.training.fema.gov/is