ADMINISTRATIVE DRAFT (6-22-26)

MONO COUNTY

OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

ORGANIZATIONAL & PROGRAMMATIC ASSESSMENT

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I. REPORT STRUCTURE

This report is organized to provide the Board of Supervisors with a clear, comprehensive, and usable assessment of the County's emergency management program.

It begins with an Executive Summary that presents the assessment's key findings, themes, and strategic considerations. This is followed by a series of sections aligned with the scope of work identified in the County's Request for Proposals. Additionally, Municipal Management Solutions has included supplemental sections to provide further context and value, including a case study of the Pack Fire and a draft job description for consideration.

Each section of the assessment is structured to function as a stand-alone component, presenting relevant background, key findings, and associated recommendations if relevant. This approach allows individual sections to be referenced independently, while also supporting a cohesive understanding of the County's overall emergency management system. Recommendations from each section are consolidated into an implementation roadmap designed to guide prioritized, phased improvements.

The report concludes with appendices that provide additional detail and supporting information. These materials are intended to supplement, rather than duplicate, the main body of the report. For example, while the report summarizes key insights from the peer county comparison, the appendices include more detailed profiles and data for each comparison jurisdiction.

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mono County's emergency management program includes the core elements required under state and federal systems, incorporating established plans and participation in California's mutual aid network. Additionally, the program has a track record of multi-agency coordination and collaboration. However, the program is currently operating in a transitional and fragmented state, limiting its effectiveness in a high-risk environment defined by wildfire, severe winter weather, geographic isolation, and seasonal population surges.

Strengths

- The County has a solid structural foundation aligned with SEMS/NIMS and access to statewide mutual aid.
- Strong individual commitment by staff and partner agencies sustains operations despite system gaps.
- The Wildfire Mitigation Coordinator program is a clear success, receiving significant grant funding and strengthening community resilience.
- Stakeholders share a willingness to improve coordination and rebuild the system.

Key Issues Requiring Board Attention

The assessment identifies the following systemic challenges:

- **Leadership and Structure Gap**: The absence of a permanent Emergency Management Director and unclear performance expectations of this position have resulted in lack of accountability, role confusion, and inconsistent performance.
- **Breakdowns in Communication and Coordination**: Internal departments, the Town of Mammoth Lakes, fire agencies, and the public are not consistently "on the same page" or informed; both complications affect response effectiveness.
- **Reactive System**: Preparedness, training, and planning are inconsistent, resulting in a system that is primarily reactive rather than proactive.
- **Fragmented Partnerships**: Many key partners do not view the County's emergency management function as a central coordinating resource.
- **Strained County–Town Relationship**: Lack of collaboration with the Town of Mammoth Lakes results in duplication of services and reduced system efficiency.
- **Capacity and Sustainability Constraints**: Limited staffing, reliance on grant funding, and outdated plans (e.g., EOP) reduce long-term effectiveness.

Primary Message: The Problem is a Lack of Governance and Collaboration

While always important for small, rural counties, it is essential that emergency management exists as a collaborative and coordinated function. Success depends on strong, institutionalized relationships with:

- The Town of Mammoth Lakes
- Local fire districts and public safety partners

- State and federal agencies
- Neighboring counties and regional partners
- Nonprofits and community organizations

Currently, these relationships are somewhat informal and inconsistent, limiting the County's ability to function as a unified system during emergencies.

What Changes Are Necessary?

The County needs to prioritize organizational clarity, leadership, and collaboration. Key strategic actions for Board consideration:

1. **Establish Clear Leadership and Structure**
    a. Fill and empower the Emergency Management Director role.
    b. Determine where OEM sits organizationally and clarify authority and expectations.
    c. Ensure Mono County adequately prepares for non-fire emergencies, such as power outages, winter storm events, avalanches, earthquakes and other mass casualty events.
2. **Rebuild and Formalize Partnerships**
    a. Strengthen coordination with the Town of Mammoth Lakes.
    b. Formalize relationships with fire districts, state/federal partners, and NGOs.
3. **Institutionalize Communication and Coordination**
    a. Set clear expectations for information sharing and interagency coordination.
    b. Establish regular coordination forums and joint planning efforts.
4. **Shift to a Proactive System**
    a. Invest in training, exercises, and preparedness planning.
    b. Update core documents and align them with current risks.
5. **Stabilize Funding and Capacity**
    a. Reduce reliance on grants for core functions.
    b. Build sustainable staffing and administrative support.

Conclusion

Mono County employs capable people and has put foundational systems in place, but lacks a fully functioning, integrated emergency management program. The County currently relies on individual effort and informal relationships rather than a clear, accountable, and collaborative structure. The Board must better define structure and expectations, strengthen partnerships among Mono County programs and between Mono County and outside partners, and ensure accountability and sustained progress within their emergency management function.

Additionally, as wildfire emergencies have become common throughout California in recent years, much of this assessment focuses on these events; however, Mono County is susceptible to a wide variety of emergency and mass casualty events, including extreme winter events, avalanches, power outages (unanticipated or Public Safety Power Shutoff events) and earthquakes. Mono County must ensure preparedness and training activities address all these risks.

With intentional commitment to these recommendations, Mono County can transition from a reactive, fragmented system to a coordinated, resilient, and partnership-driven emergency management program prepared to respond to real-world risks.

III. Overview and Background

Mono County is a destination recreation resort community located on the east side of the Sierra Nevada Mountain range. The County is located approximately 290 miles north of the greater Los Angeles area. The County includes one incorporated municipality, the Town of Mammoth Lakes, and is primarily surrounded by federal lands, including the Inyo National Forest, Toiyabe National Forest and Bureau of Land Management. This land ownership pattern requires regular coordination and collaboration between County agencies and federal partners during wildfire suppression operations, search and rescue incidents, and other emergency activities occurring on federal lands. Major wildfire incidents in the region commonly involve unified command structures that include federal, state, and local fire agencies.

The County has experienced multiple emergency response and recovery events in recent years and is seeking to ensure its emergency management structure, staffing, and work program are appropriately aligned to meet current and future needs.

Mono County operates in a complex hazard environment shaped by elevation, geography, climate, and land ownership patterns. The County encompasses large areas of mountainous terrain and sparsely populated communities. Transportation access to many areas is limited to a small number of state highways and mountain routes. During winter storms, heavy snowfall and avalanche conditions can isolate communities and disrupt transportation networks. Wildfires, flooding events, and seismic hazards also pose potential threats to infrastructure and public safety.

Seasonal tourism also affects the County's emergency management environment. The Town of Mammoth Lakes serves as a major recreation destination and experiences significant population increases during peak tourism seasons. Winter recreation activities, summer outdoor tourism, and special events bring large numbers of visitors who may be unfamiliar with local hazards and evacuation routes. As a result, emergency management planning must account for fluctuating population levels and the need for effective communication with visitors during emergencies.

The departure of the County's previous director in late 2025 began a transition period which is still in place; emergency management responsibilities are currently supported on an interim basis through the Mono County Sheriff's Office and existing personnel in the CAO's office. While this arrangement maintains basic operational continuity, the current absence of a permanent emergency management director affects long-term program management activities such as planning updates, training coordination, grant administration, and strategic program development.

The purpose of this project is to evaluate the appropriate organizational placement, staffing structure, functional responsibilities, and priority work program for the Office of Emergency Management. From this assessment, the County is also seeking specific recommendations regarding the appropriate placement and role of the County's Wildfire Coordinator position.

IV. METHODOLOGY

This organizational and programmatic assessment of the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) utilized a qualitative, multi-source approach. Structured interviews with key stakeholders, including Mono County elected officials and staff, Town of Mammoth Lakes personnel, and Fire District staff, served as primary information sources. These interviews were designed to capture perspectives on current emergency management structure, coordination, operational effectiveness, and areas for improvement across participating entities.

In addition to stakeholder interviews, the assessment included a review of available documents, such as organizational charts, emergency management plans, and relevant management and operational materials. To provide broader context, the findings were additionally informed by a high-level comparative analysis of emergency management structures and practices in similar California counties. This combined methodology allows for identification and analysis of internal organizational dynamics. Additionally, the high-level overview of Mono County's staffing and budget positions compared to similar counties may provide opportunities to strengthen the emergency management program.

V. CONTEXT FOR ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT

Mono County maintains an emergency management program that operates within the structure established by the California Standardized Emergency Management System and the federal National Incident Management System. These systems provide the framework for emergency preparedness, response coordination, recovery administration, and mitigation planning within California jurisdictions. Under this structure, counties serve as the Operational Area responsible for coordinating emergency management activities among local governments, special districts, partner agencies, and for serving as the interface between local jurisdictions and the State of California during emergencies.

Emergency management responsibilities within the County have historically been administered through the Office of Emergency Management. This office has been responsible for coordinating preparedness activities, maintaining the County Emergency Operations Plan, supporting Emergency Operations Center activations, managing disaster recovery documentation, and coordinating mitigation and resilience initiatives. The emergency management program also supports coordination among County departments involved in disaster response, including public health, public works, finance, and social services.

VI. EMPLOYEE/STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Overview

To inform our analysis, Municipal Management Solutions, LLC (MMS) interviewed a variety of stakeholders identified by Mono County officials and reflected in the Scope of Work. The purpose of these interviews was to gather candid feedback about organizational structure, staffing capacity, leadership effectiveness, service delivery, processes, and systems. As these interviews progressed, consistent themes emerged and are reflected in this report. Our approach ensured multiple stakeholders provided consistent information before we considered it a true "theme."

Name	Position
Supervisor Jennifer Kreitz	Member, Board of Supervisors
Supervisor Rhonda Duggan	Member, Board of Supervisors
Supervisor Paul McFarland	Member, Board of Supervisors
Supervisor John Peters	Member, Board of Supervisors
Supervisor Lynda Salcido	Member, Board of Supervisors
Sandra Moberly	County Administrative Officer
Christine Bouchard	Assistant CAO
Ingrid Braun	Sheriff
Clint Dohmen	Undersheriff
Stephanie Trujillo	Finance Director
Michael Martinez	Information Technology Director
Paul Roten	Public Works Director
K. Peterson, J. Kearney, C. Young, B. Chappell-McGovern, T. Boo	Public Health & Social Services
Brittany Pratt	Animal Control
Rob Patterson	Mammoth Lakes Town Manager
Haislip Hayes	Mammoth Lakes Public Works Director
Dan Casabian	Mammoth Lakes Police Chief
Chief Ales Tomaier	Mammoth Lakes Fire Chief
Four Fire Chiefs	Fire Districts
Chris Mokracek	Former Mono County OEM Director
Wendilyn Grasseschi	Wildland Fire Coordinator

Summary

The themes and findings listed below are not attributable to a single point of failure, but rather the result(s) of a systemic breakdown rooted in structural, leadership, and coordination deficiencies. The County currently operates without a fully functioning emergency management system; instead, it relies on assigned individuals and fragmented efforts across departments.

As a result, a substantial gap exists between the intended role of emergency management—which includes coordination, planning, and leadership—and current practice, which is largely characterized by ad hoc improvisation and siloed operations. These themes are revisited throughout the overall organizational evaluation.

Themes and Findings

The following graphic summarizes the themes and findings on one page. Additional details relative to each theme and finding is provided below.



1. Lack of Leadership, Structure, and Role Clarity was the most dominant theme across all interviews.

- Participants consistently described widespread confusion about who is in charge during emergencies, what the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) Director's role should look like, and whether the OEM should operate under the Sheriff, the County Administrative Officer (CAO), or as a stand-alone entity. Participants frequently characterized the OEM, itself, as "absent," "nonexistent," or "irrelevant" in practice. This perception was exacerbated by the absence of a clearly defined chain of command, ambiguity surrounding departmental roles (e.g., IT, Animal Control, and Finance) and uncertainty about incident leadership, particularly the distinction between the Incident Commander's responsibilities and the OEM's strategic coordination role.

2. Severe Communication & Coordination Breakdowns were consistently identified as top operational failures.

- These failures were identified with respect to both radio/mass notification systems and operational/incident command structure. Interviewees reported persistent challenges in communication, internally among County departments and the Board of Supervisors, and externally, including with the Town of Mammoth Lakes, fire districts, and the public. These issues were compounded by significant information gaps, with key stakeholders often not being informed or included in decision-making processes and critical updates being frequently delayed or even withheld. During incidents, these deficiencies manifested in dispatch failures, confusion regarding command structure, and inconsistent public messaging, all of which undermined effective response efforts.

3. Reactive System with Minimal Preparedness

- Emergency management was widely characterized as reactive and largely "after-the-fact," rather than proactive or strategically driven. Interviewees identified significant gaps in preparedness, including insufficient training and exercises, a lack of regular tabletop scenarios, and limited pre-event planning. As a result, critical support functions—such as IT, Animal Control, and Finance—are often engaged only after issues have arisen, rather than being systematically integrated into planning and response efforts prior to actual emergency events.

4. Weak Interagency Integration

- The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) is not effectively integrated with key County departments, including Fire agencies, Public Works, IT, Animal Control, and Finance. This lack of integration extends to external partners as well, with the Town of Mammoth Lakes, nonprofit organizations, and state and federal agencies often operating independently of the County OEM. As a result, Fire agencies and other response partners tend to rely on established mutual aid systems and state or federal coordination mechanisms, rather than engaging with or depending on the County OEM for operational support or coordination.

5. Strained County–Town of Mammoth Lakes Relationship

- A core tension exists between the County and the Town of Mammoth Lakes, characterized by differing operational approaches. The County is generally perceived as slow-to-respond and more process-driven, while the Town is viewed as more responsive and outcome-oriented. This misalignment has contributed to a general frustration among constituents living in the Town of Mammoth Lakes; criticism of the County's service delivery and general lack of responsiveness is strong. As a result, to better serve its own operational priorities and interests, the Town is likely moving toward the development of its own Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and enhanced emergency management capabilities.
- The Town of Mammoth Lakes has always had their own EOC and emergency management responsibilities, including their own EOP which is approximately 10 years old. ***Appendix 14*** to this report summarizes the importance of integrated emergency management between Mono County and the Town of Mammoth Lakes, as well as review of the draft Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) currently under development for Mono County. The intent is to identify areas where clarity, balance, and organizational alignment may need refinement to support effective implementation of emergency management functions.

6. Resource, Capacity, and Funding Challenges

- Key issues include a significant reliance on unstable grant funding, a lack of centralized grant management, and limited staffing capacity, particularly in relation to volunteers and administrative support. These financial and organizational constraints are further compounded by significant operational challenges, including rural geography, frequent disruptions (Highway 395 closures, for example) and limited infrastructure redundancy. Together, these factors restrict operational flexibility and reduce overall system effectiveness and resilience.

7. Lack of Training and Exercises and Workforce Gaps

- Regular training, Incident Command System (ICS) exercises, and/or interagency drills occur seldomly or not at all. Additionally, significant workforce gaps exist, including the absence of Disaster Service Workers and weak coordination with volunteers and partner organizations such as CART and other nonprofits. As a result, staff consistently report feeling unprepared, unclear about roles and responsibilities, and largely reactive in their approach to emergency response.

8. Systems & Technology Underutilization, Lack of Clear Ownership

- Emergency alert systems such as Genasys and Ready Mono are available to enhance emergency management; however, their effectiveness is limited by a lack of clear ownership, insufficient training, and weak governance structures. In addition, significant infrastructure gaps persist, including limitations in communications systems and cell tower coverage. While the Information Technology Department is positioned to serve in a supporting role to the Office of Emergency Management (OEM), OEM

should maintain ownership and divisional responsibility for the implementation and use of technology to strengthen emergency preparedness, response, and recovery capabilities.

9. Operational Gaps in Critical Functions

- Key operational gaps were identified across several critical emergency management functions, including evacuation planning for both people and animals (including large animals), dispatch reliability, and Emergency Operations Center (EOC) activation and participation. Additional deficiencies were noted in sheltering and recovery coordination, as well as overall incident management capacity, particularly the lack of a Type 3 Incident Management Team (IMT) capability.

10. Desire for a Rebuilt, Professionalized Emergency Management System

- Across stakeholders, there is broad agreement on the need for a strong and visible Office of Emergency Management (OEM) leader, a clearly defined organizational structure, and a more proactive, planning-focused approach to emergency management. Participants also emphasized the importance of OEM functioning as a collaborative and coordinating entity integrated across departments and external partners, eliminating the current practice of departmental silos. While there is strong agreement about the necessary areas for improvement, some debate remains regarding the appropriate structural placement of OEM within the broader County organization.

11. Untapped Strengths & Opportunities

- Despite the challenges identified, a willingness among employees to collaborate was evident, both within their own department, across county departments and with external partners such as fire districts, the Town of Mammoth Lakes, non-profits and community organizations. Additionally, current successful tools, programs, and systems can be grown and leveraged. Finally, several emerging opportunities were identified, including expanded regional collaboration, the potential use of the airport as an emergency response hub, and the development of a Wildland Fire Coordinator role to enhance coordination and wildfire preparedness.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the themes and findings identified through this assessment, several recommendations are presented in the following image. Additional detail regarding each recommendation and specific tasks are provided below. These recommendations are intended to provide a structured and practical path forward. They are not intended to be exhaustive, nor do they represent a prescriptive or immediate implementation plan. Rather, they are offered as a framework to guide organizational alignment, to strengthen emergency management capabilities, and to support ongoing discussion among County leadership and partner agencies.

Implementation will require prioritization, resource consideration, and sustained commitment from stakeholders and across departments. Meaningful improvement will occur over time and

will depend on consistent leadership, clear accountability, and a shared commitment to building a coordinated and resilient emergency management system.



1. Establish Clear Governance, Authority, and Organizational Structure *(Addresses Findings 1, 4, 10)*

- Define and formalize the organizational placement of the Office of Emergency Management (OEM), including whether it functions as:
    - A standalone department
    - A division in the CAO's Office
    - A division in the Sheriff's Office (*Consider hiring non-sworn staff for this division.)*
- Clearly distinguish between:
    - Strategic coordination (OEM Director)
    - Operational command (Incident Commander)
- Develop and adopt a Countywide Emergency Management Charter that:
    - Defines roles, authority, and responsibilities across all departments
    - Establishes a clear chain of command
    - Clarifies expectations during preparedness, response, and recovery
- Assign formal departmental liaison roles to OEM to ensure consistent coordination across functions (IT, Animal Control, Finance, Public Works, etc.)
- When a new structure is agreed upon, identify additional positions needed and write thorough job descriptions for each position.

Outcome:
Eliminates ambiguity, establishes accountability, and creates a functional system framework.

2. Strengthen Communication, Coordination, and Information Management *(Addresses Findings 2, 8)*

- Establish standardized communication protocols:
    - Internal (County departments, Board of Supervisors)
    - External (Town of Mammoth Lakes, partners, public)
    - During incidents (who communicates what, when, and how)
- Create a formal Public Information Officer (PIO) function during emergency preparation, response and recovery events:
    - Dedicated position or structured model
    - Integrated into incident command and EOC operations
- Develop written policies for communication with elected officials during emergencies
- Assign clear ownership of all emergency communication systems (e.g., Genasys, Ready Mono) to OEM
- Conduct regular system testing, training, and drills to ensure usability and reliability

Outcome:
Ensures consistent, timely, and reliable information flow across all stakeholders.

3. Transition from Reactive to Proactive Preparedness *(Addresses Findings 3, 7)**

- Institutionalize a structured preparedness program:
  - Quarterly tabletop exercises
  - Annual functional or full-scale exercises
- Require active participation from all departments in emergency planning and exercises
- Establish preparedness-focused Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the OEM Director
- Integrate all departments into planning efforts before incidents occur

Outcome:
With a proactive, institutionalized system, the County will be significantly better prepared for and able to manage emergency incidents.

4. Build an Integrated, Organization-wide Emergency Management System *(Addresses Findings 4, 9)*

- Embed all departments into the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) structure with clearly defined roles
- Develop and maintain interagency MOUs, with priority focus on:
  - Animal evacuation and sheltering
  - Resource sharing and mutual aid
  - Shelter operations in accordance with Red Cross practices
- Establish a Multi-Agency Emergency Management Advisory Group, including:
  - CAO, Sheriff, Fire, Town of Mammoth Lakes, Public Works, IT, Health, NGOs

    Note: Mono County previously had an Emergency Services Council consisting of the Chair of the Board of Supervisors, Director of OEM, Auditor-Controller, Social Services, Public Health, Sheriff's Office, Highway patrol, CalTrans, Forest Service representatives and fire districts. ***Consideration should be given to recreating this advisory group, while adding a representative from the CAO and Behavioral Health to the team, and updating the bylaws to be relevant in today's climate****.*
- Implement regular interagency coordination meetings (monthly or quarterly)
- Once implemented, it is unlikely Mono County will need to continue their 'Unified Command' meetings, and instead, incorporate those into the work of the Emergency Management Advisory Group.

Outcome:
Replaces current siloed operations with a coordinated, collaborative system.

5. Improve Coordination between the County, the Town of Mammoth Lakes, Inyo County and the City of Bishop and Define a Collaborative Model *(Addresses Finding 5)*

- Develop a formal County-Town-City agreement (MOU) that:
  - Defines roles in preparedness, response, and recovery
  - Establishes coordination protocols
- Support the Town's desire to operate its own EOC while ensuring:
  - Integration with County systems
  - Alignment with state and federal coordination structures
- Create joint planning, training, and exercise programs

Outcome:
Reduces friction, aligns expectations, and prevents duplication of effort.

6. Strengthen Financial Sustainability, Oversight, and Grant Management *(Addresses Finding 6)*

- Develop a multi-year funding strategy incorporating:
  - General Fund
  - Grants
  - Partnerships
- Establish centralized grant management capacity:
  - Dedicated grant manager or function within Finance
- Improve financial tracking, documentation, and compliance processes during incidents
- Coordinate with the Town of Mammoth Lakes, local Fire Districts, non-profits and community organizations to pursue multi-agency grant opportunities when collaborative applications enhance competitiveness. Establish criteria for joint applications, including designation of a lead agency responsible for grant administration, compliance, monitoring, and reporting.

Outcome:
Ensures long-term sustainability, reduces financial risk, and improves reimbursement success.

7. Invest in Workforce Capacity and Training *(Addresses Findings 7, 6)*

- Develop a Disaster Service Worker (DSW) program across County departments
- Implement a volunteer program:
  - Establish or partner with CERT teams (regional if necessary)
  - Build relationships with nonprofit organizations
- Require all staff participate in online shelter training.
- Require mandatory ICS and role-based training for all relevant staff
- Require the newly hired Emergency Management Director to develop a calendar for public outreach, training commitments, and OEM administrative milestones (*can be later used to gauge performance)*

Outcome:
Expands surge capacity and improves operational readiness.

8. Enhance Operational Readiness and Core Emergency Functions *(Addresses Finding 9)*

- Develop comprehensive evacuation plans:
  - Include large animal evacuation
  - Pre-identify routes, triggers, and responsibilities
- Establish clear EOC activation protocols and participation requirements
- Develop or access Type 3 Incident Management Team (IMT) capability
- Pre-identify and equip sheltering locations, and communicate those resources to all emergency management and response stakeholders
- Improve logistics by:
  - Decentralizing emergency supplies geographically
  - Developing mobile response capabilities
  - Developing a response resource inventory and storage/staging plan for various OEM equipment

Outcome:
Strengthens operational preparedness and performance across all phases of an incident.

9. Establish Performance Management Metrics, Accountability, and Continuous Improvement *(Addresses Findings 1, 2, 10)*

- Develop performance metrics for OEM:
  - Preparedness activities
  - Training participation
  - Response effectiveness
- Require regular reporting to the Board of Supervisors (at least semi-annually during non-emergency periods)
- Conduct After-Action Reviews:
  - Focus on improvement—not fault
- Strengthen interagency coordination through ongoing evaluation and feedback

Outcome:
Creates transparency, consistency and clear expectations County-wide.

10. Leverage Existing Strengths and Strategic Opportunities *(Addresses Finding 11)*

- Leverage the Town of Mammoth Lake's operational capacity as a regional asset:
  - EOC support
  - Logistics coordination
  - Response staging
- Evaluate integration of the Wildland Fire Coordinator role into OEM preparedness, response and recovery strategy
- Expand partnerships with nonprofit and community organizations
- Explore development of the airport as a regional emergency operations hub

Outcome:
Builds on existing strengths to enhance regional capability and resilience.

Implementation Approach

Improving emergency management in Mono County will require an intentional, phased and sustained effort. Initial actions should focus on establishing clarity of authority and communication protocols to ensure a functional baseline system. Subsequent efforts should prioritize integration, training, and partnership development, followed by longer-term investments in capacity, infrastructure, and performance management.

This progression can be best understood when represented by three phases:

- **Stabilize:** Establish leadership, structure, and communication
- **Build:** Develop integrated capability and coordination
- **Sustain:** Institutionalize practices and strengthen resilience

Successful implementation will depend on continued leadership engagement, interagency collaboration, and a shared commitment to improvement across the County and among its partners.

**See Appendix 01 for additional details*.

Employee/Stakeholder Engagement Summary/Final Comments

The assessment identified both significant challenges and meaningful opportunities. Mono County benefits from committed personnel, strong regional relationships, and financial capacity that can support long-term improvement. At the same time, the current system requires greater structure, coordination, and clarity to function effectively.

Importantly, broad agreement exists among stakeholders regarding the need for improvement and a shared willingness to move forward. This provides a strong foundation for progress. Emergency management is inherently complex, particularly in a geographically large and operationally diverse county. However, with focused effort, clear leadership, and sustained collaboration, Mono County is well-positioned to build a more coordinated, proactive, effective and resilient emergency management system.

VII. FIRE SERVICE FEEDBACK/ASSESSMENT

Purpose

The purpose of this phase of the assessment is to obtain input from the fire departments/district who serve as first responders, providing a critical public safety service. These professionals are also subject matter experts on emergency preparedness and response.

The consulting team met with fire chiefs serving within Mono County who were willing to participate. At everyone's request, and to ensure candid input without concern for attribution, their identities will remain confidential. This approach recognizes the practical realities of local governance and funding relationships, which can influence participants' ability and willingness to speak openly. The perspectives and information provided have been incorporated in a manner that reflects broader system observations and themes without identifying a specific source.

Findings

Stakeholder input from participating Mono County fire chiefs reinforces a consistent theme identified throughout this assessment: the County's emergency management function is not perceived as a visible, routinely engaged, or operationally relevant support system.

Feedback obtained through direct discussions, written survey responses, and review of the countywide fire service environment suggests the issue is not limited to dissatisfaction with a specific program element or isolated concerns tied to individual events. Rather, fire service stakeholders expressed a fundamental concern about the role and presence of the Office of Emergency Management, itself. Participating chiefs generally described the function as largely absent from the practical realities of fire service operations, planning, and coordination, rather than a consistent, active countywide coordination asset.

This distinction is significant in the context of Mono County's operating environment, which is characterized by wildfire risk, severe winter weather, complex evacuation dynamics, substantial federal land management presence, volunteer-dependent fire districts, and geographic isolation. In such a setting, an effective emergency management function is expected to provide an organizational framework that enhances communication, situational awareness, preparedness, and recovery coordination across agencies. Based on fire service input, that expectation is not being consistently met.

Participating chiefs reported limited routine interaction with emergency management across preparedness activities, training initiatives, incident support functions, and post-incident administrative coordination. As a result, local fire agencies appear to rely more heavily on established mutual aid systems, direct interagency relationships, operational area fire coordination channels, support from the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, and federal agency partnerships, rather than on the County's internal emergency management structure.

Feedback does not indicate overt conflict between the County and the fire service; rather, it suggests a weak or underdeveloped operational relationship. Several chiefs characterized emergency management as having limited relevance to their day-to-day operational and incident-related needs. While other chiefs acknowledged isolated positive interactions with

emergency management, they attributed this to individual staff effort, not an overall effective emergency management system.

Preparedness and training support emerged as a particularly weak area. Participating chiefs indicated that emergency management is not consistently visible or effectively engaged in planning activities, exercises, or operationally meaningful training. Participants mentioned that a major local training event received more effective logistical and coordination support from neighboring Inyo County emergency management personnel than from Mono County's own emergency management representatives.

Observations related to incident support followed a similar pattern. Chiefs indicated that some support functions, such as shelter operations, have been effective, *when led by committed individuals*; overall confidence in the Office of Emergency Management's incident support capability, however, remained limited. Chiefs identified concerns related to evacuation coordination, mapping accuracy, information dissemination, and the absence of a clearly defined countywide incident management support structure. Several comments indicated key operational support functions are being "carried" by Sheriff's Office personnel, California Highway Patrol staff, or external partner agencies, as emergency management does not function as a truly centralized county framework.

Administrative support functions were also identified as an area of concern. Fire service stakeholders expressed limited confidence in the County's capacity to assist with grant development, mitigation, project implementation, project tracking and completion, and post-incident documentation and reimbursement support. This gap is particularly consequential in a rural context, where fire districts often face limited administrative and financial capacity and rely heavily on external funding and reimbursement processes to maintain operational readiness.

A recurring theme in stakeholder feedback was the lack of a formalized and consistently functional relationship between Mono County and its eleven local fire agencies. Chiefs emphasized that if the County intends to provide meaningful support to the fire service, the emergency management function must be more directly connected to field operations, clearly accountable to stakeholder needs, and structured to deliver visible value before, during, and after incidents. Suggested improvements included stronger leadership presence, increased staffing capacity, the establishment of a dedicated fire district liaison role, clearer accountability mechanisms, and the restoration of a credible Type 3 incident management capability during the initial operational period of extended incidents.

Taken together, the input from the fire service does not suggest that incremental procedural adjustments alone are sufficient. Rather, it supports the broader conclusion that Mono County would benefit from a more clearly defined, operationally credible, and better integrated emergency management structure that functions as an active support system for local agencies, not simply an administrative function.

**See Appendix 02 for additional details.*

VIII. ORGANIZATIONAL, PROGRAMMATIC & GOVERNANCE ASSESSMENT

Overview

For the past few years, emergency management functions have been administered through the County's Office of Emergency Management, which reports to the County Administrative Office. Core responsibilities include coordination of preparedness activities, maintenance of the County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), support of Emergency Operations Center (EOC) activations, management of disaster recovery documentation, and facilitation of mitigation and resilience initiatives. The program also supports interdepartmental coordination among County agencies involved in disaster response, including public health, public works, finance, and social services.

At the time of this assessment, the Director of Emergency Management position is vacant. Following the departure of the previous director in late 2025, the County implemented an interim structure in which emergency management responsibilities are supported by the Mono County Sheriff's Office in coordination with the Assistant CAO. While this arrangement sustains baseline operational continuity, the absence of a permanent, dedicated program leader constrains the County's ability to effectively advance long-term program management functions, including planning updates, training and exercise coordination, grant administration, and strategic program development.

Organizational/Governance Assessment

To ensure a high functioning Office of Emergency Management, it is essential that Mono County determine the organizational structure that best meets the needs and expectations of the Board of Supervisors and the community. Throughout California, emergency management functions are primarily structured as follows:

- A division within the CAO's office.
- A stand-alone Department with an 'at-will' Department Head who reports to the CAO/Board of Supervisors.
- A division/responsibility of the Sheriff's Office.

Regardless of the structure, it is essential that emergency management responsibilities are assigned to full-time dedicated staff with sufficient redundancy in resources, rather than as a part-time, collateral assignment. One of Mono County's primary weaknesses is that since 2022-2023, this responsibility has been assigned to a single individual. In part due to this lack of staffing redundancy, delays occurred in activating the Emergency Operations Center during the Inn Fire, as the Director of OEM was out of the office/county.

The following is a summary of the advantages and disadvantages of each of the three organizational models identified above.

- Emergency Management as a Division within the CAO's Office:
  Based on the experience of the Municipal Management Solutions team, the least effective model is emergency management functioning as a division of the CAO's office. Depending on staff personalities, this structure has the potential to result in delayed decision making and micro-management. Additionally, because most county administrators are not subject matter experts in emergency management functions, this option comes with the risk of insufficient subject matter expertise. While this structure may be effective with the right staff, any change in staffing may put the effectiveness of this model at risk.

  Finally, depending on the approach and personalities of the Board of Supervisors, this model is likely the most susceptible to unnecessary and possibly detrimental political influence as decisions are made. Another disadvantage of this model, especially in small, rural counties, is that due to a lack of funding and resources, it is often difficult to ensure sufficient staff are able to provide 24/7/365 coverage.

- Emergency Management as a Stand-Alone Department with an 'At-Will' Director
  This approach can be a very effective model, as it provides full-time, dedicated staff to the effort. Additionally, this model is consistent with other critical functions provided by Mono County department heads. Finally, in the event members of the Board exert inappropriate political influence during an emergency response event, this model allows the CAO to act as a buffer between the Department Heads and the Board of Supervisors. (*Please note that no employees or stakeholders made reference to any inappropriate influence by the Board of Supervisors during emergency events. However, as Board members change, the potential exists and has occurred in other counties.*)

  The disadvantage of this model, especially in small, rural counties, is that due to a lack of funding and resources, it is often difficult to ensure sufficient staff can provide 24/7/365 coverage.

- Emergency Management as a Division in the Sheriff's Office
  Placing the Office of Emergency Management within the Sheriff's Office offers several important operational advantages and remains the most effective model for ensuring continuity and redundancy during emergency response. Under California law, the Sheriff is the only local official authorized to issue evacuation orders. As a result, the Sheriff's Office is inherently central to most emergency incidents and plays a critical role in life-safety decision-making. Housing emergency management within the Sheriff's Office aligns authority with responsibility, streamlines operational decision-making, and helps ensure unified command during incidents. This model also provides greater redundancy, as the Sheriff can pull resources/staff from other divisions as needed.

  This structure also provides a degree of insulation from undue political influence during emergency operations. Because the Sheriff is an independently elected official, operational decisions can be made with a primary focus on public safety and incident

needs. In addition, experience demonstrates that requests for assistance originating from the Sheriff's Office often receive particularly prompt attention from key partners, including California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, Federal Emergency Management Agency, neighboring public safety agencies, nonprofit organizations, and private-sector partners. This can be especially valuable in a rural county where rapid access to external resources is essential.

At the same time, this model presents several challenges that warrant Board consideration. During emergency incidents, communication with other elected officials, particularly the Board of Supervisors, can be inconsistent. While the Board does not have an operational role in incident command, Supervisors must be kept appropriately informed, so they can respond to constituent concerns and fulfill their governance responsibilities. This requires a careful balance between timely information sharing and the protection of sensitive operational information, particularly when actions such as evacuation orders are under consideration but have not yet been publicly announced.

Another potential limitation is that sheriff-led emergency management programs often excel during the response phase but sometimes place less emphasis on the preparedness and recovery phases. In many jurisdictions, preparedness activities, including training, exercises, and engagement of civilian personnel such as Disaster Service Workers, receive insufficient attention. Similarly, recovery operations are sometimes transferred to other departments without a clearly defined framework, creating gaps in effectiveness, continuity, accountability, and long-term coordination.

Although the Board of Supervisors does not exercise operational authority over the Sheriff, it retains an important governance role in establishing policy expectations for the County's emergency management program. Accordingly, the Board of Supervisors should clearly articulate its expectations for a comprehensive emergency management system that addresses preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation. It should also assess whether the current organizational structure and leadership are well positioned to deliver those functions effectively under this model.

Programmatic Assessment

Emergency management programs typically rely on a centralized program manager to ensure continuity across preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation functions. In the absence of such leadership, responsibilities are often distributed across multiple departments, which can limit accountability, reduce program cohesion, and hinder sustained progress in long-term planning and capability development.

The County's Emergency Operations Plan establishes the framework for incident coordination and EOC operations, including defined roles and responsibilities for County departments, activation protocols, and coordination mechanisms with partner agencies. * The plan reflects ICS- and SEMS-consistent structures; however, the plan was last comprehensively updated in 2012. As such, sections of the plan may not accurately reflect current organizational structures, operational practices, technological systems, or the County's evolving hazard profile. (*At the time of this assessment, Mono County was updating their EOP.)*

In collaboration with the Town of Mammoth Lakes and regional partners, Mono County has also developed a Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan. This plan identifies key hazards impacting the County, including wildfire, severe winter storms, avalanches, flooding, seismic events, hazardous materials incidents, and energy disruptions, and provides a strategic framework for reducing long-term risk. The plan appropriately emphasizes interjurisdictional coordination and reflects the County's unique geographic and environmental conditions.
The County operates within a complex hazard environment shaped by mountainous terrain, limited transportation access, and dispersed population centers along the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada. Seasonal weather conditions, particularly heavy snowfall and avalanche risk, can isolate communities and disrupt critical transportation routes. Additional risks include wildfire, flooding, and seismic activity, all of which pose ongoing threats to infrastructure and public safety.

Emergency response within the County is inherently a multi-agency effort. For example, fire protection services are delivered by a combination of fire protection districts and municipal agencies, while law enforcement and evacuation orders are primarily provided by the Sheriff's Office. Emergency medical services require coordination among fire agencies, ambulance providers, healthcare facilities, and regional systems. Public health agencies play a critical role in addressing medical and environmental health incidents and coordinating with healthcare partners.

The County's Emergency Operations Center serves as the central coordination point during complex or large-scale incidents. Emergency Operations Centers support situational awareness, resource management, policy coordination, and interagency communication. Staffing is typically drawn from multiple County departments, with personnel serving as Disaster Service Workers. While this model is common in rural jurisdictions, it requires ongoing training and exercises to ensure readiness and effectiveness during activations.

Mono County also relies heavily on California's statewide mutual aid system. Through the California Master Mutual Aid Agreement, local agencies can access resources from neighboring jurisdictions when incidents exceed local capacity. Coordination is facilitated through regional and state-level systems managed by Cal OES. Mutual aid plays a critical role during major incidents such as wildfires and severe winter storms.

In addition to response functions, the County's emergency management program is responsible for coordinating disaster recovery and reimbursement processes. This includes conducting damage assessments, tracking eligible costs, and managing reimbursement requests through state and federal programs, including those administered by Cal OES and FEMA. Effective recovery operations require strong coordination between emergency management, finance, and executive leadership.

The County has also established a Wildfire Mitigation Coordinator position to support long-term resilience efforts. This role focuses on grant management, project implementation, and interagency coordination related to wildfire risk reduction. While distinct from core response operations, this position represents a critical investment in mitigation and reflects the County's prioritization of wildfire resilience.

**See Appendix 03 for additional details.*

Key Findings – Existing Conditions Review

Document review and preliminary analysis identified the following key findings:

- The fundamental structural framework required under SEMS and NIMS, including core plans, EOC capabilities, and participation in the statewide mutual aid system exists in Mono County.
- Mono County's emergency management program is currently in a period of organizational transition, with the Director position vacant and responsibilities distributed across the Sheriff's Office and existing staff. This condition limits continuity, strategic planning capacity, and long-term program development.
- Emergency management responsibilities are distributed across multiple departments, which is typical for rural jurisdictions but requires clear leadership, defined roles, and coordinated program management to ensure effectiveness.
- Key planning documents, particularly the Emergency Operations Plan, require updating to reflect current organizational structures, operational practices, and hazard conditions. *(As noted above, at the time of this assessment Mono County was in the process of updating its Emergency Operations Plan.)*
- The County operates within a complex hazard environment that necessitates strong coordination across local, state, and federal partners, particularly given risks associated with wildfire, severe winter weather, avalanches, and tourism impacts.
- Due to its rural nature and limited staffing capacity, the County relies heavily on interagency coordination and mutual aid, reinforcing the importance of maintaining strong systems for collaboration and EOC readiness.
- Mitigation and resilience efforts play an increasingly important role in the County's emergency management program, as demonstrated by the establishment of a dedicated Wildfire Mitigation Coordinator.

Conclusion

Mono County demonstrates many foundational elements of an effective emergency management program. The County is also fortunate to have dedicated staff invested in their community and interested in collaborating to protect it. At the same time, it goes without saying that the County faces financial, geographic and staffing challenges, not to mention ever-evolving emergency incidents. The Board must make a thoughtful, collaborative decision about the placement of emergency management services; once decided, they must ensure that permanent, dedicated staffing and policies and procedures are in place so the program can be successful.

Recommendations

1. **Choose and Formalize Organizational Structure**
    a. The Board should formally adopt one of three governance models:
        - A Division with the Chief Administrative Office
        - A Department with a Department Head serving as the Director of OEM

- A division in the Sheriff's Office, with the Sheriff serving as the Director of OEM, with consideration given to hiring non-sworn staff to support OEM functions

2. **Immediately Establish Permanent Leadership (Highest Priority)**
    a. Regardless of where OEM is assigned, Mono County should immediately approve an updated job description and compensation range (*See Exhibit #2*) and begin recruitment as soon as possible.

    (*Note: If OEM is assigned to the Sheriff, an updated job description for the Director of OEM will not be necessary as these functions will fall under the responsibility of the Sheriff or Undersheriff.*)

3. **Build Staffing Redundancy**
    a. Regardless of the organization/governance model chosen, it is critical that Mono County ensure sufficient staff redundancy and the ability to respond to emergencies 24/7/365. Mono County should begin those discussions now and finalize the staffing model upon choice of organizational structure. The staffing model should include full-time, permanent staff, as well as essential staff who will be called when the EOC is activated.

4. **Update and Modernize the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)**
    a. Complete and adopt the updated EOP (already in progress), ensuring it includes the following:
        - Current organizational structure
        - Updated roles/responsibilities
        - Modern communication systems
        - Clear EOC activation triggers
        - Integration into chosen structure

5. **Institutionalize Training & Exercise Program, including:**
    a. EOC activation drills
    b. Wildfire and winter storm scenarios
    c. Multi-agency coordination exercises
    d. Board/Senior leadership briefings

6. **Strengthen EOC Readiness and Activation Protocol:**
    a. Create redundant activation authority (not dependent on one position)
    b. Pre-designate EOC roles with alternates
    c. Maintain updated call-down lists and contact systems.

7. **Formalize Communication Protocols with the Board of Supervisors**
    a. Develop written policies for:
        - Incident briefings
        - Information flow during evolving situations
        - Handling sensitive/pre-decisional information

8. **Strengthen Recovery and Grant Management Capacity**
    a. In collaboration with the Finance Department, assign clear ownership of disaster recovery within OEM.
    b. Standardize:
        - Cost tracking
        - Damage assessments
        - FEMA/Cal OES reimbursement processes

9. **Expand Focus Beyond Response (Preparedness & Mitigation Integration)**
    a. Integrate the Wildfire Mitigation Coordinator into the broader emergency management program.
    b. Develop a multi-year resilience strategy.

10. **Formalize Interagency Coordination Frameworks**
    a. Update MOUs and coordination agreements with:
        - Fire districts
        - EMS providers
        - Public Health/Emergency Preparedness and Response
        - Regional partners.

IX. STAFFING AND RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

Overview

The assessment finds that Mono County's Office of Emergency Management (OEM) is currently operating under significant staffing and capacity constraints that limit both day-to-day preparedness and long-term program development. The vacancy in the Director of Emergency Management position is a critical gap, with responsibilities temporarily distributed between the Sheriff's Office and the Assistant CAO. While this interim arrangement has maintained basic operational continuity, it significantly limits the County's ability to sustain core emergency management functions, including preparedness planning, training coordination, grant administration, interagency coordination, and long-term program development.

Historically, the program has relied heavily on a single position, with limited redundancy. This structure creates operational vulnerabilities during staff absences and has contributed to delays in key activities, including Emergency Operations Center activation. Stakeholder input further identified insufficient administrative support, limited engagement with volunteer resources, and inconsistent training and exercise programs. Staff roles are not clearly defined, and response efforts tend to be reactive rather than proactive.

Resource limitations are compounded by structural and funding challenges, particularly a reliance on unstable grant funding. Mono County's rural geography, infrastructure constraints, and frequent operational disruptions further reduce flexibility and place additional strain on existing resources. While mutual aid agreements and regional partnerships provide important supplemental support during large-scale incidents, stakeholders expressed concern that core emergency management functions—such as interagency coordination, incident support, and recovery administration—are not sufficiently resourced or institutionalized at the County level. Overall, the assessment identifies a need for sustained investment in staffing, stable funding, and organizational structure to support a more effective, resilient and coordinated emergency management program.

Staff and Resource Availability[1]

The current and historical reliance on a single individual serving as Director of Emergency Management represents the most significant weakness identified in this assessment. Without additional full-time, dedicated staff—supported by pre-identified personnel who can be activated during emergencies—the County will continue to face challenges, particularly in the areas of preparedness and recovery.

A comparative review of similarly situated counties (Alpine, El Dorado, Inyo, Madera, Placer, Nevada, and Tuolumne) indicates that staffing levels for emergency management programs range from zero to eleven full-time equivalents (FTEs). Total appropriations vary significantly; some programs rely solely on limited grant funding while others have annual budgets of approximately $9 million, composed of general funds and grants.

[1] The Wildfire Coordinator position is discussed later in this report.

In addition to permanent staff, high-performing emergency management programs depend on trained support personnel, including Disaster Service Workers (DSWs), who can be assigned to the EOC and other response and recovery roles. The availability and training of these personnel are essential to ensuring operational scalability during emergencies.

Organizational Placement and Staffing Structure

A key policy decision for Mono County is determining the appropriate organizational placement of the Office of Emergency Management — whether under the Sheriff's Office, as a standalone department, or as a division within the CAO. If the County elects to establish OEM as a standalone function or within the CAO, it will be necessary to identify sufficient General Fund resources to support additional staffing and program sustainability.

At a minimum, this would include the following positions:

- Director of Emergency Management
- Program Manager, Response & Recovery
- Program Manager, Preparedness & Planning
- Volunteer Coordinator who reports to the Program Manager, Preparedness & Planning during day-to-day operations. (*Depending on the workload and once this position is established over the first one to two years, it may not require a full-time employee dedicated to emergency management. At the appropriate time, Mono County should assess the overall demand and consider a broader scope of volunteer coordination beyond emergency management and Crisis Emergency Management Team response. Examples include coordinating volunteers for Animal Cervices and various senior programs.)*
- Administrative Assistant (*recordkeeping, scheduling, data management, division calendar, and program support*)

Additional support roles should also be identified and trained for emergency activation, though not necessarily dedicated full-time to OEM. These may include:

- Public Information Officer
- Fire agency liaison
- Finance staff for cost tracking and documentation
- Liaisons to law enforcement agencies, EMS, the American Red Cross, and community-based organizations

Standalone Department/CAO -vs- Sheriff's Office Structure Advantages and Disadvantages

Emergency management is fundamentally a coordination function. Regardless of organizational placement, effective emergency management depends on the ability to coordinate across departments, disciplines, jurisdictions, and operational functions.

Given OEM's prior experience operating under both organizational models, the County should carefully evaluate the advantages, disadvantages, operational realities, and long-term sustainability considerations associated with each approach.

While advantages and disadvantages exist for both models, the CAO, Sheriff, and Board of Supervisors should have input and must collaborate to make this important policy decision.

OEM As Stand-Alone Department/CAO Structure

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Clear administrative authority	Potential perception gap among operational response agencies
Less chance of "diversion" from Core Mission	Reduced direct integration with 24/7 ops
More direct connection with BOS	Requires internal back-up (2nd in command)

As previously outlined, placing the OEM with the CAO, whether as standalone division or included as part of the County's Administrative Offices, will require a minimum of 4 FTE positions.

OEM Under Sheriff Structure

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Leverages existing Sheriff's department admin/ops/logistical systems	Law enforcement tendency to divert admin personnel to "priority" field operations
Direct connection to 24/7 ops and dispatch	Assigned Sergeant promotion (rotation out)
Ability to find/identify/assign EM personnel	Perception concerns among non-law enforcement response partners
Broadens organization-wide EM focus	Operational command blurring (esp. for fires)
Less risk of unnecessary political influence	Potential for mis-alignment with BOS expectations
	Potential for a lack of communication to the BOS during emergency response events.

While placing OEM under the Sheriff may be perceived as reducing direct Board oversight, it offers several operational and fiscal advantages.

Additional funding will also need to be provided to the Sheriff's Office consolidating OEM within the Sheriff's Office can reduce costs by leveraging existing administrative, operational, and logistical systems, including 24/7 staffing, dispatch, communications infrastructure, training programs, and incident command capabilities. This integration minimizes duplication of functions such as human resources, finance, facilities, and information technology the other models would require. Given the internal expertise, especially with the current Undersheriff, a Deputy Director of Emergency Management is not necessary with this structure. Therefore, only the two following FTEs would need added and funded:

- Sergeant/Director of Emergency Management
- Administrative Assistant (Record Keeping, Data Gathering, Activity Calendar, General Coordination)

Additionally, aligning emergency management functions under a single operational command structure can improve coordination and efficiency during incidents. This integration reduces duplication of effort, enhances resource allocation, and would likely improve grant management outcomes. A stand-alone department, in contrast, may introduce additional administrative layers and coordination requirements without a corresponding increase in effectiveness.

The Sheriff's structure does include some vulnerabilities. First, in law enforcement, there is an acknowledged tendency to reassign sworn personnel in administrative roles to field operations. The impacts of this tendency can be minimized if County leaders acknowledge and invest in the Emergency Management priority and agree to keep such reassignments to a minimum.

Second, the primary reason emergency management functions were reassigned from the Sheriff's Department to the CAO in 2023 was related to the Sheriff's limited role during the COVID pandemic. During this prolonged emergency event, public health had the primary response role and received funding to fulfill it. Importantly, the Board must also determine whether the Sheriff's Office can effectively facilitate preparedness, response, and recovery efforts for a host of different types of emergencies.

Finally, the Sheriff's Department's significant role and influence in a fire response could agitate stakeholder fire agencies. Role clarity and diplomatic interpersonal communications can minimize any potential friction.

Support Departments/Programs

Critical to the success of any Office of Emergency Management program and the three primary phases of preparation, response and recovery, is ensuring strong partnerships with non-law enforcement personnel. Examples include public heath, behavioral health, social services, county aging programs, non-profits, community organizations and Animal Control.

Strong Office of Emergency Management (OEM) programs depend on coordinated, multidisciplinary partnerships because emergencies extend far beyond traditional law enforcement capabilities. In the preparedness phase, collaboration with public health, behavioral health, and social services agencies allows jurisdictions to identify vulnerable populations, plan for mass care needs, and build integrated response protocols before an incident occurs. For example, public health departments contribute to disease surveillance and medical surge planning, while behavioral health professionals help design crisis counseling frameworks. Social services and aging programs play a critical role in maintaining registries and outreach systems for individuals who may require evacuation assistance or continuity of care during disruptions.

During response and recovery, these same partners become essential for sustaining life safety and restoring community stability. Non-profits and community organizations often provide immediate sheltering, food distribution, and volunteer coordination at a scale government alone cannot match, while Animal Control supports both public safety and emotional well-being by managing displaced pets and livestock—an often overlooked but important factor in evacuation compliance. Behavioral health and social service providers are equally vital in the recovery phase, offering trauma-informed care, case management, and long-term assistance navigating housing, financial aid, and healthcare systems. Together, these partnerships ensure that

emergency management is not only focused on incident control, but also on holistic community resilience and recovery.

Based on interviews and feedback from staff in these programs, Mono County should ensure these programs are included in all emergency preparation activities. Examples of specific weaknesses include:

- Limited integration in Emergency Management
- Lack of External Support and Volunteer Capacity
- Evacuation barriers for large animals, including lack of MOUs with Tri-County Fairgrounds and Douglas County
- Resource and Supply Limitations which are primarily centralized in Bridgeport and Whitmore, and a lack of a de-centralized system for staffing essential supplies across the county
- Equipment Procurement Challenges primarily restrictive grant requirements

Job Description Analysis

As part of this assessment, a careful review of the Director of Emergency Management' current job description was conducted (*see appendices for copy)*. The job description should be modernized to better reflect contemporary emergency management practices, including greater emphasis on preparedness, interagency coordination, community resilience, recovery, mitigation, and organizational leadership. Several specific problems with the current job description were identified, which may have previously contributed to a lack of understanding about performance and authority expectations.

- The current job description is too operational and dated and reads more like an emergency response coordinator than a modern emergency management executive.
- The current job description includes "on-scene incident command" language, incorrectly suggesting that the Director of Emergency Management may routinely function as an Incident Commander. This is inconsistent with Incident Command System (ICS) best practices.
- Current language about reporting relationships is structurally problematic. The position reports to the Sheriff during normal operations and the CAO/BOS during activation.
- The current job description places too much emphasis on "response". Updates should include language to bolster preparedness and community resilience, such as:
    - Leads countywide preparedness, mitigation, and resilience initiatives;
    - Coordinates public education and community preparedness;
    - Develops and maintains continuity of government/operations;
    - Coordinates hazard mitigation planning and grant-funded projects; and,
    - Facilitates collaboration with community organizations, volunteer groups, other jurisdictions, as well as non-profit and community organization stakeholders
- The current job description is too internally focused. Updates should add language like:
    - Coordinates emergency management planning and activities with local jurisdictions, tribal governments, special districts, utilities, schools, healthcare providers, and regional/state/federal agencies
    - Facilitates interagency coordination meetings, training exercises, and preparedness initiatives

- The current job description lacks technical and communications responsibilities. Updates should add details like:
    - Oversees emergency notification systems, situational awareness tools, and emergency communications platforms in coordination with Information Technology staff
    - Ensures testing, training, and operational readiness of emergency management systems and technologies
- The current job description should include recovery and financial compliance language, such as:
    - Coordinates disaster recovery activities, including damage assessment, reimbursement documentation, and recovery coordination with Cal OES and FEMA
    - Oversees emergency management grant administration and compliance
    - Coordinates with Finance staff regarding disaster cost tracking and reimbursement requirements
- The current job description should address local rural and geographic complexities. Consider adding language such as:
    - Addresses emergency management challenges associated with rural geography, severe weather, wildfire risk, geographic isolation, limited transportation routes, and infrastructure vulnerabilities
- An updated job description should modify minimum qualifications from “Bachelor’s Degree in Business/Public Administration” to include “Emergency Management, Public Administration, Fire Science, Homeland Security, Public Safety Administration, Environmental Science, or closely related field”
- An updated job description should include preferred experience/training, such as:
    - Experience working in rural or geographically isolated jurisdictions
    - Experience coordinating multi-agency incidents and EOC operations
    - Experience with FEMA and Cal OES reimbursement and grant processes
    - ICS 100, 200, 300, 400
    - IS 700 and 800
    - SEMS/NIMS compliance training
- Outdated language should be removed from the current job description—for example, “Sense of smell to distinguish between normal odors and controlled substances.”

To help support Mono County, a sample job description for the Director of Emergency Management is provided but will need revisions based on who is responsible for overseeing the Office of Emergency Management (e.g, CAO or Sheriff).

**See Appendix 04 for additional details.*

X. DISASTER SERVICES WORKEROPERATIONAL READINESS SURVEY

Purpose

California Government Code, Section 3100 mandates that "all public employees are hereby declared to be disaster service workers…" In addition, California Government Code, Section 3101 defines "public employees" to include county employees.

During emergency events, especially those that last more than 48 – 72 hours, a high performing emergency preparation, response and recovery plan must rely on use of Disaster Services Workers. This survey was conducted for the purpose of evaluating Disaster Service Worker (DSW) designation awareness, training, preparedness, deployment readiness, EOC familiarity, and confidence in the County's emergency mobilization capabilities. *

**Please see Appendix 05 for further details.*

Overview

The survey resulted in responses from 77 employees representing multiple departments and levels of staff (e.g., line staff, supervisors and managers).

Key Themes and Findings

1. Awareness and Designation

- 60 respondents reported they are currently designated as Disaster Service Workers.
- 10 respondents were unsure of their designation status.
- 7 respondents reported they are not designated.

Summary: Most employees recognize they are designated Disaster Service Workers, but a notable minority remain unclear about their role or status, suggesting a need for clearer communication and onboarding.

2. Training Gaps and Inconsistent Preparedness

- 33 respondents reported receiving no DSW training.
- 26 respondents received training within the past two years.
- 17 respondents received training more than two years ago.
- Most commonly completed trainings included:
    - ICS 100 (41 respondents)
    - ICS 200 (35 respondents)
    - Shelter Operations Training (32 respondents)[2]
    - IS-700/NIMS (31 respondents)

[2] It should be noted that Mono County Health & Human Services currently offers in-person shelter training on an annual basis.

- It should also be noted that 22 respondents reported no emergency management training at all.

Summary: Training participation is inconsistent across the workforce. While many respondents completed foundational ICS and emergency management courses, a significant number reported receiving no formal DSW or emergency management training.

3. Preparedness and Confidence Levels

- 39 respondents felt “Somewhat prepared.”
- 18 respondents felt “Minimally prepared.”
- 13 respondents felt “Very prepared.”
- 7 respondents felt “Not prepared.”

3a. Confidence in County Mobilization Ability

- 46 respondents reported “Moderate confidence.”
- 19 respondents reported “High confidence.”
- 10 respondents reported low or no confidence.

3b. Perception of County Mobilization Capability

- 32 respondents rated the County’s mobilization capability as “Adequate.”
- 23 rated it “Marginal.”
- 13 rated it “Strong.”
- 6 rated it “Insufficient.”

Summary: Most employees expressed moderate confidence rather than strong confidence in the County’s emergency mobilization readiness. Responses suggest employees believe the system is functional but would benefit from stronger organization, clearer expectations, and more practical preparation.

4. EOC and Incident Command Familiarity

Familiarity with Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Procedures

- 31 respondents were “Somewhat familiar.”
- 21 were “Slightly familiar.”
- 20 were “Not familiar.”
- Only 5 reported being “Very familiar.”

4b. Familiarity with Incident Command System (ICS) Terminology

- 31 respondents reported “Limited” familiarity.
- 22 reported “Moderate” familiarity.
- 11 reported “Strong” familiarity.

Summary: Knowledge of EOC procedures and Incident Command System terminology remains limited for many respondents, indicating an opportunity for additional operational and role-based training.

5. Deployment Experience and Operational Challenges

- Many respondents had never previously deployed during an emergency. Among those who had deployed:
    - Assigned duties were generally described as “Mostly clear,” though some reported unclear expectations.
    - Supervision quality was mixed, with some respondents identifying only marginal direction and coordination.

5b. Common Barriers to Deployment

- Most frequently identified barriers included:
    - Childcare or family obligations (35)
    - Distance from work location (22)
    - Transportation issues (7)

Summary: Personal and logistical barriers could significantly affect deployment capability during a large-scale emergency. Family obligations and travel distance were the most commonly cited concerns.

6. Priority Areas for Improvement

Respondents identified the following top priorities for strengthening the DSW program:

- Additional training (53)
- More frequent exercises (48)
- Expanded staff participation (36)
- Clearer role assignments (33)
- Improved communication during emergencies (33)
- Pre-designated emergency assignments (33)

Summary: Employees consistently requested more training, practical exercises, and clearer operational structure. Respondents emphasized the need for better communication and more clearly defined responsibilities before emergencies occur.

Summary

Survey results indicate that Mono County employees generally understand the importance of the Disaster Service Worker program and believe the County has a functional emergency response framework. However, most respondents expressed moderate confidence in the County’s overall preparedness and mobilization capability. The strongest recurring concerns centered on inconsistent training, limited familiarity with EOC and ICS procedures, unclear operational roles, and insufficient practical exercises.

The survey also highlighted several opportunities to strengthen organizational readiness. Employees overwhelmingly identified additional training, more frequent emergency exercises, and clearer role assignments as the most important improvements. While many staff members are willing to respond during emergencies, logistical challenges such as childcare responsibilities and travel distance may limit deployment capacity.

Overall, the results suggest the County would benefit from a more structured, standardized, and regularly exercised Disaster Service Worker program to improve readiness, confidence, and operational effectiveness during major emergencies.

Conclusion

Survey results indicate that Mono County employees generally understand the importance of the Disaster Service Worker program and believe the County has a functional emergency response framework; however, most respondents expressed only moderate confidence in the County's overall preparedness and mobilization capability, likely due to inconsistent training, limited familiarity with EOC and ICS procedures, unclear operational roles, and insufficient practical exercises.

Survey results support the position that Mono County's current emergency management structure is not sufficiently resourced to meet the increasing demands of preparedness, response, and recovery. The absence of dedicated leadership, limited staffing redundancy, and reliance on unstable funding sources impact the County's ability to operate proactively and sustain critical programs. Addressing these challenges will require a clear organizational decision, coupled with a commitment to ensuring stable funding and staffing. Regardless of whether the County ultimately establishes a standalone OEM structure or integrates emergency management functions into the CAO's or Sheriff's Office, the County should prioritize development of a resilient, sustainable, and institutionalized emergency management program. Doing so will strengthen operational readiness, improve coordination across agencies, and enhance the County's ability to protect lives, property, and community continuity during emergencies.

XI. PRIORITY WORK PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

Overview

A Priority Work Program is a structured plan that identifies and organizes the most critical tasks and actions needed to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies. It ensures limited resources are directed first toward high-impact activities that protect life, property, and essential services.

The purpose of this section is to explain how the proposed Priority Work Program aligns with established emergency management doctrine used by the State of California and the federal government. This section evaluates the current emergency management program across preparedness, response, recovery, mitigation training, and public information; examines the role and functional value of the Wildfire Mitigation Coordinator position; and establishes a practical emergency management work program based on the County's actual operating conditions, not simply on planning doctrine or grant activity.

At the County level, this system dictates that personnel working directly at the scene of an emergency oversee the event. Meanwhile, the emergency operations center works behind the scenes, helping coordinate efforts, sharing information, setting policies, requesting resources, and ensuring relevant agencies stay in touch with each other. This separation of responsibilities is intentional and designed to prevent duplication or conflict between field command and coordination functions.

Overall Assessment

Mono County's emergency management requirements exceed the capacity of its current organizational structure and available resources. The County operates in a complex environment defined by geographic isolation, severe weather activity, constrained access, seasonal population variability, and a high degree of reliance on external partners. These conditions require an emergency management program that is disciplined, operationally focused, and oriented toward resolving persistent, ongoing challenges.

To improve overall effectiveness, the County would benefit from a structured and *prioritized work program.* This program should come with clear priorities that address recurring operational gaps, clarifies the mission and expectations of the Office of Emergency Management, strengthens preparedness for isolation and severe weather conditions, and more fully integrates mitigation, planning, public information, training, and interagency coordination into a cohesive, countywide system.

Summary of Key Themes

1) Preparedness/Training
   Preparedness and training activities are currently inconsistent and appear to rely heavily on individual initiative, project-based efforts, and informal partner relationships, rather than a consistently applied countywide program. The County will benefit from clearly

defined annual preparedness priorities, a more structured, consistent, and replicable training and exercise program, enhanced hazard-specific planning, and stronger integration with local agencies, fire districts, and state, federal, and community partners.

2) Response
Mono County's response environment is shaped by geography, access limitations, weather impacts, tourism-related surges, and the need for coordinated multi-agency operations. Within this context, the County's emergency management function should emphasize coordination, situational awareness, public information, resource support, and disciplined Emergency Operations Center activation, rather than direct field-level command. These core functions should be more clearly defined, organized, and routinely exercised and emphasized.

3) Recovery
Recovery capabilities are often underdeveloped in local emergency management programs, and Mono County faces similar challenges. The County will benefit from improved disaster documentation practices, clearer definition of recovery coordination roles, enhanced readiness for state and federal reimbursement processes, and more formalized post-incident recovery planning aligned with applicable and available assistance programs.

4) Mitigation
Mitigation represents one of the County's more developed program areas, due in part to ongoing wildfire resilience efforts and the Wildfire Mitigation Coordinator role. Current mitigation activities, however, are relatively narrow in scope and do not adequately consider the County's broader risks such as flooding, earthquakes, power outages, extreme snow events, and transportation challenges. Expanding and integrating mitigation into countywide planning, infrastructure investment, continuity planning, and long-term resilience efforts for emergencies beyond wildfire will strengthen overall program effectiveness.

5) Public Information
Public information and warning capabilities should be treated as a central component of Mono County's emergency management program. The County's operating environment, characterized by dispersed populations, isolated communities, seasonal visitors, variable road access, severe weather, and communications constraints, makes timely, accurate, and trusted information operationally critical. Public information should be established as a primary program function, supported by clear protocols, tools, and coordination mechanisms. In addition, the Information Technology Department should continue providing support, but the ownership and responsibility of public information practices, policies, etc. should be functions of the Director of Emergency Management.

6) Mono County Hazard Context Relevant to Program Prioritization
The County's priority work program should be grounded in its actual operating conditions and risk environment. In addition to wildfire risk, Mono County faces recurring and significant operational challenges associated with winter weather, extended road closures, access limitations, avalanche risk, utility and communications disruptions,

tourism impacts, constrained medical transport capabilities, as well as potential earthquake and volcanic hazards.

These conditions support the need for a work program that extends beyond traditional wildfire or Emergency Operations Center–focused planning and instead emphasizes continuity of operations, isolation management, public warning, and interagency coordination. Key planning and operational considerations should include:

- Wildfire and wildland–urban interface (WUI) exposure
- Winter storms, pass closures, and prolonged snow-related isolation
- Roadway disruption and limited community access
- Utility outages and communications system degradation
- Tourism impacts and transient population considerations
- Evacuation, sheltering, and re-entry operations[3]
- Earthquake, geologic, and volcanic risks
- Flooding, runoff, and debris flow hazards
- Dependence on state, federal, and mutual aid partners

Priorities

The following priorities are intended to guide Mono County toward a more disciplined, operationally grounded emergency management program. Collectively, they emphasize clarification of mission, alignment with real-world conditions, and sustained improvement in readiness, coordination, and resilience.

Priority 1 – Clarify and Stabilize the Core Mission of Emergency Management

Mono County should establish a clear, consistent, and durable definition of the emergency management function across County government. Current expectations appear to rely, in part, on informal understanding or individual interpretation. A more explicit framework is needed to ensure alignment, continuity, and accountability.

The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) should be formally positioned as the County's lead entity for coordination, planning, readiness, public information support, and disaster recovery across all hazards. All departments and partner agencies should have a consistent and common understanding of this role.

Key actions include clarifying OEM authority and responsibilities; defining its working relationships with the Sheriff, Public Works, Public Health, fire districts, EMS, schools, and special districts; and establishing clear expectations for planning, coordination, Emergency Operations Center (EOC) support, public information, and recovery functions. The County should reinforce the fact that emergency management is a countywide coordination function, not a project-specific or administrative role.

[3] HHS provides shelter trainings and there are CSTI trainings offered by Inyo County and Mono County.

Priority 2 – Strengthen Isolation, Winter Weather, and Access Disruption Readiness

Severe winter weather, prolonged road closures, and community isolation should be treated as central planning priorities for Mono County. These conditions are recurring, high-impact events that directly affect daily life, safety, continuity of operations, and access to external support.

The County should develop and refine operational plans that address extended isolation scenarios, including realistic assumptions regarding pass closures, limited ingress and egress, and constrained mutual aid access. Preparedness efforts should address stranded travelers, isolated residents, disruptions to goods and medical care, and utility outages.

Coordination with transportation agencies, law enforcement, public works, utilities, and neighboring jurisdictions is essential to ensure a shared understanding of access limitations and continuity strategies.

Priority 3 – Improve Public Warning, Public Information, and Community Communications

Public warning and information should be treated as core operational capabilities and high-value investments. Mono County's geography, dispersed population, and visitor base require a communications approach that is timely, consistent, and credible under rapidly changing conditions.

The County should clarify roles, protocols, and decision-making authority related to public warning. Messaging about closures, evacuations, sheltering, and access restrictions should be consistent and coordinated across agencies. Improvements should also be made to the County website, social media, and alerting systems to ensure reliable dissemination of information.

As mentioned earlier, the Information Technology Department should play a critical role in supporting public outreach and communication efforts; however, the OEM must clearly be responsible for ensuring that public warning, public information and community communications are meeting the needs of Mono County. Attention should be given to ensuring that visitors and transient populations can access clear, actionable emergency information during incidents.

Priority 4 – Formalize an All-Hazards Planning and Readiness Program

Mono County should establish a structured, ongoing planning and readiness cycle that reflects its full hazard profile and operational realities. Planning efforts should develop beyond episodic updates or compliance-driven activities and instead function as a continuous readiness discipline.

This endeavor should include maintaining and updating emergency plans and annexes on a defined schedule, integrating key hazards such as wildfire, severe weather, isolation, evacuation, continuity, and recovery into planning priorities, and clearly defining departmental roles within the County's emergency management framework. Planning assumptions should be grounded in actual geographic, logistical, and operational constraints.

Priority 5 – Build Recovery and Disaster Documentation Capacity

The County should strengthen its ability to manage disaster recovery, particularly in the areas of documentation, financial tracking, and reimbursement. While response capabilities are often more visible, gaps in recovery can have significant long-term operational and fiscal impacts. Improvements should include establishing consistent disaster documentation practices, clarifying recovery roles and responsibilities in advance of major incidents, and enhancing readiness for state and federal reimbursement processes. The County should also formalize damage assessment procedures and strengthen post-incident corrective action and follow-through.

Priority 6 – Strengthen Training, SEMS/NIMS Integration, and Exercise Readiness
Mono County should implement a structured and recurring training and exercise program aligned with its hazard environment and operational needs. Training should be treated as an ongoing capability-building effort rather than a one-time compliance requirement.

The County should establish a regular training and exercise schedule; ensure personnel receive appropriate Incident Command System (ICS), Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS), and National Incident Management System (NIMS) training; and use exercises to validate plans under realistic conditions.

Tabletop, functional, and field exercises should be used to test scenarios such as wildfire, winter isolation, evacuation, public warning, and continuity. These efforts should include active participation from local, state, and federal partners and should be supported by meaningful after-action reviews and improvement plans.

Priority 7 – Strengthen Wildfire Resilience as a Distinct but Integrated Program Area

Wildfire mitigation and resilience should remain a defined priority for Mono County. Existing efforts, including those led by the Wildfire Mitigation Coordinator, provide a strong foundation. However, wildfire-related activities should align more closely with broader county planning, including hazard mitigation, public information, and long-term resilience initiatives. The County should continue to support partnerships with Fire Safe Councils, local fire districts, state agencies, and regional partners, while ensuring that wildfire programs complement—rather than replace—broader emergency management functions.

Priority 8 – Improve County Interface with Fire Districts and Rural Stakeholders

Effective emergency management in Mono County depends on strong coordination with local fire districts and other rural stakeholders. These partners are essential to incident response and community-level readiness, but operate under their own resource constraints. The County should establish a more consistent and productive coordination framework, improve two-way communication regarding planning and operational expectations and ensure that county systems and processes support local partners without creating unnecessary administrative burden.

Priority 9 – Establish Program Metrics, Reporting, and Accountability

To ensure sustained progress, Mono County should treat emergency management as an ongoing management function supported by clear accountability and performance tracking. This includes adopting a formal annual or multi-year work program, assigning lead and supporting responsibilities for each priority area, and establishing a regular reporting cycle to monitor implementation. The County should also develop practical performance measures tied to readiness, coordination, planning, training, and mitigation outcomes, enabling leadership to assess progress and adjust priorities as needed.

Conclusion

Mono County's emergency management function will benefit from a more deliberate and structured operating model. The County does not need additional conceptual frameworks, but rather the establishment of clear priorities, consistent coordination, and an intentional program able to respond to emergencies occurring within the County's operating environment.

The priority work program outlined in this section is intended to provide that structure and direction. It emphasizes practical, operational improvements and reinforces the need for a disciplined, consistent, countywide approach to emergency management. Within this context, the Wildfire Mitigation Coordinator role should be understood as a valuable and effective resilience function—one that contributes meaningfully to the County's overall efforts but operates within a broader system that requires continued development, integration, and sustained organizational support.

XII. WILDFIRE COORDINATOR AND PLACEMENT ASSESSMENT

Overview

The Wildfire Coordinator reports to the Director of the Office of Emergency management through bi-monthly meetings and has unlimited access to the Director, should they need guidance.

In addition, the Wildfire Coordinator reports to a designated representative of the California Fire Safe Council's (CFSC) Southern Region; this happens via Grant Quarterly Progress Reports and during Quarterly Zoom/Teams interviews with CFSC representatives. CFSC designated site visits also provide opportunity for the Wildfire Coordinator to update and get feedback from the CFSC representative. The CFCCS administers all County Coordinator grants.

Purpose

The purpose of Wildfire Coordinator assessment is to provide a structured analysis of the written responses submitted by the Mono County Wildfire Coordinator as part of the broader Mono County Office of Emergency Management assessment. The goal of this assessment is to document the current functions, accomplishments, constraints, and strategic contributions of the Wildfire Coordinator position, and to evaluate how the role aligns with the County's overall emergency management and community resilience framework.

Overall Assessment

This assessment indicates the Wildfire Coordinator role is delivering meaningful countywide value despite operating with limited structural and administrative support. The position currently fulfills multiple critical functions, including grant development, interagency coordination, mitigation strategy development, public education, and community engagement.

At the same time, the findings suggest that Mono County's wildfire mitigation efforts remain in a developmental phase. Foundational systems necessary to sustain and scale long-term success are still being established. In practical terms, the Wildfire Coordinator represents one of the County's most significant emerging resilience assets; however, wildfire mitigation has not yet been fully institutionalized as a mature and durable program area.

Summary of Key Themes

1) Role Scope and Functional Breadth
   The Wildfire Coordinator manages a broad, countywide portfolio encompassing wildfire mitigation planning, public outreach and education, Firewise and Fire Safe Council support, grant writing, project coordination, and relationship management across local, regional, state, and federal partners. The position also functions as a central point of contact for many wildfire-related initiatives.

   Importantly, the role extends beyond administrative duties; it also serves an operationally relevant coordination function, contributing directly to both community resilience and county preparedness objectives.

2) Measurable Progress and Program Value
Assessment responses demonstrate clear and measurable outcomes associated with the position. These metrics include successful external grant acquisition, expansion of Firewise and Fire Adapted Communities, strengthened Fire Safe Councils, and increased coordination around wildfire preparedness and hazardous fuels reduction.

Collectively, these results indicate the Wildfire Coordinator role is delivering significant return on investment and should be regarded as a strategic county asset rather than a narrowly scoped, grant-funded position.

3) Grant Development and External Funding
A key indicator of program effectiveness is the Wildfire Coordinator's success in securing and supporting major grant initiatives. These efforts have brought critical funding, equipment, and implementation capacity to Mono County and the broader Eastern Sierra region. Notable examples include:

- 2025 USDA Forest Service Community Wildfire Defense Grant (~$4.6 million)
- 2025 CAL FIRE Wildfire Prevention Grant (~$433,000)
- 2025 and 2024 Southern California Edison Community Directed Grants
- 2023 USDA Wood Innovations Grant (~$600,000)
- 2023 Cal OES/LISTOS funding for community preparedness equipment

These outcomes demonstrate the role's effectiveness in translating planning and coordination into tangible financial resources and on-the-ground project implementation.

4) Community Wildfire Capacity Building
Assessment findings indicate Mono County has significantly expanded its wildfire mitigation capacity in recent years, largely through community-based coordination and engagement. This evolution includes increased participation in Firewise programs, sustained support to Fire Safe Councils, and growing public involvement in wildfire preparedness and fuels reduction efforts.

This distinction is important: the County is actively building its wildfire resilience systems rather than maintaining a fully developed framework.

5) Relationships with Fire Districts and Partner Agencies
The Wildfire Coordinator has developed strong working relationships with local fire districts, community organizations, CAL FIRE, federal land management agencies, and other stakeholders. Collectively, these partnerships appear to be primary drivers of program success.

Given Mono County's rural and geographically diverse nature, this emphasis on collaboration and trust-based relationships is essential to effective wildfire resilience.

6) County-Specific Wildfire Risk Insights
The Wildfire Coordinator identified June Lake, Walker, Topaz, and Mammoth Lakes as areas of elevated wildfire concern. These assessments are supported by credible, location-specific factors including fuel loading, insect damage, topography, limited access routes, vegetation characteristics, historic fire impacts, and development patterns.

Such insights provide valuable input for future hazard mitigation planning and targeted investment strategies.

7) Data and Performance Tracking Limitations
A key assessment finding is that program needs and expectations have outpaced the County's ability to systematically track, measure, and report outcomes. Current data collection and performance management systems are underdeveloped relative to the scale of ongoing activities.

This should be understood as an organizational gap rather than a performance issue. Formalizing metrics, reporting processes, and accountability mechanisms will be critical to sustaining and demonstrating program effectiveness over time.

8) Integration with Emergency Management
Clear areas of overlap exist between the Wildlife Coordinator role and emergency management, particularly regarding public information, community preparedness, and resilience messaging. However, grant constraints currently limit the Wildfire Coordinator's direct involvement in emergency response functions.

While a valid organizational structure could be placing the Wildfire Coordinator under the responsibility of OEM, considering OEM is in a period of transition and the Wildfire Coordinator role is performing well, the Wildfire Coordinator should continue reporting to the CAO.

If Mono County determines that OEM will be a stand-alone department, or a division in the CAO's office, once OEM is stabilized consideration should be given to placing the Wildfire Coordinator under the authority of the Director of OEM.

If Mono County determines that OEM will be a responsibility of the Sheriff, OEM should continue reporting to the CAO. A civilian Wildfire Coordinator position should report to the County Administrative Officer (CAO), rather than an elected Sheriff, because wildfire preparedness, mitigation, response coordination, and recovery are inherently cross-departmental county functions requiring neutral executive oversight and enterprise-wide collaboration. Reporting to the CAO ensures the position can coordinate effectively across emergency management, public works, planning, environmental health, finance, community development, and external agency partners without being housed within a single elected department. Because the Sheriff is an independently elected official with a distinct law enforcement mission and autonomous governance structure, placing a civilian wildfire coordination role under the Sheriff may create organizational silos, perceived conflicts of priority, or limitations on countywide policy alignment. Reporting to the CAO better supports strategic accountability, administrative consistency, multi-

agency coordination, and alignment with the Board of Supervisors' broader public safety and resilience objectives.[4]

While this assessment does not recommend organizational restructuring, the findings suggest potential value in a future evaluation of how wildfire coordination responsibilities are distributed across County departments. A more integrated or interdepartmental model may enhance coordination with local fire districts and public safety partners.

At present, the Wildfire Coordinator position should be understood and identified as a resilience-focused role with emergency management relevance, rather than as a traditional response-oriented position.

9) Structural Gaps and Countywide Challenges
Assessment responses identified several systemic challenges, including limited administrative support, constrained grant management capacity, insufficient fiscal sponsorship pathways for community organizations, and communication limitations in rural and mountainous areas.

These findings indicate Mono County's primary constraint is not a lack of effort, but rather the need to strengthen the organizational infrastructure necessary to support a modern, scalable wildfire mitigation program, as funding is available.

Priorities for the Next 12 to 24 Months

The Wildfire Coordinator identified several practical priorities, including:

- Increased administrative and programmatic support
- Enhanced wildfire mitigation and prevention support for local fire agencies
- Additional staffing to sustain and expand Fire Adapted Communities initiatives

These priorities align with the broader findings of this assessment.

Conclusion

The Wildfire Mitigation Coordinator position represents one of Mono County's more effective and emerging resilience functions. The role is contributing measurable value in areas such as grant development, community wildfire preparedness, stakeholder coordination, Firewise and Fire Safe Council engagement, and the expansion of wildfire mitigation programs. As such, the position should be maintained and, where appropriate, further developed.

Current successes are driven in large part by individual initiative and relationship-building rather than a fully developed institutional framework. Sustained success and continued progress will require investment in administrative, analytical, and organizational support systems.

[4] The reasons justifying why the Wildfire Coordinator should not report to an elected Sheriff can also apply to the Office of Emergency Management.

At the same time, the County should recognize the role of Wildfire Mitigation Coordinator is inherently shaped by grant funding, mitigation priorities, and a relatively focused scope of work. It is not structured to address the full range of the County's emergency management requirements. Accordingly, the position should not be expected to independently resolve broader capability gaps related to isolation planning, severe weather readiness, Emergency Operations Center (EOC) functions, public information, recovery coordination, or countywide operational integration.

Within the context of this assessment, the Wildlife Mitigation Coordinator position is best understood as a key component of the County's broader resilience and mitigation efforts, with important connections to preparedness, public information, coordination with local fire agencies, and long-term risk reduction strategy. The role should be deliberately integrated into the County's emergency management framework while remaining independently focused on its unique intended purpose, funding structure, and operational limits.

This assessment does not recommend converting the Wildlife Mitigation Coordinator position to a broader emergency medical services (EMS) or fire district liaison role at this time. However, it does suggest potential future value in evaluating whether certain field-facing coordination functions would be more effectively supported within a broader, interdepartmental resilience and local agency coordination framework, rather than solely within the emergency management function, itself. In addition, there is opportunity for shared administrative support between OEM and the Wildfire Mitigation Coordinator.

In summary, Mono County has established a capable and productive wildfire mitigation function, but has not yet developed a fully mature, institutionalized wildfire mitigation program. The Mono County Wildfire Coordinator role appears to be delivering meaningful countywide value through grant development, community wildfire preparedness, stakeholder coordination, and mitigation program growth. However, the role is currently operating within a broader county system that remains underbuilt in several critical areas, including data management, administrative support, communications resilience, fiscal sponsorship pathways, and long-term program sustainability.

The County should treat this function not as a temporary or grant-limited initiative, but as a foundational component of its long-term wildfire resilience strategy.

XIII. PEER COUNTY BENCHMARK

The purpose of this section is to compare Mono County's Office of Emergency Management (OEM) with OEMs in other, similar jurisdictions. To provide a thorough perspective, this report includes both smaller and larger counties, primarily in rural California. Multiple focal points were evaluated. As emergency management is inherently collaborative and multi-jurisdictional, and counties operate within a shared statewide framework, these comparisons provide significant practical, strategic, and policy-related data. By examining similarities and differences across similar counties, Mono County can strengthen its ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters.

The objectives of these comparisons are:

1) **To Address Unique Geographic and Demographic Challenges**
   Mono County is a rural, mountainous region with unique hazards, such as heavy snowfall, avalanches, and limited infrastructure access. In contrast, other California counties may face urban risks (earthquakes, dense populations) or coastal hazards (flooding, sea-level rise). Comparison clarifies which challenges are common and which are unique to Mono County.

2) **To Enhance Accountability and Transparency**
   Comparison with other counties creates a benchmark for accountability and provides Mono County with additional information to make the best decisions possible with available resources.

3) **To Support Innovation and Adaptation**
   Due to climate change, technological advances, and emerging threats, emergency management is constantly evolving. Counties often pilot new tools such as GIS-based risk mapping, advanced alert systems, or community resilience programs. By comparing its OEM with those of peer counties, Mono County can adopt innovative technologies more quickly, learn from pilot programs and case studies and implement best practices, thereby fostering a proactive, rather than a reactive, approach to emergency management.

Municipal Management Solutions, LLC (MMS) compared Mono County's Office of Emergency Management (OEM) organization structure, availability of public safety resources, county size, population and additional county demographics with the following counties:

- Alpine
- El Dorado
- Inyo
- Madera
- Nevada
- Placer
- Tuolumne

Among comparable counties, OES programs reside with the Sheriff in four counties, and with the CEO/CAO in three counties. Further, while this assessment did not include a detailed comparison to Douglas County, Nevada, it should be noted that the Douglas County Manager is responsible for overseeing the Office of Emergency Management. As Douglas County borders Mono County, this is important to keep in mind.

Below is a summary of the primary categories of the peer county comparison.

	OEM/OES FTEs	Square Miles	Population	Incorporated Cities/Towns	Director of OEM/OES	OEM/OES Budget
Alpine	None	743	1,200	N/A	Sheriff	Grants
El Dorado	5	1,708	191,185	Placerville South Lake Tahoe	Sheriff	$1.82M
Inyo	2	10,192	18,000	Bishop	CAO	$949,000
Madera	2 (also responsible for Searcy & Rescue)	2,153	156,255	Chowchilla Madera	Sheriff	$384,098
Mono	**2 (Including Wildfire Coordinator)**	**3,132**	**13,195**	**Mammoth Lakes**	**CAO**	**$779,061**
Nevada	11	958	102,195	Grass Valley Nevada City Truckee	CEO	$8.96M
Placer	5	1,506	421,000	Auburn Colfax Lincoln Loomis Rocklin Roseville	Sheriff	$2.82M
Tuolumne	4	2,274	55,620	Sonora	CAO	$1.23M

Note: During peak tourism periods, populations in Inyo, Mono and Madera counties often double in size, putting additional strain on public safety services.

The counties show substantial variation in emergency management staffing, resources, and operational scope. Nevada County maintains the largest OEM/OES staffing level (11 FTEs) and highest budget ($8.96M), despite serving a mid-sized population (102,195) and relatively small geographic area (958 square miles), suggesting a comparatively high investment in emergency management capacity. Placer County, with the largest population (421,000), operates with 5 FTEs and a $2.82M budget, while El Dorado County supports a similar staffing model (5 FTEs) across a larger geographic footprint and lower population. Smaller rural counties such as Inyo, Mono, and Tuolumne manage vast service areas with limited staffing (2–4 FTEs), indicating broader geographic responsibilities per employee. Alpine County stands apart, reporting no dedicated OEM/OES staff and relying on the Sheriff's Office and grant funding. Governance structures also vary, with most counties placing OEM/OES under the Sheriff, while others report

to the CAO/CEO, reflecting differing organizational approaches to emergency management oversight.

Summarily, comparing the Mono County Office of Emergency Management with other California county OEMs is a critical strategy for improving effectiveness, efficiency, and resilience. Thoughtful analysis of comparison data, collaboration with similar and/or neighboring counties, and shared learning can all lead to enhanced preparedness and response capabilities, while ensuring alignment with statewide systems. These efforts will collectively lead to better protection of lives, property, and the environment, fulfilling the core mission of emergency management. That said, every county faces unique challenges and has unique strengths. While we hope Mono County finds this comparative information useful, clearly any decisions should be made with the needs and priorities of Mono County residents in mind.

**See Appendices 6-13 for additional details.*

XIV. PACK FIRE (2025): OPERATIONAL CASE STUDY, CWPP GAP, & PROGRAM IMPLICATIONS

Purpose of the Case Study

While analysis of the Pack Fire was not requested as part of this project, Municipal Management Solutions, LLC (MMS) determined that examination of the event would add significant value to the overall evaluation. This section uses the 2025 Pack Fire as a recent, real-world operational case study to evaluate Mono County's emergency management environment, coordination demands, communications performance, wildfire mitigation implementation, and post-incident recovery implications. The purpose is not to critique field suppression operations, which were led through established incident command and unified command structures, but rather to assess what the incident reveals about Mono County's broader emergency management capability, continuity, and organizational readiness.

The Pack Fire is especially relevant to this assessment because it was one of the most significant recent wildfire incidents affecting Mono County communities, public safety systems, transportation corridors, and countywide coordination functions. As such, it provides a factual and incident-based framework for evaluating whether current emergency management systems, staffing, organizational placement, mitigation capacity, and recovery support functions are adequate and appropriate for Mono County's actual risk profile and operational needs.

In the context of this assessment, the Pack Fire should be viewed as more than a wildfire response event. It should be treated as a benchmark incident that tested Mono County's ability to coordinate across jurisdictions, support evacuations and repopulation, interface with public health and transportation impacts, sustain public communication, and transition from response into recovery and mitigation. This is precisely the type of incident that should inform organizational and programmatic recommendations for the future.

Incident Overview

The Pack Fire ignited on November 13, 2025, near McGee Creek Road west of U.S. Highway 395 in Mono County. Publicly available information indicates the fire burned approximately 1,974 acres, threatened more than 1,100 structures, destroyed 30 structures, and damaged 6 additional structures. The incident required mandatory evacuation orders and warnings affecting the Long Valley, McGee Creek, and Crowley Lake areas and contributed to closures along U.S. Highway 395, one of the County's most important regional transportation corridors.
The incident was managed under Unified Command, involving the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), specifically the San Bernardino–Inyo–Mono Unit, the Inyo National Forest, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Mono County Sheriff. The fire was ultimately fully contained on December 3, 2025. Following the fire, Mono County received both a local emergency proclamation and a Governor's State of Emergency declaration, with subsequent concerns extending beyond the burn itself to include flood, debris flow, erosion, access, and other post-fire consequences associated with winter weather and runoff conditions. For purposes of this assessment, the significance of the Pack Fire cannot be measured solely in acreage destroyed or suppression complexity; its significance lies in the breadth of countywide consequences and coordination requirements it created. The incident triggered evacuation and

repopulation activity, sheltering and public assistance functions, transportation impacts, public health considerations, recovery coordination needs, and longer-term mitigation and grant implications. These are all core areas relevant to a county-level emergency management assessment.

Emergency Management Relevance to the Mono County Assessment

The Pack Fire is directly relevant to this assessment because it tested the County's emergency management system in the exact areas a county Office of Emergency Management should be expected to influence, support, or coordinate. These include coordination between field incident command and county policy and coordination functions; evacuation support and repopulation coordination; public information and resident assistance; shelter and human services support; public health interface; transportation and access impacts; recovery coordination and assistance center activation; state and federal interface; and post-fire mitigation and resilience planning. A recurring theme in emergency management assessments is the difference between plans and actual operational behavior under stress. The Pack Fire offers a practical opportunity to examine not only what Mono County's plans indicate, but what the County's emergency management ecosystem was required to do when confronted with a fast-moving wildfire that threatened communities, infrastructure, and continuity of operations; this makes the Pack Fire one of the most useful real-world data points available for this project.

Operational and Organizational Observations

The publicly available record confirms that the Pack Fire required sustained countywide coordination activity beyond fireline operations. These efforts included evacuation support, sheltering, resident communication, public assistance, repopulation coordination, and recovery-oriented activities such as the opening of a Local Assistance Center. The incident also confirms that wildfire consequence management in Mono County extends well beyond suppression and into community services, public health, infrastructure restoration, public communication, and longer-term recovery.

Several organizational observations can reasonably be drawn from this incident. First, the Pack Fire illustrates the reality that Mono County's wildfire risk is not merely a fire suppression issue. Wildfire incidents in Mono County can rapidly become countywide emergencies requiring coordination among the Sheriff, fire agencies, public health, transportation stakeholders, public information personnel, utility partners, volunteer organizations, and administrative support systems.

Second, the incident highlights the importance of clearly separating field command from county coordination functions. Wildland suppression and evacuation law enforcement responsibilities may appropriately live within established command systems and statutory authorities, but county-level emergency management must still provide value through coordination, support, situational awareness, public consequence management, and continuity between operational periods and post-fire phases.

Finally, the Pack Fire reinforces a broader governance and organizational issue common in many rural counties: emergency management is often expected to perform at a high level during

major incidents even while staffing, role clarity, and institutional support between incidents are underprioritized. That tension should be addressed through this assessment.

Communications, Dispatch, and Incident Management Performance

The Pack Fire also revealed that communications and dispatch performance should be prioritized as a material part of the County's emergency management capability. After Action Report findings indicate that radio communications were challenged by coverage limitations, congestion, and frequency coordination problems. Tactical interoperability was not seamless, and responders, at times, relied on cellular telephones to bridge operational communication gaps. Those conditions are not minor technical inconveniences; they impact situational awareness, resource assignment, and responder safety.

Dispatch and notification issues also emerged. Cooperating agencies reported uneven paging, delay in certain notifications, and the need for self-dispatch or workarounds during the early stages of the incident. The Sheriff's Office After Action Report similarly identified problems in coordinating across agencies and in receiving and disseminating information from the field. These findings suggest that emergency communications capability in Mono County should be evaluated not only as a radio system issue, but also as a dispatch structure, staffing, and interoperability issue.

The incident further demonstrated limitations in local depth for the Incident Command System. Although Unified Command was established and life safety objectives were met, the After Action Report identified that key functions such as planning, logistics, resource status, and situation status were not fully staffed during early operations. These obstacles reduced ability to see the overall operational picture, complicated documentation, and made transfer of command more difficult. These are classic symptoms of an organization that can perform under pressure because of committed people, but does not have enough depth, role clarity, or pre-designated staffing to consistently support a higher-level incident management structure.

These observations should not be interpreted as criticism of the responders who managed a fast-moving and dangerous event. They should instead be treated as evidence that Mono County's emergency management and command-support systems require development and reinforcement if the County expects to successfully manage future incidents with the same or greater complexity.

Emergency Operations Center, Alert and Warning, and Human Services Observations

The Pack Fire also provides practical insight into the County's coordination architecture outside the fireline. Mono County did not activate a formal Emergency Operations Center during the incident. The After-Action Report attributes this in part to the compressed operational period, the fact that many of the people who would staff an Emergency Operations Center were directly engaged in field command or operations, and the lack of a designated facility, trained staff pool, and pre-assigned Emergency Operations Center roles. In a small rural county, those realities are understandable. At the same time, they also confirm an organizational gap: the County's ability to sustain policy coordination, resource support, documentation, and continuity outside the field command environment remains limited.

Alert and warning systems also presented challenges. The County utilized the Genasys EVAC system for evacuation notifications, but reports indicated that some residents did not receive alerts. Mono County staff concluded the alerts were sent out as expected, but the primary reason for this breakdown was a result of community members not signing up to receive the alters. This illustrates the need to improve communication with the community as part of the preparation and planning process to sign up to receive the alerts. The After-Action Report also noted that responsibility for issuing alerts depends heavily on the availability of the Emergency Manager, with the Sheriff's Office filling the redundancy gap. This solution is a practical workaround, but it also reflects a structural vulnerability.

At the same time, the incident indicated that human services, sheltering, and public assistance coordination were meaningful components of the County's consequence management function. Temporary evacuation points, sheltering, and the Local Assistance Center were activated through interagency and partner coordination involving county departments, neighboring jurisdictions, nonprofit organizations, and volunteer support. Access and Functional Needs support was also provided, though the After-Action Report identified limitations in the completeness of the Access and Functional Needs database. These findings reinforce that emergency management in Mono County is not only an operational coordination function but also a public-facing human services and recovery support function.

CWPP Implementation Gaps Revealed by the Pack Fire

The Pack Fire also provides an important planning and mitigation lens. Mono County's Community Wildfire Protection Plan identifies broad categories of priority work, including hazardous fuels reduction, community preparedness and defensible space, evacuation and access planning, interagency coordination, and post-fire resilience. The Pack Fire demonstrates that while those planning priorities remain valid, implementation appears incomplete and uneven in ways that materially affected community exposure and consequence management.

Fuel reduction and landscape treatment gaps remain evident where the scale, continuity, maintenance, or strategic placement of treatment work appears insufficient to materially reduce exposure in the affected wildland-urban interface environment. The Pack Fire also highlights community preparedness, defensible space, and home hardening gaps, suggesting that parcel-level mitigation and readiness remain uneven across the County.

The fire also exposed evacuation, access, and transportation vulnerabilities, particularly the significance of U.S. Highway 395 and limited rural egress options. Additionally, the incident illustrates the reality that implementation capacity matters as much as planning quality. Counties can adopt strong plans, but without dedicated bandwidth to track priorities, align grants, coordinate projects, and sustain follow-through between fire seasons, plans alone do not reduce risk.

Implications for the Wildfire Mitigation Coordinator Role

The Pack Fire is especially relevant to the County's consideration of the Wildfire Mitigation Coordinator role. Incident evaluation can help clarify what that role should and should not be.

The Pack Fire also demonstrates Mono County's need for continuity in wildfire-related coordination that extends beyond operational periods and beyond any one department or incident. Specifically, the County needs a function that can connect mitigation planning, grant strategy, interagency coordination, project tracking, community engagement, and post-fire follow-through; this is where a wildfire coordination role adds strategic value.

At the same time, the Pack Fire also reinforces the position that the Wildfire Mitigation Coordinator should not be structured as a tactical or operational command position unless and until the County is willing to directly fund such a role and intentionally redefine it. As currently understood, the position is primarily grant-funded through CAL FIRE or similarly constrained mitigation programs, which typically do not support field operations or emergency response command responsibilities. If permissible per the grant, consideration should be given to using discretionary revenues to support this position so that Mono County has the flexibility to utilize the position to best serve the needs of the community. In addition, Mono County should have plans in place so that if the grant is terminated, Mono County can continue to fund this position with discretionary revenues.

Implementation and Organizational Implications for Mono County

The Pack Fire offers practical direction for Mono County's future organizational and programmatic improvements. In the near term, the County should use the Pack Fire to formalize the interfaces between emergency management, wildfire mitigation, evacuation support, public information, public health, communications, and recovery coordination. At a minimum, the County should identify and document who is responsible for county-level coordination functions before, during, and after major wildfires and ensure that these roles are institutionalized rather than personality-dependent.

From there, Mono County should more intentionally integrate wildfire mitigation, grant pipelines, Community Wildfire Protection Plan implementation tracking, emergency communications improvement, and post-fire resilience planning into a unified coordination framework. The Pack Fire makes clear that wildfire resilience cannot be treated as a one-season or one-plan issue. It is a year-round, interdepartmental program function.

In the long term, the Pack Fire supports the need for Mono County to institutionalize wildfire consequence management and recovery continuity within its County structure. This does not mean creating a large bureaucracy. It means ensuring that Mono County has a sustainable model for linking mitigation, coordination, communications, consequence management, reimbursement, and resilience work across incident cycles.

Case Study Conclusion

The Pack Fire should be treated as a benchmark incident for this assessment. It is one of the clearest recent examples of the way wildfire risk in Mono County extends beyond suppression and into evacuation coordination, public consequence management, public health, transportation disruption, recovery, mitigation, communications, and long-term resilience.

For purposes of this project, the Pack Fire is valuable not because it proves a single organizational conclusion, but because it reveals where continuity, coordination, implementation capacity, communications reliability, and role clarity matter most. It supports the conclusion that Mono County's emergency management system should be evaluated and strengthened based on the actual demands created by modern wildfire incidents rather than on a narrow or outdated view of emergency management as a plan-writing or response-only function.

Acronyms/Definitions	
Acronym	**Definition**
AFN	Access and Functional Needs
CAL FIRE	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
CWPP	Community Wildfire Protection Plan
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
EVAC	The County's evacuation notification platform as used in Genasys EVAC
ICS	Incident Command System
LAC	Local Assistance Center
PIO	Public Information Officer
U.S.	United States

Pack Fire (2025) Timeline of Emergency Management and Coordination Actions	
Date	**Key Actions**
November 13, 2025	Fire ignition; initial attack and Unified Command established.
November 13–15, 2025	Mandatory evacuation orders and warnings issued for Long Valley and McGee Creek; U.S. Highway 395 closures implemented.

November 16–17, 2025	Evacuation shelters operated and were subsequently demobilized; public assistance line published by Mono County Emergency Management.
November 17, 2025	Evacuation orders lifted; warnings remained within portions of the fire area; public health direction issued during repopulation.
November 21, 2025	California Governor's Office of Emergency Services and Mono County opened a Local Assistance Center at the Crowley Lake Community Center.
December 3, 2025	Fire fully contained.
December 9, 2025	Governor proclaimed a State of Emergency for Mono County.

Pack Fire (2025) – Operational and System Observations Relevant to Emergency Management

Focus Area	Observed Issue	Why It Matters	Potential Improvement Direction
Communications	Coverage, congestion, and interoperability limitations	Reduced situational awareness and field coordination	Radio system improvement, interoperable communications planning, and field training
Dispatch	Notification and coordination inconsistencies	Slowed resource assignment and information flow	Dispatch process review, staffing evaluation, and clearer interagency notification protocols
Incident Command System support	Limited Planning and Logistics depth in early operations	Constrained documentation, resource tracking, and transfer of command	Pre-designated incident management staffing, training, and exercises
Emergency Operations Center capability	No formal activation and limited staffing model	Reduced county-level coordination capacity outside field command	Emergency Operations Center designation, role assignments, and training
Alert and warning	Dependence on software, public enrollment, and limited redundancy	Potential delay or uneven public notification	Redundant authority, public education, and layered warning procedures

Access and Functional Needs support	Incomplete database participation	Potential gaps in identifying vulnerable residents	Outreach, annual validation, and integration with local partner knowledge

Pack Fire (2025) – Community Wildfire Protection Plan Implementation Gaps and Funding Alignment			
Community Wildfire Protection Plan Focus Area	**Observed Gap Revealed by Pack Fire**	**Evidence from Pack Fire**	**Potential Funding Alignment**
Fuel Reduction	Insufficient scale or continuity of fuels treatment near wildland-urban interface communities	More than 1,100 structures threatened; 30 structures destroyed	CAL FIRE Wildfire Prevention Grants; Forest Health Grants
Defensible Space / Home Hardening	Uneven parcel-level mitigation and community hardening	Structure losses despite existing community outreach and awareness efforts	CAL FIRE Prevention Grants; California Fire Safe Council programs
Evacuation and Access	Limited evacuation routes and corridor vulnerability	Mandatory evacuations and U.S. Highway 395 closures	CAL FIRE Prevention Grants; Federal Emergency Management Agency mitigation programs
Community Wildfire Protection Plan implementation capacity	Limited staffing and continuity to convert priorities into projects	Multi-agency coordination and post-fire follow-through demands	Planning and coordination grants; implementation support programs
Post-Fire Mitigation	Secondary hazards not fully institutionalized in implementation model	Flood, runoff, erosion, and debris-flow concerns after the fire	CAL FIRE and Federal Emergency Management Agency hazard mitigation funding

XV. GEOGRAPHIC RESPONSE AREAS

Background

During the interview and assessment preparation, a suggestion was made that Mono County consider organizing emergency management and response planning into four geographic response areas consisting of South County, the Town of Mammoth Lakes, the June Lake/Lee Vining area, and North County extending from Conway Summit northward. The concept warrants consideration and presents both advantages and limitations.

From a practical standpoint, Mono County already functions as several distinct geographic regions. Residents, visitors, elected officials, and response agencies generally recognize meaningful differences between South County, Mammoth Lakes, the central corridor communities, and North County. Each area possesses unique demographics, transportation considerations, infrastructure, seasonal population fluctuations, and hazard profiles. As a result, organizing information within these geographic areas can improve communication, planning discussions, and community understanding of local issues.

Advantages

The approach is particularly effective when discussing emergency management planning, community preparedness initiatives, hazard mitigation efforts, infrastructure vulnerabilities, and long-term strategic priorities. Similar geographic frameworks are commonly utilized by sheriff offices through patrol beats and service areas, providing a structure that is familiar to both elected officials and the public.

Within each planning region, the Office of Emergency Management could evaluate population characteristics, critical facilities, transportation networks, hazards, emergency response capabilities, and recovery considerations. This structure would provide elected officials and stakeholders with a familiar geographic framework while maintaining a risk-based approach to emergency management and public safety planning.

Additionally, responder and volunteer groups from each of the four areas could be organized. Besides using these groups in response to events, organizing and training each group could be focused, customized, and coordinated to provide better community-level responsiveness and compliment the overall OEM program. The value of highly trained, equipped, informed, and organized personnel for emergency response cannot be overstated.

Challenges

The challenge arises when geographic boundaries are used as the primary basis for operational planning or resource deployment. Mono County's service demands are not evenly distributed across the county. The Town of Mammoth Lakes accounts for a substantial portion of the county's population, tourism activity, critical infrastructure, special events, and emergency response workload. Other regions encompass significant geographic areas but experience considerably lower call volumes and day-to-day service demands.

As a result, geographic divisions alone may not accurately reflect operational risk, emergency

service demand, or resource requirements. Emergency management responsibilities are often driven more by hazard exposure and population concentrations than by geographic boundaries. Winter storm impacts, transportation incidents along the U.S. Highway 395 corridor, tourism-related emergencies, wildland-urban interface concerns, and remote community access challenges frequently cross any geographic boundaries that may be established.

For this reason, it may be beneficial to limit the focus of the proposed geographic areas as 'planning regions' rather than operational districts. Under this approach, the County could organize portions of the Emergency Operations Plan, hazard mitigation strategies, and emergency management discussions around four planning regions:

- South County
- Town of Mammoth Lakes
- Central Corridor (June Lake, Mono Basin, and Lee Vining)
- North County (Bridgeport and communities north of Conway Summit)

Conclusion

Overall, the four responses areas concept has merit as an organizational and communication tool. However, emergency management recommendations, resource deployment decisions, and operational planning should continue to be guided primarily by risk, hazard exposure, population impacts, and service demand rather than geographic boundaries alone.

Recommendation

For these reasons, it is recommended that Mono County consider organizing Emergency Management resources for operations in two areas: "north" and "south". The "north" response district could be centered in Bridgeport and the "south" in, or near, Mammoth. In both the 2025 Pack Fire and early 2023 snow event the physical closures of 395, in effect, necessitated a "from the north" and "from the south" response plan. As the Office of Emergency Management matures in the future, transitioning to four operational areas could be necessary.

XVI. CONCLUSION

Mono County has developed many of the essential building blocks of an effective emergency management program. The County has established the foundational framework required under state and federal emergency management systems, maintains access to California's robust mutual aid network, and benefits from a dedicated workforce and strong support from partner agencies. The Wildfire Mitigation Coordinator program stands out as a significant success, demonstrating the County's ability to secure external funding, strengthen community resilience, and build meaningful partnerships around wildfire preparedness and mitigation. These assets provide a strong platform on which to build a more mature and resilient emergency management system.

At the same time, the assessment makes clear that Mono County's emergency management program is not yet operating as a fully integrated, countywide system. ***The absence of permanent leadership, unclear organizational alignment, and limited staffing redundancy have contributed to a program that is too often dependent on individual initiative rather than institutional structure***. Communication gaps, inconsistent preparedness activities, and unreliable coordination with key stakeholders—including fire agencies, the Town of Mammoth Lakes, and other critical partners—have limited the County's ability to function as a unified and proactive organization. In its current form, the system remains more reactive than strategic, particularly in the areas of preparedness, recovery, and interagency integration.

Mono County's operating environment demands a more disciplined and comprehensive approach. As mentioned throughout this report, Mono County faces a uniquely complex hazard profile; effective preparation to manage varied and evolving threats will require a clearly defined governance structure, stronger partnerships, updated plans, regular training and exercises, and a renewed emphasis on communication, accountability, and whole-community coordination. The County's emergency management function must be positioned and empowered to lead across all phases of emergency management—preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation.

The path forward is both necessary and achievable. Mono County does not need to build an overly complex or costly bureaucracy; rather, it must establish clear leadership, formalize expectations, and institutionalize the coordination practices necessary for long-term success.

With sustained Board support, strengthened organizational alignment, and a commitment to implementation, Mono County's emergency management program can evolve from a fragmented, personality-driven system into a coordinated, resilient, and professionally led system capable of protecting its residents, visitors, and communities in an increasingly complex risk environment.

ADMINISTRATIVE DRAFT

MONO COUNTY

OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ROADMAP

Rebuilding Effectiveness, Engagement & Trust

("If you want to run fast, run alone. If you want to run far, run together.")

(African Proverb)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This roadmap provides a phased implementation strategy to strengthen the capabilities, structure, coordination, and long-term resilience of the Mono County Office of Emergency Management (OEM).

The roadmap prioritizes the County's most critical organizational and operational needs first — leadership stabilization, governance clarification, communications improvement, and interagency coordination — while establishing a sustainable foundation for preparedness, response, recovery, mitigation, and community resilience.

Through clearly defined priorities, timelines, and accountability measures, the roadmap supports:

- Improved operational coordination
- More effective emergency response capabilities
- Stronger public communication systems
- Enhanced interagency partnerships
- Sustainable staffing and funding models
- Increased organizational resilience and readiness

Ultimately, this roadmap supports Mono County's transition from a reactive and fragmented emergency management posture to a coordinated, proactive, and resilient emergency management system capable of effectively responding to wildfire, severe weather, infrastructure disruptions, and other complex emergencies.

The graphic on the following page provides a high level implementation framework to be completed over eighteen months.

MONO COUNTY OEM ROADMAP

Rebuilding Effectiveness, Engagement & Trust

STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK (2026–2027)

FOCUS AREAS	STABILIZE (0–3 MONTHS) Establish Stability & Direction	BUILD FOUNDATION (3–9 MONTHS) Strengthen Systems & Capacity	SUSTAIN & MATURE (9–18 MONTHS) Institutionalize & Improve
1. Governance, Leadership & Organizational Structure	Determine governance model; recruit OEM Director; adopt charter; define authority and chain of command	Establish liaison roles; refine staffing model; develop SOPs	Implement performance metrics; conduct governance reviews
2. Communication, Coordination & Public Information	Define communication protocols; assign system ownership; establish PIO structure	Formalize PIO role; conduct communication drills; establish Board briefing protocols	Continuous testing and upgrades; integrate communications into exercises
3. Preparedness, Training & Exercises	Develop training calendar; require baseline ICS training	Conduct quarterly tabletop and annual full-scale exercises; integrate partners	Institutionalize training cycles; tie training to performance metrics
4. Interagency Integration & Partnerships	Establish advisory group; identify priority MOUs	Execute agreements; hold quarterly coordination meetings	Maintain agreements; expand regional collaboration
5. County–Town Alignment	Initiate leadership alignment meetings; develop County–Town MOU	Conduct joint exercises; align EOC operations and protocols	Establish shared planning cycles; implement regional coordination model
6. Financial Sustainability & Grant Management	Identify funding sources; assign interim grant responsibilities	Create centralized grant management function; develop multi-year funding strategy	Optimize grant pipeline and tracking systems
7. Workforce Capacity & Volunteer Programs	Define Disaster Service Worker roles; identify staffing gaps	Launch CERT/volunteer program; recruit and train volunteers	Maintain volunteer engagement; expand surge capacity
8. Operational Readiness & Core Functions	Define EOC activation triggers; begin evacuation planning	Develop evacuation and shelter plans; establish IMT capability	Maintain plans and conduct drills; improve logistics and supply staging
9. Performance Management	Define KPIs; establish reporting schedule	Implement after-action reporting; track trends	Institutionalize continuous improvement cycle
10. Wildfire Resilience & Integration	Formalize OEM coordination; identify integration points	Expand mitigation planning; strengthen Fire Safe Council partnerships	Develop long-term resilience strategy; scale grant-funded programs
11. Recovery	Identify recovery staffing and resource needs; review previous recovery efforts	Train recovery personnel; establish AAR process; develop recovery communication procedures	Update plans based on lessons learned; strengthen mutual aid agreements
12. OEM Director – First 90 Days	Executive briefings; stakeholder engagement; program review; readiness assessment	Countywide assessment; evaluate training, evacuation, communications and coordination systems	Implement improvements; formalize coordination mechanisms; establish 12–18 month action plan

OUR GOAL: Build a coordinated, proactive, and resilient emergency management system that protects our community and strengthens partnerships across Mono County.

STRONGER TOGETHER. PREPARED FOR TOMORROW.

ROADMAP OVERVIEW

The Mono County OEM Roadmap focuses on strengthening the core systems, leadership practices, organizational structures, and operational processes that support emergency management throughout Mono County.

Assessment findings demonstrated that isolated “fixes”, whether cultural or operational, will not independently achieve sustainable improvement. Long-term success will require sustained leadership commitment, organizational coordination, and strategic investment over time and across the following Focus Areas.

Focus Area	Objective
Governance & Leadership & Organizational Structure	Establish accountability, direction, and organizational stability. Clarify roles, responsibilities, and reporting relationships.
Communication, Coordination & Public Information	Enhance internal coordination and public information delivery.
Proactive Preparedness, Training & Exercises	Improve preparedness, response coordination, and recovery operations.
Interagency Integration & Partnerships	Build regional partnerships and collaborative response systems.
County/Town Alignment	Improve efficiency, reduce duplication of effort and utilize the strengths of each organization to provide the highest level of service.
Financial Sustainability	Improve funding stability and grant management capacity.
Workforce Capacity & Volunteer Programs	Strengthen staffing, volunteer engagement, and training systems.
Operational Readiness & Core Functions	Improve operational readiness, evacuation planning, logistics coordination, and incident management capability.
Performance Management	Create measurable accountability and continuous improvement.
Wildfire Resilience & Integration	Integrate the Wildfire Coordinator into the Office of Emergency Management
Recovery	Ensure sufficient resources with appropriate training are assigned to recovery efforts (e.g., finance, public works, facilities, etc.)
OEM Director – First 90 Days	Ensure the incoming OEM Director, if OEM is not assigned to the Sheriff, is provided with a foundation of initial expectations to be successful in the role.

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

Successful implementation of the Roadmap will require sustained leadership commitment, organizational coordination, and investment over time. While some recommendations can be implemented through operational and management practice changes, other initiatives may require additional staffing resources, training infrastructure, external facilitation support, or organizational restructuring to achieve long-term success.

The roadmap is therefore intended to function as:

- a strategic organizational renewal framework; and
- a practical implementation guide that can evolve over time based on Department priorities, available resources, and organizational readiness

The Roadmap should be reviewed periodically by County leadership to evaluate progress, reassess priorities, and ensure implementation efforts remain aligned with operational realities and workforce needs.

Lastly, as the Roadmap is categorized by themes, Mono County should, when possible, consider implementing the recommended actions in parallel rather than sequentially.

ROADMAP IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

Stabilize (0 – 3 Months)		Build Foundation (3 – 9 months)		Mature System (9 – 18 months)
• Appoint/interim OEM leadership • Define roles and authority • Establish communication protocols • Begin County–Town coordination reset		• Launch training and exercise program • Create advisory group • Centralize grant management • Formalize MOUs		• Implement full preparedness program • Strengthen regional model • Build workforce capacity (DSW, volunteers) • Invest in infrastructure and systems

Focus Area 1: Governance, Leadership & Organizational Structure	
Strategic Objective: Establish clear governance, leadership accountability, organizational structure, and operational authority for the OEM.	
Stabilize (0-3 Months)	
	1.1) Board of Supervisors Determines Governance Model (e.g, CAO, Sheriff, Stand-Alone Department)
	1.2) Finalize Job Description and Recruit for Director of OEM (this should be done regardless of the Governance Model)
	1.3) Draft and Adopt Emergency Management Charter
	1.4) Define Chain of Command and Department Roles
Build (3 – 9 Months)	
	1.5) Establish Department Liaison Roles
	1.6) Refine Organizational Structure & Staffing Model
	1.7) Develop SOPs for Preparedness, Response & Recovery
Sustain (9 - 18 Months)	
	1.8) Develop and Implement Performance Metrics
	1.9) Periodic Governance Review

Focus Area 2: Communication, Coordination & Public Information	
Strategic Objective: Strengthen internal communication systems, public information delivery, and interagency coordination.	
Stabilize (0-3 Months)	
	2.1: Define Communication Protocols (internal/external)
	2.2: Assign Ownership of Systems to OEM (Genasys, Ready Mono)
	2.3: Identify PIO Structure
Build (3 - 9 Months)	
	2.4: Formalize PIO Role (Dedicated or Duty-Based)
	2.5: Conduct Regular Communication Drills such as Call-Down/Notification drills, Radio interoperability drills, and EOC Communication simulations (e.g, 2 – 3 drills per year)
	2.6: Develop Board of Supervisors Briefing Protocols
Sustain (9 - 18 Months)	
	2.7: Continuous system testing + upgrades
	2.8: Integrate communications into all exercises

Focus Area 3: Proactive Preparedness, Training & Exercises	
Strategic Objective: Institutionalize training, exercise programs, and preparedness systems across County operations.	
Stabilize (0-3 Months)	
	3.1: Develop annual training & exercise calendar
	3.2: Require ICS baseline training for key staff
Build (3 – 9 Months)	
	3.3: Run quarterly tabletop + annual full-scale exercises
	3.4: Integrate all departments + Town + fire agencies
Sustain (9 - 18 Months)	
	3.5: Institutionalize training cycles
	3.6: Link training to performance metrics

Focus Area 4: Interagency Integration & Partnerships	
Strategic Objective: Strengthen collaboration, mutual aid coordination, and formal partnerships across agencies.	
Stabilize (0-3 Months)	
	4.1: Establish Advisory Group
	4.2: Identify priority MOUs (fire, animal evacuation, shelters)
Build (3 – 9 Months)	
	4.3: Execute MOUs
	4.4: Hold quarterly interagency coordination meetings
Sustain (9 - 18 Months)	
	4.5: Maintain agreements
	4.6: Expand regional collaboration

Focus Area 5: County/Town Alignment	
Strategic Objective: Improve operational alignment and collaborative planning between County and Town leadership.	
Stabilize (0-3 Months)	
	5.1: Initiate leadership alignment meetings
	5.2: Draft County–Town MOU
Build (3 – 9 Months)	
	5.3: Conduct joint exercises
	5.4: Align EOC operations and protocols
Sustain (9 – 18 Months)	
	5.5: Shared planning cycles
	5.6: Regional coordination model

Focus Area 6: Financial Sustainability & Grant Management	
Strategic Objective: Develop sustainable funding models and centralized grant management capabilities.	
Stabilize (0 - 3 Months)	
	6.1: Identify funding for OEM positions
	6.2: Assign interim grant management responsibility
Build (3 – 9 Months)	
	6.3: Create centralized grant management function
	6.4: Develop multi-year funding strategy
Sustain (9 - 18 Months)	
	6.5: Optimize grant pipeline + tracking systems

Focus Area 7: Workforce Capacity & Volunteer Programs	
Strategic Objective: Strengthen staffing resilience, volunteer management, and surge capacity.	
Stabilize (0 - 3 Months)	
	7.1: Define Disaster Service Worker roles across departments
	7.2: Identify staffing gaps
Build (3 – 9 Months)	
	7.3: Launch a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)/volunteer program
	7.4: Recruit and train volunteers
Sustain (9 - 18 Months)	
	7.5: Maintain volunteer engagement
	7.6: Expand surge capacity

Focus Area 8: Operational Readiness & Core Functions	
Strategic Objective: Improve operational readiness, evacuation planning, logistics coordination, and incident management capability.	
Stabilize (0 - 3 Months)	
	8.1: Define Emergency Operations Center activation triggers
	8.2: Begin evacuation planning
Build (3 – 9 Months)	
	8.3: Develop full evacuation + shelter plans
	8.4: Establish Incident Management Team capability (internal or regional)
Sustain (9 - 18 Months)	
	8.5: Maintain plans + conduct drills
	8.6: Improve logistics + supply staging

Focus Area 9: Performance Management	
Strategic Objective: Create measurable accountability systems and continuous improvement practices.	
Stabilize (0 - 3 Months)	
	9.1: Define Key Performance Indicators
	9.2: Establish reporting schedule
Build (3 – 9 Months)	
	9.3: Implement After Action Report process after incidents/exercises
	9.4: Track performance trends
Sustain (9 - 18 Months)	
	9.5: Continuous improvement cycle

Focus Area 10: Wildfire & Resilience Integration (All Governance Scenarios.)	
Strategic Objective: Integrate the Wildfire Coordinator responsibilities into the Office of Emergency Management process.	
Stabilize (0 - 3 Months)	
	10.1: Formalize coordination with OEM
	10.2: Identify integration points (planning, communications)
Build (3 – 9 Months)	
	10.3: Expand mitigation to all hazards
	10.4: Strengthen Fire Safe Council partnerships
Sustain (9 - 18 Months)	
	10.5: Develop long-term resilience strategy
	10.6: Scale grant-funded programs

Focus Area 11: Recovery	
Strategic Objective: Ensure sufficient resources with appropriate training are assigned to recovery efforts (e.g., finance, public works, facilities, etc.)	
Stabilize (0 - 3 Months)	
	11.1: Identify departments and staff who will be needed during recovery efforts.
	11.2: Review recovery efforts of prior emergencies and identify areas of improvement.
Build (3 – 9 Months)	
	11.3: Provide training to departments and staff who will be utilized during recovery efforts.
	11.4: Collaborate with internal and external stakeholders to identify the After-Action Report process.
	11.5: Develop internal policies and procedures to ensure the Board of Supervisors, community members and other stakeholders are kept apprise of recovery efforts.
Sustain (9 - 18 Months)	
	11.6: Update emergency operations plans, policies, etc. based on lessons learned from prior emergency events.
	11.7: Evaluate mutual aid agreements and implement or update as necessary.

Focus Area 12: OEM DIRECTOR – FIRST 90 DAYS	
Strategic Objective: Provide the OEM Director with a strong foundation and expectations in order to be successful in this role.	
Stabilize (0 - 30 Days)	
	12.1: Conduct executive-level briefings with the County Administrative Officer, Board members, and department heads.
	12.2: Complete stakeholder meet-and-greets with fire districts, law enforcement, EMS, Public Works, Public Health, Town of Mammoth Lakes, schools and other regional and state partners.
	12.3: Perform internal program review of the EOP, Safety Element, Hazard Mitigation Plan, and supporting documents.
	12.4: Review Emergency Operations Center readiness, systems, and staffing.
	12.5: Inventory and assess current training, including ICS, SEMS, NIMS, and EOC participation.
	12.6: Develop an initial risk and capability snapshot.
	Deliverable: Provide a 30-day assessment to the CAO and the Board of Supervisors. *(Note: This should be done under any of the three governance models proposed in this assessment.)*
Build (31 – 60 Days)	
	12.6: Validate Emergency Operations Plan roles, responsibilities and coordination with all agencies.
	12.7: Assess evacuation routes and access constraints with Public Works and response agencies.
	12.8: Evaluate training program and compliance levels for County staff and partners.
	12.9: Review prior exercises and after-action reports to identify recurring gaps.
	12.10: Assess public warning and notification systems and communication capabilities.
	12.11: Evaluate interagency coordination and effectiveness.
	12.12: Develop a countywide training and exercise plan, including EOC and elected official participation.
	12.13: Begin development of community-specific evaluation plans for high-risk areas.
	Deliverable: 60-day structured assessment report with identified gaps and recommended priorities.
Sustain (61 – 90 Days)	
	12.14: Implement improvements to the public communication and notification systems.
	12.15: Formalize coordination mechanisms and establish regular interagency meetings.
	12.16: Schedule training classes, tabletop exercises to occur through December 2027.
	12.17: Develop and finalize policies, procedures as needed.
	Deliverable: 90-day report detailed action plan for the next 12 – 18 months

Appendix 01- Mono County Emergency Management Training and Exercise Matrix

Purpose

This appendix establishes a role-based emergency management training and exercise framework for Mono County using FEMA, NIMS, ICS, and California SEMS standards. The framework is designed to ensure personnel at all levels can function effectively during incidents.

Training Matrix Role			
Role	**Required Training**	**Recommended Training**	**Exercise Requirement**
Board of Supervisors	G-402; SEMS G606	IS-29	Annual policy tabletop
Executive Leadership	G-402; IS-700; IS-800; SEMS G606	G-191	Annual executive tabletop
Department Heads	IS-100; IS-200; IS-700; IS-800; SEMS G606	IS-230; IS-242	Annual tabletop
OEM/EOC Director	IS-100; IS-200; IS-700; IS-800; ICS-300; ICS-400; SEMS G606	G-191; G-2300	Annual functional exercise
EOC Staff	IS-100; IS-200; IS-700; IS-800; SEMS G606	ICS-300; G-191	Annual EOC drill
Finance/Recovery	IS-100; IS-700; SEMS G606	IS-230; E-210	Annual reimbursement drill
General Employees/ DSW	IS-100; IS-700; SEMS G606	DSW Orientation	Annual call-down drill
Interagency Training (Training with all OEM partners, including Mono County Departments, Fire Districts, Hospitals, Non-Profits and Town of Mammoth Lakes.)	Primarily Tabletop Exercises	Various Emergency Scenarios	2 – 3 Tabletop Exercises per year

Training Frequency

There is not a universal FEMA rule that says emergency management staff must redo ICS/NIMS training on a fixed schedule. Instead, recertification is usually set by your employer, state, or credentialing system, not FEMA itself. In general, the following guidelines are recommended:

1. FEMA baseline expectation (national guidance)

- FEMA's ICS and NIMS courses (like IS-100, IS-200, IS-700, IS-800, ICS-300, ICS-400):
  - **Are generally considered "one-time completion" courses**
  - **Do not expire at the federal level**
  - **Do not require mandatory re-taking every year**

2. What agencies actually require (real-world standard)

- Most professional emergency management organizations require ongoing NIMS/ICS refreshers, even if FEMA doesn't mandate retesting. Many jurisdictions require:
  - Annual NIMS compliance training
  - Refresher modules or short updates
  - Participation in drills or tabletop exercises
- This is especially common for EOC staff, first responders, hospital emergency management teams and public safety agencies.

3. Practical refresher cycle used in the field

- Even where not strictly required, a typical professional standard looks like:
  - Yearly: NIMS refresher training + exercises (tabletop or full-scale drills)
  - Every 1–3 years: Role-specific refreshers or updated FEMA guidance review
  - As needed: When assigned to a new role in ICS (e.g., becoming Section Chief or Incident Commander)

4. Higher-level ICS courses (ICS-300 / ICS-400)

These higher-level ICS courses are more role-specific and are often not required to be retaken. However, agencies typically require demonstrated ongoing competency, periodic exercises or incident participation and updates when guidance changes.

Links to Training Resources

1) FEMA Emergency Management Training
   - FEMA Emergency Management Institute (EMI) Independent Study Program (main portal).
     https://training.fema.gov/IS/
   - EMI Course Catalog (search all FEMA courses).
     https://training.fema.gov/EMICourses/EMICatalog.aspx
   - NIMS / ICS Training Program overview (framework + course structure)
     https://www.fema.gov/national-incident-management-system

2) Core ICS & FEMA Online Courses (Independent Study)

- These are the standard FEMA ICS/NIMS courses most people start with:
    - ICS-100: Introduction to Incident Command System
      https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-100.c
    - ICS-200: Basic Incident Command System
      https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-200.c
    - IS-700: National Incident Management System (NIMS) Introduction
      https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-700.b
    -
    - IS-800: National Response Framework Introduction
      https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-800.d

3) Helpful FEMA Training Hub Pages

- FEMA NIMS Training Toolkit (ICS + NIMS course list and guidance)
  https://preptoolkit.fema.gov/web/nims-toolkit/training

- FEMA EMI NIMS Training page
  https://training.fema.gov/nims/

Appendix 02 -Fire Chief Survey Results – Mono County Emergency Management Program

Introduction

As part of the Mono County Office of Emergency Management assessment, a targeted survey was distributed to local fire service leadership to obtain direct feedback regarding the effectiveness, coordination, and value of the County's emergency management program. The survey was designed to capture both quantitative scoring and qualitative observations from fire chiefs with operational responsibility and firsthand experience working within Mono County's emergency management environment.

At the time of this analysis, three surveys have been received and reviewed. While the sample size remains limited, the responses are highly consistent and provide useful directional insight into how the current emergency management structure is perceived by key fire service stakeholders. To protect respondent confidentiality and preserve candid participation, individual names and agency affiliations have been removed from this appendix.

Executive Summary of Findings

Stakeholder feedback obtained from participating Mono County fire chiefs indicates a low level of confidence in the County's current emergency management structure and its operational value to local fire agencies. Survey results and written comments consistently reflected concerns regarding limited County visibility, weak interagency coordination, unclear leadership, insufficient routine engagement, and a lack of operational integration with fire service partners. While respondents identified some potential value in wildfire coordination efforts, the broader conclusion is that Mono County's emergency management program would benefit from stronger organizational clarity, increased capacity, and a more deliberate operational relationship with fire and EMS stakeholders.

Table Y-1. Respondent Profile Summary

Respondent	Position	Agency Type	Years in Current Role	Survey Date
Respondent A	Fire Chief	Local Fire District	4	April 2026
Respondent B	Fire Chief	Local Fire District	4	March 2026
Respondent C	Fire Chief	Local Fire District	10	March 2026

Table Y-2. Overall Survey Scores

Respondent	Total Score	Maximum Possible Score	Interpretation
Respondent A	31	85	Substantial concerns
Respondent B	39	85	Substantial concerns
Respondent C	13	85	Substantial concerns
Average	27.7	85	Substantial concerns

Table Y-3. Section Score Comparison

Survey Section	Maximum Score	Respondent A	Respondent B	Respondent C	Average Score	Average % of Maximum
Section 1 – Overall Program Effectiveness	20	7	6	4	5.7	28.3%
Section 2 – Coordination and Communication	15	6	6	3	5.0	33.3%
Section 3 – Planning, Preparedness, and Support	15	4	7	3	4.7	31.1%
Section 4 – Wildfire Coordinator Role	20	6	11	4	7.0	35.0%
Section 5 – Governance and Future Direction	15	8	9	3	6.7	44.4%

Interpretation of Findings

The section-by-section scoring reveals that the participating chiefs do not view Mono County's emergency management program as currently functioning as a strong operational support system for the fire service. The lowest category scores occurred in Overall Program Effectiveness, Planning/Preparedness Support, and Coordination/Communication. These are the core functions of a county emergency management system, and low performance in these areas indicates that respondents do not perceive the County as consistently providing clear leadership, actionable

support, or a dependable coordination framework for emergency preparedness and incident support.

Taken together, the survey results suggest that Mono County's emergency management function is currently being experienced by participating fire chiefs less as an active countywide coordination system and more as a limited or inconsistent administrative presence.

Table Y-4. Anonymous Comment Matrix

Theme	Representative Feedback	Implication
Lack of OEM Presence	Minimal presence / no coordination	Program lacks visibility and engagement
Leadership Deficiency	Rebuild the program / hire the right people	Need for stronger leadership and ownership
Poor Fire Service Integration	No interagency training / limited interaction	Weak Operational Area integration
Wildfire Coordinator Role Clarity	Helpful but unclear mission / lacks authority	Needs structure, clarity, and support
Resource and Capacity Gaps	Insufficient staffing and coordination	Current capacity appears inadequate
Priority for Future Structure	Coordinate with fire and EMS agencies	Support exists for a stronger county model

Table Y-5. Recommendation Matrix

Issue	Finding	Recommended Action	Priority
Leadership	Lack of visible leadership and ownership	Assign or establish clear emergency management leadership and accountability	High
Coordination	Weak coordination with fire and EMS agencies	Create a structured stakeholder engagement and coordination model	High
Preparedness	Limited planning, training, and exercise support	Expand interagency planning, training, and exercise participation	High
Wildfire Coordinator Role	Role appears underdefined and insufficiently integrated	Clarify mission, authority, and alignment with county priorities	Medium-High

Capacity	Current staffing and support appear insufficient	Evaluate additional staffing and support requirements	High
Governance	County role is not consistently understood	Define and communicate the County's support role with partner agencies	Medium-High

Conclusion

The fire chief survey results provide a candid but valuable perspective on the current condition of Mono County's emergency management program. Participating respondents did not express confidence in the County's present structure and instead described a system that appears fragmented, thinly staffed, weakly coordinated, and insufficiently engaged with operational fire service partners.

At the same time, the survey responses also point toward a constructive path forward: stronger leadership, clearer organizational design, better fire service integration, and a more fully supported county coordination model. For these reasons, this appendix should be used not as a stand-alone criticism, but as a supporting evidence base for the report's recommendations regarding structure, staffing, operational relevance, and stakeholder engagement.

Appendix 03 - Mono County Emergency Operations Center Staffing Roster and Position Assignments

Purpose

This appendix provides a recommended Emergency Operations Center staffing structure using existing County personnel with primary and alternate assignments to ensure operational continuity.

EOC Staffing Requirements		
EOC Position	**Primary Department**	**Alternate Department**
EOC Director	CAO / OEM	Senior Department Head
Operations	Sheriff / Public Works	Fire Liaison / Public Health
Planning	Administrative Staff	OEM Support
Logistics	Public Works	General Services
Finance/Admin	Auditor / Finance	Admin Services
PIO	County Communications	Public Health
Liaison	OEM	Executive Staff
Recovery	CAO / Finance	Public Works Admin

APPENDIX 04 – DRAFT JOB DESCRIPTION

DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Definition and Class Characteristics

This is the single administrative management class responsible for the coordination, development and administration of the County's multi-hazard and disaster emergency response plan, including coordination, communication, implementation and training activities of the long-range Emergency Management and Response Program and on-scene incident command. The incumbent must be able to establish collaborative partnerships across many stakeholders, including the Town of Mammoth, local fire districts, non-profits, other Mono County Departments as well as state and federal agencies.

This class is further distinguished by its responsibility for overall management of the County's Office of Emergency Services including budget monitoring and development, grant writing and management, staff supervision and modification of a coordinated emergency response, coordinating and assisting in the management, mitigation and recovery program utilizing various public, private and individual resources and meeting state and federal guidelines and requirements.

Reports To:
To Be Determined. (*Recommend changing the job spec to only report to one person (e.g, Sheriff or CAO), not both.*)

Examples of Duties (*The following is used as a partial description and is not restrictive as to duties required):*

- Essential:
    - Serves as the lead County official in emergency management/disaster preparedness and fire related emergencies.
    - Oversees and administers all aspects of emergency/disaster preparedness, response, and recovery, which may include implementation of applicable portions of the emergency plan during disasters and emergency powers in the event of a local emergency.
    - Coordinates and directs emergency planning, operations, staffing, and logistics; coordinates the activities of all emergency services in pre-emergency planning, during an emergency, and post emergency recovery.
    - Represents the County in all dealings pertaining to emergency planning; serves as the primary point of contact with the California Office of Emergency Services, Federal Emergency Management Agency, federal Department of Homeland Security, and related organizations.
    - Organizes and develops the County emergency program and operational area; coordinates emergency functions of the County with other County

departments, other public and private organizations, volunteer groups, and individuals.
- Develops and maintains the County's emergency operations plan and supporting plans.
- Develops and coordinates training programs and emergency readiness exercises.
- Develops and coordinates programs designed to inform the public of measures for self-protection and emergency service activities.
- Prepares and submits all reports required of the Office of Emergency Services by other entities including the Federal government, the State of California, the Board of Supervisors, and Disaster Council.
- Designates and maintains an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in an acceptable state of readiness; serves as the EOC Operations Center Deputy Director when the EOC is activated.
- Directly or through subordinate managers or supervisors selects, trains, motivates, and evaluates assigned personnel; works with employees to correct deficiencies; implements discipline and termination procedures.
- Oversees and participates in the development of the annual budget; participates in forecasting funds needed for staffing, equipment, materials, and supplies; monitors and approves expenditures; implements adjustments.
- Provides administrative oversight of federal grants; sets priorities for emergency management federal grant projects; acts as Signature Authority for federal grant applications for the County Office of Emergency Operations and the Sacramento Operational Area.
- Manages and participates in the development and implementation of goals, objectives, policies, and priorities for assigned programs; recommends and administers policies and procedures.
- Identifies opportunities for improving service delivery methods and procedures; identifies resource needs; obtains approval for and implements improvements as needed/required.
- Attends and participates in professional group meetings; stays abreast of new trends and innovations related to the field of emergency preparedness, response, and recovery.
- Responds to and resolves difficult and sensitive customer inquiries and complaints.
- Supports activities of the Emergency Operations Center, which may include helping ensure requests for disaster service workers are fulfilled when calls for assistance arise, serving on the Emergency Operations Center as assigned, and providing other support as needed.
- Develops and maintains collaborative partnerships with other local, state, federal and non-profit organizations.

Knowledge and Skills Required

- Knowledge of:
  - Emergency services administration, program development and evaluation

- Principles and practices of management necessary to plan, organize, direct, manage, and evaluate the staff and functions of an emergency preparedness, recovery and response operation
- All aspects of emergency services administration including current and appropriate methods, procedures, and technical expertise
- Interrelationships, responsibilities, goals and functions of local, state and federal government related to emergency management; common forms of local government
- Applicable, federal, state, and local laws, ordinances, and codes related to local and regional disaster preparedness, response, and recovery
- Technology, trends, methods, and techniques in the areas of emergency and disaster preparedness, response, relief and recovery
- Planning principles and response protocols for threats and hazards
- Principles and practices of management and organizational theory, business finance and budgeting, contracts, grant writing, business development, program management and analysis, supervision, personnel management, employee relations, and modern information systems
- The National Incident Management System (NIMS); State Emergency Management System (SEMS); California Incident Command System (ICS); Operational Area Satellite Information System (OASIS), Web EOC ∃ the state system for managing information and resources during disasters or large-scale incidents, and other relevant systems
- California State Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan (SHMP)
- Techniques of preparing, producing and disseminating information to various target community groups
- English usage, spelling, grammar, and punctuation

- <u>Ability to:</u>
  - Plan, organize, manage and evaluate the staff, functions, operations, and systems of an emergency preparedness, recovery, and response operation
  - Direct and coordinate all levels of personnel and aspects of emergency services administration in an actual emergency or disaster situation
  - Establish goals, policies and performance standards
  - Formulate and implement policies, plans and procedures for monitoring and reviewing responses in a time of disaster
  - Oversee and participate in activities associated with various disaster planning committees assuring the preparation, participation and coordination of emergency response training seminars, drills and simulation exercises
  - Develop and provide information for the purpose of updating the public on emergency planning, capabilities, and action
  - Interpret and summarize a variety of data and information.
  - Analyze and evaluate statistical data and reports related to emergency services; prepare reports required by local, State and Federal agencies, and others
  - Develop, monitor and interpret budgets and other financial documents; assure eligibility requirements for federal, state, and local reimbursement

programs are met and maintained; write and/or approve and coordinate budget requests and claims for reimbursement of funds
- Interpret, explain, and apply applicable federal, state, and local laws, codes, regulations, and legislation
- Select, manage, train, develop, evaluate, and motivate staff; investigate and resolve disciplinary issues
- Keep abreast of new technology, trends, and techniques in the areas of emergency response and disaster relief including computer programs associated with the maintenance and update of the emergency response plans
- Establish and maintain cooperative relationships with federal, state, and local agencies, private organizations, county departments, and agencies concerned with emergency services
- Communicate clearly and concisely, both verbally and in writing
- Influence and persuade others to accept a viewpoint or follow a course of action
- Exercise discretion and maintain confidentiality of information

Education and Experience Required

A Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in emergency management, public safety, public or business administration, or a related field; AND five years experience in emergency management. Experience must include a minimum of one year at the full supervisory level that includes experience in the management of an Emergency Operations Center, disaster preparedness plans, educational/training programs, and the coordination of of multi-agency and municipal emergency response.

Licenses and Certificates

Possession of a California Specialized training Institute (CSTI) emergency Management Specialist Certificate or an International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) Certified Emergency Manager (CEM) or Associated Emergency Manager (AEM) is desirable. Completion of Federal Emergency Management Institute (FEMA) Professional Development Series must be obtained within one (1) year of appointment.

Physical Demands and Working Conditions

Mobility to sit, stand, operate a computer and related equipment. Walk for extended periods over difficult terrain. May lift and carry equipment and training materials weighing up to fifty (50) pounds. Perform the full range of body movements including reaching, bending, grasping and climbing.

Work extended and unusual hours, including weekends, holidays, and/or off-hour shifts during emergencies or disaster situations and during training programs or preparedness exercises. Remain on-call in case of emergencies.

Required Conditions of Employment

As a condition of employment, the incumbent will be required to:

1. Possess a valid California C driver's license, or the employee must be able to provide suitable transportation, which is approved by the County Administrative Officer.
2. Be available to work irregular and unusual work schedules as required to effectively manage an emergency response program.
3. Be able to work under unusual and/or adverse physical, mental, and/or sensory conditions needed during emergency response, i.e., inclement weather, dust, noise, smoke, and stressful situations.
4. Must pass a background check.

Physical and Sensory Requirements

The physical and sensory abilities required for this classification include:

1. Ability to verbally communicate and to hear two-way radio transmissions with static and telephone calls in field or noisy environments, such as an emergency event site.
2. Physical mobility to travel to and from alternate work sites and to traverse varying emergency site terrain.
3. Ability to work outside with possible exposure to varying temperature, wetness, odors and slippery surfaces.
4. See well enough to read standard text and data on a computer terminal, maps, and other related materials.
5. Physical strength to lift and carry supplies and materials weighing up to approximately 25 pounds.
6. Sense of smell to distinguish between normal odors and controlled substances.

The contents of this class specification shall not be construed to constitute any expressed or implied warranty or guarantee, nor shall it constitute a contract of employment. Mono County assumes no responsibility for the accuracy of the document and the actual duties of the job, nor does it assume responsibility for any errors or omissions in the information contained herein. The contents of this specification may be modified or revoked without notice. Terms and conditions of employment are determined through a "meet and confer@ process" and are subject to the Memorandum of Understanding or individual employee "At-Will" contract currently in effect.

APPLICATION & EXAM PROCESS

The exam process will consist of a review and competitive evaluation of the required knowledge and abilities as demonstrated on the application. Those successful in this evaluation will be invited to an oral interview with County management staff.

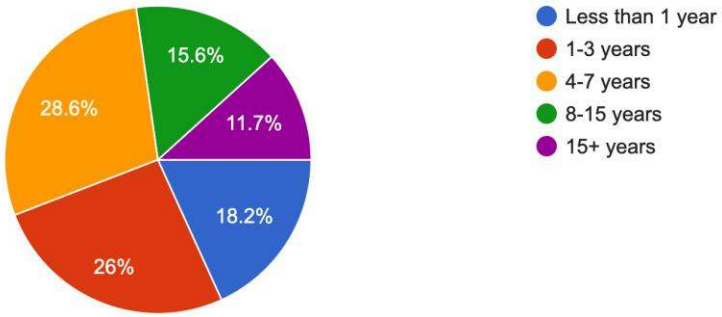
For a complete job description and application, contact the County Administrative Office at (760) 932-5412 or obtain job flyer, job application by accessing Human Resources Employment Opportunities website: www.monocounty.ca.gov

Appendix 05 - Disaster Services Worker Survey
May 2026

Employee Information

How long have you been employed by Mono County?

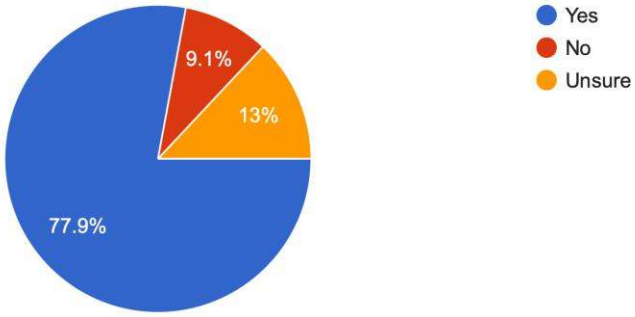
77 responses



Disaster Services Worker Designation

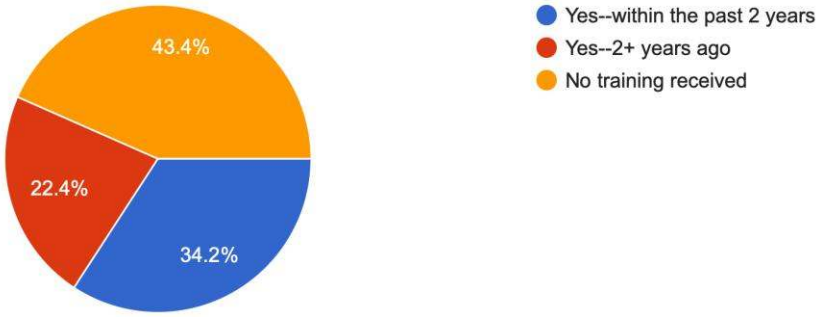
Are you currently designated as a Disaster Service Worker?

77 responses



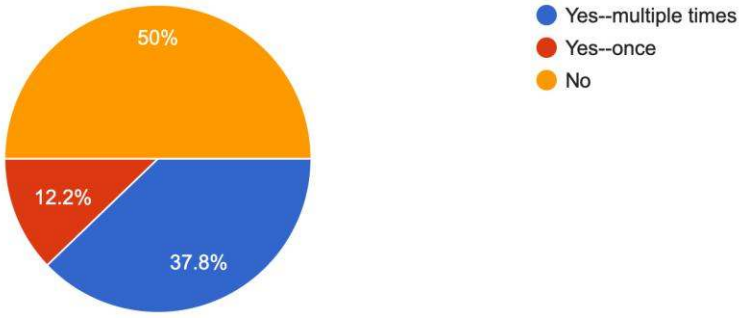
Have you received Disaster Service Worker orientation or training?

76 responses



Have you ever been deployed as a Disaster Service Worker during an emergency?

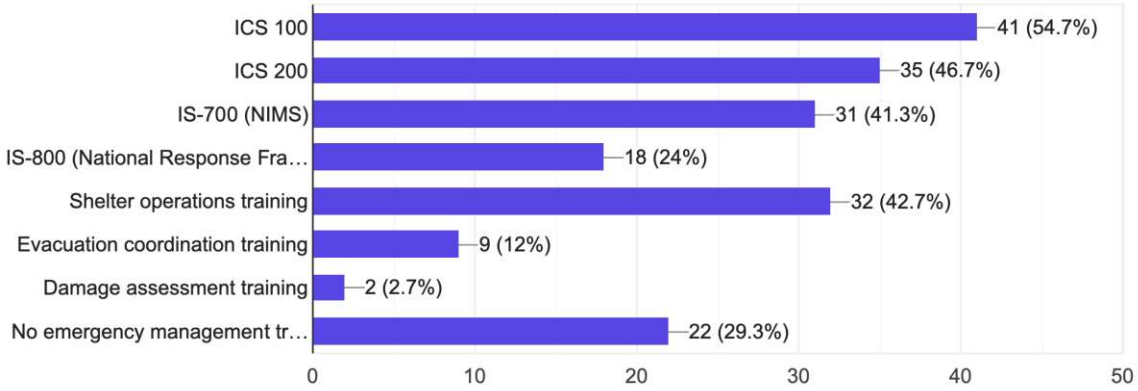
74 responses



Training & Preparedness

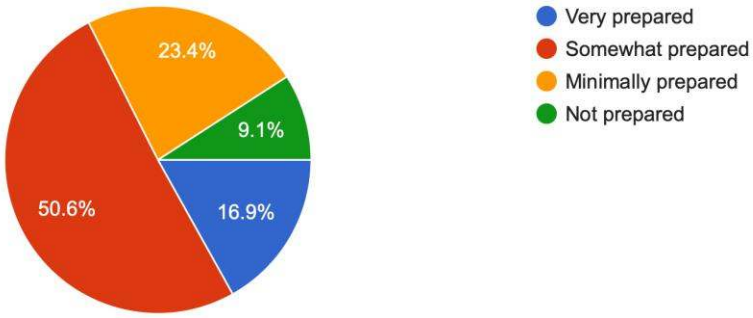
Which emergency management training have you completed (choose all that apply)?

75 responses



How prepared do you feel to serve in a Disaster Service Worker role during a major emergency?

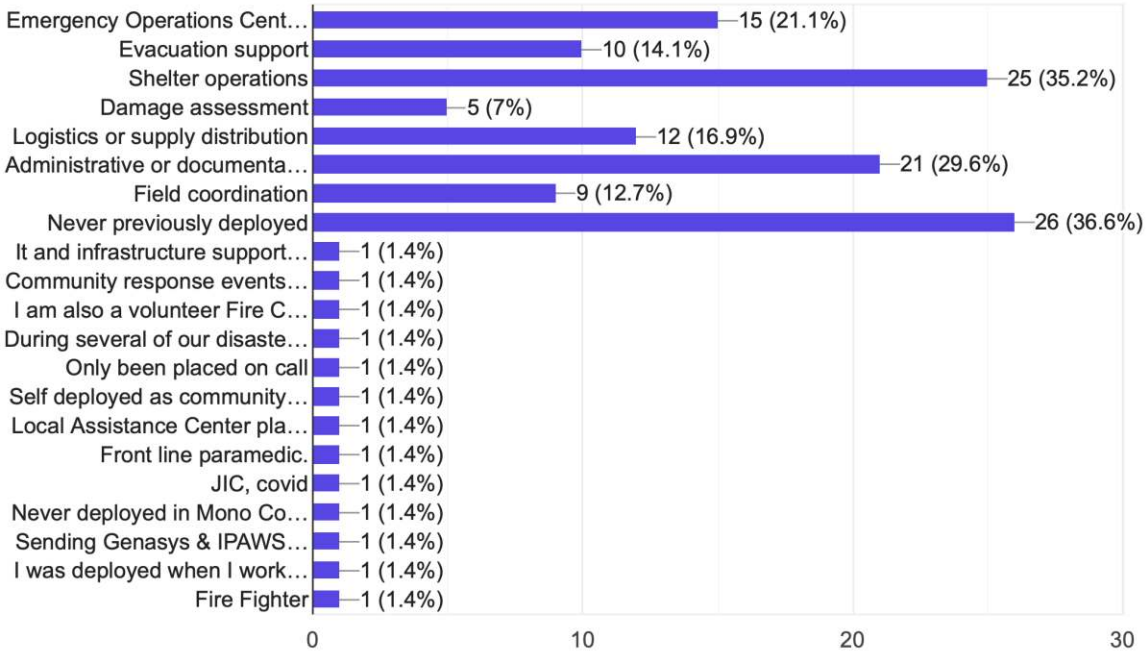
77 responses



Deployment Experience

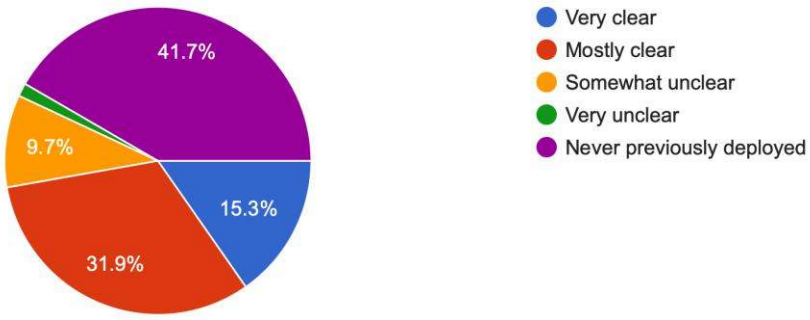
If you have served as a Disaster Service Worker during an incident, what function(s) did you perform (choose all that apply)?

71 responses



If previously deployed, how clear were your assigned duties?

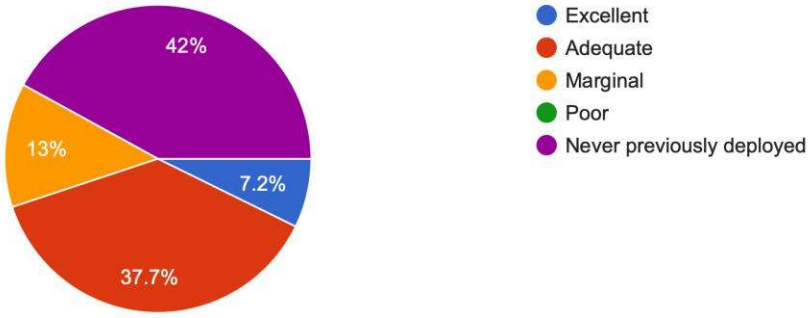
72 responses



Deployment Experience, Con't.

During deployment, what was the quality of supervision and direction?

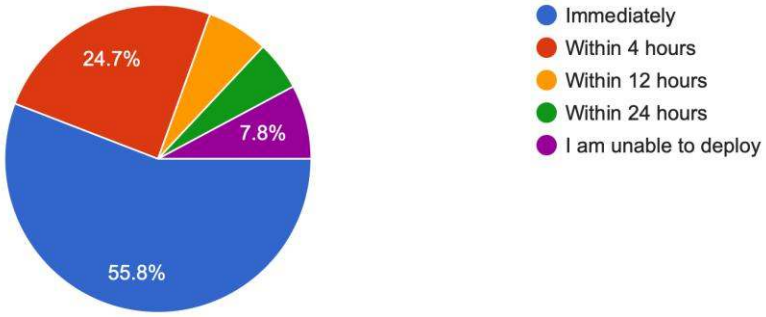
69 responses



Availability for Emergency Deployment

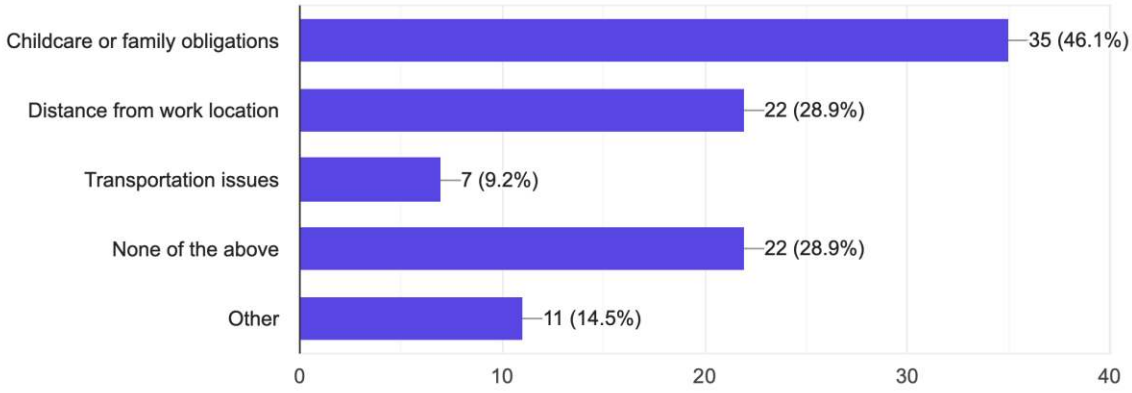
If an emergency occurred today, how quickly could you report for duty?

77 responses



Which of the following factors could limit your ability to respond to an emergency (choose all that apply)?

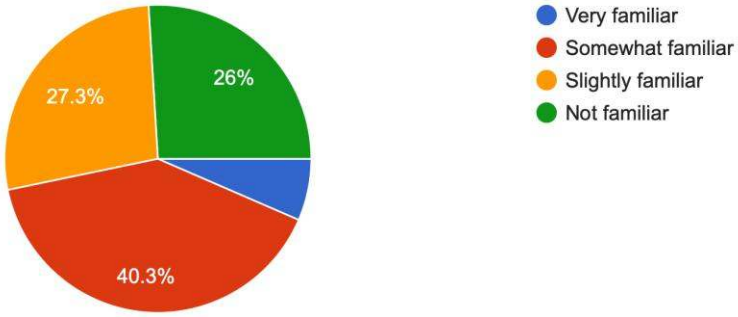
76 responses



Operational Readiness

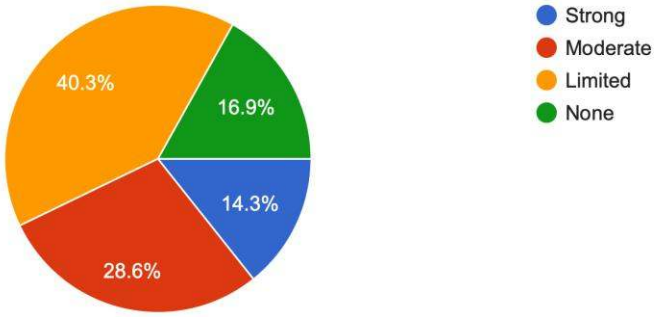
If deployed to the Emergency Operations Center, how familiar are you with EOC procedures?

77 responses



What is your level of familiarity with Incident Command System terminology?

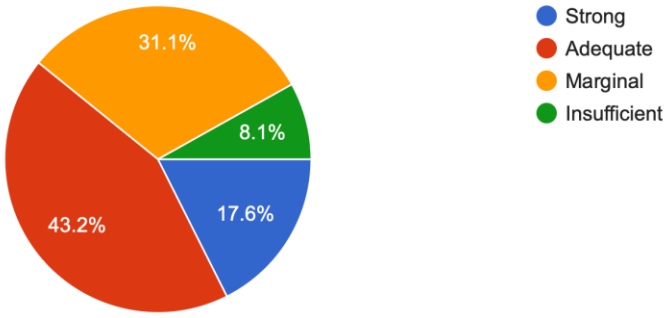
77 responses



County Readiness

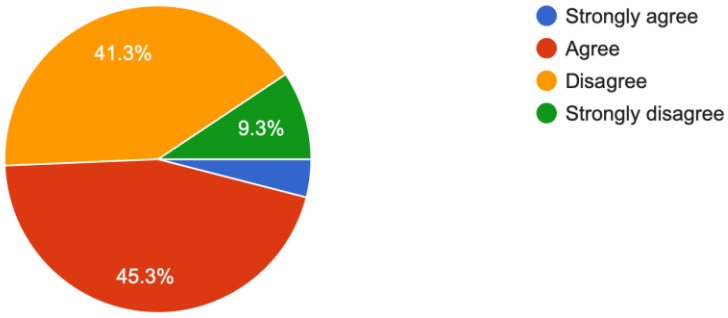
How would you characterize the County's ability to mobilize Disaster Service Workers during a major emergency?

74 responses



Please respond to the following statement: The County currently provides adequate training for Disaster Service Worker responsibilities.

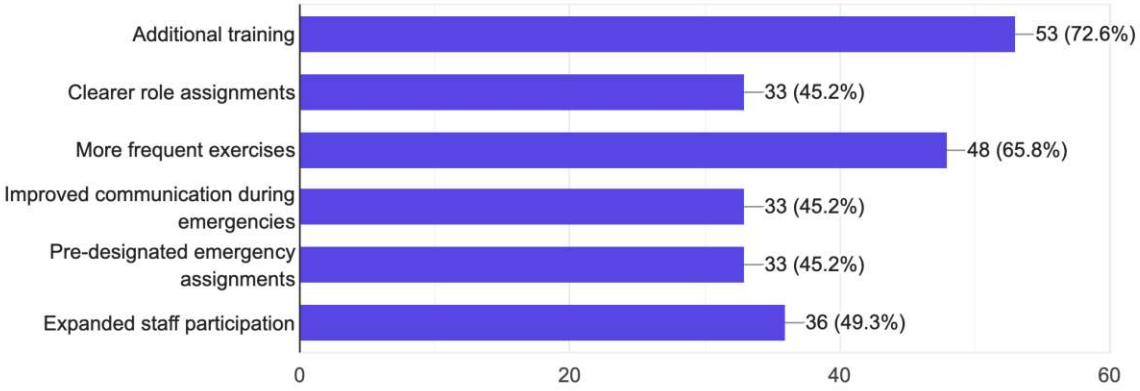
75 responses



Improvement Priorities

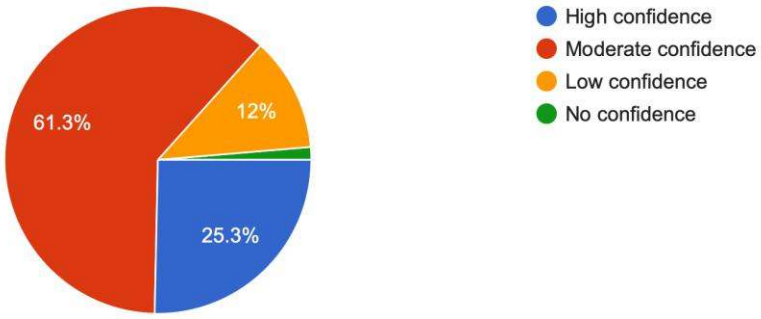
Please select the three improvements that would most strengthen the County Disaster Service Worker program:

73 responses



What is your overall level of confidence in the County's ability to mobilize Disaster Service Workers?

75 responses



Appendix 06 - Alpine County
County Public Safety and Emergency Management Profile

This report provides a baseline overview of public safety and emergency management in Alpine County. It is designed to support a comparative analysis between Alpine, El Dorado, Inyo, Madera, Mono, Nevada, Placer and Tuolumne counties. The profile is intended for policy discussion, planning alignment, and regional coordination.

I. County Overview

Alpine County is located along the central Sierra Nevada and the California–Nevada border. It is the least populated county in California and is characterized by remote mountain communities, extensive federal land ownership, and seasonal tourism-driven population fluctuations.

- **County Seat:** Markleeville
- **Population (2020 Census):** ~1,200
- **Land Area:** ~743 square miles
- **Incorporated Cities/Towns**: None
- **Major Communities**: Communities are concentrated along State Routes 88, 89, and 4, including Markleeville, Woodfords, Bear Valley, Kirkwood, and Alpine Village. Tourism and seasonal outdoor recreation significantly increase operational demand for public safety services.

II. Governance Structure

Alpine County operates under a five-member Board of Supervisors, with a County Administrative Officer who is responsible for administrative management and departmental coordination.

The Alpine County Sheriff's Office serves as the Director of Emergency Services.

III. Geography and Land Ownership

- A substantial portion of Alpine County consists of federally managed lands, including the Humboldt–Toiyabe, Eldorado, and Stanislaus National Forests.
- Public land ownership requires extensive interagency coordination for wildfire suppression, evacuation planning, winter access management, and large incident response.
- The county's remote mountainous geography presents operational challenges for transportation, emergency response, and continuity of services.

IV. Hazard Profile

Alpine County faces multiple hazards due to its mountainous terrain and seasonal population shifts:

- **Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire**: Extensive exposure due to forest fuels and scattered development.
- **Severe Winter Storms**: Heavy snowfall and mountain pass closures.
- **Flooding and Debris Flows**: Rapid snowmelt and intense precipitation.
- **Transportation Corridor Incidents**: Mountain highway travel hazards.
- **Wilderness Search and Rescue**: Backcountry and recreational incidents.

- **Tourism-Related Public Safety**: Seasonal influxes increase demand for emergency services.
- **Public Safety Power Shutoff Events**: A PG&E Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) event is a precautionary measure where electricity is temporarily turned off in high-risk areas to prevent wildfires during extreme weather conditions like strong winds and dry heat, often lasting multiple days.

V. Public Safety Infrastructure

1) **Fire Protection**
    - Alpine County Fire Protection District
    - Woodfords Fire Protection District
    - Bear Valley Fire Department (seasonal operations)
    - CAL FIRE and U.S. Forest Service: Provide mutual aid and large wildfire suppression

2) **Law Enforcement**
    - Alpine County Sheriff's Office – Countywide law enforcement
    - California Highway Patrol – State highway and traffic enforcement

3) **Emergency Medical Services**
    - Operates within a regional and rural emergency medical services system
    - Local first response is supplemented by ambulance transport to facilities in neighboring counties, including Douglas County, Carson City, and the Lake Tahoe Basin.

VI. Emergency Management Structure

The Alpine County Office, Office of Emergency Services (OES) serves as the agency responsible for countywide emergency management, coordinating:

- Emergency Operations Center (EOC) management
- Evacuation planning and coordination
- Interagency coordination
- Training programs and exercises
- Disaster recovery operations
- Due to the county's small population and limited resources, regional coordination and state/federal partnerships are essential for operational effectiveness.

VII. Fiscal Baseline

- **Total County Budget**: ~$36 million (all government funds)
- **General Fund Appropriations**: ~$15.46 million
- **Authorized Workforce:** 95 FTEs
- **Office of Emergency Management/Services FTEs:** None
- **Office of Emergency Management/Services Funding:** Grants. No County funds.

VIII. Significant Incident History (2015 – 2025)

- 2021: Tamarack Fire: ~68,000 acres. Evacuations in Markleeville, Woodfords, Alpine Village. Multi-agency response with significant structure loss.
- 2023: Atmospheric River. Heavy snowfall, road access disruption and infrastructure disruption.
- 2023: Sierra Snow Emergency. Mountain pass closures, prolonged operational coordination demands.

IX. Key Observations

- Wildfire remains the dominant hazard due to extensive forest fuels and scattered development.
- Severe winter weather significantly affects transportation corridors and service continuity.
- The county's small population and limited staffing amplify reliance on mutual aid, regional coordination, and state/federal partnerships.
- Extensive federal land ownership drives coordination complexity for wildfire and emergency response.
- Seasonal tourism increases demand variability for public safety services.
- Mutual aid and interagency cooperation are critical to maintaining operational capacity.
- Winter and wildfire hazards require pre-positioning of resources and robust planning for road closures and evacuations.

X. Data Sources

- Alpine County Budget Documents – alpinecountyca.gov
- Alpine County Office of Emergency Services
- California Governor's Office of Emergency Services – caloes.ca.gov
- CAL FIRE Incident Database – fire.ca.gov
- U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts – census.gov
- California Department of Finance Demographics – dof.ca.gov
- FEMA Disaster Declaration Database – fema.gov
- National Interagency Fire Center Statistics – nifc.gov
- U.S. Forest Service land management resources

Appendix 07 - El Dorado County
County Public Safety and Emergency Management Profile

This report provides a baseline overview of public safety and emergency management in El Dorado County. It is designed to support comparative analysis with Alpine, El Dorado, Inyo, Madera, Mono, Nevada, Placer and Tuolomne counties. The profile is intended for policy discussion, planning alignment, and regional coordination.

I. County Overview

El Dorado County spans the Sierra Nevada from the Sacramento metropolitan foothills to the Lake Tahoe Basin. It is characterized by diverse terrain, high seasonal tourism, and population concentration along major corridors.

- **County Seat:** Placerville
- **Population (2020 Census):** 191,185
- **Land Area:** 1,707.85 square miles
- **Incorporated Cities:** Placerville and South Lake Tahoe
- **Major Communities:** El Dorado Hills, Cameron Park, Shingle Springs, Camino/Pollock Pines, Tahoe Basin communities

Tourism and recreation—especially in the Tahoe Basin—significantly increase seasonal population and operational demand for public safety services.

II. Governance Structure

El Dorado County operates under a county charter with a five-member Board of Supervisors, with a Chief Administrative Officer who is responsible for administrative management and departmental coordination.

The El Dorado County Sheriff's Office serves as the Director of Emergency Services.

III. Geography and Land Ownership

- **Eastern County:** Predominantly federally and state-managed lands, including Eldorado National Forest and Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit lands.
- **Western Foothills:** Predominantly private residential, commercial, and agricultural land.
- **Public land** dominance in the Sierra Nevada Mountains necessitates interagency coordination for wildfire response, evacuation planning, and recovery operations.
- **Key Transportation Corridors:** US Highway 50 (primary east-west corridor and evacuation route), State Route 49, State Route 193, and Tahoe Basin road network.

IV. Hazard Profile

El Dorado County faces multiple recurring and seasonal hazards:

- **Wildfire / Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI):** Extensive exposure in foothill and Sierra communities; major events include the 2021 Caldor Fire (221,835 acres burned, 1,005 structures destroyed).

- **Severe Winter Storms:** Heavy snowfall, road closures, and isolation in the Tahoe Basin.
- **Flooding & Debris Flows:** Atmospheric river storms, burn scars, and rain-on-snow events affect drainage areas and transportation corridors.
- **Seismic Hazards:** Regional Sierra Nevada fault systems create low-to-moderate earthquake risk.
- **Mass Casualty / Remote Rescue:** Tourism and wilderness recreation increase demand for search and rescue and long transport operations.
- **Public Health:** Seasonal population surges challenge healthcare delivery and surge staffing capacity.
- **Public Safety Power Shutoff Events**: A PG&E Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) event is a precautionary measure where electricity is temporarily turned off in high-risk areas to prevent wildfires during extreme weather conditions like strong winds and dry heat, often lasting multiple days.

V. Public Safety Infrastructure

1) **Fire Protection**

   - **Countywide:** El Dorado County Fire Protection District; numerous independent fire protection districts (e.g., Diamond Springs-El Dorado, Rescue, Georgetown, Garden Valley, Mosquito, Pioneer).
   - **Municipal / Community Services Districts:** El Dorado Hills Fire Department, Cameron Park Fire Department, South Lake Tahoe Fire Rescue.
   - **State and Federal Partners:** CAL FIRE Amador-El Dorado Unit; U.S. Forest Service (Eldorado National Forest, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit).

2) **Law Enforcement**
   - **Countywide:** El Dorado County Sheriff's Office (OES housed within Sheriff's Office).
   - **Municipal Police:** Placerville Police Department, South Lake Tahoe Police Department.
   - **Highway Patrol:** California Highway Patrol provides traffic and highway incident enforcement.

3) **Emergency Medical Services (EMS)**
   - **Oversight:** El Dorado County EMS Agency which is overseen by the Health & Human Services Agency.
   - **Delivery:** Contracted ambulance providers and local ALS/BLS systems; west slope and Tahoe Basin coverage varies based on terrain and population centers.

VI. Emergency Management Structure

The El Dorado County Sheriff's Office, Office of Emergency Services serves as the lead agency for Operation Area coordination. Core program areas include:

- **Staffing:** Five Sheriff's Office employees assigned to OES.
- **Key Programs:** EOC management, Emergency Operations Plan maintenance, training and exercises, alert/warning systems, evacuation coordination, disaster recovery coordination with Cal OES, FEMA, and federal land management partners.
- **Operational Area Partners:** Fire protection districts, municipal police, EMS, hospitals, public health, Caltrans, utilities, federal agencies, schools, NGOs, and volunteer organizations.

VII. Fiscal Baseline

- **Total Countywide Budget:** $1.06 billion (all governmental funds)
- **General Fund Appropriations:** $446.1 million
- **Authorized Workforce: 2,107 FTEs**
- **Office of Emergency Management/Services FTEs:** 5 FTEs
- **Office of Emergency Management/Services Funding:** $1.8M

VIII. Significant Incident History (2015 – 2025)

El Dorado County has experienced multiple major incidents requiring multi-agency coordination:

- 2016: Trailhead Fire. ~5,645 acres.
- 2021: Caldor Fire. ~221,835 acres. 1,005 structures destroyed, 81 structures damaged.
- 2022: Mosquito Fire. ~76,788 acres.
- 2024: Crozier Fire. ~1,938 acres.

IX. Key Observations

- **Interagency dependency:** Federal land dominance requires robust coordination for wildfire and recovery.
- **Transportation corridor reliance:** US Highway 50 is critical for evacuations; closures significantly impact operational planning.
- **Seasonal population surges:** Tourism peaks increase demand for EMS, search & rescue, and wildfire response.
- **Severe winter weather:** Tahoe Basin storms disrupt services, sheltering, and transportation.
- **Funding and staffing sustainability:** OES staffing is limited (five Sheriff's Office personnel); workload driven by wildfire season length, winter storm cycles, and multi-jurisdiction coordination.
- **Transportation:** US Highway 50 (primary east-west evacuation corridor), State Route 49, Tahoe Basin road network; winter storms and wildfire closures impact mobility.
- **Air:** Lake Tahoe Airport and regional heliports support medical transport and wildfire aviation.
- **Utilities:** Electricity, water, telecommunications supplied by mix of districts, CSDs, and private providers; vulnerable to winter storms and wildfire.
- **Public Health:** Marshall Medical Center (Placerville) and Barton Health (South Lake Tahoe) are primary hospital partners.
- **Emergency Communications:** Regional PSAP/dispatch systems; radio interoperability critical in multi-agency response environment.

X. Data Sources

- El Dorado County FY 2024-25 Recommended Budget – edcgov.us
- El Dorado County Annual Comprehensive Financial Report – edcgov.us
- El Dorado County Office of Emergency Services – edcgov.us/OES
- CAL FIRE Amador-El Dorado Unit – fire.ca.gov
- U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts – census.gov
- California Governor's Office of Emergency Services – caloes.ca.gov
- California Department of Finance – dof.ca.gov
- USGS – usgs.gov
- National Interagency Fire Center – nifc.gov
- FEMA Disaster Declarations – fema.gov

Appendix 08 - Inyo County
County Public Safety and Emergency Management Profile

This report provides a baseline overview of public safety and emergency management in Inyo County. It is designed to support a comparative analysis between Alpine, El Dorado, Inyo, Madera, Mono, Nevada, Placer and Tuolomne counties. The profile is intended for policy discussion, planning alignment, and regional coordination.

I. County Overview

Inyo County is a large rural county along the eastern Sierra Nevada and California–Nevada border, characterized by long travel distances between communities, extensive federal lands, and low population density.

- **County Seat:** Independence
- **Population (2020 Census):** ~18,000
- **Land Area:** ~10,227 square miles
- **Incorporated Cities:** Bishop
- **Major Communities:** Concentrated along the Owens Valley corridor, primarily in the City of Bishop.

Tourism and recreation significantly increase seasonal population and operational demand for public safety services.

II. Governance Structure

Inyo County operates under a five-member Board of Supervisors, with a County Administrative Officer who is responsible for administrative management and departmental coordination.

The Inyo County Administrator is is responsible for oversight of emergency management functions.

III. Geography and Land Ownership

Inyo County is characterized by extremely low population density, long travel distances between communities, and large expanses of federally managed lands. These characteristics significantly influence emergency response logistics and emergency management planning.

IV. Hazard Profile

Primary hazards affecting Inyo County include:

- **Wildland Fire:** Frequent in forested and wildland-urban interface areas.
- **Severe Winter Storms:** Heavy snowfall and mountain pass closures.
- **Flooding / Mudflows:** Especially during atmospheric river events.
- **Seismic Hazards:** Eastern Sierra fault system creates low-to-moderate earthquake risk.
- **Transportation Incidents:** US Highway 395 corridor incidents.
- **Extreme Heat:** Desert regions in the Owens Valley.
- **Search and Rescue:** Wilderness recreation areas including Mount Whitney and Death Valley National Park.

V. Public Safety Infrastructure

1) **Fire Protection**
   - Bishop Volunteer Fire Department
   - Big Pine Volunteer Fire Department
   - Independence Volunteer Fire Department
   - Lone Pine Volunteer Fire Department
   - Southern Inyo Fire Protection District
   - Aspendell / South Fork Volunteer Fire Department

2) **Law Enforcement**
   - Inyo County Sheriff's Office
   - California Highway Patrol (highway and traffic enforcement)

3) **Emergency Medical Services**
   - County Emergency Medical Services program coordinates regional ambulance transport and first-response coverage.

VI. Emergency Management Structure

The Office of Emergency Management reports to the County Administrator and is the agency responsible for countywide emergency management, coordinating:

- Emergency Operations Center (EOC) management
- Operational Area coordination
- Emergency Operations Plan maintenance
- Alert and warning systems
- Training and exercises
- Disaster recovery coordination with Cal OES and FEMA
- Collaboration with Local Partners

VII. Fiscal Baseline

- **Total County Budget:** ~$169.4 million (all government funds)
- **General Fund Appropriations:** ~$93.4 million
- **Authorized Workforce:** 500 FTEs
- **Office of Emergency Management/Services FTEs:** 2
- **Office of Emergency Management/Services Funding:** ~$949,000

VIII. Significant Incident History (2015 – 2025)

- 2018: Georges Fire. ~2,883 acres. Inyo National Forest, north of Lone Pine.
- 2019: Taboose Fire. ~10,296 acres. Southwest of Big Pine. Evacuations and forest closures.
- 2023: Tropical Storm Hillary. Extreme rainfall, mudlfows and infrastructure damage.
- 2023: Regional Storm Disaster Declaration. Statewide flooding impacts.
- 2024: Horseshoe Fire: ~4,500 acres. Near Lone Pine, CA. Multiple structures destroyed.

IX. Key Observations

- **Transportation:** US Highway 395 is the primary evacuation and logistics corridor.
- **Air Transportation:** Eastern Sierra Regional Airport (Bishop) supports medical transport and emergency aviation.
- **Medical Facilities:** Northern Inyo Hospital serves as the county's primary hospital.
- **Utilities:** Electricity, water, and telecommunications serve dispersed communities; vulnerable to wildfire and storm impacts.
- **Large geographic area with limited staffing resources** for emergency response.
- **Reliance on volunteer fire agencies** for structural fire protection.
- **High dependence on mutual aid and federal land management partners**.
- **Climate-driven hazards**, including wildfire, flooding, and severe storms.
- **Dependence on US Highway 395** as the primary evacuation and response corridor.

X. Data Sources

- Inyo County FY 2024–25 Budget Documents
- Inyo County Office of Emergency Services
- CAL FIRE Incident Database – fire.ca.gov
- U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts – census.gov
- California Governor's Office of Emergency Services – caloes.ca.gov
- U.S. Forest Service – fs.usda.gov/inyo
- National Park Service – nps.gov/deva
- Bureau of Land Management – blm.gov
- USGS Hazard Data – usgs.gov
- FEMA Disaster Declaration Database – fema.gov

Appendix 09 - Madera County
County Public Safety and Emergency Management Profile

This report provides a baseline overview of public safety and emergency management in Madera County. It is designed to support a comparative analysis between Alpine, El Dorado, Inyo, Madera, Mono, Nevada, Placer and Tuolumne counties. The profile is intended for policy discussion, planning alignment, and regional coordination.

I. County Overview

Madera County is located in central California, extending from the agricultural lands of the San Joaquin Valley into the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

- **County Seat:** Madera
- **Population (2020 Census):** 156,255
- **Land Area:** 2,153 square miles
- **Incorporated Cities:** Madera and Chowchilla
- **Major Communities:** Oakhurst, North Fork, Coarsegold and Bass Lake

Tourism associated with Yosemite National Park and Sierra Nevada Mountain recreation areas significantly increases seasonal population, particularly in eastern portions of the county, creating variable demand for emergency services.

II. Governance Structure

Madera County operates under a five-member Board of Supervisors. Administrative functions are managed by a County Administrative Officer responsible for interdepartmental coordination and implementation of Board policy.

The Director of OES is the Sheriff, serving as the lead agency for emergency management and disaster response.

III. Geography and Land Ownership

Overall, approximately 38% of land in Madera County consists of federally managed lands, including the Sierra National Forest and portions of Yosemite National Park. Eastern Madera County consists of approximately 70% of publicly owned land. This land ownership pattern necessitates extensive interagency coordination for:

- Wildfire suppression
- Evacuation planning
- Large-scale incident management

The county's geographic diversity—from valley floor to alpine terrain—introduces varying hazard profiles and operational challenges.

IV. Hazard Profile

Madera County faces a range of recurring and emerging hazards:

- **Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire:** Significant risk in foothill and mountain communities
- **Extreme Heat:** Elevated exposure in the San Joaquin Valley
- **Flooding:** Associated with the San Joaquin River watershed and irrigation systems
- **Drought:** Ongoing impacts on water supply and wildfire conditions
- **Wildfire Smoke:** Air quality impacts across both valley and mountain regions
- **Tourism-Related Public Safety**: Seasonal influxes increase demand for emergency services.
- **Public Safety Power Shut Off Events:** Mountain and foothill communities like Oakhurst, North Fork, and Coarsegold fall in the wildland-urban interface and may be exposed to PSPS during high-risk fire weather events
- **Earthquakes:** Madera County experiences low to moderate seismic activity, mostly smaller magnitude earthquakes. Major, damaging earthquakes are less common than in coastal California, but valley and foothill communities could feel moderate events.

V. Public Safety Infrastructure

1) **Fire Protection**
   Fire services are delivered through a combination of contract, municipal, and volunteer models:

   - Madera County Fire Department: Operated by CAL FIRE under contract
   - City of Madera Fire Services: Provided through CAL FIRE contract
   - Chowchilla Fire Department: Volunteer-based municipal department
   - Foothill and Mountain Areas: Supported by volunteer and community-based fire organizations

   Key regional partners include CAL FIRE (Madera-Mariposa-Merced Unit), Sierra National Forest fire resources, and Yosemite National Park fire management.

2) **Law Enforcement**
   - Madera County Sheriff's Office
   - City of Madera Police Department
   - Chowchilla Police Department
   - California Highway Patrol

3) **Emergency Medical Services**
   Madera County operates within the Central California Emergency Medical Services Agency framework. Ambulance transport is provided through contracted providers, supported by fire-based first response systems.

VI. Emergency Management Structure

The Madera County Office of Emergency Services (OES) serves as the agency responsible for countywide emergency management, coordinating:

- Emergency Operations Center (EOC) planning and management
- Alert and warning systems
- Evacuation coordination
- Interagency coordination
- Training and exercises
- Hazard mitigation planning
- Disaster recovery operations

VII. Fiscal Baseline

- **Total County Budget:** ~$450 million (all government funds)
- **General Fund Appropriations:** ~$180 million
- **Authorized Workforce:** 2,082 FTEs
- **Office of Emergency Management/Services FTEs:** 2 FTEs with a shared responsibility for Search & Rescue
- **Office of Emergency Management/Services Funding:** ~$384,000

VIII. Significant Incident History (2015 – 2025)

- **2017 Railroad Fire:** Burned approximately 12,400 acres near Sugar Pine and Oakhurst; resulted in evacuations and regional response operations.
- **2020 Creek Fire:** Burned approximately 379,895 acres across Fresno and Madera Counties; destroyed over 850 structures and prompted large-scale evacuations, including high-profile helicopter rescues at Mammoth Pool Reservoir.
- **2023 Atmospheric River Storms:** Repeated winter storm events caused heavy rainfall, flooding concerns in valley areas, and significant snow impacts in the Sierra Nevada Mountains.
- **2023 Regional Winter Storm Emergency:** Extended snow and infrastructure impacts required sustained emergency response and coordination across mountain communities.
- Pack Fire:

IX. Key Observations

- Madera County's geographic diversity creates complex, multi-hazard conditions requiring adaptable response strategies.
- A contract-based fire service model with CAL FIRE provides operational capacity but requires strong coordination with local and volunteer resources.
- Federal land ownership significantly influences emergency management operations, particularly wildfire response and evacuation planning.
- Seasonal population increases in tourism areas add variability to service demand and planning assumptions.

- Recent incident history demonstrates the need for large-scale evacuation capability and sustained multi-agency coordination.
- Winter and wildfire hazards require pre-positioning of resources and robust planning for road closures and evacuations.

X. Data Sources

- Madera County Budget and Financial Documents
- Madera County Office of Emergency Services
- Madera County General Plan
- CAL FIRE (Madera-Mariposa-Merced Unit)
- California Governor's Office of Emergency Services
- U.S. Census Bureau
- California Department of Finance
- CAL FIRE Incident Database and FRAP
- U.S. Forest Service – Sierra National Forest
- National Park Service – Yosemite National Park

Appendix 10 - Mono County
County Public Safety and Emergency Management Profile

This report provides a baseline overview of public safety and emergency management in Mono County. It is designed to support comparative analysis with Mono, El Dorado, Tuolumne, Inyo, and Nevada Counties. It is designed to support comparative analysis with Alpine, El Dorado, Inyo, Madera, Mono, Nevada, Placer and Tuolomne counties. The profile is intended for policy discussion, planning alignment, and regional coordination.

I. County Overview

Mono County is located in eastern California along the Nevada border, stretching from the eastern Sierra Nevada mountains to high desert basins and including communities such as Mammoth Lakes and Bridgeport.
It is characterized by diverse terrain, high seasonal tourism, and population concentration along major corridors.

- **County Seat:** Bridgeport
- **Population (2020 Census):** 13,195
- **Land Area:** 3,132 square miles
- **Incorporated Cities/Towns:** Mammoth Lakes
- **Major Communities:** June Lake, Lee Vining, Topaz, Crowley Lake, Benton, Hammil and Chalfant

Tourism and recreation—especially in and around Mammoth Lakes and Bridgeport—significantly increase seasonal population and operational demand for public safety services.

II. Governance Structure

Mono County is a General Law County that operates under a five-member Board of Supervisors.

Currently, the Director of Emergency Management reports to the County Administrative Office.

III. Geography and Land Ownership

Mono County covers about 3,132 square miles with approximately 94% of the land being publicly owned, making it one of California's larger counties by land area despite its relatively small population.

Primary communities include the following:

- **Mammoth Lakes Region:** The county's only incorporated town and its largest population center serving as a year-round resort hub famous for skiing, mountain biking, and a large concentration of lodging and dining in areas such as Mammoth Lake, June Lake, and Crowely Lake.
- **Mono Basin and North Region:** Lee Vining which serves as an entrance to Yosemite National Park, Bridgeport and Twin Lakes.

- **Antelope Valley Region:** Walker, Coleville, & Topaz which are a cluster of small, rural, ranching-oriented communities located along Highway 395.
- **Tri-Valley Region:** Benton, Hammil, & Chalfant located along Highway 6 on the eastern side of the county, primarily consisting of rural, agricultural communities that experience far less tourist traffic.

IV. Hazard Profile

Mono County faces multiple recurring and seasonal hazards:

- **Wildfire**: Mono County has extensive forest and brush areas with dry summers, steep terrain, and strong winds. County planning documents state that most privately owned land is rated as "very high" fire hazard.
- **Winter Storms/Avalanches:** Because much of Mono County sits in or adjacent to the Sierra Nevada, severe winter weather is extremely common, including highway closures, whiteout conditions and avalanches requiring coordination with avalanche forecasters and evacuation procedures during high-danger periods.
- **Earthquakes:**Mono County is one of California's more geologically active regions. It sits near the Long Valley Caldera and multiple active fault systems.
- **Transportation & Isolation:** A major practical risk in Mono County is isolation due to geography. Many communities rely on only one or two access roads and major highways, including US-395, may be closed for extensive periods of time.
- **Extended Power Outages (Planned and Unplanned):** Due to extreme weather conditions, extended power outages potentially create emergency and life-threatening conditions for certain communities and populations.

V. Public Safety Infrastructure

1) **Fire Protection Agencies**
   - **Countywide:** Numerous independent fire protection districts (Antelope Valley Fire Protection District, Bridgeport Fire Protection District, Chalfant Valley Fire Department, June Lake Fire Department, Lee Vining Fire Protection District, Long Valley Fire Protection District, Paradise Fire Protection District, Wheeler Crest Fire Protection District, Mono City Fire Protection District, White Mountain Fire Protection District
   - **Municipal / Community Services Districts:** Mammoth Lakes Fire Department
   - **State and Federal Partners:** CAL FIRE, U.S. Forest Service

2) **Law Enforcement**
   - **Countywide:** Mono County Sheriff's Office
   - **Municipal Police:** Mammoth Lakes Police Department
   - **Highway Patrol:** California Highway Patrol provides traffic and highway incident enforcement.

3) **Emergency Medical Services**
   - Mono County Emergency Medical Services

VI. Emergency Management Structure

The Mono County Office of Emergency Management serves as the lead agency for Operation Area coordination. Core program areas include:

- **Staffing:** 2 FTEs including the Wildfire Coordinator.
- **Key Programs:** EOC management, Emergency Operations Plan maintenance, training and exercises, alert/warning systems, evacuation coordination, disaster recovery coordination with Cal OES, FEMA, and federal land management partners.
- **Operational Area Partners:** Fire protection districts, municipal police, EMS, hospitals, public health, Caltrans, utilities, federal agencies, schools, NGOs, and volunteer organizations.

VII. FY 2024/25 Fiscal Baseline

- **Total County Budget (All Funds):** ~$174.6 million
- **OEM Appropriations:** ~$779,000
- **Authorized Workforce:** ~398 FTEs

VIII. Significant Incident History (2015 – 2025)

- 2015: Mono County issued an emergency proclamation citing drought, wind, fire risk, and winter storm impacts following severe February 2015 wind events amid California's drought emergency.
- 2017-18: Mono County participated in statewide winter storm recovery actions during heavy Sierra seasons (depending on specific FEMA event boundaries).
- 2020: Mono County activated emergency operations under California's statewide COVID emergency and federal public health emergency framework; extensive local emergency orders and emergency management measures were implemented.
- 2020 (Nov.): Governor Newsom issued a State of Emergency for Mono County due to the Mountain View Fire, which burned >20,000 acres, caused fatalities, evacuations, and infrastructure threats.
- 2021: Caldor Fire Smoke/Regional Wildfire Impacts, though not all incidents resulted in a Mono-specific declaration.
- 2022: Coulter/Oak/Regional Wildfire Readiness and emergency coordination intensified during statewide wildfire activity.
- 2023 (Jan – March): Extreme winter storms causing road closures and stranded travelers.
- 2023 (March): California Winter Storm Emergency declared by the Governor covering Mono County and 12 other counties.
- 2024: Severe winter/avalanche incidents, though not all rose to new countywide declarations.
- 2025: Pack Fire local emergency declared by Mono County and subsequently proclaimed as a State of Emergency by the Governor.

IX. Key Observations

- **Interagency dependency:** Public land dominance requires robust coordination for wildfire and recovery.
- **Transportation corridor reliance:** US Highway 395 is critical for evacuations; closures significantly impact operational planning.
- **Seasonal population surges:** Tourism peaks increase demand for EMS, search & rescue, and wildfire response.
- **Severe winter weather:** Winter storms disrupt services, sheltering, and transportation.
- **Funding and staffing sustainability:** OEM is limited to one position plus the support of the Wildfire Coordinator, requiring strong collaboration and partnership with external stakeholders.
- **Air:** Mammoth Airport supports medical transport and wildfire aviation.

X. Data Sources

- Mono County Budget – 2025/26
- U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts – census.gov
- California Governor's Office of Emergency Services – caloes.ca.gov
- California Department of Finance – dof.ca.gov
- USGS – usgs.gov
- National Interagency Fire Center – nifc.gov
- FEMA Disaster Declarations – fema.gov

Appendix 11 - Nevada County
County Public Safety and Emergency Management Profile

This report provides a baseline overview of public safety and emergency management in Nevada County. It is designed to support a comparative analysis between Alpine, El Dorado, Inyo, Madera, Mono, Nevada, Placer and Tuolumne counties. The profile is intended for policy discussion, planning alignment, and regional coordination.

I. County Overview

Nevada County extends from the Sacramento Valley foothills to the crest of the Sierra Nevada and the Nevada state line. Communities are concentrated along the Interstate 80 and State Route 49 corridors.

- **County Seat:** Nevada City
- **Population (2020 Census):** ~102,500
- **Land Area:** ~974 square miles
- **Incorporated Cities/Towns:** Grass Valley, Nevada City, Truckee
- **Major Communities:** Penn Valley in addition to the incorporated cities.

Tourism and recreation associated with the Sierra Nevada and Lake Tahoe Basin significantly increase seasonal population and operational demand for public safety services

II. Governance Structure

Nevada County operates under a five-member Board of Supervisors with a County Executive Officer responsible for administrative management and departmental coordination.

The Office of Emergency Services is overseen by the Information & General Services Agency.

III. Geography and Land Ownership

- A substantial portion of Nevada County consists of federal lands managed by the U.S. Forest Service within the Tahoe National Forest.
- Public land ownership patterns require extensive interagency coordination for wildfire management, evacuation planning, and large incident response.

IV. Hazard Profile

Nevada County faces multiple recurring and seasonal hazards:

- **Wildfire/Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI)**: Extensive exposure due to forest fuels.
- **Severe Winter Storms:** Severe storms affecting Interstate 80 and Truckee; atmospheric river flooding events; transportation corridor incidents; wilderness search and rescue; and regional seismic hazards.
- **Severe Winter Storms:** Heavy snowfall and road closures.
- **Flooding and Debris Flow**: Atmospheric river storm events, burn scars and rain-on-snow events affect drainage areas and transportation corridors.
- **Transportation** corridor incidents along Interstate 80.
- **Search & Rescue**: Wilderness search and rescue operations.

- **Public Safety Power Shutoff Events**: A PG&E Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) event is a precautionary measure where electricity is temporarily turned off in high-risk areas to prevent wildfires during extreme weather conditions like strong winds and dry heat, often lasting multiple days.

V. Public Safety Infrastructure

1) **Fire Protection**
   - Fire protection services are delivered through the following independent fire protection districts and municipal departments:
     - Truckee Fire Protection District which serves the Town of Truckee.
     - Nevada County Consolidated Fire Protection District
     - Truckee Fire Protection District
     - Grass Valley Fire Department
     - Nevada City Fire Department
     - Penn Valley Fire Protection District
     - North San Juan Fire Protection District
     - Higgins Area Fire Protection District

2) **Law Enforcement**
   - Nevada County Sheriff's Office – Countywide law enforcement
   - Grass Valley Police Department
   - Nevada City Police Department
   - Truckee Police Department
   - California Highway Patrol

3) **Emergency Medical Services:** Nevada County operates under the Sierra-Sacramento Valley Emergency Medical Services Agency structure with ambulance transport provided through contracted providers and fire department response systems.

VI. Emergency Management Structure

The Nevada County Office of Emergency Services is a division under the Information & General Services Agency.

Programs include emergency planning, evacuation coordination, EOC management, training and exercises, and disaster recovery coordination.

VII. Fiscal Baseline

- **Total County Budget (All Funds):** ~370 million
- **General Fund Expenditures:** ~$140 million
- **Authorized Workforce:** 932 FTEs
- **Office of Emergency Management/Services FTEs:** 11 FTEs
- **Office of Emergency Management Budget:** $8.96M

VIII. Significant Incident History (2015 – 2025)

The following incidents represent major emergencies affecting Nevada County during the past decade. Events include wildfires, severe winter weather incidents, and regional disasters requiring Operational Area coordination or EOC activation.

- **2017 – McCourtney Fire:** The McCourtney Fire was ignited in August 2017 west of Grass Valley and burned approximately 160 acres in steep terrain. Evacuations were issued for nearby communities. No fatalities were reported and structural losses were limited due to rapid containment by local agencies and CAL FIRE resources.
- **2020 – Jones Fire:** The Jones Fire ignited August 17, 2020 near Jones Bar Road along the South Yuba River canyon. The wildfire burned approximately 705 acres in steep canyon terrain. Evacuations were issued for nearby residents. No fatalities were reported.
- **2021 – River Fire:** The River Fire ignited August 4, 2021, near the Bear River canyon area on the Nevada-Placer County border. The fire burned approximately 2,619 acres and destroyed approximately 174 structures with more than 30 structures damaged. One civilian fatality occurred. Nevada County participated in evacuations and mutual aid operations.
- **2022 – Mosquito Fire (regional impact):** The Mosquito Fire ignited September 6, 2022 near Oxbow Reservoir and ultimately burned approximately 76,788 acres in Placer and El Dorado Counties. Although outside Nevada County, the incident required significant regional mutual aid participation and emergency management coordination.
- **2023 – Atmospheric River Winter Storm Series:** Beginning in late 2022 and continuing through early 2023, Nevada County experienced repeated atmospheric river storm events producing heavy rainfall in foothill areas and severe snowfall in the Truckee region. Impacts included road closures, power outages, flooding, and infrastructure damage.
- **2023 – Sierra Winter Snow Emergency:** Record snowpack conditions in early 2023 created operational challenges including prolonged Interstate 80 closures, transportation disruptions, infrastructure strain, and emergency shelter coordination in mountain communities.

IX. Key Observations

Wildfire remains the dominant hazard due to extensive Wildland/Urban Interface development. Winter storms frequently affect transportation systems and critical infrastructure. Regional wildfire incidents often draw Nevada County into statewide mutual aid operations.

X. Data Sources

- Nevada County Budget and Financial Documents – https://www.nevadacountyca.gov/budget
- Nevada County Annual Comprehensive Financial Report – https://www.nevadacountyca.gov/finance
- Nevada County Office of Emergency Services – https://www.nevadacountyca.gov/OES
- Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) – Federal preparedness grant supporting local emergency management staffing and planning – https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/emergency-management-performance
- California Governor's Office of Emergency Services – https://www.caloes.ca.gov
- Nevada County Sheriff's Office – https://www.nevadacountyca.gov/sheriff
- Nevada County Consolidated Fire Protection District – https://www.nevadacountyfire.org
- Truckee Fire Protection District – https://www.truckeefire.org
- Grass Valley Fire Department – https://www.cityofgrassvalley.com/fire
- Nevada City Fire Department – https://www.nevadacityca.gov
- Penn Valley Fire Protection District – https://www.pennvalleyfire.com
- North San Juan Fire Protection District – https://www.nsjfire.org
- Higgins Area Fire Protection District – https://www.higginsfire.org
- CAL FIRE Incident Database – https://www.fire.ca.gov/incidents
- CAL FIRE Fire and Resource Assessment Program – https://frap.fire.ca.gov
- U.S. Forest Service Tahoe National Forest – https://www.fs.usda.gov/tahoe
- U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts – https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/nevadacountycalifornia
- California Department of Finance Demographics – https://dof.ca.gov/Forecasting/Demographics
- FEMA Disaster Declaration Database – https://www.fema.gov/disaster/declarations
- National Interagency Fire Center Statistics – https://www.nifc.gov/fire-information/statistics
- California Natural Resources Agency Open Data Portal – https://data.cnra.ca.gov
- USGS Hazard Data – https://www.usgs.gov

Appendix 12 - Placer County
County Public Safety and Emergency Management Profile

This report provides a baseline overview of public safety and emergency management in Placer County. It is designed to support a comparative analysis between Alpine, El Dorado, Inyo, Madera, Mono, Nevada, Placer and Tuolomne counties. The profile is intended for policy discussion, planning alignment, and regional coordination.

I. County Overview

Placer County is a geographically diverse county extending from the Sacramento Valley through the Sierra Nevada to the Nevada border, including the Lake Tahoe Basin. The county includes both urban/suburban communities (Roseville, Rocklin, Lincoln) and rural/mountain communities (Auburn foothills, North Tahoe). This creates a dual operational environment with high call volumes in the west and complex, hazard-driven demand in the east.

The county spans from near sea level in the western valley to over 9,000 feet elevation in the Sierra Nevada.

- **County Seat:** Auburn
- **Population**: (2020 Census): ~404,000
- **Land Area**: ~1,407 square miles
- **Incorporated Cities**: Auburn, Colfax, Lincoln, Loomis, Rocklin and Roseville
- **Major Communities**: The majority of the population resides in western Placer County urban/suburban areas. Eastern Placer County (including North Lake Tahoe communities such as Tahoe City, Kings Beach, and Olympic Valley) has lower resident population but significant seasonal visitation.

Key transportation corridors: Interstate 80 (primary east-west corridor connecting Sacramento to Reno), State Route 65 (north-south growth corridor), State Route 49 (foothill corridor), and State Route 89 (Tahoe Basin circulation).

II. Governance Structure

Placer County is a charter county governed by an elected Board of Supervisors with an appointed County Executive Officer who is responsible for administrative management and departmental coordination.

The Placer County Sheriff's Office is responsible for providing Office of Emergency Management/Services throughout Placer County.

III. Geography and Land Ownership

Placer County is a geographically diverse county extending from the Sacramento Valley through the Sierra Nevada to the Nevada border, including the Lake Tahoe Basin. The county includes both urban/suburban communities (Roseville, Rocklin, Lincoln) and rural/mountain communities (Auburn foothills, North Tahoe). This creates a dual operational environment with high call volumes in the west and complex, hazard-driven demand in the east.

IV. Hazard Profile

Placer County faces multiple recurring and seasonal hazards, including:

- **Wildfire/Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI)**: Wildfire risk in foothill and mountain communities; large-scale wildfire events.
- **Severe Winter Storms**: Eastern Placer County experiences heavy snowfall, road closures and infrastructure strain. Winter storms and snow impacts in the Sierra and Tahoe Basin; flooding along the American River watershed; drought conditions; and high-traffic transportation incidents along Interstate 80 and State Route 89 corridors.
- **Flooding and Debris Flows**: American River watershed and localized stormwater flooding present risk in western areas.
- **Transportation Corridor Incidents**: High traffic volume along I-80 and regional growth corridors contributes to accident-related demand.
- **Wilderness Search and Rescue**: Backcountry and recreational incidents.
- **Tourism-Related Public Safety**: Seasonal influxes in and around the northwest portions of Lake Tahoe/Truckee increase demand for emergency services.
- **Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS)**: A PG&E Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) event is a precautionary measure where electricity is temporarily turned off in high-risk areas to prevent wildfires during extreme weather conditions like strong winds and dry heat, often lasting multiple days.

V. Public Safety Infrastructure

Fire protection is delivered through a combination of municipal fire departments (Roseville, Rocklin, Lincoln), large fire districts (Placer County Fire Department, North Tahoe Fire Protection District, Foresthill Fire, Newcastle Fire, etc.), and CAL FIRE through contract and state responsibility area coverage. Law enforcement is provided by the Placer County Sheriff's Office in unincorporated areas and by municipal police departments in incorporated cities. EMS is provided through a contracted ambulance provider model under LEMSA oversight.

1) **Fire Protection**
   - Placer County Fire Department (serving unincorporated areas and contract cities).
   - Special districts including North Tahoe Fire Protection District, Foresthill Fire Protection District, Newcastle Fire Protection District, and others
   - State and Federal Wildland Partners such as CAL FIRE, US Forest Service, and CAL OES provide significant operational support.

2) Law Enforcement
   - Placer County Sheriff's Office – Countywide law enforcement
   - Incorporated cities have their own police departments.
   - California Highway Patrol – State highway and traffic enforcement.

3) **Emergency Medical Services**:
   - Emergency Medical Services are provided through a contracted ambulance provider system under LEMSA authority, coordinated with fire agencies for first response.

VI. Emergency Management Structure

Placer County operates a well-developed Operational Area emergency management program housed within the Sheriff's Office (Office of Emergency Services). The program includes a staffed Emergency Operations Center (EOC), established training programs, and a history of activations for wildfire, winter storms, and public safety power shutoff (PSPS) events.

VII. Fiscal Baseline

- **Total County Budget (All Funds):** ~$1.37 billion
- **General Fund Appropriations:** ~$478.1 million
- **Authorized Workforce:** 2,938 FTEs
- **Office of Emergency Management/Services FTEs:** 5 FTEs
- **Office of Emergency Services Budget: General Fund:** $2.82M

VIII. Significant Incident History (2015 – 2025)

The following incidents represent major emergencies affecting Placer County during the past decade. Events include wildfires, severe winter weather incidents, and regional disasters requiring Operational Area coordination or Emergency Operations Center activation.

- **2017 – Winter Storm and Flooding Event:** In January 2017, Placer County experienced severe winter storms resulting in heavy rainfall, flooding, mudslides, and infrastructure damage. A local emergency was proclaimed and later supported by a federal disaster declaration. Impacts included road damage, drainage system failures, and disruptions to public infrastructure requiring extended recovery efforts.
- **2021 – River Fire:** The River Fire ignited August 4, 2021 near the Bear River canyon area along the Nevada-Placer County border. The fire burned approximately 2,619 acres and resulted in significant structural loss, with more than 140 structures destroyed and additional structures damaged. Evacuations were issued across both counties. The incident required extensive multi-agency coordination and recovery operations.
- **2021 – Bridge Fire:** The Bridge Fire ignited in September 2021 near the Foresthill Bridge corridor. The fire burned approximately 411 acres in steep terrain and prompted evacuation orders and warnings. The incident impacted recreational areas and demonstrated the County's vulnerability to fires in topographically challenging areas near populated corridors.
- **2022 – Mosquito Fire:** The Mosquito Fire ignited September 6, 2022 near Oxbow Reservoir and ultimately burned approximately 76,788 acres across Placer and El Dorado Counties. Placer County activated its Emergency Operations Center and issued a local emergency proclamation. The fire prompted large-scale evacuations, threatened thousands of residents, and caused extensive damage to forest lands, utilities, and infrastructure. Recovery operations extended multiple years.
- **2023 – Winter Storm and Flooding Event:** In January 2023, Placer County experienced a series of severe winter storms producing heavy rain, snow, and high winds. Impacts included flooding, power outages, mudslides, road failures, and debris flows. The County proclaimed a local emergency, activated the Emergency Operations Center, and was included in a federal disaster declaration. Infrastructure repair and recovery efforts have continued beyond the initial incident period.
- **2023 – Sierra Winter Storm and Snow Emergency:** Beginning in February 2023, Placer County experienced additional severe winter storms producing heavy snowfall and high winds. Impacts included prolonged Interstate 80 closures, avalanche activity in

Olympic Valley resulting in evacuations and structural damage, landslides in the Colfax area, extended power outages, and significant strain on transportation and public works systems. The event required sustained operational coordination but did not receive federal disaster declaration support for the County.

IX. Key Observations

Placer County represents a hybrid model combining urban service delivery and rural/wildland risk. Comparative analysis should evaluate scalability of services, integration between municipal and district fire agencies, and the effectiveness of Operational Area coordination across a large and diverse jurisdiction.

X. Data Sources

- Placer County Budget and CAFR documents
- U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts (Placer County)
- Placer County Office of Emergency Services
- Placer County Sheriff's Office
- CAL FIRE and regional incident records
- Local municipal and fire district publications

Appendix 13 - Tuolumne County
County Public Safety and Emergency Management Profile

This report provides a baseline overview of public safety and emergency management in Tuolumne County. It is designed to support a comparative analysis between Alpine, El Dorado, Inyo, Madera, Mono, Nevada, Placer, and Tuolumne counties. The profile is intended for policy discussion, planning alignment, and regional coordination.

I. County Overview

Tuolumne County is located in the central Sierra Nevada region of California and forms part of the historic Gold Country. The county extends from the western foothills of the Sierra Nevada to the crest of the Sierra near Yosemite National Park.

Large portions of eastern Tuolumne County consist of federal lands including the Stanislaus National Forest and portions of Yosemite National Park. These land ownership patterns influence wildfire risk, tourism activity, and emergency response coordination.

- **County Seat**: Sonora
- **Population (2020 Census)**: ~55,620
- **Land Area**: 2,274 square miles
- **Incorporated Cities**: Sonora
- **Major Communities:** Jamestown, Columbia, Tuolomne City, Twaine Harte and Groveland

II. Governance Structure

Tuolumne County operates under a five-member elected Board of Supervisors and an appointed County Administrator.

The County Administrator oversees departmental operations including public safety, public works, health services, and administrative services. Emergency management functions are coordinated through the Tuolumne County Office of Emergency Services, which reports to the CAO.

III. Geography and Land Ownership

- A substantial portion of eastern Tuolumne County consists of federal lands including the Stanislaus National Forest and portions of Yosemite National Park.
- Public land ownership patterns require extensive interagency coordination for wildfire management, evacuation planning, and large incident response.
- Elevation ranges from roughly 600 feet in the western foothills to more than 9,000 feet along the Sierra crest.

IV. Hazard Profile

Tuolumne County faces multiple hazards due to its mountainous terrain and seasonal population shifts:

- **Wildfire/Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI)**: Extensive wildfire exposure throughout the majority of the county.
- **Severe Winter Storms:** Heavy snowfall affecting higher elevation communities.

- **Flooding and Debris Flow**: Along regional watersheds.
- **Transportation Corridor Incidents:** Mountain highways; public safety incidents associated with tourism and recreation.
- **Wilderness Search and Rescue**: Backcountry and recreational incidents.
- **Tourism-Related Public Safety**: Seasonal influxes increase demand for emergency services.
- **Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) Events**: A PG&E Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) event is a precautionary measure where electricity is temporarily turned off in high-risk areas to prevent wildfires during extreme weather conditions like strong winds and dry heat, often lasting multiple days.

V. Public Safety Infrastructure

1) **Fire Protection**
   - **Countywide:** Fire protection services are delivered through the Tuolumne County Fire Department operating under a cooperative agreement with CAL FIRE.
   - **Municipal Services/Special Districts**: Multiple local fire protection districts and volunteer fire departments supplement county coverage.
   - **State and Federal Partners**: CalFire, United States Forest Service and the National Park Service maintain firefighting resources within the county.

2) **Law Enforcement**:
   - Tuolumne County Sheriff's Office
   - City of Sonora Police Department
   - California Highway Patrol

3) **Emergency Medical Services**
   - Tuolumne County Ambulance Service is the county's ambulance program/system, and Manteca District Ambulance Service is the contracted operator that staffs and runs the day-to-day ambulance operations for that county system.

VI. Emergency Management Structure

The Tuolumne County Office of Emergency Services coordinates countywide emergency management including Emergency Operations Center planning, interagency coordination, alert and warning systems, evacuation coordination, training programs, and disaster recovery operations.

VII. Fiscal Baseline

- **Total County Budget (All Funds):** ~$286 million
- **General Fund Expenditures:** ~$120 million
- **Authorized Workforce:** ~50.5 FTEs
- **Office of Emergency Management/Services FTEs:** 4 FTEs
- **Office of Emergency Management/Services Appropriations:** ~$1.23M from state, federal and other governments. No County funds.

VIII. Significant Incident History (2015 – 2025)

- **2018 Donnell Fire:** Burned approximately 36,000 acres in the Stanislaus National Forest and impacted Highway 108 corridor communities.
- **2021 River Fire:** Burned approximately 9,600 acres near Groveland and threatened residential communities requiring evacuation warnings and orders.

IX. Key Observations

Tuolumne County reflects a rural, hazard-exposed emergency management environment where success depends less on organizational scale and more on coordination discipline, partner integration, and operational resilience. Comparative analysis should assess the County's capacity to perform as an effective Operational Area coordinator, align emergency management with public safety and health functions, and manage recurring wildfire, evacuation, and visitor-driven incident complexity across a geographically dispersed service area.

X. Data Sources

- Tuolumne County FY 2024-2025 Adopted Budget
- Tuolumne County Office of Emergency Services materials
- Tuolumne County Community Wildfire Protection Plan
- CAL FIRE Tuolumne-Calaveras Unit documentation
- California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection wildfire databases
- California Governor's Office of Emergency Services planning resources

APPENDIX 14
CITY & COUNTY EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLANS IN CALIFORNIA

Purpose

This section provides information on the importance of integrated emergency management between Mono County and the Town of Mammoth Lakes, as well as review of the draft Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) currently under development for Mono County. The intent is to identify areas where clarity, balance, and organizational alignment may need refinement to support effective implementation of emergency management functions.

Introduction

California emergency management is intentionally designed as a layered and coordinated system involving local governments, Operational Areas, regional mutual aid systems, and the State of California. Within this structure, counties commonly maintain Operational Area Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs), while cities and towns frequently maintain local Emergency Operations Plans tailored to their unique hazards, operational responsibilities, infrastructure, and community needs.

The existence of both county and city Emergency Operations Plans is not unusual, duplicative, or inefficient. Rather, this structure reflects California's emergency management doctrine under the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) and the National Incident Management System (NIMS). Throughout California, local governments routinely maintain independent or complementary Emergency Operations Plans while coordinating through county Operational Areas during emergencies and disasters.

The relationship between Mono County and the Town of Mammoth Lakes reflects this same statewide model. A review of the Town of Mammoth Lakes Emergency Operations Plan demonstrates repeated recognition that successful emergency management within Mono County depends upon integrated planning, shared operational coordination, mutual aid systems, interoperable communications, and collaborative Emergency Operations Center relationships between the Town and the County.

California Emergency Management Structure

California utilizes the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) as the framework for organizing emergency response and disaster coordination statewide. SEMS establishes five organizational levels:

- Field Response
- Local Government
- Operational Area
- Regional
- State

Under SEMS, counties serve as Operational Areas responsible for coordinating emergency management activities among all political subdivisions within the county, including cities, towns, special districts, and other local agencies.

However, Operational Areas are not intended to replace local government emergency management responsibilities. Instead, Operational Areas function as coordination and support systems for local jurisdictions during emergencies and disasters.

California Cities Maintaining Local Emergency Operations Plans

Many California cities maintain Emergency Operations Plans separate from, but coordinated with, county Operational Area plans. Examples include:

- City of Los Altos — Santa Clara County
- City of Eureka — Humboldt County
- City of El Cerrito — Contra Costa County
- City of Camarillo — Ventura County
- City of Sanger — Fresno County
- City of San Ramon — Contra Costa County

Large California municipalities also maintain extensive independent emergency management organizations and Emergency Operations Plans, including:

- City of San Diego
- City of Sacramento
- City of San Jose
- City of Fresno
- City of Anaheim
- City of Irvine
- City of Oakland
- City of Long Beach

Rationale for Maintaining Local Emergency Operations Plans

Cities maintain local Emergency Operations Plans for several important operational and governance reasons. Local hazard planning allows cities to address unique risks such as wildland urban interface fires, severe weather, flooding, earthquakes, tourism-related population surges, transportation incidents and infrastructure vulnerabilities.

Cities also maintain independent governmental responsibilities during disasters, including public information, emergency declarations, continuity of services, infrastructure management, and emergency ordinances.

Local Emergency Operations Centers provide rapid localized decision-making and coordination for field operations, resource allocation, evacuation coordination, damage assessment, and recovery operations.

Operational Relationship Between Mono County and Mammoth Lakes

The relationship between Mono County and the Town of Mammoth Lakes reflects the statewide California emergency management model. Mono County maintains an Operational Area Emergency Operations Plan responsible for regional coordination, mutual aid integration, resource management, and state and federal interface responsibilities.

The Town of Mammoth Lakes maintains a local Emergency Operations Plan addressing community-specific hazards and municipal emergency management responsibilities. The Town's EOP repeatedly demonstrates that Mammoth Lakes does not operate independently from Mono County during emergencies. Instead, the document reflects a highly integrated operational relationship between the Town and County emergency management systems.

Operation Need for a Local EOP in the Town of Mammoth Lakes

The Mammoth Lakes EOP addresses numerous community-specific operational challenges, all of which are shared challenges in the unincorporated areas of Mono County. Examples include snow emergencies, tourism population surges, wildland urban interface fire hazards, earthquake and volcanic activity, transportation disruptions, evacuation challenges, shelter coordination and infrastructure protection.

These local operational issues require planning detail beyond what would typically exist within a countywide Operational Area plan. The Town's EOP therefore functions as the local implementation document while the County Operational Area plan serves as the regional coordination framework.

The Importance of Shared Operational Coordination

The Town of Mammoth Lakes EOP repeatedly emphasizes unified command, multi-agency coordination, interoperable communications, mutual aid, shared EOC coordination, joint planning and regional resource coordination.

The plan specifically references coordination with Mono County agencies, Mammoth Lakes Fire Protection District, state and federal agencies, special districts, non-governmental organizations, and private sector partners.

The EOP also recognizes that major incidents could exceed the capabilities of individual jurisdictions and require support from neighboring governments, the Operational Area, the State of California, and federal agencies.

Mono County All Hazards Incident Management Team

The Town, County of Mono, and the Mammoth Lakes Fire Protection District entered into a joint powers agreement to employ an all-hazards incident management team during critical incidents in Mono County. This original effort may have diminished as employees have left both jurisdictions, but the concept still remains valid.

This arrangement reflects prior recognition by both the Town and County that integrated emergency management leadership is operationally necessary.

The AHIMT model provides, shared operational leadership, unified command capability, regional coordination, resource integration, multi-agency management and rapid incident stabilization.

Analysis of Draft Emergency Operations Plan

This section provides a review of the draft Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) currently under development for Mono County. The intent is to identify areas where clarity, balance, and organizational alignment may need refinement to support effective implementation of emergency management functions.

1. Governance Ambiguity Within the Plan

A consistent finding from the assessment is that governance of emergency management in Mono County is not clearly defined, and this uncertainty is reflected in the draft EOP.

Stakeholders expressed confusion regarding whether the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) reports through the Sheriff's Office or the County Administrative Office (CAO), as well as the extent of authority held by the OEM Director. There is also ambiguity in how the Incident Commander and OEM interact during emergency activations, particularly in terms of decision-making authority and operational control.

This lack of clarity is reflected in multiple and sometimes conflicting statements within the EOP itself. The promulgation page identifies the Sheriff's Office/OEM as responsible for maintaining the plan, while the handling instructions place OEM within County Administration. Section 1.4 further describes emergency management as being administered through County Administration. In contrast, other sections indicate that the Sheriff is currently serving as the OEM Director due to a vacancy in that role.
Individually, these statements may be accurate given the County's transitional staffing conditions; however, collectively they create an impression of structural inconsistency. It may be advisable for the County to first finalize and formalize its long-term emergency management organizational structure and then ensure the EOP is updated to clearly and consistently reflect that structure.

2. Response-Oriented Emphasis Versus Limited Preparedness Focus

The draft EOP is heavily weighted toward response operations, reflecting a strong emphasis on incident management functions such as emergency response procedures, EOC activation, notification processes, mutual aid coordination, and documentation requirements. These elements are well developed and provide a solid operational foundation for managing active incidents.

However, comparatively less attention is given to preparedness and long-term resilience-building activities. Key areas such as annual preparedness priorities, community resilience strategies, public education and outreach, volunteer coordination, CART development, Disaster Service Worker training, and structured multi-year training and exercise programs are either minimally addressed or absent. Additionally, there is limited articulation of readiness performance measures that would allow the County to evaluate preparedness over time.

This imbalance is notable given stakeholder feedback describing the County as largely reactive rather than proactive in its emergency management posture. As currently written, the EOP tends to reinforce that perception by prioritizing response mechanisms over sustained preparedness and capacity-building efforts.

3. Underrepresentation of the Town of Mammoth Lakes Relationship

While the EOP appropriately recognizes the Town of Mammoth Lakes as part of the Operational Area, it does not fully reflect the operational complexity or evolving nature of the County–Town relationship. The Town maintains its own Emergency Operations Plan and has expressed interest in operating its own Emergency Operations Center, as well as expanding its internal emergency management capacity.

Despite this, the EOP largely treats the Town of Mammoth Lakes as a standard partner jurisdiction rather than a semi-independent operational entity with its own capabilities and planning structure. The plan also provides limited detail regarding coordination expectations between County and Town EOCs, shared planning responsibilities, or mechanisms for joint decision-making during large-scale incidents.

Given stakeholder input, the County–Town relationship represents one of the most significant and operationally consequential dynamics in Mono County's emergency management system. Greater clarity in this area would improve coordination and reduce potential uncertainty during joint activations.

4. Reliance on OEM Capacity Assumptions

The draft EOP assigns a substantial range of responsibilities to the Office of Emergency Management, implicitly assuming a fully staffed and functionally mature OEM structure. However, the assessment identified significant constraints, including a vacant OEM Director position, limited or no redundancy in staffing, and constrained administrative and preparedness capacity.

As a result, there is a disconnect between the responsibilities outlined in the plan and the County's current operational capacity to execute those responsibilities consistently. This gap between planning assumptions and existing capability introduces implementation risk, particularly during sustained activations or periods of concurrent incidents.

5. Underdeveloped Recovery Function

Compared to response operations, the recovery component of the EOP remains relatively underdeveloped. This is particularly important given the financial and administrative challenges often associated with disaster recovery at the county level, including reimbursement processes and coordination with FEMA and Cal OES, which were recurring themes in stakeholder discussions.

While the plan acknowledges the transition from response to recovery, it does not sufficiently define the organizational structure or operational framework for managing recovery activities. There is limited description of a recovery management structure, absence of a recovery task force concept, and minimal articulation of Recovery Support Functions or their activation and coordination. Strengthening this portion of the EOP would enhance the County's ability to manage long-term recovery more effectively, particularly in terms of financial recovery, interagency coordination, and sustained community restoration.

Conclusion

California emergency management doctrine is based upon integrated coordination between local governments and county Operational Areas. Cities throughout California routinely maintain independent or complementary Emergency Operations Plans designed to address local hazards, municipal continuity, emergency operations, and community-specific operational needs.

These local plans do not replace county Operational Area Emergency Operations Plans. Instead, they function as localized operational implementation documents integrated into broader county, regional, and statewide emergency management frameworks. The relationship between Mono County and the Town of Mammoth Lakes reflects this same statewide model.

The Town of Mammoth Lakes Emergency Operations Plan strongly supports the conclusion that successful emergency management within Mono County depends upon close collaboration, integrated planning, shared training, interoperable communications, unified operational coordination, and strong working relationships between the County and the Town.

Rather than competing systems, the County and Town Emergency Operations Plans represent complementary and interdependent components of California's broader emergency management framework designed to improve disaster resilience, operational coordination, and public safety.