

**Tornado  
Annex VII  
Colorado State Emergency Operations Plan**

**LEAD AGENCY:** Dept. of Local Affairs, Office of Emergency Management

**SUPPORTING AGENCIES:** Governor's Office, Personnel & Administration, Corrections, Labor & Employment, Military Affairs, Natural Resources, Public Safety, Transportation, Human Services, Red Cross, Salvation Army, COVOAD

**I. PURPOSE**

This annex has been prepared to ensure a coordinated response by state agencies to requests from local jurisdictions to reduce potential loss of life and to ensure that essential services are maintained or quickly restored following a tornado. It is designed to supplement the operational strategy outlined in the Basic Plan.

**II. SITUATION**

- A. A tornado is a small extremely intense whirlwind formed by a severe thunderstorm. It descends as a funnel or tube-shaped extension from a cumulonimbus cloud. If the tornado reaches the ground, its high winds and sudden drop in air pressure as it passes cause almost complete destruction of everything in its path.
- B. Tornadoes are more likely on the eastern plains of Colorado, but a number have been reported in all areas of the state including mountain counties. The tornadoes in Colorado generally are smaller than those in the Mid-west U.S.
- C. Secondary effects of a tornado must be planned for including hazardous materials, health issues, vector control, and others.

**III. ASSUMPTIONS**

- A. See Basic Plan
- B. Citizens will be advised of potential severe weather conditions through a variety of means, including: National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) radio, standard radio announcements, TV announcements, local sirens, etc.
- C. The National Weather Service (NWS) will provide tornado and severe weather warnings. Warning time will vary.
- D. Spring and summer are the primary months for a tornado to occur, but there have been sightings in all months of the year.

**IV. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS**

- A. First response to a tornado event will be by local responders, when the event is so large that local resources are unable to handle it, additional assistance may be requested through the declaration process. Such assistance, when authorized, will be provided by state agencies operating under their own

authority, or as part of an effort coordinated by the Office of Emergency Management operating on behalf of the Governor. The Governor may request assistance from the federal government if the capabilities and resources of both local and state governments are exceeded.

- B. The extent of the initial response will depend on warning time, the severity and location of the strike, the numbers of people and structures affected by the tornado, and the ability of the local jurisdiction to provide assistance.

## V. **RESPONSIBILITIES**

### A. **Governor's Office:**

1. Authorize state active duty status for use of Colorado National Guard personnel to provide lifesaving assistance, if necessary.
2. Following the state disaster statutes, make monies available through the state disaster fund or other funds to provide for basic recovery of essential life services.
3. Activate the Colorado State Operations Emergency Plan.

### B. **Office of Emergency Management, DOLA:**

1. Coordinate state response to requests for assistance from local jurisdictions.
2. Activate and staff the State Emergency Operations Center.
3. Maintain communications with Governor's office, other state agencies and local jurisdictions regarding the status of response and recovery efforts.
4. Monitor severe weather conditions, as needed.

### C. **Department of Transportation**

1. Provide assistance by providing barricades, debris removal and road repair as requested.
2. Maintain communications and advise dispatch of current conditions in all areas of the state - these reports will be relayed, as needed, to the Office of Emergency Management.
3. Provide engineers to Damage Assessment teams.

### D. **Department of Public Health & Environment**

Provide assistance to local health departments in vector control, public health issues, water quality and hazardous materials issues.

### E. **Colorado State Patrol:**

1. Establish traffic control on state highways and preserve law and order.

2. Maintain communications and advise dispatch of current conditions in all areas of the state - emergency reports will be relayed, as needed, to the Office of Emergency Management.
3. Assist in hazardous materials incidents.

**F. Department of Human Services/American Red Cross**

1. DHS - Administer assistance programs including Individual & Family Grants Program.
2. DHS - Mental Health Services - plan for and provide mental health services to victims and rescuers.
3. ARC - Provide shelters and provisions for stranded people in accordance with internal procedures.

**G. Other State Agencies**

1. Provide support as requested by the Office of Emergency Management.

**VI. SEF's likely to be involved in a tornado emergency.**

- A. SEF 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14 -- agency involvement will vary with the circumstances of each incident.