

Vermont Emergency Management Director (EMD) Manual

Under [20 V.S.A. § 6](#), each town and city in Vermont is authorized and directed to establish a local emergency management organization in accordance with the State Emergency Management Plan. The executive officer or legislative branch of the town or city is authorized to appoint a town or city Emergency Management Director (EMD) who shall have direct responsibility for the organization, administration, and coordination of the local organization for emergency management, subject to the direction and control of the executive officer or legislative branch. If an EMD is not appointed, the executive officer or legislative branch becomes the EMD for that town or city.

What is an EMD and what are they responsible for?

The Emergency Management Director (EMD) is an appointed individual in each town or city who has the direct responsibility for the local organization, administration, and coordination of emergency management, subject to the direction and control of the executive officer or legislative branch. Generally, the Emergency Management Director manages the local emergency management organization, including the identification of the resources and organization that would be used to support incident command; facilitates Emergency Management meetings with municipal stakeholders to discuss current emergency management plans, organization, equipment, training, and exercises; manages the creation and maintenance of the Local Emergency Management Plan; manages the maintenance of the local Emergency Operations Center; coordinates citizen preparedness initiatives; coordinates volunteer recruitment; participates as a voting member in the [Regional Emergency Management Committee](#); participates in the creation of the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan; participates in the Emergency Manager Certification program offered by Vermont Emergency Management; if necessary, appoints an Emergency Management Coordinator or other support staff to assist in executing any of these responsibilities.

Steps a new Emergency Management Director (EMD) should take:

1. Meet with your Vermont Emergency Management (VEM) Regional Coordinator and the Emergency Planner at your Regional Planning Commission (RPC) to help walk you through the items in this document and to build a relationship as they are there to support you and your municipality. You can find the Regional Coordinator and Regional Planning Commission specific to your region here: <https://vem.vermont.gov/programs/emd/partners>
2. Register for a [FEMA Student ID](#) and for the [Learning Management System](#).
 - The FEMA Student ID allows you to participate in the many online courses offered by the Emergency Management Institute (EMI):
<https://training.fema.gov/is/>
 - The Learning Management System (LMS) is the portal for Vermont specific training, such as the 2 hour EMD Seminar or the 8 hour EMD Course.
 - See page 5 of this document for a list of suggested courses.
3. Network with other local EMDs for expertise and mutual aid.
 - Regional Emergency Management Committees (REMC) are one venue where EMDs can network beyond their town's borders. These groups typically meet quarterly to discuss how to enhance emergency management in the region:
<https://vem.vermont.gov/programs/regional-emergency-management-committees>

4. Read your Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP) cover to cover and collaboratively update it, ensuring all stakeholders within the plan know and understand their roles and responsibilities.
 - Validate the information against recent events.
 - Ensure the plan meets the required elements included in the Local Emergency Management Plan Municipal Adoption Form
 - LEMP Templates are available here: <https://vem.vermont.gov/plans/lemp>
5. Sign up for [VT-Alert](#) to receive alerts and stay informed. Suggest those within your town do the same. Talk to your Regional Coordinator at VEM to discuss how your town can use VT-Alert to send messages and keep residents informed.
6. Develop a Delegation of Authority with your municipality's governing body to outline the authorities of the Incident Commander and Emergency Management Director. A sample Emergency Delegation of Authority Template for Incident Commanders can be found here: <https://vem.vermont.gov/document/incident-delegation-authority-template>
7. Learn your jurisdiction's specific spending procedures, including procurement policies.
8. Become familiar with your municipal Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) to better understand high-hazard areas within your municipality, and the plans in place to mitigate impacts.
9. Sign up for listservs to stay informed: <https://vem.vermont.gov/email-lists> These lists allow you to receive our monthly newsletter, learn about funding and training opportunities, and much more!
10. Form a local emergency management committee / team to assist in plan updates and training.

Forming an emergency management committee / team for your municipality.

There are a varying number of responsibilities (depending on the event) that may be needed to support your Incident Commander (and the first responders). If you do not put together an emergency management team, these responsibilities still need to be completed and will fall on the Emergency Management Director in the preparedness phase, or the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Director during the response phase.

After forming your team:

- Meet regularly (at least quarterly) to keep your team engaged and ready.
- Identify and coordinate resources and partners (private, not for profit, local, state, and federal).
- Train all team members to understand and be able to perform the roles and responsibilities associated with the position(s) they will hold in the EOC.
- Train and exercise your Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP) and any annexes you have created. If you need assistance exercising your Local Emergency Management Plan, contact your Vermont Emergency Management (VEM) Regional Coordinator.

Emergency Management Director on going responsibilities include:

- 1. Updating the town's Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP) annually.**
 - This must be done after Town Meeting Day and prior to May 1st. This process involves reviewing your LEMP and updating it to reflect any changes that have occurred since the previous year's update. Your Regional Planning Commission and the Vermont Emergency Management Regional Coordinator are available to assist you with this process. Once your LEMP is updated, it needs to be approved by your Selectboard or City Council at their next warned meeting. It will then be submitted to your Regional Planning Commission who will review it for completeness and then submit it to the VEM Regional Coordinator. The Regional Coordinator will review it and if all requirements are met, it will be "Received and Accepted". If all requirements are not met, it will be returned with an explanation of what is missing or incomplete.
- 2. Be prepared to support the Incident Commander during an event through opening your local Emergency Operations Center (EOC) or your local shelter. *Make sure the below information on locations, staff, and resources are captured in your Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP).**
 - Have a predetermined EOC location and staff. You should have the resources and equipment you will need (with back-up options) stored and ready to go. Some suggested EOC resources include maps, computers, Wi-Fi, a communications plan, documentation and tracking sheets, copies of plans (i.e., LEMP).
 - During an event be prepared and have a plan to track spending costs. You will need that information when it comes time for recovery and reimbursement, especially during federally declared disasters.
 - Have predetermined shelter location(s) and become familiar with what it takes (i.e., equipment and staffing) to open and run your local shelter(s). This can be done in a variety of ways, so be flexible and offer sheltering that matches the needs of your community during each emergency. Some of the different types of shelters that can be run at the local level include warming centers, cooling centers, and overnight shelters. Regional Shelters are coordinated and staffed by the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) and the American Red Cross. Make sure to think about whether you are going to allow people to bring their pets. Understand that if you do not allow people to bring their pets, people may choose the more dangerous route of riding out the emergency at home.
- 3. Identify vulnerable populations and those with special considerations to ensure your plans encompass their needs. Reach out to organizations serving these vulnerable populations in your community to discuss their plans and ensure they do not conflict with your town's Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP).**
 - Vulnerable populations include organizations and facilities that serve vulnerable populations who are especially at-risk during emergencies. Examples include schools, daycares (who will likely be proactively reaching out to the EMD), nursing homes, senior complexes, organizations serving individuals with limited English proficiency, and mental health facilities to name a few.

*Please Note- The names of individuals should not be listed in the vulnerable populations section of the Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP). In order to make sure those individuals are captured; they should be referred to the Citizens Assistance Registry for Emergencies (CARE) program

<https://e911.vermont.gov/care> . If you are not sure who exactly would be considered vulnerable, please reach out to stakeholders in your community, your VEM Regional Coordinator or your local Vermont Department of Health Emergency Preparedness Specialist. A list of local Health Department offices can be found here: <https://www.healthvermont.gov/local>.

Suggested Practices

- 1. Plan for being on your own for the first 72 hours and promote 72 hours of independence to all within your municipality.**
 - Portions of your municipality may be isolated resulting from storm conditions, mutual aid being stretched thin, or due to your terrain. Have a plan and resources ready to get you and your community through the first 72 hours until help can make its way to you. Having plans at the individual level will minimize the impact of events and alleviate resource conflicts involving those with critical needs. You can promote individual preparedness by contacting your Vermont Emergency Management Regional Coordinator and requesting copies for the Vermont Family Emergency Preparedness Workbook.
 - Community plans should include considerations for power outages, including locations individuals can go to for warming or cooling. Your Local Emergency Management Plan requires you to identify 3 physical locations in town to post messages during a power outage. Make sure individuals in town know where those locations are.
- 2. Keep people informed about your emergency management team's emergency preparedness efforts.**
 - Meet with the Selectboard or City Council a couple of times a year to educate them on Emergency Management and earn their buy in as it is their responsibility too.
 - Post Emergency Management tips and updates to help the community be better prepared and aware. Good methods for this include the town/city's website, social media, Front Porch Forum, etc.
 - Attend town meeting day and give an update on what your emergency management efforts have been as well as use it as an opportunity to recruit volunteers and promote personal preparedness.
- 3. Document everything.**
 - The more documentation and pictures you have, the better the process will be for everyone during the recovery and reimbursement phase. Best practices also include driving around your municipality and taking photos of areas known to flood or have issues during non-disaster times as well as during the disaster. Keeping good maintenance records of culvert maintenance, replacement, installation, and upsizing is important too.
- 4. Participate in your Regional Emergency Management Committee (REMC).**
 - These committees typically meet quarterly to coordinate emergency planning and preparedness activities to improve the regions' ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from all disasters. By statute, the voting members of these committees are the town/city local Emergency Management Director or designee, and one representative from the town/city emergency services appointed by the executive officer or legislative branch. Additional information about Regional Emergency Management Committees is available here: <https://vem.vermont.gov/programs/regional-emergency-management-committees>

5. Don't try to do everything by yourself.

- Consider appointing an Emergency Management Coordinator or other support staff to assist you on your local emergency management team. Additional individuals you should reach out to for assistance and support are:
 - Town Health Officer
 - Neighboring EMDs
 - Local Volunteers
- A list of state and regional EMD partners that can assist and support you can be found here: <https://vem.vermont.gov/programs/emd/partners>

Suggested courses and trainings for EMD's

FEMA EMI IS-100C Incident Command System

<https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=is-100.c>

FEMA EMI IS-200C Basic Incident Command System for Initial Response

<https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-200.c>

Emergency Management Director (8 Hour Course). Registration is available through the Learning Management System: <https://vem.vermont.gov/training/trainingprogram/lms>

Those looking to obtain their EMD certification.

To provide local emergency management organizations with the basic knowledge to effectively manage local disasters, Vermont Emergency Management has developed an Emergency Management Director certification program. This program is designed for individuals that may work within the local emergency management organization and includes 60-75 hours of blended learning curriculum.

Link to EMD Certification Curriculum:

<https://vem.vermont.gov/programs/emd/certification>

Upon completion of all the curriculum, individuals will be:

- Presented with a State of Vermont Emergency Management Director certificate.
- Highlighted as Certified Vermont Emergency Management Directors on the Vermont Emergency Management website and recognized at the annual Vermont Emergency Preparedness Conference.
- Eligible to receive the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Professional Development Series Certification.

Trained, professional Emergency Management Directors are the cornerstone of effective local emergency management organizations.

Remember hard work and planning will increase your town's resiliency.

Frequently Asked Questions

- **What is the difference between an Emergency Management Coordinator and an Emergency Management Director?**

An Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC) may be appointed to support the work of the Emergency Management Director (EMD). The actual functions of the EMC will vary greatly by town or city as they are based on the support needed by each EMD.

What protections do EMDs have?

Under [12 V.S.A. § 519](#), "(a) A person who knows that another is exposed to grave physical harm shall, to the extent that the same can be rendered without danger or peril to himself or without interference with important duties owed to others, give reasonable assistance to the exposed person unless that assistance or care is being provided by others. (b) A person who provides reasonable assistance in compliance with subsection (a) of this section shall not be liable in civil damages unless his acts constitute gross negligence or unless he will receive or expects to receive remuneration. Nothing contained in this subsection shall alter existing law with respect to tort liability of a practitioner of the healing arts for acts committed in the ordinary course of his practice."

- **What should an EMD do before an incident occurs?**

Before an incident occurs, EMDs should coordinate the development of their [Local Emergency Management Plan](#), participate in Emergency Management trainings and exercises, work with their communities to mobilize volunteers that could assist the municipality during a disaster, and participate in their [Regional Emergency Management Committee](#).

- **What should an EMD do during an incident?**

During an incident, the EMD will generally be coordinating information flow between the municipality and the state, coordinating resource acquisition on behalf of the Incident Commander, and maintaining a common operating picture for the incident occurring within the town.

- **What should an EMD do after an incident?**

After an incident, the EMD will generally be coordinating information flow between the municipality and the state, documenting incident damages, assisting the municipality in returning back to normal, and, if the incident is large enough, coordinating with the state and FEMA on a disaster declaration.

- **How can an EMD reduce the impact of future incidents?**

EMDs should always be working within their municipality to identify potential mitigation actions that can be taken to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and property due to disasters. Contact your [Regional Planning Commission](#) to find out who leads mitigation efforts for your municipality.

- **What is VT-Alert?**

Vermont Alert is the state system designed to keep Vermonters informed about emergency situations, weather alerts, or road information - among other details that could affect everyday life. Users select what information they wish to receive, how they receive that information - email, text, phone call, etc. - and for what areas the alerts pertain. VT-Alert is a free service, and it only takes a few minutes to sign up for an account. For more information or to register, please visit the [Vermont Alert webpage](#).

- **Why does every municipality need a LEMP?**

The [Local Emergency Management Plan \(LEMP\)](#) is a municipality's guidebook to how they will function when an incident occurs. This plan should identify points of contact that the state can coordinate with during an incident, the potential hazards and vulnerabilities that exist within the municipality, and the resources that the municipality has to respond to an incident. Additionally, each municipality is required to have an up-to-date LEMP in order to apply for any grant funding from Vermont Emergency Management, and it is required to receive increased funding from the [Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund](#).

- **Who is typically involved when the LEMP and the EOC are activated?**

Depending on the incident, there are a variety of organizations that may be involved when the LEMP and local EOC is activated. At the local level, there is typically coordination between law enforcement, fire, emergency medical services, public works, transportation, the Selectboard, and the EMD. There may be additional coordination with private or not-for-profit partners such as utilities, grocery stores, [Vermont 211](#), and the [American Red Cross](#); as well as coordination with state and federal partners such as Vermont Emergency Management, [Vermont Agency of Transportation](#), [Vermont State Police](#), [Vermont Hazardous Materials Response Team](#), [Vermont Department of Health](#), and the [National Weather Service](#).

For more information contact your [Vermont Emergency Management Regional Coordinator](#).