



# Dam Failure Response

## Teller County Emergency Operations Plan Annex - I

November 18, 2021

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## PURPOSE

The purpose of this plan is to establish procedures for warning, evacuating, and sheltering persons who would be endangered in the event of a dam failure within Teller County. It also addresses similar emergency response actions which might be required in the event of massive flooding within Teller County. The plan is designed to accomplish these functions with minimum confusion and maximum speed.

## SCOPE

This plan describes actions necessary to accomplish the warning, evacuation, shelter and recovery of areas that would be inundated by a dam failure in Teller County.

This plan has been developed within the authority and guidance contained in the Teller County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) which governs responsibility and actions of local agencies in an emergency or disaster situation. The concepts, practices, and procedures contained in those plans also apply to a dam failure or flooding related to an emergency release from a dam. This plan emphasizes unique procedures necessary to respond to a dam emergency situation.

The plan is designed to:

- Establish warning procedures
- Outline evacuation procedures
- Identify reception centers and shelters to be activated for the care of evacuees.
- Identify procedures for the security of the perimeter and the interior of the affected area during and after evacuation.
- Identify procedures for allowing evacuees to return to their homes.
- Assign specific functions and responsibilities to state and local emergency response agencies and other organizations.

## SITUATION

In Teller County, dams help mitigate flooding activity, provide for water storage and supply for agriculture and human use, serve as recreational areas.

## TELLER COUNTY DAMS

Dam	Stream/ River	Storage Capacity (Acre-Feet)	Affected Jurisdiction	Owner
Rampart Reservoir		44,200	El Paso County	Colorado Springs Utilities
Wrights Reservoir	Four Mile Creek	3,540	Teller County & Fremont County	Pisgah Reservoir & Ditch Company
Big Horn, Boehmer, Mason Dams	East Fork West Beaver Creek	191, 541 & 1965	Teller County & Fremont County	Colorado Springs Utilities
Mc Reynolds, Rosemont & Wilson Dams	East Fork West Beaver Creek	2049.6, 2537 & 669	Teller County & Fremont County	Colorado Springs Utilities

For Teller County, the Dams identified pose no direct life safety risk to residents living in the County. There are no residents that live in the inundation zones inside Teller County for any of these Dams. Once the waters from a Dam breach leave Teller County, the life safety impacts are in both El Paso and Fremont Counties respectively.

An enormous amount of water is often released when a dam failure occurs. Loss of life and property, along with catastrophic damage to roads, bridges and other forms of infrastructure could potentially occur. Dam failure can occur quickly or it can be a result of degradation resulting in small leaks that eventually weaken the structure to the point of failure. If dams are inspected regularly, warning signs can be addressed and appropriate action can be taken by dam owners in the form of early notification to emergency officials.

Dams can fail at any time of the year, but failures due to natural phenomena usually occur in Teller County during the late summer and early fall as a result of monsoonal rains that may cause overtopping events.

There are several factors that influence the potential for dam failure and the severity of its impacts. These factors have to do with the amount of water that is held back by the dam, the design and construction of the dam and the amount/type of development that is located below the dam.

There are many potential factors that may cause a dam to fail:

- Heavy prolonged rainfall (can result in overtopping)
- Earthquake (can severely damage the structural integrity of the dam)
- Improper design, structure maintenance or negligent operation
- Secondary impact from the failure of an upstream dam
- Deliberate destruction through criminal or terrorist activity

Teller County has experienced dam failure in the past. There were no human fatalities, but several animals died.

## **CONCEPT OF OPERATION**

### **EMERGENCY LEVEL DETERMINATION**

To assure appropriate and prompt response to an emergency situation, Emergency Officials have classified potential emergency situation or conditions according to the relative urgency as follows:

- Non-emergency Incident
- Potential Dam Failure
- Urgent; potential failure

#### **EMERGENCY LEVEL 1**

Non-emergency incident; unusual event; slowly developing situation.

This situation is not normal but has not yet threatened the operation or structural integrity of the dam, but possibly could if it continues to develop. The State Dam Safety Engineer (and/or FERC) and the Dam Owner's Engineer should be contacted to investigate the situation and recommend actions to be taken. The condition of the dam should be closely monitored, especially during storm events, to detect any development of a potential or imminent dam failure situation. The Local Emergency Management Director should be informed if it is determined that the conditions may possibly develop into a worse condition that may require emergency actions.

### **EMERGENCY LEVEL 2**

Potential dam failure situation, rapidly developing.

This situation may eventually lead to dam failure and flash flooding downstream, but there is not an immediate threat of dam failure. The Local Emergency Manager should be notified of this emergency situation and placed on alert. The dam owner should closely monitor the condition of the dam and periodically report the status of the situation to the Local Emergency Manager, FERC and/or the State Dam Safety Engineer. As time permits, remedial actions should be taken to delay, moderate, or prevent failure of the dam. If the dam condition worsens and failure becomes imminent, the Local Emergency Manager must be notified immediately of the change in the emergency level to evacuate the people at risk downstream.

Where applicable, the State Dam Safety Engineer should be contacted to evaluate the situation and recommend remedial actions to prevent failure of the dam. The dam owner should initiate remedial repairs using local resources that may be available. Time available to employ remedial actions may be hours or days. This emergency level may also be applicable when flow through the spillway has, or is expected to, result in flooding of downstream areas where people near the channel could be endangered. Emergency services should be on alert to initiate evacuations or road closures if the flooding increases.

### **EMERGENCY LEVEL 3**

Urgent; dam failure is imminent or in progress.

This is an extremely urgent situation when a dam failure is occurring or obviously is about to occur and cannot be prevented. Flash flooding will occur downstream of the dam. This situation is also applicable when flow through the spillway is causing downstream flooding of people and roads. The Local Dispatch Center and/or Emergency Manager should be contacted immediately so emergency services can begin evacuations of all at-risk people and close roads as needed (see Inundation Map and Summary of People/Structures at Greatest Risk in the EAP).

## **NOTIFICATION AND COMMUNICATION**

### **NOTIFICATION**

After the emergency level has been determined, people on the following notification flowcharts (see Notification and Communication Flowcharts in the EAP) for the appropriate emergency level shall be notified immediately.

### **COMMUNICATION**

#### **EMERGENCY LEVEL 1**

Non-emergency incident; unusual event; slowly developing situation.

The Dam Owner should contact State Dam Safety Engineer and the Dam Owner’s Engineer, describe the situation, and request technical assistance on the next steps that should be taken.

#### **EMERGENCY LEVEL 2**

Potential dam failure situation; rapidly developing.

The Dam Owner should contact Local Emergency Manager, State Dam Safety Engineer, and the Dam Owner’s Engineer, describe the situation, and request technical assistance on the next steps that should be taken. The following message may be used to help describe the emergency situation to the Local Emergency Manager: “This is (Identify yourself; name, position, etc.). We have an emergency condition at (name of dam). We have activated the Emergency Action Plan for this dam and are currently under Emergency Level 2. We are implementing predetermined actions to respond to a rapidly developing situation that could result in dam failure. Reference the Inundation Map in your copy of the Emergency Action Plan. We will advise you as soon as the situation is resolved or if the situation gets worse. I can be contacted at the following number \_\_\_\_\_. If you cannot reach me, please call the following alternative number \_\_\_\_\_.”

#### **EMERGENCY LEVEL 3**

Urgent; dam failure is imminent or in progress.

The Local Dispatch should be contacted immediately and the potentially flooded area must be evacuated (see Inundation Map in the EAP).

### **PLAN ACTIVATION**

This plan should be activated by the Sheriff’s Office, Incident Commander (IC) or County Emergency Management upon receipt of notification of a potential significant or actual problem with a dam within Teller County.

### **SITUATION STATUS**

The first priority upon plan activation is situation status reporting, which is the process of getting a complete and comprehensive summary of the damages. Initial reports on the nature of the problem are needed in order to develop an effective immediate response. Ongoing situation reporting is critically

important for determining effects from dam failure, such as location of water in stream channels, amount of flooding occurring, special rescue efforts that may be needed and related response needs.

Situation reporting is generally divided into two components: Overall situation assessment at the EOC and situation reporting from the field. Field situation reporting is accomplished by personnel such as dam tenders, public works crews, law enforcement and firefighters reporting information back to their specific agencies. An important aspect of situation assessment is interagency coordination between the various agencies in order to develop an overall status of the incident, which allows for effective overall response coordination at the EOC level.

## **LOCAL PROCEDURES**

The Dam Manager determines the type of incident (Type 1 or 2) and notifies the Teller County Dispatch Center who will then follow internal notification procedures to alert local officials and emergency personnel. This Notification includes Teller County Emergency Management who is responsible to maintain liaison with the Dam Manager. The Dam Manager will be responsible for keeping the County Emergency Operations Center informed on planning and emergency conditions.

1. The Teller County Sheriff's Office and Emergency Management will coordinate all activities involving actual operations, including warning and evacuations.
2. Evacuation will be implemented on advice from the dam owner based on progressive or instantaneous failure of the dam(s). It is the responsibility of the dam owner to provide emergency officials with timely information in order to implement pre-evacuation and evacuation orders and emergency responder communication as needed.
3. Upon receipt of information of a Type 1 or 2 incident, the EOC will be activated.
4. The EOC will direct and coordinate support activities in cooperation of all local, State and Federal government agencies.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **DAM OWNER**

- Respond to observed or reported conditions, incidents, or unusual events to detect if an existing or potential emergency exists (see Step 1 - Event Detection).
- As soon as an emergency event is detected, immediately determine the emergency level (see Step 2 - Emergency Level Determination).
- Immediately notify the personnel in the order shown on the notification flow chart for the appropriate emergency level (see Notification and Communication Flowcharts in the EAP).
- Provide updates of the situation to the Local Emergency Manager to assist them in making timely and accurate decisions regarding warnings and evacuations.
- Provide leadership to assure the EAP is reviewed and updated annually and copies of the revised EAP are distributed to all who received copies of the original EAP.
- Facilitate exercise of the EAP as necessary to ensure the effectiveness of the EAP and emergency response.

## **LOCAL EMERGENCY MANAGER/COORDINATOR**

- The County Sheriff, his designee or the Director of Emergency Management acts as the Local Emergency Manager.
- Serve as the primary contact person responsible for tracking and coordination of all emergency actions.
- Maintain communication with media – or delegate this task.
- When a Level 2 situation occurs:
  - ✓ Prepare emergency management personnel for possible evacuations that may be needed if a Level 3 situation occurs.
  - ✓ Alert public as appropriate.
- When a Level 3 situation occurs:
  - ✓ Initiate warnings and order evacuation of people at risk downstream of the dam.
  - ✓ With law enforcement, track the evacuation of people and closed roads within the evacuation area (see Inundation Map in the EAP).
  - ✓ Work with dispatch to alert the general public of the emergency.
  - ✓ Decide when to terminate the emergency.
  - ✓ PARTICIPATE IN ANNUAL REVIEW AND UPDATE OF THE EAP.

## **COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

- Respond to specific requests from the Local Emergency Manager to help minimize the impacts of an emergency event.

## **DAM OWNER’S ENGINEER**

- Provide ASSISTANCE AND EXPERTISE WITH TECHNICAL ISSUES RELATED TO DAM.

## **STATE DAM SAFETY ENGINEER (OFFICE OF THE STATE ENGINEER)**

- Advise dam owner on emergency level determination if time permits.
- Advise dam owner on remedial actions to take if a Level 2 event occurs and if time permits.
- Advise the Local and State Emergency Managers on technical issues related to the specific event and determine when conditions are safe to terminate the emergency.

## **INTERAGENCY COORDINATION AND WEBEOC**

Multi Agency Coordination (MAC) is important for ensuring effective response to a dam failure or related problem. A MAC system allows for the exchange of information between the County EOC (acting in the role of Operational Area Coordinator) and affected jurisdictions. It is important for agencies to interact in an organized matter in order to carry out effective overall management of the incident, which in turn provides for the safety of the affected public and emergency workers.

In the case of activation of this plan, the MAC system will generally include the County EOC, related Department Operations Centers (DOC) and other local agencies communicating with each affected

jurisdiction in order to provide information on what is happening, what the threat is, and determining what additional resources each jurisdiction may need.

In turn, it is important for the jurisdictions to provide the County EOC and related DOCs information on their actions and making resource requests through the EOC or DOC so an overall response effort can be coordinated. This system allows the County to know if sufficient resources are available from the county or if mutual aid must be requested from other areas.

WebEOC is the web-based situational awareness tool used for the purpose of keeping the agencies within the MAC system informed in real time. Agencies are responsible for their own procedures on the operation of the WebEOC system and designated personnel who are trained to operate the system and add information as needed.

## **NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE INFORMATION**

The National Weather Service (NWS), part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) provides weather, hydrologic, and climate forecasts and warnings for the United States, its territories, adjacent waters and ocean areas, for the protection of life and property and the enhancement of the national economy.

NWS data and products can be used by other governmental agencies, the private sector and the public. The NWS is the agency responsible for issuing special weather statements, advisories, watches or warnings for severe weather conditions, as well as general weather forecasts.

During storm periods, NWS may issue a flood advisory, watch, or warning.

- ✓ A “Flood Advisory” indicates that flooding of small streams, streets, and low-lying areas, such as railroad underpasses and urban storm drains, may or is occurring.
- ✓ A “Watch” is a bulletin issued when expected rainfall could cause creeks, streams and/or rivers to overflow.
- ✓ A “Warning” is the most urgent announcement of imminent or current flooding due to overtopping or breaching and advises locations in the warned area to prepare for flooding and/or evacuation.

The National Weather Service distributes weather warning information to public safety, media organizations, and directly to the public through use of the NWS weather radio broadcast. For many “warning” level weather notifications, NWS may use both the Emergency Alert System (EAS) and the weather radio alert system to notify the public of the warning. Teller County Emergency Management recommends all residents within the weather radio coverage area purchase and use a weather alert capable radio. Such radios can be purchased at various retail stores or online for a relatively nominal cost.

In addition to NWS providing weather information to the public through various means, public agencies monitor severe weather alerts and may also be in direct contact with NWS warning coordinators as situations arise. As a result, these agencies are prepared to take necessary response actions, including potential activation of this plan, with very short lead time.

## **PUBLIC INFORMATION**

### **EMERGENCY WARNING INFORMATION**

There will be a need for a multifaceted approach to public information that may include emergency information for the public and information for emergency workers. The public will need and want information about the extent of the emergency and the need for evacuation, as well as instructions on what actions to take. The local media, particularly radio, will perform an essential role in providing emergency instructions and status information to the public.

The goal of this plan, in conjunction with the overall County Emergency Operations Plan is to provide a system of rapid dissemination of accurate instructions and information to the public, primarily through the use of the local NIXEL and EAS alert systems. It should be noted that in a sudden dam failure, there may not be sufficient time to activate the EAS or other immediate notification methods prior to areas being impacted with fast moving water.

Warnings will be conducted in accordance with the Teller County Emergency Operations Plan Public Information and Warning Annex A. All methods of notification will be utilized to warn the public, including: Emergency Alert System (via broadcast media), NOAA Alert Radio, NIXEL, IPAWS, vehicle PA systems, VMS boards and door-to-door.

There are initial, pre-scripted messages in Appendix D of this plan that are available for broadcast.

### **GENERAL PUBLIC INFORMATION**

In addition to emergency notification information, the public information function will be necessary to keep the public updated on the overall incident. Emergency incidents arouse public attention and attract the media. The media will respond to the area and will regularly call for updated information. If the media cannot find an official spokesperson to talk to, they may talk to anybody near or affiliated with the incident. As a result, the public information function is important to any incident.

The Public Information Officer (PIO), and his/her assistants, will be responsible for developing current and accurate information, providing a central source of information, relieving the Dispatch Center and Emergency Operations Center and others from media pressure, and tracking down and dispelling rumors. PIO procedures contained Annex A, separate from this plan, may be used as guidance for response to a dam failure event.

### **EMERGENCY DECLARATION**

Upon activation of the County EOC after a dam failure, the Emergency Manager or his/her authorized alternate, should consider proclaiming a local emergency and follow the proper procedures for doing so through local government officials and subsequent filing with the State Emergency Operations Center.

## **EVACUATION**

Evacuations may become necessary if a problem with a dam or levee is more than minor. Evacuation shelters may be opened as necessary. Locations will be identified to the public through information provided to the media and/or emergency broadcasts. Evacuation procedures will be in accordance with the Teller County Emergency Operations Plan Evacuation Annex B, as well as the Mass Care and Shelter Annex C.

## **SHELTER AND RECEPTION CENTERS**

If evacuations are necessary, a significant number of displaced citizens can be anticipated as a result of a dam or levee failure, or a related problem. A considerable number of these will probably be self-sufficient (staying with friends, family, etc.) An estimated 10% of the displaced public may require sheltering as provided by the American Red Cross. Significant logistical support may also be required, which is coordinated through the Mass Care function when activated in the County EOC.

Locations of shelters and reception centers can be found in Appendix B of the EOP. The American Red Cross is the agency which would manage shelters/reception working with the EOC and County Department of Human Services.

## **DEMOBILIZATION**

When response agencies are nearing completion of the last remaining life and property safety missions, and when the Sheriff/Director of Emergency Management has determined that the disaster has entered into a recovery phase, the EOC/UC command group should develop a formal demobilization plan. Consideration should be given to releasing mutual aid agencies no longer needed. Consideration should also be given to assigning appropriate agencies to conduct short term recovery operations, such as debris removal, restoration of critical facilities and utilities/communications, and tending to the needs of the displaced.

The County EOC should be downgraded or shut down as soon as emergency operations cease. The various warning mechanisms used should be deactivated with a termination 'final' message giving the public a contact point for follow up assistance. It is desirable to attempt to restore agencies to their normal working routine and environment as soon as possible. Both short term and long-term recovery operations can best be managed through the normal structure of government.

## **RECOVERY**

During transition into recovery phase, damaged structures may need inspections to determine if they are safe for public reentry or if they should be condemned until repaired. This task may require using qualified inspection personnel from other jurisdictions and private companies. These personnel can be obtained through local and statewide mutual aid systems, including State Damage Assessment and Recovery Teams deployed as requested.

Another issue which may need to be addressed is the potential health concerns related to flooding and water related damages. The County Sheriff must determine when it is safe to allow public reentry to any

area that has been evacuated due to dam failure. Based on joint concurrence of the EOC/Unified Command (UC) Group and other appropriate officials, reentry will be authorized after threats have subsided and a NIXEL/EAS message, or other notification, has been issued.

## **CLEANUP, REHABILITATION, AND RESTORATION**

Cleanup, rehabilitation, and restoration may take a considerable amount of time. It may also take a considerable amount of effort and cooperation between the private sector and local, State, and Federal governments. It is anticipated that local government resources and finances after a major dam failure will be strained and that aid from the state and federal governments may be required.

Long term recovery considerations will be many and could include:

- Cleanup of debris on public property and repair of infrastructure such as roads and bridges
- Hazardous material specialists, under the supervision of the NETCO Fire District and/or CCV Mine, may be needed for any needed cleanup of hazardous material
- Public Health services may be needed, such as water purification, inoculations and sanitation, potable water supply issues
- Solid waste facilities may not be able to handle all debris disposal needs; plans for alternate sites and programs may need to be worked out
- Reconstruction of damaged critical facilities will need to be approved and initiated as soon as possible
- Providing temporary housing
- Conducting building safety assessments
- School resumption
- Fostering long term economic recovery
- Restoring essential services
- Preserving historic buildings
- Encouraging immediate business recovery

## **DAMAGE ASSISTANCE CENTER**

Provided the necessary emergency proclamations were made during the emergency, the County will coordinate with state officials in performing damage assessment to determine specific needs following a disaster.

If a Federal disaster has been declared, assistance may be provided through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and related agencies. Victims may register for disaster assistance by telephone or possibly through a Disaster Assistance Center (DAC). DACs are facilities that are opened and staffed by government agencies for the purpose of applying for disaster relief assistance for both individual families and to the public sector.

Some of the disaster assistance services that could be provided include:

- Emergency family and individual needs, provided by volunteer relief organizations, such as the American Red Cross
- Disaster loans to individuals and businesses provided through State and Federal agencies such as the Small Business Administration and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

- Temporary housing through Federal programs
- Crisis counseling through County Mental Health programs

## **DOCUMENTATION**

County agencies involved in a dam failure should track activities using activity logs. The narrative of these logs and related reports should describe the primary responsibility, the duties performed, and the total number of staff hours of involvement by the agency during the emergency phase of the dam failure. The master activity log documents names and times of agency personnel involved in a particular assignment, equipment and supplies used, and any contracts with a private vendor to support emergency operations.

A copy of this narrative report and master activity log should become part of the County's official record of the dam failure.

## **AFTER ACTION REPORT**

As specified in State Statute any city, county, and/or both proclaiming a local emergency for which the governor proclaims a state of emergency, is required to complete and transmit an After-Action Report to State OES within ninety (90) days of the close of the incident period. NIMS also requires After Action Reporting.

The After-Action Report shall, at a minimum, be a review of response actions taken, suggested modifications, necessary modifications to plans and procedures, identified training needs, and recovery actions to date.

These After-Action Reports will also be consistent with, and meet, National Incident Management System requirements.

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT COST RECOVERY**

When a State or Federal disaster declaration is made, many local government costs related to the declared disaster may be reimbursable through State and/or Federal programs. Eligible costs for reimbursement may include permanent repairs to damaged facilities, including infrastructure, and certain emergency response and protective measure activities.

The State Office of Emergency Management is responsible for administering both the Federal Public Assistance program in Colorado and the State's Disaster Assistance Act program. For Teller County, the Director of Emergency Management will be the lead representative for coordinating cost reimbursement programs between county agencies/departments and State OEM.

In most cases, local agencies must expend funds before they can receive payment of funds through the Federal Public Assistance program. This reimbursement process is a lengthy one involving the complete review of damage estimates and documentation. Actual receipt of funds may take months. All county and related agencies and departments will need to document damages as thoroughly as possible; without proper documentation, it may be impossible to obtain reimbursement through the Public Assistance,

Disaster Assistance Act or any other program. This includes documenting all incurred costs, including labor and expenditures. Photos should be taken and receipts and similar documentation need to be saved.

### **EVACUATION AND RECEPTION CENTERS**

Reception Centers are designated to allow residents who need to evacuate, and do not have family or friends to stay with or cannot obtain hotel rooms, to have a specific initial location to report to outside of the inundation area. Once evacuees report in to their designated Reception Center, as outlined below, they will be assigned a public shelter within the County. Residents with pets should bring their pets in carriers. By reporting to the Reception Centers, officials will have time to get shelters opened and prepared.

See the Mass Care and Shelter Guide for more information.

1. Residents living in or near \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ to the \_\_\_\_\_ will travel \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
(shelter/reception center for shelter assignment).
2. Residents living in or near \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ to the \_\_\_\_\_ will travel \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
(shelter/reception center for shelter assignment).
3. Residents living in or near \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ to the \_\_\_\_\_ will travel \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
(shelter/reception center for shelter assignment).
4. Residents living in or near \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ to the \_\_\_\_\_ will travel \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
(shelter/reception center for shelter assignment).