
SUBJECT: EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES

ADOPTED DATE: OCTOBER 5, 2020

PAGE 1 OF 2

The need to evacuate portions of Cass County may arise in a number of varying situations. Hazardous material releases, fire, plane crashes, terrorist activities, and civil disorder may require the evacuation of a contained area. Likewise, flooding or other large weather events may require the evacuation of very small or large area.

An Incident Commander from the Sheriff's Department or local fire department has the authority to evacuate all or part of a small number of buildings during smaller emergency incidents.

The Cass County Evacuation Plan is maintained in Annex II of the Cass County Emergency Operations Plan and is reviewed and updated on a semi-annual basis by the Cass County Emergency Manager. The plan provides the framework to ensure the safe and orderly evacuation of residents who are threatened by hazards. It identifies roles, responsibilities, and capabilities to specific departments and agencies.

The Governor of North Dakota has the authority to issue a declaration of Disaster Emergency under Chapter 37 of the N.D.C.C. During the state of emergency or disaster the governor has the authority to direct and compel the evacuation of all or part of the population from any stricken or threatened area within the state if the action is necessary for the preservation of life or other disaster mitigation, response or recovery.

Chapter 37 of the N.D.C.C. requires that a local mandatory evacuation order may only be declared by the principal executive officer of the county or city. It may not be continued or renewed for a period in excess of seven days except by or with the consent of the governing board of the county or city. The N.D.C.C. also requires that a mandatory evacuation order must be given prompt and general publicity and be filed promptly with the county auditor.

The Cass County Commission has the authority to order (that is command or direct), but not to compel, evacuation in the event of a disaster emergency. This authority should be exercised after a local disaster or emergency has been declared by the county governing body upon finding that a disaster has occurred or is imminent.

The request for evacuation will originate with the Incident Commander at the scene in charge of a specific incident who is well aware of the potential consequence to lives and property of the local citizens. The request for evacuation is forwarded to the EOC, (if it is activated), or through proper channels. The County Emergency Manager or Incident Commander will contact the Commission Chair or in the chair's absence, the Vice Chair requesting an evacuation order. The order may be continued beyond seven days only with the full consent of the county commission.

SUBJECT: EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES

ADOPTED DATE: OCTOBER 5, 2020

PAGE 2 OF 2

Cass County may issue two types of evacuation notices: voluntary and mandatory.

Voluntary Evacuation

Residents are encouraged to evacuate when there is a significant potential threat of flooding to life or property. This will be issued when the expected time frame for the threat is six to 48 hours. Notification will be through CassClayAlerts and media outlets. A voluntary evacuation may target specific populations, such as nursing home residents or hospital patients or specific geographical locations.

Cass County will also use voluntary evacuations as a precursor to mandatory evacuations to reduce the number of people when the likelihood of a mandatory evacuation order is high but timing is not precise or predictable. Voluntary evacuations may also be used for locations at greater risk and those prone to higher levels of congestion that would hinder mitigation activities.

Officials will provide reasons for a voluntary evacuation, enabling citizens to make informed decisions based on personal situations.

Mandatory Evacuation

This is a warning that an imminent threat to life and property exists and individuals MUST evacuate in accordance with the instructions of local officials. This will be issued for immediate threats with an anticipated timeframe of zero to six hours. Notifications will be routed through all available means including warning sirens, door-to-door notification, CassClayAlerts, and media outlets. A mandatory evacuation may target vulnerable populations such as nursing home residents or hospital patients as well as populations in specific geographical locations.

Individuals who choose not to evacuate need to be prepared to accept the consequences of limited or no access to food, water, or basic services for an extended period of time. In addition, people must understand that rescues into areas previously evacuated may not be timely or possible.

Cass County will attempt to secure all areas under mandatory evacuation orders by restricting access and increasing patrols by law enforcement officers or requesting support through mutual aid or state support.

Cass County will not be responsible for individual costs relating to an evacuation. Under voluntary evacuation conditions, there are no programs that citizens may access to recoup costs. If mandatory evacuations are ordered during a declared presidential disaster, FEMA may reimburse expenses during the timeframe the order was in effect.

HISTORICAL REFERENCE DATE: MARCH 15, 2010
MARCH 21, 2011
OCTOBER 21, 2013