Resource Management and Mutual Aid Agreements

Disasters can and will happen. Since 1950, there have been almost 4,766 confirmed tornados in Kansas with 236 attributable deaths and over $3.5 billion in property and crop damage. Your best response to a disaster is having good plans and agreements in place before they strike.

Primary Concerns for Disasters
- Protect public health, safety, and welfare.
- Secure the area and utility assets.
- Assess the damage.
- Determine priorities for recovery.
- Restoration and clean-up.

Where Do Disasters Happen?

The Topeka Capital Journal has a great site to view the entire history of tornados in Kansas from 1950 to the present. Below is a map of the deadliest tornados within the last 73 years.

Although tornados are most associated with disaster, they are far from the most prevalent and costly.

National Risk Index

Natural hazards are defined by FEMA as environmental phenomena that have the potential to impact societies and the human environment. One way to gauge the risk throughout the United States is by the National Risk Index, natural hazards are represented by the expected annual loss, which specifically incorporates data for exposure, annualized frequency, and historic loss ratio.

Some of the 18 natural hazards included in the National Risk Index are:
- Drought
- Earthquake
- Hail
- Heat Wave
- Hurricane
- Tornado
- Tsunami
- Volcanic Activity
- Wildfire
- Winter Weather

The map seen below is the current National Risk Index for Kansas.

The National Risk Index's interactive mapping and data-based interface enables users to visually explore individual datasets to better understand what is driving a community's natural hazard risk with minimal technical expertise. Users may also create reports to capture risk details on a community or conduct community-based risk comparisons, as well as export data for analysis using other software.
Local Government Responsibilities

Local units of government are responsible for their own public works and infrastructure and have the primary responsibility through all phases of emergency management. Local government is additionally responsible for law enforcement activities within its jurisdiction. Planning for these responsibilities and coordination is accomplished through Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPC’s).

How do you ensure and make the programs work?
- Emergency Response Plans are in place and employees are trained on that plan.
- Mutual Aid Agreements are developed and executed.
- Mutual Aid coordination with local and state authorities.
- Some lessons learned when preparing your plans:
  - Have an emergency response plan in place (know where it is and what is in it).
  - Train employees (ERP, NIMS, ICS).
  - Have good maps (both utility and street maps; typically street signs and landmarks are destroyed).
  - Have vendor list available of critical equipment and suppliers (cell phone numbers if possible).
  - Location of critical machinery and material.
  - Identify critical system components.
  - Proper identification of personnel and mission (know who is responsible for gas, electric, and even cable utilities).
  - Identify locations for housing and meals for crews when needed (you will be inundated).
  - Identify critical needs and locations.

Local Emergency Planning Committees or LEPCs:

LEPC’s are responsible for Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act (EPCRA) compliance. The LEPC’s primary responsibility is to develop an emergency response plan by identifying the hazards that pose a risk within the community and evaluate the available resources for preparing and responding to a potential natural or manmade disaster.

LEPC Membership in accordance with Public Law 99-499, Section 301(c) consists of the following:
- Elected State or Local officials
- Firefighting
- Transportation
- Hospital
- Broadcast and/or print media
- Local environmental groups
- Law enforcement
- Emergency management
- Emergency medical personnel
- Health officials
- Community groups
- Owners/operators of covered facilities

LEPC’s serve as the link between local governments and industries to enhance hazmat preparedness and are crucial to all-hazards planning and community right-to-know programs.

Avenues for Support

Kansas Mutual Aid Compact System

The Kansas Mutual Aid System (KMAS) is an intrastate mutual aid compact that allows for sharing of personnel and equipment resources amongst jurisdictions after a local state of disaster emergency is declared by the impacted County Commission (or designee) to augment response and recovery actions. As stated in part one of this article, Counties are the only entities within the Kansas Response Plan that can request assistance. This is why it is critical to know who your County designee is and that your plans are in sync.

In 2006, the Kansas Legislature created a statewide mutual aid system by enacting KSA 48-950 through KSA 48-958. The statewide mutual aid system automatically made all political subdivisions of the state a part of the system, subject to the ability of political subdivisions to withdraw from the statewide mutual aid system. The purpose of this compact is to expand the resources and provide assistance available to each of the participating political subdivisions, assist with planning, ensure more timely arrival of aid, minimize operational and administrative conflicts, resolve disputes, and facilitate the prompt recovery of costs. A participating political subdivision may request assistance of other participating political subdivisions in preventing, mitigating, responding to and recovering from disasters that result in locally declared emergencies or in concert with authorized drills or exercises.

The Kansas Mutual Aid Compact consists of 12 articles.

Article I and II: Purpose and Authorities

The purpose of the compact is to provide for mutual assistance between the participating political subdivisions entering into this compact in managing any emergency or disaster that is declared a state of local disaster emergency. Every political subdivision is considered as “participating” unless through ordinance or resolution of the governing body, acted to withdraw from the compact.

Article III: General Implementation

States that entities should participate to the best of their ability and that it is well known that we can not do it on our own and that will we need to rely on others for immediate access to resources as they are very limited.

Article IV: Participating Political Subdivision Responsibilities

A. Each entity must identify the hazards within their jurisdiction.
B. Conduct trainings with other entities and share plans.
C. Identify your resources and have.
D. Adopt NIMS and ICS.
E. Develop an operational plan and procedures.

ONLY authorized individuals such as the County Commission Chair, Mayor or their designees may contact other authorized individuals for assistance. This is very important to outside agencies to ensure proper response and responsibility.
Article V: Limitations
Every jurisdiction should make every effort to provide a response, however it is understood that it may be impossible to do so.

Article VI: Licenses and Permits Portability
Licenses and permits are reciprocal during an emergency.

Article VII: Liability
All persons responding under the operational control of the requesting political subdivision are deemed to be employees of the requesting participating political subdivision. Each participating political subdivision party to this compact will be responsible for providing insurance coverage for its own actions and those of its employees and volunteers.

Each participating political subdivision will also be responsible for providing workers’ compensation insurance coverage for its own employees. Except in cases of willful misconduct, gross negligence, or bad faith, neither the participating political subdivisions nor their employees shall be liable for the death of or injury to persons or for damage to property.

Article VIII: Supplementary Agreements
They can exist outside of this compact without limitation.

Article IX and X: Compensation and Reimbursement
Personnel should be compensated as with existing entity. All compensation and equipment usage shall be reimbursed to the entity providing support by the requesting jurisdiction unless other supplemental agreements are made. (In my experience most jurisdictions forgo reimbursement of personnel and equipment)

Article XI: Implementation
This compact becomes immediately effective once requested by an authorized individual and accepted by the supporting authorized party. Example: Mayor to County Commission Chair or administrator to County Emergency Manager

Article XII: Severability
This act shall be construed to effectuate the purposes stated in Article I herein. If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the invalidity shall not affect any other provision or application of the act which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application.


Kansas Mutual Aid Program for Utilities (KSMAP) Through Kansas Municipal Utilities (KMU)
The KSMAP program provides an organized structure for requesting and responding with help for utilities. This program was developed because utilities require specialized resources, equipment, and personnel to sustain operations.

Kansas Mutual Aid Program Regions

Utility Needs
- Utilities require specialized resources and personnel to sustain operations.
- Utilities must typically provide their own response in the immediate aftermath of disaster.
- Response agencies also rely on utility operations.
- Disasters can impact damaged utility employees and their families.
- Large scale disasters can quickly outstrip a community’s ability to respond and recover on its own.

Why Participate in a Program?
- Neighboring utility systems can respond with qualified professionals – “neighbor helping neighbor”.
- Agreements need to be in place prior to an incident for federal reimbursement eligibility.
- Continued demonstrated need from disasters.

How to Participate
- Adopted program agreement by resolution.
- Compile and update system information.
- Agree to assist when capable of assisting.
- Submit system information to the KSMAP program.
- Provide training to personnel.
- No cost to join or continue membership.

Please Visit www.kmunet.org and under the Services tab, click Mutual Aid for more information.
When you Call for Help you Need to Know the Following:

- Identify type of incident.
- Location, size, extent of damage.
- Impact on utility.
- Resources needed, for how long.
- Communication capabilities.
- Reporting location when assistance arrives.
- Arrangements for accommodations and food.
- Provide regular updates and assignments.

When Responding with Help:

- Determine ability to meet own utility needs.
- Identify needed resources availability.
- Personnel/Equipment/Material.
- Prepare personnel.
- Deploy.
- Follow direction of requesting utility or coordinator.
- Track time and material.
- Work safely.

Benefits of KSMAP

- Participation is voluntary.
- Provides a single program to access resources statewide.
- Establishes agreement and protocols for responding with trained individuals and specialized equipment.
- Can assist in initial phases of a disaster until additional aid can arrive.
- Increases emergency preparedness and coordination.
- No obligation to respond if resources are needed in own utility.
- Intrastate and interstate assistance.

Other Resources for Resource Management and Mutual Aid

**KSREADY.gov** is provided by the Kansas Division of Emergency Management, a Division of the Kansas Adjutant General’s Department, to provide Kansas citizens with resources and information for preparing for disasters and emergencies.

**KDHE Disaster Recovery** (See: www.kdhe ks.gov/819/Disaster-Recovery)

Provides information for Homeowners such as:

1. Flood Safety: Precautions to Take Before, During and After Flooding, Help After a Disaster.
2. Repairing Your Flooded Home.
4. Lost or Damaged Marriage and Birth Certificate, Asbestos in Flooded Homes: Where it Might Be Found and Precautions to Follow.

Information for Municipal and County Government

1. KDEM State Debris Management Plan, KDHE BWM Forms for Requesting Disposal Without a Permit.
2. Disposal of Whole Unprocessed Livestock Carcasses.

**Flyers/Posters are also available:**

Return to Home Safely Poster, Returning Home After a Hurricane or Flood, Stay Cool, Get Rid of Mold, Kill Germs with Bleach.

**Other State and Local Agencies and Nongovernmental Organizations for Support**

- **KEMA** - The Kansas Emergency Management Association is a network of leaders dedicated to providing excellence in emergency management for Kansas [https://kema.org](https://kema.org).
- **Salvation Army** - [www.centralusa.salvationarmy.org/mokan](http://www.centralusa.salvationarmy.org/mokan).

Additionally, reach out to the Media, Local Community Foundations, your school district for secondary sites, temporary shelters and bus transportation.

In part three, Nick will highlight individual concerns related to different natural disasters and give you some tips on communicating both before, during, and after an emergency.

© Nick Hernandez is the City Manager for the City of Dodge City and a League Governing Body Member. Nick is the League of Kansas Municipalities representative for the Commission on Emergency Planning and Response. He can be reached at nickh@dodgecity.org