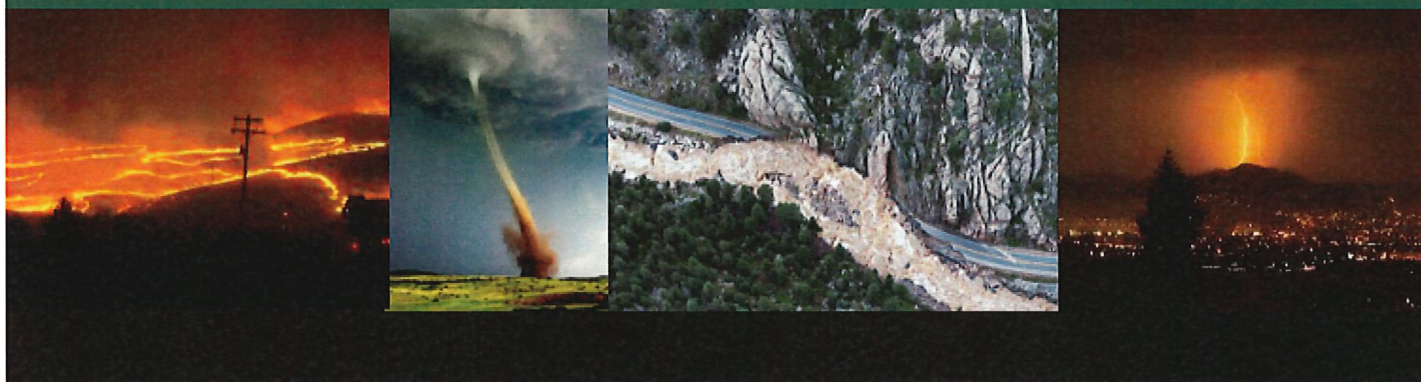


REUNIFICATION PLAN



Larimer County Emergency Management
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www.larimer.org/emergency

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Introduction

Reunification, a critical Mass Care function, provides human and technological resources to reconnect individuals as quickly as possible following a disaster or incident. Mechanisms include facilitating communication between friends and family members, acting upon urgent requests including unaccompanied minors and separated children, reestablishing contact with family members who have been separated within the disaster area, reunifying pets with their people, and working with partners to resolve reunification-related inquiries. This function also includes the provision of services through a Reunification Center such as victim services, behavioral health, case management, or others as required.

Purpose

The purpose of this Reunification Annex is to outline authorities, policies, organizational arrangements, operational concepts, and procedures that are in place for the provision of reunification and the setup and operation of a Reunification Center.

Authorities and References

- Larimer IGA for Emergency Management
- Colorado Disaster Emergency Act, CRS 24-33.5-700, as amended
- Larimer Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, ESF 6 – Mass Care and Sheltering
- Larimer Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, ESF 6a – Human Services
- Larimer Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, ESF 6b Household Pets
- Larimer Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, ESF 6c - VOAD
- Larimer Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, Evacuation and Re-Entry Annex
- Larimer Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, Emergency Alert, and Warning Annex

Scope

This Annex includes all emergency management and emergency response agencies within Larimer County and should be used for any incident within the county borders. Private partners and NGOs are also included as our Mass Care partners, as this plan includes the procedures for Reunification as well as the activation and operation of a Reunification Center, and call center.

Situation

Larimer County is complex, with both rural and urban environments, mountainous areas flowing into the plains, and a wide range of hazards from major waterways to a large wildland-urban interface. It is also growing rapidly with a strong economic base from industry diversity, agriculture, and good quality of life. With this complexity and growth, the challenges of emergency management are expanding.

Safeguarding the life and property of our community members is an innate responsibility of the governing body of each political subdivision of the state. In the event of a mass casualty event requiring the need for friends and family reunification, the safe and effective reunification of community members is essential to the preservation of community wellbeing and effective emergency response and recovery. All agencies identified in this plan shall cooperate as described below in the interest of our unified goal of friends and family reunification.

Concept of Operations

Reunification Procedure

The timely and efficient reunification of family, friends, and animals is critical to the recovery of an area following an emergency or disaster. Multiple agencies and jurisdictions will be involved. Therefore, it is necessary to have a clear procedure for pre-emergency, emergency, and post-emergency actions.

Pre-Emergency:

- Identify reunification sites and obtain necessary agreements for use
- Coordinate with hospitals regarding the movement of information regarding patients
- Establish necessary agreements and procedures for reunification
- Understand the regulations and laws related to the effective reunification of people and animals
- Train and exercise the Reunification Plan with reunification partners regularly to ensure effectiveness

During Emergency:

There is no one way to reunify individuals and animals. Reunification depends upon a number of factors, such as whether there are injuries, whether minor children are involved, whether there are missing persons due to the event, whether the event is at a school or university, and whether pets and/or service animals are affected. Each has a nuance that must be managed.

Family and Friends Reunification

Description: Family and Friends Reunification involves reunifying adult family members with friends and family. This is often done through the Safe and Well site through Red Cross and through social media platforms. This is for those who have the ability to reconnect either virtually or by driving to a designated reunification site.

Lead Agency: American Red Cross

Supporting Agencies: OEM, Hospitals, Behavioral Health Providers, VOAD, Law Enforcement Agencies, LC Human Services, etc.

Procedure:

1. The incident involves mass casualties, rapid evacuations, or any other event with the need for reunification occurs and the appropriate Office of Emergency Management (OEM) is notified via dispatch.

2. OEM notifies the American Red Cross (ARC) of the incident and the possibility of establishing a Reunification Center
3. ARC establishes the incident in the Safe and Well website and OEM and Red Cross advertise the website to connect people
4. OEM activates a shareable document for the collection of information regarding missing persons that can be accessed, edited, and shared between agencies assisting on behalf of the OEM for reunification.
5. OEM establishes a call center to collect information about missing persons (this would be separate from the Joint Information Center)
6. For large incidents, a Reunification Center will need to be established by the Red Cross as both a connection point and a site for information exchange
7. If not already done, OEM contacts the Red Cross (ARC) and lets them know of the need to activate the pre-established Reunification Center for the purpose of reunification in the appropriate location.
8. Upon notification to ARC, notification shall be made to all other Reunification Center support agencies so that they can start deploying resources to the designated site.
 - a. Reunification Center support agencies include, but are not limited to, the Larimer County Care Team, Law Enforcement Agency Victim Advocates, Law Enforcement Partners, Human Services, ARC, and the designated Reunification Center sites staff or volunteers.
9. Information regarding the location of the Reunification Center/Reunification Site will be put out via social media and through NoCoAlert.
10. Once the Reunification Center has been set up and opened then community members can begin accessing the center.
11. A hospital Reunification Coordinator will be identified at each hospital involved that will be responsible for tracking patients coming in associated with the event on the shared tracking document and will also serve as the point of contact for the Reunification Site and the Call Center/JIC
12. As community members access the Center or call the call center seeking information on missing persons, the shared document will begin to be filled out and coordination will take place between call center staff, Reunification Center Staff, and the Reunification Coordinator at the involved hospitals in order to start reunifying individuals
13. The Reunification Center will also serve as a place where individuals can be connected to behavioral health resources, resources provided by victim advocates, and receive support by connecting with the Larimer County Coroners' office if necessary.

Reunification Center Operations

Description: The operation of the Reunification Center will require numerous different roles for successful operation. These roles will not necessarily be filled solely by a single organization but may be fulfilled through multiple participating organizations. People responding to the Reunification Center will need to be credentialed or badged in order to ensure safety and security. Badging/Credentialing will happen via the Salamander System or by other means. The list of roles below is by no means exhaustive but at a minimum, the following roles should be filled during the activation of a reunification center.

Reunification Center Coordinator: Will act as the primary point of contact for hospitals and for the Emergency operations center. This individual is responsible for the oversight of all operations conducted at the Reunification Center. This individual should know who is present and working at all times.

Greeter/Ambassador: These individuals are responsible for supporting the public as they arrive at the Reunification Center. These are the first people the public will encounter and these individuals should be prepared to guide the public toward services offered within the Reunification Center.

Check-in/Gatekeeper:

Maintenance/Service: This role will be filled by facility representatives who are responsible for the upkeep, cleaning, and servicing of the facility space being utilized as the Reunification Center.

Security: The Security staff are responsible for the overall safety and security of all present at the reunification center. They will need to monitor activities both inside and outside of the facility in order to make sure that the facility remains a safe space for all present.

Reunification Support Staff: These individuals will operate the Reunification Center support desk in which community members come to seek information regarding a missing friend or family member. These staff members are responsible for managing the Reunification Tracker and inputting data so that both the hospitals, coroner, EOC, and JIC are able to see who is missing and support reunification efforts. These staff members are also responsible for notifying community members of the potential location of their reported person as information becomes available.

Agency Representatives: These individuals are representatives of organizations or agencies who are providing a service or function within the Reunification Center.

Reunification Centers will also need to have appropriate signage that can be placed in highly visible areas so that the public is able to best navigate to the Reunification Center and throughout the Reunification Center. Language on the signage should be in both English and Spanish at a minimum and best accommodate additional languages as needed.

Reunification Tracker

Emergency Management agencies, hospitals, and the Reunification Center will all utilize a shared reunification tracker that will be utilized for tracking of individuals seeking reunification with friends or family as well as patients who arrive from the incident at a hospital. This tracking will allow Emergency Management agencies, hospitals, and the Reunification Center to support our community's inefficient reunification. The EOC will initiate the tracking process and send the current Reunification Tracker to all involved stakeholders at the time of the incident. Only signers on this plan will be provided access to the tracker and agree that the information in the tracker is for emergency purposes only. This process is in compliance with HIPPA regulations. A link to the template tracker can be found below.

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1p5Rz0ogJqa5di_6_9Xafp6bTUcez3QLDPKy3EKKhJI/edit#gid=0

Considerations for Unaccompanied Minor Reunification

Description: Unaccompanied minors will require additional support and resources outside of Friends and Family Reunification including supervision, counselors, and the assistance of Human Services if the family cannot be found

Responsible Party: Law Enforcement, and Human Services

Procedure:

1. An unaccompanied minor is found without family members
2. Attempts will be made by responders to find family members
3. If family members or guardians cannot be found then the law enforcement officer will transport the unaccompanied minor to the Reunification Center/Reunification Site where they will be handed off to a representative from the American Red Cross or Human Services who will then assist them in reunifying with a guardian.
4. If the unaccompanied minor's guardian cannot be found, Human Services will utilize normal day-to-day operations to ensure the care of the minor.

School / College / University Reunification

Description: An incident occurs at an educational institution requiring reunification.

Responsible Party: The Educational Institution is ultimately responsible for the planning and execution of reunification protocols for students, faculty, and staff.

Procedure: As determined by the institution. OEM will be notified and will provide support as required for the safe and effective reunification of personnel. This may include, but is not limited to, logistical support, transportation support, public information management, situational awareness and coordination with outside agencies. For incidents involving school personnel who are not on a school/university site, the procedures for Family and Friends Reunification should be followed.

Considerations for Reunification with the Deceased

Responsible Party: Larimer County Coroner

Description: This reunification process is for members of the public that are deceased due the the event, either from the scene or at local hospitals.

Procedure: The Larimer County Coroner will provide a Reunification Coordinator to respond to the Reunification Center. Once at the Reunification Center, the Coordinator will closely monitor the Reunification Tracker and compare that to the internal tracker utilized by the coroner's office. If a deceased individual is identified, the Coroner's Office Reunification Coordinator will make a notification at the Reunification Center in a private space if the individual is eligible to be notified. If they are not eligible then they must wait until notification has been made to an eligible party. The Coroner's Office

Reunification Coordinator will call the next of kin if it is not the individual at the Reunification Center. Behavioral health providers on-site will be utilized for behavioral health services as well as necessary. Once notification has been made then this is reflected appropriately in the Reunification Tracker in a confidential manner.

Family Reunification with Pets and Service Animals (non-livestock or exotic animals)

Description: This reunification process is for unaccompanied pets/service animals or family members with missing pets/service animals.

Responsible Party: OEM and Larimer Humane Society

Procedure:

1. A pet or service animal is found or reported missing or a large area is evacuated necessitating reunification of family and pets/service animals.
2. OEM is notified
3. Larimer Humane Society (LHS) is activated to begin animal sheltering procedures.
4. Unaccompanied animals will be taken to the designated shelter sites until the family can be located.
5. LHS will attempt to provide animal shelters in proximity to human shelters, as can be accommodated.
6. If large animals are involved, LHS will work directly with the Sheriff's Posse and other large animal sheltering partners.
7. Information will be provided via media and social media about open animal shelters and reunification areas
8. A call center is established to provide information about animal sheltering operations.
9. If a pet is found and no one comes to claim it, the LHS will follow normal operating procedures for the care of the animal.

Post-Emergency:

Once the emergency is contained and reunification measures have begun, the following considerations should be made:

1. If there are large numbers of casualties or missing persons that remain unaccounted for, the behavioral health component of reunification will require additional support and personnel
2. Those staying in temporary emergency shelters may no longer have homes to go to and will need assistance finding long-term housing
3. Long-Term Recovery Group case management may be required to assist affected individuals. This is done through the Volunteer Agencies Active in Disaster (see LTRG Annex to the Larimer Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan).

Considerations for Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

During a major emergency that requires a reunification center, the appropriate EOC is activated

At the appropriate level. Among other tasks, the EOC should ensure that responders performing the rescues and evacuations are aware of the reunification sites and that hospitals have assigned a reunification coordinator and are utilizing the Reunification Tracker. The EOC in some circumstances may coordinate the activation of the Joint Information Center (JIC), the Call Center, and Policy Group as needed.

Considerations for Public Information

Actions will need to be taken to ensure that access to communication for those who require translation or interpretation services at the Reunification Centers, Hospitals, JIC, and via the Call Center. Information will also need to be posted to county, city, or agency websites and via the JIC/Call Center lines regarding continued case management information for services provided at the Reunification Center before closing the center. In addition translation or interpretation services may be accessed via different software or vendors however translation services must be accessible.

Considerations for Policy Group

Due to the nature of an event requiring reunification, there may be a need to establish a joint Policy Group. It is recommended that all jurisdictions involved quickly establish a Joint Policy Group where policy-level decisions are made with a unified and collaborative approach, increasing awareness, and decreasing delay. The emergency manager for the affected jurisdictions will schedule Policy Group meetings as appropriate for the event to get policy decisions made in a timely manner.

Roles and Responsibilities

American Red Cross:

- Designate, respond to, and set up the Reunification Center
- Set up "Safe and Well" website at the request of Emergency Management
- Provide staff to Reunification Center for reunification tracking, greeting, behavioral health, and other duties
- Establish agreements with facilities before the disaster in order to pre-designate sites for use as shelters and reunification centers.
- Facilitate the credentialing/badging of all workers at the Reunification Center

Colorado Organization for Victim Assistance (COVA):

- Provide support to LE Victim Advocate agencies and District Attorney Victim Advocates responding to the incident if requested
- Respond to Reunification Center as requested to augment victim advocate support

Coroner

- Provide a representative to respond to the Reunification Center to act as the Reunification Coordinator for the Coroner's Office
- Continually review the Reunification Tracker and when necessary make death notifications
- Provide Case Management Services to next of kin when necessary
- Respond to the scene of the incident in order to provide identification and deceased recovery services
- Provide death notifications as necessary

District Attorney Victim Advocates

- Respond to Reunification Center and provide support to victims related to criminal cases, victim compensation, etc.
- The Victims Compensation Unit is responsible for the provision of services to victims as guided by the Colorado Crime Victim Compensation Act, C.R.S. 24-4.1-100
- Provide ongoing support to victims while criminal cases work through the Justice System.
- Reference the Mass Victim Critical Response Plan for additional information.

Emergency Management Agency

- Activate the Reunification Plan
- Notify Reunification Center agencies
- Activate and Staff the EOC
- Create and distribute the reunification tracker sheet
- Set up the call center
- Identify primary Reunification in their jurisdiction
- Provide EOC support to the Reunification Center
- Activate the Red Cross system Safe and Well

EMS Agencies

- Responds to the incident and provides triage, treatment, and transport.
- Emergency Medical Services agencies are responsible for the care and transport of all patients or injured parties within the County.
- Assist in reunification efforts as available.

Fire Agencies

- The fire departments and districts that serve Larimer County are responsible for providing all services related to fire prevention and suppression.
- Act in a support capacity for all EMS and support law enforcement services as needed or

- requested
- Assist in reunification efforts as available.

Hospitals

- Provides medical care to those arriving at the facility
- Assigns a Reunification Coordinator who will be the primary liaison to the EOC and the Reunification Center.
- Documents those individuals coming into the hospital from the incident in the shared Reunification Tracker

Human Services

- Respond to Reunification Center and provide support for unaccompanied minors

Larimer County CARE Team

- Respond to Reunification Center as requested
- Provide behavioral health support to those who need
- Work with Victim Advocates as appropriate
- Support case management of those with the need for long-term behavioral health needs associated with the event

Law Enforcement Agencies

- Responds to an incident in order to provide law enforcement assistance
- Transports unaccompanied minors who are not injured and unable to find parent/guardians to the Reunification Center
- Provides security services at the Reunification Center

Law Enforcement Victim Advocates

- Respond to Reunification Center and provide support to victims as requested
- Respond to scene of the incident and provide support to victims
- Support the Larimer County Coroners Office in death notifications as requested

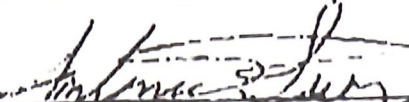
Reunification Center/Reunification Site Agency

- Upon notification opens up site for Reunification Center

- Supports set up of Reunification Center in support of ARC
- Maintains Reunification Center
- Demobilizes the Reunification Center and returns the facility to pre-event status.

Signatures

The Larimer Reunification Plan has hereby been reviewed and approved by the following partners to be used as a coordinated effort throughout Larimer County and will be added to the Larimer County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.

BY:  Date: 8/02/2022
American Red Cross

BY:  Date: 8/2/2022
Larimer County Office of Emergency Management

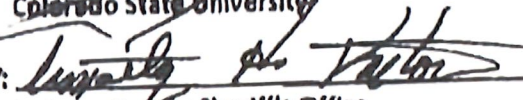
BY:  Date: 10-12-2022
City of Loveland

BY: _____ Date: _____
City of Fort Collins

BY:  Date: 08/05/22
Larimer County Coroner

BY:  Date: 07/26/2023
Town of Estes Park

BY: _____ Date: _____
Colorado State University

BY:  Date: 8-08-22
Larimer County Sheriff's Office

BY:  Date: 10/18/2022
Larimer Emergency Telephone Authority
Signer ID: 48QUPSTOF8

BY:  Date: 12-14-22
Banner Health

BY:  Date: 10/18/2022
UCH Health

BY:  Date: 8/1/2022
Estes Park Health

BY:  Date: 10/09/2022
Thompson Valley EMS