

Category 5

Criterion 5D: Domestic Preparedness Program

The agency operates an all-hazards preparedness program that includes a coordinated multiagency response plan designed to provide the community preparedness and resiliency in response to terrorist threats or attacks, major disasters, and other large-scale emergencies occurring at or in the immediate area.

Summary:

The City of Meridian and the Meridian Fire Department are part of the Ada County/City Emergency Management (ACCEM) group, which is responsible of the creation and management of emergency response plans and community preparedness. Being part of a county-wide process ensures the maximum use of resources for any emergency that occurs in the county, as it often effects citizens from all cities in the county. The city also maintains its own continuity of operations plan and works with ACCEM to update its plans as well as takes place in regular meetings to update county-wide plans. The department has had the opportunity to train on several county wide disaster drills including a recent Active Shooter/Hostile Event Response (ASHER) drill.

Performance Indicators:

CC 5D.1 The agency maintains a local emergency operations/all-hazards plan that defines roles and responsibilities of all participating departments and/or external agencies. The agency participates in maintaining and revising the plan with the AHJ.

Description

The Ada County Emergency Management & Community Resilience (ACEMCR) office coordinates all emergency operations for the county and municipalities within it. ACEMCR develops a county-wide Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and coordinates it with local and state EOPs. The Meridian Fire Department (MFD) and City of Meridian are members of the Ada County City Emergency Management (ACCEM) Executive Council, and the MFD deputy chief of administration chairs the ACCEM Technical Advisory Group (TAG) committee. The TAG and Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) report to ACCEM and together are responsible for the creation and management of the county emergency operations plans. Currently Ada County has an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), Flood Response Plan, Hazmat Response Plan, Joint Information Systems Plan, Wildfire Response Plan, and Hazard Mitigation Plan. All of the plans follow the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and incident command system (ICS). Each plan defines the roles and responsibilities of all agencies and partners. Currently the department and the City of Meridian have a draft EOP specific to the city, which is being reviewed by ACEMCR for integration with the county EOP by 2025.

Appraisal

The Ada County Office of Emergency Management and Community Resilience has published the above-listed various emergency operations plans (EOPs) which define the roles and responsibilities of all departments, municipalities, and other partner agencies. The plans were written in accordance with the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) *Comprehensive Preparedness Guide 101: Developing and Maintaining Emergency Operations Plans Version 2.0*. The EOPs are intended to integrate with EOPs written for all levels of government, including cities within Ada County, neighboring counties in the region, the State of Idaho, and the National Response Framework. The Ada

County EOP was developed based on guidance from FEMA (including the National Incident Management System [NIMS]), as well as lessons learned from disasters and emergencies that have threatened Ada County in the past. The department has participated in regular meetings of the ACCEM Executive Council and TAG committees to evaluate the plan. The department recently participated in a county-wide Active Shooter/Hostile Event Response drill to test the effectiveness of the EOP, and received largely positive feedback from the hosting consultant group.

Plan

The department and city will continue to be active members in the ACCEM Executive Council and TAG committees. The department will continue to participate in any county or statewide exercises. The deputy chief of administration will be the department's designated representative for any ACCEM committee meetings. Once the City of Meridian draft EOP is accepted it will be published and distributed to all department heads.

References

- Ada County Emergency Operations Plan, pg. ii-iii, 9-14
- ACCEM Executive Council Meeting Packet
- Technical Advisory Group Meeting Minutes
- Meridian Emergency Operations Plan 2023 Draft
- ASHER Training AAR

5D.2 The agency complies with the National Incident Management System, or other appropriate incident management system, and its operational methods are compatible with all external response agencies.

Description

The department is compliant with the National Incident Management System (NIMS) as mandated by The Ada County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD-5). All line personnel at the department are required to complete Incident Command System (ICS) training. Also, the department operates using the West Ada Emergency Operations Guidelines which are NIMS and ICS compliant.

Appraisal

All department line personnel have been certified to a minimum of ICS 100, 200, and NIMS 700. All department emergency operation guidelines and the Ada County EOP have complied with NIMS and ICS requirements.

Plan

The training division will continue to be responsible for ensuring that all recruit and lateral hires are trained on ICS 100, 200, and NIMS 700 at a minimum. The training division will also maintain and update all training records to ensure that ICS certifications are logged. The fire chief will be responsible for ensuring that all emergency operations guidelines and the EOP are NIMS and ICS compliant.

References

- Homeland Security Presidential Directive – 5
- Ada County Emergency Operations Plan, pg. iii, 5, 7
- West Ada Emergency Operating Guidelines, pg. 58-59
- Probationary Firefighter Handbook, pg. 14

5D.3 The agency has a process in place for requesting additional resources not readily available in the community served.

Description

The department uses the Ada County Sheriff's Office 911 Emergency Dispatch Center (Dispatch) as its primary means of requesting resources. All fire, EMS, and law enforcement agencies in the county are dispatched via automatic vehicle locator (AVL) so that the closest resource, regardless of jurisdiction, is sent to the appropriate incident. Dispatch's fire resource lists (FRLs) contain automatic aid agreements and also allow for agencies to request additional resources from other agencies, as well as specialty teams such as Hazmat and technical rescue. The Ada County Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs) also identify outside agencies and partners that will aid during a disaster. Ada County 911 Communications Center is the primary agency in charge of emergency communications per the Ada County EOP. Resources that are not affiliated or dispatched through Ada County Dispatch can be requested using the Ada County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Resource Request Form.

Appraisal

The partnership between the department, Dispatch, and other police, fire, and EMS agencies has ensured that the appropriate resources have been dispatched to incidents regardless of jurisdictional boundary. In addition, the Ada County EOP has outlined the mutual and automatic aid process for large emergencies. The Ada County EOC Resource Request Form has been made available to all agencies and municipalities in Ada County.

Plan

The department will continue to use Ada County Dispatch as its primary method to request resources, including automatic and mutual aid. For large scale emergencies or disaster declarations, the department will follow the Ada County EOP and use dispatch or request resources through the EOC. Ada County Emergency Management & Community Resilience office will be in charge of maintaining a current list of resources available during large scale incidents and to maintain communications with partner organizations.

References

- Ada County Emergency Operations Plan, Annex 5

- Ada County Fire Response Lists
- Ada County Emergency Operations Center Resource Request Form

5D.4 The agency has processes to record information and provide data on needed resources, the scope and nature of the event, and field resources deployed to local, state/provincial, and federal agencies.

Description

All fire, EMS, and police agencies in Ada County use the Ada County 911 Communications Center, run by the Ada County Sheriff's office, as the primary emergency dispatch communicator. Ada County Dispatch uses *CentralSquare* Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD). Because all public safety agencies in the county use the same dispatch, information on incidents, including data and assigned resources, can be shared across all agencies. The Idaho Office of Emergency Management and Ada County Emergency Management and Community Resilience office use *WebEOC* to coordinate large cross-jurisdictional incidents.

Appraisal

The CAD system has proved effective in sharing information and dispatching needed resources across departments and jurisdictions. During an Active Shooter/Hostile Event Response (ASHER) call in 2022, the Meridian Fire Department responded alongside Ada County Paramedics, Boise Fire, Meridian Police, and Ada County Sheriffs. The use of a common CAD allowed all agencies to share information and establish a unified command. During a cross-jurisdictional flooding event in 2017, *WebEOC* was used to share information including flood maps and Incident Action Plans. There has not been an emergency in which Meridian has used *WebEOC* since then.

Plan

The department will seek out further training on the *WebEOC* program including possible tabletop exercises. The department will continue to participate in Emergency Communications Planning Committee (ECPC) meetings to continue to coordinate dispatch and CAD efforts with area departments and Ada County Dispatch.

References

- *WebEOC* Screenshot
- *CentralSquare* Screenshot

- ASHER CAD information
- Ada County Emergency Operations Plan, pg. 63
- Ada County Flood Response Plan

5D.5 The agency conducts and documents a vulnerability assessment and has operational plans to protect the agency's specific critical infrastructure, including but not limited to materials, supplies, apparatus, facilities security, fuel, and information systems.

Description

Vulnerability assessments are conducted on a county-wide level with input from all emergency response agencies. The Ada County Office of Emergency Management and Community Resilience publishes an Ada County Threat/Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) and a Hazard Vulnerability Analysis. The department is a member of the Ada County City Emergency Management Executive Council which provides input on the office's emergency operations plans. In addition, the department has hazard risk assessment listed in the 2022 Ada County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan. The department also lists known hazards and critical infrastructure in the *Meridian Fire Department Community Risk Assessment/Standards of Cover (CRA/SOC)*.

Appraisal

The last THIRA was last published in 2018. The THIRA process for Ada County was informed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) *Comprehensive Preparedness Guide (CPG) 201* and the *State of Idaho Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) Guide for Local Jurisdictions*. The Hazard Vulnerability Analysis was published in 2010 and contains more detailed information on the types of threats in the county. The Ada County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan also reports on actions taken by the city to mitigate specific hazards. The CRA/SOC identified more specific threats to the city of Meridian, specifically ones relevant to the fire department, such as structure fire target hazards.

Plan

Ada County Emergency Management and Community Resilience (ACEMCR) is currently in the process of revising the THIRA, and will publish a new edition this year and distribute it to agency partners. ACEMCR has a goal of updating the THIRA every 5 years. The department will update the CRA/SOC with each accreditation cycle and will coordinate its risk assessment with risks identified in ACEMCR publications.

References

- Ada County Hazard Vulnerability Analysis
- ACCEM Executive Council Meeting Packet
- 2022 Ada County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan Vol. 2, 2 County and Cities, pg. 6-1 – 6-15
- Community Risk Assessment/Standards of Cover, pg. 80-82, 162

5D.6 The agency has a documented continuity of operations plan, that is reviewed annually and updated at least every five years, to ensure essential operations are maintained.

Description

The department has a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) that was published in 2012. The city participates in emergency management through the Ada County City Emergency Management committees. The Ada County Emergency Operation Plans (EOPs) contains a Continuity of Government and Operations Order of Success plan. The draft of the City of Meridian EOP also contains a continuity of government and operations section.

Appraisal

The department's COOP was published in 2012 and has not been updated. Elements of the COOP have been added to the Ada County EOP and the City's draft EOP. The County's EOP has been adequate for the department however, there has not been an incident that has tested the need for a strong COOP in the last 5 years.

Plan

The department will discuss the need for an updated COOP as part of the city's and departments strategic planning process. If the City and the department determine there is need for a new COOP as a separate document from the city and county EOPs, then the department will work to form a committee to address that need.

References

- Ada County Emergency Operations Plan, Appendix D
- Meridian Fire Department COOP 2012

5D.7 The agency has processes in place for intelligence sharing with other public safety agencies.

Description

There are multiple processes in place for information and intelligence sharing with other public safety agencies, depending on the size of the incident. Routine communications for city emergency calls are handled by Ada County Sheriff's Office 911 Emergency Dispatch Center (Dispatch) through computer aided dispatch (CAD). All county emergency agencies use Dispatch and information can be easily shared through CAD for local and county emergencies. The department also employs a public information office (PIO) that is shared with the police department and acts as a liaison between the two agencies. The county uses *WebEOC* as an online platform for sharing more detailed information, such as incident action plans (IAPs) through an online communications service. Statewide emergency communications are run through Idaho State Communications. The Idaho Emergency Operations Plan also uses the Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN), a national secure web-based portal for information sharing and collaboration between Federal, State, local, tribal, territorial, private sector, and international partners. The Idaho Criminal Intelligence Center (IC2) is the fusion information center for terrorism and cybersecurity threats.

Appraisal

Ada County Dispatch's CAD has been the primary method of information sharing between agencies, and has been used between agencies and jurisdictions on a day-to-day basis. There has only been one instance in which Meridian used *WebEOC* for information sharing, during the 2017 flooding events. The Meridian Fire Department has not been a part of any events in which HSIN or IC2 were used, nor have any personnel received training in these systems.

Plan

The department will continue to be a part of the various committees which govern information distribution at the local and county level. The department will continue to be active in the Emergency Communications Planning Committee (ECPC) and the Ada County City Emergency Management Executive Council. The department will seek out

training opportunities through the Ada County Emergency Management and Community Resilience office on communications programs.

References

- Public Information Officer Job Description
- *WebEOC* Screenshot
- Ada County Flood Response Plan
- Idaho Emergency Operations Plan, ESF 12, pg. 9; IA7 - Page 1

5D.8 The agency has a crisis communications or public information plan.

Description

The department has a published Communications Plan and a Branding Guide that are managed by the department's Public Information Officer (PIO) and overseen by the city's communications manager. The City of Meridian has a general crisis communications plan contained within its Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) as well as an Emergency Communications Plan published in 2018 that is currently being revised for 2025. The department's PIO currently serves as the crisis communication manager for the department.

Appraisal

The department completed a new communications plan and branding guide as part of the *Meridian Fire Department Strategic Plan 2022-2024*. The Communications Plan includes information and guidelines on target audiences (both internal and external), methods, strategies, measurable outcomes, media types and best practices. The branding guide was developed to help department heads and administration design department reports, materials, public information guides, and other publications in a consistent manner, as well as coordinate social media outreach. The branding guide and communications plan were both part of the department's strategic plan goals. The city's EOP has not been updated in nearly 10 years but is currently going through a review and update process.

Plan

The department will develop a crisis communications plan as part of its Strategic Plan with an anticipated completion date of late 2023/early 2024. The department will follow the newly created communications plan and branding guide and evaluate their effectiveness during the next strategic planning review in 2024. The department will work with the city to update the city's EOP and crisis communications plan to be published in late 2023/early 2024.

References

- Meridian Fire Department Branding Guide
- Meridian Fire Department Communications Plan

- Meridian Emergency Operations Plan 2014, pg. 10
- Meridian Emergency Operations Plan 2023 Draft, pg. 8-9

CC 5D.9 The agency conducts a formal and documented program appraisal, at least annually, to determine the program’s impacts and outcomes, and to measure performance and progress in reducing risk.

Description

The department conducts program appraisals according to Administrative Standard Operating Guideline (ASOG) – Program Appraisals. The deputy chief of administration is responsible for the Domestic Preparedness Program Appraisals. The Domestic Preparedness Program Appraisal evaluates the program’s budget, relation to the *Meridian Fire Department Community Risk Assessment/Standards of Cover* and *Meridian Fire Department Strategic Plan 2022-2024*, goals and objectives, and inputs and outputs. Since all of the department’s domestic preparedness and emergency operations planning is handled through a joint effort at the county level, the program appraisal is an examination of whether or not the county management systems is meeting the needs of the department and the City of Meridian.

Appraisal

The City of Meridian and the department are members of the Ada County/City Emergency Management (ACCEM) Group which manages the emergency operations plans (EOPs) for the entire county. The deputy chief of administration has been the department’s representatives at the ACCEM executive council which helps to develop the county’s plan. The city also takes part in regular meetings and updates of the county’s EOP. The city is currently working on updating its city-specific EOP to be included in the County’s EOP. The department also has certified all of its line personnel in ICS 100, 200, and NIMS 700 as part of the Incident Command System. The department identified the need for an updated Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) for the next strategic plan cycle. The department also took part in a county-wide mass casualty drill to test the effectiveness of the county’s EOPs, and while largely successful, the drill did lead to some changes in the overall mass-casualty EOP for the county. The department’s membership in ACCEM has overall been positive and has produced county-wide EOPs that the department and surrounding agencies have all agreed to use. Maintaining positive relationships with ACCEM members has helped the department meet its strategic plan Goal 3A – optimize

partnership agreements that result in achieving the highest level of response capability for the MFD community.

Plan

The department will continue to complete program appraisals as outline in the SOG. The department will ensure that all personnel are ICS certified at the appropriate level. The department will aim to participate in at least one larger-scale interagency drill annually to test the effectiveness of the county EOPs.

References

- Annual Program Appraisal 5D.9 Domestic Preparedness
- *Meridian Fire Department 2022-2024 Strategic Plan*, pg. 26