

Boulder County Evacuation Triage Task Force

Response Guide

Overview of the Boulder County Evacuation (BCE) Triage Task Force:

- The BCE Triage Task Force is a multi-disciplinary, multi-agency task force comprised of staff from the following disciplines:
 - Public Health
 - Case Management
 - Behavioral Health
- The Triage Task Force responds to an evacuation site when an evacuation is ordered in Boulder County for any reason. Most often this will be due to wildfires or floods.
- An on-call member of the task force will be notified when an evacuation site has been ordered.
- The on-call task force member will ensure that at least one member of the task force reports to the evacuation site to conduct a rapid assessment of the needs of evacuees.
- The onsite task force member will determine if other members of the team are needed onsite or need to be available for phone consultation. This determination is made based on the number, issues, and complexity of needs of evacuees arriving at the evacuation site.
- The task force works closely with the Red Cross, which is primarily responsible for Mass Care and typically establishes the evacuation site upon request of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

Differences between an Evacuation Site and a Shelter:

- An evacuation site is a facility that is a temporary gathering point for individuals who have been directed to evacuate their homes due to an emergency.
- An evacuation site provides a safe location for evacuees to obtain official information about the status of the emergency and to reunite with family members.
- Depending upon the expected duration of the evacuation, a shelter may be opened.
- The primary differences between an evacuation site and a shelter:
 - An evacuation site is short term
 - The evacuation site provides information and perhaps light refreshments

- A shelter is designed for overnight accommodations for those without other resources for lodging and meals, due to the emergency/disaster.
- Shelters provide cots, meals and resources to identify and meet physical and mental health needs.

Expectations of Triage Task Force Members:

- On-Call Expectations
 - Supervisory approval and permission to participate in emergency/disaster response
 - Ability to respond to the evacuation site (be on site) within 1 hour of activation
 - When notified of standby status for a disaster, be available by phone in the event of an activation
 - Wear authorized agency ID badge when activated
 - Arrange for coverage by another task force member if unavailable on your designated on-call day
 - The on-call task force member is expected to ensure response to the evacuation site either personally or by assigning another task force member. The other specialty leads are requested to remain available by phone for consultation.

- Reimbursement for Response Activities
 - Boulder County employees:
 - If you are an exempt employee, you are not eligible for overtime pay. However, you may take admin time with your supervisor's approval to compensate you for the extra time.
 - Employees of other agencies, e.g. Mental Health Partners, should discuss this issue with their supervisors prior to accepting on-call responsibilities

- Response Activities
 - Triage task force members responding to an evacuation site will initially conduct a rapid assessment with the Rapid Assessment Tool (RAT).
 - Findings from the RAT will be communicated to the ESF-8 Lead at the Boulder EOC (unless otherwise directed).
 - Following completion of the rapid assessment, the on-site task force member will circulate among the evacuees, engaging them to more fully determine if there are access and/or functional needs to be addressed.
 - Consultation with other specialty leads is available by phone for collaborative problem solving and additional task force members may be requested on-site due to high numbers of evacuees and/or the complexity of apparent needs.

- Needs assessments will include (see Rapid Assessment Tool and Access and Functional Needs Assessment Form):
 - Assessment of issues/needs that evacuees may not be able to initially verbalize
 - Identification of needed resources
 - Psychological first aid
 - Medication and oxygen
 - Dietary issues
 - Occasional alternative placement /arrangements for care

- On-site triage requires abilities to connect and engage with evacuees, assess needs, utilize excellent problem solving skills, and promote a sense of safety and calm – core strengths of those serving on the triage task force.

- An on-site triage assignment typically lasts for only a few hours.

Documentation:

- Documentation is provided on the Rapid Assessment Tool (RAT) and the Access and Functional Needs Assessment Form.
- Forms and all documentation with confidential client information are submitted to the specialty lead.

Terminology:

- ESF – Essential Support Function
- ESF-8 – Health and Medical function. BCPH is the lead agency for ESF-8,
- ESF-8a—Behavioral health. MHP is the lead agency for ESF-8a
- ESF-6 – Mass Care and Sheltering. Boulder County Community Services is the lead agency for ESF-6. The Red Cross and Salvation Army are the primary providers for mass care (feeding and sheltering).
- EOC – Emergency Operations Center
- Standby – The EOC has been activated and an evacuation is possible. Staff is requested to be available by phone for notification of activation.
- Activation – Triage services are needed at an evacuation site.