



DENVER
THE MILE HIGH CITY

Protective Actions Annex

City and County of Denver Emergency Operations Plan

August 2026, Version 1.0

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE

The Protective Actions Annex to the Denver Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) outlines the operational strategy and processes for implementing protective actions, including evacuation and shelter in place, within the City and County of Denver. Protective actions are implemented to protect life safety, and multiple operations may occur concurrently to ensure rapid response activities. This annex identifies the coordinating framework and roles and responsibilities for citywide implementation and maintenance of protective actions.

1.2 SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

This Annex serves as a framework for how the City and County of Denver implements mid- and large-scale protective actions. Additionally, the EOP Protective Actions Annex identifies systems, resources, roles, and responsibilities of city agencies for protective action needs impacting the Denver community prior to or during an incident or event.

This annex assumes that small-scale protective actions, such as those occurring during local fires, at crimes scenes, or due to a localized hazardous materials spill, are to be managed by local first responders in the field. This Annex does not change processes for Denver Police Department (DPD) and Denver Fire Department (DFD) to issue routine, small-scale protective actions.

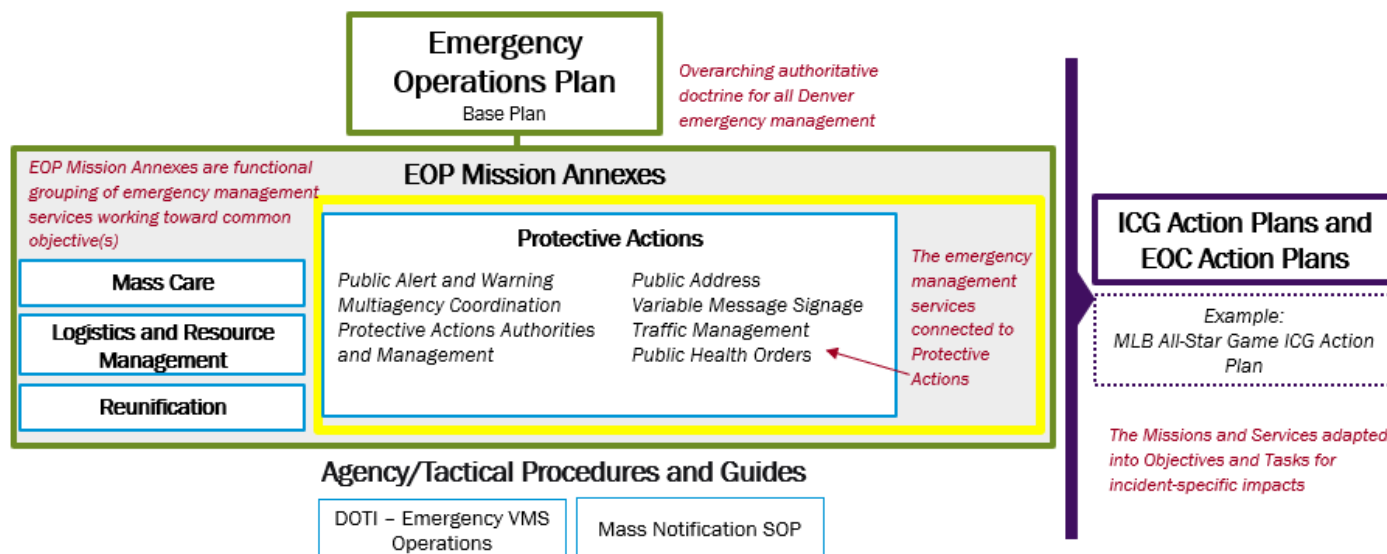
Planning for protective actions at certain specialized facilities is conducted by the agencies that operate them. While they may coordinate with city emergency management or request support, they fall outside the scope of this EOP Annex, which focuses on protective actions affecting large segments of the city. The following types of facilities manage their own planning and implementation of protective actions (not an exhaustive list):

- Correctional facilities
- Hospitals
- Nursing homes, long-term care facilities, skilled nursing facilities
- Schools (K-12, higher education)
- The Denver Zoo (animal evacuation)
- Denver International Airport

1.3 STRUCTURE AND INTEGRATION

The EOP Protective Actions Annex works in coordination with other citywide emergency management plans and procedures and may be activated in tandem with all other EOP Mission Annexes.

Given the speed at which some protective actions must be issued, components of this plan may be implemented prior to or immediately following an incident or event and may precede local activations and missions.



Graphic 5. Structure and Integration of the Emergency Operations Plan and its Annexes

1.4 PLANNING PRINCIPLES

The EOP Protective Actions Annex follows the foundational laws and standards referenced in the EOP Base Plan that guide all emergency management policies and procedures in the city, such as the Denver Executive Order 85. In the creation of this Annex and its implementation, several additional laws, standards, and guidelines should guide protective actions activities in Denver.

1.4.1 APPLICABLE LAWS, STANDARDS, AND DOCTRINE

1.4.1.1 LOCAL

- Denver Emergency Operations Plan – Base Plan, 2025
- D.R.M.C. Chapter 42 – Police
- D.R.M.C. Chapter 22 – Fire Protection and Prevention
- D.R.M.C. Chapter 16 – Emergency Preparedness
- D.R.M.C. Chapter 24 – Health and Sanitation

1.4.1.2 STATE/REGION

- C.R.S 24-33.5-704. The governor and disaster emergencies - response - duties and limitations.
- C.R.S 25 – Health
- CDOT Traffic Incident Management Plan – City & County of Denver Sub-Area Supplemental Plan (2023)

1.4.1.3 NATIONAL

- FEMA Planning Considerations: Evacuation and Shelter in Place, July 2019

1.4.2 ASSUMPTIONS

The EOP Protective Actions Annex considers the following planning assumptions:

- Each member of the community, whether residents of, workers or visitors, is responsible for preparing their own personal emergency plans.
- Some incidents will occur with no-notice, requiring rapid decision making to protect life safety.
- Most people at risk will evacuate when ordered to do so. Historically, public safety officials have noted that approximately 80 percent of urban dwellers will follow evacuation orders.
- Mass evacuation may cause evacuees to cross jurisdictional boundaries, requiring a regional response.
- Approximately 25% of the population evacuating will have disabilities and other access and functional needs that may impact their ability to safely evacuate.
- A percentage of the population evacuating will have unique cultural considerations that may impact their understanding of communication notices and orders to evacuate as well as their ability to safely evacuate.
- Some people will not have the ability and/or resources to evacuate without assistance.
- Evacuations within Denver will involve multiple jurisdictions due to the direct impacts of transportation routes, the location of safe zones or refuge areas, evacuation centers, pet/livestock shelters, and the need for mutual aid resources.
- Many households have at least one pet; and of those households, many will not evacuate without their pets.
- Service animals should remain with their owner throughout all stages of disaster assistance.
- Caregivers should stay with their clients to provide the appropriate care throughout the duration of the evacuation period.
- Roadways and ground transport are the primary mode for evacuating persons from the affected area.
- Major roadways may remain intact for some period following the emergency. In the case of a flood, tornado, fire, or other event, some roadways will remain intact while others may become impassable.
- Day-to-day mass transit resources may need additional capacity to meet the demand during an emergency.
- Shelter in place may often be the better decision for some types of emergencies, as mass evacuations pose inherent risks, especially in moving those who are medically fragile. Decisions to evacuate or shelter in place will be made based on situational analysis.
- Evacuations will require substantial personnel and equipment, which could stress and/or exceed the capabilities of the city.
- Selection of evacuation routes, evacuation centers, shelters, or termination of evacuations varies based on the specific hazard, degree of vulnerability, number of people impacted, and projected area of event impact.

1.5 SITUATION OVERVIEW

There are a variety of situations that may warrant implementation of protective actions within the City and County of Denver. Each incident will present different risks, impacts, and needs, and may impact different geographic areas.

1.5.1 DENVER THREATS AND HAZARDS

The citywide emergency management program utilizes an all-hazards approach to identify the potential risk and impact against individuals, property, and the environment specifically informed by the threats and hazards identified in the city's Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (HIRA). Throughout this plan, there are processes and considerations for impacts of a variety hazards to ensure flexible and adaptable protective actions.

For more information on the hazard profile of the city, including its master list of hazards, please reference the Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment.

1.5.2 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Notable incidents nationwide and in the Denver metro area highlight the need for comprehensive protective actions planning, especially as multiple types of hazards may lead to a need for shelter in place or evacuation.

- **2021 Marshall Fire – Evacuation:** The Marshall Fire ignited on December 30, 2021, and spread across the suburban communities of Louisville, Superior, Broomfield, Boulder, Westminster, Lafayette, Arvada, and unincorporated Boulder County, Colorado. Wildfire is a growing global concern for rural, suburban, and urban fringe areas given the ongoing changes in climate and the increase in populated areas at the wildland-urban interface. The Marshall Fire was the most destructive fire in Colorado history. The wildfire burned over 6,200 acres and destroyed over 1,000 structures located in the City of Louisville, the Town of Superior, and unincorporated Boulder County. The fire also caused the deaths of two people and the evacuation of around 30,000 people.
- **2020-2021 COVID-19 Pandemic – Public Health Order:** During the global COVID-19 pandemic, Denver had over 230,000 cases and approximately 1,500 deaths. Denver Department of Public Health and Environment, under guidance from the Mayor, issued Public Health Orders to individuals for isolation and quarantine, businesses and facilities for occupancy and space restrictions, and to the public for Stay-at-Home Orders outlining who were “essential” employees and businesses. The Public Health Orders were used to limit peoples’ risk of exposure during times of heightened transmission.
- **2020 George Floyd Protests - Curfew:** During the nationwide protests related to the killing of George Floyd, Denver saw protests of varying sizes over several weeks. The initial five days of protest included peaceful demonstrations, as well as property destruction, fires, and violence that resulted in significant injuries. On May 30 the Mayor issued a citywide curfew, which went into effect 8:00pm-5:00am and was in place until June 01. On June 01 the curfew was adjusted to be 9:00pm-5:00am through June 04.
- **2018 Emerson St. Fire – Evacuation Centers:** A structure fire along N. Emerson St. between 17th and 18th Ave. The fire destroyed an apartment complex under construction; caused two fatalities; and affected numerous commercial, residential, and government buildings nearby. The EOC and JIC were activated to coordinate release of information to the public, resources for the field, determine mass care service needs, and begin the transition to recovery. There was potential to provide mass care to hundreds of community members and approximately 60 residences, 12 businesses, and a Denver Parks and Recreation facility were evacuated. An evacuation center was opened to provide service access to impacted individuals.
- **2013 Colorado Floods – Re-Entry:** The 2013 Colorado floods was a natural disaster occurring in the State of Colorado. Statewide, the flooding killed 10 people, destroyed 1,882 structures, and damaged at least 16,000 other structures. At one point, more than 1,200 people were missing (all have since been accounted for) and more than 18,000 people were evacuated. Re-entry operations were conducted within communities throughout the state as roadways were cleared and communities became accessible.

1.5.3 PROTECTIVE ACTIONS OVERVIEW

Protective actions consist of orders to the public to take measures to protect their lives, health safety, and wellbeing. These orders may be issued by an Incident Commander for an incident scene, by a responding/lead agency, or by the Mayor. While there are many potential public protective action orders that may be issued, the most common are detailed below and **processes to issue each are outlined in attached appendices.**

1.5.3.1 SHELTER IN PLACE

Responsible Agency: DPD; DFD; Department of Public Health and Environment (DDPHE)

Shelter in place is issued for threats that require the public to immediately go indoors and stay there until told it is safe to leave. Shelter in place is appropriate when hazard conditions necessitate that individuals seek protection in their home, place of employment, or other nearby location. This is typically implemented to address immediate security threats, police operations in an area, extreme weather, or a hazardous materials release. The order to shelter in place is normally short-lived and targets a specific neighborhood or at-risk geographic area. Sheltering in place is the primary protective action in many cases. Often it is safer for individuals to shelter in place than to try to

evacuate.

In some cases, such as hazardous materials (HAZMAT) releases, the public may receive additional safety instructions to close all doors, windows, flumes, and other exterior openings of a structure. DDPHE may support DPD and DFD with additional health safety information and guidance.

1.5.3.2 AVOID THE AREA

Responsible Agency: DPD; DFD; DDPHE

Avoid the area orders communicate to the public to stay away from a certain geographic area. Avoid the area orders are often issued in tandem with orders to those living, working, or otherwise doing business in the restricted area to shelter in place or evacuate. These orders help ensure people do not enter an area with an ongoing threat or hazard. This may be used to keep individuals away from police activity or a hazardous materials situation. DPD, for example, uses routine avoid the area orders to keep individuals away from a situation with a dangerous suspect and police activity. When the hazard or threat is deemed to be remediate and conditions in the area are now safe, the avoid the area order is lifted.

1.5.3.3 CURFEW

Responsible Agency: Mayor's Office; DPD

Curfew orders restrict who may be outside of their home in a certain geographic area at a given time. This is used to assist in preventing damages, injuries, or unrest. Curfew orders should include the times of the curfew, the area of the curfew, and who is exempt from the curfew. The Mayor has the authority to issue curfews, which are then enforced by the DPD and publicized by the JIC.

1.5.3.4 EVACUATION AND RE-ENTRY

Responsible Agency: DPD; DFD; DDPHE; Office of Emergency Management (OEM)

Evacuation orders are notices to the public to leave a geographic area. Affected populations must be given information regarding safe evacuation routes or direction of travel. Depending on the incident and available time, an Evacuation Center should be set up nearby to receive evacuees and provide information related to returning to the evacuated area or support evacuees through an extended displacement. Evacuations also require significant coordination to ensure safe and organized re-entry and reoccupation of evacuated areas. Re-Entry is the coordinated movement of first responders, recovery resources, and the public back into a community or geographic area once a threat or hazard is remediated. Re-entry may be assessed by the responding agencies and with subject matter experts (such as DDPHE for environmental concerns).

1.5.3.5 PUBLIC HEALTH ORDERS

Responsible Agency: DDPHE

Public Health Orders are issued by the public health authority (DDPHE), under D.R.M.C., to a person or community to protect the health and safety. Public Health orders may be used to reduce the spread of disease or limit exposures to an environmental hazard. They are as varied as the public health and environmental health threats that may face the city. For example, contamination of the city's drinking water may result in instructions to boil or not use tap water. For communicable diseases, the city may issue quarantine, isolation, or social distancing orders. The Executive Director of DDPHE may issue public health orders, in consultation with the department's Chief Medical Officer. Public Health orders are routinely issued to an individual to reduce the risk of disease transmission. In some situations, public health orders can be issued at a community level to protect health and safety. An example of this is closure of schools or an order limiting certain activities. DDPHE is responsible for implementing public health protective actions and coordinating with all relevant lead, support, and partner organizations.

1.5.3.6 NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE ALERTS

Responsible Agency: NWS

The National Weather Service (NWS) has the primary responsibility for issuing weather-related protective actions, including alerts and warnings for severe and hazardous conditions. These messages, delivered through federal alerting systems, may reach the public before or alongside city-issued communications and may vary in language, format, and timing. The city may issue supplemental or follow-up messages to clarify, amplify, or provide locally specific protective actions as needed. In the Denver area, NWS may issue alerts with protective actions for: Tornado, Severe Thunderstorm (only when the damage threat is destructive), Flash Flood (only when the damage threat is considerable or catastrophic), Extreme Wind, Dust Storm, and Snow Squall.

1.5.4 POPULATION CONSIDERATIONS

Different individuals may have varied abilities to comply with protective action orders and recommendations. During planning, these considerations are identified and examined to develop strategies and recommendations. The following list includes some of the considerations for specific populations.

- **People Experiencing Homelessness:** This group may have limited resources to evacuate, stockpile food, store medications, and shelter in place. Messages communicated through mainstream media sources may not reach them. The Department of Housing and Sustainability (HOST) supports effective communication plans that includes accessible messaging and coordination with service providers and outreach workers.
- **Language Access:** 8.4% of Denver residents speak English "less than very well", and approximately 22% of Denverites speak a language other than English at home. Creating content that is accessible in multiple languages is critical.
- **Animals:**
 - *Service Animals:* Under the Rehabilitation Act and the ADA, individuals with service animals will evacuate and remain with their animals at all times.
 - *Household Pets:* Sixty-five percent (65%) of American households have pets and individuals who are evacuating should bring their animals with them. Previous disasters demonstrated that many individuals refuse to evacuate if they are forced to leave their household pets behind. During evacuation and re-entry operations, animals require tracking, embarkation, transportation, debarkation, care, feeding, waste removal, veterinary support, and sheltering.
 - *Large Animals/Livestock:* Denver allows livestock and fowl at residences, and some large animals may need to be evacuated. The city has limited capability to shelter larger animals and may partner with neighboring jurisdictions for support.
- **Critical transportation needs:** This population encompasses evacuees who have limited or no access to personal transportation and those who require additional assistance or accessible transportation options to evacuate safely. Individuals may rely on public transit, paratransit, accessible vehicles, mobility assistance devices, or other accommodations; may be unable to drive due to age, disability, income, or circumstance; or may be temporarily stranded in areas without adequate transportation options. Approximately 4.8% of Denver households do not own a car.
- **Tourists:** Denver welcomed 37.4 million total visitors in 2023, including 20.5 million overnight visitors and 16.9 million day visitors. Many visitors are unfamiliar with Denver's geography, transportation systems, and hazards. They may not subscribe or understand city alerting and public information platforms, rely heavily on mobile navigation apps, and often lack access to private vehicles.
- **Facilities:** Facilities that are responsible for housing and/or caring for a specific group of individuals are responsible for developing plans to shelter in place and evacuate their populations.
 - *Correctional Facilities:* The custody and care of inmates falls under the Denver Sheriffs Department or the state's Department of Corrections. The implementation of protective actions at secure correctional facilities is the responsibility of the managing agency.
 - *Hospitals, Long-Term Care Facilities, Skilled Nursing Facilities:* Facilities establish internal plans to care for patients and staff over the course of an incident requiring shelter in place or evacuations.

- **Schools:** Many schools utilize the Standard Response Protocol (SRP) to guide planning. The AHEC campus has an emergency management team which has designed specific procedures and messaging.
- **Denver International Airport:** DEN maintains a Managed Response standard operating guide which outlines implementation of specific protective actions in response to hazards on airport property.
- **Additional infrastructure-dependent populations:** Individuals who rely on electricity-dependent medical devices, home health services, refrigeration for medications, or other critical utilities may require expedited evacuation support, accessible transportation solutions, and priority re-entry to ensure continuity of care.

1.6 PREPAREDNESS PLANNING AND STEADY-STATE OPERATIONS

During regular, steady-state operations, individual agencies follow their agency-specific routine protective actions implementation processes in accordance with appropriate laws and regulations. The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) maintains plans for implementing protective actions within Denver. In partnership with 911, the OEM Duty Officers practice issuing public alert and warning to relay protective actions instructions to the impacted populations. Through plan maintenance and training the City and County of Denver remains ready to quickly implement protective actions. Additionally, Denver Fire Department (DFD) and Denver Police Department (DPD) routinely work with 911 to issue protective actions instructions to small areas, such as shelter in place because of police activity. Routine operation processes are utilized and enhanced for larger scale incidents.

1.6.1 CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

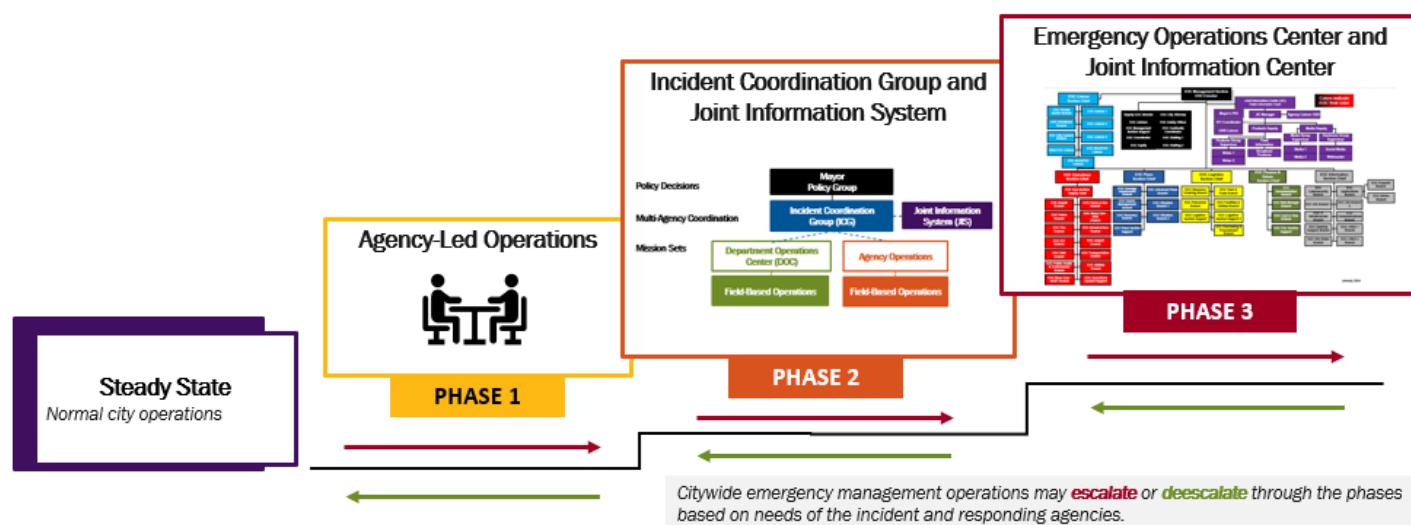
During steady-state capability building, Denver's Emergency Management Program is regularly assessing resource gaps against its required emergency management services and priorities, and agencies work to fill those gaps through a variety of methods (e.g., procurement, pre-arranged contracts, memorandums of understanding, etc.). Services are developed based on building Plans, Organization, Equipping, Training, and Exercise (POETE) components.

Refer to the Citywide Preparedness Plan for current resource management priorities.

SECTION 2: CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

The City and County of Denver functions along a three-phased emergency management cycle conveyed in the following concept of operations. These phases do not exist singularly, and an incident or event may fluctuate between and along the continuum based on ongoing needs and priorities. These phases are adaptable and may be used from minor city agency operations to major disasters.

Protective actions may be issued in advance of or in response to a hazard. The protective action implementation process is often initiated by the responding on-scene lead agency, and subsequent emergency management structures are established, as needed, to provide wraparound support. While issuing protective actions is the primary function, the city is responsible for supporting the responders and impacted communities. The emergency management response structure may escalate or deescalate through the phases to coordinate city operations.



Graphic 1. City and County of Denver Emergency Management Phases

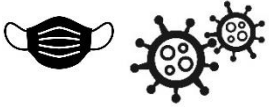
2.1 OBJECTIVES

The city also prioritizes the following objectives for the Protective Actions Mission:

- **Public Safety:** Implement protective actions and coordinated operations to limit people's exposure to a hazard and maintain public safety during incident management.
- **Crisis Communications:** Provide timely, clear information to keep the public informed of hazards, risks, and protective actions endeavoring to reach all populations through accessible, coordinated methods.
- **Protective Actions:** Implement timely threat analysis and informed decision-making to identify appropriate protective action to reduce or eliminate incident risks. When evacuation is required, safely and efficiently move affected populations from hazardous areas to secure locations using clear communication, coordinated transportation, and well-defined routes
- **Consequence Management:** Coordinate emergency management activities to address cascading impacts of protective actions, such as establishing reception centers.
- **Safe Re-entry:** Restore safe access to impacted area by implementing a phased reentry process, maintaining perimeter security, and issuing clear communications to displaced people.

2.2 PROTECTIVE ACTIONS SERVICES

To support issuance, maintenance, and lifting of protective action orders, the City and County of Denver maintains capabilities to conduct the necessary Services.

Public Alert and Warning* <i>Lead: OEM</i> (with 911, DFD, DEN) 	Multiagency Coordination* <i>Lead: OEM</i> 	Protective Actions Authorities and Management <i>Lead: DPD, DFD</i> 	Public Health Orders <i>Lead: DDPHE</i> 
Traffic Management <i>Lead: DOTI</i> 	Public Address* <i>Lead: DPD, DFD</i> 	Crisis Communications* <i>Lead: OEM</i> 	Variable Message Signage <i>Lead: DOTI</i> 

Graphic 2. Protective Actions Services (*Indicates Service is detailed in another annex)

2.3 THRESHOLDS TO ACTIVATE

The decision to utilize protective actions will depend on the nature, scope, and severity of the emergency, as well as the number of people affected and what actions are necessary to protect the public. Given the integrated nature of alert and warning and issuing protective actions, the city aligns its protective action tiers to the alert and warning alert tiers as seen in Graphic 3.

- **Tier 1 – Routine/Localized:** The on-scene responders will conduct a risk-benefit analysis to determine the most effective protective action with the least amount of impact to those affected. Many incidents that are localized may be handled by day-to-day operations with responding agencies and support from 911. This likely doesn't include a need for large-scale mass care or other services.
- **Tier 2 – Neighborhood(s) and Citywide:** As more geographic areas and people are included in a protective action, the messaging and response escalates. This will include the responding agencies and 911 but may also include multiagency coordination with OEM support to ensure any necessary services are activated for those impacted.

Tier 1 – Routine	Tier 2 – Neighborhood and Larger Alerts
• Scale: Localized incidents affecting a limited area or population, typically a few blocks, and is defined by on-scene personnel • Decision Approach: On-scene responders conduct a risk-benefit analysis to determine the most effective protective action with the least impact • Distribution: 911 Communication Supervisor creates and sends alert to defined area and manages alert follow-ups and all clear messaging • Response and Coordination: Handled through day-to-day operations by responding agencies with support from 911 • Services Impact: Typically, does not require large-scale Mass Care or additional support services	• Scale: Impacts multiple neighborhoods or a larger population • Decision Approach: Protective actions expand based on increased risk, population affected, and incident complexity • Distribution: 911 Communication Supervisors or OEM create and send the alert to defined area. Requires two-person authentication to send. • Response and Coordination: Includes responding agencies and 911, with multiagency coordination and OEM support • Services Impact: May require activation of Mass Care and other support services for impacted populations

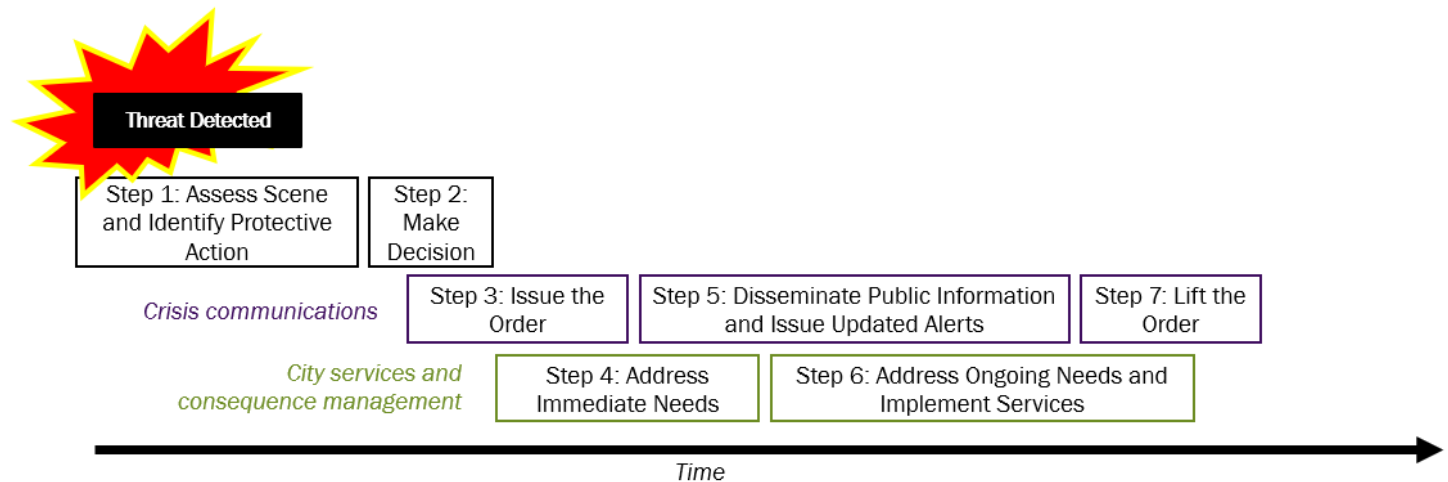
Graphic 3. Denver Alert and Warning Tiers

2.3.1 MULTIAGENCY COORDINATION

The following components of protective actions implementation may occur through any of the emergency management phases: Agency-Led Response, Incident Coordination Group (ICG), Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Each incident is different, and the specifics, such as location, extent, and communities impacted, may require different actions, and involve different priorities.

Note: Protective action orders should be issued as quickly as possible to ensure individuals have the most time to comply with the orders. Responding agencies should not let processes delay actions that may protect lives.

2.4 PROTECTIVE ACTIONS IMPLEMENTATION



Graphic 4. Protective actions implementation timeline

For details on the process for issuing each protective action, refer to the appendices.

2.4.1 STEP 1: ASSESS SCENE AND IDENTIFY PROTECTIVE ACTION

For impending/approaching threats or hazards, DFD, DPD, OEM and DDPHE all have responsibility and authority to identify the need for protective actions.

During incidents with little to no warning, the on-scene Incident Commander (IC) is responsible for identifying the need for protective actions. In the absence of on-scene IC, OEM may determine need for protective action.

If there is notice (e.g., tornado, severe weather), a decision to issue a *pre-incident* order may be made. This is generally from the NWS or OEM. Additionally, DFD and DPD may issue a pre-incident order if they have advance intelligence of a threat/hazard.

Agency Hazard Responsibilities: Different city agencies are responsible for identifying the need for protective actions based on the type of hazard. The following list indicated typical lead agency, but this may vary based on the incident, and other agencies may support in decision making.

Table 1. Denver's 21 Hazards, Protective Actions, and Responsible Agency

Hazard	Issuing Agency	Shelter in Place	Avoid the Area	Curfew	Evacuation	Public Health
Communicable Disease	DDPHE					X
Cyber Incident						
Dam Inundation	OEM		X		X	
Drought						
Earthquake and Subsidence	OEM, DPD, DFD	X	X		X	
Extreme Temperatures						
Fire (e.g., wildland, structure fires, large urban fires)	DFD	X	X		X	
Flooding	OEM, DPD	X	X		X	
Hazardous Materials Incident	DFD, DDPHE	X	X		X	X
Influx of Evacuees						
Severe Winter Storm	NWS	X				
Smoke and Ash	DFD, DDPHE	X	X		X	
Social Unrest	DPD, MO	X	X	X		
Space Weather						
Terrorism and Mass Violence (e.g., suspect at large, active threat, suspicious device, bioterrorism)	DPD, DDPHE	X	X		X	
Tornado and Severe Thunderstorm	NWS, OEM	X	X			
Transportation Incident	DPD, DFD		X			
Utility Disruption	OEM, DDPHE	X		X		X

2.4.1.1 GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR DETERMINING A PROTECTIVE ACTION

- **Threat and Risk Assessment:** Severity, speed of onset, exposure pathways, and potential for escalation.
- **Life Safety Impact:** Immediacy of danger, populations at highest risk, and ability to rapidly reduce exposure.
- **Population Characteristics:** Size, mobility, vulnerability, and access to transportation or essential services.
- **Feasibility and Safety of Movement:** Whether it is safer to evacuate or remain in place; condition of routes, shelters, and infrastructure.
- **Overall Impact:** What is the least impactful order that will accomplish the mission to protect life safety?

2.4.2 STEP 2: MAKE DECISION

Protective action orders should be issued as quickly as possible to ensure individuals have the most time to comply with the orders. **Responding agencies should not let processes delay actions to protect lives.**

- **Tier 1 – Localized:** For immediate protective actions impacting a limited amount of individuals/geographic area, the on-scene Incident Commander (DPD, DFD) has the authority to decide to issue protective actions orders. Additionally, based on hazard, OEM (Executive and Deputy Directors) and DDPHE (Director or Executive Director) may also determine need for protective action.
- **Tier 2 – Neighborhood or Larger:** For protective actions impacting many individuals, the on-scene Incident Commander and 911 will consult, as time allows, with OEM to issue alert and warning and prepare for consequence management.

2.4.3 STEP 3: ISSUE THE ORDER (ALERT AND WARNING)

Alert and warning efforts must scale in both scope and intensity alongside the protective actions being

implemented. As protective actions expand, public information must shift from targeted notifications to broad, coordinated, messaging to ensure all impacted individuals/communities are notified as quickly and successfully as possible. Protective action tiers are aligned with Denver's corresponding alert and warning tiers to ensure that notifications scale appropriately with the geographic scope and severity of the hazard.

Considerations:

- What is/are the most effective alert and warning method(s) to reach the impacted community?
- Which communication methods are available for use?
- What is the geographic area that needs to be alerted?
- Are there special populations that may need accessible communications?

Refer to alert and warning policy and procedures for decision-making matrix and considerations for alert methods based on hazard types.

Alert and Warning Methods:

- Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) – issued by OEM, 911, and NWS
- Reverse Emergency Notifications (REN) – issued by 911 and OEM
- Outdoor Warning Siren (OWS) – issued by DFD, DEN, and OEM
- Emergency Alert System (EAS) – issued by OEM, 911, and NWS
- Door-to-door – conducted by public safety agencies, community members, and volunteers
- Long-range Acoustic Device (LRAD) – issued by Public Safety Agencies for outdoor announcements
- Drones – Managed by DPD for outdoor warning
- Public Address Systems – issued by facilities with public announcement systems (e.g., Denver Airport, schools)

Alert and Warning Templates: Denver maintains pre-scripted, customizable templates designed for specific protective actions and hazards, to support rapid, accurate alert and warning message development and delivery.

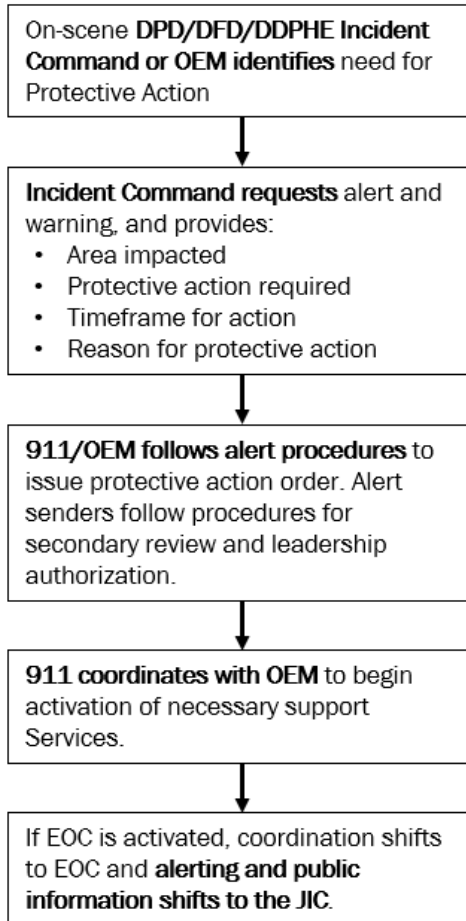
Public Information Methods:

- Evacuation Map - visual information regarding evacuation areas and Evacuation Centers
- Website
- Social Media
- Traditional Media
- 311 Contact Center
- Variable Message Signage (VMS) - Instructs drivers of traffic information related to evacuation routes or other key information on other protective actions they missed while driving (e.g., avoiding a certain area or sheltering in place)

2.4.4 STEP 4: ADDRESS IMMEDIATE NEEDS

Immediate needs are the critical services and actions required at the onset of a protective action to ensure life safety, rapid hazard mitigation, and effective public communication. Immediate needs vary depending on the type of protective action implemented.

Protective Actions Decision and Communications Process



Graphic 5. Decision and Communications Process

The lead agency and partner agencies, such as Denver Human Services (DHS) and OEM, are responsible for assessing and addressing immediate needs to support impacted individuals/communities.

Potential Services:

- Evacuation Center(s) (Reception Centers) (DHS)
- Traffic Management (DOTI)
- Public Information (Responding agency and OEM)

2.4.5 STEP 5: DISSEMINATE PUBLIC INFORMATION AND ISSUE UPDATED ALERTS

When protective action orders are issued, keeping those impacted and the public informed is a priority. Impacted individuals and communities may need information on how to comply with the order issued, how long they should expect to be impacted, and where they can access updated information. The method of disseminating information may vary depending on the lead agency and communication needs.

Consider providing the following types of information:

- How to comply with orders
- Which areas are impacted
- How long they should expect to be impacted
- Where they can access additional information
- How they will be notified when it is safe to resume normal activities
- Safe routes to evacuate

Communication methods:

- Alert and Warning follow up
- Public Information: frequent, coordinated updates on the Evacuation Map and other visual resources, website, social media, 311 Contact Center

2.4.6 STEP 6: ADDRESS ONGOING NEEDS AND IMPLEMENT SERVICES

The lead agency and responding partner agencies will continue assessing and providing services to maintain public safety, meet basic human needs, and ensure compliance for the duration of the protective action. Depending on the incident and protective action, the duration may last hours, days, or longer.

Monitoring occurs through:

- Evacuation Center managers
- On-scene responders
- Community partners

Potential Services:

- Sheltering (DHS)
- Health and Medical (DDPHE)
- Commodity Distribution (DHS)
- Reunification (DHS)

2.4.7 STEP 7: LIFT THE ORDER

The lead agency who issued the order is likely the agency that will determine when the order can be lifted. If the ICG or EOC are activated, the decision to lift the order may be made in partnership with OEM and/or the Mayor's Office.

Depending on the protective action issued, there will be varied ways to lift the order.

SECTION 3: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following table complements the EOP and further defines city services required of agencies in support of the Protective Actions Mission. Agencies assigned to a service are responsible for developing the associated capability to support response to incidents.

3.1 CITY AGENCIES

Agency	Service Responsibility	Description
Denver Police Department	Protective Actions Authorities and Management (Police) Law enforcement and scene security	- Decision to order protective action - Notifies Denver 911 of order, triggering alert and warning - Possibly perform door-to-door notifications of impacted residents - Issue additional orders as necessary - Secure the scene and manage access - Coordinate with OEM to determine need for LRAD deployment
Denver Fire Department	Protective Actions Authorities and Management (Fire) Hazardous Materials Detection and Containment	- Identify and assess need and make decision for protective actions for fire and hazardous materials incidents and related emergency situations - Notifies Denver 911 of order, triggering alert and warning - Coordinate with DPD to issue additional orders as necessary - Coordinate with DPD to perform door-to-door notifications and issue additional orders as necessary
Denver Department of Public Health and Environment	Public Health Protective Actions Environmental Quality Response	- Monitor public health risks requiring action - Coordinate with DFD to establish restricted areas and other protective action order needs - Coordinate with DPD and DFD to issue or update protective action orders, as necessary
Denver 911	911 Management Alert and Warning	- Coordinate with on-scene Incident Commander to issue protective action orders - Send initial emergency alerts and warnings, and coordinate with OEM for additional support as necessary - Coordinate transfer of continued emergency alerts and warnings to the JIC, if activated
Department of Transportation and Infrastructure	Traffic Management	- Lead traffic, contraflow, and detour routing with appropriate signal, signage, and messaging updates as necessary - Assist in routing, traffic control, contraflow, and right-of-way enforcement during evacuations and other emergencies - Coordinate with CDOT for traffic and transportation resources as necessary
General Services	Employee Alert and Notification	Utilize city's employee mass notification system to initiate protective action notices to employees
Mayor's Office	Executive Leadership Mayors Communications Government Operations	- Provides executive leadership and priorities for managing protective actions - Directs city agencies on escalation and de-escalation - Determines level of city activation and government status

Agency	Service Responsibility	Description
Office of Emergency Management	Multiagency Coordination Alert and Warning Crisis Communication Situational Awareness and Monitoring	- Coordinate with on-scene Incident Commander to issue protective action orders - Coordinate with Denver 911, DEN, and DFD on sending emergency alerts and warnings - Coordinate additional City and partner agency support for mass evacuations as necessary - Coordinate ICG/JIS and EOC/JIC activation, operations, and management - Through the JIC or JIS develop and issue communications to the public - Monitor and assess ongoing and anticipated needs/Services - Coordinate with the state or neighboring jurisdictions to facilitate moving evacuees out of Denver when necessary

3.2 EXTERNAL PARTNERS

Agency	Service Responsibility	Description
Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT)	Support Traffic Management	- Support Denver responders with traffic, contraflow, and detour routing with appropriate signal, signage, and messaging updates - Lead coordination of traffic operations on state-owned roads/infrastructure - Assist in routing, traffic control, contraflow, and right-of-way enforcement during evacuations and other emergencies - Coordinate with CDOT for traffic and transportation resources as necessary
Colorado State Patrol (CSP)	Support Traffic Management	- Support DPD in providing law enforcement within Denver, as requested - Coordinate traffic management/policing on state-owned roads - Provide police services at the State Capitol
CO Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE)	Support messaging and protective actions implementation	- Support DDPHE in messaging risk and protective actions - Issue statewide protective actions
Colorado Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHSEM)	State Emergency Management and regional coordination	- Facilitate the fulfillment of resource requests for state or federal assets - Support Denver, as requested, with regional coordination where protective actions impact other jurisdictions - Support evacuees who leave Denver, to include tracking, mass care, and other support. - Issue WEAs on behalf of Denver OEM when requested and local options are exhausted
Utility Companies (e.g., Xcel, Denver Water)	Support public information	- Lead PSPS messaging with support from city agencies (Xcel) - Provide information to the city regarding utility outages - Work with OEM/EOC/ICG to determine priorities for restoration - Support development of ongoing public information
National Weather Service	Support alert and warning for weather-related hazards	- Provide information on inclement and destructive weather - Issue alert and warning for some weather events, such as Tornado, Destructive Storms - Support situation monitoring with OEM

SECTION 4: PROTECTIVE ACTIONS SUPPORTING DOCTRINE

4.1 APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Shelter in Place Orders
- Appendix B: Avoid the Area Orders
- Appendix C: Curfew Orders
- Appendix D: Evacuation Orders and Re-entry
 - Attachment: Evacuation Traffic Management
 - Attachment: DOTI Emergency Use of Variable Message Sign
- Appendix E: Public Health Orders

4.2 OTHER SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- Denver Evacuation Plan (Parsons, 2026)
- Denver Metro Region Traffic Incident Management Plan (CDOT 2023)
- Warning and Evacuation Feedback & Lifesim Results for Denver, CO (USACE 2026)

SECTION 5: PLAN MAINTENANCE

Refer to the Denver Office of Emergency Management Planning Policy for detailed maintenance guidelines of this Annex.

SECTION 6: RECORD OF CHANGE

Date	Description of Change

APPENDIX A: SHELTER IN PLACE ORDERS

6.1 AUTHORITY

Agencies with Authority to Issue Shelter in Place Order:

- DPD
- DFD
- DDPHE
- Mayor's Office
- OEM

6.2 CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

6.2.1 STEP 1: ASSESS THE SCENE AND IDENTIFY PROTECTIVE ACTION

The lead responding agency is responsible for assessing the scene to determine the appropriate protective action. During special events the Mayor's Office and OEM may assess the need and determine the necessary protective action.

- Determine hazard type, severity, and potential exposure pathways.
- Identify geographic location and scale: Determine during scene size up if need for shelter in place exceeds the routine issuance
- Identify affected populations and vulnerable groups.
- Evaluate whether shelter in place is the safest immediate action compared to evacuation or other measures.

6.2.2 STEP 2: MAKE DECISION

- Decision-makers analyze threat information, resource availability, and life-safety priorities.
- The lead responding agency is responsible for making the final decision to issue a shelter in place order.
 - DPD and DFD rely on the on-scene Incident Commander for decision making.
 - If time allows, the IC may contact a supervisor or OEM to confirm actions to be taken.
 - During special events with large crowds, OEM and the Mayor's Office may make the decision to issue an order based on available information, such as an alert from NWS.

6.2.3 STEP 3: ISSUE THE ORDER

- The lead responding agency Incident Commander/designee determines shelter in place orders.
- To issue an order, the Incident Commander requests 911/OEM/DEN to issue an alert.
- Utilize pre-scripted alert templates with additional information provided by the Incident Commander, including:
 - Geographic boundary
 - Specific location(s) to clarify geographic boundary
 - Reason/hazard for shelter in place
 - Duration of order
 - Additional safety actions the public should take, if critical to include, for example:
 - Weather Alerts: cascading impacts
 - Hazardous Materials: close windows/doors
 - Active Threats: lock doors
- Authorized Alerting Agencies: in coordination with Incident Commander and following Denver alert and warning policies and procedures and decision matrix thresholds, determine which alert system(s) to use. Follow all alerting procedures for message development, secondary review, and leadership approval.

6.2.4 STEP 4: ADDRESS IMMEDIATE NEEDS

The lead agency maintains situational awareness. Throughout the response, the lead agency is monitoring for ongoing and anticipated needs. If needs exceed or are expected to exceed the responding agencies' capabilities, a request for an ICG or EOC may be routed to OEM to establish support monitoring and addressing needs of impacted individuals.

- Confirm safety within affected buildings or areas, including securing facilities and monitoring utilities.
- Deploy local responders as needed for assistance or enforcement.
- Provide immediate communication updates to residents and stakeholders.
- Consider the expected duration of the shelter in place order and begin asking questions such as:
 - What populations require assistance (e.g., elderly, people with disabilities, pets)?
 - Are essential supplies available (food, water, medications)?
 - Are utilities and critical systems functioning?
 - What immediate health or medical needs must be addressed?
 - Will the length of order impact individuals (e.g. running out of food supplies)?

6.2.5 STEP 5: DISSEMINATE PUBLIC INFORMATION AND ISSUE UPDATED ALERTS

The lead responding agency PIO is responsible for disseminating public information regarding the threat/hazard and issued orders. If the ICG is active, a JIS is utilized to coordinate information dissemination across multiple involved city agencies. If the EOC is active, the JIC becomes the lead for messaging to the public.

Issue Updated Order (Alert and Warning): As needed, the lead responding agency, in partnership with other responding agencies, determines if any updates or changes in protective action orders are needed.

Considerations:

- Change in hazard situation and impacts necessitating change from shelter in place to evacuation
- Change in geographic boundary of shelter in place order
- Updated information regarding duration

Public Information: In addition to alert and warning, information should be shared with the public through social media or other methods.

Considerations:

- Change in hazard situation and impacts necessitating change from shelter in place to evacuation
- Change in geographic boundary of shelter in place order
- Updated information regarding duration
- Resources for impacted individuals

6.2.6 STEP 6: ADDRESS ONGOING NEEDS AND IMPLEMENT SERVICES

Consider the scale, duration of order, time of day, and impacted population when assessing needed services. Consider:

- **Utilities monitoring:** If utilities are impacted, there may be additional consequences/impacts. OEM may work with providers to support prioritization of restoration.
- **Mental/medical health check-ins:** People impacted by the incident may need additional health and medical support. This may be coordinated by OEM and DDPHE to provide services to individuals.
- **Transportation:** If people are outside and do not have a suitable location to shelter in place (e.g. People experiencing homelessness), transportation to an appropriate location may be needed.

Potential Services:

- Mass Care
- Health and Medical; Behavioral Health

6.2.7 STEP 7: LIFT THE ORDER

6.2.7.1 DECISION

- The issuing agency has the authority to lift the order.
- If the EOC or ICG are activated, the on scene agency may advise and the leader of those groups (e.g. OEM, Mayor's Office) may make the decision to lift the order.
- Decision making considerations:
 - Has the risk to life safety been eliminated?
 - Does the impact to individuals outweigh the identified risk?

6.2.7.2 STEPS TO LIFT SHELTER IN PLACE ORDER

Provide all clear and inform individuals it is safe to leave shelter:

- Communicate clearly to the public that normal activities can resume.
 - Generally the notification of lifting the order is issued through alert and warning methods to ensure impacted individuals receive timely notification. This may include information on next steps.
- Coordinate post-incident monitoring and any follow-up services or guidance.
 - Communications should also be posted on social media to explain the lifting of the order and provide any follow up information or further actions (e.g. air out house, changes to traffic or accessibility within the city, ongoing police/fire/health activities).

6.3 RESOURCES

- FEMA Shelter in Place Instructions by Scenario for the Public: <https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/national-preparedness/plan/evacuation-shelter-in-place>

APPENDIX B: AVOID THE AREA ORDERS

6.4 AUTHORITY

Agencies with Authority to Issue Avoid the Area Order:

- DPD
- DFD
- DDPHE

6.5 CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

6.5.1 STEP 1: ASSESS THE SCENE AND IDENTIFY PROTECTIVE ACTION

The lead responding agency is responsible for assessing the scene to determine the appropriate protective action.

- Determine hazard type, severity, and potential exposure pathways.
- Identify geographic location and scale: Determine during scene size up if need for shelter in place exceeds the routine issuance
- Identify affected populations and vulnerable groups.
- Evaluate whether avoid the area is the only order necessary to protect life safety. For example, an evacuation or shelter in place order might be needed for those within the hot-zone/area of impact.

6.5.2 STEP 2: MAKE DECISION

- Decision-makers analyze threat information, resource availability, and life-safety priorities.
- The lead responding agency is responsible for making the final decision to issue a shelter in place order.
 - DPD and DFD rely on the on-scene Incident Commander for decision making.
 - If time allows, the IC may contact a supervisor or OEM to confirm actions to be taken.
 - During special events with large crowds, OEM and the Mayor's Office may make the decision to issue an order based on available information.
 - If there is a risk to health identified by DDPHE, DDPHE may work with DFD, DPD or OEM to determine the need for and issue the order.

6.5.3 STEP 3: ISSUE THE ORDER

- The lead responding agency Incident Commander/designee determines avoid the area orders.
- To issue an order, the Incident Commander requests 911/OEM/DEN to issue an alert.
- Utilize pre-scripted alert templates with additional information provided by the Incident Commander, including:
 - Geographic boundary
 - Specific location(s) to clarify geographic boundary
 - Reason/hazard
 - Duration of order
 - Additional safety actions the public should take
- Authorized Alerting Agencies: in coordination with Incident Commander and following Denver alert and warning policies and procedures and decision matrix thresholds, determine which alert system(s) to use. Follow all alerting procedures for message development, secondary review, and leadership approval.

6.5.4 STEP 4: ADDRESS IMMEDIATE NEEDS

The lead agency maintains situational awareness. Throughout the response, the lead agency is monitoring for ongoing needs. If needs exceed or are expected to exceed the responding agencies' capabilities, a request for an ICG or EOC may be routed to OEM to establish support monitoring and addressing needs of impacted individuals.

Immediate needs will likely focus on securing the perimeter for avoid the area.

Potential Services:

- Traffic Management
- Perimeter Control/Public Safety
- Multiagency Coordination

Considerations:

- Are alternate routes safe?
- Are emergency responders able to access the area?
- Is public messaging clear and timely for people in and outside the area?
- Are there additional orders to assess? (i.e., if evacuation of the area occurred, consider the needs of impacted individuals)

6.5.5 STEP 5: DISSEMINATE PUBLIC INFORMATION AND ISSUE UPDATED ALERTS

The lead responding agency PIO is responsible for disseminating public information regarding the threat/hazard and issued orders. If the ICG is active, a JIS is utilized to coordinate information dissemination across multiple involved city agencies. If the EOC is active, the JIC becomes the lead for messaging to the public.

6.5.5.1 ISSUE UPDATED ORDER (ALERT AND WARNING)

As needed, the lead responding agency, in partnership with other responding agencies, determines if any updated or change in protective action orders are needed.

Considerations:

- Change in hazard situation and impacts
- Change in geographic boundary
- Updated information regarding duration
- Since Avoid the Area does not typically require special actions by individuals, ongoing services beyond communication are not expected

6.5.5.2 PUBLIC INFORMATION

In addition to alert and warning, information should be shared with the public through social media or other methods.

Considerations:

- Change in hazard situation and impacts
- Change in geographic boundary
- Updated information regarding duration
- Resources for impacted individuals (information or mass care services)

6.5.6 STEP 6: ADDRESS ONGOING NEEDS AND IMPLEMENT SERVICES

Consider the scale, duration of order, time of day, and impacted population when assessing needed services.

Considerations:

- Is the hazard contained?
- Are alternate routes and public safety maintained?
- What people/businesses are impacted and may need support if they cannot reenter the area?

Potential Services:

- Continuous traffic/perimeter monitoring
- Scene control / Law Enforcement
- Environmental Quality Response

6.5.7 STEP 7: LIFT THE ORDER

6.5.7.1 DECISION

- The issuing agency has the authority to lift the order.
- If the EOC or ICG are activated, the on scene agency may advise and the leader of those groups (e.g. OEM, Mayor's Office) to make the decision to lift the order.
- Decision making considerations:
 - Has the risk to life safety been eliminated?
 - Does the impact to individuals outweigh the identified risk?

6.5.7.2 STEPS TO LIFT AVOID THE AREA ORDER

Provide all clear and inform individuals it is safe to re-enter the area:

- Communicate clearly to the public that normal activities can resume.
 - Generally the notification of lifting the order is issued through alert and warning methods to ensure impacted individuals receive timely and official notification. This may include information on next steps.
- Coordinate post-incident monitoring and any follow-up services or guidance.
 - Communications should also be posted on social media to explain the lifting of the order and provide any follow up information or further actions (e.g. ongoing police/fire/health activities).

APPENDIX C: CURFEW ORDERS

6.6 AUTHORITY

Agencies with Authority to Issue Curfew Orders:

- DPD
- Mayor's Office

6.7 CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

6.7.1 STEP 1: IDENTIFY THE NEED

- **Evaluate the threat or incident prompting a curfew.** Some hazards that may require a curfew include:
 - Social Unrest: Protests or riots that risk property damage, public injury, or escalation of violence.
 - Active threats: Gang activity, active shooter situations, or other ongoing crimes that threaten residents or responders.
 - Hazardous Conditions where limiting movement reduces exposure, such as:
 - Severe weather hazards (blizzards, ice storms) affecting transportation safety.
 - Fire hazards or rapidly spreading wildfires in urban-adjacent areas.
 - Chemical spills, gas leaks, or other environmental hazards.
 - Structural hazards after earthquakes, explosions, or building failures.
 - Other Public Safety Threats: Situations identified by city leadership where restricting movement mitigates risk to life, property, or critical infrastructure.
- **Geography:** Identify the geographic area affected and populations at risk, including residential neighborhoods, business districts, and critical facilities.
- **Surrounding Factors:** Consider time of day, expected duration, and potential secondary hazards (traffic congestion, transportation disruptions).

Determine whether curfew is more effective than other protective actions (shelter-in-place, avoid-the-area).

6.7.2 STEP 2: MAKE DECISION

The Mayor's Office, through the ICG or EOC, and with support from on-scene Incident Command and OEM, make the determination that a curfew is necessary.

In situations where a curfew may be warranted to protect life safety and property, the Mayor's Office is responsible for issuing a curfew order.

6.7.3 STEP 3: ISSUE THE ORDER

Curfew orders are approved and issued on the behalf of the Mayor's Office. The decision to implement may also be made by DPD. To issue an order, OEM and 911 coordinate to issue the order.

- OEM and/or ICG/EOC leadership must provide the following information:
 - Geographic boundary
 - Specific location(s) to clarify geographic boundary
 - Reason/hazard
 - Duration of order, start time and end time
- **Authorized Alerting Agencies:** in coordination with OEM and/or ICG/EOC leadership, and following Denver alert and warning policies and procedures and decision matrix thresholds, determine which alert system(s) to use. Follow all alerting procedures for message development, secondary review, and leadership approval.
- In addition to alert, consider additional public information and public documentation needs with Mayor's Office and CAO. Include information on exemptions and enforcement expectations.

- Common exemptions: traveling to and from work, seeking medical care, traveling to and from school, providing medical or elder/child care, critical infrastructure providers, public safety entities, and potentially more dependent on the incident.
- Enforcement: DPD is largely responsible for enforcing curfew orders
- OEM and city agencies notify critical infrastructure operators and essential services of curfew implications.

6.7.4 STEP 4: ADDRESS IMMEDIATE NEEDS

- Establish enforcement posts at entry points, intersections, and known hotspots within the curfew area.
- Begin assessing immediate population needs:
 - Are there residents who may need emergency transport?
 - Are essential services accessible for vulnerable populations?
 - Are the correct individuals exempted?
 - Will the curfew inadvertently create any barriers/risks to certain populations?
- Monitor potential crowding, traffic, or safety hazards associated with the curfew start.

Potential Services:

- Law enforcement
- Public information

Considerations:

- Are curfew boundaries clear?
- Are critical services accessible?
- Is messaging reaching vulnerable populations?
- Do additional groups need an exemption?
- Are individuals able to maintain health and safety?
- Will the length of order impact individuals (e.g. running out of food supplies)?
- What populations require assistance (e.g., elderly, people with disabilities)?

6.7.5 STEP 5: DISSEMINATE PUBLIC INFORMATION AND ISSUE UPDATED ALERTS

The lead responding agency PIO is responsible for disseminating public information regarding the threat/hazard and issued orders. If the ICG is active, a JIS is utilized to coordinate information dissemination across multiple involved city agencies. If the EOC is active, the JIC becomes the lead for messaging to the public.

6.7.5.1 ISSUE UPDATED ORDER

As needed, the lead responding agency, in partnership with other responding agencies, determines if any updated or change in protective action orders are needed.

- Issue updates on enforcement zones, timing adjustments, or exemptions.

6.7.5.2 PUBLIC INFORMATION

In addition to alert and warning, information should be shared with the public through social media or other methods.

- Provide real-time updates on enforcement zones, timing adjustments, or exemptions.
- Communicate ongoing safety instructions for residents and businesses.
- Communicate curfew enforcement process.
- Coordinate updates with media, social media, and partner agencies to maintain consistency and reach hard-to-reach populations.
- Monitor public response and adjust messaging to reduce confusion or misinformation.

6.7.6 STEP 6: ADDRESS ONGOING NEEDS AND IMPLEMENT SERVICES

The Mayor's Office and ICG/EOC maintain situational awareness. Throughout the response, they monitor for ongoing needs.

Potential Services:

- Law Enforcement
- Public Information

Considerations:

- Who is impacted? Do they have outstanding needs?
- Do people/professions need an exemption?
- Is the threat ongoing? How long is the curfew in effect?

6.7.7 STEP 7: LIFT THE ORDER

6.7.7.1 DECISION

- The issuing agency has the authority to lift the order.
- If the EOC or ICG are activated, the on scene/enforcing agency may advise and the leader of those groups (e.g. OEM, Mayor's Office) may make the decision to lift the order.
- Decision making considerations:
 - Has the risk to life safety been eliminated?
 - Does the impact to individuals outweigh the identified risk?

6.7.7.2 STEPS TO LIFT CURFEW

- Provide all clear and inform individuals the curfew has been lifted.
- Communicate clearly to the public that normal activities can resume.
 - Generally the notification of lifting the order is issued through alert and warning methods to ensure impacted individuals receive timely notification. This may include information on next steps.
- Coordinate post-incident monitoring and any follow-up services or guidance.
 - Communications should also be posted on social media to explain the lifting of the order and provide any follow up information or further actions.

APPENDIX D: PUBLIC HEALTH ORDERS

6.8 AUTHORITY

Agencies with Authority to Issue Public Health Orders:

- DDPHE

6.9 CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

6.9.1 STEP 1: ASSESS SCENE AND IDENTIFY PROTECTIVE ACTION

DDPHE, as the local public health and environmental authority for the City and County of Denver, has the legal authority and ability to issue public health orders to protect the health and safety of Denver's people, pets, and environment. If there is an incident in Denver, whether a direct public health incident or another incident that may cause impacts to health and safety in Denver, DDPHE may issue a public health order to mitigate the impacts and/or stop the threat.

6.9.2 STEP 2: MAKE DECISION

The Denver Revised Municipal Code, Section 24-16, gives the Executive Director of DDPHE the full power to take all measures necessary to promote the health and cleanliness of the city and its inhabitants and visitors, which includes the issuance of public health orders. In consultation with DDPHE's Chief Medical Officer, DDPHE's Executive Director has the authority to issue a public health order. The situation and circumstance that may warrant a public health order vary widely, and the intention/scope of the public health order and exact actions in the order also vary.

6.9.3 STEP 3: ISSUE THE ORDER

The Executive Director of DDPHE, or delegate, will issue any public health order that is needed. Most public health orders will be issued in writing, outlining the purpose of the PHO and any necessary steps that need to occur to comply with the PHO. Any individual or community that is under a public health order will have access to the order.

6.9.4 STEP 4: ADDRESS IMMEDIATE NEEDS

Potential Services:

- Health and medical services
- Transportation
- Enforcement coordination

Considerations:

- Are populations aware of orders?
- Are enforcement resources adequate?
- Are support services sufficient for compliance and safety?

6.9.5 STEP 5: DISSEMINATE PUBLIC INFORMATION AND ISSUE UPDATED ALERTS

DDPHE's PIO is responsible for disseminating public information regarding the threat/hazard and issued public health orders. If the ICG is active, a JIS is utilized to coordinate information dissemination across multiple involved city agencies. If the EOC is active, the JIC becomes the lead for messaging to the public.

As needed, DDPHE will determine if any updated orders must be issued as the situation processes and/or changes.

6.9.6 STEP 6: ADDRESS ONGOING NEEDS AND IMPLEMENT SERVICES

DDPHE will maintain situational awareness of any incident where a public health order is issued. DDPHE will monitor any ongoing needs and will update and/or rescind any orders if necessary. If needs exceed or are expected to exceed the responding agencies' capabilities, a request for an ICG or EOC may be routed to OEM to establish support monitoring and addressing needs of impacted individuals.

Potential Services:

- Public Information
- Health monitoring
- Social support
- Enforcement follow-up

Considerations:

- Are public health objectives being met?
- Are vulnerable populations supported?
- Are compliance levels adequate?

6.9.7 STEP 7: LIFT THE ORDER

6.9.7.1 DECISION

Public health orders may be rescinded/lifted by DDPHE if the incident has been successfully resolved and the threat to health and safety has been successfully mitigated. If DDPHE issued the public health order in writing, DDPHE will issue an updated order or a recession document for the order.

6.9.7.2 STEPS TO LIFT PUBLIC HEALTH ORDERS

Inform public the orders are lifted and provide any necessary follow up for on-going safety actions. Often, a formal written recession letter will be issued notifying affected parties that the order has been lifted.

APPENDIX E: EVACUATION ORDERS AND RE-ENTRY

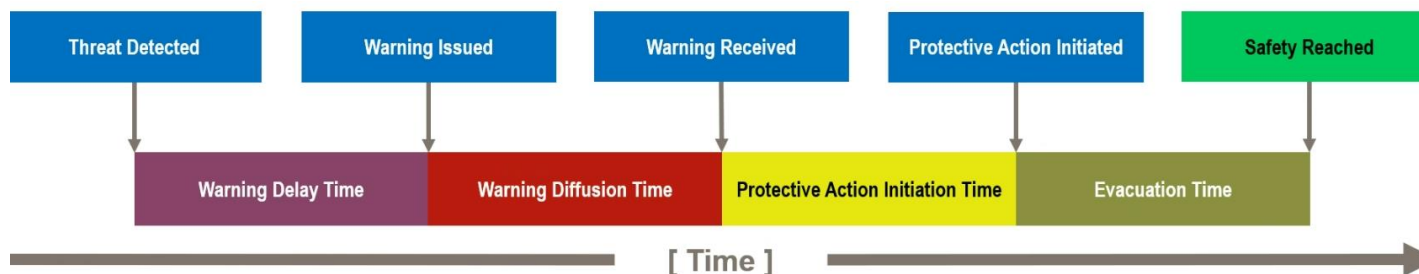
6.10 AUTHORITY

Agencies with Authority to Issue Evacuation Orders:

- DPD
- DFD
- OEM
- DDPHE

6.11 CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS: EVACUATION

The graphic below outlines the timeline of evacuation from threat detected through reaching safety. Strategies should be considered throughout the evacuation process to ensure the most people are able to reach safety in a timely way.



Graphic 5. Evacuation Timeline

6.11.1 STEP 1: IDENTIFY THE NEED

The Incident Commander on scene is responsible for identifying the need to implement protective actions based on a threat. IC assesses:

- Hazard type, severity
- Geographic location and scale
- Affected populations and vulnerable groups

If the need for evacuation seems likely, but is not currently indicated, the IC may determine to send an Evacuation Warning (“prepare to evacuate”) message. This is designed to allow people to prepare since there is a chance there will be an evacuation order. “Prepare to evacuate” messages might accompany an evacuation order for a specific area or may be issued without another order. Issuing a “prepare to evacuate” message follows the same process as an evacuation order.

6.11.2 STEP 2: MAKE DECISION

On-Scene: The lead responding agency is responsible for assessing the scene, confirming the need, and making the decision to issue an order. DPD and DFD rely on the on-scene Incident Commander for decision making. If time allows, the IC may contact a supervisor to confirm actions to be taken.

In some circumstances, information about a hazard may route to OEM first, rather than a traditional first responder agency. For example, for dam failures and related flooding, OEM relies on information from USACE and DHSEM, as well as other flood monitoring partners, to confirm the threat/risk and help Denver determine the need to evacuate.

6.11.3 STEP 3: ISSUE THE ORDER

- The lead responding agency Incident Commander/designee determines evacuation orders.
- Utilize pre-scripted alert templates with additional information provided by the Incident Commander, including:
 - Location/impacted areas and geographic boundary for evacuation
 - Primary hazard/cause for evacuation
 - Where to evacuate to, if available and as time permits
 - Timeframe for evacuation, if possible
 - Additional safety actions the public should take, if critical to include
- Authorized Alerting Agencies: in coordination with Incident Commander and following Denver alert and warning policies and procedures and decision matrix thresholds, determine which alert system(s) to use. Follow all alerting procedures for message development, secondary review, and leadership approval.
 - **IMPORTANT NOTE ON ALERT LANGUAGE:** The Denver metro region has aligned message language terminology to improve cross- and multi-jurisdiction operations:
 - “Evacuation Order” indicates leave now
 - “Evacuation Warning” indicates prepare to evacuate

Notice and Preparation Time: Evacuation outcomes depend on more than transportation network capacity; human behavior, how quickly people mobilize, which routes they choose, what modes they use, and how closely they follow instructions, equally governs performance.

6.11.4 STEP 4: ADDRESS IMMEDIATE NEEDS

Priorities:

- 1) Protecting Life Safety
- 2) Emergency Response to the Hazard
- 3) Traffic Management for Evacuation

Potential Services:

- Multiagency Coordination – as soon as evacuation alerts are sent, safety agencies and OEM will notify senior leadership and Mayor’s office. OEM will establish an ICG or EOC as early as possible for coordination of messaging and consequence management.
- Evacuation Center(s) (Reception Centers)
- Traffic Management
- Public Information

6.11.4.1 EVACUATION CENTERS

Evacuation Centers (Service: Reception Centers) serve as rally points for families and a safe destination for those not evacuating to other locations, such as relatives’ houses out of the impacted area. The initial Evacuation Center may be established by responding agencies to address immediate needs. The initial decision to activate Evacuation Centers is with the IC. The responsibility then transitions to DHS who is responsible for managing Evacuation Centers. Depending on the expected number of evacuees and the direction of evacuation routes, multiple Evacuation Centers may be established.

Considerations:

- Safe distance from impacted area (coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions, as needed)
- Number of people evacuating
- Size of center and amount of parking available
- Anticipated length of impact

For additional information on establishment of Evacuation Centers, reference the EOP Mass Care Annex.

6.11.4.2 EVACUATION TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

DPD and DFD may be the primary method of traffic management, especially within the impacted area. DOTI establishes the Traffic Management Center (TMC) to support traffic management. This may include utilizing traffic management strategies such as waiving toll fees, contraflow, signal changing.

Additionally, DOTI can utilize Variable Message Signs (VMS) to relay critical information to evacuees. Critical messaging should be directed by the IC and TMC, with the ICG/EOC supporting message development once activated.

For Traffic Management support involving state-owned roads, contact the CDOT Traffic Operations Center.

6.11.4.3 PUBLIC INFORMATION

In addition to timely alert and warning, public information should be developed and shared as quickly as possible. This may include messaging to those not under the evacuation order to limit travel and to avoid the area to help improve traffic conditions for evacuees and first responders.

6.11.5 STEP 5: DISSEMINATE PUBLIC INFORMATION AND ISSUE UPDATED ALERTS

The lead responding agency PIO is responsible for disseminating public information regarding the threat/hazard and issued orders. If the ICG is active, a JIS is utilized to coordinate information dissemination across multiple involved city agencies. If the EOC is active, the JIC becomes the lead for messaging to the public.

- 911 initially, and then the JIC once activated, update as needed the Evac Map
- If needed, the GIS position can create or modify the map

Public Information Priorities:

- Keeping evacuees informed of locations they can evacuate to
- Informing people outside of the evacuation zone to avoid the area
- Informing people of changes to traffic (signal changes, contraflow, closures)

6.11.6 STEP 6: ADDRESS ONGOING NEEDS AND IMPLEMENT SERVICES

Monitoring ongoing needs

- OEM establishes the ICG or EOC with the Mayor's Office
- DPD maintains security of the impacted area to reduce risks of injury, further property damage, or theft. This may be supported with contracted security providers. As the population vacates large areas of homes and businesses, law enforcement may secure those areas pending return of residents. Security requirements exceeding the resources available within DPD are requested by DPD through existing mutual aid agreements.
- The ICG/EOC assess timing for planning Re-entry. Before reentry, the area must be confirmed to be safe and secure. An assessment must be completed by DPD, DFD and/or DDPHE to verify that response personnel and citizens can return to the evacuated area.

Potential Services:

- Sheltering (DHS)
- Health and Medical (DDPHE)
- Commodity Distribution (DHS)
- Reunification (DHS)

Considerations:

- Are evacuees safe and supported?

- Are transportation and shelter services still sufficient?
- Are updates timely and coordinated?
- Are safe evacuation routes identified?
- Are transportation and shelters accessible to all, including vulnerable populations?
- Are communication methods effective?

6.11.6.1 SHELTERING

If evacuation orders are expected to exceed 12 hours or extend into the overnight hours, overnight shelters should be established to temporarily provide safe sheltering for evacuated individuals.

Sheltering information is available in the EOP Mass Care Annex

6.11.6.2 REUNIFICATION

A reunification center may be established to coordinate reuniting impacted individuals.

Reunification information is available in the EOP Reunification Annex

6.11.7 STEP 7: LIFT THE ORDER

Evacuation and Avoid the Area orders may be rescinded/lifted by the issuing authority. This may be done in coordination with the Mayor's Office or response structure (ICG, EOC). Lifting the order coincides with re-entry.

Evacuation and Re-Entry: Alert impacted individuals they can return and provide information on re-entry.

6.12 CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS: RE-ENTRY

After an evacuation or an order to avoid the area, residents, business owners, critical infrastructure partners, and recovery vendors must be allowed to orderly return to an area. For re-entry to occur, the area must be determined safe, which is done in partnership with DPD, DFD and DDPHE. Public health and environment safety assessments should be considered depending on the hazard and risks.

For smaller emergencies with a limited scope, re-entry may be managed at the incident site by DPD. For larger emergencies, re-entry may need to be managed using a tiered process, led by DPD or another assigned response agency.

Considerations:

- Determine damage assessment needs
- Provide emergency response personnel and equipment in the re-entered area
- Decide on full-scale or phased re-entry
- Establish a re-entry schedule
- Establish a method for identifying authorized vehicles and individuals
- Establish control and credentialing points
- Arrange public transportation to return evacuees
- Plan and carry out a public information strategy
- Control traffic
- Provide security

For a major emergency or disaster, Denver may establish a re-entry credentialing site. Property owners and tenants, as well as service providers, recovery contractors and other key personnel will be vetted and credentialed at this location and issued passes to enter areas of restricted access.

Entry will be prioritized according to the following groups:

- **Group 1:** Access restricted to the damage assessment and repair personnel that are needed to address immediate life safety needs or restore basic infrastructure needed to allow the safe re-entry of additional personnel.
- **Group 2:** Access restrictions broadened to include property owners and tenants as well as their approved recovery contractors.
- **Group 3:** Open access. Increased police patrols and curfews may still be in effect.

Re-entry should be controlled to ensure life safety and to maintain the security of the impacted area. DPD or a contracted security company enforces the re-entry process, which may include credential verification and resident address verification.

Public Information

Public Information can be distributed through routine channels as well as through the Evacuation Map.

The Evac Map or other mapping tools/visualization may be developed by the EOC or ICG GIS representative. There may be different areas re-opened at different times and detailing that on the map could provide great info to impacted people. Different areas may only be open to certain types of people (damage assessors vs residents), which could be indicated on the map. There might be specific re-entry credentialing sites or entry points, which could be indicated on the map along with info around the times they are open.

Once re-entry has been initiated, develop and carry out a public information strategy to communicate the details of the re-entry operation to the evacuees. Clearly describe:

- When the re-entry will begin and if it is a full-scale or temporary re-entry
- If a phased re-entry, what and when different groups will be allowed to enter the evacuated area
- Any transportation instructions
- Identification requirements
- Instructions on permissible re-entry area activities (if restrictions are in place)
- Safety considerations
 - Avoid loose or dangling power lines and report them immediately to the power company
 - Enter home with caution
 - Beware of snakes, insects, and animals driven to higher ground by floodwater
 - Open windows and doors to ventilate and dry your home
 - Check refrigerated foods for spoilage
- Take pictures of the damage, both to the house and its contents, for insurance claims.

ATTACHMENT: EVACUATION TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

For Traffic Management support involving state-managed roads, contact CDOT Traffic Operations Center.

Below are general tools for managing traffic during high-volume evacuations.

Additionally, two scenarios are specifically assessed – Downtown Denver Rail Hazardous Material Incident and Montbello WUI.

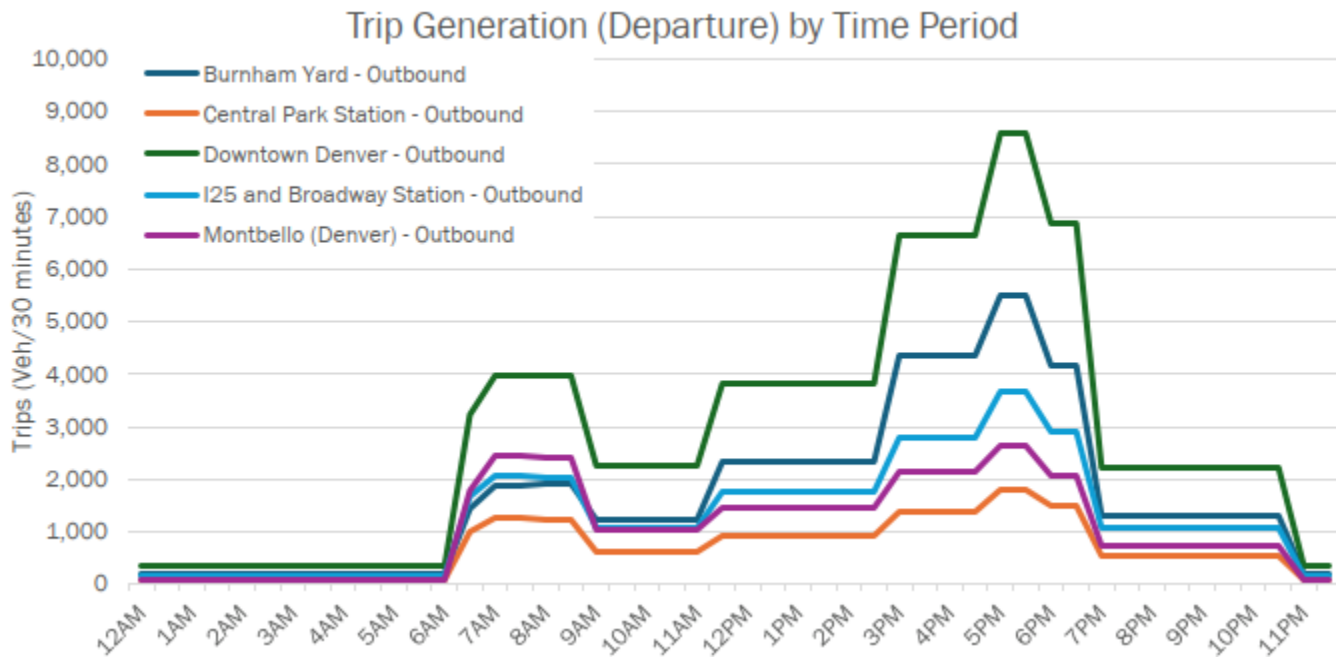
6.13 EVACUATION FACTORS AND CONSIDERATIONS

6.13.1 RISK PERCEPTION AND COMMUNICATION

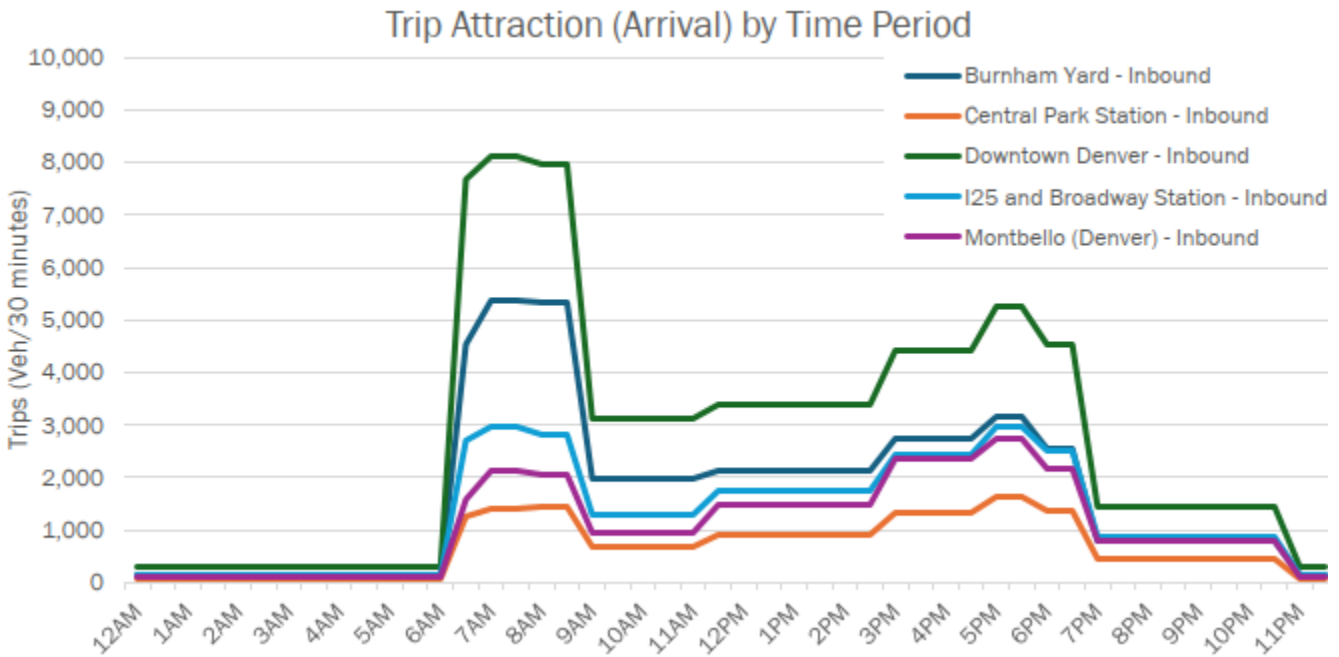
Evacuation risk perception strongly influences whether people act appropriately and on time. If evacuees do not understand the severity, immediacy, or proximity of a hazard, optimism biases can lead them to delay or ignore instructions. Conversely, social validation (i.e. choosing to evacuate, if those around you or people you know choose to) prior experiences in emergency situations, misinformation, and ambiguous cues can prompt either risky inaction or unnecessary “shadow” evacuation. Shadow evacuation by those that are outside the at-risk zones increases demand on constrained evacuation corridors and slows down clearance for populations who must evacuate and elevates overall risk.

6.13.2 BACKGROUND TRAFFIC

In large metropolitan areas, background traffic from commuters, shoppers, visitors, freight, ride-hail, and through traffic on interstates can be the single largest determinant of evacuation success. When primary and secondary evacuation corridors are filled with non-evacuation trips, constrained gateways (freeway ramps, merge/weave areas, key arterials) slow dramatically, reducing how many at-risk residents can exit in the critical time window. This risk is highest during AM/PM peaks and event dismissals, and it varies by location: downtown near Union Station faces dense commuter and venue flows; I-25 & Broadway/Burnham Yard experiences interchange-focused surges; Central Park’s gateways at Quebec and Central Park Boulevard carry regional and local demand to I-70; Montbello’s limited exits at Peoria and Chambers are sensitive to any added non-essential movement.



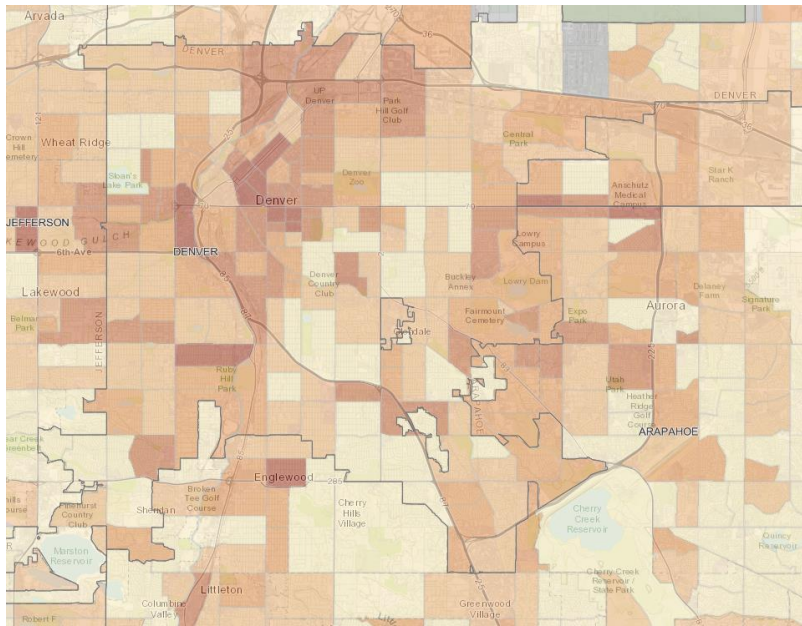
Graphic 6. 2020 Trip Generation Departure by Study Area and Time of Day



Graphic 7. 2020 Trip Generation Arrival by Study Area and Time of Day

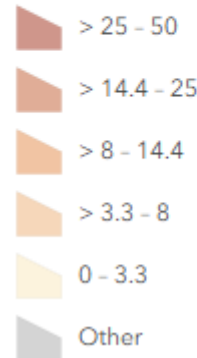
6.13.3 VEHICLE AVAILABILITY AND OCCUPANCY

Access to a vehicle and how many people ride in it directly shapes how much demand the network must process during an evacuation.



Percentage of the Occupied Housing Units with No Vehicle Availability 2020-2024 Estimates

Percent_Housing_Mobility_THU_Occupied_No_Vehicles_Available



Graphic 8. Percent of households with no vehicle

6.13.4 ROUTE FAMILIARITY

Route familiarity and simple wayfinding significantly influence evacuation speed and safety. When evacuees know which arterials connect to which freeway ramps and which crossings are closed, they make fewer wrong turns, avoid U-turns and weaving, and reduce recirculation near bottlenecks. In Downtown Denver, the dense grid and elevated structures can be confusing; Around I-25 & Broadway/Burnham Yard, limited crossings and interchange-focused egress require clear instructions to use Broadway, Alameda, and Santa Fe approaches without cutting through constrained local streets. In Montbello, evacuation messaging should emphasize the use of major and collector streets that provide direct access to regional exits, avoiding reliance on local residential streets.

6.13.5 CONSIDERATION FOR RESIDENT, TOURIST, AND WORKER

Mobilization dynamics differ for residents, employees, and transient populations (visitors, event attendees, passers-through), and these differences matter for timing and routing. Residents typically mobilize from home, often coordinating dependents and pets, which can lengthen preparation but increase vehicle occupancy and reduce total number of evacuating vehicles. Employees may be at workplaces, especially downtown, and tend to depart more quickly once instructed but face constraints such as parking access, shift schedules, and unfamiliarity with the most efficient outbound corridors. Transient populations (e.g., venue attendees near Coors Field or travelers near Central Park Station) often mobilize immediately on foot or by ride-hail, with limited destination planning and higher sensitivity to crowding and pedestrian-vehicle conflicts. Time of day amplifies these differences: daytime periods skew toward employees and visitors in downtown, while evening periods in Central Park and Montbello skew toward residents at home. Estimates for each are provided in Evacuation Scenarios Analysis.

Departure Time (Mobilization Curve)

Evacuation vehicle demand is generated separately for residential and employment-based evacuees using distinct mobilization curves.

Employees typically require less preparation time for evacuation compared to residents.

Time Since Evacuation Onset	Residential Evacuees	Employment Evacuees
Hour 0 – Hour 1	10%	80%
Hour 1 – Hour 2	60%	20%
Hour 2 – Onwards	30%	0%

Percentages represent evacuation departures applied within each model period; departures are interpolated for partial-hour periods and applied in aggregate.

Graphic 9. Evacuation Demand Assumption

6.13.6 ROADWAY INFRASTRUCTURE AND IMPACTS ON EVACUATION

The following table summarizes these transportation network components, their key locations, and the potential impacts on evacuations that should be considered.

Table 2. Roadway Infrastructure and Potential Impacts on Evacuation

Element	Description	Key Locations/ Corridors / Intersections / Ramps	Potential impacts on evacuation
Freeway and managed-lane network	Denver's freeway and managed-lane system is the high-capacity backbone of the network, aggregating arterial flows and moving evacuees quickly toward regional egress and out of hazard areas. Managed/express lanes can preserve more reliable throughput for priority movements where access policies allow. Overall effectiveness is sensitive to incidents, merge/weave constraints, and interchange/ramp operations.	Downtown: I-25 and associated ramps at Park Ave W / 20th / N Speer and Auraria Pkwy / W Colfax; I-70 and associated ramps at N Brighton / 38th / Federal / N Pecos Montbello: I-70 mainline and associated ramps at Chambers / Peoria / Havana / Central Park; Peña Blvd Burnham Yard: I-25 mainline and associated ramps at Broadway / Alameda / Santa Fe / US-6 / 6th Central Park: I-70 and associated ramps at Quebec / Central Park.	Queue spillback at ramps choking arterial feeders. Interchange merge/weave constraints limiting capacity. Express lane access constraints reducing usable capacity. Incidents/stalled vehicles increases travel time
Arterial road network	Distributes evacuees to freeways and serves as alternate egress; Signal coordination and progression are critical for outbound flow.	Downtown: Park Ave W, 20th St, 15th St, N Speer Blvd, Federal Blvd, Auraria Pkwy, W Colfax Ave, Kalamath St, W 6th Ave, Broadway. Montbello: E 56th Ave, Chambers Rd, Peoria St, Havana St, Central Park Blvd. Burnham Yard: Broadway / Lincoln, Alameda Ave, Santa Fe Dr, Mississippi / Evans. Central Park: Central Park Blvd, Quebec St, MLK Jr Blvd, Smith Rd / 40th Ave, 56th Ave.	Signal progression (in outbound direction) breakdowns could increase increasing delay/queues. At-grade bottlenecks at high-turn intersections or severely closed spaced intersections/access points. Turn conflicts and midblock friction (parking/loading along arterial roads) especially with heavy vehicle movement slowing outbound movement.

Element	Description	Key Locations/ Corridors / Intersections / Ramps	Potential impacts on evacuation
Transit (RTD) and park-and-ride hubs	Bus and rail can support off-corridor movements and assistance-dependent populations Rail is power-dependent: select stations/segments may lie within/near hazard footprints.	Transit Stations: Union Station I-25 & Broadway Station Central Park Station Peoria Station Park-and-ride hubs: Central Park (Stapleton/MLK & Spruce), I-25 & Broadway, 40th & Colorado	Station/line closures within incident areas reduces people moving capacity for transit/rail. Power loss suspending rail service. Bus staging or scheduling/resource conflicts at constrained hubs.
Freight and rail operations	Freight/passenger rail corridors can block at-grade arterials; Hazmat incidents may require rail hold-outs and perimeters.	Union Station throat and BNSF/UP mains; Burnham Yard; A-Line near Central Park (Smith Rd/40th corridor); Sand Creek freight corridor near Montbello	Rail crossing closures result in long delays. Stopped trains can create long-duration blockages. Rail response perimeters potentially forcing detours/road closures.

6.14 TRAFFIC OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Table 3. Operational Thresholds and Actions

Parameter	Purpose/Use	Potential Data Sources	Location Examples	Threshold Concept / Trigger Guidance	Traffic Management Strategies
Corridor speed (mph)	Detect deteriorating operations and emerging congestion with speed slowdowns	- Bluetooth - Probe speeds - ATMS logs	Outbound corridors feeding ramps (e.g. Speer, Park Ave West, Broadway, Alameda, Quebec)	Activate when observed speeds on outbound segments fall noticeably and persistently below typical conditions, indicating sustained congestion rather than short term fluctuation	- Apply outbound favoring signal timing - Assess turn restrictions - Implement detours

Parameter	Purpose/Use	Potential Data Sources	Location Examples	Threshold Concept / Trigger Guidance	Traffic Management Strategies
Corridor Travel time	Identify bottlenecks; compare against typical conditions	- Probe travel time - Bluetooth	Major evacuation segments leading to I-25 and I-70	Activate when travel times on key outbound links are consistently higher than normal and indicate that queues are growing or not dissipating between cycles	- Direct to parallel corridors - Verify to see if incidents area slowing traffic
Volume-to-Capacity	Quantify load vs capacity at critical segments	Detectors (loops / radar / video)	Ramp terminals Freeway merge/weave areas Key arterial roads/intersections	Activate when volumes approach or exceed practical capacity for more than a brief period, indicating that demand is outpacing available capacity on a recurring basis	- Limit inbound turns - Meter inflows - Targeted closures
Queue length / spillback	Prevent queues blocking intersections	- CCTV - Video analytics	Ramp terminals High-conflict intersections	Activate when queues routinely reach back to or through upstream intersections, or extend into mainline freeway lanes	- Manual control - Turn restrictions - Automatically adjust splits/cycle lengths/offsets
Intersection blockage (frequency)	Keep junctions clear to preserve progression	- CCTV - field reports	High-conflict intersections	Activate when intersection blockages are observed repeatedly within a short time window, indicating that normal operations are not clearing queues effectively	- Field enforcement - Cones/barricades - VMS: "Keep intersections clear"

Parameter	Purpose/Use	Potential Data Sources	Location Examples	Threshold Concept / Trigger Guidance	Traffic Management Strategies
Stalled/disabled vehicles	Restore capacity rapidly	- CCTV - Operator/tow logs	Ramps and arterial roads Mainline Freeway	Activate upon detection of any stalled or disabled vehicle on a critical route or lane that reduces capacity or creates a safety hazard	- Dispatch tow - Shoulder clearance where safe
Grade crossing status	Goal is to avoid blockages near rail crossing	CCTV; railroad liaison; field reports	Crossings near Union, Burnham Yard, Central Park	Crossing blocked/locked	- Close crossing - Implement detours - Adjust signals
Ramp access management	Prevent mainline spillback and unsafe merges	CCTV; operator logs	Critical ramps at I-25 and I-70	Spillback persists and extends to arterial road (on-ramps) or mainline freeway (off-ramps)	Meter/hold inflows
Background volume indicator	Suppress discretionary / shadow trips	- Traffic Counts (cameras, detectors); - Probe volume proxies	Non-evacuation areas along primary/secondary evacuation routes	Activate when traffic volumes on key routes outside the evacuation area remain close to typical levels, indicating limited reduction in nonessential travel	Issue “stay off roads” advisories
Time to 80% evacuated (zone)	Measure evacuation progress	- OEM tracking; - model-assisted estimates	Each scenario 1-mile buffer area	Activate when observed progress toward evacuation targets is significantly slower than planned, indicating that current strategies are not achieving desired clearance	- Intensify background demand suppression - Strengthen corridor-specific guidance - Enforce closures

Parameter	Purpose/Use	Potential Data Sources	Location Examples	Threshold Concept / Trigger Guidance	Traffic Management Strategies
Weather/drainage impact	Apply speed/lane reductions as needed	- Weather feeds - CCTV	Low-lying/poor drainage segments	Standing water observed; Speed/lanes degrade	- Reduce speeds - Implement detours if needed - Clear hazards
Work zone status	Account for temporary capacity reductions	- Work zone registry - CCTV	Corridors with active work	Activate when active work zones are present within critical evacuation corridors or gateways and are materially reducing available capacity	Adjust routing, signal timing;

(Source: Denver Evacuation Plan – Parsons)

6.14.1 TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

6.14.1.1 SIGNAL TIMING MODIFICATION

Adjust and coordinate traffic signal timing to favor outbound progression on corridors feeding designated gateways (freeway ramps and perimeter arterials), reducing conflicts and stabilizing queues within and adjacent to the one-mile evacuation buffers. During evacuations, signal timing should be implemented through a small set of pre-approved, corridor-specific plans that can be activated quickly and then fine-tuned in the field. In most cases, this involves:

- Using longer, coordinated cycle lengths (on the order of 150–180 seconds) with offsets matched to outbound progression speeds (about 25–30 mph on urban arterials).
- Retaining existing peak-hour plans only where observed volumes and patterns remain close to typical conditions.
- Increasing green time for primary outbound movements and freeway-ramp approaches while reducing or, where appropriate, temporarily restricting conflicting inbound or minor-street movements.
- Applying split phasing at selected intersections to better manage heavy turning movements that disrupt outbound flow.
- Enabling emergency vehicle preemption and, where feasible, transit signal priority on corridors that support responder access and assisted evacuation (e.g., RTD or paratransit).

Timing should be adjusted iteratively as conditions evolve.

6.14.1.2 MANUAL TRAFFIC CONTROL

Manual traffic control by law enforcement is effective for resolving unbalanced flows, heavy merges, and pedestrian–vehicle conflicts. However, it is highly resource-intensive and cannot be applied broadly across the network.

Manual traffic control can be effective when used selectively to address specific, high-priority challenges that cannot be resolved through automated systems or signal timing adjustments. It is most beneficial in situations where real-time human intervention is necessary to manage unique or dynamic conditions. Priority should be given to:

- Locations with unpredictable traffic patterns, such as areas with sudden surges of vehicles or pedestrians that require immediate, flexible responses.
- Complex intersections or bottlenecks, where conflicting movements or heavy turning volumes create delays that automated systems cannot resolve.
- Areas impacted by temporary disruptions, such as rail crossings blocked by train activity or incidents that require detours and dynamic traffic redirection.
- Critical evacuation corridors, where maintaining continuous flow is essential, and manual control can help prioritize outbound movements over non-essential traffic.

Manual control should be informed by real-time monitoring and implemented within a phased framework. Initial focus should be on critical gateways (such as ramp terminals and key arterial junctions), with secondary hotspots addressed as resources allow.

Manual traffic control, while effective in specific scenarios, has notable limitations. Ramp spillback at freeway terminals, such as I-25 in Downtown Denver or I-70 in Montbello, can overwhelm arterial roads even with manual intervention. Rail crossings near evacuation routes in the downtown rail district and along key corridors can experience prolonged blockages, forcing detours that strain alternate routes. Pedestrian surges near major venues, such as Coors Field or Ball Arena, can further slow vehicle movements and complicate traffic management.

Additionally, manual traffic control is resource-intensive, requiring significant personnel deployment that may be unsustainable during large-scale emergencies without advance preparation and clear priorities for where to assign officers.

Location Type	Scenario	Specific Locations
Critical Freeway Ramp Terminals	Downtown Denver (Early PM Peak, 3–5 PM)	• I-25 ramp terminals at Speer Blvd, Park Ave West, 20th St, Auraria Pkwy, W Colfax Ave, W 6th Ave
	Montbello (Late PM Peak, 5–6 PM)	• I-70 ramp terminals at Peoria St and Chambers Rd
High-Conflict Arterial Intersections	Downtown Denver (Early PM Peak, 3–5 PM)	• Speer Blvd at Kalamath St / Champa St • Park Ave West at 20th St
	Montbello (Late PM Peak, 5–6 PM)	• Peoria St at E 56th Ave • Chambers Rd at Green Valley Ranch Blvd
Grade Crossings	Downtown Denver (Early PM Peak, 3–5 PM)	• Rail crossings in the Union Station / Coors Field area where blocked crossings could affect access to Speer Blvd, Park Ave West, and nearby arterials
Venue Adjacent Crossings	Downtown Denver (Early PM Peak, 3–5 PM)	• 20th St at Blake/Wazee (Coors Field) • Auraria Pkwy at 9th St (Ball Arena / Auraria Campus)

Graphic 10. Best Use Cases for Manual Traffic Control in Denver

6.14.1.3 ROUTE AND RAMP CLOSURES

Route and ramp closures involve temporarily restricting access to specific roadways, freeway ramps, or intersections to prioritize evacuation traffic and prevent congestion at critical bottlenecks. These measures are used to limit inflow into constrained areas, streamline outbound movements, and protect key evacuation corridors from disruptions caused by conflicting traffic patterns or excessive merging.

Route and ramp closures can be effective when applied selectively to protect evacuation corridors and maintain traffic flow during emergencies. Priority should be given to:

- Freeway ramp terminals where merging traffic creates bottlenecks, ensuring mainline freeway flow is preserved by limiting access at critical ramps.
- Arterial intersections experiencing severe spillback or conflicting movements, where closures can streamline outbound progression and reduce delays.

- Crossings near rail perimeters or wildfire zones, where exposure risks or physical blockages necessitate detours to alternate routes.
- Secondary routes that can be used to offload traffic from oversaturated primary evacuation corridors.

Because closures and turn prohibitions can affect freight movement and raise crash or secondary incident risks, they should be limited to locations and periods where life-safety benefits clearly outweigh the drawbacks.

Prioritization should focus on: (1) ramp terminals and interchanges that serve designated outbound corridors, (2) arterial intersections experiencing severe spillback or conflicting movements, and (3) crossings adjacent to rail perimeters or wildfire smoke corridors where exposure risks are highest. Measures should be activated in phases and adjusted based on real-time monitoring to match evolving conditions. All measures require field implementation, through police control or barricades, and should be prioritized where they yield the greatest benefit.

While targeted ramp and route closures can protect evacuation corridors, they also carry important risks and trade-offs that are evident in the scenarios:

- Risk of shifting congestion rather than removing it: In Downtown and Montbello, the modeling shows that a small number of ramps and approaches already operate near or above capacity. If off-ramps are closed or on-ramp flows are held too aggressively without complementary signal and routing changes, queues can simply move onto adjacent arterials or local streets, creating new bottlenecks and potential gridlock near the evacuation area.
- Potential loss of access for essential traffic: Closing off-ramps into Downtown or Montbello reduces non-evacuation inflow, but it may also restrict access for emergency services, freight serving critical facilities, or people trying to reach shelters and hospitals. Without clear exception procedures and routing for priority vehicles, closures can inadvertently delay life-safety movements.
- Driver confusion and recirculation: The modeled scenarios indicate that evacuees and background traffic already converge on a limited set of gateways. Sudden changes to usual ramp and route patterns, especially if not clearly signed and communicated, can result in hesitation, wrong turns, and recirculation near key interchanges, worsening congestion at exactly the locations that need to be kept clear.
- Resource and coordination demands: Implementing and adjusting closures in real time requires field personnel, barricades, and close coordination between CCD, CDOT, and law enforcement. During a large-scale evacuation, staffing and equipment may be insufficient to manage multiple ramp and route closures while also handling incidents, manual control, and assisted evacuation.

Because of these unintended consequences, it is recommended ramp and route closures in Downtown and Montbello should be used sparingly, targeted to the specific I-25 and I-70 access points highlighted in the analysis, and always paired with signal timing adjustments, clear public messaging, and provisions for emergency access.

6.14.1.4 DYNAMIC LANE MANAGEMENT

Temporarily changes the direction or purpose of multi-directional, express, or special-use lanes to increase outbound capacity during an evacuation.

- Determine with CDOT if express lanes should be closed for response vehicles or open to public
 - North I-25, downtown to US 36
 - I-70 between Brighton Blvd and Chamber Rd
- Determine with CDOT if two reversible lanes on I-25 from 20th St to US 36 should be opened to support evacuation routes
- Determine with CDOT if traffic can be routed to E-470 (CDOT follows process in Denver Metro Region Traffic Incident Management Plan)

6.14.1.5 CONTRAFLOW LANES

Contraflow involves temporarily reversing one or more inbound lanes on a roadway or freeway so that they carry traffic in the outbound direction, increasing capacity away from a hazard area. Contraflow can be applied on

freeways, expressways, or major arterials, typically over defined segments with controlled entry and exit points. Because contraflow changes normal driving patterns, it requires careful planning, field implementation, and clear, consistent communication to be used safely.

Contraflow has been used effectively in large scale evacuations, especially for predictable, slow-onset hazards such as major hurricanes. However, national guidance and past experience emphasize that contraflow is a complex, resource-intensive strategy that is suitable only when certain conditions are met:

- There is sufficient warning time to plan, staff, and set up the contraflow segment, including barriers, signing, and access controls.
- Entry and exit points can be clearly controlled, so vehicles are not forced to merge across opposing flows or enter contraflow segments unexpectedly.
- Adequate shoulders or crossovers exist to allow emergency vehicles and service patrols to reach incidents and stalled vehicles.

For urban corridors like I-25 and I-70 in Denver, contraflow must be evaluated carefully against these criteria. While it can increase outbound capacity in theory, it can also complicate emergency access, increase crash risk if drivers are confused, and require significant time and field resources that may not be available during short-notice events.

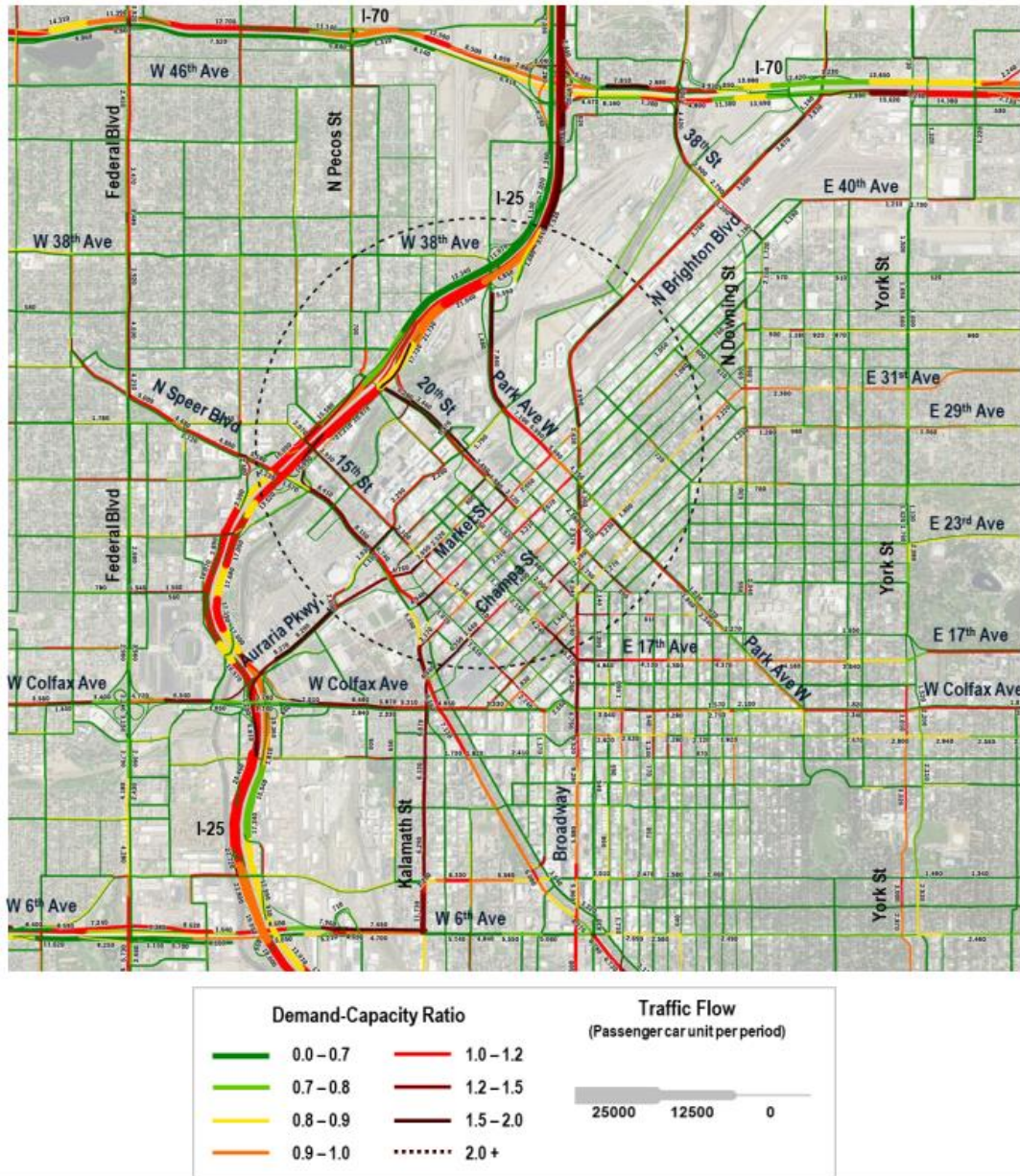
It is not recommended to implement contraflow as a primary strategy for the modeled one mile evacuation buffers because of these constraints and because the modeling shows that bottlenecks are concentrated at a small number of ramps and interchanges rather than along long mainline segments. Instead, contraflow is identified as a potential longer-term, corridor-scale option that would require detailed engineering and operational planning.

CDOT Denver Metro Region Traffic Incident Management Plan (TIMP) outlines alternate routes for impacted heavily trafficked highways and closures. Additionally, it outlines ways to increase traffic throughput, like opening express lanes to general purpose traffic or changing direction of multi-directional lanes. CDOT will update messaging on VMS.

6.14.2 KEY EVACUATION CORRIDORS AND BOTTLENECK LOCATIONS

Traffic management methods should be considered and implemented to address traffic flow through high-demand roadways.

6.14.2.1 DOWNTOWN



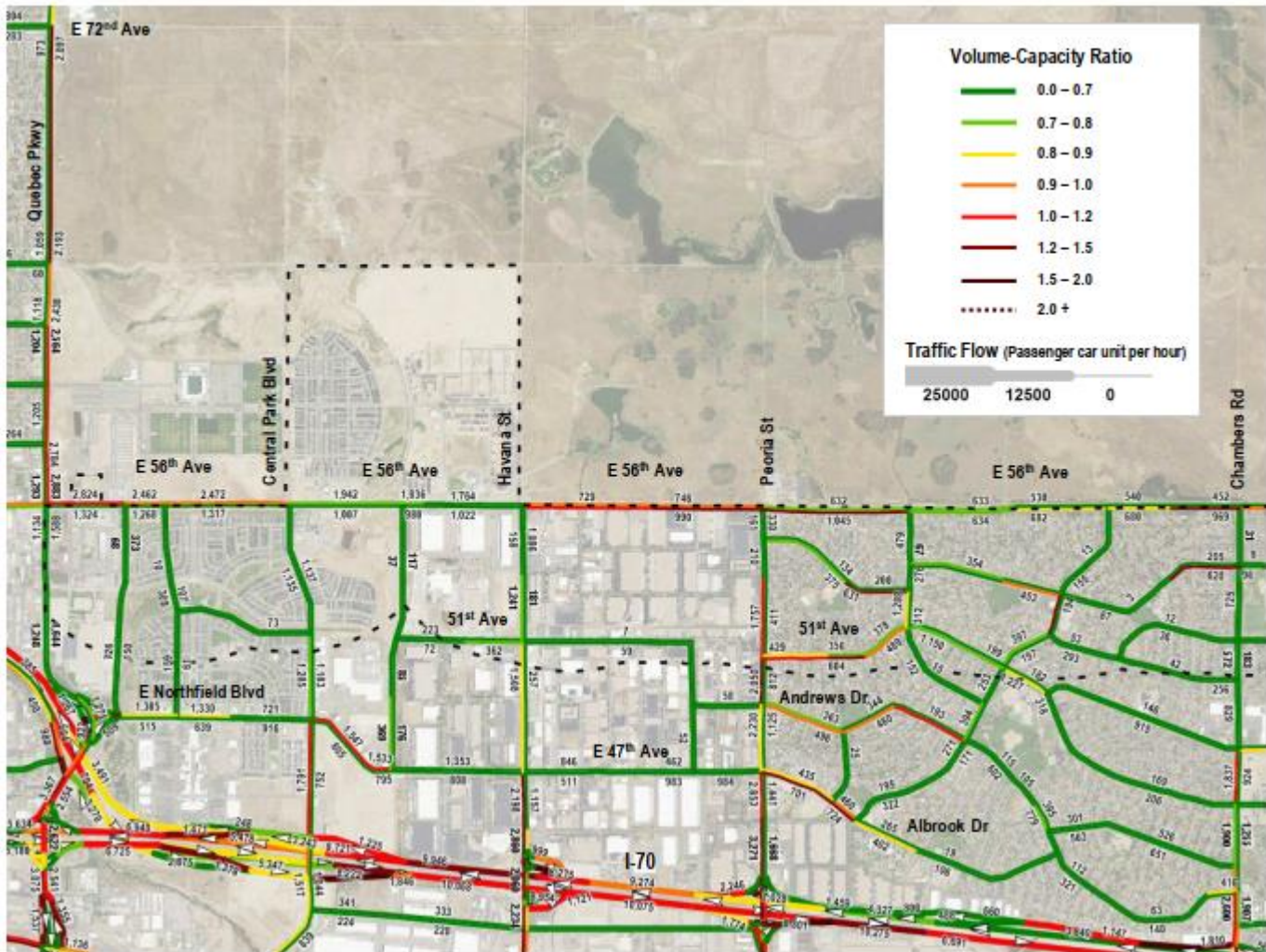
Graphic 11. Downtown Denver Demand-Capacity Ratio (Expected Bottlenecks)

Table 4. Heavily Used Evacuation Corridors and Bottleneck Segments – Downtown Denver (3PM Start)

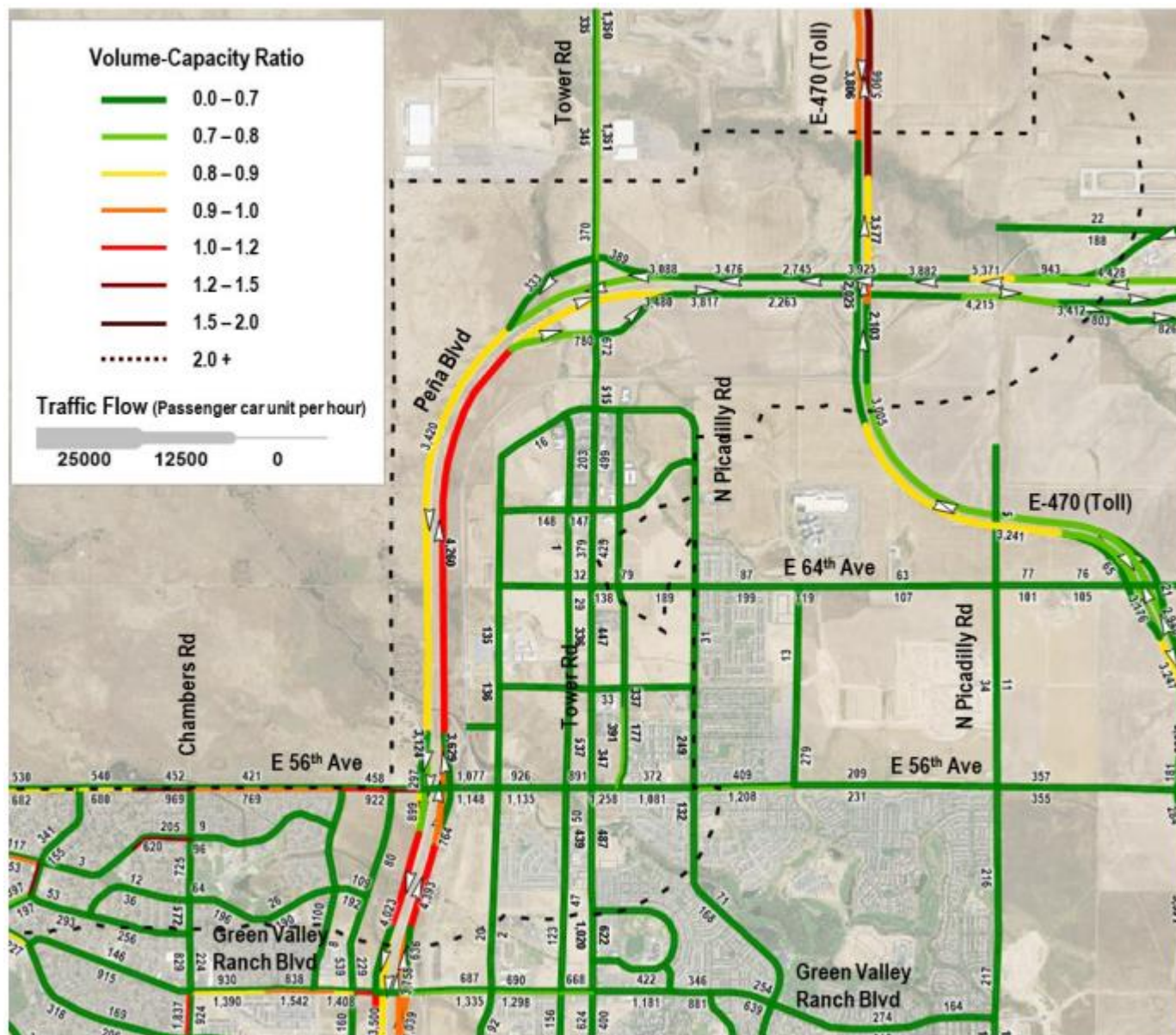
Corridor	Direction	Critical Segment / Movement	Primary Constraint
Kalamath Street	Southbound	North Speer Boulevard to West 6 th Avenue	I-25 and West 6 th Avenue related demand exceeds available capacity

Corridor	Direction	Critical Segment / Movement	Primary Constraint
West Colfax Avenue	Westbound	North Speer Boulevard to NB I-25 on-ramp	I-25 related demand exceeds available capacity
Auraria Parkway	Westbound	To southbound I-25	I-25 related demand exceeds available capacity
Auraria Parkway	Westbound	To West Colfax Avenue	Congestion spillback from West Colfax Avenue west of Federal Boulevard
North Speer Boulevard	Westbound	Toward northbound I-25	I-25 related demand exceeds available capacity with spillback from West Colfax Avenue
North Speer Boulevard	Westbound	Toward Federal Boulevard	Interstate freeway congestion leading to diversion toward non-freeway routes
Federal Boulevard	Northbound	From N Speer Blvd to I-70/I-76	Diversion from I-25 congestion toward alternative freeway access
15 th Street	Westbound	Toward Central Street	I-25 ramp and mainline capacity constraints leading to local street congestion
20 th Street	Westbound	Toward I-25 and I-25 Express Lanes	I-25 related demand exceeds available capacity
Park Avenue West	Northbound	Toward I-25 on-ramp	I-25 related demand exceeds available capacity
Broadway – North Brighton Boulevard	Northbound	Blake Street toward I-70 on-ramp / 46 th Avenue	I-25 capacity constraints leading to diversion toward I-70 via local streets
Broadway	Southbound	17 th Street to 14 th Street	Demand exceeds available roadway capacity
I-25	Northbound	North of Park Avenue West	Combined regional and evacuation demand exceeds freeway capacity

6.14.2.2 MONTBELLO



Graphic 12. Demand-Capacity and Traffic Volume Map (West End) (5PM Start)



Graphic 13. Demand-Capacity and Traffic Volume Map (East End) (5PM Start)

Table 5. Heavily Used Evacuation Corridors and Bottleneck Segments – Montbello Evacuation (5 PM Start)

Corridor	Direction	Critical Segment / Movement	Primary Constraint
E 56th Avenue	Westbound	Connection to northbound Quebec Parkway	Demand approaches available road capacity
Quebec Parkway	Northbound	E 56th Avenue to E 72nd Ave (to Adams County)	Demand exceeds available capacity
E Northfield Boulevard	Westbound	Central Park Boulevard Intersection	I-70 related demand exceeds intersection capacity
Central Park Boulevard	Southbound	Approach to I-70	I-70 related demand exceeds intersection capacity

Corridor	Direction	Critical Segment / Movement	Primary Constraint
Havana Street	Southbound	Approach to I-70	I-70 related demand exceeds road capacity
Peoria Street	Southbound	Approach to I-70	I-70 related demand exceeds road capacity
Chamber Road	Southbound	Approach to I-70	I-70 related demand exceeds road capacity
I-70	Eastbound and Westbound	Through Montbello Area	Regional freeway demand exceeds capacity under existing conditions
Gateway Avenue / Green Valley Ranch Boulevard	Eastbound	Connection to Peña Boulevard	Demand heading towards Peña Boulevard demand approaches available road capacity
Peña Boulevard	Northbound	Between E 56 th Avenue and Tower Road	Combined regional travel demand/evacuation demand approaches available capacity
Corridors with Recent Capacity Improvements After 2020 (Model Horizon Year)			
E-470 Toll Road	Northbound	From Peña Boulevard toward Commerce City	Demand exceeds 2020 capacity; widened in 2024
E 56 th Avenue	Eastbound	Toward Peña Boulevard	Demand exceeds 2020 capacity; widened in 2023
E 56 th Avenue	Eastbound/ Westbound	Between Havana Street and Peoria Street	Limited 2020 capacity; widened in 2023

6.14.3 IMPLEMENTATION OF TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

During an evacuation, the implementation of traffic management strategies should:

- **Reinforce familiar routes rather than invent new ones.** Many of the tools described in this section, (i.e. outbound-favoring signal timing, limited manual control, and targeted ramp or turn restrictions), are already used for routine downtown events and venue operations. Applying them at the bottlenecks highlighted by the modeling (rather than across the entire network) aligns with driver expectations and makes it more likely that people will follow the intended paths towards I-25 and I-70.
- **Prioritize quick, high-impact changes.** With limited operational resources, emphasis should be placed on actions that can be implemented rapidly, such as signal timing adjustments on key corridors, simple turn restrictions at high-conflict intersections, and selective ramp access controls at a small number of critical interchanges. Even though individual driver behavior will vary, these measures will improve system-wide progression, reduce conflicts, and increase throughput when applied at the right locations.
- **Use phasing and triggers to scale response.** The phasing structure and activation thresholds described in the next section is purposed to keep ramp terminals and adjacent intersections clear. Typically, these are not required for evacuations of 1-mile buffers but are left as contingency recommendations if needed.

6.15 VARIABLE MESSAGE SIGNAGE

6.15.1 DOTI-MANAGED VMS

DOTI maintains standard practices for utilizing Variable Message Signage on local roadways. See Attachment: Emergency Use of Variable Message Signs (VMS)

6.15.2 CDOT-MANAGED VMS

CDOT maintains standard practices for utilizing Variable Message Signage on state roadways.

Table 6. Interchange and VMS Locations for Denver Streets

ROADWAY – INTERCHANGE	VMS
Colfax Avenue	
West Colfax and Lowell Blvd	VMS Eastbound
West Colfax and Osage St	VMS Westbound
West Colfax and Osage St	VMS Eastbound
East Colfax and North Pearl St	VMS Westbound
Broadway	
North Broadway and Champa St	VMS Southbound
Speer Blvd	
Speer Blvd and Elitch Circle	VMS Southbound
Speer Blvd and Stout St	VMS Northbound
Speer Blvd and Cherokee St	VMS Northbound
Speer Blvd and North Pearl St	VMS Northbound
Lincoln	
North Lincoln St. and West 9th Ave	VMS Northbound
Federal Blvd	
Federal Blvd and West 7th Ave	VMS Northbound
Federal and West 40 th Ave	VMS Southbound
Auraria Parkway	
Auraria Pkwy and 9th St	VMS Southbound

Table 7. Interchange and VMS Locations

Roadway-Interchange	Milepost	VMS
I-25		
Interchange (Exit 199) Belleview Avenue	199	
Interchange (Exit 200) Interstate 225	200	VMS Northbound
Interchange (Exit 201) E. Hampden Ave	201	
Interchange (Exit 202) E. Yale Ave	202	
Interchange (Exit 203) E. Evans Ave	203	
Interchange (Exit 204) Colorado Blvd	204	
Interchange (Exit 205) University Blvd	205	VMS Southbound
Interchange (Exit 206) Emerson St, Washington St, Downing St	206	

Roadway-Interchange	Milepost	VMS
Interchange (Exit 207A) Lincoln St. Broadway	207A	
Interchange (Exit 207B) Santa Fe Dr, Alameda Ave	207B	VMS Northbound
Interchange (Exit 209A-B) 6 th Ave	209A-B	
Interchange (Exit 209C) 8 th Ave	209C	
Interchange (Exit 210A) Colfax Ave	210A	
Interchange (Exit 210B) Auraria Parkway	210B	
Interchange (Exit 210C) 17 th Ave	210C	
Interchange (Exit 211) 23 rd Ave	211	
Interchange (Exit 212A) Speer Blvd South	212A	
Interchange (Exit 212B) Speer Blvd North	212B	
Interchange (Exit 212C) 20 th St	212C	
Interchange (Exit 213) 38 th Ave	213	VMS Northbound
Interchange (Exit 214A) I-70	214A	VMS Northbound
Interchange (Exit 214B) 48 th Ave	214B	
Interchange (Exit 215) 58 th Ave	215	VMS Northbound
Interstate 70		
Interchange (Exit 270) Sheridan Blvd, Harlan St	270	
Interchange (Exit 272) Federal Blvd	272	
Interchange (Exit 273) Pecos St	273	
Interchange (Exit) I-25	274	
Interchange (Exit 275B) Brighton Blvd	275B	
Interchange (Exit 275C) York St, Josephine St	275C	
Interchange (Exit 276A) Steele St	276A	
Interchange (Exit 276B) Colorado Blvd	276B	
Interchange (Exit 277) Monaco St, Dahlia St, Holly St	277	
Interchange (Exit 278) Quebec St	278	
Interchange (Exit 279B) I-270	279B	
Interchange (Exit 280) Havana St	280	
Interchange (Exit 281) Peoria St	281	
Interchange (Exit 282) Interstate 225	282	VMS Westbound
Interchange (Exit 283) Chambers Rd	283	
Interchange (Exit 285) Airport Blvd	284	
E-470		
Interchange (Exit 28B) Peña Blvd	28	VMS Eastbound
Interchange (Exit 28A) Denver Intl Airport	28	VMS Westbound
Interchange (Exit 25) 64 th Ave	25	VMS Eastbound
Interchange (Exit 24) 56 th Ave	24	VMS Westbound
Interstate 225		
Interchange (Exit 2) Tamarac St/DTC Blvd	1	

Roadway-Interchange	Milepost	VMS
Interchange (Exit 2A) Tamarac St/DTC Blvd	1	
Interchange (Exit 2B) Yosemite St	2	VMS Northbound
Interchange (Exit 4) Parker Rd	4	

For additional information regarding information and graphics contained in this appendix, reference the Denver Evacuation Plan (Parsons, 2026) and the Denver Metro Region TIMP (CDOT, 2023).