

**Regional Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Plan**  
Washoe County Emergency Management and Homeland Security Program

## **SECTION 5: NOTIFICATION AND WARNING**

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*Section 5 contains details on notification and warning during a hazardous materials (HAZMAT) incident.*

### **5.1 Notification and Warning Systems**

The Washoe County Emergency Management and Homeland Security Program (WCEM) communicates among stakeholders on a routine basis with email, telephones, 800 MHz radios, satellite telephones, cellular telephones, video-teleconferencing, and text/paging. Many of these methods are embedded in systems used to conduct alert notifications and warnings to the public.

Notification and warning systems are critical when life-threatening materials are released. One organization will be responsible for alerting the public, response teams, and hospitals as soon as word of the release is received. The Washoe County, Reno, or Sparks 911 dispatch will be used to make notifications.

### **5.2 Notification Guidelines**

The primary objective of Washoe County's warning system is to notify key officials of emergency situations and disseminate timely and accurate warnings and instructions to the population at risk from the threat or occurrence of a HAZMAT incident. Rapid dissemination and delivery of warning information and instructions may provide time for citizens to take action to protect themselves and their property.

Following is the notification protocol:

- a. The Incident Commander (IC) may request outside municipal, state, federal, or private resources at any time during a hazardous materials response without upgrading the incident response level.
- b. The IC may request other HAZMAT Teams without declaring a Level III incident.
- c. Public Safety Answering Points (911 Dispatchers) shall make local, state, federal, and industrial agency notifications as requested and directed by the IC.

See Washoe County Emergency Management Alert Notification and Warning Plan, a functional annex in WebEOC.

### **5.3 Methods for Determining Release and Possible Affected Areas**

The Washoe LEPC anticipates two typical scenarios by which applicable authorities determine a potential release of hazardous materials which includes notification by a citizen (including an employee from a HAZMAT facility) and notification by a public safety or local government employee. The following flow charts document a typical scenario wherein a release of HAZMAT is determined and reported.

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<b>CITIZEN NOTIFICATION</b>	<b>PUBLIC SAFETY NOTIFICATION</b>
Citizen recognizes release of hazardous material (or perceived release) relative to transportation container, a facility, or a pipeline. Citizen recognition may be based on observation, odor, or sound. In the case of an employee at a permitted facility, recognition may be the result of activation of a monitoring system.	Public Safety Officer or other government employee recognizes release of hazardous material (or perceived release) relative to transportation container, a facility, or a pipeline. Recognition may be based on observation, odor, or sound. Recognition may also be the result of a facility's monitoring system that provides an audible alarm.
Citizen (or facility employee) calls 911. Depending upon the location the 911 call is made from, the call will be routed to Reno Dispatch, Sparks Dispatch, or Washoe County Dispatch. Additionally, depending on the nature of the primary complaint, REMSA Dispatch could also be the receiver of information that determines a hazardous material release.	Public Safety Officer or other government official contacts their Dispatch Center by virtue of radio communication or by calling 911. Depending upon the location the 911 call is made from, the call will be routed to Reno Dispatch, Sparks Dispatch or Washoe County Dispatch. Additionally, depending on the nature of the primary complaint, REMSA Dispatch could also be the receiver of information that determines a hazardous material release.
Dispatcher defines the nature, location, and circumstances of the incident by virtue of a series of targeted questions	Dispatcher defines the nature, location, and circumstances of the incident by virtue of a series of targeted questions.
Dispatcher dispatches the applicable fire department and the Regional Hazardous Materials Response Team (TRIAD). NOTE: In areas of Washoe County not directly served by the Regional Hazardous Materials Response Team (Incline Village), the local fire department will assess the incident circumstances and request the response of the Regional Hazardous Materials Response Team as may be applicable.	Dispatcher dispatches the applicable fire department and the Regional Hazardous Materials Response Team (TRIAD). NOTE: In areas of Washoe County not directly served by the Regional Hazardous Materials Response Team (Incline Village), the local fire department will assess the incident circumstances and request the response of the Regional Hazardous Materials Response Team as may be applicable.
Based upon information collected by the Dispatcher, information gathered during response, and circumstances observed upon arrival (size-up process), fire department personnel, and/or Regional Hazardous Materials Response Team will assess the area that is potentially affected by the release of hazardous materials and take appropriate action to protect lives, environment, and property.	Based upon information collected by the Dispatcher, information gathered during response, and circumstances observed upon arrival (size-up process), fire department personnel, and/or Regional Hazardous Materials Response Team will assess the area that is potentially affected by the release of hazardous materials and take appropriate action to protect lives, environment, and property.