

CITY OF JACKSONVILLE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN

The following is a brief summary of the Jacksonville, OR Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) as it specifically relates to the role the City plays in the prevention/mitigation, public notification and related evacuation provisions related to imminent wildfire. This summary is organized in a manner similar to the information flow contained in the actual document.

The EOP is a set of directives that provides an overall management framework in the support of the City's effort to mitigate, respond to and recover from major emergencies. The EOP was developed by Jacksonville's Emergency Response Personnel, the City Administrator and the Public Safety Committee (which I am told by Jeff Alvis no longer exists). The City Administrator is required to request a review and update of the EOP every five years. This document is not dated so I am unable to determine when the next review will be required.

The EOP defines four phases of Emergency Management:

- 1) **Mitigation** (reducing causes of disasters, risk analysis and fire safety and building codes.)
 - Section 2, III, A. "Hazard Description – Wildfire" (pg 11) states "Jacksonville Woodlands Historical Natural Park and Trail System joins some 284 acres of wooded hillsides. These forested lands owned and jointly managed by multiple agencies resemble large peninsulas jutting into Jacksonville residential areas. The presence of the woodlands within the city limits creates significant wildland/urban interface areas

and the need for constant vigilance from fire protection services.”

- The EOP also includes a special “Annex A” (pg 64) dealing exclusively with wildfire. In Annex A, mitigation measures include community education and involvement by the Fire Prevention Division to identify risks where the wildland and urban areas interface.

2) **Preparedness** (including planning, training and providing public information as well as staff training and education).

- Annex A also goes on to say in its Preparedness section: “In coordination with the Geographical Information System Department (GIS) and county 911 Centers; the Southern Oregon Regional Communications (SORC) and Rogue Valley Communications (RVCOM), develop and maintain calling system that would enable the city to contact people who might be affected by a major fire.” (**Note**, this section does not define who develops and maintains this system or who would operate it should it become necessary).

3) **Response** (extraordinary functions and actions taken by government and the private sector to minimize loss of life and property).

- Annex A stipulates that the Fire Department responds to fire emergencies and that Law Enforcement is responsible for traffic control, crime scene security and the assistance of people/animals in the case of an evacuation.

4) **Recovery** (short-term and long-term assistance designed to return conditions back to normal).

Identified Emergencies include Wildfire, Structural Fire, Severe Weather, Floods, HAZMAT, Earthquake, Landslides, Civil Disobedience and Terrorism.

Each department within the city is responsible for developing detailed plans and procedures to meet the directives outlined in the EOP. These plans and procedures are to be updated regularly. These departmental plans and procedures are not included in the EOP because they change from time to time and are unique to each department. Copies of each departmental plan are to be provided to the Emergency Manager (City Administrator or designee) with copies distributed to Emergency Management Staff.

Section 3 “Direction and Control” (pg 14) stipulates that the “**Mayor and City Council** are responsible for declaring a state of emergency”. Section 3 goes on to say that The City Administrator, Public Safety Department Chief and Public Works Director serve as an oversight team to make decisions on situations not covered by pre-planned responses and to make recommendations to the City Council regarding emergency expenditures. (Note: In an apparent conflict with Section 3, the next Section 4 “Assignment of Responsibilities” (pg 21), Parts II A & B state that the **City Administrator** makes the declaration of a State of Emergency according to the line of succession in the city government and is to serve as the Emergency Manager.)

Once an emergency has been declared (in this case, wildfire), the following departments provide these basic functions:

- **Fire Department:** responsible for disaster command coordination, firefighting response, search and rescue, hazardous materials response, providing health and medical services.
- **Police:** coordinates and conducts evacuation as needed; responsible for law enforcement and crime prevention; coordinates with Fire Department to provide warning services to designated areas.
- **Public Works:** responsible for opening emergency routes so that fire and police equipment can reach the disaster area; assists with Alert, Warning and Evacuation Process; It is also responsible to provide vehicles and personnel to evacuate and relocate records and equipment, if necessary.
- **Southern Oregon Regional Communications (SORC):** responsible for primary disaster notification of Emergency Management staff, including the City Administrator, the Public Safety Department Chief and the Public Works Department Director.

Section 5 (pg 26) addresses Emergency Functions including emergency declaration, methods of public alert/warning, and evacuation notification and related assistance. Major public alert mechanisms include Cable Television Alert System, Mobile Public Address System and Door to Door Alert. (Note, there is no mention of a reverse 911 system.)

Formal authority to order an evacuation lies with the City Administrator or designee. Under emergency conditions this authority is delegated to the Incident Commander (Note: I was unable to find a specific definition of Incident Commander (IC). It appears from the Organization Chart on page 16 that the City Administrator appoints the IC. Who specifically gets appointed may depend on the nature of the incident.)

The IC is responsible for the following pre-evacuation activities:

- Identify high hazard areas;
- Identify potential evacuation routes, their capabilities, and vulnerabilities to the hazard; and
- Alert and warn the public at risk.

Section 5, III, D. (pg 29) summarizes the need for evacuation of special populations, including:

- Private and public schools;
- Residence of elder care facilities and adult foster care homes;
- Residential developments for persons age 55 + (i.e. Royal Mobile Estates; and
- Residence in private homes with mobility impairment.

Section 5, III, D. is unclear as to which department is responsible for these special evacuation needs or if a list of such individuals/residents has been created and periodically updated.

END OF EOP SUMMARY

JACKSONVILLE MUNICIPAL CODE

Chapter 8.04 of the Code addresses general Public Nuisances including weeds and noxious growth. Specifically, Section 8.04.110 states “No owner or person in charge of property may permit weeds, invasive plants, hazardous plants or other noxious vegetation to grow upon his/her property. It shall be the duty of an owner or person in charge of the property to cut down or destroy weeds or other noxious vegetation as often as needed in order to prevent the weeds or noxious vegetation from becoming unsightly or **from becoming a fire hazard** or from maturing or going to seed.”

Subsequent sections of 8.04 address the declaration of a nuisance and related notice and abatement procedures. Section 8.04.180 (A) states, in part, that “ Upon determination by the appropriate department that a nuisance, as defined in this Chapter, or any other ordinance of the City, exists, that department shall promptly cause a notice to be mailed to the owner or person in charge of the property and posted on the premises where the nuisance exists direction the owner or person in charge of the property to abate such nuisance.” Included in the notice is a description of the nuisance and a statement that if the nuisance is not removed, the City may abate the nuisance at its own cost and such cost shall be assessed as a lien against the property. The notice must also inform the owner of how to protest the abatement. (It is unclear in section which departments are responsible for determining if a particular nuisance exists).

Chapter 8.08 specifically addresses Fire Hazards. Section 8.08.030 (A) states: “It is unlawful for any owners, occupants, agent or other person in possession of a lot, tract or parcel of land within the corporate limits of the City, to permit grass or other vegetation, excepting shrubs, trees, or crops raised in the ordinary course of husbandry, to become a fire hazard. The Fire Chief shall determine when conditions of the environment deem it necessary to invoke regulated closures and aggressive control of vegetation constituting a fire hazard. The duration of this time period shall be until there is no longer a threat of fire danger, as determined by the Fire Chief.”

Section 8.08.030 (B) goes on to state: “The Fire Chief of designee shall make weekly inspections, as practicable, of lots, tracts, and parcels throughout this time period within Jacksonville on which grass or vegetation is in excess of ten inches in height to determine whether or not any such lots, tracts or parcels of land with such vegetation constitute a fire hazard. If the Fire Chief shall determine that fire hazard exists, the Fire Chief shall cause the hazard to be abated as set forth in Section 8.08.050.” (Note: it is unclear from Chapter 8.08 if the Fire Chief has the authority to declare debris build-up on roofs and in gutters (i.e. Leaves, branches, pine needles, etc.) to be deemed fire hazards, subject to abatement procedures.)

The notice and abatement procedures contained in Section 8.08 are similar, but more detailed, to those summarized above for Section 8.04.180 (A).

END OF MUNICIPAL CODE SUMMARY