

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To effectively respond to any emergency (disaster or incident), the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) has developed an Emergency Operations and Disaster Plan (the Plan). The Plan defines a Concept of Operations; the processes and procedures, roles and responsibilities, for implementing an effective response and otherwise restoring the transportation system. The Plan is a “living” document; training, exercises, and experience with its implementation will undoubtedly suggest changes that will improve it.

The Plan, which defines MDT’s responsibilities is important so that a coordinated effort with other agencies provides an effective and efficient response to any incident. The Plan also complies with Executive Order 17-04 which states that the Governor, “...do hereby formally recognize and adopt the National Incident Management System (NIMS) as a guide toward the development of Montana’s approach to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from domestic incidents, regardless of the cause, size or complexity.” MDT’s authority to act in any incident is also based on State statutes (MCA 2-15-25, MCA 23 and MCA 60).

The ultimate responsibility for emergency management within MDT rests with the agency Director. However, MDT has decided that the Maintenance Division Administrator will be the Incident Commander for MDT during emergencies. Continuity of operations will be maintained in the event of an emergency, or absence of the Director or other key personnel. The established succession is:

- Director
- Deputy Director
- Maintenance Division Administrator
- Engineering Division Administrator
- District Administrators
- Maintenance Chiefs

The response by MDT should be linked to the level of the incident. There are three levels of incidents: Level I incidents are isolated accidents that are routinely handled by the local authorities, Level II incidents are situations that cannot be resolved with, or exceeds the capacity of, available local resources from the impacted area, and Level III incidents are catastrophic events that require massive amounts of resources from local, state, and federal governments.

The overriding issue among all possible response actions is SAFETY. The *personal safety* of MDT employees and the general public is the first consideration in determining what to do and what *not* to do. There are no exceptions.

All responses should be based on the Incident Command System. The Incident Command System (ICS) is the management tool for command, control and coordination of a response, and provides a means to coordinate the efforts of individual agencies as they work toward the common goal of stabilizing the incident and protecting life, property and

the environment. The Incident Command System is also based on the Unified Command Structure (UCS). UCS is the consistent, systematic means of organizing a variety of autonomous agencies into one concerted emergency response effort.

A key to the Incident Command System is that there is only one Incident Commander. The Incident Commander is the individual with the ultimate authority to direct the actions of all other responders at the incident scene. Should an MDT employee be the first on the scene of an incident, they become the *de facto* Incident Commander.

Depending upon the level of the incident, Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) may be activated to act as a command post for the response to the incident. Depending upon the level of the incident, the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) may be activated. There would also be the possibility that any or all of the other EOCs: Department (MDT/EOC), District (DEOC), or Local (LEOC), Emergency Operations Centers may need to be activated.

Each Headquarters Division, District, Maintenance Division and Section has predefined responsibilities for accomplishing the tasks described throughout the document. The roles of MDT Executive Management are defined as is the nature of coordination that must take place within the Department.

Appropriate hazard specific responses are described for both manmade and natural incidents. Incident types discussed are: terrorism, homeland security, Weapons of Mass Destruction, earthquakes, floods, blizzards, wildfires, avalanches and landslides. Action items such as immediate response, evacuation, utility and lifeline repairs, and the possibility of secondary events are described.

The Helena Campus Survival Plan (Chapter 6) describes the unique responses and actions that must be taken in the event of a major incident at, or in the vicinity of, the Helena Campus, which is the location of MDT Headquarters. Natural and manmade disasters may be of such magnitude that Campus building occupants and people in the surrounding area might be forced to evacuate and establish off-site command posts at which to restore and continue essential services. The Survival Plan spells out numerous responsibilities; however, it emphasizes that it is the ability of each individual to *adapt* and to cope with virtually any need or demand of the moment that will result in successful management of the incident. A proper response will also likely occur if adequate training has occurred.

Training is outlined for Hazardous Materials Awareness and protocols of Incident Command. Training unique to the Helena Campus should be provided to line employees who form various “groups” responsible for evacuation, traffic control, facilities operations and damage assessment, search and rescue, medical support, “camp” staging areas, communications and initial standard operating procedures. Group team members are required to perform specific tasks during emergency situations at the Campus.

In response to an incident, MDT would be part of a coordinated effort, an effort coordinated through the use of the Incident Command System. By training MDT employees to respond based on the guidelines in the Plan, MDT should have a coordinated, effective and efficient response to any manmade or natural disaster (incident) which may occur in the State.