

Continuity of Operations Plan

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC) is committed to ensuring the safety of the agency's staff and facilities and to the continuation of essential operations during emergencies which necessitate ceasing operations at areas operated by the agency. These protocols serve to assist NGPC in managing its operations in the event the Director and/or Board of Commissioners, or the Governor determine, in case of an emergency, that there is a need for temporarily closures. The goals of the Continuity of Operations Plan are:

- Continue critical and time-sensitive NGPC operations during temporary interruption of NGPC services.
- Provide public services to the extent practicable depending on the emergency.
- Ensure appropriate, timely and ongoing communication with all key stakeholders and staff.
- Protect the health and safety of staff and guests at NGPC areas.

Not every situation to limit the work force to essential personnel only requires the same response. Three levels of potential closures are defined:

- **Level 1:** Closure due to weather event or recognition of a local or regional incident.
- **Level 2:** Closure due to loss of power, a response to a local or national incident, the President issues a directive to release non-essential personnel; or Governor issues a state of emergency.
- **Level 3:** Closure is due to direct threat to health or safety of staff and the public that use NGPC areas.

Essential Communications

Effective communication must take place given any level of emergency identified for the public and the agency's personnel. In the event of any emergency identified, a Communications Plan will be created or modified to guide the Communications Division and agency staff with important information and responses to the public and personnel as soon as possible, with input from all needed individuals.

Agency spokespersons will be identified. Key agency messages will be created by Communications Division, with assistance from pertinent divisions depending on the emergency that occurs. These key messages will be distributed to all staff via email and be placed on the agency Intranet page to have a uniform response to the public. Staff messages will be created by Administration and Communication divisions and will be distributed to all staff via, direct supervisor communications, email and placed on the agency Intranet page for guidance. Specific customer and public messages will be produced by Administration and Communication divisions throughout all messaging that goes out to the public. Key messages will be updated as needed and as situations evolve.

Multiple media outlets will be used to ensure broad segments of the population have access to the messaging and information regarding the identified emergency. These outlets include, but are not limited to, signage for public at areas, agency website, staff Intranet, news releases, social media, Outdoor Nebraska radio, customer emails/direct communication and currently available broadcast channels. Information will go out as frequently as needed, depending on the circumstances surrounding the emergency and new or updated information. Communications Division will include a timeline within

the created Communications Plan that outlines dates for the different types of media outlets used to share information as needed.

Communications staff focuses and priorities during an emergency situation will be to provide accurate and updated information and how it affects the public and our staff.

Continued communications with other state and federal agencies, including the Governor's office will take place, depending on the level of emergency. If the Joint Incident Command Center (JIC) is activated and has daily or scheduled updates for state agencies to participate in, Communications division personnel will attend and disseminate the information to pertinent agency staff. The JIC office issues information to media on a daily or regular basis as a central point of state agency communications.

Agency divisions will work closely with other state and federal agencies, along with partners to effectively communicate actions taken during identified emergency to ensure that business can continue to move forward as needed. Division staff will report processes determined with partners to Division Administrators, which will then be shared with all Administrators on a weekly basis to ensure continuity of business occurs.

As an agency that functions with a Board of Commissioners that has public meetings, the agency will follow all state mandated protocols put into place in regards to public meetings if the identified emergency spans the timeframe of any scheduled public meetings. Notices of meeting changes will be sent via a public notice and/or posted on the agency website.

Each division functions differently, therefore the internal communication within divisions may occur differently depending on tasks of the division. After an emergency declaration, divisions will immediately identify parameters and actions to put into place on to best communicate amongst themselves, and with other divisions. These communications can and should include, direct supervisor to employee communication, email, phone calls, conference calls, video calls...etc. Each division administrator will report to the leadership team the protocols put into place for their respective staffs to ensure continuity of business functions continue.

Collaboration, communication, and coordination are essential activities during any emergency situation among all divisions and agency staff throughout the state. As a diverse agency with statewide resources, communication will be essential to direct resources and activities to best meet the needs of our employees, the resources we manage, and the public. That also includes the need to communicate, and coordinate with other governmental agencies and entities to collaboratively and effectively respond to the emergency at hand. Each division will work closely with the partners they are in communication with and share information with other divisions as needed. Administration and Communications divisions will be the conduits for information related to the JIC, if activated. Administration division will coordinate and collaborate all efforts with the Governor's office, Legislature and Board of Commission. The agency will take full advantage of all communication options to coordinate with staff across the state, including phone, email, and web platforms, to ensure information is flowing smoothly and continuously.

Essential Operations

Essential operations are vital operations during a temporary suspension of services:

- Public safety and Law Enforcement
- Critical Infrastructure of areas
- Livestock and animal care
- Financial services
- Information Technology and Communications
- Employee Payroll and HR Services
- Engineering and Construction services

While these areas are identified as essential areas of operation, staffing is addressed in the attachment to the Plan. Staffing needs may change depending on the nature of the emergency event and will be determined by Administration to ensure continuation of the essential operations.

Public Safety and Law Enforcement

Law enforcement operations, along with security of areas will be maintained during any temporary suspension of NGPC operations. Conservation Officers remain in active status unless specifically directed otherwise by the Division Administrator. Parks and Wildlife Division Administrators will identify staff necessary to maintain the safety and security of both park and wildlife areas. The Wildlife Life Division District Managers, in conjunction with district Law Enforcement personnel will determine if an onsite response is needed for nuisance animals or depredation issues. Law Enforcement Division Administrator will make determination of which non-credentialed staff **would not** be deemed essential personnel during an event requiring temporary closure of the agency or a specific location.

Critical Infrastructure of areas

NGPC areas have extensive infrastructure including mechanical systems, sanitation systems, life support systems for animals and fire suppression systems that must be maintained during temporary closures. This includes offices and service centers across the state, fish hatcheries, park and wildlife areas. In the event of temporary closures, Administration, Fisheries, Parks, Communications and Wildlife Division Administrators will identify essential personnel is to maintain the critical infrastructure of the agency or specific location.

Livestock and Animal Care

NGPC has livestock such as bison, horses and cattle, live terrestrial and aquatic animals for naturalist and education programming, and aquatic facilities within fish hatcheries that must be maintained at all times. Essential personnel will be identified by Parks, Fisheries and Fish and Wildlife Education Division Administrators to ensure the care of these animals is maintained during temporary closures of the agency or specific location.

Financial Services

The financial business of the agency must be maintained in times of emergency to ensure bills are paid and revenues are accounted for. Some services have components that must be completed within the office setting and cannot be done via teleworking such as: Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable,

Expense Reimbursement, Permit Fulfillment and Procurement, where the main medium/documentation remains in hard copy form. The Division Administrators will determine which personnel are essential to complete the tasks above. The agency relies on processing of mail for many of these and other functions. The Division Administrators will identify essential personnel to process incoming mail and ensure continuity of business is maintained during any temporary closure of the agency.

Information Technology and Communication

IT service will continue to support continuous operations in the event of a temporary suspension, especially with many agency functions that will be continued through telework. In most cases, IT can function remotely except for requests requiring physical contact with hardware and to troubleshoot issues with Remote Desktop connections or with on-site servers. If remote maintenance of hardware is not possible, repairs of hardware may be suspended until the temporary closure is lifted. The IT Manager will determine which personnel are essential to the specific incident.

Communication services will be essential for both internal and external communications during any emergency. This includes maintaining communication through forwarding of incoming phone calls to employees in telework status and maintaining land-line and cell phone service for continuity of public service and internal communications. These activities can predominantly be handled through telework, but they are important functions such as receiving and sending mail that will require staff to work on location. The Division Administrators and Administration will identify essential staff for communication purposes.

Employee Payroll and HR Services

Payroll processing must continue to ensure employees are paid appropriately and timely. Hiring of full time employees may freeze during temporary closures unless deemed necessary by corresponding Division Administrators' recommendation and concurrence from Administration to move forward through hiring process. Hiring process of temporary employees will continue throughout temporary closures to ensure that future business of the agency can still move forward. Most other services provided by HR can be done remotely to ensure staff are compensated and their benefits are maintained. The HR Administrator will determine staff required to report to work, check mail, and move paperwork through the process in the event of temporary suspension of NGPC operations.

Engineering and Construction Services

Engineering and construction services of the agency is required to address design, construction, and maintenance of physical and naturally built environments for the protection of public health, safety and welfare. Contractual work is often deemed an essential function by the Governor or the agency leadership and will continue if possible and at the discretion of the Agency Director. Minimal administrative work would need to occur to process documentation dealing with contracts such as, but not limited to, insurance forms, bonds, invoices, and permits. Construction services would include those action items that require work to be completed by the agency as agreed upon in an existing contract unless otherwise agreed upon with the third party. The Engineering Division Administrator will identify essential personnel for engineering services and Parks Division Administrator will identify essential personnel for Operations and Construction or Parks services, in coordination with Engineering Division Administrator.

Maintaining critical infrastructure that is essential during temporary closures in an emergency can be accomplished by on-site managers from the Divisions and by engineering and construction utilizing telework. This plan deals directly with those functions that must be maintained on location, such as a park or wildlife area, fish hatchery, or office location.

Continuity of Leadership

In the event that Leadership personnel are unable to perform their essential duties, a hierarchy of leadership will be outlined by division within the spreadsheet related to the emergency at hand. The succession of leadership will be identified by name and position within the spreadsheet emergency.

Essential Personnel and duties

Employees who work in essential areas may be designated as essential personnel by Division Administration. These employees designated as “essential” to the operation have skills or expertise critically necessary to ensure successful, continuous operations during an emergency. Their absence from duty could endanger the safety and health of NGPC’s infrastructure or facilities, including livestock and animal care. As a result, they may be required to work in an office or on location whenever the Continuity of Operations Plan is activated, regardless of the level of emergency. In some instances more than one individuals may be trained/equipped to handle the essential service in which case staff may be rotated into onsite service as directed by the respective Division.

Many services and business functions that the agency provides can and will be accomplished by employees utilizing teleworking. These employees do not need to be designated as “Essential on-site” on the accompanying spreadsheet. An example would be Agency leadership (Administration and Division Administrators, who will be essential to developing and managing the agency response to an emergency but are able to fulfill those duties utilizing teleworking.

Each division must identify essential personnel that must report to a NGPC location to accomplish specific assigned tasks during the period of Emergency. Each emergency will require a specific assessment of personnel deemed essential for the situation at hand. Therefore, the accompanying spreadsheet will be filled out by Division Administrators and approved by Administration to ensure the essential work functions are being completed for the continued operation of the agency for each emergency.

Due to statewide responsibilities, there will be times that staff will need to continue to travel to perform their duties. Depending on the level of emergency identified, travel restrictions could be put into place. Each division will identify the authority for decision making regarding travel restrictions. Travel authorizations will be required for any personnel traveling during an identified emergency.

For planning purposes, each division will provide a supplemental document outlining expectations of staff during an identified emergency to ensure continuity of business occurs. This information will correlate with the spreadsheet that identifies Essential Personnel.

See attached spreadsheet for Identified Essential Personnel and duties and attached Organizational Chart.

