

STATE OF COLORADO

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Dedicated to protecting and improving the health and environment of the people of Colorado

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Colorado Department
of Public Health
and Environment

Emergency Medical Services (EMS)—Terrorism Preparedness

BACKGROUND

- The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, the Colorado Board of Health and the State Emergency Medical and Trauma Services Advisory Council assist in the development of a statewide emergency medical and trauma services system.

DEPARTMENT ROLE

- **Board of Health.** Statute requires that the State Board of Health adopt rules to ensure appropriate patient access to disaster medical care through designated trauma centers and define the role of Regional Emergency Medical and Trauma Services Advisory Councils in preparation for a planned response to bioterrorist events.
- **Funding for Local Communities.** The State Emergency Medical and Trauma Service Advisory Council and the department use the EMS Provider Grant Program to fund local communities and providers for mass-casualty preparedness efforts.
- **Certification and Training.** The department is the central agency for certification and training of emergency medical technicians statewide.
 - ✓ Curriculum developed by the Colorado Board of Medical Examiners, the State Emergency Medical and Trauma Services Advisory Council and the department.
 - ✓ Curriculum focuses on signs and symptoms rather than identifying and treating specific diseases.
- **Planning.** The department developed a mass-casualty planning template, which includes planning for response to bioterrorism events.
- **Technical Assistance.** Department staff are available to assist communities in development of their mass casualty plans, by providing specific or general information on all medical aspects of the plan.
- **Advisory Council.** The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment staffs the State Emergency Medical and Trauma Services Advisory Council (SEMTAC) established in statute (25-3.5-104, C.R.S.). The 32 council members represent a comprehensive spectrum of medical and trauma care agencies throughout the state. The council:
 - Advises the department on programs, planning, service needs and rules.
 - Makes recommendations concerning standards for delivery of EMS services.
 - ✓ Minimum equipment requirements for ambulances
 - ✓ County licensure of ambulances
 - ✓ Curricula for training emergency medical personnel
 - ✓ Eligibility for trauma center designation
 - Makes funding recommendations for the development, implementation and maintenance of the statewide emergency medical and trauma system.

PARTNERS IN EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

- **RETACs.** Regional Emergency Medical and Trauma Services Advisory Councils, or RETACs, are appointed by counties to develop regional area emergency medical and trauma services plans.
 - Each of the 11 RETACs in Colorado is composed of at least four counties, or two counties with a combined population of at least 750,000.
 - At least one representative from each county serves on the RETAC.
 - The plans describe methods for providing the appropriate service and care to persons ill and injured in those areas. Components related to mass casualties and acts of terrorism include:
 - ✓ disaster communication
 - ✓ identification of disaster management assistance and resources
 - ✓ description of local disaster plans
 - ✓ description of local disaster plans
 - RETACs use a mass-casualty planning template inclusive of bioterrorism developed by department staff, which qualifies them for EMS Provider Grant Program funds.
 - RETACs are required to maintain an up-to-date list of all prehospital care organizations within their region; to conduct rapid notification tests at least twice a year; and to advise each organization to develop a plan for a response to an occurrence or imminent threat of an emergency epidemic.
- **Other State Agencies**
 - **Colorado Department of Public Safety.** The Colorado State Patrol, Colorado Bureau of Investigation, Division of Criminal Justice and the Division of Fire Safety work with federal, state and local agencies to protect the safety of Coloradans.
 - **Colorado Department of Local Affairs.** The state's Office of Emergency Management is the central state planning office for emergency preparedness and is the lead agency for state response coordination, and provides assistance to other state agencies and local jurisdictions in their emergency planning efforts.
 - **Colorado Department of General Support Services.** The Colorado Government Technology Services Division's Telecommunications Services is launching a digital trunked radio system, to provide a single shared network for digital wireless voice and data communication among public safety and medical service providers statewide.
- **Local First Responders.** Colorado's 64 counties and 270 municipalities have numerous local resources for emergency medical response.
 - fire and rescue departments
 - ambulance and transport agencies
 - police and sheriff's departments
 - hospitals and clinics
- **Federal Support.** In addition to federal law enforcement and military resources, Colorado has two specialized programs that offer support in the event of terrorist events.
 - **Colorado Disaster Medical Assistance Team.** The team, which is one of 37 around the country, provides medical services and support to areas overwhelmed by natural or man-made calamities. Part of the Colorado team, which is based in Denver, is a highly specialized, nationally deployable sub-unit known as the "National Medical Response Team for Weapons of Mass Destruction," one of only three in the nation.
 - **Metropolitan Medical Response System.** Three Colorado cities, Aurora, Colorado Springs and Denver, are receiving federal funding to develop Metropolitan Medical Response Systems to help local health and medical systems to respond to a terrorist incident involving nuclear, biological or chemical agents.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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