

*ARKANSAS STATEWIDE  
MUTUAL AID PLAN*

**ARMAP**

**1/1/06**

# INTRODUCTION

It is said, “No one stands alone.” Few communities are blessed with the resources to cope with every possible situation. We all depend on the support and assistance of our neighbors. At times we may send or receive assistance crossing several county or state boundaries.

Arkansas has more than its share of disasters, whether natural or man made. Arkansas is a dynamic state with rural and urban areas where tourism and general development are on the increase. None of us are immune from the possibility that the next disaster or extraordinary event could occur in our community.

Almost all disasters start at the local level. Government has the responsibility to prepare for and protect their citizens from these disasters. Emergency response leaders, and other public officials, will face overwhelming challenges when they occur.

What is your plan? How will your department react? When should you ask for mutual aid? How would you request the resources or technical support needed for your incident? What is to be expected? This document is designed to answer those questions and help you understand the Arkansas Statewide Mutual Aid Plan. A thorough understanding of the Plan is a responsibility of every Arkansas emergency response leader.

This is the beginning of a statewide mutual aid plan. Much will be learned in the months and years ahead. This Plan must be continually reviewed, revised and improved as conditions and needs in Arkansas change.

## PURPOSE

Act 1179 of 2005 established a Statewide Mutual Aid System and sets the framework for statewide mutual aid response.

The purpose of the **Arkansas Statewide Mutual Aid Plan (ARMAP)** is to build upon that framework and provide for the organized and expedient mobilization and operation of resources in response to disasters, weapons of mass destruction incidents and other extraordinary events, on a statewide basis.

Safety of our responders, the highest levels of service for our citizens and protection of state economic and environmental resources are the ultimate objectives of this plan.

## PLANNING CONCEPTS

Each **local government has the responsibility to prepare and protect its citizens** against the destructive forces of a natural or man made disaster **and to provide resources consistent with anticipated local needs.** However, some disasters are of a scope or duration that local resources are not adequate. No community has the financial resources to fund every contingency or to cope with all potential events.

From past major events, it is abundantly clear that greater coordination of multi-agency disaster response is needed. As development of the state of Arkansas continues to increase, the number of incidents affecting our population, economy and natural resources can also be expected to increase.

Basic to Arkansas's emergency planning effort is a statewide system of mutual aid in which **each jurisdiction relies first upon its own resources.** Local governments are encouraged to develop all-risk emergency plans and local mutual aid agreements within their county or operational area.

Communities are expected to **commit locally owned and local mutual aid resources before requesting statewide mutual aid.** However, no agency is expected to reduce its own local capability to an unreasonable level.

The **rendering of mutual aid is voluntary.** No community is required to unreasonably deplete its own resources in furnishing mutual aid. The decision to

provide resources for mutual aid is made on a case-by-case basis by the agency receiving the request.

The responsible **local official** in whose jurisdiction an incident has occurred **shall remain in charge** of the incident.

**Timely notification** and an orderly, coordinated build-up and response of mutual aid resources is essential to a successful mitigation effort.

## **STATE PARTNERS**

### ***Arkansas Department of Emergency Management (ADEM)***

Act 511 of 1973 and Act 646 of 1999 (Arkansas Emergency Services Act of 1973, Arkansas Code 12-75-101 et.al) direct the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management to maintain a management system that effectively and efficiently provides mitigation of and recovery from the effects of natural and man made disasters. The goal is accomplished through a series of programs designed to identify all disasters threatening the State; assist state agencies, local governments, volunteer and other organizations in determining the means to mitigate disaster effects; develop procedures for fast and efficient deployment of identified resources to effectuate mitigation and recovery; continually exercise all plans, evaluate results and make modifications to ensure procedures are effective; and coordinate the efforts of all organizations responding to disasters. ADEM is critical to the entire plan.

ADEM is the initial contact point for implementation of ARMAP.

Anytime an incident requires mutual aid beyond the local level, the request must go through ADEM. In many cases, ADEM will be on scene to offer technical and administrative assistance and coordination of state resources.

### ***First Response Agencies***

All First Response agencies in the state are partners in the plan. As responders they are the ones that will utilize the plan both in requesting and sending assistance.

Most important to the success of ARMAP and the outcome of any mutual aid response is the local official. Whether it is the requesting agency, or the agency

providing a resource, mutual assistance cannot occur in any fashion without the local official's knowledge of the plan and participation in the plan.

### ***Emergency Jurisdictions***

An emergency jurisdiction consists of any one of the seventy-five counties in the state.

### ***Arkansas Homeland Security Advisory Group (ARHSAG)***

Act 1179 of 2005 created an advisory body titled the "Arkansas Homeland Security Advisory Group" that consists of federal, state and local agencies and professional associations as determined by the Director of Arkansas Department of Emergency Management. This group is responsible for developing comprehensive guidelines and procedures that address requirements for requesting and providing assistance through the statewide mutual aid system, recordkeeping, reimbursement for assistance and any other process necessary to implement the statewide mutual aid system.

## **EMERGENCY JURISDICTION**

All emergency jurisdictions shall participate in the statewide mutual aid system, unless they have opted out of participating.

### ***Opt Out Procedures***

An emergency jurisdiction may elect not to participate in the statewide mutual aid system. In order to make the election, the governing body of the emergency jurisdiction shall enact a resolution declaring that the emergency jurisdiction elects not to participate in the statewide mutual aid system. The chief executive officer of the governing body shall provide a copy of the resolution to the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management within ten days of enactment.

### ***Participating Emergency Jurisdictions***

Within its own jurisdiction, a participating emergency jurisdiction shall:

- Identify potential problems and hazards that could affect the jurisdiction using an identification system common to all participating emergency jurisdictions.
- Conduct joint planning, intelligence sharing, and threat assessment development with contiguous participating emergency jurisdictions.
- Conduct joint training exercises with contiguous participating emergency jurisdictions at least once every other year.
- Identify and inventory, at least annually, current services, equipment, supplies, personnel, and other resources related to planning, prevention, mitigation, and response and recover activities of the participating emergency jurisdiction.
- Adopt and implement an incident management system consistent with Homeland Security Presidential Directive #5 (HSPD-5).

## **RESOURCE INVENTORY**

The ARMAP Resource Inventory is the foundation of the Statewide Mutual Aid Plan. ADEM is responsible for the development and implementation of the resource inventory database.

There are certain responsibilities and procedures relating to the resource inventory of which requesting agencies and responding agencies must be aware.

### ***Responding Agency***

In order to be a responding agency within the Arkansas Statewide Mutual Aid Plan, you must submit a Resource Inventory Sheet to ADEM.

By submitting your resources to the database, you are eligible to be a “responding” agency. By doing so you must agree to follow the rules and procedures of the plan. Some of the key expectations of responding agencies are:

- You must **follow the National Incident Management System (NIMS)**. This assumes that personnel that may respond to mutual aid incidents are familiar with this system and can operate within a fully implemented incident command system.
- All responding **personnel must be qualified and competent** in the position they are filling. The responding agency is responsible to determine the suitable professional qualifications of responders.

- You must take measures locally to seek authorization to immediately send resources outside of your jurisdiction. This is normally in the form of a resolution adopted by your jurisdiction's governing body.
- You must have developed and implemented an internal policy or procedure for the response to a request for mutual aid.
- You must provide an **annually updated** inventory of resources.

## *Requesting Agency*

- Incidents to which statewide mutual aid resources are requested **must operate within the National Incident Management System (NIMS)**. This is for the safety of on scene personnel and overall organization of the incident.
- When requesting resources, **the requesting agency must use the appropriate type designations** for resources. This is the primary way that the database can be searched.
- **Procedures for requesting and utilizing mutual aid resources must be followed** as described in this document.

There are a number of specialized resources or skills in the database that ADEM can search for by key words.

Of course, other more specialized or non-typical resources may also be available around the state but will take more time to locate. If a requesting agency knows the location of a specialized piece of equipment, they should inform ADEM upon request.

The resource inventory shall include information on both public and private ambulances and emergency medical vehicles and public forms of transportation such as buses that may be used in a declared emergency.

## **LOCAL DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY**

The issue of local delegation of authority is very important to the success of ARMAP. If dispatch gets the call, will they know what to do? Can they immediately dispatch resources or do they need to get approval? Meetings to make this decision at the time of a request are impractical. These issues should be considered and resolved beforehand.

If local governing body approval is needed, it is required by this plan that a **resolution be adopted in advance** authorizing department heads to release equipment at their discretion.

The resolution should designate the department head or his representative, who exercising discretion and considering the needs of the political subdivision and its inhabitants, may dispatch equipment and personnel as considered necessary if a danger of fire, hazard, casualty or another similar occurrence exists outside the political subdivision and by its suddenness it would be impractical for the governing body itself to authorize the dispatch of equipment and personnel to combat that emergency or disaster.

## NIMS

Homeland Security Presidential Directive HSPD-5 mandates the development and use of the **National Incident Management System (NIMS)**.

Therefore, incidents requiring the use of ARMAP and the resources operating at such an incident shall utilize the **National Incident Management System (NIMS)**.

The Incident Command System (ICS) is a component of NIMS. NIMS is designed to be used in response to fires, floods, winter storms, tornadoes, riots, hazardous materials, or other natural or man-made incidents. The structure of NIMS can be established and modified depending on the changing conditions of an incident. The flexibility of NIMS allows it to be used for any type or size of incident from a single unit response to a multi-agency response.

NIMS has five major functional areas: command, operations, planning, logistics and finance. The Incident Commander's responsibilities are:

- Assess incident priorities – life safety, incident stabilization, property conservation.
- Determine strategic goals and tactical objectives.
- Develop and implement an incident action plan (IAP).
- Develop and appropriate organizational structure.
- Manage resources.
- Coordinate overall emergency activity.
- Functional responsibilities of safety, liaison, and public information.

The job of an incident commander at a mutual aid incident is a daunting task. When an incident management system is not used, particularly at multi-unit or multi-agency incidents, chaos results. Chaos exposes responders and the public to greater risks. For these reasons, it is essential to utilize NIMS to ensure a safe, effective, organized and efficient operation. Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) laws require the use of ICS at incidents involving hazardous materials. National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1561 requires that ICS be used at all emergency incidents to which a public fire department responds.

## COMMUNICATIONS

Communication is critical to the success of any incident. If there is a problem in any emergency response, it will more often than not involve communication. The larger and more complex the incident, the more communication become an issue. By their nature, mutual aid incidents are large and complex. Planning and practical exercises are the only ways to discover and avoid problems with communication.

Communication starts in the dispatch center. All communication center personnel should have an up-to-date working knowledge of ARMAP. They must know what to do and what procedures to follow when an incident escalates from a single jurisdiction response to a multiple jurisdiction response. There may be new terminology, unfamiliar voices and new units on the air. Chaos often results if dispatch is not able to adjust to meet a much higher demand. Mutual aid is a new game with new players and new rules. Everyone must know them.

The dispatch center is as important on the sending end as it is on the receiving end. **Timely mobilization and response of mutual aid starts and ends in the local communication dispatch center.**

A good initial step to take with your dispatch center is to give them a copy of this document. The second step should be to develop a communication plan for the request, response and deployment of mutual aid resources. What frequencies are available? How will they be allocated? Will you need additional dispatchers or radios?

Radio Communication must be clear, concise and disciplined. **Use clear text messages.** If radio channels become overloaded, messages cannot get through. Field units may begin to take independent action. This is the beginning of much greater problems. **Immediate attention must be given to expanding your**

**communication capability.** Do you have enough frequencies along with spare batteries and portable radios to provide to mutual aid units?

In many disasters, the local telephone and cell phone systems may be inoperable or overloaded. Have contingency plans in place. The incident commander may need to establish a **Communication Unit** within the incident command structure to support the communication needs of the incident.

## *Media Communications*

In a disaster or major emergency, the transfer of incident information is in competition with one of the most sophisticated communication systems in the world – the *news media*. Some widely publicized major incidents, such as the Columbine High School shooting, have demonstrated that the news media may have more information than responding resources. We have also seen that major news networks can mobilize their crews and be on scene any place in the country within two to three hours. Through local affiliated channels they can be broadcasting live video images nationwide before local units are even on scene.

The media can quickly become a hindrance or an asset depending on their access to and release of accurate information. The solution to this potential problem is the early activation of a local public information plan. To ensure accurate, timely and responsible release of information, **all information must flow through on Public Information Officer (PIO)**. This person, their location, and a schedule of media releases must be made known. If the media does not have regular and timely access to information through the PIO, they will find it or create it elsewhere.

The public information plan must be made known to all resource units, the EOC, and all agencies involved in the response. If the emergency affects a private entity that may also have a communication or public information officer, they must also be brought into the NIMS PIO plan. Many incidents have resulted in field units, incident commanders and private sector spokes persons giving contradicting or inaccurate information. Until an effective public information plan is implemented, the media will grab at any information it can get. In a major incident, you must act early and with enough resources to contain this potential problem.

# ACTIVATING THE PLAN

This section explains the general steps for activation of ARMAP. Detail instructions and forms relating to more unique and specific operations of the plan can be found in the appendices to this plan.

## *Requesting Agency Procedure*

The requesting agency must first **commit local resources and utilize any existing local area mutual aid agreements before activating the statewide plan**. When local resources are not adequate for the size, nature, complexity or duration of an incident, **ARMAP** should be activated. **A declaration of a disaster is critical to the activation of the plan** so all local plans should follow AR Code 12-75-108 regarding the declaring of a disaster.

A requesting agency **should not exhaust local resources to an unsafe level** before calling for statewide assistance. Statewide assistance means that a search of the ARMAP Resource Inventory will be done to find the closest appropriate and available resources outside of a local mutual aid group that match the incident's needs.

Statewide mutual aid assistance can also be requested to assist in a training exercise if a plan is in place for such training.

To request any statewide assistance the request must be made by **calling ADEM**.

## *ADEM Initial Contact*

On the initial contact with ADEM, the requesting agency will be providing information and answering questions pertinent to the incident and its needs.

If you have the advantage of forewarning of a potential disaster, it is prudent to activate the system so that ADEM and designated resources can be alerted and ready to react quickly. In some cases, resources may be placed in a standby mode. This may save valuable response time in later phases of the incident.

When contact is made with ADEM, the requesting agency will need to give a detailed description of the incident and resources needed. This will enable ADEM to find the right resources for the incident. It will also help ADEM to know if any

other state agencies should be notified. Be prepared to **provide the following information to ADEM as appropriate:**

- The caller's name, rank and agency they represent.
- Purpose of your call – **to request mutual aid.**
- A brief report of the **nature of the problem**, i.e. immediate or planned need.
- Whether local mutual aid resources have been exhausted or are otherwise unavailable.
- The **type of incident**, i.e. fire, flooding, hazmat, building collapse, tornado, etc.
- The **area affected**, people or property involved.
- Anticipated or **potential problems**. How bad could it get?
- **Resources needed**. Be specific as to what kind and how many.
- Anticipated **duration of incident**.
- **Reporting location**, i.e. staging, with easy to understand directions.
- A **telephone number and point of contact** where ADEM can contact the requesting agency. This should be a number that has a high probability of being available, e.g. not being busy or out of service.
- A **telephone number** for responding units to contact requesting agency if needed.
- Radio travel frequency if available.

Once the request for mutual aid is made, ADEM will contact the appropriate agencies.

The result of the initial conversation between ADEM and the requesting agency will be:

- An agreement on the number and type(s) of resources that are needed,
- How soon they are needed,
- How long they are expected to be needed, and
- Where the resources should report, including a point of contact.

When identifying the resources needed, **use the Minimum Standards for Resource Types** developed by NIMS. At large incidents in which resources may be sent or received between many different local, state and federal agencies, it is important that common terminology be used. The ARMAP Resource Inventory is also based on this system. The method of finding the closest most appropriate resources for your needs is by using these “type” designations.

With this information, ADEM will immediately begin to locate and mobilize the closest available resources that match those requested.

The importance of providing **accurate and factual information** to ADEM cannot be over emphasized. This information may be passed on to the Governor's office or needed to make decisions about State disaster declarations or requests for other assistance. Accurate information is important in every aspect of an incident including development of incident action plans, strategic decisions and media releases.

At this point, the requesting agency should be making preparations for the arrival of mutual aid resources. Preparations to consider are:

- Staging – check-in procedure, ensure readiness of equipment and personnel, security.
- Advise staging or check-in location of anticipated resources and time of arrival.
- Equipment support – repairs, fuel, oil, tires, anti-freeze, etc.
- Personnel support – food, water, shelter, sanitation, rehabilitation, relief, rest, and medical.
- Communications – develop a plan, provide portable radios, maps or escorts as needed.
- Strategy – Consider new incident action plan and deployment of resources.
- Accountability – Who is there, where are they assigned, and what are they doing.

Once they arrive, the requesting agency is responsible for mutual aid resources. This includes providing repairs, fuel, oil, anti-freeze, tires, etc. for the apparatus and for the medical care, rehabilitation, feeding, shelter and general well being of the personnel.

Consider what assignments may be given to arriving resources. Will they need maps or an escort to efficiently carry out their assignment? Whenever practical, it is better to assign mutual aid resources to the incident rather than to have them sit in staging. These people have traveled a long distance to provide assistance. Use them in the incident whenever possible.

## ***ADEM Second Contact***

The second contact between ADEM and the requesting agency will occur when the resource request is totally or substantially filled. This time ADEM will be informing the requesting agency what resources are responding, where they are responding from, and the expected time of their arrival. Any known cell phone number of responding resources will be provided.

**Using improper reporting or requesting procedures** or circumventing these procedures **could slow down your request** for mutual aid.

All mutual aid operations under this plan must be carried out according to the **National Incident Management System (NIMS)**. Any incident requiring statewide mutual aid resources will be of such magnitude and consequence that a structured incident management system will be needed. ADEM may ask if local personnel are qualified in the NIMS. If not, they may recommend requesting an experienced incident overhead team.

## ***Responding Agency Procedures***

The procedure for a responding agency is simpler but just as important to the success of the plan. When resources are requested from another department, **either the incident commander or their designee will be contacted by the ADEM**. Each jurisdiction should determine in advance **who has the authority to release equipment** for mutual aid by doing a local delegation of authority resolution.

Using the ARMAP Resource Inventory, ADEM knows the closest departments to an incident that has the types of resources being requested. ADEM may have to contact several entities to fill the request. Remember that this is in response to an emergency and expect the conversation to be brief.

The responding personnel and equipment should be deployed as quickly as possible. You should attempt to **deploy as quickly as for an emergency in your own community**. It is understood that it may take a while longer to assemble a crew that can be gone for an extended period of time.

It is the responding jurisdiction's responsibility to send good serviceable equipment and personnel that are equipped and trained for the type of incident to which they are responding.

An emergency responder from a responding agency shall remain under the command control of his or her home jurisdiction, including use of medical protocols, standard operating procedures, and other protocols and procedures identified by the department. However, for the duration of the assistance, the emergency responder shall be under the operational control of the requesting agency in accordance with the incident management system of that jurisdiction.

Equipment and supplies belonging to the responding agency shall remain under the command control of the home jurisdiction. However, for the duration of the assistance, the equipment and supplies shall be under the operational control of the requesting agency in accordance with the incident management system of that jurisdiction.

Upon arrival, you must **check in with the staging officer** or other designated contact person.

Shortly after arrival and prior to assignment, you should receive an incident briefing. The requesting agency should verify radio communications with you and provide maps, portable radios, or escort as needed for your assignment.

**The responding agency officer is responsible for the safety of their crew.** If the officer does not feel comfortable with an assignment does not know who to report to, the officer needs more information and must let the command structure know.

Upon your release from the incident, you should **go through a demobilization process.** Your vehicle and equipment should be inspected and any damaged or lost equipment accounted for and documented. Any personnel injuries should also be documented.

It is strongly advised that every responding resource **keep a log of their activities starting from the time they leave their home base until they return to their home base.** Just as with incidents in your own community, records and reports are very important. Later this could be a factor in any reimbursement issues, insurance claims or lawsuits arising from the incident.

## **POST-INCIDENT REVIEW**

As with major local incidents, incidents requiring statewide mutual aid deserve a review. This is how we learn, identify strengths and weaknesses, and improve. Statewide mutual aid is new and complex. There are likely to be many valuable lessons to be learned from each incident.

The requesting agency is encouraged to conduct a post-incident review. All agencies involved with response to the incident should be invited.

## **REIMBURSEMENT**

- Workers Compensation – For purposes of workers compensation insurance, the employees of the responding agency are considered to be acting within the scope of their regular employment, as employees of the responding agency.
- Liability – For the purpose of liability, the employees of the responding agency are considered to be employees of the requesting agency.
- Compensation – In a state or federal declared emergency the requesting agency shall reimburse the responding agency for all expenses associated with providing the assistance other than regular salaries and benefits. In a local declared emergency the responding agency may request reimbursement.
- Request for reimbursement shall be made in accordance to established procedures. The department will not provide reimbursement for expenses associated with training exercises except in accordance with applicable rules.
- Complete and proper documentation of all expenses associated with a statewide mutual aid response is required before any reimbursement can be issued.
- Any claim for expenses incurred in using equipment or supplies, for which reimbursement is requested, must be filed with the clerk of the receiving political subdivision within 90 days.
- Any agency providing assistance may donate equipment, supplies or any other kind of asset to another agency.

Note: The term “employee” includes members of a volunteer fire or rescue organization.

It is recommended that departments have a policy in place for reimbursement of actual costs in the event of mutual aid with agencies with which you do not have a written agreement. In the event of a federally declared disaster, FEMA may use pre-established reimbursement rates that are lower than your actual costs. If you can show that your actual costs are higher than their rates, this policy will give you a better chance of collecting your actual costs.

## **SPECIAL PROBLEMS AND CONSIDERATIONS**

Much has been learned from years of experience with mutual aid in other states. Following are some general tips and considerations when using mutual aid.

- Responding personnel may not be familiar with your environmental conditions and topography. Whenever possible, **brief mutual aid units on local conditions and precautions** or assign a local responder to accompany them.
- Have a **check-in procedure for arriving units**. Verify mechanical condition of equipment and operational readiness or experience of personnel. It is not unusual for vehicles traveling long distances to develop mechanical problems.
- Be aware of mutual aid resources not **properly uniformed or equipped** to work in your emergency environment. You are responsible for their security and safety.
- Don't expect urban designed/trained resources to function in rural off-road environments and vice versa. Likewise, don't send inexperienced personnel into a high-risk environment. Verify **training competencies** of mutual aid personnel. ADEM may also assist with this when locating resources. However, ultimately it is the incident commander's responsibility.
- Know **what** resources are assigned to the incident, **who** they are, and **where** they are located. **Accountability is a must!**
- Don't place mutual aid resources in staging and forget about them. **Use them.**
- Don't put mutual aid resources in a remote location and never **check on them.**
- Are mutual aid units able to **communicate** with each other and command? Provide maps, portable radios, and other useful information.
- Provide an incident briefing to all units. Mutual aid units must know how they fit into the big picture, any special hazards or problems, and the incident action plan.

- Mutual aid resources (equipment and personnel) that are not prepared for the task or do not conduct themselves in a professional manner should be released from the incident. Inform ADEM.
- Expect that any statewide mutual aid incident will require a fully implemented incident command system including operations, planning, logistics and finance. Be prepared to provide adequate support personnel for these roles.
- Coordinating and caring for mutual aid resources can become a complex task. Consider requesting experienced incident management personnel to help manage the incident.
- Assign an incident safety officer with sufficient staff to cover all branches/sectors.
- With extended mutual aid incidents comes the need to relieve personnel from the scene.
- Establish a **public information officer** to provide incident information to public officials and the media. Be prepared to manage a large media response.
- Once you request mutual aid, you have an obligation to **keep the entire mutual aid organization informed**, including all mutual aid units and ADEM.
- Mutual aid resources can create a logistical nightmare. Be sure to have adequate **logistical support** to deal with all the needs of the incident.