



RUSSELLVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT  
POLICY MANUAL

Policy Number:  
Section:  
Original Date:  
Revised Date:

## PURPOSE

This policy provides the general framework for emergency procedures following the aftermath of a tornado or damage following destruction caused by high winds.

## POLICY

Following the destruction caused by high winds or a tornado, the members of the Russellville Fire Department will be responsible for the following:

- Search and Rescue
- Medical Triage and Treatment
- Control of Hazardous Situations
- Fire Control and Property Conservation

Tornado Watch. Is issued by government weather services when weather conditions are favorable for the development of severe thunderstorms that are capable of producing tornadoes.

Tornado Warning. Is an alert issued by government weather services to warn an area that a tornado may be imminent. It can be issued after either a tornado or funnel cloud has already been spotted, or if there are radar indications that a tornado may be possible.

### **Phase I – Operational Readiness – Tornado Watch (or High Wind Warning)**

When a tornado watch is in effect per the National Weather Service the on-duty Battalion Chief shall:

- Request emergency maintenance or repairs for apparatus or equipment to assure operational readiness.
- Notify the Fire Chief and/or designee that the department is at pre-storm readiness.
- Ensure that apparatus and equipment are full of fuel.
- Inspect all chainsaws, generators and hand lights.
- Check mobile and portable radio communication and make sure all radio batteries are at full charge.

### **Phase II – Take Cover – Tornado Warning**

Take all precautions necessary to protect department personnel and equipment during this phase, and above all do not respond while a tornado is on the ground.

As soon as the department is notified of a Tornado Warning by Pope County 911 the Battalion Chief shall carry out the following:

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- Direct all companies that are out of quarters that are not assigned an “emergency” incident to return to their assigned fire station immediately. Companies out of quarters on assigned emergency incidents shall be directed to take cover by whatever means.
- Direct all company officers to close all bay doors in their respective fire stations and where danger is imminent have their personnel take cover in a predetermined safe location within the fire station.
- Direct all company personnel to don turnout pants and boots to ensure quick turnout.
- Direct company officers to have in their possession, during the warning, a handheld radio in order to maintain radio contact with Pope County 911 and a hand light in the event of power failure.

Note: Facts to remember, these storms usually include:

- Destructive force winds
- Large hail
- Deadly lightning
- Flying debris

### Phase III – Aftermath (Damage Assessment/Emergency Response)

Based on damage reports from Pope County 911 and/or other first responder agencies, the Battalion Chief shall direct the following tasks:

1. **Station Assessment.** As soon as it is deemed safe, company officers shall conduct an assessment of any injuries to Department personnel and/or damage to fire station premises and determine if their company is available for immediate emergency response. Immediately following the assessment, company officers shall report their company’s status via telephone to the Battalion Chief. (Immediate attention shall be given to injuries sustained by Department personnel or civilians.).
2. **FMA Field Assessment.** Pending no emergency responses assigned from the dispatch center, all companies whose FMAs are in the path of potential damage shall begin a preliminary damage assessment of all major streets, roadways, and adjoining properties. During the assessment companies shall offer assistance in the clearing of streets of debris and other obstructions while maintaining a state of readiness in the event of an emergency response. The following unsafe conditions may be present:
  - a. Downed energized power lines
  - b. Streets may be blocked due to downed trees, wrecked automobiles or structures or other debris, and flooding
  - c. Flood areas may include escaping hazardous chemicals, liquids or gases
  - d. Injured people or animals lying in the street or adjacent easements

When responding all personnel will follow the following guidelines:

- Preservation of life before property conservation
- Report all hazardous conditions to the Battalion Chief and/or the Department representative at the County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) if it is activated.

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- Upon arrival at the damaged area, report the type and extent of damage to the Battalion Chief and/or EOC.

During these operations mutual-aid may not be available from nearby communities because they may also be dealing with extensive damage.

**3. Off-Duty Callback.** If damage has been confirmed within or in the immediate vicinity of the city, the Battalion Chief shall request the Dispatcher Center to callback of all off-duty personnel per 205.01 (Emergency Callback)

**4. Major Emergency Coordinating Team.** Establish a Major Emergency Coordinating Team (MECT) at the Central Fire Station. The Team shall address the following:

- Develop an overall strategy of operations.
- Ensure all frontline and reserve apparatus and equipment is in state of readiness for immediate response.
- Assign and deploy resources where necessary based on FMA Field Assessments and/or from County Dispatch Center/EOC.
- Track the arrival and assignment of off-duty personnel.
- Coordinate with other first responder agencies
- Assign a senior officer to the County EOC (If activated). Preferably this should be at least a Battalion Chief or higher ranking officer.

**5. Special Deployment Considerations.**

- Establish an additional battalion chief. This may be necessary due to call volume and complexity of incidents.
- Establishment of one or more Task Forces may be necessary due to the nature and severity of storm damage (Refer to SOP 201.08 Task Force)

**6. Tactical Considerations.**

Liquid Hazardous Material Spills:

- Foam
- Plug-n-dike
- Diking and Neutralization

Gas or Vapor Leaks:

- Contact CenterPoint
- Plugs or Seals
- Evacuation and removal of ignition sources

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Fires:

- If a severely damaged structure or vehicle is “ALL CLEAR” of people, then “write it off” and protect exposures.
- Perform rescue and medical treatment; if resources are not available to protect or extinguish structures that are on fire, then the decision must be made to “write it off”.

Post Activity:

- Report to the Fire Chief any apparatus or equipment that was damaged or destroyed
- Return all apparatus and equipment to service as soon as possible
- Complete all required documentation
- A post incident analysis will be conducted as soon as possible following an incident.

Approved

Fire Chief