

Spotlight on EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

November 2021

Clatsop County's Emergency Management Department maintains responsibility for a breadth of planning efforts, facilitation of various appointed and volunteer committees, public outreach and education focusing on an all-hazards approach, grant management and overseeing emergency communications.

It's a broad list of responsibilities for Director Tiffany Brown and her two-person staff, and which has only grown with the ongoing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The department manages the county's ClatsopALERTS! emergency notification and community information system, coordinates training events for local volunteers, promotes emergency preparedness, and oversees advisory panels such as the Ambulance Service Area Advisory Committee. It also manages the Emergency Operations Center at Camp Rilea, built adjacent to the facility's Warrior Hall to serve as a central command and communications hub during local and regional emergencies.

But planning is also a key focus of the department – not just for responses to emergencies when they happen, but for reducing the impacts of those events before they do.

The Cascadia earthquake and tsunami threat draws much of the attention in discussions of natural hazards on the Oregon Coast, but the region is also at risk from other potential events such as wildfires, wind storms and landslides. All these hazards are detailed in the Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan (NHMP), a comprehensive document that evaluates the vulnerabilities of our communities to these events, and outlines strategies to reduce or eliminate the risks they pose – to “create a disaster resilient Clatsop County” according to the plan's mission statement.

The plan identifies a range of measures from infrastructure upgrades to educational campaigns.

“We've identified in the last few years that we can save \$6 in a disaster for every \$1 we spend ahead of time, on mitigation projects,” Brown said.

The department recently completed an update of the NHMP, which not only incorporated new data but also added 10 jurisdictions, including Seaside School District, the Port of Astoria and several service districts. “Now those folks are eligible for funding streams they wouldn't have been otherwise,” including hazard mitigation funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Brown said.

In 2017, the Emergency Management Department assumed responsibility for the County's public health emergency preparedness program, which serves to advance six main areas of preparedness so state and local systems are better prepared for emergencies that impact the public's health.

Public health became a top priority last year with the COVID-19 pandemic, and Emergency Management has played a pivotal role in the county's response. The department has handled much of the logistics for testing, vaccination and treatment events at various locations, set up online registration for vaccine clinics, and made the Emergency Operations Center available for the county's Public Information Call Center.

The department has also served as a clearinghouse for local agencies, businesses and non-profits to access supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) through a single contact.

[Go to the county website](#) for a complete description of Emergency Management's services and programs.



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For questions or more information contact Clatsop County Emergency Management at (503)325-8645 or clatsopemd@co.clatsop.or.us.



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