



Poweshiek County Emergency Management Agency

Emergency Support Function 4

Firefighting

2026



Poweshiek County Emergency Management Commission

Plan Adoption Document

2026

We hereby certify that the attached/enclosed plans, portions of plans or Emergency Support Functions (ESF) to the Poweshiek County Comprehensive Emergency Response Plan have been approved and adopted by the members of the county Emergency Management Commission on this the 15th day in the month of April in the year 2026. This plan shall become part of the county emergency response and emergency operations plan once adopted.

Plans or ESFs Adopted:

ESF 4: Firefighting; Including all attachments and appendices

Dawn Hamilton
Chairperson, Emergency Management Commission

04-15-2026
Date

Dawn HAMILTON
Chairperson, EMC-Printed

Brian Paul
Coordinator, Emergency Management Agency

4/15/26
Date

Brian Paul
Coordinator, EMA-Printed

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ESF Coordinator

Poweshiek County Emergency Management

Primary Agencies

Primary agencies that will take the lead in implementing this ESF

Brooklyn Fire Department
Deep River Fire Department
Grinnell Fire Department
Hartwick Fire Department
Malcom Fire Department
Montezuma Fire Department
Searsboro Fire Department

Support Agencies

Major agencies that support Primary Agencies

EMS Services
Grinnell Police Department
Iowa State Fire Marshal
National Weather Service
Poweshiek County Dispatch Center
Poweshiek County Secondary Roads/City Public Works Depts.
Poweshiek County Sheriff's Office
Red Cross
Urban & Rural Water Districts

Purpose

Why are we writing this ESF?

The Fire-Rescue function in emergency or disaster situations is complex and may require the coordination of resources and all appropriate local, state, and federal agencies. The purpose of this plan is to optimize the use of fire service resources for an emergency, major catastrophe, or large disaster requiring fire service response or assistance. This includes but is not limited to the detection and suppression of urban, rural, and wildland fires and/or rescue needs resulting from an emergency incident or occurring simultaneously or coincidentally within a significant incident.

Scope

What does this plan cover?

This plan is not meant to establish specific operating procedures, but to establish framework that will provide guidance, coordination, and communication among the responding agencies, departments, and jurisdictions. This plan applies to all phases of incident management to include preparedness, response, and recovery. Typical activities in the plan will require close working relationships and coordination, collaboration, and communication with ESF-2: Communications; ESF-3: Public Works; ESF 5: Emergency Management; ESF-8: Health/Medical; ESF-9: Search & Rescue; ESF-10: Hazardous Materials; ESF-12: Utilities; ESF-13: Public Safety & Security.

ESF 4 assistance includes actions taken through the application of federal, state, and local governments, and in some cases, private industry, resources and technical expertise to control and suppress fires that threaten to become major emergencies or incidents. The provision of such services will be in accordance with mutual aid agreements, compacts, and established recognized standards for fire & rescue. Firefighting and rescue efforts will address four categories:

1. Urban Fires

Fires or related emergencies or major catastrophes that may threaten lives and property within a populated area such as a city or town. Fires and related emergencies in an urban setting often have established and adequate water supply system and infrastructure to support firefighting efforts.

2. Rural Fires

Fires or related emergencies or major catastrophes that may threaten lives and property outside of populated areas. Fires and related emergencies in rural areas oftentimes do not possess established and adequate water supply systems and infrastructure creating the need for additional resources to bring water to the scene.

3. Wildland Fires

Fires or related emergencies or major catastrophes that occur in forests, ranges, grassland, or agriculture fields that may threaten wildlife, habitat, or agricultural resources and livestock. Additionally, these incidents may be on the fringe of populated areas and pose a threat to lives and property.

4. Rescue Services

Emergencies or major catastrophes that may require the use of specialized equipment, skills, and techniques. Rescue services may include the following but is not limited to: vehicle and machinery extrication, high/low angle rescue, confined space rescue, ice/water rescue, trench rescue, grain bin rescue, collapse rescue, urban & wilderness rescue, and other technical rescue categories.

Policies

What policies are in place that will govern preparedness, response, and recovery efforts?

Each department or unit of local government is responsible for its firefighting infrastructure and has the primary responsibility for incident preparedness, response, and recovery activities.

When responding to an incident of multi-jurisdictional or countywide significance, the Authority Having Jurisdiction will lead other municipal, county, or other jurisdictional agencies and resources in response and recovery efforts.

Each jurisdiction maintains control over their individual resources, however, will operate in accordance with the Incident Command System and operate within the goals, objectives, tasks, missions and Incident Action Plan (IAP) set by the Incident Commander.

Situation

What is creating the need for this plan?

Emergency Support Function (ESF) 4: Firefighting is a key component of the County's Emergency Operations Plan. The need for this plan comes from a combination of urban and rural fire risks, limited resources, transportation corridors, severe weather threats, and compliance with national standards-all of which require a coordinated, countywide firefighting response plan. Below are some key points and risk factors as the primary reasons driving the need for this plan:

- Rural and Agriculture Risks- Poweshiek County has large expanses of farmland, grassland, and timber. These areas are vulnerable to wildland and field fires, particularly during dry and windy conditions. Rural living, farm equipment incidents, controlled burn escapes, and crop storage fires increase the likelihood of large-scale fire responses. Additionally, crop storage, agricultural implements and equipment pose unique rescue vulnerabilities.
- Community Growth and Infrastructure- Many towns across Poweshiek County have dense residential areas, schools, and business/industrial areas which pose a higher risk for complex fire emergencies. Many communities have seen growth through development in both residential and commercial areas.
- Limited Resources- Most departments in the county are volunteers with limited personnel, equipment, and response times. Fire-rescue incidents can quickly overwhelm departments with limited resources and availability of personnel ultimately threatening lives and property. Water infrastructure in urban areas may be inadequate for some firefighting operations, and non-existent in rural areas, especially during drought conditions.
- Transportation Corridors- Major transportation routes of interstate 80, highway 63, highway 6, highway 21, and rail lines run through the county increasing the risk for transportation related fires, hazardous materials response, and crashes requiring

specialized responses and coordination of resources. We have seen a local increase in “alternative fuel vehicles” such as electric vehicles traveling these corridors and the use of EV charging stations, which pose its own threats and dangers.

- Severe Weather & Natural Disasters- Iowa experiences tornadoes, high winds, and severe summer and winter weather which can trigger secondary fire hazards from downed power lines, lightning strikes, damaged gas lines, or the need to assist in search & rescue or damage assessment missions.
- Compliance- The Federal Emergency Management Agency and Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Department require counties to adopt and align with the National Response Framework (NRF), National Incident Management System (NIMS), and Incident Command System (ICS) and work towards the National Qualification System (NQS) to remain eligible for disaster reimbursement and federal grant awards.

Planning Assumptions

What can we realistically assume regarding our response to the above situations?

The timely and coordinated deployment of fire-rescue resources will have a direct impact on the ability to respond to and recover from a disaster or large-scale incident. Some fires and emergencies may not affect all fire-rescue resources at once or have a significant impact on all services. To this end, ESF 4 is based on the following assumptions:

- Fire-rescue departments will utilize their existing directives and procedures to the extent possible when responding to emergencies or disasters. All fire departments will work within the framework of the Incident Command System when operating during a disaster or emergency.
- Existing fire-rescue personnel and equipment will be able to cope with most day-to-day emergency situations either within their jurisdiction, or use of existing mutual aid agreements.
- During a major fire or related incident, normally available fire-rescue resources may be quickly exhausted and difficult to obtain.
- It is reasonable to assume that a major fire or rescue incident can occur as a secondary event to a natural or human-caused disaster. This may result in water supply infrastructure damage, damaged or blocked transportation routes making access to the emergency location difficult, limited fire personnel and resources, unique and uncommon rescue situations, or firefighters being called upon to more than their typical response to fires and emergencies.
- Fire-rescue personnel have been trained with ICS principles and practices, however, lack of experience in response to a major incident may result in slow development of the incident command structure.

Concept of Operations

This section will describe how the primary and support agencies will organize and work to support the overall preparedness, response, and recovery efforts.

To the extent possible, ESF 4 departments and organizations will follow their normal day-to-day policy and procedures in carrying out designated tasks. Conflicts regarding mission, tasks, priorities, and responsibilities will be forwarded to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Executive/Policy Group (if activated), or the Incident Commander.

Roles and Responsibilities

What defines a primary or supporting agency?

The county has identified primary and support agencies to ensure ESF 4 related activities are performed in an efficient and effective manner during all phases of the emergency management cycle.

- **Primary Agency:** Agencies that are assigned as the primary agency have been designated as such based on the agency's responsibility, authority, jurisdiction, functional expertise, resources, and capabilities in managing the assigned tasks and activities. Primary agencies may not be responsible for all elements of a given function, task, or mission and will work with supporting agencies to manage and complete functions, tasks, and missions related to ESF 4. Primary agencies may operate in a supporting role during mutual aid requests to other jurisdictions to support ESF 4 activities.
- **Support Agency:** Agencies may be assigned a support role if they have a substantial interest, mission, or related functions during incidents based on their role, capability, and resources. Organizations with a self-defined mission that includes emergency or disaster response and/or recovery efforts may receive formalized tasking by governmental agencies based on their capabilities and resources.

When fire-rescue services are needed for an incident response or recovery, an Incident Command Post (ICP) will be established, or the Emergency Operations Center will be activated. All activities related to ESF 4 will be coordinated at either the ICP or the EOC. Fire-rescue services may use local resources and mutual aid to supplement their capabilities for unmet needs. Emergency Management should be utilized to assist in the coordination of resources for response and recovery efforts related to ESF 4.

When operations go beyond local mutual aid agreements, the EOC may be activated to coordinate additional support. When prioritization becomes necessary, coordinating resources will occur under a unified command. Requests for fire-rescue resources will be made through the EOC when activated or the Poweshiek County Emergency Management Agency when not activated.

ESF 4 has a primary mission of the detection, suppression, and prevention of fires; providing rescue support and operations; and hazardous materials response within their jurisdiction. Other general roles and responsibilities of ESF 4 are, but not limited to:

- Assist with evacuation in cooperation with law enforcement.
- Assist in search & rescue missions and tasks.
- Ensure responder safety and maintain continuity of services during extended operations.
- Provide situation reports and damage assessments to the EOC.
- Assist and support public works and utility operators with debris management.

Preparedness Activities

How will primary and support agencies prepare for the management of Firefighting efforts and resources in the event of a major emergency or disaster?

- Conduct pre-fire planning and inspections.
- Conduct fire safety education programs to the public.
- Develop and maintain response policies, plans, and procedures.
- Develop, maintain, and participate in mutual aid agreements.
- Assign personnel to function in the EOC or ICP to assist in coordination of firefighting tasks.
- Train personnel to the Iowa Fire Service Training Bureau Firefighter I, Hazardous Materials Awareness, and Hazardous Materials Operations level at a minimum.
- Train their personnel in the Incident Command System to help ensure coordination during emergency incidents. The minimum level of training for all firefighting personnel is ICS 100 and NIMS 700. It is highly recommended that officers and command level personnel take ICS 200 and NIMS 800 also.
- Conduct and offer routine training for their personnel to remain proficient in their roles and responsibilities and gain new skills and certifications.
- Participate in drills and exercises to test existing plans and procedures and develop inter-agency collaboration.
- Maintain their equipment, tools, and apparatus to ensure a constant state of readiness.
- Develop, maintain, and update equipment and resource lists.

Response Activities

If there is a major fire emergency, or ESF 4 is activated, how will the response unfold and how will operations be coordinated?

Response activities are divided into two categories- On-scene operations and EOC operations. The primary duties of on-scene operations are to manage tactical operations, conduct risk assessments, and request additional resources as needed through established mutual aid. Within the EOC, the focus shifts to supporting on-going or long-term fire-rescue needs by coordinating additional mutual aid, continuity of operations, logistical support, communications, and coordination between local, state, and federal resources.

On-Scene Operations

How will the initial response be managed?

Fire-rescue operations must begin with the establishment of Incident Command. Incident Command should be taken by the first arriving fire-rescue response unit. Command may be passed to a higher-ranking officer when they arrive on scene. The Incident Commander's control and direction must be followed if they are in command. Command and control of all fire-rescue operations are under the control by the fire department having jurisdiction, unless command has been passed to, and accepted by another jurisdiction.

Priority is given to life safety (responder and the public), Incident stabilization, and property conservation, in that order.

When local resources are inadequate or exhausted, the Incident Commander may request mutual aid using alarm cards through the dispatch center to assist with the incident.

Existing mutual aid agreements will be activated through the dispatching of additional resources identified on the alarm cards.

Requests for resources beyond existing mutual aid agreements, such as the Central Iowa Disaster Task Force and Strike Teams will be requested through Poweshiek County Emergency Management.

Incidents requiring multi-jurisdictional and multi-agency response may be organized under a Unified Command structure using ICS principles.

EOC Operations

How will Firefighting related objectives be coordinated in a large-scale or expanding incident?

The Poweshiek County EOC may be activated to support field operations and serve as the central location for inter-agency/departments coordination and executive level policy and decision making. ESF-5 Incident Management outlines in greater detail the functions and responsibilities of the EOC. Refer to that plan for further guidance.

EOC Functions- The EOC will facilitate the following functions/responsibilities:

- Overall coordination of emergency response and/or recovery efforts
- Establish incident objectives, goals, and metrics.
- Provide executive policy and decision making
- Coordination with agencies, jurisdictions, including mutual aid, state and federal resources.
- Collection, evaluation, and dissemination of information.
- Resource procurement, allocation, and tracking.

Activation- The EOC may be activated under the following general guidelines:

- Resource needs exceed local and normal mutual aid resources.
- Widespread or long-duration incidents that may last multiple days.
- Multiple agencies and jurisdictions are affected or responding.

- Multi-county, state, or federal assistance may be required.

Authorization- The following individuals may request the EOC be activated:

- Emergency Management/Designee
- Chief Elected Official/Designee
- Incident Commander

Notification Procedure

Requests to activate the EOC will be made through the Poweshiek County Dispatch Center and/or Poweshiek County Emergency Management. Contact lists are kept on file in the dispatch center and with Emergency Management who will make proper notification of EOC activation through Alert Iowa and normal means of communication.

Initial Reporting Requirements

When the EOC is activated the minimum reporting requirements to the EOC include:

- Emergency Management Coordinator
- Elected Officials of the jurisdiction
- Representative(s) from the primary response agency (agency having jurisdiction)
- Representative(s) from support agency(s)
- EOC General Staff (Operations, Logistics, Planning, Finance/Admin Section Chiefs)
- Specific requests by the authorized entity activating the EOC

Subsequent notifications to report to the EOC will be determined on an assessment of the situation and will be the responsibility of the above identified personnel to notify appropriate agencies/personnel to report.

EOC Facilities

There are two Emergency Operations Centers located in Poweshiek County. The primary location is listed first, and the secondary is listed second. Based on the location and complexity of an incident it will be determined by the elected officials and Emergency Management which EOC to utilize. Both EOC's are equipped similarly and can sustain 24/7 operations and are equally accessible for use as needed.

**Poweshiek County Public Safety Bldg
4802 Barnes City Rd
Montezuma, IA 50171**

**Grinnell Public Safety Bldg
1020 Spring St
Grinnell, IA 50112**

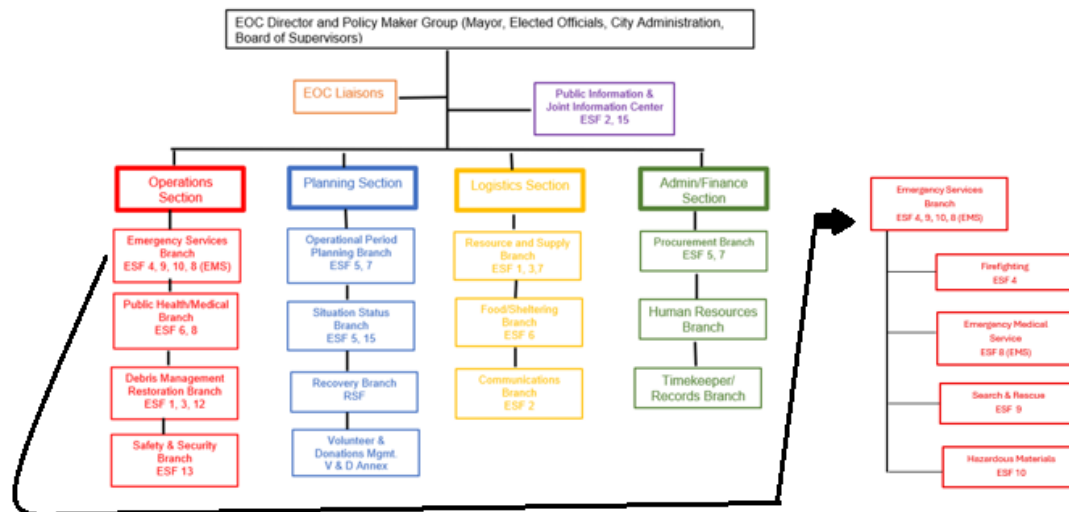
EOC Operational Levels

To be consistent with ICS principles, a graduated approach to managing emergencies and disasters is used. As the scope and complexity of the situation escalates, staffing levels within the EOC will increase as needed.

Level	Description	Minimum Staffing
1 (Monitor)	Small incident or event One Site One or more agency involved Potential threat of: Severe storm Escalating incident	Emergency Management (EOC Director) Additional Staff as Requested
2 (Partial)	Moderate event Two or more sites Several agencies involved Major scheduled event Limited evacuations Resource support required	EOC Director Requested ESF Groups Section Chiefs (as needed) Senior Elected Officials PIO
3 (Full)	Major event/incident Multiple Sites Regional disaster Multiple agencies involved Extensive evacuations Resource support required	EOC Director All ESF Groups All Section Chiefs Policy Group (elected officials) Liaison Officer All EOC General Staff

EOC Organization

In our EOC, ESF 4 is under the Operations Section and serves within the Emergency Services Branch. Based on the size, severity, complexity of the incident and/or availability of personnel, multiple people will serve in various roles (single role) within the Emergency Services Branch, or one person may serve in multiple roles under the Emergency Services Branch (dual/multi-role).



Communications

How will personnel and resources communicate during an EOC activated incident?

Informal Communications

Communications may be informal and direct to the intended party when exchanging information with other local, regional, and state counterparts following normal day-to-day practices and procedures. Informal communication may be used when there is a need to:

- Communicate with other primary or support agencies operating within an assigned mission or task.

- Communicate outside the EOC or ICP with personnel, resources, and other agencies to obtain information or available resources needed to assist in the implementation of plans, missions, or tasks.
- Coordinate and communicate closely with other active ESF groups within the EOC.

Formal Communications

Any communication that requires a change to the status of the operational plan or Incident Action Plan (IAP) goals and objectives must be formal in nature and follow the formal chain of command process. Formal communication may be used when there is a need to:

- Change or alteration of goals or objectives identified in the IAP.
- Resource requests outside of available on-scene or staged resources, or unmet resource needs.
- Situation/status reporting and progress reports
- Public information reporting

ESF 4 General EOC Response Objectives

What is my role and responsibility as the ESF 4 Representative in the EOC during the response phase?

Typical incident objectives that need to be performed within the EOC by the Firefighting ESF include but are not limited to:

- Serve as a liaison between related primary and supporting agencies.
- Monitor ongoing fire-rescue related actions and activities.
- Assessing the need for additional support beyond normal mutual aid and reporting the need for additional resources.
- Receive and share with command staff situation status updates and needs related to fire-rescue to aid in the development of situation reports and the Incident Action Plan.
- Participate in and provide fire-rescue specific reports for EOC briefings.
- Assist in the development of incident objectives and goals.
- Provide fire-rescue resources and personnel to meet incident needs, objectives, and goals.
- Coordinate fire-rescue resources and staffing to ensure that the function can provide adequate service across multiple operational periods.
- Coordinate with other ESF's as needed.
- Coordinate and provide logistical support for operations.
- Provide technical assistance to General Staff and Policy Group as needed.

ESF 4 General EOC Recovery Objectives

What is my role and responsibility as the ESF 4 Representative in the EOC during the recovery phase?

This section involves the Firefighting related actions needed to help individuals and communities recover as soon as possible. Typical recovery objectives include, but are not limited to:

- Continue to coordinate fire-rescue equipment, personnel, and supplies.
- Assess damage to fire-rescue equipment and facilities if necessary.

- Conduct an appropriate fire investigation and/or participate in the fire investigation as requested.
- Prepare and submit fire reports and documentation.
- Prepare and submit cost recovery documentation, if appropriate.
- Conduct fire inspections of restored or reconstructed buildings within their jurisdictions as appropriate.
- Participate in after-action meetings and submit documentation for after action reports.
- Demobilize mutual aid and other resources when they are no longer needed.

Plan Maintenance

How will this plan be maintained?

Maintenance

The ESF 4 Coordinator will be responsible for the review of this plan on an annual basis. If revisions are necessary, they will be made and the updated plan forwarded to the primary agencies.

- Dissemination of the updated plan will be made by Poweshiek County Emergency Management following the guidelines outlined in the Basic Plan...
- Significant operational changes in the plan resulting from exercises or actual events will be accomplished through an ESF 4 Planning Committee.

Exercises

The Poweshiek County Emergency Management Agency will coordinate and integrate the exercising of this plan to meet local needs and state/federal requirements as part of other ESF or incident specific exercises.