



**Emergency Support Function 8  
Public Health & Medical Services**



**Coordinating Agency**

West Virginia Department of Health and  
Human Resources (WVDHHR)

**Support Agencies and Organizations**

West Virginia Department of Agriculture  
(WVDA)  
West Virginia Department of Environmental  
Protection (WVDEP)  
West Virginia Division of Homeland  
Security and Emergency Management  
(WVDHSEM)  
West Virginia Department of Military  
Affairs and Public Safety (WVDMAPS)  
West Virginia Board of Pharmacy  
(WVBOP)  
West Virginia Voluntary Organizations  
Active in Disaster (WVVOAD)  
Civil Air Patrol (CAP)  
West Virginia Department of Education  
(WVDE)  
West Virginia Bureau of Senior Services  
(WVBSS)  
West Virginia Department of Administration  
West Virginia Department of Transportation  
(WVDOT)

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**Purpose**

ESF 8 coordinates health and medical resources needed to supplement local jurisdictions in response during a natural or man-made disaster. The Cabinet Secretary of West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (WVDHHR) is responsible for the management and direction of ESF 8.

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**Scope**

ESF 8 provides supplemental assistance to local jurisdictions in identifying and meeting the public health and medical needs of victims of any emergency or disaster. This support is categorized as follows:

- Assessment of public health/medical needs

- Public health surveillance and disease outbreak investigation
- Medical care personnel health and safety
- Medical equipment, supplies, and countermeasures
- Emergency Medical Services
- Environmental health monitoring and response
- Mass fatality operations
- Mass care and public works emergency support functions
- Health Care facility patient evacuation
- Public Health laboratory services
- Children’s and family services
- Food/Water safety
- Behavioral health care
- Potable water/wastewater and solid waste disposal
- Veterinary medical support

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**Policies**

**A.** All Departments and agencies assigned responsibilities within ESF 8 will develop and maintain the necessary plans and standard operating procedures needed to accomplish their tasks.

**B.** WVDHHR is the lead agency for ESF 8 and coordinates federal public health and medical services response, and is the State of West Virginia’s public health medical expert providing guidance to local jurisdictions.

**C.** The Cabinet Secretary of WVDHHR will maintain authority over the departments work units throughout the state utilizing the incident command system.

**D.** WVDHHR through the West Virginia State Emergency Operations Center (WVSEOC) will support the state and local Emergency Operations Centers (EOC). Extensive public health and medical response will be further supported as needed by WVDHHR’s agency-specific incident coordination system, as an extension of/adjunct to the WVSEOC.

## **Organizational Structure**

**A.** Each participating state agency or private sector organization develops Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs) that specify how assigned tasks are carried out. Elements of these SOGs impacting other agencies are coordinated with those agencies.

**B.** State agencies primary roles are to supplement local resources, except where specifically directed by law or other agreements.

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## **Concept of Operations**

### **A. General**

1. WVDHHR coordinates health and medical assets to mitigate the harmful effects of natural and man-made disasters and to preserve life. WVDHHR coordinates support to local health entities when local capacity has been exceeded and/or multiple jurisdictions are involved. WVDHHR response activities are coordinated by the Director, Center for Threat Preparedness (CTP). The Director serves as the Disaster Coordinator which includes the assessment and coordination of disaster response activities.

2. Response activities are implemented in accordance with the National Incident Management System (NIMS). It is the responsibility of the Disaster Coordinator to coordinate the health and medical response for a disaster/emergency. The Director of the Center for Threat Preparedness ensures communication with the Secretary of the WVDMAPS, the Secretary of WVDHHR, the State Health Officer and the WVSEOC.

3. A liaison officer may be assigned for duties within the WVSEOC to facilitate the sharing of information between WVDHHR and its support agencies. At the conclusion of an event or exercise, the Director of the Center for Threat Preparedness ensures the implementation of an After Action Review (AAR), documentation of the outcomes and lessons learned, and sharing of this information with appropriate parties. The After Action Review should be held internally and with all supporting partners and agencies.

### **B. Phases of Management**

#### **1. Preparedness**

a. Develop and maintain a hazard and risk vulnerability analysis related to the agency's area of concern and responsibilities.

b. Coordinate this analysis with other supporting agencies.

- c. Review this analysis periodically to identify changes in hazard and risk status and vulnerability classification.
- d. Develop pre-scripted brochures, pamphlets and other public information handouts for the media and public.
- e. Develop and maintain emergency plans, procedures, regulations and legislation and recommend appropriate changes.
- f. Develop agreements for reciprocal assistance in response to major emergency medical emergencies, including mutual aid agreements and Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) for support material, personnel or mission-ready packages.
- g. Conduct necessary training and exercises to ensure an effective state of preparedness. Coordinate with support agencies, volunteer groups and others on training and exercises.
- h. Develop a state system of identification, registration and credentialing of health and medical response teams.
- i. Obtain protective equipment, clothing, instruments and medical countermeasures to perform tasks in hazardous environments.
- j. Develop, coordinate and participate in a regular schedule of tests, drills, and exercises independently or with other emergency service agencies.
- k. Coordinate with local Jurisdictions' identification of special needs shelters.
- l. Develop/identify disaster preparedness resources for access and functional needs populations.
- m. Maintain Emergency public health alerting system.
- n. Develop and maintain a list of hospital bed availability.
- o. Develop plans and procedures for the establishment of staging areas for medical personnel, equipment and supplies.
- p. Support the development and preparedness of community and state response teams, e.g. Crisis Behavioral Health Teams, Radiological Response Strike Teams, Epidemiology and Environmental Field Teams.

q. Develop and maintain tools for public health and medical situational awareness.

2. Response

a. Conduct initial assessment of public health and medical needs.

b. Assess resource availability.

c. Coordinate response for disease surveillance and control, laboratory services, children and family issues, behavioral health, environmental health, mass fatality management and emergency medical services.

d. Coordinate with WVDHSEM and local jurisdictions regarding special needs shelters.

e. Coordinate and communicate with appropriate healthcare organizations, availability of beds, hospital diversions, and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) medical direction communication needed.

f. Determine need for healthcare facility patient evacuation(s) and tracking.

g. Monitor, acquire and assess information about the disaster and share with relevant parties.

h. Coordinate deployment of resources, as needed.

i. Arrange EMS medical transportation beyond available local resources or capabilities.

j. Coordinate population health and medical monitoring activities.

k. Coordinate/support decontamination of exposed emergency personnel and victims.

l. Coordinate public information with the Governor's Office of Communications and WVDHSEM.

m. Coordinate the establishment of temporary morgues with the West Virginia Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME).

n. Maintain records of the numbers and identity of deceased, injured, and hospitalized casualties, handling mass casualties, victim identification and mortuary services.

o. Identify state medical assets and deploy as needed to affected areas.

p. Assist with coordination of patient relocation and establishment of emergency medical care centers.

q. Coordinate provisions of medical care.

**3. Recovery**

a. Coordinate/support movement of individuals back into their homes (temporary or established)

b. Coordinate/support re-establishment of public health and healthcare resources in affected area.

c. Assist in damage assessment activities and report results.

d. Assist in implementation of disaster assistance programs per agency SOGs.

e. Assist in handling inquiries concerning missing persons and in notification of families regarding status and location.

f. Support clean-up activities and other actions to support return to normal conditions.

g. Compile a record of events.

h. Review codes, laws, procedures and recommend improvements where appropriate.

**Agency Responsibilities Matrix**

<b>Supporting Agency</b>	<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources	WVDHHR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage health and medical resources by maintaining a resource inventory and tracking available resources such as hospital and nursing home bed availability</li> <li>• Maintain emergency public health emergency alerting system</li> <li>• Determine resource allocations and arrange for the provision of medical personnel, equipment, supplies, and countermeasures to healthcare facilities and shelters</li> <li>• Ensure medical volunteers are credentialed either through the state’s advanced credentialing system or respective licensure board</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor, assess, and respond to requests for assistance from local emergency medical services public health or healthcare entities</li> <li>• Coordinate hospital evacuations</li> <li>• Evaluate threats to public health, including impacts of biological, chemical and radiological exposure. This may be accomplished through field assessments, damage assessments, facility damage assessments, epidemiological surveillance and investigation, community health assessments and/or in concert with other state agencies such as the WVDEP</li> <li>• Ensure sanitary conditions of shelters, water, food supply, potability of water, and control of vermin and other pests</li> <li>• Ensure proper emergency storage and disposal of waste, including human waste.</li> <li>• Investigate and advise the public and emergency workers of potential health hazards and steps they can take to protect themselves and/or mitigate the situation. This may include, but is not limited to, information on home clean-up procedures, injury prevention, rodent and pest control, infection control and self-care information. Provide medical countermeasures to disaster response personnel, as needed, prior to deployment (e.g. tetanus)</li> <li>• Coordinate and provide behavioral health services to disaster victims, healthcare workforce, emergency workers, first responders, impacted communities and other persons, as appropriate</li> <li>• Regulate fatality management services, so no public hazard is created. Provide guidance to local health facilities and communities for handling and disposing of human remains</li> <li>• Coordinate mass fatality management processes.</li> <li>• Establish mortuary surge capacity capabilities</li> <li>• Ensure the provision of laboratory services for analysis of clinical and environmental (e.g. chemical and biological) samples and report the findings, as appropriate, to local, state and federal partners</li> <li>• Establish and ensure regular communications with partners and support agencies such as local health departments, hospitals, pharmacies, medical suppliers, and others</li> <li>• Coordinate the development and distribution of key public information and education messages using multiple mediums at a level the general public can understand. Assist with coordination of a Joint Information System (JIS) and Joint Information Center (JIC) Operations with the Governor’s Office of Communications</li> <li>• Execute and manage all health-related information technology systems such as electronic disease detection, Health Alert Network (HAN), and public health portals</li> </ul>
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West Virginia Department of Agriculture	WVDA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulate the food supply system from the farm until it is provided to the public, primarily wholesale and retail food stores. Regulate the slaughterhouse and food warehouses. Share information as appropriate with WVDHHR</li> </ul>
West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection	WVDEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide environmental laboratory services, hazardous materials expertise and services, along with assisting in the evaluation and provision for safe water and food supplies</li> </ul>
West Virginia Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management	WVDHSEM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate ESF 5 Emergency Management and ESF 7 Logistics</li> <li>• Support ESF 8 Public Health</li> </ul>
West Virginia Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety	WVDMAPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide support actions to protect public health through the provision of staff for response activities, medical services, security and crowd control, and air and ground transportation</li> <li>• Assist with public facility assessments and designate public facilities that may be hazardous</li> <li>• Ensure the security of health and medical assets at all times; including receiving, staging, storing, transporting, distributing and dispensing</li> <li>• Coordinate crowd control at medical facilities and sites of mass distribution/dispensing of medical resources</li> <li>• Ensure the safety of health and medical professionals working in a potentially dangerous environment, such as when medical resources are scarce, which may lead to theft and civil unrest</li> <li>• Assist with coordinating health facility and mass distribution/dispensing site security when local resources are unable to meet a need</li> <li>• Provide guidance to the health and medical community regarding protection of evidence and chain of custody as it relates to disaster victims needing medical care.</li> <li>• Support the State Medical Examiner in carrying out his/her duties</li> </ul>
West Virginia Board of Pharmacy	WVBOP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gain access to appropriate pharmacies for use as medicine distribution points and ensure the safety and security of all controlled substances</li> </ul>
West Virginia Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster	WVVOAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support ESF 8 health and medical response activities and appropriate ESF 6 Mass Care operations</li> <li>• Provide workforce surge capacity, access to medical supplies and resources, shelter operations, casualty tracking services, food preparation and distribution, transportation, behavioral health support and assist with information dissemination, among other duties.</li> <li>• Provide workforce surge capacity, access to medical supplies and resources, shelter operations, casualty tracking services, food preparation and distribution, transportation, behavioral health support and assist with information dissemination, among other duties.</li> </ul>

Civil Air Patrol	CAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide transportation for medical supplies, health care personnel and disaster victims as requested</li></ul>
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## **Authorities & References**

### *Authorities*

West Virginia Code §16

### *References*

State of West Virginia Emergency Operations Plan – Basic Plan

WVDHHR Public Health Threat Response Plan

West Virginia Hazardous Materials (ESF 10)