

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF LEWIS COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

**AMEND CHAPTER 3.02 – EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
AND OPERATIONS – OF LEWIS COUNTY CODE**

ORDINANCE 1365

WHEREAS, RCW 38.52.030 mandates an all-hazard comprehensive emergency management plan and programs for the emergency management of the state of Washington, and RCW 38.52.070 requires the county's emergency management organization and plan to be consistent with the state's plan and program; and

WHEREAS, the Lewis County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) established Chapter 3.02 - Emergency Management Operations and Plan - of county code via Ordinance 1239 in July 2012 and revised it via Ordinance 1310 in December 2019; and

WHEREAS, the BOCC wishes to update Chapter 3.02 as follows:

- Update Section 3.02.030 to reflect that emergency management is a department, not a division.
- Add Chapter 3.02.070 - Designation of spokesperson during emergencies or disasters - to establish the parameters regarding the commissioner or designee to serve as the BOCC spokesperson during emergencies.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED that the BOCC hereby amends Chapter 3.02 of Lewis County Code as follows:

**Chapter 3.02
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OPERATIONS AND PLAN**

Sections:

3.02.010	Purpose.
3.02.020	Definitions.
3.02.030	Director of emergency management.
3.02.040	Lewis County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan – Adoption by reference.
3.02.050	Plan verification and review.
3.02.060	Continuity of government.
3.02.070	Designation of spokesperson during emergencies or disasters.

3.02.010 Purpose.

As a political subdivision of the state, Lewis County intends to comply with its responsibilities under Chapter [38.52](#) RCW, Emergency Management, which responsibilities include the establishment of a local organization for emergency/disaster management. The county emergency management plan and organization, adopted by reference herein, are intended to establish the organization for the local preparation for and the carrying out of all emergency functions, other than functions for which the

military forces are primarily responsible, to mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies and disasters, and to aid victims suffering from injury or damage, resulting from disasters caused by all hazards, whether natural or technological or human-caused, and to provide support for search and rescue operations for persons in distress. However, “emergency management” or “comprehensive emergency management” does not mean preparation for emergency evacuation or relocation of residents in anticipation of nuclear attack.

3.02.020 Definitions.

(1) Emergency or Disaster. As used in this title “emergency” or “disaster” shall mean an event or set of circumstances which: (a) demands immediate action to preserve public health, protect life, protect public property, or provide relief to any stricken community overtaken by such circumstances; or (b) reaches such a dimension or degree of destructiveness as to warrant the Governor declaring a state of emergency pursuant to RCW [43.06.010](#). “Emergency” or “disaster” as used in this title does not include an incident that requires a normal police, coroner, fire, rescue, emergency medical services, utility or public works response including a response to a violation of one of the statutes referenced in RCW [38.52.430](#).

(2) Additional Definitions. See Appendix – Glossary of Terms of the Lewis County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.

3.02.030 Director of emergency management.

Pursuant to RCW [38.52.070](#), the board of county commissioners is authorized to establish a local organization for emergency management hereby known as the department of emergency management. Also pursuant to RCW [38.52.070](#), the board of county commissioners is authorized to appoint an individual as the director of emergency management (director).

(1) The director shall have direct responsibility for the organization, administration, and operation of the department of emergency management and implementation of the Lewis County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP), subject to the direction and control of the board of county commissioners. The director’s role and responsibilities are set forth in the CEMP and are subject to the limitations and responsibilities set forth in Chapter [38.52](#) RCW.

(2) The director shall have the authority to request that the board of county commissioners (board) declare the existence or threatened existence of a disaster and the termination thereof, if the board is in session, or to issue such declaration if the board is not in session, subject to action by the board to ratify or rescind such declaration at the board’s earliest practical meeting. In the absence and unavailability of the director, the director’s designee shall have the same authority to act as conferred upon the director in this subsection.

3.02.040 Lewis County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan – Adoption by reference.

The “Lewis County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan” (CEMP) (January 2011) including appendices is adopted by reference as though set forth herein in full. The CEMP incorporates the county organizational structure and response plan for emergencies and disasters and is intended to comply with the relevant provisions of Chapter [38.52](#) RCW.

3.02.050 Plan verification and review.

(1) Verification. Following the effective date of the adopting ordinance and pursuant to RCW [38.52.070](#), the director shall be responsible to submit the CEMP to the Director of the Emergency Management Division of the State Military Department for review and verification for consistency. The CEMP shall be reviewed and amended as necessary by the board of county commissioners to address compliance with state and federal law, including the requirements of Chapter [38.52](#) RCW.

(2) Review. The CEMP is subject to review pursuant to the “plan maintenance” review four-year cycle as set forth in the CEMP.

3.02.060 Continuity of government.

When, as the result of an emergency or disaster, the number of county commissioners needed and available to act falls below a quorum, the following provisions shall govern the continuity of the board of county commissioners:

(1) Any county commissioner shall have full authority to act in all matters as the board of county commissioners until a quorum is restored pursuant to applicable law.

(2) In the event that no county commissioner is available to act as provided in subsection (1) of this section, then those elected county officials listed herein that are available for duty shall jointly act as the board of county commissioners and shall exercise by majority vote of those present at a proper meeting the full authority of the board of county commissioners until such time as one or more county commissioners become available or are duly appointed. The “elected county officials” referenced herein shall consist of the following officials: sheriff, assessor, auditor, county clerk, prosecuting attorney, coroner, and treasurer.

(3) The actions taken by a county commissioner or group of elected county officials pursuant to and in accordance with the authority granted by subsections (1) and (2) of this section and otherwise applicable law shall be ratified by the board of county commissioners once a quorum is duly restored. [Ord. 1310 §2, 2019; Ord. 1239 §3, 2012]

3.02.070 Designation of spokesperson during emergencies or disasters.

In the event of an emergency or disaster, elected officials are encouraged to participate in incident briefings, operational meetings, and planning sessions. To ensure clear and consistent communication, the following provisions establish the designated spokesperson representing the Board of County Commissioners:

(1) Single-district impact: When an incident affects only one commissioner district, the commissioner representing the impacted district, or their designee, shall serve as the official spokesperson for all related meetings and planning sessions. This commissioner, or their designee, shall also serve as the Board’s representative within the Policy Group upon activation of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

(2) Multi-district impact: When an incident affects multiple commissioner districts, the Chair of the Board of County Commissioners, or their designee, shall serve as the designated spokesperson for all relevant meetings and planning sessions. The Chair, or their designee, shall also represent the Board as a member of the Policy Group upon activation of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

PASSED IN REGULAR SESSION THIS 10th day of June 2025, following a public hearing publicized in the newspaper of record on May 28, 2025.

APPROVED AS TO FORM:
Jonathan Meyer, Prosecuting Attorney

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
LEWIS COUNTY, WASHINGTON

By: David Bailey, Chief Civil DPA

Scott J. Brummer, Chair

ATTEST:

Lindsey R. Pollock, DVM, Vice Chair

Rieva Lester, CMC, Clerk of the Board

Sean D. Swope, Commissioner