

Start here the moment a disaster begins.

Emergency management is not a first responder, and the EMA Director may be supporting several communities at once. What you gather and report feeds the county Emergency Operations Center, so resources can be balanced across the whole county.

Every public message answers:

1. What happened? 2. What are we doing? 3. What should you do?

...and tells people where to get answers:

Local media (EMA sends information right away) · EMA social media · wapelloready.org · Wapello Life app · Wapello Ready Alerts (Alert Iowa) for home and business addresses

Urgent life-safety warnings: EMA can send Wireless Emergency Alerts through FEMA's IPAWS straight to cell phones in the danger area. Call the EMA Director.

Coordinate all public information with the EMA Director and the Joint Information Center (JIC).

☐ Are there rumors or fears we need to address?

Decision Log

Key information, factors weighed, and decisions reached.

TIME	INFORMATION / DECISION

Contacts

EMA DIRECTOR • 24/7 DUTY PHONE

Damage photos: ema@wapellocounty.org (include location, date, and time). State resources and the Iowa HSEM Duty Officer: through your EMA Director.

Your key people

ROLE	NAME	PHONE
Mayor pro tem / Designee		
Fire Chief		
Police Chief / Sheriff		
Public Works / Streets		
Water & Wastewater		
Electric / Gas Utility		
EMS		
Public Health		
City Clerk / Administrator		
Public Information Officer		

SEPTEMBER 2026

Steps follow FEMA's incident priorities (life safety, incident stabilization, property and environmental protection) and the Community Lifelines construct. Questions adapted from Iowa HSEMD (2024); lifelines and status colors from FEMA's Community Lifelines Implementation Toolkit (2023).



FOR ELECTED & APPOINTED
OFFICIALS

When Disaster Strikes

Questions to Ask

Your first steps as Mayor, or designee, the moment a disaster begins

CALL THE EMA DIRECTOR

24/7 duty phone

Wapello County Emergency Management Agency
Protection Through Preparedness

1

LIFE SAFETY

Priority one in every incident

Check first with the Fire Chief and the Police Chief or Sheriff's Office. Fire leads search & rescue and hazard control; law enforcement assists. EMA needs this initial picture.

- ☐ Utility hazards? ☐ Downed power lines
☐ Gas leaks
- ☐ Other hazards? (fire, collapse, hazmat, flooding) _____
- ☐ Injuries: _____ Missing: _____
- ☐ Is search & rescue underway? Which areas are cleared?
- ☐ Are schools, care facilities, or residents who need help affected?
- ☐ Do people need shelter or evacuation?

Notes

2

CALL THE EMA DIRECTOR

Share your initial picture: what, where, who is affected, and what you need.

Time called: _____

Next update due: _____

Officials meet at: _____



With the EMA Director, consider a local disaster declaration. Only the Mayor (or the Board chair for the county) can declare. Declare early if outside help may be needed.

Time signed: _____

3

INCIDENT STABILIZATION

- ☐ What area is affected, and who lives there?
- ☐ What resources are needed? Request them through the EMA Director so they can be balanced countywide.
- ☐ Who is watching for escalation and secondary impacts?
- ☐ Is debris blocking emergency access?

Notes

4

PROPERTY PROTECTION & DAMAGE REPORTING

Initial damage assessment

- ☐ What is the status of critical infrastructure? Check any that are affected:
- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| ☐ Electric power | ☐ Natural gas | ☐ Drinking water |
| ☐ Wastewater & lift stations | ☐ Roads & bridges | ☐ Rail crossings |
| ☐ Cell towers & 911 | ☐ Hospitals & care homes | ☐ Schools & shelters |
| ☐ Government buildings | ☐ Fuel stations | ☐ Levees, dams & stormwater |
- ☐ How many homes and businesses are affected? Where?



Start damage reporting. EMA opens the incident in **Futurity**, the state's damage reporting system, and publishes the self-reporting link to media, social media, and officials. **Must be done within 48 hours.**

Link published: _____

- ☐ **Start tracking costs now:** staff and overtime hours, equipment use, contracts, and photos. FEMA reimburses only documented costs.

Notes

5

RESTORATION OF SERVICES

Check each Community Lifeline

- ☐ Which city and county services are affected, and what are the priorities?
- ☐ Is continuity of government or operations affected?

COMMUNITY LIFELINE · WHAT'S IN IT	G	Y	R	?
Safety & Security Law enforcement, fire, search & rescue, government services, levees & dams				
Food, Hydration, Shelter Food, bottled water, shelter & housing, agriculture				
Health & Medical Hospitals & clinics, public health, EMS & patient transport, pharmacies, fatality management				
Energy Power grid, fuel, generators & temporary power				
Communications Phones, cell & internet, 911 & dispatch, responder radios, alerts, banking & ATMs				
Transportation Roads & bridges, rail, transit, airports, waterways				
Hazardous Materials Chemical facilities, spills & contamination				
Water Systems Drinking water, wastewater & sewer				

G = stable · Y = impacted, being stabilized · R = disrupted, no solution yet · ? = unknown

Lifeline notes