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Managing Requests for Transportation Assistance from Vulnerable Populations in the Green River Valley during an Evacuation

Appendix to Regional Disaster Plan, ESF 1: Transportation Annex

Revised February 8, 2011

Introduction

In the event of a major evacuation of residents located in the Green River Valley due to an imminent flood threat, it is estimated that several hundred people may be unable to evacuate on their own. These people will likely call 911, their local emergency management offices, or available public information hotlines. While plans are in place to assist the evacuation of hospitals, nursing homes and long term care facilities, additional coordination is needed to address individuals who will need assistance in evacuating their homes.

During a significant flood threat, the King County Regional Communication and Emergency Coordination Center (RCECC) will activate as necessary to coordinate response activities among affected government agencies and jurisdictions. Emergency Support Function (ESF) agencies will commit resources and expertise as needed to address transportation, mass care, health and medical consequences of the movement of vulnerable populations from the threat area to appropriate shelters.

The lead agency for coordinating the above response activities is the King County Office of Emergency Management (OEM). OEM will collaborate with local, state, tribal, and federal governmental agencies, as well as local community based organizations to assure an effective and efficient response.

Purpose

The purpose of this Appendix is to identify roles and responsibilities for agencies involved in coordinating strategies for relocating vulnerable populations who are not able to evacuate on their own from an effected geographical area to a place of relative safety.

Scope

This Appendix adopts an all hazards approach to coordinating assets in support of movement of vulnerable. Activities within the scope of this plan include but are not limited to:

- Providing direction to 911 dispatch centers receiving individual transportation requests that do not require EMS transport.
- Coordination of evacuation and transportation plans between transportation and transit agencies, emergency medical services and local emergency management.
- Managing requests from individuals who do not need medical assistance but feel they are not able to evacuate on their own.

This Appendix does not address evacuation of inmates, hospitals, nursing homes of long term care facilities, schools, or other fixed facilities.

Planning Assumptions

- The ability of support agencies to respond to an emergency or disaster is dependent upon the scope and severity of the event, status of preparedness and organizational response capabilities.
- Alert and notification procedures will support the identification of needs by local agencies and the response to resource requests.
- EMS transportation resources will be in high demand.
- Transportation operations involving the evacuation of vulnerable populations needing assistance will likely be limited to a maximum of 12 hours following an evacuation order.
- City agencies will address requests from the public for transportation assistance. When city resources are unable to meet identified needs, requests will be forwarded to the RCECC for action.
- Calls from the public requesting transportation assistance will be received by many locations, including EOCs, call centers and 911 dispatch.
- PHSKC will coordinate with the EMS Medical Director for King County regarding medical advice and the need for implementing crisis standards of care to facilitate rapid transport and movement of medically fragile patients.
- King County Department of Transportation, Community Transit, and King County Metro will staff the ESF 1 desk at the RCECC to fill mission requests.
- ALS/BLS support for transportation only (not 911 emergency response) will be coordinated at the RCECC through the ESF 4 desk.
- Medically fragile transportation requests that come into the RCECC and require EMS transport will be directed to Valley Communications or appropriate dispatch center to facilitate mission assignment. Valley Communications will direct ALS and BLS calls to the appropriate EMS agency.
- Public health emergencies may also impact neighboring counties and health departments thereby limiting the availability of mutual aid.
- Members of our community who are seniors, children, disabled, homeless, non-English speakers, low-income or otherwise in need of ongoing support, will be more vulnerable during and after an emergency. .
- This plan is intended to support behind-the-scenes coordination of King County and local jurisdictions. It is not to be shared with the public, nor set the expectation that the public can call to arrange transport. Messaging to the public continues to focus on personal preparedness.

Concept of Operations

Evacuation and transportation of medically fragile individuals from a geographic location is a coordinated effort through numerous functions not limited to ESF 1, ESF 4, and ESF 8. Each will work closely to ensure resources are assigned, alert and notification complete, pick up and drop off locations identified and sufficient medical care provided to support fragile population movement.

The King County Office of Emergency Management (OEM), working in the RCECC will provide support to localities assisting their residents in evacuating. The RCECC will collaborate with local, state, tribal, and federal governmental agencies to assure an effective and efficient response.

A Medical Services Officer (MSO) will be deployed from King County Medic One to Valley Communications, the regional 9-1-1 Center for south King County, to support Valley Communications efforts with dispatching calls from persons who may or may not need medical attention. The MSO and Emergency Medical Dispatch Program Manager will direct and document all resources as well as dispatched responses to anyone that needs support evacuating from their location.

When a call for assistance is received by the Public Information Hotline, the RCECC, or other organizations, the person answering the call is to first determine whether it is a medical emergency requiring medical assistance, fire or police. If it is, the caller is to either be transferred to 911 or direct to hang up and call 911 or use the 10 digit number for Valley Communications / 911 (253) 852-2121.

If it is determined that the caller does not need medical assistance, and only requires transportation assistance, that caller will be transferred directly to the EOC of the locality in which the caller resides. That EOC will take responsibility for the caller. Public Hotlines and EOCs must have the appropriate public numbers for each city EOC so that if the call can not be transferred, the caller will be provided the appropriate number.

Localities will coordinate with the transportation desk in the RCECC when they require transportation resources.

Responsibilities

Local Emergency Management

1. Implement evacuation plans and orders in response to an emergency or disaster.
2. Contact the transportation desk in the RCECC for assistance when requests overwhelm available local resources.

King County Medic One

1. Coordinate resources to collect, transport, and care for persons requiring a medical response.
2. Deploy a Medical Services Officer to Valley Communications, the regional 9-1-1 Center for south King County, to support Valley Communications efforts with dispatching calls from persons who may or may not need medical attention. The MSO and Emergency Medical Dispatch Program Manager will direct and document all resources as well as dispatched responses to anyone that needs support evacuating from their location.

King County Department of Transportation

1. Staff the transportation desk at the RCECC.
2. Coordinate with the local emergency management offices to support transportation needs in support of command objectives.

King County Office of Emergency Management

1. Develop and implement alert and notification protocol for public warning
2. Receive requests for evacuation assistance from the general public, King County Metro, or response partners from citizens or organizations in incorporated areas, and contact appropriate city EOCs to manage such requests with local resources.

Public Health – Seattle & King County:

1. When calls requesting transportation assistance are received by the Public Information Call Center (PICC), transfer them either to the EOC of the city in which they reside or, if they appear to need medical assistance, to 911.
2. Coordinate or implement Alternate Care Facilities (ACF) as reception stations for medically fragile patients. Communicate the locations of ACFs to all city EOCs, and the RCECC.

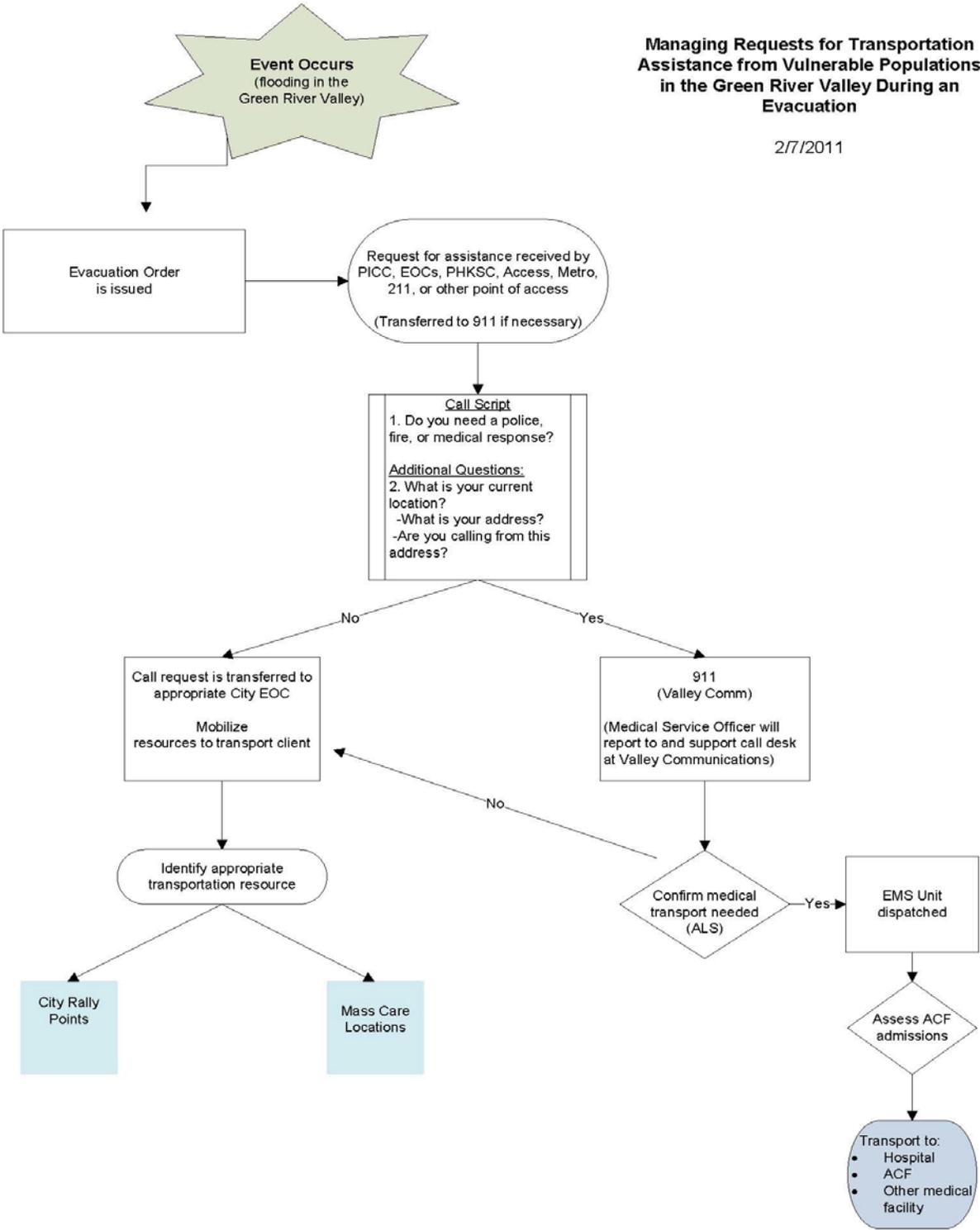
Public and Private Emergency Medical Services

1. Staff the Transportation desk in the RCECC to coordinate transportation resource management with King County DOT.
2. Assist ALS providers in the movement of medically fragile populations.

Valley Communications 911

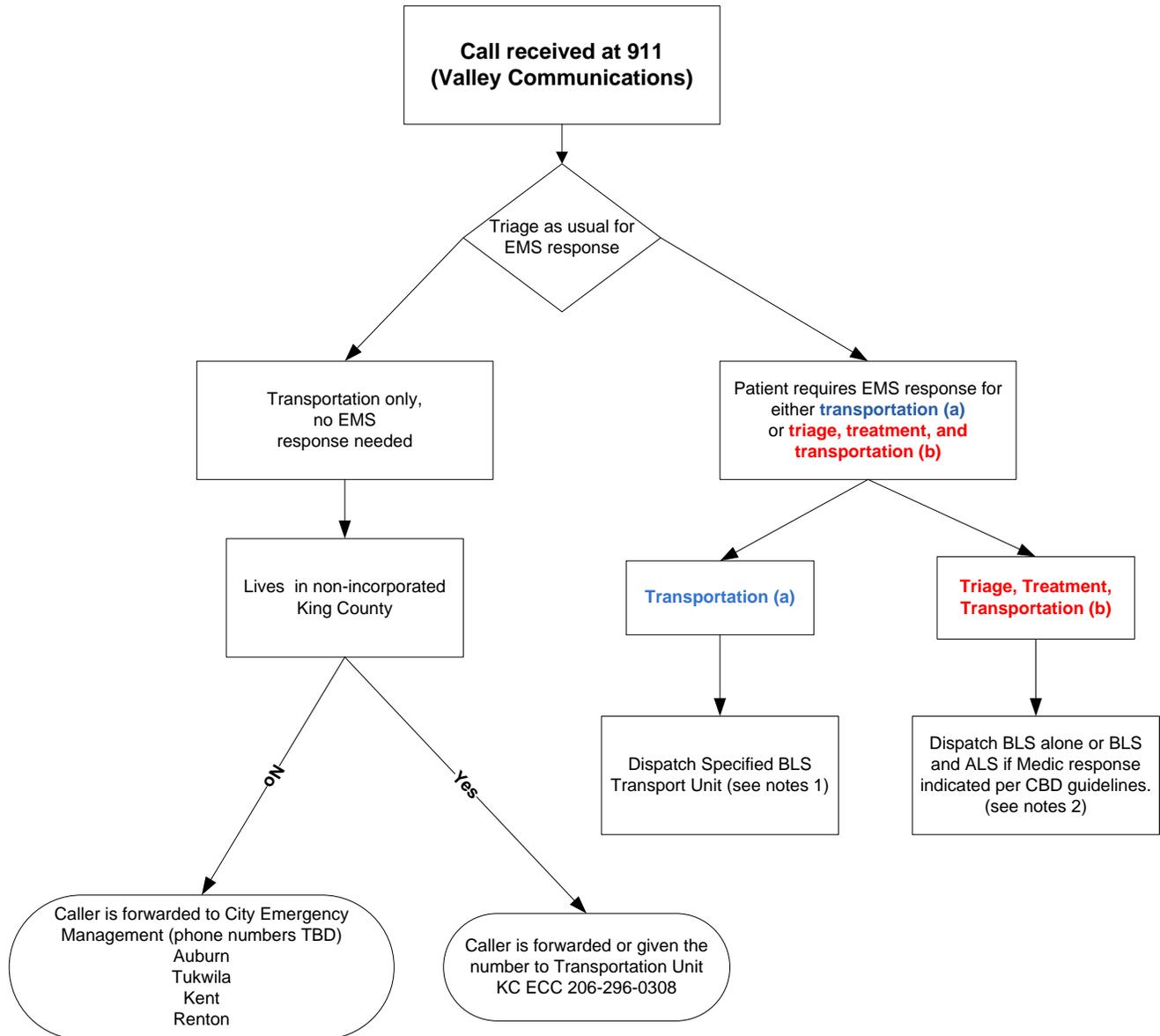
1. Triage transportation requests submitted through 911 and dispatch appropriate resources
2. Forward non-emergency, ambulatory transportation requests to the local emergency management office governing the town in which the caller lives.

Attachment 1 – Managing Requests for Transportation Assistance during a Green River Evacuation Event



Attachment 2 - Flood response for 911 EMS calls – 11/09/09 CBD Guidelines Update for calls to 911 for EMS or Evacuation / Transportation

King County Emergency Preparedness Division has been working to prepare for a surge of calls from the public in the event of flooding in the south part of the County. Calls will likely come into the 911 system from those citizens requesting assistance in transporting home-health care, adult family home, boarding home etc. patients out of the flood area.



Attachment 3 – EMS Communication Instructions for operators

- a Transportation calls requiring a BLS response will be those in which there is no change in the patient's condition however BLS transport is necessary due to the non-ambulatory nature or condition of the patient in that facility or home-health environment. These patients do not need EMS evaluation but simply need medical assistance in order to prepare and transport them in an appropriate vehicle. An example of this would be a home-health care patient that is on a ventilator or an adult family home with patients that are not ambulatory or require more assistance than the care taker can provide in order to remove them from the flood area.
- b Patients that need to be triaged and/or treated prior to being transported will need the same response sent during normal operations – BLS only if the patient is stable and meets the CBD Guidelines for a BLS only response, or BLS and ALS if the patient is unstable according to the CBD Guidelines. An example of this would be a patient in an adult family home that requires special assistance but is also currently experiencing symptoms such as chest pain that need to be evaluated.

Special Notes:

1. King County OEM and King County Medic One are working on plans to put in place in case there is a need for extra BLS transport units. The units that will be dispatched to accomplish this mission may be from mutual aid agencies providing assistance as needed and requested. As this will be a dynamic situation, the EOC will communicate with the 911 centers via the communications plan developed for emergency situations such as pandemic as to the availability and process to use to dispatch these transport units.
2. The Emergency Medical Dispatchers will continue to use the CBD Guidelines to triage medical calls as they do during normal operations. If resources are taxed and there becomes a need to change the guidelines in accordance, direction will be provided to all responding EMS agencies by the King County EMS Medical Director.

Attachment 4 – Flood Evacuation Notification EOC/911

When Metro/Access or any transportation assets/resources are no longer able to respond to flood areas due to water on the roadways the King County EOC Transportation Desk will notify Valley Communications 911 Center (VCC) so that callers are no longer referred to the King County EOC transportation line. At this point, operations will shift from a mode of evacuation to a rescue mission and Valley Communications will defer to their rescue operations procedures as outlined by the individual response agencies.

