



701 East Broadway, Columbia, Missouri 65201

Department Source: Fire

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: January 20, 2026

Re: Emergency Management Ordinance Revision and defining the City's Operational Role

Impacted Ward: Citywide

Executive Summary

Staff has prepared for Council consideration an ordinance authorizing a revision of the Emergency Management Organization ordinance in Chapter 7-Civil Defense; Article II to define how the City organizes, manages, and remains accountable during emergency situations.

Discussion

Columbia has a strong, effective regional emergency management framework, and Boone County Emergency Management (BCEM) is a critical partner in that system. That relationship is valued, respected, and remains healthy. We train together, plan together, exercise together, and respond together when the scope or scale of an incident extends beyond city boundaries.

The ordinance update to the City's emergency management chapter is not about stepping away from that partnership. It is about clearly defining how the City organizes, manages, and remains accountable for emergencies and disruptions that are wholly within our organization and our jurisdiction. Not every incident requires a countywide response or a regional emergency operations center activation. Many events are City-specific. Planned events, infrastructure failures, weather impacts, internal continuity issues, and localized emergencies all require disciplined coordination, clear authority, and timely decision-making inside City government. When those situations occur, the City must be able to act quickly, coordinate across departments, and remain accountable for outcomes without confusion about roles or responsibility.

This ordinance update clarifies that structure. It establishes a clear City emergency management function, aligned under the City Manager, housed within the Fire Department, and responsible for readiness, planning, coordination, and continuity. That includes maintaining participation in the countywide emergency operations plan (EOP), continuity of government and business continuity planning, training and exercises and NIMS compliance. These are not abstract requirements. They are practical necessities that support real decisions during real events. Just as important, the ordinance explicitly preserves Boone County's countywide role and reinforces the City's continued participation in regional plans, mutual aid, training, and County-led emergency operations when circumstances warrant. This is not duplication and it is not competition. It is good emergency management. Strong regional response depends on each jurisdiction being internally organized, prepared, and accountable before the incident scales up.



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Emergency management works best when lines are clear before they are tested. This update gives staff clarity about how the City organizes internally while protecting the collaborative regional framework that already serves our community. Our commitment remains the same: coordinated response, professional execution, and accountability to the people we serve. Additional guidance and training will follow to support departments in their roles under this structure. The expectation is straightforward. We stay aligned, we stay ready, and we continue to work shoulder-to-shoulder with our regional partners when it matters most.

Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: N/A

Long-Term Impact: N/A

Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

Strategic Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Safe Community, Secondary Impact: Organizational Excellence, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

Comprehensive Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Livable & Sustainable Communities, Secondary Impact: Not applicable, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

Legislative History

Date	Action
	N/A

Suggested Council Action

Staff recommends approval of this revision of the Emergency Management ordinance.