This is a model for a generic evacuation and shelter-in-place plan from the Two Rivers - Ottauquechee Regional Commission (TRORC). While not mandatory for every LEMP, municipalities with a high risk of having to evacuate or shelter-in-place should have an evacuation and/or shelter-in-place plan and may use this document (or any other format that suits their planning requirements) as a base. Plans should be tailored for local conditions, resources, and processes, but are often not used as-is - they are frameworks that can be quickly adjusted during an emergency to provide a usable incident action plan for the actual situation. Delete this paragraph in the final version of this document!

Situation

Evacuation
An <u>occurring</u> emergency situation can create the need to evacuate all persons in the area to protect life or property. An <u>anticipated</u> emergency situation may also create a need to preemptively evacuate an area.

Sheltering-in-Place (SIP)
If there is not sufficient time to safely evacuate, and it would be more dangerous to be caught outdoors or in vehicles during the hazard, it may be more advisable for persons to "shelter-in-place" by taking shelter in appropriate locations in their own homes or nearby buildings. Such situations can include a plume of hazardous vapor that will dissipate, an armed person, tornado, etc.

Area Closure
Responders may need to close an area to all entrance to facilitate emergency operations such as emergency vehicle access and egress, victim triage, firefighting, and tactical law enforcement actions.

Assumptions

- The relocation of people from their homes, schools and places of business can cross several jurisdictional lines, with no one person or agency having the authority, capacity, and/or responsibility for carrying out such an evacuation, including the reception of evacuees.
- It is assumed that the public will receive and understand official information related to evacuation. Most of the public will act in its own interest and evacuate dangerous areas when advised to do so by local government authorities. Some of the population can be expected to spontaneously evacuate a risk area to areas of their choice prior to receiving official evacuation instructions.
- A portion of the population will not have access to private vehicles and will need transportation assistance to evacuate.
- Some individuals may refuse to evacuate. It is not advisable to use limited resources to forcibly evacuate people.
- Evacuation of special populations or facilities (such as prisons, hospitals, nursing homes, etc) can take considerable time, effort, and entail large costs.
- The need to evacuate can occur with little or no warning, day or night, regardless of weather conditions.

- Most evacuees will seek shelter at hotels or with relatives or friends, rather than use designated shelter facilities, but shelters will be needed for the duration of the closure and should be designated prior to ordering an evacuation if possible. A rule of thumb is that 20% of evacuees will use shelters.
- Residents may try to re-enter a risk area before safe to do so, so re-entry planning is needed once the evacuation phase is over.
- Some owners of animals will refuse to evacuate unless arrangements have been made to care for their animals, so animal shelters should be prearranged.

Preparedness

Some activities can take place ahead of evacuations/area closures/sheltering-in-place that will facilitate such actions if they are needed.

- Identify fixed areas/critical facilities potentially in need of evacuation (i.e., flood plains, areas near hazardous materials sites, health care facilities, schools, nursing homes, jails, etc.) For facilities, have likely Incident Commanders review facility evacuation plans.
- Develop a public education program to increase citizen awareness of reasons for possible evacuation, routes to travel, availability of transportation, reception locations, appropriate food, clothing, and other essential items to pack.
- Educate the public about what sheltering-in-place entails and why it is safer in certain circumstances.
- Identify population groups who may require special assistance during evacuation and sheltering (senior citizens, disabled, homeless, without private transportation, etc.)
- Preplan the most likely means of communicating that an evacuation/closure/SIP is in progress; evacuation routes, taking into account traffic capacities and likely road conditions; and estimate needed resources to effect the action.
- Establish emergency shelters/reception centers within the community and coordinate with likely shelters outside of the community. Publicize these locations.
- Practice evacuation decisions with Unified Command or impacted parties.
- Identify shelters that will take pets or emergency kennels. If there are agricultural operations in the area, there may need to be farms willing to take these animals, but livestock evacuations need considerable time to be accomplished.

Concept of Operations
An order to evacuate/close/shelter-in-place is a serious decision that has the potential to cause significant disruption and create its own hazards. The basic steps will require Incident Command to:

1. make a fast decision that there is a need to take action
2. ensure there is proper authority to order action
3. understand the implications on the affected area
4. decide on proper scope, method, and duration
5. request sufficient resources to undertake and maintain the action
6. issue public warnings to begin the process
7. issue ongoing public information

8. control area until formally deciding to allow re-entry

In order for the Incident Commander to make and execute such a decision, the ICS structure should be expanded sufficiently to have a separate Safety Officer, Liaison Officer, and Public Information Officer prior to the decision to evacuate, close, or shelter-in-place.

A basic checklist for Incident Command, if no other more detailed protocol exists, is as follows:

Make a fast decision that there is a need to take action
1. is the threat imminent?
2. Is the likely disruption and movement of people caused by the warnings and order safer than just controlling the scene?
3. Is the best action merely closing the area to entry and sheltering-in place those in the area rather than ordering it evacuated? Consideration should be given to whether people already in the area would be affected more by the hazard if they stayed inside, and the time it would take to actually warn and complete the evacuation versus the duration of the hazard.
4. Pre-evacuation Warning: On slow-moving events with a likelihood for evacuation, pre-evacuation notice should be given to affected residents if it appears that hazardous conditions may warrant such action. Notify the public to stand by for information.

Ensure there is proper authority to order action
1. Does the IC have the power to order the action, or is expanded authority needed, such as declaration of emergency or establishment of unified command?

Understand the implications on the affected area
1. Warnings and evacuations cause traffic problems, hurt business, disrupt lives, and can be dangerous under extreme weather or for elderly or patient populations. The IC's responsibility is to protect public safety, but the anticipated action should not be taken lightly. Review what is in the area to be covered, and discuss briefly the proposed action with the needed partner agencies, command staff, or the Safety Officer if that is the only person available.
2. If there are facilities (Schools, Prisons/Jails, Hospitals, Nursing Homes, Emergency Services, Employers, Parks, etc.) that will take extra time to evacuate/close/SIP, notify them to begin preparatory actions and to stand by.

Decide on proper scope, method, and duration
1. Evacuate or close an area sufficient to encompass the emergency if it escalates, the weather/wind changes, or it is worse than initial reports indicate.
2. Make sure outbound egress and inbound access is achieved.
3. Determine likely duration of evacuation/closure/SIP. If people are expected to remain away for days they will want to use vehicles and take belongings/pets. If they are to remain away for hours due to a short-term/high hazard situation (such as a person shooting) immediate evacuation by foot may work. Since you cannot actually force an evacuation, consider the public's needs and cooperation.

4. Determine if you will be closing the area and how much traffic control will be needed and where. Will you need to stop only vehicles or all persons from entering?
5. If contemplating closing a state/interstate highway or a Class 1 or 2 road, you will need to coordinate the closure with VTrans.
6. Determine how you will notify people that they can return.

Request sufficient resources to undertake and maintain the action
1. Even if you have the resources to start the evacuation, you likely cannot sustain it 24/7. Order additional resources early on if the evacuation will be more than hours. Requests for resources and a local declaration of emergency should be sent to VEM.
2. Traffic control devices such as signs, barricades, and even vehicles should be requested from road crews/ public works.
3. Ideally, you will have law enforcement in place when the order to evacuate is given. Evacuation routes will be selected by law enforcement officials at the time of the evacuation decision. Movement instructions will be part of the warning and subsequent public information releases. If at all possible, two-way traffic will be maintained on all evacuation routes to allow continued access for emergency vehicles. Law enforcement communications will coordinate use of wrecker services needed to clear disabled vehicles.

Issue public warnings to begin the process
1. Have Public Information Officer prepare warning materials. Topics to cover should include a phone number for additional information and help if transportation is needed, directions to proper routes/shelters, anticipated duration if known, reminders to check on neighbors and turn off appliances and lock doors, obey law enforcement. Provide referral to standard materials on what to take.
2. Evacuation or sheltering usually requires very short notice and therefore TV and radio are the best media sources to use. Towns should notify Vermont Emergency Management of evacuations/closures/SIPs. For very limited areas, door-to-door or PA systems on emergency vehicles may be more efficient.
3. Potential resources needed to perform warning

Radio
- WDEV (Radio Vermont) 1-800-639-9338, wdev@radiovermont.com
- WYKR 101.3 FM 802-757-2773
- WCVR 102.1 FM (Champ) 802-728-4411 corm@champrocks.com
- WXLF 93.5 FM (The Wolf) 603-727-0262 Fax: (603) 727-0134
- WWOD 104.3 FM (Oldies 104) 603-298-7444 Fax: (603) 727-0134
- WRJT 103.1 FM (The Point) 877-367-6468 Fax (802) 223-1520
- VT Public Radio 89.5 FM (VPR) 802-655-9451 Fax: (802) 655-2799

TV
- WCAX – Channel 3, CBS, Burlington, 802-773-7729 channel3@wcax.com
- WVNY – Channel 22, ABC, Burlington (802) 660-9333 Fax: (802) 660-8673
- WNNE NewsChannel 31, WRJ 802-295-3100 Fax: 802-295-3983
- VT Public TV 802) 655-4800 view@vpt.org

<u>Other</u>
- Emergency Alert System (EAS) – this is coordinated through Vermont Emergency Management's Duty Officer, 1.800.347.0488
- Route alerting (using PA systems on emergency vehicles) - The use of law enforcement and fire emergency vehicles moving through the affected area with sirens and public address is usually effective. When used, two vehicles should be employed: the first will get peoples' attention and the second will deliver the evacuation message.
- Reverse 911 (automated calls to specific areas)
- Door-to-door

<u>Issue ongoing public information</u>
1. Continue to issue updates through the media so that evacuated people can check on the status of the situation.

<u>Control area until formally deciding to allow re-entry</u>
1. In an evacuation, the problem of access control and area security become extremely important. Law enforcement agencies will establish a perimeter control to provide security and protection of property left behind. Fire departments will take measures to insure continued fire protection.
2. Re-entry of an evacuated area requires the same consideration, coordination, and control of the items undertaken in the original evacuation. The re-entry decision and order will be made by the IC after the threat has passed and the evacuated area has been inspected by fire, law, and utilities personnel for safety. After certain emergencies, such as floods, earthquakes, or fires, some specific re-entry considerations are needed. Ensure that the threat which caused evacuation is over, structures have been inspected to determine if they are safe to return to.
3. If homes have been damaged, determine the long-term housing requirements.
4. Inform the public of proper re-entry actions, particularly cautions they should take with regard to reactivating utilities and any proper cleanup instructions, if necessary.