

# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS



## DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

The State Preparedness and Incident Response Equipment (SPIRE) Grant Program funds the purchase and distribution of emergency preparedness equipment to local jurisdictions, including vehicles and other property, to be used during an emergency. The SPIRE equipment list was last updated in 2019. During Oregon’s 2021 Regular Session, [House Bill 2426](#) directs the Oregon Homeland Security Council (OHSC) to update a list of equipment for the SPIRE program before January 1, 2022. The measure prioritizes search and rescue equipment and grant requests from urban search and rescue teams.

Legislators considered a number of measures related to OHSC. [House Bill 2235](#) (*not enacted*) would have directed the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) to study and make recommendations on emergency workforce needs in a major emergency. [House Bill 2461 A](#) (*not enacted*) would have directed OHSC to create the Oregon Critical Disaster Preparedness Stockpile to ensure a robust stock of emergency supplies and equipment. Similar to HB 2426, [House Bill 2882](#) (*not enacted*) would have directed OHSC to update an equipment list for the SPIRE Grant Program before January 1, 2022.

The Legislative Assembly also considered several disaster preparedness bills targeting public health and safety. [House Bill 2233](#) (*not enacted*), would have established the Emergency Shelter Task Force to make recommendations regarding provision of shelter for people and animals in the aftermath of an emergency.

[House Bill 2891](#) (*not enacted*) would have required health care facilities and providers, local public health authorities, and public and private safety agencies to maintain a surplus of essential supplies to continue normal operations for 120 days assuming a 25 percent reduction in staff. [House Bill 2883 A](#) (*not enacted*) would have created the Oregon Public Places are Safe Places Investment Fund and a

## CONTENTS

- [Disaster Preparedness](#)
- [Disaster Response](#)
- [Emergency Coordination and Communication](#)
- [Emergency Responders](#)
- [Recovery Efforts](#)
- [Resilience](#)

See the **2021 Legislative Summary Report for [Emergency Preparedness](#)**, which highlights policy measures that received a public hearing during Oregon’s 2021 Regular Legislative Session.

corresponding advisory body within the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) to support the ongoing development of disaster response staging areas. Staging areas are temporary sites where personnel, equipment, and supplies are maintained pending assignment and distribution after a disaster.

Currently, Oregon participates in the federal Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) for statewide emergency response exercises. [House Bill 2896](#) (*not enacted*) would have directed OEM to conduct an annual multidisciplinary, all-hazards emergency response exercise for each state agency. Lastly, [House Bill 2897 A](#) (*not enacted*) would have required elected officials, state agency heads, and management personnel in state government to complete introductory courses on incident command structure.

## DISASTER RESPONSE

With the impacts of COVID-19 and the 2020 wildfire season on communities across the state, measures related to disaster response were considered. [House Bill 2304](#) (*not enacted*) would have established the Oregon Disaster Recovery Authority, and [House Bill 2893](#) (*not enacted*) would have established an

Oregon Disaster Response Assistance Matching Fund to provide matching funds to be eligible for federal funds or aid related to disaster response.

Two other measures, [House Bill 2305](#) and [House Bill 2308](#) (*neither enacted*) would have authorized the Governor, if necessitated by emergency, to direct any person in the state to accept and fulfill orders for manufacture, sale, or distribution of goods necessary to protect public safety with certain requirements.

---

## **EMERGENCY COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION**

Restructuring the state's emergency coordination and communications system was accomplished through the passage of [House Bill 2927](#) (HB 2927). The measure renames the Oregon Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and the Oregon State Fire Marshal (OSFM) the Oregon Department of Emergency Management and the Oregon Department of the State Fire Marshal, respectively; establishes each as a stand-alone state agency; and centralizes their functions. HB 2927 also creates the Emergency Preparedness Advisory Council and the Local Government Emergency Management Advisory Council; establishes OHSC within the Oregon Department of Emergency Management and creates an implementation task force. Similarly, [Senate Bill 105](#) (*not enacted*) would have transferred responsibility for the Oregon Emergency Response System from the Oregon State Police (OSP) to OEM, which was accomplished through HB 2927.

To continue the state's efforts to address public safety and resiliency in Oregon, [Senate Bill 288 A](#) (*not enacted*) was also deliberated. It would have represented the most recent evolution and refinement of Oregon's emergency preparedness, response, and recovery planning efforts. It included faith-based and community organizations, targeted certain populations for additional outreach, provided for qualified volunteers rendering assistance during statewide declarations of emergency, and directed the Oregon Business Development Department (OBDD) to administer the Unreinforced Masonry Seismic Safety Program to disburse grants to improve the safety and resiliency of qualifying structures during an earthquake.

To provide for updated emergency communication equipment, [Senate Bill 363 A](#) (*not enacted*) would have appropriated \$1.4 million General Fund dollars to the Oregon Military Department for the acquisition of certain emergency response broadcasting equipment and system upgrades.

Through [House Bill 2425 A](#) (*not enacted*), OEM would have been directed to administer a grant program in support of projects to consolidate and modernize or upgrade Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs, or 9-1-1 call centers). Finally, [House Bill 2894](#) (*not enacted*) would have directed OEM to create and maintain a database for flagging known or suspected hazardous locations during an emergency.

---

## **EMERGENCY RESPONDERS**

Oregon's Emergency Response System (OERS) is responsible for coordinating state resources in response to all manner of emergencies. This coordination requires multi-jurisdictional cooperation between all levels of government and the private sector. [Senate Bill 104](#) permits OEM to establish or recognize the credentialing of critical service providers by it or other entities if certain criteria are met, to streamline such providers' access and ability to function in emergencies.

Another measure receiving support during the 2021 Legislative Session was [House Bill 2593](#). It permits OEM to agree with an authorized nonprofit organization representing sheriffs to administer a program to produce and sell outdoor recreation search and rescue contribution cards.

[House Bill 2237](#) (*not enacted*) would have directed OEM to create and maintain a roster of students at post-secondary institutions available for temporary emergency-related work. [House Bill 2295](#) (*not enacted*) would have provided that a fire chief, or representative of a fire chief or county, extinguish uncontrolled fires found to be burning in unprotected areas.

The Oregon Health Authority operates the State Emergency Registry of Volunteers in Oregon ([SERV-OR](#)). This database contains a list of licensed health

care professionals who have registered to be volunteers in the event of federal, state, and/or local emergencies. SERV-OR consists of three volunteer groups: the Volunteer Management Unit, the State Managed Volunteer Pool, and the Medical Reserve Corps. Modeled after SERV-OR, [House Bill 2890](#) (*not enacted*) would have directed OEM to create and maintain a registry of people able and willing to provide emergency response services.

---

## RECOVERY EFFORTS

To address recovery issues in the aftermath of a declaration of emergency, legislators looked at several bills. [Senate Bill 531](#) (*not enacted*) would have established the right to reimbursement from the state of Oregon of actual damages incurred by businesses engendered by temporary or permanent cessation of business operations caused by a specified declaration of emergency. [House Bill 2236](#) (*not enacted*) would have established the Task Force on Rural Fire Protection District Community Development to study and develop recommendations on ways to expand the ability of rural fire protection districts to use district assets to facilitate community development efforts following a natural disaster. [House Bill 2850](#) (*not enacted*) would have allowed the Governor to establish economic recovery zones after the termination of a state of emergency.

---

## RESILIENCE

Throughout the 2021 session, legislators resumed discussions regarding the state's infrastructure resiliency. [House Bill 2234](#) (*not enacted*) would have required the Director of the Department of Consumer and Business Services (DCBS) to create appropriate specialty codes standards, safeguards, and guidelines for incorporating fire prevention, fireproofing, or fire resistance measures into the construction, repair, renovation, rehabilitation, retrofitting, or maintenance of buildings and other structures that are located in areas of Oregon that are susceptible to wildfires. The measure would have required the owners to obtain and maintain a fire insurance policy with enough coverage to provide for the rebuilding or replacement of buildings or structures.

A few resiliency measures would have impacted the Oregon Safety Assessment Program, which is responsible for evaluating the condition of buildings after an emergency and determining whether the buildings may be safely occupied ([ORS 401.256, 2019](#)). [House Bill 2851 A](#) (*not enacted*) would have appropriated funds for the Oregon Safety Assessment Program, the Nesika Beach Ophir Water District, and the State Fire Marshal to study and develop recommendations regarding Rural Fire Protection Districts, and for ten additional positions within OEM. [House Bill 2881](#) (*not enacted*) would have directed DCBS to assess a \$15 fee for limited plan reviews for fire and life safety to be deposited into the State Fire Marshal Fund for the Oregon Safety Assessment Program. [House Bill 2892](#) (*not enacted*) would have appropriated additional funds from the state's General Fund to the State Fire Marshal to cover personnel costs related to the Oregon Safety Assessment Program.

Local jurisdictions may not have the resources to obtain needed emergency preparedness equipment. To help address the issue, the legislature created the Resiliency Grant Fund in 2017 to distribute and purchase emergency equipment at the local level. [House Bill 2898](#) (*not enacted*) would have imposed a \$9 surtax on income tax liability and deposited the proceeds into the Resiliency Grant Fund. [House Bill 3160 A](#) (*not enacted*) would have established the Oregon Wildfire Preparedness and Community Protection Fund (OWPACPF) to support activities related to restoration, protection, and recovery from wildfires. It would have provided a \$45 million appropriation to OWPACPF.

---

### Staff

Regina Wilson, Legislative Analyst

### Legislative Policy and Research Office

Oregon State Capitol, Rm 453  
(503) 986-1813

[www.oregonlegislature.gov/lpro](http://www.oregonlegislature.gov/lpro)