



NEWS RELEASE

RILEY COUNTY EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER IS ACTIVATED

(Manhattan, Kansas- March 22, 2020) In response to the current national public health crisis, the Riley County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) started daily operations on Saturday, March 21. The EOC was previously meeting twice weekly. The purpose of a full-time EOC is to properly prepare our region for any threats posed in relation to Coronavirus (COVID-19). Julie Gibbs, the local Health Officer for the county, serves as the lead, or Incident Command, and spokesperson for EOC. Other agencies working to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our community as part of the unified command structure include Riley County Emergency Management, Riley County Emergency Medical Services, Riley County Police Department, the City of Manhattan, and Manhattan Fire Department.

The Riley County EOC has invited partners from Pottawatomie and Geary Counties, Fort Riley, Kansas State University, local health care providers, and other key stakeholders, to ensure cooperation and teamwork are happening at the level our region has come to expect. External communications for the Riley County EOC are now being handled by a team of local public information officers who will do their best to make sure everyone has up-to-date information on the evolving situation.

By establishing this structure, mission objectives can be set for operational periods, and supporting agencies can help ensure the objectives get carried out. This also allows for streamlined ordering of critical resources to ensure the community is prepared if the situation continues to escalate. Multiple daily meetings are ongoing, using social distancing guidelines or virtual methods to ensure key staff are protected and to adhere to guidelines to slow the spread of the virus.

“Working together to solve problems during emergencies is what we do here in Riley County and the region,” stated Pat Collins, Riley County Emergency Manager. “We will continue to plan, prepare, and carry out the mission of protecting of our residents in these uncertain times. It is what we have trained for and what we have done during other emergencies, and this time we are calling on the community to help by doing their part too.”

Public updates will be provided daily on KMAN Radio AM 1350 or 93.3 FM at 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., as well as on the RCHD Facebook Page at 4:15 p.m. [facebook.com/rileycountyhealthdepartment](https://www.facebook.com/rileycountyhealthdepartment).

For more information about Riley County’s response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) threat, visit <https://www.rileycountyks.gov/1857/Novel-Coronavirus-2019-nCoV>, follow RCHD on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/Rileycountyhealthdepartment/> and Twitter @RileyCoHealth.

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