

Planning for large-scale evacuations



The ability to move large numbers of people from threatened to safe locations in a short amount of time requires careful preparation on the part of civil-protection authorities and emergency services. Working on behalf of the Swiss Federal Office for Civil Protection (FOCP), EBP first identified the relevant factors that need to be considered in the context of planning for large-scale evacuations, and then used its findings as a basis for drafting a planning guide that can be used by the various cantons.

Challenges associated with large-scale evacuations

Incidents such as dam breaks and chemical and nuclear power plant accidents may make it necessary to execute large-scale evacuations. In the context of such evacuations, the relevant emergency services are expected to move large numbers of people to safe locations within a short space of time. This represents a challenge for the civil-protection authorities, the responsible emergency services and any partnering civil-protection organizations.

Multifaceted planning tasks

The Swiss Federal Office for Civil Protection commissioned EBP to identify the main factors that are relevant to the execution of large-scale evacuations. These factors include, for instance, crisis-communication systems, transportation systems and provisions for the temporary accommodation of evacuated residents. In examining each of these factors, EBP also identified the specific measures, roles and resources that need to be accounted for in the planning context – both for mission

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Facts

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Contact persons

Dr. Christine Steinlin
christine.steinlin@ebp.ch

readiness (e.g. the defining of evacuation routes) and mission execution (e.g. controlling access to threatened locations).

Planning guideline for cantons

The planning guideline gives the cantons a basis for drafting their own concepts, deployment documentation, checklists and material lists for the planning of large-scale evacuations.