

# STATE OF COLORADO

## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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John W. Hickenlooper  
Governor

## D 2016-002

### EXECUTIVE ORDER

#### **Declaring a Disaster Emergency due to the Blizzard in Colorado and Employing the National Guard for the Purpose of Conducting Rescue Missions**

Pursuant to the authority vested in the Governor of the State of Colorado and, in particular, pursuant to relevant portions of C.R.S. § 28-3-104 and relevant portions of the Colorado Disaster Emergency Act, C.R.S. § 24-33.5-701, et seq. I, John W. Hickenlooper, Governor of the State of Colorado, hereby issue this Executive Order declaring a disaster emergency due to the recent blizzard and employing the National Guard for the purpose of conducting search and rescue.

#### I. Background and Purpose

During the early morning hours of March 23, 2016, blizzard conditions began forming in northeast Colorado, including the Denver metropolitan area. Emergency personnel anticipated that the rapid accumulation of snow and high winds had the potential to strand motorists throughout the area, thereby necessitating rescue missions. It was likely that the demand for rescue missions would exceed the capacity of local agencies. Accordingly, pursuant to C.R.S. § 28-3-104, Governor Hickenlooper verbally authorized the activation of the National Guard to assist these rescue missions.

As the day progressed, the blizzard intensified, resulting in closures of numerous highways along the Front Range from the Wyoming border to Colorado Springs and throughout Northeastern Colorado. Denver International Airport shut down at approximately 12:17 p.m. as blizzard conditions triggered power fluctuations and required intensive snow removal. At approximately 3:40 p.m. on March 23, 2016, Governor Hickenlooper verbally declared a disaster emergency.

## II. Declaration and Directives

- A. The blizzard constitutes a disaster emergency under C.R.S. § 24-33.5-704. The Governor's verbal order of March 23, 2016 at 3:40 p.m. declaring a disaster emergency is hereby memorialized by this Executive Order and shall have the full force and effect of law as if it were contained within this Executive Order.
- B. The State Emergency Operations Plan is hereby activated. All State departments and agencies shall take whatever actions may be required and requested by the Director or Acting Director of the Office of Emergency Management, including the provision of appropriate staff and equipment as necessary.
- C. Pursuant to C.R.S. § 24-33.5-706(4), it is ordered that \$325,000 be made available from the Disaster Emergency Fund for response activities related to this incident. These funds exist in the Disaster Emergency Fund from unexpended funds encumbered for other disaster events in the last three years. The Director of the Office of Emergency Management is hereby authorized and directed to allocate the funding to the appropriate government agencies and non-profit organizations and execute awards, purchase orders or other mechanisms to effect the allocation of the funds. These funds shall remain available for this purpose for thirty-six months from March 23, 2016, and any unexpended funds shall remain in the Disaster Emergency Fund.
- D. Pursuant to C.R.S. § 28-3-104, the Governor's verbal orders on March 23, 2016 activating the National Guard and authorizing the utilization of National Guard assets for storm-related missions is hereby memorialized by this Executive Order and shall have the full force and effect of law as if it was contained within this Executive Order.

III. Duration

- A. This Executive Order shall expire thirty days from its date of signature unless extended further by Executive Order, except that the funds described in paragraph II(C) above shall remain available for the described purposes for thirty-six months from March 23, 2016.



GIVEN under my hand and the  
Executive Seal of the State of  
Colorado this twenty-fifth day of  
March, 2016

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John W. Hickenlooper", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John W. Hickenlooper  
Governor