



D 2025 013

EXECUTIVE ORDER

Declaring a Disaster Emergency Due to the Hazardous Materials Incident in Pueblo County

Pursuant to the authority vested in the Governor of the State of Colorado and, in particular, pursuant to Article IV, Section 2, of the Colorado Constitution and the relevant portions of the Colorado Disaster Emergency Act, C.R.S. § 24-33.5-701, *et seq.*, I, Jared Polis, Governor of the State of Colorado, issue this Executive Order declaring a state of disaster emergency due to the Hazardous Materials Incident in Pueblo County, enabling State agencies to coordinate response, consequence management, and hazard mitigation efforts.

I. Background and Purpose

The Governor is responsible for meeting the dangers to the State and people presented by disasters. C.R.S. § 24-33.5-704(1). The Colorado Disaster Emergency Act defines a disaster as “the occurrence or imminent threat of widespread or severe damages, injury or loss of life or property resulting from any natural cause or cause of human origin.” C.R.S. § 24-33.5-703(3).

On or around August 20, 2025, inspectors of the Office of Funeral and Mortuary Science Services in the Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA) arrived at Davis Mortuary, a funeral home in Pueblo, for a statutorily mandated annual inspection. Inspectors found several bodies in various stages of decomposition in a concealed room. Based on this inspection, on August 20, 2025, the Director of the Division of Professions and Occupations, who oversees the Office of Funeral and Mortuary Science Services, summarily suspended Davis Mortuary’s registration to practice as a funeral establishment pursuant to C.R.S. § 24-4-104(4)(a) pending proceedings to determine whether Davis Mortuary’s registration to practice should be further disciplined. The Director further ordered, pending the outcome of the proceedings, Davis Mortuary to “immediately cease, desist, and refrain from any further acts for which a registration to practice as a funeral establishment is required by the laws of the state of Colorado.”

On August 21, 2025, the City of Pueblo, Pueblo County Sheriff’s Office, and the Board of County Commissioners of Pueblo County declared a local disaster in Pueblo County due to the situation at Davis Mortuary and the involvement of the elected Pueblo County Coroner. As stated in the local disaster declaration, Pueblo County is currently without an acting Coroner, Coroner’s Office, or adequate staffing; there are anticipated hazardous materials involved; there

are expected costs that are anticipated to exceed that of Pueblo City and the Pueblo County governments; and there is an expected need for State-owned resources.

Pueblo County officials and the City of Pueblo Police Department requested assistance from the State. Accordingly, because improperly cared for remains represent a public health hazard, I am declaring a state of disaster emergency due to the Hazardous Materials Incident in Pueblo County, enabling State agencies to coordinate response, consequence management, and hazard mitigation efforts.

II. Declarations and Directives

- A. The Hazardous Materials Incident and associated impacts in Pueblo County constitute a disaster emergency under C.R.S. § 24-33.5-701, *et seq.* This Executive Order declares a disaster emergency beginning today, August 22, 2025.
- B. The State Emergency Operations Plan is activated. All State departments and agencies are authorized to take whatever actions may be required and requested by the Director or their delegate of the Office of Emergency Management, pursuant to the State Emergency Operations Plan, including provision of appropriate staff and equipment as necessary.
- C. Pursuant to C.R.S. § 24-33.5-706(4)(b), funds in the Disaster Emergency Fund (DEF) are insufficient to pay for response, consequence management, and hazard mitigation efforts related to the Hazardous Materials Incident in Pueblo County. Therefore, I order that three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000) be transferred from the State Emergency Reserve Cash Fund (SERCF) to the DEF. I encumber three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000) in the DEF to pay for response, consequence management, and hazard mitigation efforts related to the Hazardous Materials Incident in Pueblo County.
- D. Pursuant to C.R.S. § 24-33.5-705.4(5), the Director of the Office of Emergency Management is hereby authorized and directed to allocate the funding to the appropriate government agencies and nonprofit organizations and execute awards, purchase orders or other mechanisms to effect the allocation of funds. The funds described in Section II(C) above shall remain available for this purpose until seventy-two (72) months from the date of this Executive Order, and any unexpended funds shall remain in the DEF.
- E. I encourage Pueblo County officials and the Pueblo County Deputy Coroner to seek assistance from other counties, including deputizing neighboring County Coroners and their staff, and for those counties to provide assistance to Pueblo

County in the investigation, management, and mitigation of this disaster, as well as in the day-to-day operations of the Pueblo County Coroner's Office.

- F. I call upon the Pueblo County Coroner to resign from office immediately to ensure continuity of essential services in Pueblo County.

III. Duration

This Executive Order shall expire thirty (30) days from August 22, 2025, unless extended further by Executive Order, except that the funds described in Section II(C) above shall remain available for the described purposes for seventy-two (72) months from the date of this Executive Order.



GIVEN under my hand and the Executive Seal of the State of Colorado this twenty-second day of August, 2025.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jared Polis".

Jared Polis
Governor