



BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

AB 6740
September 2, 2025
Regular Business

AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

TITLE:	AB 6740: Emergency Management Program Update	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Receive report. No action necessary.	<input type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution

DEPARTMENT:	Police
STAFF:	Michelle Bennett, Interim Police Chief Amanda Keverkamp, Emergency Manager
COUNCIL LIAISON:	n/a
EXHIBITS:	n/a
CITY COUNCIL PRIORITY:	n/a

AMOUNT OF EXPENDITURE	\$ n/a
AMOUNT BUDGETED	\$ n/a
APPROPRIATION REQUIRED	\$ n/a

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mercer Island Emergency Management is responsible for a variety of preparedness programs and products in addition to leading the City's response to emergencies and disasters. This agenda item provides an update on emergency management program activities from 2024-2025.

BACKGROUND

Mercer Island's emergency management program was established in the mid-1990s in response to a Washington state requirement for all jurisdictions to establish an emergency management program (RCW 38.52). Mercer Island Municipal Code 3.32.040 and 3.32.060 establishes the emergency management program within the Police Department as well as powers granted under RCW Chapter 38.52.

Mercer Island Emergency Management is staffed by 1.0 FTE, the City's Emergency Manager. This is a split position with 70% of the work dedicated to emergency management functions and the other 30% supports Police Department and Citywide communications.

The Emergency Manager is responsible for a wide range of duties including:

- Managing emergency events within the City of Mercer Island
- Writing, maintaining, and updating emergency plans
- Ensuring staff are trained and ready to respond to emergencies
- Building and training a cadre of emergency management volunteers
- Developing and implementing public education and outreach

To achieve this mission, the City offers a wide range of classes, trainings, and certifications to the staff and community.

ISSUE/DISCUSSION

The purpose of emergency management is to prepare for all hazards and coordinate response to both planned and unplanned incidents. During an incident, the Emergency Manager is responsible for coordinating departments, teams, and volunteers to gain a complete understanding of the situation. This is done by activating the emergency operations center (EOC) where staff across multiple departments gather to receive and share information, develop strategies for the response, enact those strategies, and coordinate recovery.

Responding to Emergencies

In 2024, the City made two local emergency declarations - the first in April for the SPU water main transmission line leak, neighborhood evacuation, and water conservation and the second in November for the bomb cyclone windstorm and power outage. In total, the City operated under a declared local emergency for six months of the year (165 days).

As of August 2025, the EOC was activated to assist the Public Works team with the water main break and closure of East Mercer Way at Clarke Beach. The EOC will also be activated in response to the Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT) project replacing the failed expansion joint on the I-90 East Channel Bridge beginning September 18, 2025.

Emergency Plan Updates

The Emergency Manager is responsible for creating and updating emergency plans. These plans help guide staff and volunteer response before, during, and after an emergency. Two plans were recently updated including the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) and Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP).

Washington State law (RCW 38.52) requires all jurisdictions to develop a Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP). That plan must be reviewed and approved by the State every five years. The update to that plan was due to the State for review at the end of 2024. It was approved and has been submitted to the City Council for ratification during the September 2, 2025 Regular Meeting.

The Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) was due to the federal government via King County at the end of 2024. That plan was approved in spring 2025 and ratified by City Council in July 2025.

Both of these plans will be due for an update again in five years.

NIMS Training for Staff

Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD) 5 directs the implementation of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) that provides a nationwide template to prevent, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of incidents. In addition to a template for responding to incidents, NIMS standardizes roles and training. This standardization ensures staff from any agency across the country can plug into Mercer Island's incident response and vice versa.

Staff and badged volunteers are required to take a variety of NIMS courses. Most are virtual but advanced classes are in-person. The advanced courses are offered throughout the year at other jurisdictions or in other counties. To help alleviate the pressure of traveling to these advanced courses, in 2024, emergency management coordinated with King County Office of Emergency Management (KCOEM) trainers to offer an

on-site “ICS-300: Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents” course. Eight city staff successfully completed the course, further expanding the City’s ability to respond to emergencies.

Managing Volunteer Corps

A major component of the emergency management program are the volunteers. In 2024, there were 179 trained volunteers on the emergency management roster, 59 of which were badged volunteers, which means they have undergone background checks and additional training. Throughout the year, nearly 60 volunteers participated in at least one emergency management training, outreach event, deployment, or other event. Many of these volunteers participated in more than one event.

Volunteer trainings throughout 2024-2025 have included:

- 18 training, event, meeting, and deployment opportunities.
- Four new events added including two Stop the Bleed classes.
- 20+ volunteers participated in each of the annual volunteer exercises.

Emergency management volunteers were also deployed during the 2024 November bomb cyclone. Volunteers were paired with City staff to conduct a door-to-door canvass of the remaining neighborhoods without power, providing information about available resources.

Public Education and Outreach Programs

Community preparedness is an integral part of the resilience and safety of the residents and businesses on Mercer Island. Since the early 1990’s, Mercer Island has engaged the community in preparing for disasters. The mission of Mercer Island Emergency Management is to prepare for, respond to, and recover from local and regional incidents, and to prepare Mercer Islanders to be self-sufficient for 7-14 days following a major disaster. Throughout 2024-2025, the City has provided:

- 12 outreach events ranging from tabling at the Farmers Market and Town Center Trick or Treat to trainings like the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program.
- Five preparedness presentations provided to the community.

In 2024, 23 community members graduated from the CERT program. The dates for the 2025 CERT program will be finalized soon.

NEXT STEPS

Throughout the rest of the year additional trainings, outreach events, and exercises have been planned for staff, volunteers, and the community.

In September 2025, the EOC will be activated in response to the WSDOT closure of Mercer Island eastbound on-ramps at East Mercer Way and the HOV on-ramp in Town Center at 80th Ave SE, for the replacement of the failed expansion joint on the I-90 East Channel Bridge.

Additionally, staff are in the early planning stages for the FIFA World Cup events scheduled for the summer of 2026.

Staff will continue to respond to unplanned emergencies as they arise.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Receive report. No action necessary.

