

Emergency Management Directors

Snapshot

2017 Median Pay: \$72,760 per year, \$34.98 per hour

Typical Entry-Level Education: Bachelor's degree

Work Experience in a Related Occupation: 5 years or more

On-the-job Training: None

Number of Jobs, 2016: 10,100

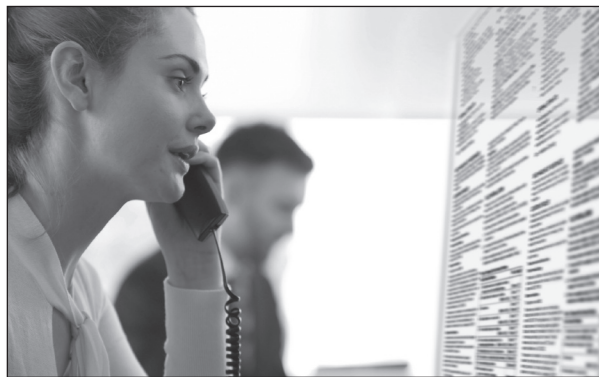
Job Outlook, 2016-26: 8% (As fast as average)

Employment Change, 2016-26: 800

CAREER OVERVIEW

What Emergency Management Directors Do

Emergency management directors prepare plans and procedures for responding to natural disasters and other emergencies. They also help lead the response during and after emergencies, often in coordination with



public safety officials, elected officials, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies.

Duties

Emergency management directors typically do the following:

- Assess hazards and prepare plans to respond to emergencies and disasters in order to minimize risk to people and property
- Meet with public safety officials, private companies, and the general public to get recommendations regarding emergency response plans
- Organize emergency response training programs and exercises for staff, volunteers, and other responders
- Coordinate the sharing of resources and equipment within the community and across communities to assist in responding to an emergency
- Prepare and analyze damage assessments following disasters or emergencies
- Review emergency plans of individual organizations, such as medical facilities, to ensure their adequacy
- Apply for federal funding for emergency management planning, responses, and recovery, and report on the use of funds allocated
- Review local emergency operations plans and revise them if necessary
- Maintain facilities used during emergency operations

Emergency management directors are responsible for planning and leading the responses to natural disasters and other emergencies. Directors work with government agencies, nonprofits, private companies, and the general public to develop effective plans that minimize damage and disruptions during an emergency.

To develop emergency response plans, directors typically research “best practices” from around the country and from other emergency management agencies. Directors also must prepare plans and procedures that meet local, state, and federal regulations.

Directors must analyze the resources, equipment, and staff available to respond to emergencies. If resources or equipment is lacking, directors must either revise their plans or get the needed resources from another community or state. Many directors coordinate with fire, emergency medical service, police departments, and public works

agencies in other communities to locate and share equipment during an emergency. Directors must be in contact with other agencies to collect and share information regarding the scope of the emergency, the potential costs, and the resources or staff needed.

After plans are developed, emergency management directors typically ensure that individuals and groups become familiar with the emergency procedures. Directors often use social media to disseminate plans and warnings to the general public.

Emergency management directors conduct training courses and disaster exercises for staff, volunteers, and local agencies to help ensure an effective and coordinated response to an emergency. Directors also may visit schools, hospitals, or other community groups to update everyone on plans for emergencies.

During an emergency, directors typically maintain a command center at which personnel monitor and manage the emergency operations. Directors help lead the response, making adjustments to or prioritizing certain actions if necessary. These actions may include ordering evacuations, conducting rescue missions, or opening up public shelters for those displaced by the emergency. Emergency management directors also may need to conduct press conferences or other outreach activities to keep the public informed about the emergency.

Following an emergency, directors must assess the damage to their community and must coordinate getting assistance and supplies into the community if necessary. Directors may need to request state or federal assistance to help execute their emergency response plan and provide support to affected citizens, organizations, and communities. Directors may also revise their plans and procedures to prepare for future emergencies or disasters.

Emergency management directors working for hospitals, universities, or private companies may be called *business continuity managers*. Similar to their counterparts in local and state government, business continuity managers prepare plans and procedures to help businesses maintain operations and minimize losses during and after an emergency.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

Most emergency management directors must be on call at all times to assist in emergency response.

Emergency management directors held about 10,100 jobs in 2016. The largest employers of emergency management directors were as follows:

Local government, excluding education and hospitals	52%
State government, excluding education and hospitals	12
Hospitals; state, local, and private	8
Professional, scientific, and technical services	6
Colleges, universities, and professional schools; state, local, and private	5

Although most emergency management directors work in an office, they also typically travel to meet with various government agencies, community groups, and private companies.

During disasters and emergencies, directors often work in stressful situations.

Work Schedules

Most emergency management directors work full time. In addition, most are on call at all times and may need to work overtime to respond to emergencies and to support emergency management operations. Others may work evenings and weekends to meet with various community groups in preparing their emergency response plans.

HOW TO BECOME AN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR

Applicants need years of work experience in law enforcement, fire safety, or an emergency management field.

Emergency management directors typically need a bachelor's degree, as well as multiple years of work experience in emergency response, disaster planning, or public administration.

Education

Emergency management directors typically need a bachelor's degree in business or public administration, accounting, finance, emergency management, or public health. Some directors working in the private sector in the area of business continuity management may need to have a degree in computer science, information systems administration, or another information technology (IT) field.

Some smaller municipalities or local governments may hire applicants who have just a high school diploma. However, these applicants usually need extensive work experience in emergency management if they are to be hired.

Work Experience in a Related Occupation

Applicants typically need multiple years of work experience, often with the military, law enforcement, fire safety, or in another emergency management field, before they can be hired as an emergency management director. Previous work experience in these areas enables applicants to make difficult decisions in stressful and time-sensitive situations. Such experience also prepares one to work with various agencies to ensure that proper resources are used to respond to emergencies.

For more information, see the profiles on police and detectives, firefighters, police, fire, and ambulance dispatchers, and EMTs and paramedics.

Licenses, Certifications, and Registrations

Some states require directors obtain certification within a certain timeframe after being hired in the position.

Many agencies and states offer voluntary certificate programs to help emergency management directors obtain additional skills. Some employers may prefer or even require a Certified Emergency Manager (CEM), Certified Business Continuity Professional (CBCP), or equivalent designation. Emergency management directors can attain the CEM designation through the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM); the certification must be renewed every 5 years. The CBCP designation is given by the Disaster Recovery Institute International (DRI) and must be renewed every 2 years.

Both associations require applicants to complete a certain number of continuing education courses prior to recertification.

ADVANCEMENT

Important Qualities

Communication skills. Emergency management directors must write out and communicate their emergency preparedness plans to all levels of government, as well as to the public.

Critical-thinking skills. Emergency management directors must anticipate hazards and problems that may arise from an emergency in order to respond effectively.

Decisionmaking skills. Emergency management directors must make timely decisions, often in stressful situations. They must also identify the strengths and weaknesses of all solutions and approaches, as well as the costs and benefits of each action.

Interpersonal skills. Emergency management directors must work with other government agencies, law enforcement and fire officials, and the general public to coordinate emergency responses.

Leadership skills. To ensure effective responses to emergencies, emergency management directors need to organize and train a variety of people.

WAGES

Median annual wages, May 2017

Management occupations: \$102,590

Emergency management directors: \$72,760

Total, all occupations: \$37,690

Note: All Occupations includes all occupations in the U.S. Economy. Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics

The median annual wage for emergency management directors was \$72,760 in May 2017. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$38,270, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$141,620.

In May 2017, the median annual wages for emergency management directors in the top industries in which they worked were as follows:

Professional, scientific, and technical services	\$95,890
Colleges, universities, and professional schools; state, local, and private	88,850
Hospitals; state, local, and private	81,790
Local government, excluding education and hospitals	65,910
State government, excluding education and hospitals	60,000

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JOB OUTLOOK

Percent change in employment, projected 2016-26

Management occupations: 8%

Emergency management directors: 8%

Total, all occupations: 7%

Note: All Occupations includes all occupations in the U.S. Economy. Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Projections program

Employment of emergency management directors is projected to grow 8 percent from 2016 to 2026, about as fast as the average for all occupations.

The importance of preparing for and minimizing the risks from emergencies will help sustain demand and employment opportunities for emergency management directors. These workers will be needed to help businesses and organizations continue to provide essential services during and after emergencies.

Some local and state governments rely on federal financial assistance to fund their emergency management agencies. Counties may not hire full-time, stand-alone emergency management directors, choosing instead to shift the job responsibilities to the fire chief, police chief, or other government employees.

Job Prospects

Competition for jobs is expected to be strong. Emergency management directors is a relatively small occupation, and only modest increases in state and local government budgets mean that new job openings are likely to be limited.

However, retirements over the next decade may provide some opportunities for jobseekers interested in entering the occupation. Applicants with extensive work experience in an emergency management role will have the best job prospects

Employment projections data for Emergency management directors, 2016-26

Occupational Title	SOC Code	Employment, 2016	Projected Employment, 2026	Change, 2016-26	
				Percent	Numeric
Emergency management directors	11-9161	10,100	10,900	8	800

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Projections program

Famous First

Clara Barton learned of the Red Cross in Geneva, Switzerland and, in 1869, traveled to Europe to become a part of International Red Cross during the Franco-Prussian War. She became President of American National Red Cross, in May 1881. The first chapters opened in upstate New York, where she had connections. John D. Rockefeller and four others donated money to help create a national headquarters near the White House. The famed abolitionist, Frederick Douglass, offered advice and support to Barton,

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Red_Cross#History_and_organization



SIMILAR OCCUPATIONS

This table shows a list of occupations with job duties that are similar to those of emergency management directors.

OCCUPATION	JOB DUTIES	ENTRY-LEVEL EDUCATION	2017 MEDIAN PAY
Budget Analysts	Budget analysts help public and private institutions organize their finances. They prepare budget reports and monitor institutional spending.	Bachelor's degree	\$75,240
EMTs and Paramedics	Emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and paramedics care for the sick or injured in emergency medical settings. People's lives often depend on the quick reaction and competent care provided by these workers. EMTs and paramedics respond to emergency calls, performing medical services and transporting patients to medical facilities.	Postsecondary nondegree award	\$33,380
Firefighters	Firefighters control and put out fires and respond to emergencies where life, property, or the environment is at risk.	Postsecondary nondegree award	\$49,080

OCCUPATION	JOB DUTIES	ENTRY-LEVEL EDUCATION	2017 MEDIAN PAY
Management Analysts	Management analysts, often called management consultants, propose ways to improve an organization's efficiency. They advise managers on how to make organizations more profitable through reduced costs and increased revenues.	Bachelor's degree	\$82,450
Police and Detectives	Police officers protect lives and property. Detectives and criminal investigators, who are sometimes called agents or special agents, gather facts and collect evidence of possible crimes.	High school diploma or equivalent (police) Bachelor's degree (fish and game wardens) Bachelor's degree (federal agencies)	\$62,960
Top Executives	Top executives devise strategies and policies to ensure that an organization meets its goals. They plan, direct, and coordinate operational activities of companies and organizations.	Bachelor's degree	\$104,700

Fast Fact

The magnitude 7.0 earthquake that hit Haiti on January 12, 2010, appears to count as one of the world's top ten disasters. The death toll was estimated at 316,000 by the Haitian government in 2011; 160,000 by the journal *Medicine, Conflict and Survival*, and between 46,000-85,000 a draft US Agency for International Development report.

Source: www.ranker.com

MORE INFORMATION

For more information about emergency management directors and their certifications, visit

**Recovery Institute
International**

<https://drii.org/>

**International Association of
Emergency Managers**

<https://www.iaem.org/>

**National Emergency
Management Association**

<https://www.nemaweb.org/>

Sources

Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, Emergency Management Directors.