

LEARNING MORE ABOUT THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONAL

FEMA Higher Education Program

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INTRODUCTION

Want to learn more about the emergency management professional and work in this important area?

Congratulations! You are about to enter one of the most important, dynamic and rewarding careers in the United States and around the world!

The emergency management profession is vital since disasters are increasing in frequency and intensity. In addition, the profession is ever-changing since hazards and vulnerabilities are changing over time and because the methods to deal with them are improving as well. And, the profession is satisfying since it provides countless benefits toward the well-being of society.

Perhaps you have questions about this particular career and how to become a professional in emergency management. This is understandable and perfectly normal. Emergency management is a relatively new and complex profession. Therefore, most people struggle to comprehend the vast array of options for employment. And, even fewer people understand professional roles within the unique but complex nature of emergency management. For these reasons, it is important to find ways to facilitate and improve entry into this profession and help individuals launch and advance their careers.

The Department of Labor periodically generates an Occupational Outlook Handbook to help answer general inquiries about employment. This document describes various aspects of many careers, including emergency management (DOL 2016-17). Quick Facts about a very specific position in emergency management – Emergency Management Directors – are shown in the chart below.

DOL Emergency Management Director Quick Facts

2016 Median Pay	\$70,500 per year (\$33.89 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, 2014	10,500
Job Outlook, 2014-24	6% (as fast as average)
Employment Change, 2014-24	700

This information provides a useful glimpse into one very specific career in emergency management. But, it does not tell the whole story about this profession. There are many other wonderful career options in emergency management. And, because the chart is limited, the details are incomplete and perhaps even unintentionally misleading. For instance, there is certainly on-the-job training for those working in emergency management and there are more people employed in this area than Emergency Managers alone.

For this reason, it is important that you undertake a more thorough examination of emergency management to see if this type of employment is the right choice for you.

In the following document, you will find answers to significant questions:

- What is emergency management?
- Who works in emergency management and what do they do?
- What is the job of emergency management like?
- What career options exist?
- What do those employed in emergency management make?
- How do I become an emergency management professional?
- How can I advance my career in emergency management?

The goal of this document is to help you find answers to these significant inquiries. In so doing, you will be better prepared to enter and contribute to the vital emergency management profession.

MODULE 1: WHAT IS EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT?

1.1 Emergencies and Disasters

Each day, there are countless emergencies and disasters in the United States and elsewhere around the world. On occasion, there are more significant catastrophes and calamities that have an even greater impact on individuals, organizations and societies. These events may result from natural, technological or anthropogenic hazards such as earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, wildfires, industrial explosions, chemical releases, transportation accidents or terrorist attacks. When these hazards interact with vulnerable people and fragile infrastructure, they result in injury, death, damage and disruption.

Important Terminology

Emergencies – small scale disasters with limited impacts.

Disasters – deadly, destructive and disruptive events that occur when a hazard interacts with human vulnerability.

Catastrophes/Calamities – large scale disasters with extensive impacts.

Natural hazards – triggering agents produced by earth systems, such as the atmosphere, geological, hydrological, seismic, etc.

Technological hazards – triggering agents resulting from technology, such as petro-chemical facilities, power plants, computer networks, etc.

Anthropogenic hazards – triggering agents generated by people, such as a transportation accident, mass shooting, terrorist bombing, etc.

Vulnerability

1.2 Emergency Management

In order to be ready for such devastating events, the profession of emergency management is desperately needed. **Emergency Management** can be defined as an effort to plan how to deal with disasters in the most effective manner. Nevertheless, there is far more to emergency management than meets the eye.

There is no single, agreed-upon conceptualization of emergency management. Many scholars and government agencies have developed their own definition for the term. On the academic side, scholars have defined emergency management from a disciplinary perspective:

- “Emergency management is the discipline dealing with risk and risk avoidance.” (Haddow and Bullock 2003, 1).
- Emergency management “is the study of how humans and their institutions deal with hazards, vulnerabilities and the events that result from their interaction” (Jensen, 2013).

Emergency management has also been defined from a professional orientation or in terms of practical application. The following are common examples of these types of definitions:

- “In simplest terms, emergency management is the management of risk so that societies can live with environmental and technical hazards and deal with the disasters that they cause” (Waugh 2000, 3)
- “Emergency management is the . . . profession of applying science, technology, planning, and management to deal with extreme events that can injure or kill large numbers of people, do extensive damage to property, and disrupt community life” (Drabek and Hoetmer 1991, xvii).
- Emergency management is “An ongoing process to prevent, mitigate, prepare for, respond to, maintain continuity during, and to recover from an incident that threatens life, property, operations, or the environment” (NFPA 1600).

Probably the most well-known definition of emergency management comes from the FEMA Emergency Management Focus Group. This collection of scholars and professionals defined emergency management as “the managerial function charged with creating the

framework within which communities reduce vulnerability to hazards and cope with disasters” (Blanchard et al., 2007, p. 4). This suggests that the profession is in charge of administrative decisions and actions that anticipate hazards, reduce vulnerability and address the impacts of disasters. Emergency management is therefore related to many other professions, careers and areas of employment including risk management, business continuity planning, land-use planning, flood plain management, emergency services, homeland security, humanitarian assistance, etc.

1.3 Goals of Emergency Management

The goal of the emergency management profession is summarized in the vision statement provided by the Emergency Management Focus Group. This group asserted that “emergency management seeks to promote safer, less vulnerable communities with the capacity to cope with hazards and disasters.” In other words, emergency management endeavors to protect life, property and the environment.

The objectives described above require fulfillment of the mission of emergency management. According to the Emergency Management Focus Group, emergency management “protects communities by coordinating and integrating all activities necessary to build, sustain, and improve the capability to mitigate against, prepare for, respond to, and recovery from threatened or actual natural disasters, acts of terrorism, or other man-made disasters.”

1.4 Phases of Emergency Management

This brings up what is commonly known as the four **phases of emergency management**:

1. **Mitigation** refers to the minimization of risk and actions to reduce occurrence and loss. Note: In homeland security parlance, this equates to prevention and protection.
 - **Prevention** includes efforts stop terrorist attacks before they occur.

- **Protection** incorporates actions to minimize damage.
- 2. **Preparedness** implies efforts to increase readiness for disaster.
- 3. **Response** suggests activities in the immediate aftermath of a disaster to save lives and spare property.
- 4. **Recovery** insinuates efforts to return the affected community to pre-disaster, or preferably, improved conditions.

1.5 Functions in Emergency Management

Although the four phases are useful concepts to simplify the emergency management profession, there are countless functions that have to be performed before, during and after emergencies, disasters and catastrophes. For instance:

- **Land-use planning** is promoted to limit development in hazardous prone areas.
- **Structural mitigation** is advocated to strengthen structures and infrastructure.
- **Planning** is required understand hazards and vulnerability, and anticipate what actions will need to be performed when disaster strikes.
- **Training** is necessary to increase capabilities to react to disasters successfully.
- **Exercising** is beneficial to test plans and reinforce what is taught through training.
- **Hazard detection and warning** are imperative if advanced notice of hazards and disasters are to be given.
- **Evacuation** is essential if people are to be moved to safer locations.
- **Sheltering** is indispensable when homes and apartment have been damaged and destroyed.
- **Search and rescue** is crucial when people have been trapped under collapsed buildings or swept away by high water.
- **Emergency medical care and triage** is vital when injuries may be life-threatening and the needs of victims have to be assessed to determine priorities.
- **Mass fatality management** is critical when the number of dead outstrip existing resources.
- **Crisis counseling** is helpful since disasters could produce major emotional challenges.
- **Media relations** are beneficial to keep victims and responding organizations informed.
- **Donations and volunteer management** is important to harness the good will of survivors and non-impacted communities.
- **Damage assessment** is fundamental to determine what locations merit attention first.
- **Disaster declarations** are key to sharing needs with outside agencies.
- **Debris removal** is mandatory when disaster produce significant damages and rubble.
- **Disaster assistance** is valuable for those who have lost housing, employment and possessions.

1.6 Principles of Emergency Management

Fortunately, there are important principles to help guide the emergency management profession in the completion of these various duties. The Emergency Management Focus Group identified eight principles for emergency management. Specifically, emergency Management must be:

1. **Comprehensive.** Emergency managers consider and take into account all hazards, all phases, all stakeholders and all impacts relevant to disasters.
2. **Progressive.** Emergency managers anticipate future disasters and take preventive and preparatory measures to build disaster-resistant and disaster-resilient communities.
3. **Risk-Driven.** Emergency managers use sound risk management principles (hazard identification, risk analysis, and impact analysis) in assigning priorities and resources.
4. **Integrated.** Emergency managers ensure unity of effort among all levels of government and all elements of a community.
5. **Collaborative.** Emergency managers create and sustain broad and sincere relationships among individuals and organizations to encourage trust, advocate a team atmosphere, build consensus, and facilitate communication.
6. **Coordinated.** Emergency managers synchronize the activities of all relevant stakeholders to achieve a common purpose.
7. **Flexible.** Emergency managers use creative and innovative approaches in solving disaster challenges.
8. **Professional.** Emergency managers value a scientific approach based on education, training, experience, ethical practice, public stewardship and continuous improvement.

Learn More: [Emergency Management Directors Career Video](http://www.careeronestop.org/videos/careeronestop-videos.aspx?videocode=11916100)

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MODULE 2: WHO ARE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONALS AND WHAT DO THEY DO?

2.1 Who are Emergency Management Professionals?

In order to understand who an emergency management professional is, it might be wise to first state what he or she is not. An emergency management professional is not the same thing as a Fire Fighter, a Police Officer, an Emergency Services Dispatcher, an EMT/Paramedic or

Nurse (even though these individuals often become emergency management professionals later on in their career). In addition, an emergency management professional is not necessarily the same professional as a Fire Chief, Police Chief, Emergency Services Coordinator or Risk Manager. However, it is important to note that some individuals like a Fire Chief, Police Chief, Emergency Services Coordinator or Risk Manager may have dual roles at times and fill emergency management duties.

So, if an emergency management professional is not the same as the individuals in the positions described above, how can this person be described? One very specific type of emergency management professional is the emergency manager. **Emergency managers** are professionals who are tasked with the responsibility of helping communities and organizations anticipate hazards and vulnerability, and undertake measures to more effectively deal with disasters (e.g., mitigate, prepare for, respond to and recover from them). As will be noted in Module 3, most emergency managers work in the public (government sector). Others are also employed in the private (business) sector and non-profit (volunteer and faith-based) sector. But not all employees in emergency management are called “Emergency Managers.”

2.2 Emergency Management Titles

There are several titles for emergency management professionals, and these names will vary across type of organization and rank of seniority. Below are some of the more common designations:

- **Emergency Management Coordinator (or Emergency Manager Director)** – This is often the highest designation for an emergency management professional. This person is “in charge” of the emergency management office, and responsible for overseeing all functions related to disasters. This individual has many years of experience in emergency management, and is seen as the leader within the unit. He or she is regarded to be a peer to other administrators in the community

(e.g., Police Chief, Fire Chief, Director of Public Works, Budget Director, etc.). This person may report to the Mayor, City Manager or perhaps even the Fire Chief or other department leaders.

- **Emergency Management Specialist** – This employee may have a few years of experience in emergency management, and has certain knowledge and skills related to particular issues (such as mitigation plans, hurricane evacuations, hazardous materials response, etc.). Emergency management specialists report to and counsel the emergency management coordinator. But, these employees have some degree of autonomy in what they do because of their expertise.
- **Emergency Management Planner** – The person in this position is often an entry level employee. This individual takes direction from the Emergency Management Coordinator, and often spends time writing emergency operations plans.

While many of those working in emergency management will have one of the above titles, position labels are not universal. There are numerous other names for those working in emergency management. Other titles may include Emergency Management Administrator, Emergency Operations Coordinator, Emergency Management Assistant, etc. Emergency management professionals working for hospitals, universities, or private companies may be called Emergency Managers (like those described above) or **Business Continuity Planners/Managers**. Similar to emergency management professionals, Business Continuity Planners/Managers prepare plans and procedures to help businesses maintain operations and minimize losses during and after an emergency. But, business continuity planners work in the private sector. In non-profit organizations, emergency management professionals may be called Disaster Specialists, Volunteer Coordinators, etc.

2.3 Duties of Emergency Management Professionals

According to the Department of Labor, “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.” This is a good,

but simple description of what an emergency management professional does. However, there is a lot more to the job which is performed by emergency management professionals.

Emergency management professionals assess hazards, write Hazard Mitigation Plans and promote mitigation activities to reduce the probability and impact of disasters. This includes things like improved land-use planning and better construction of homes, businesses buildings and infrastructure. These things are known as non-structural and structural mitigation.

Emergency management professionals are also responsible for planning and leading the response to natural disasters and other emergencies. They work with government agencies, nonprofits, private companies, and the general public to identify hazards and vulnerability, and develop effective plans that minimize damage and disruptions during an emergency.

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

Emergency management professionals also analyze the resources, equipment, and personnel available to respond to emergencies. If resources or equipment are lacking, emergency management professionals must either revise their plans or obtain the needed resources from another community or state. Many emergency management professionals coordinate with fire departments, police departments, emergency medical services, public health departments and public works agencies in other communities to locate and share equipment during an emergency. Emergency management professionals must be in contact

with other agencies to collect and share information regarding the scope of the emergency, the potential costs, and the personnel or material resources needed.

After plans are developed, emergency management professionals typically ensure that individuals and groups become familiar with the emergency procedures. Emergency management professionals meet with others and run training courses and disaster exercises for staff, volunteers, and local agencies to ensure an effective and coordinated response to an emergency. The professionals also may visit schools, hospitals, or other community groups to update everyone on the emergency plans. These professionals often use social media to disseminate preparedness recommendations to the general public.

During an emergency or disaster, emergency management professionals typically maintain a coordination center at which personnel monitor and manage the emergency operations. Emergency management professionals 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 disaster. Emergency management professionals also may need to conduct press conferences or other outreach activities to keep the public informed about the emergency.

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

As can be seen, an emergency management professional has many important professional obligations. The Department of Labor lists several other activities of emergency manager professionals:

- 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.

2.4 Nature of Emergency Management Employment

As can be seen, emergency management professionals have significant responsibilities. While some of these professionals work on a part-time basis, most have full-time careers. During non-disaster situations, they typically work a regular Monday through Friday schedule. Emergency management professionals work in an office-type setting, but also travel on an almost-daily basis to meet with various government agencies, community groups, and private companies. The work can be arduous and difficult at times since there is so much to do and because there is often limited political support or personnel and resources. On various occasions, emergency management professionals may work evenings and weekends to meet with various community groups in preparing their emergency response plans or to promote community disaster education and training. In addition, most emergency management

professionals are on-call after hours or on weekends and holidays. This means they are required to respond to calls or e-mails in case an emergency or disaster occurs. For these reasons, emergency management is not boring or routine in any way, shape or form.

Emergency management professionals typically work in an office setting. If needed, emergency management professionals may show up at the scene of an emergency or disaster. Their goal is to understand what has happened to better determine needs and request resources. However, this is very rare. It is much more common for emergency management professionals to report to the Emergency Operations Center. This is a location where disaster functions are managed and coordinated. During emergencies and disasters, emergency management professionals work overtime and experience stressful situations. Nevertheless, this work can be accompanied by high levels of satisfaction. Emergency management professionals feel a deep sense of pride for helping communities plan for disasters and react in an effective manner.

MODULE 3: WHAT CAREER OPTIONS EXIST AND HOW MUCH DO EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONALS MAKE?

3.1 Employment Opportunities for Emergency Management Professionals

There are a number of employment opportunities for those who want to become emergency management professionals. In addition, these career options are generally well-paid and have favorable growth projections. Each of these issues will be discussed in this module.

The Department of Labor provides a breakdown of where some very specific types of emergency management professionals are employed. The percentage of career options for Emergency Management Directors are listed in table 3.1.

What Emergency Management Directors Do



Emergency management directors may help train volunteers and first responders in emergency procedures.

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 are lacking, directors must either revise their plans or obtain 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 run training courses and disaster exercises for staff, volunteers, and local agencies to ensure an effective and coordinated response to an emergency. Directors also may visit schools, hospitals, or other community groups to update everyone on the emergency plans.

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 disaster. 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 effected 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.

[Occupational Outlook Handbook: Summary](https://www.bls.gov/ooh/management/emergency-management-directors.htm#tab-1)

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[Occupational Outlook Handbook: Work Environment](https://www.bls.gov/ooh/management/emergency-management-directors.htm#tab-3)

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Work Environment



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

Emergency management directors held about 10,500 jobs in 2014. 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	9%
Professional, scientific, and technical services	6%
Colleges, universities, and professional schools; state, local, and private	4%

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

Many directors work in stressful situations during disasters and emergencies.

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.

[Occupational Outlook Handbook: What They Do](https://www.bls.gov/ooh/management/emergency-management-directors.htm#tab-2)

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[Occupational Outlook Handbook: How to Become One](https://www.bls.gov/ooh/management/emergency-management-directors.htm#tab-4)

(<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/management/emergency-management-directors.htm#tab-4>)

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 to 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](http://www.iaem.com) (www.iaem.com) (IAEM); the certification must be renewed every 5 years. The CBCP designation is given by the [Disaster Recovery Institute International](http://www.drii.com) (www.drii.com) (DRI) and must be renewed every 2 years.

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

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.

[Occupational Outlook Handbook: Work Environment](https://www.bls.gov/ooh/management/emergency-management-directors.htm#tab-3)

(<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/management/emergency-management-directors.htm#tab-3>)

[Occupational Outlook Handbook: Pay](https://www.bls.gov/ooh/management/emergency-management-directors.htm#tab-5) (<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/management/emergency-management-directors.htm#tab-5>)

Pay

Emergency Management Directors Median annual wages, May 2016

Management occupations	\$100,790
Emergency management directors	\$70,500
Total, all occupations	\$37,040

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 \$74,420 in May 2018. The median wage is the wage at which half the workers in an occupation earned more than that amount and half earned less. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$40,460, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$141,130.

In May 2018, the median annual wages for emergency management directors in the top industries in which they worked were as follows:

3.2 Key Employers

As can be seen, the vast majority of Emergency Managers Directors work in government positions. This includes local, state and federal emergency management departments, organizations and agencies. In addition, international government organizations employ Emergency Managers.

- Local emergency management departments exist in most moderately sized and larger cities in the United States. In addition, counties often have emergency management organizations. However, the number of employees may vary dramatically. For instance, there are a couple of employees in the emergency management office in Omaha, Nebraska. There are 13 on the payroll in Los Angeles and over 100 in New York City.
- State emergency management organizations are also major employers of emergency managers. Every state has an emergency management organization. But, like their counterparts in city or county government, the size of these organization are different. Furthermore, the names of these entities is different. In California, the emergency management organization is known as the Office of Emergency Services, and it falls under the auspices of the Governor. In Texas, it is called the Division of Emergency Management and it is also affiliated with the Governor's Office. In Minnesota, the agency is called Emergency Management and Homeland Security, and it is located under the Department of Public Safety.
- Emergency Managers may work for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). FEMA is an agency within the Department of Homeland Security. FEMA is responsible for all types of emergency management activities including mitigation and preparedness before disasters occur. FEMA pre-positions employees in disaster areas and provide minor response support (e.g., search and rescue). But, after a disaster, FEMA is most likely to be engaged in recovery efforts. For instance, FEMA provides housing assistance to disaster victims and grants to help communities rebuild destroyed infrastructure.
- Finally, international government organizations like the Organization of American States or the United Nations employ people who fulfill emergency management functions. These organizations are interested in food security, relief for refugees, and humanitarian assistance after major events like the Indian Ocean Tsunami or the Haiti earthquake.

Emergency Management Directors may also obtain employment in the private sector. In some cases, they will still have the name "Emergency Manager." This is especially the case for transportation companies, industrial facilities or hospitals. Airlines and railroads employ people

in case of plane crashes and rail-car derailments. Petro-chemical plants need individuals to plan for accidents including fires, explosions and chemical releases. Hospitals require people to prepare methods to evacuate patients when hurricanes threaten or if fires break out.

Nevertheless, the vast majority of Emergency Managers employment opportunities in the private sector are related to Risk Management, Business Continuity Planning or Disaster Recovery. These individuals often work for banks, financial institutions, and major retailers. **Risk Managers** are slightly different than Emergency Managers, and attempt to limit liability and frequently focus on issues related to insurance. **Business Continuity Specialists** are in some ways synonymous with Emergency Managers. They attempt to maintain business activity in spite of disruptions, but also help the company resume operations and profitability after a disaster occurs. **Disaster Recovery Specialists** typically work on IT issues in companies. Their goal is to limit hacking and cyber-terrorism, make sure computer networks link-up properly, and ensure programs run smoothly or resume operability when disruptions occur.

Emergency Management Director opportunities also exist with non-profit organizations (even though these organizations are predominantly run by volunteers). The names of these positions are not uniform across organizations. However, the goal is typically to assist victims who have been negatively impacted by disaster. For instance, numerous individuals work with the Red Cross to prepare for disasters and respond to victims' needs after earthquakes, tornadoes, floods, and other events like industrial explosions and terrorist attacks. The Red Cross is the most recognized non-profit organization involved in disaster response operations. With its organization of local branches/chapters and state, regional and national offices, it has many employees and volunteers who respond to small house fires and major catastrophes.

Volunteer Disaster Action Team members as well as paid Emergency Services Specialists and others in the American Red Cross Disaster Services Human Resources Database are dispatched to disaster sites to perform a variety of functions. These functions include disaster health services, disaster mental health services, disaster welfare inquiries, family services, mass care, and other services.

1. **Disaster Health Services.** The Red Cross has employees who meet the health needs of individuals and families affected by disaster. This might include the provision of basic first aid, the filling of prescriptions, and the collecting and distribution of blood for victims when there is a shortage of blood and blood-related products after a disaster.
2. **Disaster Mental Health Services.** Volunteer and paid staff who have received adequate training may help deliver mental health services after a disaster. The immediate and long-term emotional needs of victims and first responders are identified through counseling sessions and steps are taken to help individuals, families, and the community recover psychologically from the disaster.
3. **Disaster Welfare Inquiries.** Red Cross staff members facilitate the exchange of information about individuals in disaster-affected areas to family members seeking the status on their well-being. The Red Cross receives calls from concerned family members, takes information down about the person in the disaster-affected area, and then tries to contact the person in question through personal visits or phone calls. If information is obtained, a message regarding the person's status is relayed to the family members that initiated the well-being inquiry. Bulletins are also posted to help acquire information on potential disaster victims.
4. **Family Services.** After emergencies or disasters, Red Cross employees and volunteers will work with those affected to determine their immediate and long-term needs. This may include clothing, furniture, temporary housing, or tools for work. Although the assistance is based on standardized methods, it is flexible enough to help those with minor or major relief needs.
5. **Mass Care.** Employees of the Red Cross often visit the sites of emergencies and disasters to feed emergency workers including police, fire fighters, and emergency medical technicians. Red Cross employees and volunteers also establish shelters for emergency workers and/or disaster victims. Food and other bulk items are distributed based on the needs of the individual victims and the affected community.
6. **Other Services.** American Red Cross employees are also involved in other functions that take place during disaster response. These might include the following: fund raising, damage assessment emergency communications,

volunteer management, record keeping, logistics, liaison with other agencies, public affairs.

More information about employment opportunities in Emergency Management or for Disaster Directors are found in non-profit disaster organizations (such as the Points of Light Institute in the United States or CARE) and can be obtained by searching for the [National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster](#) (www.nvoad.org).

There are also various employment opportunities with faith-based organizations such as the Salvation Army, Catholic Charities, Church World Service, Episcopal Relief and Development, Jewish Disaster Response Corps, LDS Philanthropies, Lutheran Disaster Services, Mennonite Disaster Services, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the United Methodist Committee on Relief, World Vision, etc. For more information, you may want to learn more about the [National Disaster Interfaith Network](http://www.n-din.org/ndin/index.php) (<http://www.n-din.org/ndin/index.php>).

3.3 Other Career Options – Public Sector

Beyond the typical Emergency Management Director/Business Continuity Director/Disaster Director positions described above, there are numerous people employed in other areas related to emergency management. In this sense, emergency management is a distributed function. This means that there are many other professionals that work in emergency management beyond those mentioned earlier. Some of these individuals work in the local level of government (e.g., cities, townships, and counties). This includes emergency medical technicians, fire fighters, police officers, and public health officials among others. Many additional public administrators also work in various aspects of disaster mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.

- A. **Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs).** Provide emergency medical care to the injured and transport disaster victims to hospitals for further treatment.
- B. **Firefighters.** Extinguish fires and rescue and investigate their causes. Respond to other incidents including transportation accidents, industrial explosions, and hazardous materials spills. Also engage in search and rescue.
- C. **Police Officers.** Maintain security at the scene of an emergency and disaster. Provide traffic control in major traffic accidents; close off flooded and disaster-damaged roads.
- D. **Department of Public Works.** Re-establishes public utilities after disaster. Provide personnel and heavy equipment for debris removal activities.
- E. **Department of Transportation.** Removes debris from roads. Makes repairs to signal lights and reconstruct damaged roads, bridges, and overpasses.
- F. **Department of Parks and Recreation.** Provides personnel and heavy equipment for debris removal.
- G. **Department of Public/Mental Health.** Works with hospitals to care for disaster victims. Issues quarantine orders and provide medicines in times of a biological terrorist attack. Counsels emergency service personnel and disaster victims who have been affected by critical incident stress.
- H. **Department of Housing.** Finds or helps facilitate the building of housing or relocation of tenants if large numbers of homes and apartments have been damaged or destroyed by disaster.
- I. **Department of Engineering.** Inspects buildings to determine if they are inhabitable or if they should be condemned. Promote and enforce stronger building codes during recovery and reconstruction.
- J. **Chamber of Commerce.** Communicates with businesses to determine impact of disaster and facilitate business resumption. Helps businesses acquire loans from the Small Business Administration.
- K. **Coroner's Office.** Gathers, stores, identifies, and processes remains after mass fatality incidents.
- L. **Flood Plain Managers.** Help warn communities about potential flooding disasters. Promote property acquisitions and more stringent redevelopment priorities.
- M. **Development and Redevelopment Agencies.** Find ways to help communities recover quickly while considering the best ways of designing and/or building urban areas and mitigating future disasters.
- N. **Public Information Officer.** Communicate with the media to help the public understand what has happened and what they should do to respond and recover.
- O. **City Manager.** Works with the emergency manager, mayor, and other departments to foster effective and efficient response and recovery operations.
- P. **Mayor/County Judge/County Commissioners.** Declares an emergency or disaster, and work with the emergency manager, city manager, and other department leaders to mobilize personnel and resources. Work with state and federal officials to acquire disaster assistance funds and services.

There are a number of employers related to emergency management at the state level.

- A. **State Emergency Management Offices/Departments.** Employees in this organization help local government perform preliminary damage assessment. They also meet local government requests for personnel, advice, and resources. In addition, these employees funnel monetary assistance and grants to the local level from federal government sources.
- B. **Department of Public Safety.** Those who work in this department assist the local police departments in securing disaster sites and controlling traffic.
- C. **Department of Transportation.** People in the DOT repair roads, bridges, and highways that have been damaged in the disaster. They also provide heavy equipment to the local government for debris removal if needed.
- D. **Department of Public/Mental Health.** These employees help local governments identify public health problems and respond accordingly. They provide personnel, advice, and resources to deal with disease outbreaks, terrorist attacks with biological weapons, and critical incident stress.
- E. **Department of Housing.** People employed in this agency help the local community find temporary and permanent housing after a disaster.
- F. **Department of Environmental Protection.** Workers in this organization coordinate with local officials to limit environmental degradation and clean up the environment during disaster response. They share expertise and resources in case of hazardous materials spills and terrorist incidents involving chemical or nuclear weapons.
- G. **National Guard.** Those working for the National Guard participate in various services including security, traffic control, debris removal, and engineering to the local governments affected by a disaster.
- H. **Governor's Office.** People employed in the Governor's Office help declare the disaster for the state and seek federal funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other funding sources. Mobilize state resources as needed.

There are likewise a number of federal agencies that employ professionals in emergency management related positions. Many of these employees are vital for the National Response Framework or the National Disaster Recovery Framework.

- A. **[U.S. Department of Agriculture \(USDA\)](http://www.usda.gov)** (www.usda.gov). Employees of the USDA identify food needs after disaster and respond accordingly. These employees also suppress rural and urban fires and provides information about droughts.
- B. **[U.S. Department of Commerce \(DOC\)](http://www.doc.gov/)** (www.doc.gov/). DOC workers perform a variety of functions in information and planning, resource support, communications, and hazardous materials incidents. They act as a liaison to businesses during and after disaster situations.

- C. [U.S. Department of Defense \(DOD\)](http://www.dod.gov/) (www.dod.gov/). Employees of the DOD fulfill several major functions in disaster response including public works and engineering, transportation, information and planning, resource support, urban search and rescue, communications, firefighting, mass care, health and medical services, hazardous materials, and food. Military employees also play vital roles in detecting weapons of mass destruction during terrorist incidents. Those affiliated with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) assist with public works and flood mitigation measures.
- D. [U.S. Department of Education \(DOEd\)](http://www.ed.gov/) (www.ed.gov/). DOEd employees help to collect, process, and disseminate critical information about potential and actual disasters.
- E. [U.S. Department of Energy \(DOE\)](http://www.energy.gov/) (www.energy.gov/). DOE workers are responsible for restoring energy systems after a disaster. They also respond to disasters involving nuclear power plants.
- F. [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services \(HHS\)](http://www.hhs.gov/) (www.hhs.gov/). HHS employees deliver services to supplement local and state public health and medical care operations.
- G. [U.S. Department of Homeland Security \(DHS\)](http://www.dhs.gov/) (www.dhs.gov/). DHS workers are responsible for public safety and security, especially for terrorist attacks. DHS employees work under several directorates including Management, Science and Technology, Informational Analysis and Infrastructure Protection, and Border and Transportation Security. Employees in the U.S. Coast Guard also fall under DHS, and are heavily involved in oil and hazardous materials responses.
- H. [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development \(HUD\)](http://www.hud.gov/) (www.hud.gov/). HUD employees re-establish temporary and permanent housing after disaster.
- I. [U.S. Department of the Interior \(DOI\)](http://www.doi.gov/) (www.doi.gov/). DOI employees are involved in several issues after a disaster including information and planning, energy, communications, firefighting, and hazardous materials.
- J. [U.S. Department of Justice \(DOJ\)](http://www.usdoj.gov/) (www.usdoj.gov/). DOJ workers execute information and planning, urban search and rescue, health and medical, and hazardous materials functions after a disaster. They also ensure that the response complies with all laws pertaining to disaster assistance.
- K. [U.S. Department of Labor \(DOL\)](http://www.dol.gov/) (www.dol.gov/). DOL workers assist with public works and engineering, resource support, urban search and rescue, and hazardous materials issues after a disaster.
- L. [U.S. Department of State \(DOS\)](http://www.state.gov/) (www.state.gov/). DOS employees offer transportation, energy, and hazardous materials services after a disaster.
- M. [U.S. Department of Transportation \(DOT\)](http://www.dot.gov/) (www.dot.gov/). DOT employees fulfill transportation, information and planning, energy, and hazardous materials functions after a **disaster**.
- N. [U.S. Department of Treasury \(TREAS\)](http://www.ustreas.gov/) (www.ustreas.gov/). Treasury Department employees are responsible for funding long-term recovery projects and mitigation measures.

- O. [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs \(VA\)](http://www.va.gov/) (www.va.gov/). VA employees are involved in meeting veterans' disaster assistance needs. They are also involved in public works and engineering, resource support, mass care, and health and medical services.
- P. [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](http://www.epa.gov/) (www.epa.gov/). The major role of EPA employees is to respond to and clean up hazardous materials spills. They also participate in energy-related incidents, public works and engineering, information and planning, firefighting, health and medical services, and food functions.
- Q. [Federal Communications Commission \(FCC\)](http://www.fcc.gov/) (www.fcc.gov/). FCC employees assist in communications support during and after disasters.
- R. [General Services Administration \(GSA\)](http://www.gsa.gov/) (www.gsa.gov/). GSA workers are actively involved in the performance of several disaster functions such as transportation, information and planning, mass care, and the provision of food.
- S. [National Aeronautics and Space Administration \(NASA\)](http://www.nasa.gov/) (www.nasa.gov/). NASA employees help perform the urban search and rescue and other functions with satellites and distance imaging.
- T. [Nuclear Regulatory Commission \(NRC\)](http://www.nrc.gov/) (www.nrc.gov/). NRC employees provide expertise in energy issues and hazardous materials disasters involving nuclear plants and materials.
- U. [Office of Planning and Management \(OPM\)](http://www.opm.gov/) (www.opm.gov/). OPM workers provide logistical and resource support to all other federal entities involved in disaster response.
- V. [Small Business Administration \(SBA\)](http://www.sba.gov/) (www.sba.gov/). SBA employees provide financial disaster assistance to businesses affected by disaster.
- W. [Social Security Administration \(SSA\)](http://www.ssa.gov/) (www.ssa.gov/). SSA workers assist with mass care, housing, and human services in addition to external affairs.
- X. [Tennessee Valley Authority \(TVA\)](http://www.tva.gov/) (www.tva.gov/). TVA employees offer transportation, public works and engineering, and energy services after disasters.
- Y. [U.S. Agency for International Development \(USAID\)](http://www.usaid.gov/) (www.usaid.gov/). USAID employees assist in urban search and rescue functions after disasters.
- Z. [U.S. Postal Service \(USPS\)](http://www.usps.com/) (www.usps.com/). Because of its large fleet of vehicles, USPS employees provide transportation support to other federal agencies in times of disaster.

In addition to the employees that provide emergency support functions in the National Response Framework and the National Disaster Recovery Framework, there are other federal actors that are also involved in additional emergency management related activities.

- A. [Federal Aviation Administration \(FAA\)](http://www.faa.gov/) (www.faa.gov/). Employees of the FAA divert planes from airports that are involved in aviation accidents. They also help

to resume flights when emergency responses and preliminary investigations have taken place.

- B. [Federal Bureau of Investigation \(FBI\)](http://www.fbi.gov/) (www.fbi.gov/). FBI special agents are in charge of crisis management for terrorist incidents. They attempt to apprehend potential terrorists and prosecute those who have been successful in carrying out terrorist attacks.
- C. **Congress** – [House](http://www.house.gov/) (www.house.gov/) and [Senate](http://www.senate.gov/) (www.senate.gov/). Members of the House of Representatives and U.S. Senate pass laws regarding mitigation and preparedness as well as ad-hoc legislation to augment funding for disaster assistance.
- D. [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration \(NOAA\)](http://www.noaa.gov/) (www.noaa.gov/). NOAA workers share information such as warnings relating to hurricanes and other weather disturbances.
- E. [National Transportation and Safety Board \(NTSB\)](http://www.nts.gov/) (www.nts.gov/). NTSB employees are actively involved in investigating transportation related accidents such as plane crashes.
- F. [National Weather Service \(NWS\)](http://www.nws.gov/) (www.nws.gov/). NWS workers provide warnings for severe weather including tornadoes and flash flooding. They work with the emergency alert system to relay information about potential disasters.
- G. [Occupational Safety and Health Agency \(OSHA\)](http://www.osha.gov/) (www.osha.gov/). OSHA employees respond to industrial accidents and disasters to investigate their causes and impose fines for safety violations.
- H. [Office of the Inspector General \(IG\)](https://www.oig.dhs.gov/) (https://www.oig.dhs.gov/). IG employee travel to the scene of a disaster to ensure that federal agencies and disaster victims are not misusing disaster assistance funds.
- I. [President](http://www.whitehouse.gov/) (www.whitehouse.gov/). The President of the United States reviews local and state requests for assistance and declares disasters on their behalf to initiate the National Response Framework and free up federal resources for those affected by a disaster.
- J. [U.S. Geological Survey \(USGS\)](http://www.usgs.gov/) (www.usgs.gov/). USGS employees provide technical expertise pertaining to the prediction or evaluation of flooding, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions.

Besides obtaining employment with a local and state government, there are also emergency management positions associated with tribal governments. A tribal government is “an Indian or Alaska Native Tribe . . . that the Secretary of the Interior acknowledges to exist as an Indian Tribe pursuant to the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act of 1994. People employed with a tribal government typically fulfill the same types of jobs as people working in local, state and federal government.

3.4 Other Career Options – The Private Sector

In addition to emergency management professionals that work at the local, state and federal levels, there are many other people that fulfill similar roles for businesses. Emergency management professionals that work for corporations and industry are employed in the private sector. These private sector employees are involved in the following activities:

- **Insurance.** Private sector employees write the vast majority of policies for fire, wind, hail, earthquakes, and other hazards. This includes the coverage of residential and commercial properties, personal vehicles, and the fleets of major transportation firms and carriers. Consequently, employees of insurance companies arrive at the scene of a disaster to verify damages and begin settling claims with those who have been adversely affected. Those involved in insurance and reinsurance jobs then help individuals, families, and other corporations recover by reimbursing losses associated with destroyed or damaged property.
- **Occupational health and safety.** Employees in this area ensure that the work environment limits risks such as injuries from lifting, tripping, falling, etc. In addition to various prevention and preparedness activities, people involved in emergency response teams (ERTs) respond to industrial disasters before and in conjunction with public emergency response teams.
- **Transportation.** Those employed in this area have always performed emergency management functions. Workers involved in companies that operate ocean vessels attempt to steer clear of adverse weather, and have often provided assistance to ships in distress. Railroad operators are now required by law to track hazardous materials shipments. Employees that respond to derailments ensure a quick recovery of normal operations. Trucking companies such as SAIA Motor Freight and their drivers often have their own personnel that investigate vehicle accidents and clean up hazardous materials spills according to state and federal environmental and transportation policies. Under the Aviation Family Disaster Assistance Act of 1996, airline personnel are required to plan and prepare for aviation crashes. Responsibilities during an actual incident include information dissemination, body identification, psychological counseling, etc.
- **Emergency medical health care.** When an emergency or disaster occurs, dispatchers send emergency medical technicians and paramedics to the scene of an accident, emergency or disaster to establish triage procedures, care for the wounded, and transport victims to nearby hospitals. Doctors and nurses must treat patients that arrive by ambulance, friends, or self-referral. At times, hospital employees must also protect or evacuate patients if a disaster has directly affected their facilities.
- **Media organizations.** Reports of newspaper, radio, television, and cable companies are also heavily involved after disaster strikes. These individuals are

sent to the scene of disaster to obtain interviews, audio sound bites, and video footage. After this information is compiled, organized and edited, reporters then distributed in print, via the Internet, over the air waves, or on the screen.

- **The tourist industry.** Employees in this sector of the economy are becoming more involved in emergency management activities. Fires such as the one that occurred at the MGM in Las Vegas in 1980 have impelled hotels to better prepare for and respond to emergency situations. For example, Marriott has its own Crisis Management and Business Continuity division. Hotels also have policies and procedures relating to warning employees or guests. They even serve as places of refuge for those who have evacuated because of disasters and other emergencies.
- **Provider of goods and services.** Employees in the private sector are also a major provider of goods and services for emergency managers and other businesses, organizations, or communities. In addition to their important roles in mitigation and preparedness, several businesses provide equipment and technical expertise during response and recovery operations. For instance, employees of High Sierra Electronics, HI-GO, and American Communications manufacture and sell weather warning stations, dam and reservoir monitoring systems, weather alert radios, tornado warning sirens, and communications equipment in first responder vehicles. Other vendors sell or rent sand bags, personal protective equipment, generators, computer-aided decision support systems, and other supplies for first responders and those working in emergency operations centers. Employees of Emergency & Disaster Management Inc. consult officials and staff at airports to deal with major aviation incidents. Workers associated with Cura Emergency Services and Hultcher Services respond to hazardous materials spills on road and railways, respectively. Employees of DRC, Inc. provide logistical support during response through the provision of labor, workforce housing, potable water, etc. Those involved with Phillips and Jordan contract with government agencies to remove, burn, and dispose of debris and animal carcasses left in the aftermath of disaster. Employees of Verizon, ConEd and other utility providers restore phone, electric, gas and water infrastructure rendered inoperable because of the forces of nature. Workers involved in BMS Catastrophe are well known for their ability to restore buildings and office equipment after major floods and fires. Employees of Parsons Brinkerhoff work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to verify structural damages owing to disasters and estimate repair costs. Numerous contractors and builders descend on disaster-affected communities to make repairs to damaged buildings or rebuild entire communities. There are also many contractors that work to support emergency management.

3.5 Other Career Options – The Non-Profit Sector

Although primarily run by volunteers, many non-profit organizations hire emergency management professionals that get involved in disasters. This may include faith-based organizations like the Adventist Relief and Development Agency, Catholic Charities, LDS Philanthropy, World Vision, etc. Other entities like the United Way, Rotary Clubs, Goodwill Industries, refugee organization, minority affiliation, women's and Children's Advocate Agencies also hire individuals that fulfill emergency management roles. In most cases, emergency management professionals in these organizations work to collect and donate food, water, clothing, and other life necessities to sustain those affected by a disaster on a short-term basis. They also help provide spiritual and mental health counseling, feed emergency workers, and convey words of appreciation and encouragement to those responding to the disaster. At other times, these organizations will provide money, labor, temporary housing, translation services, and construction supplies to assist victims who are recovering from a disaster. As noted earlier, many of these organizations will collaborate with the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters.

3.6 How much do Emergency Management Professionals Make?

Emergency Management professionals are not the highest paid employees among all occupations. Nonetheless, compensation for these employees is impressive and much higher than the average of all occupations. There is insufficient information about salaries for all types of emergency management professionals. However, the Department of Labor has identified the Annual Median Wages for Emergency Management Directors specifically. This is described in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2

Emergency Management Directors

Management occupations	\$100,790
Emergency management directors	\$70,500
Total, all occupations	\$37,040

As would be anticipated, the salaries for Emergency Managers are not uniform. In May 2016, the median annual wages for Emergency Management Directors in the various industries were denoted. These are identified in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3

Median Salaries in Top Industries

Colleges, universities, and professional schools; state, local, and private	\$88,150
Professional, scientific, and technical services	\$86,430
Hospitals; state, local, and private	\$78,380
Local government, excluding education and hospitals	\$64,470
State government, excluding education and hospitals	\$60,230

3.7 Employment Outlook

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, there are 10,500 Emergency Managers in the United States. By 2024, the number of positions will rise by 700 to a total of 11,200. Employment of Emergency Management Directors is therefore positive. From 2014 to 2024, growth is projected to be 6 percent, about as fast as the average for all occupations. This is noted in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4

Emergency Management Directors

Projected Change in Employment, 2014-24

Management occupations	6%
Emergency management directors	6%
Total, all occupations	7%

It is important to recognize that these statistics only include the title “Emergency Management Directors” and generally focus on government positions. There are many related jobs in emergency management not only in government, but in the private and non-profit sectors. These jobs are not reflected in the statistics above. In addition, there are several reasons to anticipate further growth.

For instance, every geographic region has the potential for weather-related emergencies such as flooding, droughts, hurricanes, and tornadoes. Increasing urbanization and continued population growth in coastal regions may increase the number of people who are vulnerable to these emergencies. Emergency management directors will be needed to develop response plans to protect more people and property, and to limit the damage from emergencies and disasters.

Employment is projected to increase as both local and state governments place a greater emphasis on preparing for natural and human-made emergencies and seek to minimize the risks of being underprepared to deal with such emergencies. Employment growth, however, may be somewhat limited because of budgetary constraints in state and local governments. Although local and state revenue and spending have increased since the end of the recession,

continued budget uncertainty and other spending obligations may lead to only modest growth in government hiring.

In addition, some local and state governments rely on federal financial support to fund their emergency management agencies. Yet similar budgetary problems at the federal level may lead to continued cutbacks in funding and grants for local and state agencies, further limiting the hiring of emergency management personnel. Some smaller 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.

Employment, therefore, is likely to grow fastest in private companies. Emergency management professionals will be needed to help businesses and organizations continue to provide essential products and services during and after emergencies. However, as in state and local government, some smaller companies, hospitals, or college campuses may not have a stand-alone director. Instead, an information technology (IT) director, a registered nurse, or a public safety officer may handle emergency management duties. New positions will also open up in the non-profit sector. However, this will be somewhat slower than the private sector (and somewhat comparable to public sector growth).

Competition for jobs is expected to be somewhat strong. Emergency Management Director positions are a relatively limited occupation, and only modest increases in state and local government budgets suggest that new job openings are likely to be limited. However, retirements over the next decade may provide some opportunities for those interested in entering these careers. As noted, there will also be openings in the private and non-profit

sectors. Applicants with extensive work experience in an emergency management role will have the best prospect for employment.

MODULE 4: HOW DO I BECOME AN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONAL AND ADVANCE MY CAREER?

In the past, almost anyone could become an Emergency Manager or work in emergency management. This is to say that there were no special educational or professional requirements to enter this type of employment. In fact, people from all walks of life were hired into this profession. It is true that first responders and military personnel were often hired based on their work experience preparing for and responding to accidents, emergencies and armed conflict. However, almost anyone could apply for open positions and there were no major hurdles in terms of academic degrees or formal training. Emergency managers and others involved in emergency management simply learned their craft while on the job. Things are dramatically different today and the standards for entry into this profession will continue to tighten over time. In order to qualify for employment in emergency management you will need a combinations of academic degrees, internships, work experience, training, certification and ongoing professional development. Your resume and interview will also have a large impact on your chances to become a professional in emergency management.

4.1 Education

According to the Department of Labor, “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.” The educational requirements or type of degree is less stringent or more diverse for others that work in the emergency management profession. For instance, an administrative assistant may only need an associate’s degree and an employee in the non-profit sector may need an education in social work.

Many of the academic disciplines listed above have been in existence for numerous years and almost every college or university has degrees in public administration, accounting, finance, computer science, information systems administration or information technology. While it is technically true that degrees in these areas could allow you to enter emergency management or business continuity, it is becoming increasingly unlikely that these degrees alone will be sufficient. More and more, employers will also want specific academic credentials (degrees, majors, minors, concentrations, certificates) in emergency management, homeland security, business continuity planning or humanitarian logistics/assistance. Job descriptions will increasingly require academic coursework in these areas at the bachelor’s and master’s levels. Bachelor’s degrees are considered entry level qualifications so it is unwise for recent graduates to expect to obtain executive positions initially. Leadership positions will often require master’s degrees. Typically, a PhD is not required to work in emergency management. However, a PhD would be requisite to teach in a major research institution.

Prior to 1983, there were no academic degrees in emergency management (or related areas like homeland security, business continuity, or humanitarian assistance). Today, there are well over 250 programs in these disciplines. The vast majority of them are listed on the website for [FEMA’s Higher Education Program](https://training.fema.gov/hiedu/) (https://training.fema.gov/hiedu/). If you are interested

in preparing for a career in emergency management, it is strongly recommended that you search this site and learn more about the programs that are listed nationally. It might even be wise to contact some of the program directors or advisors and ask them to explain more about the details and requirements of their program. For instance, you might want to learn more about several topics including:

- General education requirements
- Major and minor requirements
- Elective course options
- Mode of delivery (in class, online or hybrid) and time of offering (semesters, weekday, weeknight, weekend, etc.)
- Qualifications of faculty members
- Financial aid and scholarships
- Partnerships with entities in the public, private and non-private sector
- Service learning opportunities
- Job placement rates

One of the most important things to think about is the area of expertise and specializations that exist at each academic institution. For instance, some programs might have expertise in local government emergency management while others will have focused concentrations in public administration, business continuity, public health, humanitarian assistance, etc. Therefore, if you want to obtain employment in a local emergency management office, you would not want to attend school at an institution that really focuses on business continuity and risk management.

Finally, it would be extremely wise for students to develop a close relationship with program directors, faculty, and staff like advisors. These people can mentor you and help you graduate in the most efficient manner possible and help you transition to future employment opportunities. In fact, these people can be some of your best advocates so never do anything to

call your capabilities and commitment into question. Poor performance in class and disruptive/unethical behaviors could be deal breakers for strong letters of recommendation and other forms of advocacy on your behalf.

4.2 Professional Portfolios, Professional Memberships and Internships

In addition to your in-class instruction and personal study of the theory and principles of emergency management, it is advisable that you develop a professional portfolio. This may sound daunting, but it may be as simple as having a binder full of assignments that you have worked on during your schooling (e.g., a hazard and vulnerability analysis, a disaster plan, an exercise design, a grant application, etc.).

Joining a professional association is also a great way to strengthen your resume and become accustomed to emergency management issues and activities. Membership in organizations like the International Association of Emergency Managers will provide you with newsletters, opportunities like conference participation and access to job postings. Refer to [International Association of Emergency Managers](http://www.iaem.org) (www.iaem.org).

It would also be best to compliment your education with internship experiences. Internships – whether paid or unpaid - reinforce what is taught in class, but provide many advantages beyond the traditional lecturer and Socratic discussions. Internships allow students to learn things that cannot always be taught adequately in the “ivory tower,” including the nature of the work environment, practical application, interpersonal relations, challenges and opportunities in emergency management, politics, etc. In addition, it is worth noting that an internship could set you apart from other candidates who do not possess this unique experience. Finally, an internship will provide you many networking opportunities. The

connections one may make during an internship could lead to or prevent employment with the internship host or others that you meet. For this reason, be sure to give only the best of impressions while you serve as an internship!

4.3 Volunteering, Training and Work Experience

According to the Department of Labor, “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.”

This brings up one of the difficult things about obtaining employment in any profession - employers would prefer to hire individuals who already have experience and training. Of course, this makes it difficult for someone new to enter the profession. How can you start your career if you don't already have the training and work experience that is required for employment? This chicken and egg dilemma can be very frustrating for those seeking employment.

Nevertheless, there are things that can be done to overcome this problem. For instance, prior to employment in emergency management, a student may volunteer for an emergency management office, a business continuity employer, or the Red Cross. A student may also participate in the CERT program (Community Emergency Response Training). These types of service are invaluable in that it exposes them to emergency management, helps to increase employment credentials, and initiates the employment networking process.

An individual can also take a variety of [FEMA Independent Study courses](https://training.fema.gov/is/) (https://training.fema.gov/is/). These courses are free (unless you want to transfer them in to a college or university for academic credit) and cover a variety of topics including Incident Command, Terrorism, Emergency Operations Centers, etc. There are also training opportunities with the American Red Cross. Being able to list on your resume the training courses you have completed from FEMA or the Red Cross could set you apart from other candidates and make you an ideal candidate to hire.

Also, while you are seeking a degree, it is possible to obtain employment in a related area such as in fire-fighting, in emergency medical care, or in the military. These experiences are often coveted by those who hire emergency management professionals. There are also entry level administrative positions in some emergency management offices, business continuity programs, and humanitarian assistance organizations like the Red Cross. Clerical help is often needed, and these jobs could expose you to issues like disaster planning, grant administration and budgeting/financial reporting.

4.4 Certification

Employers may also prefer to hire individuals who have obtained some type of professional certification. A professional certification is a credential which implies that the individual has reached a high standard of knowledge, skills and abilities. According to the Department of Labor, “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](http://www.iaem.org) (www.IAEM.org) see www.iaem.com; [and] the certification must be renewed every 5 years. The CBCP designation is given by the [Disaster Recovery Institute International](http://www.drii.org) (www.DRII.org) see www.drii.org and must be renewed every 2 years. Both associations require applicants to complete a certain number of continuing education courses prior to recertification.”

While the highest levels of certification may only be obtained after years of employment and experience, there are lower types of certifications which even students can seek and earn. There will be extra work involved, but these certifications are worth it. More and more job descriptions require professional certification for employment (or obtaining such credentials within a short amount of time after beginning employment). Talking to existing professionals in emergency management, business continuity or humanitarian organizations could help you identify which credentials are required or would be helpful to gain employment. These individuals can also give you tips on interviewing and pitfalls to avoid.

4.5 Ongoing Professional Development

Even after you are successful in obtaining employment, you will want to take measures to advance your career and prepare for promotion. For this reason, you should seek out additional training opportunities. These are offered through local, state and federal organizations (e.g., regional training courses). Many of these are free and even those that require payment could be covered by your employer. This ongoing profession development is important since disasters are ever-changing and because best practices are being identified each day. Some of these courses will be held in your jurisdiction, at state emergency management conferences or at [FEMA's Emergency Management Institute](http://www.fema.gov)

(<https://training.fema.gov/emi.aspx>) in Emmitsburg, MD or the [Center for Domestic Preparedness](#) (<https://cdp.dhs.gov>) in Aniston, AL. Such training courses could cover damage assessment, hazardous materials response, exercise design, EOC management in disasters, etc.

One of the newest training programs has been developed in the Emergency Management Professional Program. According to FEMA, the Emergency Management Professional Program (EMPP) is a structured and progressive framework for acquiring the knowledge, skills and abilities to enter and progress through the field and to meet the challenges of a dynamic and complex environment. The entire EMPP curriculum is designed to be a lifetime of learning for a career in emergency management.

The EMPP includes separate but closely related training and education programs, including the National Emergency Management Academy and the National Emergency Management Advanced Academy. In addition, there are numerous specialized and technical training programs

The **National Emergency Management Academy** is the entry point for individuals pursuing a career in emergency management. Similar to basic academies operated by the fire and law enforcement communities, the National Emergency Management Academy offers a foundation education in emergency management while providing an opportunity for students to build camaraderie, establish professional contacts, and gain a common understanding of the roles, responsibilities and legal boundaries of an emergency management program. For people new to the field or transferring from another profession into emergency management, the National Emergency Management Academy provides the opportunity to get a standard and comprehensive grounding in all key aspects of the field.

The goal of the Academy is to nourish the early careers of emergency managers by providing and training experience combining knowledge of all fundamental concepts and practices of cutting-edge emergency management with a shared classroom of adult learners and skilled instructors resulting in a sound basis to build further studies and make good career choices.

Prerequisite Independent Study Courses to the National Emergency Management Academy include: IS-0100 Introduction to the Incident Command System, IS-0700 National Incident Management System (NIMS), IS-0800 National Response Framework, IS-0230 Fundamentals of Emergency Management. National Emergency Management Academy Courses include: E/L0101 Foundations of Emergency Management, EL0102 Science of Disaster, E/L0103 Planning Emergency Operations, E/L0104 Exercise Design, E/L0105 Public Information and Warning.

The **National Emergency Management Advanced Academy** provides the essential skills and tools for mid-career emergency management professionals to manage dynamic and resilient programs. The Advanced Academy provides the skills needed for emergency managers to build collaboration by bringing emergency management professionals together to share their experiences and establish a network of peers.

The goal of the Advanced Academy is to provide emergency management professionals with the skills critical to performing program management oversight, effective communication, integrated collaboration and thinking. The Advanced Academy incorporates key topics essential to mid-career Emergency Managers such as Legal Issues, Public Policy, Economics of Disasters and Research to Practice in Emergency Management. Through a guided Research Project,

participants are given the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to think critically about the key learning concepts of the program relative to their own strengths and weaknesses and their organizations, and apply their learning in their operating environment.

National Emergency Management Advanced Academy Courses include E0451 Advanced I – A Survey of Advanced Concepts in Emergency Management, E0452 Advanced II – Assessment and Application of Professional Style Emergency Management; E0453 Advanced III – Advanced Concepts and Issues in Emergency Management, E0545 Advanced IV – Advanced Concepts and Issues in the Emergency Management Community and Profession.

EMI created the National Emergency Management Executive Academy to produce a comprehensive and cutting-edge curriculum that supports the advancement of strategic and policy level executive leadership. The Executive Academy enables decision makers to think and act more strategically by applying executive-level emergency management competencies.

The program hones strategic leadership and critical thinking for senior executives involved with multi-jurisdictional, national, and international homeland security and emergency management policy development and decision-making responsibilities.

Throughout the Executive Academy a collaborative cohort environment provides senior level emergency managers the opportunity to debate and discuss public policy, then apply negotiation and conflict resolution skills to real-world, complex problems. Executives explore how they can leverage science, technology, and data analysis to make better decisions and policies.

The Executive Academy also contributes to the emergency management body of knowledge through student Capstone Projects that consider the organizational and societal implications of emergency management.

National Emergency Management Executive Academy Courses include E680 Systems Thinking & Research Methods for Executives, E682 Individual Executive Core Competencies I, E684 Technical Executive Core Competencies II, E686 Stakeholder Executive EM Core Competencies III.

In addition to these formal training opportunities, it is important to make it a priority to develop knowledge, skills and abilities in other areas. The emergency management, homeland security, business continuity and humanitarian assistance professions are complicated and require highly educated and trained individuals who can meet high expectations and professional demands. The Department of Labor notes that there are five main qualities required by those who work in emergency management and related areas. These include:

- **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.
- **Decision-making 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.

For these reasons, those working in emergency management should pursue ongoing professional development during their entire career.

Conclusion

Now that you have finished reading about emergency management professionals, you are in a much better position to prepare to enter into this important career. Understanding the nature of this type of career, what emergency management professionals do, the types of employment opportunities available, and relevant compensation rates can help you to determine where you would like to work in this exciting career. In addition, education, professional portfolios, membership in professional associations, internships, volunteering, work experience, certifications, and ongoing professional development will enable you to become an emergency management professional and advance your career. In short, if you want to be an emergency management professional, it is up to you to make that happen. Best wishes on reaching this important goal and thanks for your willingness to help others in this important profession!

Citations

Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, [Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2016-17 Edition](https://www.bls.gov/ooh/management/emergency-management-directors.htm) (https://www.bls.gov/ooh/management/emergency-management-directors.htm), Emergency Management Directors.