

SALT LAKE CITY DECLARATION OF LOCAL EMERGENCY
AND EXERCISE OF EMERGENCY POWERS
No. 1 of 2025

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Under Utah Code 53-2a-208(1), Mayor Erin Mendenhall, as the chief executive of Salt Lake City Corporation, may declare by proclamation a state of emergency if she finds that (a) a disaster has occurred or the occurrence or threat of a disaster is imminent in an area of the municipality; and (b) the municipality requires additional assistance to supplement the response and recovery efforts of the municipality.

A disaster is defined as “an event that causes, or threatens to cause loss of life, human suffering, public or private property damage, or economic or social disruption resulting from attack, internal disturbance, natural phenomena, or technological hazard; and requires resources that are beyond the scope of local agencies in routine responses to emergencies and accidents and may be of a magnitude or involve unusual circumstances that require response by government, not-for-profit or private entities.” Utah Code 53-2a-102(5). “Natural phenomena” includes a flood. Utah Code 53-2a-102(14).

Under Utah Code 53-2a-208(2) the declaration of a local emergency (a) constitutes the official recognition that a disaster situation exists within the affected municipality; (b) provides a legal basis for requesting and obtaining mutual aid or disaster assistance from other political subdivisions or from the state or federal government; (c) activates the response and recovery aspects of any and all applicable local disaster emergency plans; and (d) authorizes the furnishing of aid and assistance in relation to the proclamation.

The emergency proclamation declaring a local emergency must include (a) the nature of the local emergency; (b) the area or areas that are affected or threatened; and (c) the conditions that caused the emergency. Utah Code 53-2a-208(3).

A local emergency remains in effect until the earlier of (a) the chief executive finds that threat or danger has passed, emergency conditions no longer exist, or, the municipality no longer requires additional assistance, (b) for thirty days, or (c) the day on which the legislative body of the municipality terminates the state of emergency by majority vote. The local emergency may be extended by the municipal legislative body or terminated by joint resolution of the Utah Legislature if the state of emergency has been in effect for more than 30 days. Utah Code 53-2a-208(6); 53-2a-216.¹

¹ If a local emergency is terminated, a new state of emergency in response to the same disaster may be declared if the Mayor finds that exigent circumstances exist for a second declaration of local emergency. Utah Code 53-2a-208(7). “Exigent circumstances” means a significant change in circumstances following the expiration of a state of emergency declared in accordance with this chapter that (a) substantially increases the threat to public safety or health relative to the circumstances in existence when the state of emergency expired; (b) poses an imminent threat to public safety or health; and (c) was not known or foreseen and could not have been known or foreseen at the time the state of emergency expired. Utah Code 53-2a-203(3).

After a Mayor declares a local emergency, the Mayor may exercise emergency authority, including, but not limited to, (a) utilizing all available resources of the political subdivision as reasonably necessary to manage the local emergency and (b) employing measures and giving direction to local officers and agencies which are reasonable and necessary for the purpose of securing compliance with the provisions of the Disaster Response and Recovery Act, and with orders, rules and regulations made under the act. Utah Code 53-2a-205.

After an order is issued by the Mayor pursuant to her emergency authority, the order “shall have the full force and effect of law during the state of emergency” and the order must be filed with the office of the clerk of the municipality and delivered to Salt Lake County. Utah Code 53-2a-209.

In addition, under Salt Lake City Code, upon declaring a local emergency, the Mayor may temporarily suspend specific provisions of Salt Lake City ordinances, policies, or executive orders, during the local emergency, if compliance with such provisions would prevent, hinder, or delay action necessary to cope with the local emergency, subject to superior state and federal constitutions, laws, or regulations. Salt Lake City Code 22.03.030(O).

FACTS

Beginning Friday, October 3, 2025 and persisting through Saturday, October 4, 2025, a severe weather/rain event struck Salt Lake City with approximately 2.5 inches of rain falling during a 14-hour period. [News reports](#)² indicated that this was the most rainfall received in a day in over 124 years. This severe weather event caused localized flooding and damage to public and private property in the Rose Park neighborhoods near 2000 West and 800 North due to a drainage canal that had been overloaded due to the amount of rain that had fallen in the relatively short timeframe. Flooding may impact public roads, parks, homes, and businesses, causes imminent threats to life, safety, and property, and constitutes a disaster under Utah Code 53-2a-102(5).

LOCAL EMERGENCY DECLARATION

Pursuant to Utah Code Section 53-2a-208 and City Code 22.03.010, Salt Lake City Mayor Erin Mendenhall makes the following proclamation declaring a local emergency:

- 1. Finding of a Disaster; Nature of the Local Emergency.** The Mayor hereby finds that due to flooding caused by the severe weather/rain event, a disaster, as defined by Utah Code 53-2a-102(5) exists in Salt Lake City. This disaster necessitates a declaration of local emergency in the entirety of Salt Lake City.
- 2. Conditions Causing the Emergency.** Rapid rainfall in large volumes overwhelmed a drainage canal and led to flooding in the Rose Park neighborhoods near 2000 West and 800 North. Flooding has created emergency conditions causing the necessity to declare a local emergency in Salt Lake City.

² “Salt Lake City records highest rain totals in more than 120 years,” (October 4, 2025) by Cristian Sida, KUTV.com. (<https://perma.cc/2LGL-4VSU>).

3. **Emergency Powers and Operations.** The emergency powers and operations of Salt Lake City are hereby invoked, and Salt Lake City's personnel and resources are ordered and authorized to perform all functions authorized by federal, state, and local law to address this local emergency.

4. **Term.** This proclamation shall take effect immediately and will be ongoing for thirty (30) days unless an extension is authorized or otherwise terminated.

5. **Assistance.** Salt Lake City is authorized to request all assistance available with respect to this local emergency from all federal, state, and local sources and is authorized to activate all applicable mutual aid agreements.

EMERGENCY ORDER

Pursuant to Utah Code Section 53-2a-205, Utah Code 53-2a-209, and City Code 22.03.030, the Mayor Erin Mendenhall issues the following emergency order:

1. **Activation of Emergency Response Measures.** City officials may close roads and public spaces, conduct emergency alerts, and require evacuations as needed to address the flooding emergency and mitigation efforts. City officials may engage local and community organizations for volunteer efforts and services for the community. The City procurement code and rules are hereby waived for the purchase of goods and services in furtherance of addressing the flood conditions and related mitigation and relief efforts, including support of all emergency responders, volunteers, City personnel and operations, and similar efforts as they become needed.

2. **Filing and Dissemination.** This proclamation will be filed with the Salt Lake City Recorder and will be delivered to the State of Utah and Salt Lake County and will be disseminated to local media.

Dated this 6th day of October, 2025.



Erin Mendenhall (Oct 6, 2025 14:00:51 MDT)

Erin Mendenhall
Salt Lake City Mayor

ATTEST:



Keith Reynolds, City Recorder



Approved as to Form:



Mark E. Kittrell, Salt Lake City Attorney