A “disaster” is defined as a great misfortune, catastrophe, or sudden calamitous event that brings great damage, loss, or destruction. The Kittitas County area is vulnerable to natural, man-made, and technological related disasters.

When a disaster threatens or strikes, local government officials will take the lead in managing emergency services for public health, safety, and welfare. Their responses will extend beyond the usual boundaries of their departments and will require cooperation among public and private sectors that normally do not respond to emergency situations. The leadership of the local legislative authorities is critical, since state and federal agencies will provide only supporting services.

The Kittitas County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) is for officials who will provide emergency management preceding, during, and following any disaster. It gives these officials the policies, information, recommendations, and guidance they need to make effective operational decisions.

To ensure this plan is workable, department heads and agency managers must:

- Support the planning efforts.
- Adhere to this plan.
- Develop supporting documents (standard operating procedures and checklists).
- Implement this plan for their departments or agencies.
- Assure that all personnel within their departments or agencies are trained in this plan and in their responsibilities during any emergency or disaster.