

# Denver might not be adequately prepared for a disaster, audit shows

Emergency Management Director disagrees

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POSTED: 9:53 PM, Dec 14, 2017

UPDATED: 11:14 PM, Dec 14, 2017

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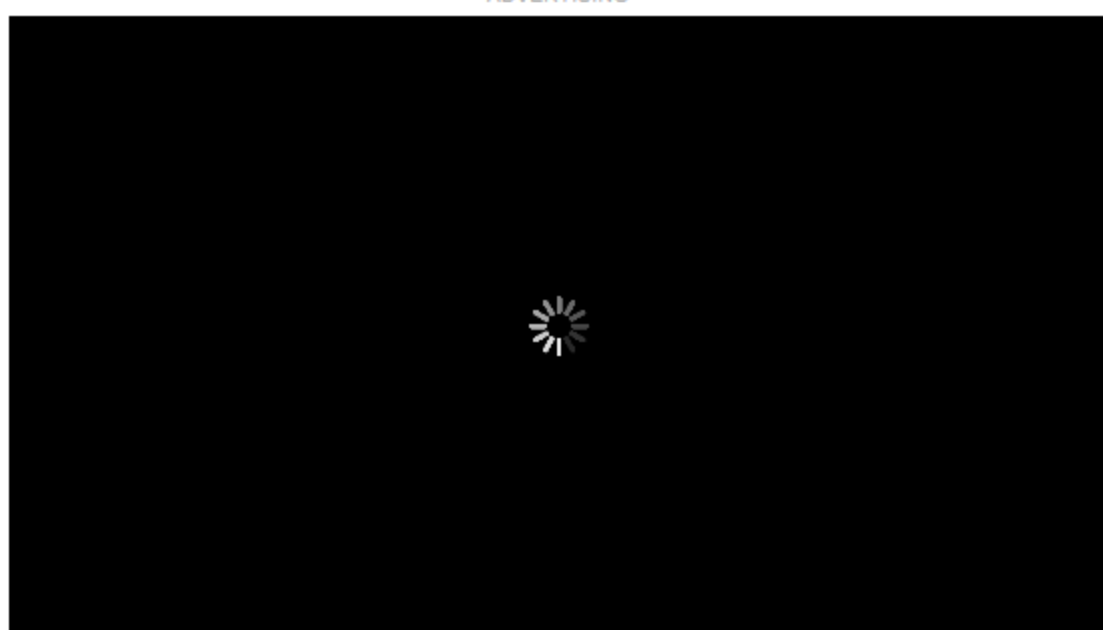
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DENVER -- An audit shows Denver is not prepared to carry out essential operations in the event of a disaster. The findings released by Auditor Timothy O'Brien call for stronger, more robust continuity of operations plans.

The executive director for the Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security admits there is room for improvement but disagrees that the city is not prepared.

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"You can always be more prepared, we can always drive that planning down to the lowest possible level so we ensure that we're ready for all emergencies, though I do not agree that we're not ready," said Ryan Broughton.

Broughton explained that he was brought in a year ago to fix some of the very issues mentioned in the audit, saying, "We recognized that well before the auditor came to visit I was hired 12 months ago to specifically address those concerns."

According to the audit, 29 out of 69 agencies had not reviewed their plans in 2017. Three of those had not reviewed plans since 2011 and five agencies did not have a plan at all.

The audit covers non-emergency services but essential city functions, not including police and fire. One example given by the Emergency Management Office would be planning for an extended power outage. The city would need to figure out how to keep the water and wastewater plant up and running, if the outage is during the winter a warming shelter may need to be opened.

"It's important because when those services stop that's when you know that you've got a problem," said Denver auditor Timothy O'Brien.

The auditor said steps are already being taken to fix some of the problems that were highlighted and added that he would follow up. Broughton assured Denver7 that he is taking those steps.

A committee tasked with working on continuity will meet in late January and he promised agencies that don't have plans will take corrective action by February 7.

"We will take those recommendations from the audit report and make sure that they're implemented across the city," said Broughton.

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