

**Document Code No.: INF-7-5-2-EP**

**Title:** Drafting and Implementing Executive and Emergency Orders

**Affected Agencies:** All Executive Branch Agencies of King County Government

**Authorities:** King County Charter Sections 320.20 Powers and Duties, RCW 38.25 Emergency Management, WAC Title 118 Department of Emergency Services

**Keywords:** Orders

**Sponsoring Agency:** Department of Executive Services, Records and Licensing Services Division



**King County**

**Executive signature:** Girmay Bahilay

3/11/2026

**Effective Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I. Purpose**

This policy provides a standardized approach to Executive Order and Emergency Order development, including: the content elements to be required; the review and approval process; and centralized coding/indexing, maintenance, and distribution for all Executive and Emergency Orders.

**II. Applicability and Audience** This policy applies to the administrative offices and executive departments supervised by the King County Executive. The audience may include King County offices, departments, officials, employees, boards, commissions, committees, or similar entities as well as contractors and grantees.

Executive Orders are distinct from Executive Policies, the development of which are provided for in INF-7-4-2-EP, Drafting and Implementing Executive and Department Policies.

**III. Definitions**

**Administrative Offices:** The administrative offices shall consist of those agencies of the Executive Branch that provide administrative services for the various agencies of county government.

**Agency:** For the purposes of this policy, "agency" means administrative offices and executive departments that are organized under the direction of the King County Executive.

**Communications:** Communications that support policies or guidelines such as announcements or accompanying statements of principles.

**Emergency Orders:** Emergency orders are one type of directive at the administrative policy level. They can be proclamations, declarations, orders or other formal statements issued by the Executive stating that an emergency situation exists and authorizing extraordinary actions in response to that emergency.

**Executive Departments:** The executive departments consist of those agencies of the Executive Branch that are primarily engaged in the execution and enforcement of ordinances and statutes concerning the public peace, health and safety and which furnish or provide governmental services directly to or for the residents of the county.

**Executive Orders:** Executive Orders are one type of directive at the administrative policy level. They are formal statements issued by the Executive mainly for the purpose of delegation of authority and responsibility.

#### **IV. Policy**

##### **A. Developing Orders**

1. The Executive has the authority to issue Executive Orders and no process for engagement or review prior to issuance is necessary.
2. Emergency Orders will override all other Executive Orders or Executive Policies for the duration they are effective or as provided by state law and county ordinance.
3. Amending, superseding, or repealing an existing directive will follow the same approval process as the adoption of a new directive.

##### **B. Coding/Indexing**

The Records and Licensing Services Division, Archives, Records Management, and Mail Services Section (ARMMS), or its successor agency, shall code and index King County Executive Orders and Emergency Orders.

##### **C. Review and Enactment**

1. **Drafting and Routing:** The County Executive Office will initiate Executive and Emergency Orders, working closely with the County's Emergency Manager and Chief Administrative Officer for the drafting and routing of Emergency Orders.
2. **Review:**  
The Executive has unilateral authority to issue Executive Orders and no process for engagement or review prior to issuance is necessary.
3. Executive and Emergency Orders shall be routed to ARMMS, or its successor agency, to be coded and reviewed to ensure proper format before they are finalized.
4. **Enactment:**  
Executive Orders and Emergency Orders become effective upon signature by the County Executive. Electronic signature using DocuSign is preferred.
5. The original signed Executive and/or Emergency Order shall be transmitted to the Department of Executive Services, Records and Licensing Services (RALS) Director, whose signature attests that the order has been filed. Electronic signature using DocuSign is preferred. The RALS Director then sends the original order to ARMMS for preservation and publication.

##### **D. Maintenance**

1. Executive Orders and Emergency Orders must be maintained as current in order to remain relevant and meaningful. Executive Orders and

Emergency Orders may include an expiration date in the text of the document.

2. The County Executive Office is responsible for maintaining the order, including:
  - a. Tracking the expiration date for the order.
  - b. Preparing any revised or replacement order as needed.
  - c. Providing any necessary communications about the order.
  - d. Ensuring that appendices to the order are kept current.

**V. Implementation Plan**

- A. This policy becomes effective for Executive Branch agencies on the date that it is signed. The Operations Cabinet is responsible for implementation of this policy.
- B. Department Directors and Agency Heads are responsible for communicating this policy to the management structure within their respective departments, agencies, and other appropriate parties.

**VI. Maintenance**

- A. This policy will be maintained by ARMMS, or its successor agency.
- B. Changes to the policy may be proposed by ARMMS, by the Executive Office, or by Executive Cabinet members.
- C. This policy will automatically expire five years after its effective date. A new or revised policy will be initiated by ARMMS prior to the expiration date.

**VII. Consequences for Noncompliance**

Orders that do not conform to this policy will not be recognized as directives of the Executive Branch, and as such will not have the same force and effect of orders.

**Appendices:**

None