



# WSEMA

Washington State Emergency Management Association

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# Constitution and Bylaws

Washington State Emergency Management Agency  
(WSEMA)

May 2023

ORIGINAL ADOPTION  
 Bremerton, Washington  
 September 24, 1970

Record of Amendments	
Date	Location
April 15, 1971	Seattle, WA
September 27, 1974	Port Angeles, WA
March 28, 1981	Wenatchee, WA
October 1, 1981	Vancouver, WA
May 6, 1983	Pasco, WA
October 6, 1983	Port Angeles, WA
June 6, 1986	Rosario, WA
May 1, 1987	Chelan, WA
November 16, 1990	Tacoma, WA
October 27, 1992	Bellevue, WA
October 8, 1993	Chelan, WA
March 15, 1994	Wenatchee, WA
September 27, 1995	Pasco, WA
September 13, 1996	Ocean Shores, WA
October 20, 1998	Blaine, WA
September 22, 2004	Ocean Shores, WA
September 18, 2007	Spokane, WA
September 21, 2010	Kennewick, WA
September 26, 2012	Spokane, WA
July 26, 2021	Mailed Ballot
May 2023	Electronic Ballot

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## WASHINGTON STATE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION - CONSTITUTION

### ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this non-profit organization shall be the Washington State Emergency Management Association, hereinafter referred to as the Association.

### ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

The purpose of the Association shall be to promote emergency preparedness throughout the State of Washington. To accomplish this, the Association shall endeavor to:

- Enhance emergency preparedness public education
- Encourage emergency planning and preparedness
- Provide training and professional development
- Improve coordination and communication in the emergency response community

### ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

**ACTIVE:** All individuals professionally engaged in the emergency management field in the State of Washington in local, state, tribal and/or federal government, or in the non-governmental, private sector, business and industry shall be eligible for Active Membership. Each Active Member shall have one vote in matters coming before the Association Membership.

**ASSOCIATE:** Associate Membership may be extended to any person who is involved or interested, but not professionally engaged in emergency management. Associate members may serve as ex-officio members of committees but may not hold office. Associate Members do not have voting privileges.

**STUDENT:** Student membership is available to any student with emergency management interests attending a post-secondary institution in a fulltime or part-time capacity who is not also employed in a full-time emergency management position. Student membership is also available to AmeriCorps VISTA members during their term of service while serving in the emergency management field.

Student members may participate in meetings and discussions and serve as members of committees but cannot vote or hold an elected office or chair a committee. Student members can also serve as a liaison and have the right to receive all Association communications.

**LIFETIME:** An honorary membership awarded to past presidents of the organization who have since also retired from active permanent emergency management employment. Lifetime members may participate in meetings and discussions and serve as members of committees but cannot vote or hold an elected office or chair a committee. Lifetime members have the right to receive all Association communications.

This category of membership does not pay dues. No refund or dues shall be issued to current members based upon this classification.

## ARTICLE IV - OFFICERS

The elected officers of the Association shall be:

- President
- President Elect
- Treasurer
- Secretary
- one (1) East Side Representative
- one (1) West Side Representative
- Liaison for Federally Recognized Tribes
- one (1) Member-at-Large representing other local, state, and or federal sector emergency management organizations
- one (1) Member-at-Large representing the private sector non-governmental, business and industry

The East and West Side Representatives represent recognized R.C.W. 38.52 local emergency management organizations for their respective geographical area (Eastern and Western Washington). The Tribal Liaison must represent a Federally Recognized Tribal Nation located in Washington State.

All Association officers shall be Active WSEMA members and professionally engaged in an emergency management capacity for an agency, organization, or business for the previous two years.

To be elected or appointed to an office, an Active Member shall meet the following requirements:

- Maintain Active Membership in the Association
- Maintain all qualifying requirements of office

The President may appoint a Sergeant-At-Arms/Parliamentarian. Appointed officers shall not have a vote on the Executive Board.

## ARTICLE V – EXECUTIVE BOARD

The elected officers of the Association, together with the Immediate Past President, shall constitute the Executive Board. The Executive Board shall formulate the policies, the annual budget and the goals of the Association. The Executive Board shall establish representatives and ad hoc committees on a case-by-case basis to further the purposes of the Association.

## ARTICLE VI - MEETINGS

The Association shall hold one annual business meeting and conference to conduct association business and appropriate professional development training.

The Executive Board shall meet quarterly or as often as needed in order to conduct association business.

The Executive Board may call special meetings of the Association by request of four (4) Executive Board members. Special meetings may take place three (3) working days after the notification to the membership.

A conference call is considered an appropriate means for conducting the business of the Executive Board.

## ARTICLE VII – DISCLAIMER OF ENDORSEMENTS

No individual member or group of members of the Association shall have the authority to endorse or recommend any product or service in the name of the Association. No individual member or group of members shall have the authority to endorse or recommend any candidate for partisan political office in the name of the Association.



## ARTICLE VIII - AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the voting membership present at a regular or special meeting of the Association, provided a copy of such proposed amendment(s) shall be given in writing at least thirty (30) days in advance of such meeting, and attached to the written notice for that meeting. Constitutional amendments must be vetted through the Bylaws Committee and presented to the membership with specific language changes included.

## ARTICLE IX – REVOCATION OF FORMER CONSTITUTION

This Constitution, adopted on the 26th of September 2012 as amended, shall supersede the Constitution adopted at the General Meeting of the Association in Kennewick, Washington on September 21, 2010.

## ARTICLE X – EFFECTIVE DATE

This Constitution will take effect on the day following adjournment of the meeting at which it was adopted.

BYLAWS ARTICLE I - MEMBERSHIP

The Association maintains four (4) categories of membership, as defined in Article III of the Association's Constitution:

- Active
- Associate
- Student
- Lifetime

BYLAWS ARTICLE II – VOTING PRIVILEGES

Only Active Members may vote on matters before the Association. Each Active Member shall have one (1) vote for election of officers and for all issues before the Association.

Voting by proxy is not permitted.

**Mail Ballot:** When the Association is proposing a Constitution or By-Law change, a ballot shall be mailed along with the proposed change. In the event the Active Member is unable to be in attendance at the Association meeting, the Active Member may vote by returning their ballot to the Association President five (5) working days prior to the Association meeting.

For all other voting issues before the Association, the Active Member must be in attendance at the Association Meeting in order to vote.

BYLAWS ARTICLE III – DUTIES OF OFFICERS

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SECTION 1: PRESIDENT

The President shall preside at all meetings of the Association and the Executive Board. The President shall be responsible for keeping the Association informed of the activities of the President's office and shall furnish reports informing Association members of the activities of the President's office at each business meeting.

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## SECTION 2: PRESIDENT ELECT

In the absence of the President, the President Elect shall perform the duties of the President. The President Elect may also be assigned special projects, at the discretion of the President.

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## SECTION 3: TREASURER

The Treasurer shall be the custodian of the funds of the Association, which shall be deposited in a bank approved by the Executive Board. Funds shall be expended in accordance with the approved fiscal policies of the Association. The Treasurer shall maintain an itemized account of expenditures, file vouchers of all payments, and present a full report at each regular business meeting of the Association. Executive Board shall annually audit the accounting of the monies and property of the Association.

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## SECTION 4: SECRETARY

The Secretary shall keep the minutes of the meetings of the Association and of the meetings of the Executive Board. The Secretary shall be responsible for safeguarding the records of the Association and shall act as its historian. The Secretary shall perform such other duties as the President may direct.

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## SECTION 5: EAST AND WEST-SIDE REPRESENTATIVES

The East and West-Side Representatives shall represent the interests recognized R.C.W. 38.52 local jurisdictions for their respective geographical area (Eastern Washington and Western Washington) in Association business.

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## SECTION 6: SERGEANT-AT-ARMS / PARLIAMENTARY

The Sergeant-at-Arms may be appointed by the President for each Association meeting and shall maintain order during all conferences and meetings and perform such other duties as the President may direct.

The Sergeant-at-Arms shall also act as Parliamentarian and ensure that all business follows the established parliamentary procedures of Robert's Rules of Order and rule on all parliamentary matters referred to the Sergeant-at-Arms by the President or from any active member from the floor.

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## SECTION 7: MEMBER-AT-LARGE – PUBLIC SECTOR

The Public Sector Member-at-Large shall represent the interests of local, state, and/or federal public sector members (other than those represented by the East Side and West Side representatives), in Association business.

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## SECTION 8: MEMBER-AT-LARGE – PRIVATE SECTOR

The Private Sector Member-at-Large shall represent the interests of the private sector, non-governmental, business and industry in Associations business.

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## SECTION 9: TRIBAL LIAISON

The Tribal Liaison shall represent the interests of Federally Recognized Tribal Nations from throughout Washington State in Association business.

## BYLAWS ARTICLE IV – TERMS OF OFFICE

The term of office for the President and President Elect shall be one year. The President Elect shall move into the President's position at the end of the one-year term of office held by the President. Note: This is a two-year line of succession.

The President and President Elect shall not succeed themselves in their respective offices unless by mutual agreement of the officers and by election of the membership, the President and President Elect are elected to serve two consecutive terms.

The East and West-Side Representatives, Secretary, and the Tribal Liaison shall be elected every odd year to serve a two-year term of office and the Treasurer, Public Sector Member-at-Large, and Private Sector Member-at-Large shall be elected every even year to serve a two-year term.

Terms of office shall start at the beginning of the month following elections.

## BYLAWS ARTICLE V - ELECTIONS

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### SECTION 1: IN-PERSON ELECTIONS

A secret written ballot shall be required in all elections where two (2) or more candidates are nominated. A majority of the votes cast shall be necessary to elect.

The Executive Board shall recommend the names of candidates considered qualified for the offices of Treasurer, Secretary, East Side Representative and West-Side Representative, Tribal Liaison, Public Sector Member-at-Large and Private Sector Member-at-Large. In addition to the recommendations of the Executive Board, a call will be made for nominations from the floor. Each office shall be voted on separately.

The President Elect shall automatically fill the office of President upon the end of their one-year term.

If no candidate receives a majority vote on the first ballot, votes shall be cast on a second ballot listing the names of the two (2) candidates receiving the highest number of votes on the first ballot.

In the event of a tie, when such would affect the final election, a second ballot shall be taken. If a tie shall still exist, the election shall be decided by the two (2) candidates for that office drawing lots.

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## SECTION 2: ELECTRONIC VOTING

If the Association is unable to conduct in-person meetings due to public health restrictions or other concerns, the Executive Board may opt to conduct officer elections via on-line, electronic voting.

If the Association does not have multiple candidates for any office, the President shall send an email to the Membership declaring that, in the absence of other candidates and without objection, the candidate(s) is/are elected by acclamation.

If there are multiple candidates for one or more offices, a secure electronic voting application will be used. The voting application should include the following features to ensure success and confidentiality:

- Provide a unique method of logging into the website to ensure only Active Members may cast votes
- Provide a method of tracking cast votes to ensure that each Member votes only once, while maintaining anonymity and confidentiality
- Allow for the choice between multiple candidates for each contested office
- Manage specific start and end times for access to voting
- Provide a detailed report of the results

To accommodate nominations from the floor, the President shall make a final announcement and call for nominations three (3) days before electronic voting is set to begin.

The Executive Board shall certify the received electronic votes and provide the results to the Membership within twenty (20) days of the end of the voting period.

## BYLAWS ARTICLE VI - APPOINTMENTS

The President may appoint a Sergeant-at-Arms/Parliamentarian. The Executive Board may appoint individual representatives and establish ad hoc committees on a case-by-case basis to further the purposes of the Association. Members appointed to represent the association on local, state and federal committees and organizations shall serve for at least one year or if in

the best interest of the Association for a longer period to be reconfirmed at the first Executive Board meeting of each calendar year.

## BYLAWS ARTICLE VII - VACANCIES

When a vacancy occurs in an elected office, for a reason other than the expiration of the term of the incumbent officer, the vacancy will be filled in the following manner:

- President - the President Elect shall assume the office of the President.
- The Executive Board may appoint a member to fill the vacancy of any other elected office, until the next election in accordance with the Constitution and By-Laws of the Association.

Whenever a vacancy occurs in an appointed office, the President may appoint a member to fill the vacancy in accordance with the Constitution and By-Laws of the Association.

## BYLAWS ARTICLE VIII - REMOVALS

An elected officer may be removed for cause by a majority vote of the Executive Board, provided said officer is accorded all the legal rights and privileges available to citizens of the United States, including right to counsel, to reply to the charges and to testify in said officer's own behalf before the Executive Board.

The Executive Board may, upon written notification to an appointed officer stating specific reasons for such action, remove said appointed officer and fill the vacancy as set forth in the Association By-Laws.

## BYLAWS ARTICLE IX - COMMITTEES

The Executive Board shall establish committees, or representatives of the Association, on a case-by-case basis for the purposes of the Association, the appointments to which serve at the pleasure of the Executive Board.

In order to improve efficiency and continuity, the Association establishes the following as standing committees:

- Membership Committee

- Bylaws Committee
- Conference and Professional Development Committee
- Strategic Planning Committee
- Legislative Committee

## BYLAWS ARTICLE X - QUORUM

At the meetings of the Executive Board, five (5) members, including the President or the President Elect, shall constitute a quorum.

At all duly called meetings of the Association, a simple majority of the eligible Active Members registered at the meeting shall constitute a quorum.

## BYLAWS ARTICLE XI – DUES AND FEES

The Executive Board shall recommend membership dues to the membership for inclusion in each year's annual budget. Increase in membership dues shall be made by the Executive Board and approved by the General Membership at the annual business meeting. Annual dues shall become due and payable by 31st of March. A tabulation of the status of dues payments of members shall be appended to the official announcement of the annual business meeting.

Membership dues are established at the following rates:

- Active - \$80
- Associate - \$60
- Student - \$40
- Lifetime - None

A member whose dues for that year remain unpaid by the annual business meeting shall be dropped from membership and lose all rights and privileges of the Association until their membership dues are paid in full.

The Executive Board may establish a registration fee for members and guests at business meetings to cover the costs of the meeting.

## BYLAWS ARTICLE XII – FISCAL PROCEDURES

### SECTION 1: GENERAL

The fiscal year of the Association shall be January 1 through December 31. A financial statement for the Association shall be developed and distributed by the Executive Board before the Annual Business Meeting.

A preliminary budget for the upcoming fiscal year shall be developed by the Treasurer following reconciliation of the annual conference finances, presented to the membership by e-mail and posted on the Association website. Members who wish to comment on the preliminary budget may provide their comments to an Executive Board member. At the first Executive Board meeting following development of the preliminary budget, the Executive Board shall approve and adopt the budget by vote. The budget format shall include the following:

- A description by each category of receipt or revenue and expenditures. Major categories shall be further described by line items with figures of each subordinate element of anticipated cost. These line items shall provide full details of all elements of the anticipated expenditures.
- A tabulation of all anticipated income including interest on savings, delinquent accounts and similar funds.
- A tabulation of previous year's budget data (where it is available) shall be listed for comparison of budgeted categories, line items, and actual expenditures.
- Narrative rationale for increases and decreases proposed in the budget.
- A description of reserve funds, their location and anticipated interest yield, if any.

The use of the Association funds for personal entertainment expenses at any Association meeting or for personal gifts is prohibited. Any unauthorized expenditures shall be the sole responsibility of the purchaser, who shall be billed for any such expenditure charged to the Association.

No travel is authorized without prior approval of the Executive Board. All travel requests must be submitted to the Executive Board for approval on the appropriate Travel Request Form. All claims for reimbursement must be submitted on the Claim Reimbursement Form with proper documentation of expenses. Forms may be procured from the Treasurer.

Travel expenses, authorized under the provisions outlined above, shall be limited to the following:

- Registration costs for attendance at meetings, conferences or conventions for a purpose beneficial to the Association. Registrations may include meals, which are part of the registration fee. Receipts and documentation are required.



- Actual cost of common carrier fares, taxi fares, bridge and ferry tolls or parking fees, in connection with Association business. The use of personal vehicles for travel may also be reimbursed at the rate paid by the State for actual mileage incurred. Receipts and documentation required.
- Reasonable expenses for overnight lodging and actual costs for meals may be reimbursed to the maximum paid by the State per day for such costs. Receipts and documentation are required.
- Advances for authorized major travel expenses are allowable with prior Executive Board approval.

Other expenses incurred in Association related business such as telephone, postage, and supplies are reimbursable subject to approval of the Executive Board. Receipts and documentation are required.

Unless approved by the Executive Board, all Association funds may only be disbursed by dual signatures of the President and Treasurer.

The Association Treasurer shall maintain the official financial records on all monies received, held, and disbursed by the Executive Board and the Association. The Treasurer shall keep records which tabulate expenditures identifying each disbursement of funds by its account number, amount, and date of disbursement, purpose and to whom disbursed.

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## SECTION 2: SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The WSEMA Scholarship Program is intended to support Washington State students pursuing an associate or bachelor's degree in Emergency or Disaster Management. Applicants must be residents of Washington State, full-time undergraduate students, and have completed at least one academic term (quarter or semester) prior to the scholarship application period. Applicants living in Washington State and participating in a distance learning, on-line program are eligible to apply. All scholarship awards are paid directly to the college/university. No funding is provided directly to the student.

The Scholarship Program is funded through donations and Association fund raising activities, which may include a Basket Auction and 50/50 drawing, which occur at the Annual Conference. Scholarship Program funds are invested through Chase Bank. The number of scholarships awarded and scholarship amounts may vary year-to-year, based on investment performance and donation proceeds. The number and amounts of awards available will be set annually by the WSEMA Executive Board at the April Board meeting, following a review of the fund status.

Each year an ad hoc committee shall be seated in March to oversee the scholarship application process for that year. This committee shall be Chaired by the Past President and include no less than five (5) participants selected from the Association's Active Membership. If an adequate

number of Member volunteers cannot be identified, the Executive Board shall serve as the ad hoc committee.

In coordination with the Treasurer, the Chair will prepare the Scholarship Fund Status Report for presentation to the Executive Board at the April Board meeting. This report shall include the total fund balance, donations/dividends/interest received, and current amount invested. The Board will use this information to determine the number and value of awards for the year. Additionally, the Chair will lead the discussion and determination of the application essay topic.

To be considered for an award, students must follow the application instructions, complete all application requirements, and submit their materials prior to the application deadline. The application period begins May 1 and closes August 1 each year. As applications are accepted virtually through email, the submission email and all required attachments must be received by WSEMA prior to the end of day (11:59:59 pm PDT) August 1. WSEMA is not responsible for technical issues or delivery delays associated with disruptions to email services or computer access.

The scholarship application shall consist of the following:

- Applicant biographic and contact information
- Contact information for college/university and Student Identification number
- Academic Major including list of required courses and expected date of graduation (Applicant may provide a link to the program description on the institution's website or scan and submit the relevant pages from the school catalog)
- Current cumulative GPA, full-time student verification, and Official Transcript
- Narrative description of educational and career goals
- Narrative description of past and current engagement in community, school, work, and Emergency Management related activities
- Two (2) Letters of Recommendation - One letter must be from a college/university faculty member and the other from an individual other than a parent or relative (i.e. teacher, current/former employer, community leader, etc.)
- One (1) 1250-word essay on a topic identified by the WSEMA Board at the April Board meeting

Upon closure of the application period, applications will be reviewed and scored not later than August 20; and award recipients shall be notified not later than August 31.

The Treasurer is responsible for ensuring the awards are paid not later than September 30. Awards shall be paid directly to the recipient's school via either written check or Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) if that is the institution's preferred method.

## BYLAWS ARTICLE XIII - MISCELLANEOUS

“Shall” is mandatory, whereas “may” is permissive within the context of the By-Laws of the Association.

## BYLAWS ARTICLE XIV - AMENDMENTS

The By-Laws of the Association may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the voting membership present at a duly called meeting of the Association. Proposed By-Laws amendments shall be submitted to the Bylaws Committee a minimum of 60 days prior to the meeting. The Bylaws Committee shall ensure that the meaning and intent of the proposal is clear and that the exact language to be changed in the bylaws is included. A copy of the proposal with exact wording shall be provided in writing to the membership a minimum of thirty (30) days prior to the duly called meeting of the Association and will be attached to the written notice for that meeting.

In the event business of such an urgent nature needs to be brought before the Association that it cannot wait for a regularly scheduled Association meeting and comply with the thirty (30) days advance written notice requirement such business may be acted upon through the process of distributing a ballot by mail to each voting member of the Association. The ballot shall be marked “EMERGENCY BUSINESS”, and a time frame of six (6) days shall be designated for the ballot to be marked and returned to the Executive Board. The membership shall be notified of the results of the issue voted upon within a twenty (20) day period by the President of his/her designee.

When necessary and appropriate, voting on amendments to the Bylaws may be conducted through the electronic voting procedures established in Article V – Elections.

## BYLAWS ARTICLE XV – PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

The rules contained in *Roberts’ Rules of Order, As Amended*, shall govern in all cases wherein they do not conflict with the rules of this organization.