

Orwell 2026 LHMP Executive Summary

Town officials and citizens of the Town of Orwell updated its All-Hazards Mitigation Plan in 2025 and 2026. They conducted a hazards inventory and risk assessment matrix, identify locations where hazards are known to the community, and identify potential mitigation projects associated with the hazards identified.

The hazard mitigation committee identified the following hazards as their **Highest Vulnerability**, based on probability, warning time, geographic impacts, property damage, and other concerns:



- Severe Ice Storm (7.0)
- Severe Snow Storm (7.0)



- High Winds (6.0)
- Highway Accidents (6.0)



High Vulnerability Hazards:



- Structure Fire (5.25)
- Severe Heat (4.5)
- Hazardous Materials Spill (4.0)
- Drought (4.0)



- Invasive Species (4.0)
- Infectious Disease/Pandemic (3.75)
- Hail Storm (3.5)
- Wildfire (3.5)



and other Medium Vulnerability Hazards:

- Severe Cold (3.0)
- Shoreland Slide (3.0)



- Insect-borne Illness (2.50)
- Tornado (2.25)



- Flash Flooding and Erosion (2.0)



For each hazard type, the committee described previous occurrences and extent, current vulnerability, future probability, and identified mitigation goals and actions.

MITIGATION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

Goal 1: Increase Community Awareness of Orwell's Vulnerability to Natural Hazards

- Objective: Inform and educate the community about the types of hazards the town is exposed to, where they occur, and recommended responses
- Objective: Reduce impacts to existing buildings and infrastructure to the extent possible
- Objective: Reduce impacts to future development and infrastructure to the extent possible
- Objective: Reduce impacts to the town's natural and historic resources
- Objective: Reduce impacts to public health

Goal 2: Reduce Vulnerability of People, Property, and the Environment to Natural Hazards

- Objective: Provide mechanisms to enhance life safety
- Objective: Reduce impacts to critical facilities and services

Goal 3: Increase Interagency Capabilities and Coordination to Reduce the Impacts of Natural Hazards

- Objective: Continue to collaborate and coordinate with other agencies on planning, projects, hazard response, and funding opportunities

The hazard mitigation planning committee developed a prioritized list of future mitigation actions and projects, with care taken to include those projects which can be considered reasonable and feasible based primarily on capacity, cost, and political feasibility. These include:

Hazard	Future Mitigation Actions
All Hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support dedicated EMD personnel and communication accounts • Encourage citizen use of VT Alert and CARE registry
Severe Ice Storm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage vegetation in the ROW to minimize/allow space for powerlines
Severe Snow Storm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain snow removal equipment and qualified personnel • support efforts by Green Mountain Power to mitigate power outages due to ice storms via pruning and tree removal activities.
High Winds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove dead and dying trees from town rights of way as part of normal maintenance
Highway Accidents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support future reconstruction activities to reduce risk at the intersection of Rte. 22A and Rte. #73 west of the village.
Structure Fire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Orwell Volunteer Fire Department
Severe Heat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain Orwell Library as emergency cooling shelter with generator and air-conditioning
Large-scale Hazardous Materials Spill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support ongoing HazMat training efforts of the Orwell Volunteer Fire Department
Drought	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support dry-well reporting, and groundwater protection efforts around both public and private water supplies.
Invasive Species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow state recommendations to prevent spread of Poison Parsnip, Eurasian Milfoil, and Emerald Ash Borer
Infectious Disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and maintain continuity planning and agreements for potential town staff shortages.
Hail Storm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide hail-safety education materials on the town website
Wildfire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggressively require outdoor burn permits prior to any outdoor burning and consider fines for violation. • Support ongoing wildland fire training efforts and wildland fire PPE and Tools by the Orwell Volunteer Fire Department
Severe Cold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a Warming Shelter plan
Land/Rock/Shoreland slide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and enforce Shoreland Overlay District in zoning
Insect-borne Illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide mosquito-safety educational materials on the use of appropriate repellants and behavior patterns to reduce bites
Tornado	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove dead and dying trees from town rights of way
Flood/Flash Flood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stone Line ditches when work is being completed on any road.

A Hazard Mitigation Plan is dynamic and should not be static. To ensure that the plan remains current and relevant, it is important that it be updated periodically. The hazard mitigation plan should be reviewed by all new town officials and revised and updated in its entirety every 5 years.

The Town of Orwell will monitor and evaluate its hazard mitigation goals, strategies and actions annually as the town budget is created. In updates of the Municipal Plan by the planning commission, the concepts, goals and strategies from this hazard mitigation plan should be incorporated and used to inform municipal development strategies.