

## Hazard / Definition

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### **Drought:**

A drought is an extended period of unusually dry weather. Droughts become severe if several months pass without significant precipitation.

## Description / Frequency

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A drought occurs when a long period of time passes without any substantial precipitation. Since different sections of the country receive widely differing amounts of rainfall, the amount of time it takes for drought conditions to develop differs throughout the country. The frequency is difficult to measure since droughts can occur at any time of the year.

### **Historical Score: 2**

Boulder County lies in a semi-arid region of the state and has experienced periods of drought. While they are not frequent occurrences, they may be of either short or long duration. The plains areas of the county will be affected differently during a drought than the mountainous areas of the county. Drought recorded history includes severe drought in 1894, 1930-1937, and 1976-1977. 1994 was one of the driest years on record.

### **Potential Score: 2**

There is always a potential for a drought in Boulder County because of its geographic location and the fact that the county lies in a semi-arid region of Colorado.

### **Impact on Life and Property:**

A prolonged drought can have serious economic impact on an area. Agricultural production can be damaged or destroyed by loss of crops or livestock, resulting in food shortages. Increased demand for water and electricity can result in shortages of these resources. Lack of precipitation, accompanied by extreme heat can increase the risk of wildfires.

## Mitigation Options / Strategies

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- C Protect water supplies.
  - C Educate public about water and energy conservation and heat protection.
  - C Establish supplementary water sources for emergency conditions.
  - C Improve agricultural cultivation practices.