

Utah: Overview

Every other page in this section describes what changes about a skill or a law once you leave Utah. This page is different, because there's nothing to translate: the manual's 13 chapters, its addenda, and its skill guides already are Utah's edition, written for the Wasatch Front specifically, not adapted from a generic template afterward.

Why Utah has a page here at all

If you found this page by browsing the By State list, that's a reasonable question. The other 49 states each needed dedicated content because this site's core material assumes Utah. Utah's own "state page" is really the rest of this site: the Manual, the Addenda, the Skill Guides, and the Case for Preparedness document. This page and its three sub-pages exist so the list itself doesn't look incomplete, and so there's one place that routes you to where the real depth already lives.

The hazard profile in one place

The full, sourced case for why this matters here specifically lives in the Case for Preparedness document. The short version: a Wasatch Fault earthquake isn't a hypothetical (93% chance of magnitude 5+ in the next 50 years, a modeled 2,000+ fatalities from a magnitude-7.0 event on the segment beneath Salt Lake City), the Great Salt Lake is a slow-moving public-health and economic crisis for the 2.5 million people living along the Wasatch Front, and the 2026 Cottonwood Fire showed how a wildfire here becomes a flood risk for months afterward, not just a fire risk during the burn. The Risks page in this section pulls those figures together in one place, sized the same way every other state's risks page is.

What's actually different about this page's siblings

The Laws, Resources, and Risks pages under Utah don't describe deltas the way, say, Oregon's or Texas's do, they describe the baseline every other state's pages are written as a delta from. Utah's rainwater harvesting rule, its concealed carry law, Be Ready Utah, USU Extension, and Utah's county-run CERT programs are all already referenced throughout the main manual, addenda, and skill guides; these three pages just collect that reference material in the same By State format as every other state, for anyone who lands here first.

Where to actually go next

- **New to this site entirely?** Start with Ready, Set, Ready, a 10-minute assessment and a map for using everything else here.
- **Want the how-to?** Skill Guides covers all 13 categories, plus Utah-specific sub-skills like Legal Rainwater Harvesting in Utah.
- **Want the full reference?** The Manual and The Addenda are the complete Tier 1–4 curriculum, written for here.
- **Want the “why”?** The Case for Preparedness is the full, sourced case, Utah sections included.

BY STATE › UTAH

Utah: Laws & Legal Considerations

Every other state’s laws page in this section describes how that state’s rules differ from Utah’s. This page describes Utah’s rules directly, the same ones already covered in more depth elsewhere on this site, collected here so this page follows the same format as the other 49.

Rainwater harvesting: two tiers, one free

Storage amount	What's required
Up to 200 gallons (2 covered containers, 100 gallons each, max)	Nothing. No registration, no paperwork.
Up to 2,500 gallons total, on one parcel	Free registration with the Utah Division of Water Rights
More than 2,500 gallons, or water for other parcels	A full water right, a separate and more involved process

This is covered in full, step-by-step detail in the Legal Rainwater Harvesting in Utah skill guide: how to register, where collection and use are limited to the same parcel where the water is captured, and how to build a system that doesn’t create a mosquito problem in the process.

Where to find it: waterrights.utah.gov/forms/rainwater.asp for registration; the skill guide above for everything else.

Water rights: prior appropriation

Utah uses prior-appropriation water law (“first in time, first in right”), the standard doctrine across the western United States. Every other prior-appropriation state’s laws page on this site, Oregon’s, Washington’s, Arizona’s, and others, describes its own version of this same doctrine as a variant of Utah’s; Utah’s own water rights are administered by the Utah Division of Water Rights, the same office that handles rainwater harvesting registration above.

A slow-moving consequence of this system

The Great Salt Lake and the broader Colorado River system that Utah shares an allocation in are both covered in depth in the Case for Preparedness document; the legal mechanism behind both is this same prior-appropriation system, now under real strain from decades of upstream diversion and a shrinking mountain snowpack.

Concealed carry: permitless since 2021

Utah has been a permitless-carry state since House Bill 60 took effect on May 5, 2021, signed by Governor Spencer Cox. Any person 21 or older who may lawfully possess a firearm can carry concealed in public without a permit.

Item	Detail
Minimum age (permitless)	21
Optional Concealed Firearm Permit	Still issued, mainly for reciprocity when carrying in other states; available at 21, or 18 for a provisional permit
Effective date	May 5, 2021 (HB 60)

Utah is one of 28 permitless-carry states covered across this section, not the first to adopt one (Arizona’s dates to 2010, for instance) but the state every other page in this section is written relative to, since this site’s core audience is here. National Patterns lays out how the age minimums and adoption timelines compare across all 28.

Sources

- Utah Division of Water Rights, rainwater harvesting registration: waterrights.utah.gov
- Utah HB 60 (2021), concealed carry amendments: le.utah.gov; coverage via Legal Heat
- Utah concealed firearm permit ages and reciprocity purpose: Utah Bureau of Criminal Identification

Utah: Local Resources

Every other state's resources page in this section introduces its own agencies and programs as "the direct analog to Be Ready Utah, USU Extension, and Utah's CERT network." This page is the source those comparisons point back to.

Be Ready Utah

The state's own household preparedness campaign, published by the Utah Division of Emergency Management, and the source of the two-week household self-sufficiency target this manual's own Tier 1 aligns with. It's referenced throughout the manual and addenda: winter storm and power outage guidance, pet evacuation checklists, and access-and-functional-needs planning built around the CMIST framework.

Where to find it: beready.utah.gov.

USU Extension: Master Gardener and other skill-building programs

Utah State University Extension runs the land-grant-university skill-building programs referenced throughout the addenda, most directly the Master Gardener program covered as Stage 3–4 content in the Water & Food addendum.

What the training actually involves

USU's Master Gardener program runs roughly 13 weeks of classroom and hands-on instruction (about 40 hours total), taught by USU Extension specialists and faculty, offered at 13 locations across the state. Certification requires completing the course and returning a minimum of 40 hours of volunteer service afterward, the same "learn it, then teach it" progression this site describes for other states' equivalent programs.

Where to find it: extension.usu.edu/mastergardener; individual county Extension offices handle registration and scheduling.

CERT: county-run, not a single statewide program

Community Emergency Response Team training in Utah is organized at the county level, not through one statewide office, the same decentralized structure this site's Texas and Florida pages describe for their own states. The Sanitation & Medical chapter already points to county-run CERT training as a faster path to Tier 4 (community-level readiness) than building an equivalent skill-sharing network from scratch.

Where to find it: contact your own county's emergency management office directly; Salt Lake County, Utah County, and Davis County each run their own regularly scheduled CERT courses along the Wasatch Front.

Sources

- Be Ready Utah: beready.utah.gov
- USU Extension Master Gardener Program: extension.usu.edu/mastergardener; Master Gardener Policy Manual
- County-run CERT programs, Wasatch Front: individual county emergency management offices

Utah: Risks & Trends

This page collects the same rigor and sourcing standard used throughout this section, applied to the state the rest of the site’s data already lives in: the Case for Preparedness document. Nothing below is new; it’s the Utah-specific figures from that document, gathered into the same format as every other state’s risks page.

The Wasatch Fault

Metric	Figure	Source
Chance of M5.0+ quake, next 50 years	93%	Working Group on Utah Earthquake Probabilities (UGS/USGS, 2016)
Chance of M6.0+ quake, next 50 years	57%	Working Group on Utah Earthquake Probabilities
Chance of M6.75+ quake, next 50 years	43%	Working Group on Utah Earthquake Probabilities
Population within 15 miles of the fault	~85% of Utah's population, infrastructure, and economy	Working Group on Utah Earthquake Probabilities
Modeled fatalities, M7.0 event on the Salt Lake City segment	2,000–2,750	Earthquake Engineering Research Institute (Utah Chapter) / Utah Geological Survey, FEMA HAZUS methodology, 2015
Modeled buildings destroyed outright	~55,400	Same HAZUS model
Modeled short-term direct economic loss	\$33.2 billion	Same HAZUS model

The probability and consequence figures above come from two separate studies, not one: the 93% (and related) probabilities are a forecast of how likely an earthquake of a given size is; the fatality and damage figures are a separate model of what a specific magnitude-7.0 event would do if it happened on the segment running beneath Salt Lake City specifically, the most populated part of the fault. See the full write-up for how the two studies fit together and what drives the projected death toll (largely unreinforced masonry buildings).

The 2020 Magna earthquake: a preview, not the event itself

Metric	Figure
Magnitude	5.7
Deaths or serious injuries	0
Damage	\$629 million
Households/businesses without power	~50,000
Aftershocks	2,500+

Why nobody died

The quake hit at 7:09 a.m. on March 18, 2020, when Utah schools had just gone remote for COVID-19. A junior high school damaged badly enough to be declared a total loss would have had students inside on any normal school day. Utah's own state seismologists have said Magna was ordinary background seismicity, a data point inside the Wasatch Fault forecast above, not evidence the larger risk has been released. Full write-up: Case for Preparedness.

The Great Salt Lake

Metric	Figure
Wasatch Front residents exposed to lakebed dust	2.5 million+
Water lost from the lake annually	~2 million acre-feet
Lowest recorded level	October 2022 (2025 water year: third-lowest on record)
Additional annual inflow needed to restore a healthy level by 2055	800,000 acre-feet, sustained

Exposed lakebed contains arsenic, lead, and other heavy metals, linked by researchers to respiratory and cardiovascular health effects for the population living along the Wasatch Front. Full write-up: Case for Preparedness.

The 2026 Cottonwood Fire and the flood that followed it

Metric	Figure
Acres burned	97,464 (Utah's 6th-largest wildfire on record)
Structures destroyed	150+
Homes hit by the resulting flood, three weeks later	~200
Rainfall that triggered the flood	1.5+ inches in 45 minutes, onto the fresh burn scar

A debris flow off the burned mountainside tore out sections of State Route 153, shut down Interstate 15 for hours, and contaminated Beaver City’s municipal water supply. The fire and the flood were declared a single state of emergency, because a burned mountainside doesn’t stop being a hazard once the flames are out, it becomes a flood risk for months afterward instead. Full write-up: Case for Preparedness.

The mechanism behind both water crises: a shrinking, earlier-melting snowpack

Utah has no major river system of its own; both the Great Salt Lake and the state’s own share of the Colorado River system depend on mountain snowpack melting on a predictable schedule. That schedule is shifting: Utah’s peak mountain snowpack has declined 16% since 1979, and the date of peak snowpack now arrives about 9 days earlier than it used to, per NOAA and the Utah Climate Center at Utah State University. The same mechanism shows up at two different scales: the Great Salt Lake locally, and Lake Powell and Lake Mead at the river-basin scale Utah shares an allocation in alongside six other states.

Sources

- Wasatch Fault earthquake probabilities: Working Group on Utah Earthquake Probabilities (Utah Geological Survey / USGS, 2016)
- Magnitude-7.0 Salt Lake City segment loss modeling: Earthquake Engineering Research Institute, Utah Chapter, with Utah Geological Survey, using FEMA’s HAZUS methodology (2015)
- 2020 Magna earthquake damage and outage figures: Utah Geological Survey; contemporary reporting
- Great Salt Lake water level, health, and inflow-restoration figures: Utah Division of Water Resources; Great Salt Lake Strike Team
- 2026 Cottonwood Fire acreage, structures, and flood impact: Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands; Governor Spencer Cox’s state of emergency declaration

- Utah snowpack decline and peak-timing shift: NOAA; Utah Climate Center, Utah State University
- Full narrative and additional context for every figure above: Case for Preparedness