

ANNEX 15 (ESF-15) PUBLIC INFORMATION TO GREENWOOD COUNTY'S EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN

Tasked Organizations: Greenwood County Voter Registration Director

Suggested Liaison: Assistant City manager
Municipal PIOs
Private Sector PIOs
Lander University

Staff augmentation as directed by County Manager

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Purpose: Provide for efficient and coordinated continuous flow of timely information and instructions to the public using all available communications media prior to, during, and following an emergency or disaster.

- B. Scope: Provide emergency public information actions before, during, and following any emergency. Potential public information response could involve personnel from all jurisdictions, organizations, agencies, and areas within the affected area.
 - 1. Timely public information properly coordinated is essential to avoid or minimize loss of life and property' Before, during, and after emergency operations, the public will be apprised through reports to the news media, social media, internet, and through the Emergency Alert System (EAS/IPAWS).
 - 2. County services and assistance shall include the delineation of responsibilities and protective actions to be taken so as to provide the general public with essential information and the documentation of emergency actions and operations implemented or proposed by written, verbal, or photographic means.

II. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

- A. The Public Information/Affairs Office is responsible for providing the community with information on impending or existing emergencies, to include immediate protective actions they should take such as sheltering or evacuation.

- B. A Joint Information Center (JIC) may be activated, if the situation warrants. The JIC will likely be at an off-site location. Agencies involved will staff telephones and coordinate media activities under the supervision of the PIO. Planned location for the JIC is the New County Library. Make necessary

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preliminary coordination with County Management and Library Leadership to insure availability.

- C. All agencies and organizations are responsible for providing the PIO with appropriate timely information about the incident and actions needed to save lives and protect property.
- D. Additionally, the PIO will establish a Community Relations (CR) plan which will include incident specific guidance and objectives at the beginning of the incident.
 - 1. Conducting the CR function is a joint responsibility between communities, chamber of commerce and Greenwood County. In large incidents where you have state and federal assistance their input and guidance will be incorporated into this plan.
 - 2. Field Teams will be organized. The composition of field teams should involve a variety of Lander and Piedmont Tech personnel, such as facility, staff, administrator, students, and several county citizens or community leaders. These teams assist in the rapid dissemination of information, to identify unmet needs, to establish an ongoing dialogue and information exchange, and to facilitate collaborative community planning and mutual disaster recovery support.
- E. Disaster and emergency information from Greenwood County government will be clear, concise, and accurate information regarding the existing situation, actions being taken by authorities, and those to be taken by the population. Every effort will be made to prevent and counter rumors, hearsay, and inaccuracies.
- F. Coordination with all appropriate departments, agencies, and organizations will be performed to the maximum extent, to ensure accurate, timely, and consistent emergency public information.
- G. ESF-15 is responsible for informing the public of emergency and disaster operations within the county. The dissemination of public information during emergency and disaster operations is done with the advice and consent of the County Council, who reserves the authority to intervene, to assume control, or to disseminate supplementary public information at any time. ESF-15 will keep the County Council informed of media-related events as they unfold and will provide such information on a continuing and timely basis.
- H. Public information, public relations, or public affairs personnel of any county agency or department will be made available to augment ESF-15 when

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requested, to include non-English speaking individuals and/or special needs populations.

- I. ESF 15 personnel will become familiar with the South Carolina EAS and how to activate that system.
- J. A coordinated effort to report and document emergency/disaster operations will be conducted by ESF 15 personnel at or near the incident site. A joint information system (JIS) of public information personnel from all affected jurisdictions, agencies, and private sector organizations may be established. If appropriate, representatives of those jurisdictions may provide emergency public information from a joint information center (JIC). Under some circumstances, county agencies or departments may issue press statements. However, these statements must but be coordinated with ESF-15 prior to release.
- K. Situation briefings, press conferences, taped messages, photographs, news accounts, statistics on injuries and fatalities, and other information shall be provided to the news media as appropriate, to include information targeted at non-English speaking individuals and or special needs populations.
- L. ESF-15 will consult with appropriate department or agency heads concerning implementation of emergency or disaster public information activities.

III. ESF RESPONSIBILITIES/ACTIONS:

- A. Review this annex and the EOP and develop Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs) for each task established by this appendix and the EOP. Each ESF will insure that the special needs community is factor into their SOPs. Annually review the State EOP & Department of Homeland Security Universal Task List and integrate tasks as appropriate
- B. Develop and conduct public information programs for community/citizen awareness of potential disasters, as well as personal protection measures for each hazards present;
- C. Develop Rumor Control Procedures;
- D. Prepare advance copies of emergency information packages for release through the news media during actual emergencies;
- E. Brief local news media personnel, community officials, local, state, and federal agencies on External Affairs policies, plans, and procedures;

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- F. Maintain current lists of radio stations, televisions stations, cable companies, websites, and newspapers to be utilized for public information releases
- G. Maintain support agreements and liaison arrangements with other agencies and the new media, if needed;
- H. Maintain arrangements to provide a briefing room for the media in the vicinity of the EOC or at the location of the disaster;
- I. Assist with the preparation/transmission of EAS messages, if needed;
- J. Disseminate news releases and daily Situation Reports from the County EOC via the agency's website;
- K. Disseminate information to elected officials through the legislative liaison function;
- L. Monitor the media to insure accuracy of information and correct inaccurate as quickly as possible;
- M. Provide information to the public about available community disaster relief assistance and mitigation programs;
- N. Coordinate efforts to provide information to public officials, and;
- O. Facilitate communications between the public and other agency officials to ensure that affected people have access and knowledge about benefits for which they may be eligible.
- P. Actions necessary to insure readiness to respond are divided into the four cycles of emergency management. These are: preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation. Each cycle requires actions to be planned for to insure total readiness. Considerations to be planned for are but are not limited to:
 - 1. Preparedness
 - a. Develop a public information program to educate the public regarding the effects of common, emergency, and disaster situations.
 - b. Develop plans to coordinate with local news media for emergency operations, before, during and after emergency situations.
 - c. Develop plans to conduct a coordinated public information program during emergencies and disasters.

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- d. Develop plans and programs to educate news media that ESF-15 is the primary information center during emergency situations.
- e. Develop procedures to organize and operate a media briefing area and/or a joint information center, if one is determined to be necessary.
- f. Develop and maintain multi-lingual pre-scripted EAS messages, news releases, and public service announcements, for all hazards to include hurricanes, earthquakes, ice storms, tornadoes, and a dam failure.
- g. Encourage development of home disaster plans and emergency kits for the public.
- h. Provide evacuation information to the affected public.
- i. Participate in county exercises and conduct, at least annually, an ESF-15 exercise to validate this annex and supporting SOPs
- j. Update public information responder listing, as necessary.
- k. Develop and implement a training program for all ESF members.
- l. Develop and maintain a roster with contact information of all ESF personnel.
- m. Annually review the Department of Homeland Security Universal Task List and integrate new tasks as appropriate.
- n. Ensure all ESF-15 personnel integrate NIMS principles in all planning. All ESF personnel will complete all required NIMS training.
- o. Secure lists of qualified interpreters/translators to relay public information.
- p. Become familiar with the Reach SC alert notification system (Reverse 911).
- q. Coordinate with State ESF15 to obtain assistance, as required.
- r. Review procedures to determine if a reentry media response will be necessary. Incorporate that example in the implementing instructions.
- s. Develop implementing instructions to counter rumors, i.e., develop a rumor control response cell.

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- t. Develop plans for staging of media.
 - u. Develop plans for directing media information towards the non-English speaking populations.
 - v. Determine staffing requirements for performing EOC duties at the three levels of EOC activation and coordinate needs with Emergency Management Director
2. Response
- a. Alert departments and or agencies whose personnel, equipment, or other resources may be used.
 - b. Provide timely and accurate EAS messages and news releases in common language and terminology to inform the public.
 - c. Provide emergency public information to special needs populations, as well as non-English speaking individuals.
 - d. Coordinate with news media regarding emergency operations.
 - e. Provide mass notification to urban and rural populations and provide periodic media updates.
 - f. Execute a coordinated public information program.
 - g. Organize and operate a briefing area and a joint information center, as appropriate.
3. Recovery
- a. Continue public information activities to include updating the public on recovery efforts.
 - b. Anticipate and plan for arrival of, and coordination with, State and FEMA ESF-15 personnel in the EOC, and/or the Joint Field Office (JFO) if one is established.
 - c. Process and disseminate disaster welfare and family reunification information.
 - d. In coordination with each ESF, ensure that related emergency information can be provided to the public concerning safety and resources required for disaster recovery.

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- e. Disseminate information to the public concerning safety and resources required for disaster recovery.
4. Mitigation
- a. Support and plan for mitigation measures.
 - b. Support requests and directives concerning mitigation and/or re-development activities.
 - c. Document matters that may be needed for inclusion in briefings, situation reports and action plans.

IV. STATE/FEDERAL INTERFACE

- A. This annex is supported by the SCEOP and the National Response Plan ESF-15, Public Information.
- B. State and Federal ESF-15 consists of the following functional components: Community Relations, Congressional Affairs, International Affairs, Public Affairs, County and Local Coordination, and Tribal Affairs.
- C. A State ESF-15 will coordinate with Federal ESF-15 to obtain federal assistance as required.