

ANNEX I

Public Information



STATE OF TEXAS EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN

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STATE OF TEXAS EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN

ANNEX I

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APPROVAL AND IMPLEMENTATION

This annex is hereby accepted for implementation and supersedes all previous editions.

Date

Chief, Emergency Management Division

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EXPLANATION OF TERMS

DDC	Disaster District Committee
DC	District Coordinator
ESF	Emergency Support Function
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
IC	Incident Commander
JFO	Joint Field Office
JIC	Joint Information Center
JIS	Joint Information System
NIMS	National Incident Management System PIO Public Information Officer
SES	Safety Education Service
SOC	State Operations Center
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
TDEM	Texas Division of Emergency Management

Agency: A division of government with a definitive function offering a specific kind of assistance. In the Incident Command System (ICS), agencies are defined either as jurisdictional, having statutory responsibility for incident management, or as assisting or cooperating, providing resources or other assistance.

Agency Representative: A person assigned by a primary, assisting, or cooperating Federal, State, local, or tribal government agency or private entity that has been delegated authority to make decisions affecting that agency or organization in incident management activities following appropriate consultation with the leadership of that agency.

Assisting Agency: An agency or organization providing personnel, services, or other resources to the agency with direct responsibility for incident management.

Cooperating Agency: An agency supplying assistance other than direct operational or support functions or resources to the incident management effort.

Emergency: The occurrence or imminent threat of a condition, situation, or event that requires immediate response actions to save lives; prevent injuries; protect property, public health, the environment, and public safety; or to lessen or avert the threat of a disaster.

Emergency Public Information: Information that is disseminated primarily in anticipation or during an emergency. In addition to providing situational information to the public, it also frequently provides instructional information to be used by the general public.

Event: A planned, non-emergency activity. ICS can be used as the management system for a wide range of events, e.g., parades, concerts, or sporting events.

Function: Function refers to the five major activities in ICS: Command, Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration. The term function is also used when describing the activity involved, e.g., the planning function. A sixth function, Intelligence, may be established, if required, to meet incident management needs.

Joint Information Center (JIC): A facility established to coordinate all incident-related public information activities. It is the central point of contact for all news media at the scene of the incident. Public information officials from all participating agencies should collocate at the JIC.

Joint Information System (JIS): Integrates incident information and public affairs into a cohesive organization designed to provide consistent, coordinated, timely information during crisis or incident operations. The mission of the JIS is to provide a structure and system for developing and delivering coordinated interagency messages; developing, recommending, and executing public information plans and strategies on behalf of the IC; advising the IC concerning public affairs issues that could affect a response effort; and controlling rumors and inaccurate information that could undermine public confidence in the emergency response effort.

National Incident Management System: A system mandated by HSPD-5 that provides a consistent nationwide approach for Federal, State, local, and tribal governments; the private-sector, and nongovernmental organizations to work effectively and efficiently together to prepare for, respond to, and recover from domestic incidents, regardless of cause, size, or complexity.

Non-governmental Organization: An entity with an association that is based on interests of its members, individuals, or institutions and that is not created by a government, but may work cooperatively with government. Such organizations serve a public purpose, not a private benefit. Examples of NGOs include faith-based charity organizations and the American Red Cross.

Public Information Officer: A member of the Command Staff responsible for interfacing with the public and media or with other agencies with incident-related information requirements.

ANNEX I

PUBLIC INFORMATION

I. AUTHORITY AND REFERENCES

See Basic Plan, Section 1

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this annex is to define, pursuant to the National Incident Management System (NIMS), the organization, operational concepts, responsibilities and procedures to accomplish Public Information requirements in the State of Texas. This annex is applicable to all agencies, organizations, and personnel assigned Public Information Emergency Support Function (ESF) responsibilities.

III. SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS

See Basic Plan, Section III.

IV. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

A. PUBLIC INFORMATION

1. Pursuant to NIMS, Emergency Public Information is disseminated primarily in anticipation or during an emergency. In addition to providing situational information to the public, it also frequently provides directive actions required to be taken by the general public.
2. The Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM), through its Public Information program, combines both education and information to reduce significant disaster-related casualties, property damage, and provide long-term public education related to hazard awareness. These efforts are intensified during incidents or events and may require augmentation from Public Information ESF members.

B. JOINT INFORMATION SYSTEM (JIS)

1. Public Information activities are coordinated through a Joint Information System (JIS), which provides the mechanism for integrating public information activities among Joint Information Centers (JICs), across jurisdictions, and with private sector and non-governmental organizations.

Key elements of the JIS include:

- a. Providing the plans, protocols, and structures used to establish an organized, integrated, and coordinated mechanism to deliver understandable, timely, accurate, and consistent information to the public in a crisis.

- b. Interagency coordination and integration.
- c. Developing and delivering coordinated messages.
- d. Support for decision-makers.
- e. Flexibility, modularity, and adaptability.

C. STATE SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE POLICY

1. Interest levels from local, state, national and international media and the general public affect public Information activities. Consistent with need, responses are made as quickly as possible. Priority should be given to local and regional media inquiries and inquiries of local elected officials as the most efficient and effective way to provide information and instructions to individuals, families, businesses, and industries affected by a disaster.
2. The Chief of the Division of Emergency Management, the Director of the Governor's Office of Homeland Security, and/or the Governor's Office will manage requests for information from elected officials.
3. The Public Information function coordinates closely with, and provides support to, all other functional groups. State Public Information activities will initiate from the State Operations Center (SOC) unless the situation dictates otherwise. Public information activities may also occur, sometimes simultaneously, on-scene, at the SOC, Media Center, Disaster District EOC, Joint Field Office (JFO), JIC, or other officially designated site.

D. STAFFING REQUIREMENTS

1. Pursuant to NIMS, only one incident PIO will be designated, whether the command structure is single or unified. Assistants may be assigned from other agencies or departments involved.
2. During an incident or event, PIO functions at the SOC may be split between at least two operational periods, initially staffed by TDEM PIOs and support staff including PIO Temporary Information Reservists. Emergency Public Information ESF members may be called upon to augment these efforts.
3. In the event additional public information assistance is needed, Public Information ESF members with knowledge of operational and procedural capabilities, Temporary Information Reservists, and/or Public Information Officers provided via mutual aid from other state agencies may be called upon to assist with Public Information activities at the SOC, Disaster District EOC, JFO, JIC, or other officially designated site.
4. Public Information Officers from other agencies may coordinate with TDEM PIO Staff at the SOC, a Joint Information Center, or through a Joint Information System and Conference Calls. However, the TDEM PIO Staff is primarily augmented through a group of Temporary Information Reservists.

E. PUBLIC INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

1. Public Information ESF members and/or their public information designee will utilize their associations within their respective agencies or organization, with the news media and with the general public, to collect and report information pertaining to overall status of state disaster response and recovery operations.

F. INFORMATION COORDINATION

1. Public information functions will be coordinated and integrated across jurisdictions and across functional agencies; among Federal, State, Local, and Tribal partners; and with private sector and non-governmental organizations.
2. All JICs must communicate and coordinate with each other on an ongoing basis. Public awareness functions must also be coordinated with the information- and operational-security matters that are the responsibility of the information and intelligence function of the ICS, particularly when public awareness activities may affect information or operations security.
3. The JIC coordinates public awareness functions with the information and operational security matters that are the responsibility of the information and intelligence function of the ICS, particularly where public awareness activities may affect information or operations security.

a. Message Flow

- 1) Prior to releasing information to the media, the Chief of the Emergency Management Division or the Director of the Governor's Office of Homeland Security approves informational fact sheets. Public information materials are forwarded for information and coordination to the Governor's Press Office, the Disaster District, and other applicable Federal, State, Local, Tribal, non-governmental, and private-sector partners (See Appendix 1).
- 2) PIOs designated by their respective agencies or organizations will serve as chief spokesperson for their entity.
- 3) Information released to the media by TDEM and other agencies and organizations will be coordinated and timely; ensuring the information is accurate and properly recorded.

b. News Media Interaction

- 1) New information will be released at regular intervals by means of advisories, fact sheets, situation reports, news conferences, formal statements, and interviews. Requests for special interviews will be requested through the State PIO and appropriate arrangements made.

G. RUMOR CONTROL

1. Rumor control is a major aspect of any Public Information program. This effort is facilitated by public feedback and regular monitoring of news reports which provide a measure of the informational program's effectiveness.
2. Support personnel, including Temporary Information Reservists, clerical support and Public Information ESF members all share responsibility for rumor control. A functional group member may be designated as the Monitoring Supervisor to collect and process information for action by the State PIO.

H. SOC PUBLIC INFORMATION OPERATIONS

The State PIO is the primary news media point of contact for all SOC response and recovery operations. The Chief of the Emergency Management Division will approve all messages released to the public by the State PIO. Information may be released to the press and the public through written or verbal news statements. Copies of all press releases will be provided to the SOC for further distribution.

1. Media Center
 - a. The TDEM Media Center is located in the cafeteria of the Texas Department of Public Safety Headquarters in Austin. The facility serves as the primary conduit for releasing Public Information by the state until activation of a JIC. Media briefings and press conferences will be conducted at this location where statements, releases, and related information will be distributed. Public Information ESF members may be called upon to participate in and/or support such meetings.
 - b. The Center is available to the State PIO, the Governor's Office, and Public Information ESF members for updating the press and the public about program specific functions and activities. The use of the Media Center is coordinated through the State PIO.
2. SOC Tours
 - a. Tours of the SOC during normal business hours are coordinated through the PIO office at the Texas Department of Public Safety, at the request of the media or the general public, as appropriate.
 - b. The State PIO, upon request of the Governor's Office and the Chief of the Texas Division of Emergency Management, will coordinate media availabilities in the SOC during activations. Most of the media activity will be confined to the Media Center.

I. ON-SCENE/RECOVERY INFORMATION ACTIVITIES

1. The State PIO acts as the lead state representative for JIS operations. The State PIO and support personnel are prepared to respond on-scene or to the JFO to support public information needs.
2. In a large-scale operation, the on-scene PIO serves as a field PIO with links to the Joint Information Center (JIC) typically collocated with the Federal, regional, State, local, or tribal EOC tasked with primary incident coordination responsibilities.

a. The Joint Information Center

- 1) During emergencies, the public may receive information from a variety of sources. The JIC provides a location for organizations participating in the management of an incident to work together to ensure that timely, accurate, easy-to-understand, and consistent information is disseminated to the public. The JIC comprises representatives from each organization involved in the management of the incident. ICs and Multi-Agency Coordination entities establish and oversee the JIC.
- 2) More than one JIC may be needed for a complex incident spanning a wide geographic area or multiple jurisdictions. A single location is preferable, but the system should be flexible and adaptable enough to accommodate multiple JIC locations when the circumstances of an incident require. A JIC may be established at various levels of government in large or complex incidents, particularly those involving complex medical and public health information requirements.
- 3) In the case of Unified Command, the departments, agencies, organizations, or jurisdictions that contribute to joint public information management do not lose their individual identities, or responsibility for their own programs or policies. Rather, each entity contributes to the overall unified message.

b. On-Scene Staffing Requirements

- 1) The State PIO coordinates with the Governor's Press Office and public information counterparts in state, district, local and/or volunteer agencies. Information Officers from Public Information ESF agencies may be collocated at the JIC and share public information functions both directly and indirectly related to agency or organization functions.
- 2) Additional Public Information ESF members may be called upon to support DDC or regional response team operations on behalf of the State PIO.

V. ORGANIZATION AND ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

A. ORGANIZATION

1. The TDEM Public Information Officer (PIO), as State PIO, serves as the primary news media point of contact for inquiries relating to response and recovery operations. These activities are coordinated, as appropriate, with the Chief of the Emergency Management Division, Director of the Governor's Office of Homeland Security, SOC Controller, Governor's Press Office, State Council Agencies, Disaster District, Federal, State, Local, and Tribal partners; and with Private-Sector and Non-governmental Organizations.
2. All emergency support functions identified in the Basic Plan are composed of personnel and resources of several state agencies/organizations. Each group is directed by a primary agency selected on the basis of authority and capability in a particular functional area. Other agencies and organizations are selected based upon their ability to provide equipment, personnel, and expertise in support of functional tasks.
3. State agencies comprising the Public Information ESF are provided in Appendix 2 of this annex.

B. ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

1. General

All agencies assigned to the Public Information ESF are responsible for the following:

- a. Training Agency Representatives in accordance with NIMS and agency specific SOPs.
- b. Maintaining current notification procedures for personnel.
- c. Developing and maintaining procedures to ensure current agency status information is readily available.
- d. Ensuring knowledge of agency plans and procedures regarding news media interaction.
- e. Developing and maintaining procedures for identification, location, commitment, deployment, and accountability of agency Public Information personnel and support resources.
- f. Providing trained Public Information support personnel for public information activities on-scene, at the SOC or Disaster District EOC, JFO, JIC, or other officially designated site.

- g. Providing other assets as needed to support public information activities on-scene, State or Disaster District EOC, JFO, JIC, or other officially designated site.

2. Primary Agency

The primary agency for State Public Information functions is TDEM. As the primary agency responsibilities include:

- a. Coordinating and integrating public information functions across jurisdictions and across functional agencies; among Federal, State, Local, and Tribal partners; and with Private Sector and Non-governmental Organizations.
- b. Determining staffing requirements for incidents and events.
- c. Processing requests for public information and coordinate responses through support agencies or organizations.
- d. Developing and providing emergency public information releases about overall state response and recovery operations.
- e. Overall responsibility for Public Information rests with the TDEM Public Information Officer who serves as the media point of contact for all state response and recovery operations.

3. Assisting Agencies

- a. Assisting agencies provide personnel, services, or other resources to the agency with direct responsibility for incident management.
- b. All Public Information ESF agency representatives operating at the SOC or disaster district EOC, JFO, and/or JIC, or other officially designated site, are expected to be aware of their capabilities of their parent organizations in providing public information support. They are expected to be prepared to respond to tasking assignments from the primary agency in the deployment and use of agency owned/leased assets and of appropriate personnel.
- c. Agency Representatives serving in the SOC, Disaster District, or JFO are expected to understand procedures for resource requests, deployment, and accountability methodology for committing assets or services that may be at their agencies disposal. They must understand their agency policies regarding response to news media inquiries and be prepared to respond in a timely manner to informational requests or to identify personnel immediately available to do so.
- d. Agency Representatives may serve in support capacities to more than one functional group until the primary agency determines exclusive representation to a functional group is necessary for operational requirements.

- e. Public Information Officers have been delegated by their respective agency to perform the following in consultation with the leadership of their agency:
 - 1) Release news and information to the media.
 - 2) Provide information and instructions to individuals, families, businesses, and industries affected by a disaster.
 - 3) Coordinate information prior to its release to ensure accuracy.
- 4. Cooperating Agencies

Cooperating Agencies supply assistance other than direct operational or support functions or resources to the incident management effort. These services are often in the form of knowledge, expertise, research, and other informational support.

VI. DIRECTION AND CONTROL

A. GENERAL

- 1. The Chief of the Texas Division of Emergency Management will exercise direction and control of Public Information activities. Response and recovery operations within the SOC will be exercised by the SOC Controller who will be a TDEM staff member appointed by the Chief of the Emergency Management Division.
- 2. The State PIO has been designated as the Primary Agency Representative for Public Information ESF activities within the SOC. Within the Disaster District, the DDC chairperson will exercise direction and control and will assign responsibility for the Public Information functions to a staff member, usually the Safety Education Service (SES) Trooper, if available.

VII. RESPONSE LEVEL/ACTION GUIDES

Public Information ESF members will take the following actions for each level of preparedness, as indicated. Primary, assisting and cooperating agencies are encouraged to develop agency-specific SOPs to facilitate this process.

A. NORMAL CONDITIONS (READINESS AND RESPONSE LEVEL IV)

- 1. Review agency or organization policies and procedures for release of information and response to news media inquires.
- 2. Designate personnel to represent the agency in public information matters at the SOC, Disaster District, JFO, and other designated sites, as required, and assure their familiarity with the emergency management system and this annex.
- 3. Develop internal procedures for identifying and activating public information personnel.

4. Participate in training and exercises with other Emergency Public Information ESF agencies.

B. INCREASED READINESS (READINESS AND RESPONSE LEVEL III)

1. Identify and prepare agency resources to support emergency public information operations during activation of the EOC.
2. Coordinate support requirements with primary agency representative.
3. Review and verify availability of required resources to support activation.
4. Coordinate pre-emergency mitigation or preparedness materials through the primary agency representative.

C. ESCALATED RESPONSE (READINESS AND RESPONSE LEVEL II)

1. Alert designated agency personnel to prepare for possible activation and deployment and be prepared to respond in a timely manner to informational requests, or identify personnel immediately available to do so.
2. Report availability of personnel and resources to the primary agency representative, including timetables for personnel availability.
3. Review and update any agency or organization pre-scripted messages, new releases, and background information for accuracy.

D. EMERGENCY CONDITIONS (RESPONSE LEVEL I)

1. Provide designated personnel to support the State EOC and its emergency public information activities, as required.
2. Deploy designated personnel to the disaster district, DFO, or other designated site, as requested.
3. Assist the primary and other Emergency Public Information Support Group agencies and organizations in the State EOC, disaster district, DFO, or other designated site as requested.
4. Respond in a timely manner to all requests for information.

VIII. CONTINUITY OF GOVERNMENT

A. GENERAL

1. Lines of succession for personnel with Public Information responsibilities will be in accordance with existing policies and required Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).
2. Primary, assisting, and cooperating agencies will ensure their respective personnel are trained and prepared to operate in the event of personnel

shortages. They will identify alternate or backup personnel; ensure these individuals understand the lines of succession, pre-delegated authorities, and task responsibilities of their individual agencies. SOPs should contain sufficient detail for alternate/backup personnel to use them to perform their tasks.

IX. ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT

A. ADMINISTRATION

1. Reports

When the State Operations Center (SOC) is activated for emergency operations, the senior public information officer will provide a periodic summary of ongoing and planned public information activities to the SOC controller.

2. Records Retention

- a. Agencies and organizations composing the Public Information ESF shall retain a file copy of all press releases, information bulletins, instructions for the public and other emergency materials prepared and disseminated during emergency operations and copies of the source materials used to develop those products. The State PIO will maintain a copy of materials received and generated at the SOC. These source documents are intended to be used in after action reviews and to identify needed improvements in operating procedures.
- b. The senior state public information officer assigned to any Joint Information Center (JIC) established in the aftermath of a disaster will ensure arrangements are made to provide copies of any joint public information materials developed by the JIC to the TDEM Public Information Office.

B. PUBLIC INFORMATION OR OPEN RECORDS REQUESTS

1. Texas Public Information Act

- a. The Texas Public Information Act is intended to meet the public's need for "complete information about the affairs of government and the official acts of public officials and employees." The Act makes public any document that is collected assembled or maintained by a governmental body. This includes a governmental body's written procedures along with opinions, orders and statements of policy of that agency, that effect the public. Any person can use this Act to request information from any agency of the executive or legislative branch of state government or local governments. A public information request, frequently termed an open records request, must be made for inspection or copies of existing hardcopy or electronic records, documents or files. State agencies are not required to generate new documents in order to respond to a request.
- b. Provisions of the Public Information Act are outlined in Chapter 552 of the Texas Government Code. There are more than two dozen exceptions to the

general rules of the Public Information Act, which are detailed in Chapter 552. These exceptions include some specifically related to homeland security.

- c. In Texas, some non-governmental agencies' records are covered under this statute if these agencies are supported in part by public funding or if they have responsibility for the expenditure of public funds.

2. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) is the federal equivalent of the state Public Information Act; it uses different procedures and has different exemption provisions. States are not subject to the FOIA, but state information provided to federal agencies may be subject to release under the FOIA. Most state agencies and local governments treat requests for information that cite the FOIA as requests for records pursuant to the provisions of the state Public Information Act.

a. Handling Requests for Public Information

- 1) Historically, there have been relatively few requests for records pursuant to the Public Information Act made during emergency response operations, probably because local, state, and federal public information staffs provide a wealth of information to the public and the media during those operations. Most public information requests occur after emergency operations have concluded when the media needs detailed information for investigative reports on a disaster or specific emergency incident or legal firms seek to document acts or omissions for use in legal proceedings related to the incident or disasters.
- 2) State agencies and local governments that receive requests for public information relating to emergency response and recovery programs are expected to handle such requests in accordance with the organization's existing procedures for responding to Public Information Act requests and maintaining records of such requests. If agencies receive public information requests relating to emergency response or initial recovery operations while the State Operations Center is still activated, it is desirable that the receiving agencies provide an information copy, clearly marked as such, to the Public Information team in the SOC so that the team is aware of potential issues.
- 3) As the Division of Emergency Management is an organizational element of both the Department of Public Safety and the Governor's Office, public information requests intended for the Division may be addressed to either organization.

C. SUPPORT

1. Acquisition of Goods and Services to Support Public Information Operations

All agreements and understanding entered into by ESF agencies for the purchase, lease, or otherwise uses of goods and services will be in accordance with the provisions of state law and procedures.

2. Equipment and Services Acquisition

All agreements and understandings entered into for the purchase, lease, or otherwise use of equipment and services will be in accordance with the provisions of state law and procedures. Public Information ESF members will be advised by TDEM according to the specific impact of the situation.

D. STATUS REPORTS

The State Coordinator for Administration will maintain a status of all outstanding Public Information requests and overall responses. This information will be summarized into periodic status reports and submitted to the SOC Controller and/or the Chief of the Emergency Management Division in accordance with SOC operating procedures.

E. EXPENDITURES AND RECORD KEEPING

1. Primary, assisting, and cooperating agencies are responsible for establishing administrative controls necessary to manage the expenditure of funds and to provide reasonable accountability for federal reimbursement in accordance with established guidelines.
2. The State Legislature is generally the first recourse of expenditures by state agencies in response to recovery from an emergency or major disaster.
3. Primary, assisting, and cooperating agencies should ensure all records necessary for emergency management operations are easily obtained for each member agency in an emergency. If needed, these records should also be duplicated and stored at another location(s) in the event the primary records are destroyed.

F. CRITIQUES

Following significant events requiring full scale activation and emergency response, the State PIO will coordinate with the Governor's Press Office, Texas DPS Communications Director and other key agency public information personnel regarding ways to improve public information operations. The Governor's Press Office may schedule periodic meetings to review media operations with public information officers and or Communications Directors of key agency members of the Governor's Emergency Management Council. TDEM will support these efforts.

X. DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

A. GENERAL

1. The Assistant Director of the TDEM has overall responsibility for development, maintenance, and implementation of this annex.
2. The Assistant Director of the TDEM is responsible for conducting an annual review of this annex and for coordinating all review and revision efforts to incorporate material learned from exercises and actual events into this annex.

APPENDIX 1 TO ANNEX I

PIO COORDINATION

The State Public Information Officer will coordinate information with the following individuals:

1. SOC Controller
2. Governor's Press Office
3. Assistant Director of the Texas Division of Emergency Management
4. Affected state agencies
5. Federal Emergency Management Agency Public Affairs
6. Affected federal agencies

APPENDIX 2 TO ANNEX I

PUBLIC INFORMATION EMERGENCY SUPPORT FUNCTION

<u>PRIMARY AGENCY:</u>	Texas Division of Emergency Management
<u>Assisting Agencies:</u>	Adjutant General's Department American Red Cross General Land Office Office of the Attorney General Railroad Commission of Texas Texas Animal Health Commission Texas Commission on Fire Protection Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services Texas Department of State Health Services Texas Department of Transportation Texas Department of Insurance Texas Department of Public Safety Texas Forest Service Texas Commission on Environmental Quality The Salvation Army
<u>Cooperating Agencies:</u>	Governor's Press Office