

ESF-4

PUBLIC INFORMATION

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ESF-4

PUBLIC INFORMATION

PRIMARY AGENCIES: Springfield Public Information Office (PIO)
Greene County Public Information Office (PIO)

SUPPORT AGENCIES: Individual Department Public Information Officers
Non-Profit Organization Public Information Officers
Private Organization Public Information Officers

I. PURPOSE

To provide for the timely release of accurate information to the residents and media of Springfield/Greene County in the event of an emergency/disaster. This plan will address issues arising from both immediate circumstances and the resulting consequences of the emergency for as long as the health and welfare of the public is imperiled.

II. SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS

A. Situation

1. Springfield and or other areas of Greene County could be affected by several types of disasters that would require the dissemination of information and instructions to the general public.
2. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 4% of Springfield-Greene County residents either speak English poorly or not at all. Since the predominant languages of these residents are Vietnamese, Spanish, French, and German, assistance with translation of emergency public information may be provided from the area universities foreign languages staff. Other services may need to be contracted.

B. Assumptions

1. The media serving Springfield/Greene County will cooperate with local officials in the dissemination of information to the public.
2. Widespread or major disasters may result in State and national media coverage.
3. Media personnel from State and national levels may not be familiar with Springfield/Greene County news release procedures.
4. Media personnel may attempt to obtain information from other than official sources.
5. Federal and State officials may be on-site and called upon for information. Such federal and State agencies will provide PIO support to Springfield/Greene County. The lead local PIO will have jurisdictional control concerning local PIO activities.
6. More than one local PIO may be involved during emergency operations. When this occurs a JOINT INFORMATION CENTER (JIC) will be established to coordinate the release of public information.
7. During an actual or impending emergency, or international crisis, the public will expect local government to provide specific information relating to personal safety, survival, and protection of property.

8. An effective public information program will reduce casualties and damages, keep rumors to a minimum, and provide education to the public.

III. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

A. General

1. This ESF applies across all phases of this plan.
2. A Lead Public Information Officer (PIO), will be designated for each operational period of the disaster, will be located in the Springfield/Greene County EOC or at a location to be designated when this plan is implemented.
3. The Lead PIO, in consultation with the Emergency Management Director, will select, as necessary, a Field Incident Command PIO and establish a Joint Information Center (JIC) as necessary.
4. Release of public information will be coordinated with and approved by the Lead PIO and/or chief elected official(s).
5. Only approved information will be considered official. The media will be so informed.
6. Any person, department, or agency releasing information to the public of their own volition will bear the responsibility for any legal or moral ramifications and repercussions resulting from that release.
7. When activated, the Joint Information Center (JIC) will establish a schedule and operating procedures for the timely, accurate release of information to citizens and the news media.
8. Information will be disseminated via the news media and through government information sources including the Internet, public access television, and telephone hotlines. Activation of the Emergency Alert System (EAS), if necessary, will be in accordance with the current approved standards.
9. Members of the Joint Information Center (JIC) will coordinate regularly with the Lead PIO, who will update the EOC staff and/or Chief Elected Official(s) and City Manager.
10. The JIC will monitor news coverage and citizen inquiries and take appropriate measures to address rumor control in order to ensure the public is receiving accurate information.
11. Public information should include instructions on the status of the emergency recovery operations, including points of contact for missing persons and the status of the injured and casualties.
12. No identifying information on casualties will be released until identification is confirmed by official sources and next of kin are notified.
13. Release of public information will include pre-disaster education and the answering of inquiries.

B. Actions to be Taken by Operating Time Frames

1. Mitigation

- a. Develop and conduct public information programs stressing hazard awareness and personal protection measures.
- b. Establish liaison with all local media and brief them regularly on emergency public information procedures.
- c. Develop procedures for:
 - (1) Press Conferences
 - (2) Opening Joint Information Center (JIC)
 - (3) Rumor control
 - (2) Writing and dissemination of news releases
 - (3) Coordination with departmental PIO's
 - (4) Record keeping
 - (5) Print and broadcasting
 - (6) Readiness instructions for the general public on what to do in the current crisis situation.
- d. Establish contact with local Emergency Alert Systems (EAS) stations and develop procedures for emergency release of information.
- e. Prepare emergency information packages for release during emergencies and distribute them to local media.
- f. Participate in local tests and exercises.
- g. Coordinate all activities with PIO's of other County/City departments.

2. Preparedness

- a. Analyze potential disaster to ensure pertinent information is prepared for release.
- b. Alert other public information personnel.
- c. Establish a location for the release of information and advise the media.
- d. Issue information through the media and EAS to allow the public to take protective actions.
- e. Start rumor control operations as directed by Direction and Control.
- f. Assist in gathering of news in the vacated risk areas and its publication in the host area. Monitor information from broadcasts from stay-behinds in the risk area.

3. Response

- a. Schedule and conduct briefings for the media.
- b. Monitor all news media reports for accuracy.
- c. Conduct rumor control activities.
- d. Issue specific instructions via appropriate dissemination methods.
- e. Partner with outside agencies to coordinate the release of info.
- f. Maintain a chronological record of disaster-related activities and news releases..

4. Recovery

- a. Continue to distribute information as necessary.
- b. Continue rumor control and news briefings.
- c. Coordinate visitor control to the EOC and to the disaster site(s).
- d. Supply information concerning status of disaster affected individuals or families through the American Red Cross.
- e. Coordinate public information releases with higher levels of government.

- f. Participate in after-action reports and critiques to assess effectiveness of information.
- g. Develop a report listing a chronological record of events and news releases.
- h. Maintain operational level until situation returns to normal.
- i. Issue a final news release when the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) closes.

IV. ORGANIZATION AND ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Primary Agencies: Springfield Public Information Office Greene County Public Information Office

- 1. When an emergency situation broadens beyond a single city of Springfield Department, all City public information employees become part of the City Manager's Office, which will assign a Lead Public Information Officer (PIO) for the City.
- 2. The Greene County PIO is responsible for the preparation and release of public information as described in this ESF.
- 3. If the disaster or emergency originates within the city limits, the City PIO will take the lead. If the disaster or emergency originates in the County, the County PIO will take the lead.
- 4. The Lead PIO will assemble the Joint Information Center (JIC) team when appropriate.
- 5. Maintain records of the cost of supplies, resources and man-hours needed to respond to the disaster event.

B. Support Agencies:

Individual Department PIO's

Each City/County department will designate a PIO as required and/or necessary. Department PIO's will provide information to the Lead PIO and coordinate the release of public information.

C. State Primary Agency

State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA)

The SEMA PIO will coordinate with local government agency PIO's during and after major disasters and emergencies.

D. Federal Primary Agency

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

Responsible for implementing Federal public affairs activities after a major disaster or emergency.

V. DIRECTION AND CONTROL

- A. Release of public information will be under the control of the Lead PIO with approval from the chief elected official or their designee.
- B. The County/City PIO is a member of the EOC staff.

VI. CONTINUITY OF GOVERNMENT

A. Line of Succession

- 1. County PIO/City Director of Public Information
- 2. As designated by the chief elected official in charge of the EOC.
- 3. Emergency Management Director

B. Alternate Site for the EOC

1. In the event the primary EOC cannot be used, PIO operations will be conducted at a site to be designated at that time. The PIO will arrange for needed equipment to be provided in the alternate EOC.
2. In the event of a limited emergency, PIO operations may be directed from a site designated at that time.

VII. ADMINISTRATION AND LOGISTICS

A. Administration

1. A chronological file of all news releases during a disaster will be maintained in the EOC with a log of these releases (**Appendix 5**).
2. A chronological file of all disaster-related events will also be maintained for future reference (**Appendix 5**).
3. All administrative functions will be the responsibility of the Office of Emergency Management.

B. Logistics

1. Communications support (i.e., internet, phone, 800 radio, etc.) will be furnished by County/City departments as possible and/or required.
2. All other logistical support will be the responsibility of and provided as directed in ESF-5.

VIII. ESF DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

The Office of Emergency Management will maintain this ESF and its supporting documents. This ESF and the procedures contained therein will be reviewed, tested periodically and revised as necessary.

IX. REFERENCES

- A. Springfield-Greene County Health Department: Public Information and Emergency Risk Communication Plan