



# **Functional Annex – Emergency Public Information**

Approved (August 15, 2007)

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## 1 Purpose

The purpose of this annex is to outline the means, organization, and process by which Washington County will provide appropriate information and instructions to the public during emergency situations.

## 2 Situation and Assumptions

### 2.1 Situation

Washington County is subject to a number of natural and human-made hazards that can threaten public health and safety and create a need to communicate emergency information to the public.

During emergencies, the public needs timely, accurate information about the situation and appropriate instructions regarding protective actions that should be taken to minimize injuries, loss of life and damage to property.

Emergencies may develop slowly (e.g., severe winter storm and flood) allowing sufficient time to effectively disseminate information to the public. Other emergencies may occur suddenly (e.g., earthquake and hazmat release) hindering staffs' ability to inform the public.

Washington County and various jurisdictions within the county share a single broadcast media market with the rest of the Portland/Vancouver metropolitan area.

Power outages may disrupt radio, television, Internet, and print media outlets that are needed to effectively distribute emergency information and recommended actions to the public.

Language, disability, cultural, and other factors affecting the ability of citizens to receive and understand emergency messages requires that the information be provided in multiple formats and through a variety of means.

Washington County maintains and/or has access to the following public information assets and resources:

- **People:** The Washington County Sheriff's Office employs one full-time public information officer (PIO) that deals with public safety issues. In addition, most of the county's departments have designated public information staff though none of them are full-time PIOs. Most are program educators who promote departmental programs and activities and communicate related information to the public. Personnel from the County Administrative Office (CAO) are included in this number and speak on behalf of county government as a whole.

Additional PIO resources may be available from cities, special service districts and agencies within Washington County, the Portland metro region and the State. In general, PIOs are in short supply and are not available to assist others if their own jurisdictions have been or could be impacted.

Washington County Cooperative Library Services supports a network of libraries within the county that can assist by making pertinent information available to the public. County residents can be directed to their local library for information designed to assist them as they recover from the incident.

Supportive groups in the county include citizen participation organizations (CPOs) which can assist with the distribution of information at the neighborhood level (e.g., community meetings in impacted areas where information on recovery resources is critical). Also, non-profit organizations can assist by reaching out to targeted ethnic/cultural audiences with emergency information and assistance.

- Information Collection and Dissemination Tools: The County uses a variety of tools for collecting information and disseminating it to the public. Some primary tools include:
  - Software alerting systems include the Emergency Alert System (EAS), Community Notification System (CNS) and Amber Alert. While EAS and the Amber Alert broadcast emergent information to a wide area, CNS alerts citizens in their own homes in a reverse 9-1-1 process, calling only the homes that could be impacted by the emergency. These programs are managed by the Washington County Consolidated Communications Agency (WCCCA) and used by jurisdictions in the county as needed.
  - Internet communications tools are available to inform the public and direct them to needed resources. Media releases and other information, such as links to pertinent information and public resources, can be shared through websites.
  - The County Public Inquiry Center is supported by county employees and citizen groups who answer public questions. The facility includes multiple phones, computer, printer and fax machine capability. Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and Joint Information Center (JIC) PIOs can use the Public Inquiry Center to disseminate approved messages and receive feedback from the public as to what kind of information is needed.
  - Contact lists are available and updated regularly. Washington County has access to a regional PIO listserv which can be used to inform PIOs throughout the region and to request their support if needed. A regional media contact list is also available to County PIOs.
- Public Information Facilities: The County provides space in both its primary and alternate Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) for public information functions. Facility resources include computers, telephones, televisions, FAX machines and printers. The primary EOC can accommodate a JIC on site or

support one closer to an incident. JIC equipment/resources are basic and would require augmentation for a multi-day event.

Washington County officials have directed designated personnel to cooperate with the news media whenever possible.

Large-scale or unusual emergencies will result in a demand for information from local, national and international media simultaneously.

The timely dissemination of accurate emergency information and recommended actions will enhance community recovery.

## **2.2 Assumptions**

- Information dissemination resources (including media and local government) will be available to facilitate timely delivery of information to the public.
- Sufficient communications capability will be available to allow information collection and dissemination.
- Partner agencies will support this plan by providing PIOs (when possible) to participate in the public information function.
- Open and effective coordination and dissemination of emergency information will increase public trust in local authorities enhancing public cooperation and compliance with issued guidance and directives.
- A majority of the public will turn to TV and radio for emergency information. The Web is a primary source of information but most often used by the public during non-emergency times. The media are far more likely than the public to refer to agency Web sites for information, particularly if they are referred there.

## **3 Concept of Operations**

### **3.1 Definitions**

#### **3.1.1 County**

In this annex, when the word “County” is capitalized it refers to Washington County government. When the word “county” is lowercase it refers to the geographic boundaries of Washington County.

#### **3.1.2 County Public Inquiry Center (PIC) (Previously Termed County Phone Bank)**

A facility activated by the Washington County EOC or DOC to provide information to the public about incident activity, impacts, and available resources. It also serves as a point to receive public offers of assistance to volunteer and/or donate goods.

**3.1.3 Department Operations Center (DOC)**

Specially equipped facility from which department staff exercise tactical direction and control and coordinate resources and information in an emergency situation. If the EOC is activated, a DOC holds a subordinate position in the allocation of resources and management of information countywide.

**3.1.4 Emergency Operations Center (EOC)**

A specially equipped facility from which County officials exercise strategic direction and control and coordinate policy, resources and information in an emergency situation.

**3.1.5 Emergency Operations Levels**

A series of four emergency response levels including routine operations and minor, major, and catastrophic incidents. Each level is defined by incident complexity, scope and resource needs.

**3.1.6 Incident Command System (ICS)**

A management system designed to effectively integrate resources from different agencies into a temporary emergency organization that can expand and contract with the magnitude of the incident and the resources on hand.

**3.1.7 Joint Information Center (JIC)**

A centralized location, either in a fixed facility (e.g., EOC) or near an incident scene. A JIC enhances information coordination, reduces misinformation, and maximizes resources by collocating Public Information Officers (PIOs).

**3.1.8 Joint Information System (JIS)**

A mechanism for integrating public information activities during an emergency to ensure coordinated and consistent message development, verification, and dissemination, while allowing participants to retain organizational identity and autonomy.

**3.1.9 Lead PIO**

The PIO in charge of the emergency public information function at the EOC, DOC, JIC or in the field. Lead PIOs report directly to Command at their location.

**3.1.10 National Incident Management System (NIMS)**

A system that integrates existing best practices into a consistent, nationwide approach to domestic incident management. NIMS requires that the Incident Command System (ICS) be institutionalized as the only such system used.

**3.1.11 Public Information Officer (PIO)**

A person who has been assigned by an organization to collect and validate information and disseminate it to the public on a daily basis using the media and other means. A PIO may also have responsibility to communicate with other groups (e.g., coworkers, governmental agencies, other PIOs). PIOs who work daily for an organization may be temporarily assigned to a PIO position within the ICS structure as part of the Command staff.

## **3.2 Operations by Emergency Level**

### **3.2.1 Routine Operations**

During routine, day-to-day operations, each County department utilizes its assigned PIO(s) to produce and disseminate necessary emergency public information (e.g., a road closure with detour information, a home burglary). County department directors with response responsibilities ensure that adequate PIO coverage is available to address department issues associated with an emergency. If an emergency exceeds a department's PIO resources, the department director might request support from another department or partner agency. Since Routine Operations do not require additional resources or a higher level of coordination, they are not addressed by this plan.

### **3.2.2 Minor Incident**

A Minor Incident is defined as a fairly common event that may be large in scale or scope and involve multiple sites and/or agencies but which can still be managed with existing department/agency resources. Examples include a winter storm with multiple road closures or a hazardous materials spill requiring the evacuation of a limited area. A local emergency may be declared

To conduct the emergency public information function during minor incidents, one of two actions may occur. County PIOs could be added as needed to the DOC staffing pattern of the responding County Department(s) or the County EOC could be partially activated and the PIO function centralized at that location.

During the early stages of a Minor Incident response, PIOs throughout the county use an informal Joint Information System (JIS) to share information and coordinate the release of incident information and public recommendations. This communication is primarily done by phone and email at or near the incident scene. Depending on the incident, one or more DOCs are activated and DOC PIOs are busy performing emergency public information functions. Once the EOC is activated, the Lead PIO in the EOC takes action to formalize the JIS to support ongoing coordination between all responding PIOs.

The County Public Inquiry Center may be activated for Minor Incidents of special interest to the public (e.g., a virus is spreading rapidly in local nursing homes).

### **3.2.3 Major Incident**

A Major Incident is defined as an uncommon event that is typically large in scale and scope and which requires outside assistance, such as a major flood or moderate earthquake. Centralization of a department's or agency's incident management and coordination activities is required. Local emergencies (city and county) will be declared as appropriate and a state emergency may be declared. A Presidential Disaster Declaration may also be requested. Some Major Incidents may also be designated Incidents of National Significance pursuant to the National Response Plan.

To support major incident operations, the County EOC will be fully activated and staffed and the Lead PIO will activate the JIS. Depending on the nature of the emergency, County DOC(s) may be activated as well (e.g., an earthquake would activate the

Department of Land Use and Transportation (LUT) DOC; a health epidemic would activate the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) DOC. All involved PIOs internal and external to the County's response structure will use the formalized JIS to communicate and coordinate.

If the EOC Lead PIO sees a need to co-locate responding PIOs from all involved jurisdictions, an EOC JIC will be established. PIOs at the EOC JIC will focus on the overall incident impacts and recommendations to the public countywide. In addition, PIOs responding to incidents in the field may establish Field JICs that will address media inquiries from locations at/near the incidents. The EOC JIC and Field JIC(s) will use the JIS to coordinate information collection and dissemination.

The County Public Inquiry Center will be activated to support the public's need for information and guidance.

### **3.2.4 Catastrophic Incident**

A Catastrophic Incident is defined as a very rare event that is broad in scope and/or complexity, has potential lasting impact and significantly reduces the government's ability to get accurate, understandable information to the public in a timely manner (e.g., a significant, damaging earthquake). Outside assistance is clearly needed and extraordinary incident management and coordination measures are required to respond to county needs. Local and state emergencies will be declared and a Presidential Disaster Declaration will likely be requested. All Catastrophic Incidents will be Incidents of National Significance resulting in overwhelming news media interest.

Immediately following a Catastrophic Incident, area PIOs will use any communication system still operational to share incident information and to coordinate the dissemination of messages to the public via the media. This informal JIS will be used until the EOC has established a JIC. At that time, steps will be taken to formalize the JIS to support the public information objective – getting the right information to the right people at the right time so they will make the right decisions.

As soon as possible, the EOC Lead PIO will establish an EOC JIC. Depending on the scope of the disaster, one or more Field JICs will be established to address media inquiries at/near the incident scene(s). All JICs will use the JIS to communicate incident information and to coordinate message dissemination. In the case of a catastrophic incident, JICs may be established at each level of incident management – local, state, regional, and national – as required. County PIOs may be asked to represent County concerns from an EOC JIC, a Field JIC or a Regional JIC as needed.

If routine communications systems are not available, establishing the infrastructure for an EOC JIC will proceed in anticipation of the restoration of needed communications systems. Alternate methods of communication will be identified and utilized as needed.

To augment PIO resources, the County will request local support through an established network of regional PIOs. If additional PIOs are still needed, the County will request support from the State.

If phone lines are operational, the County Public Inquiry Center will be activated. The Public Inquiry Center will not receive public calls until EOC JIC staff have provided call takers with approved messages and information.

### **3.3 Emergency Public Information (EPI) Functions**

During the emergency period, the EPI function focuses on disseminating accurate, understandable information in a timely manner to people at risk. As emergency response progresses, PIO staff will support the public in a variety of ways, such as providing information about public health issues, locating missing persons, donating goods or money, volunteering time, or applying for assistance. Primary EPI functions include:

- Manage the release of emergency public information and warnings;
- In coordination with involved PIOs, produce key messages, talking points and news releases;
- Advise the IC on public information issues and advocate for the community to ensure its public information needs are addressed;
- Respond to inquiries from the news media and public;
- Monitor the news media to detect and correct misinformation and to identify emerging trends or issues;
- Support elected officials and other members of the Policy Group as they prepare and deliver statements to the media/public on the emergency situation;
- Regularly inform internal staff and partner agencies of incident impacts and related activities (EOC/DOC staff, Washington County staff, cities, adjacent counties, special service districts, non-profits, businesses);
- Provide the County Public Inquiry Center (when activated) with talking points and support with confirmed public information;
- Seek verification that the public is taking appropriate actions as disseminated in messages;
- Coordinate, clear with appropriate authorities, and disseminate accurate and timely information related to the incident;
- Manage very important person (VIP) visits as needed;
- When needed, arrange for and manage community meetings in/near impacted areas to provide information to residents/businesses on available resources;
- Document the event by collecting and saving copies of all products (talking points, news releases, briefing booklets, news conference agendas, flyers, photographs, news clips of televised interviews) as well as media contact logs and public information evaluations.

## **3.4 Methods of Collection**

### **3.4.1 Trusted Relationships**

PIOs rely on trusted relationships with other PIOs to acquire accurate incident information. Relationships between PIOs are developed on an event-by-event basis and are an immediate resource.

### **3.4.2 Expert and Official Sources**

Within the ICS structure, PIOs typically rely on SitStat Unit staff to gather and display incident details. PIOs interview field responders (including Safety Officers) for on-scene observations to enhance news releases and to learn of public health and safety concerns and recommendations. PIOs collect and verify information from technical experts within the EOC structure (e.g., PGE, Red Cross, TriMet). They also monitor public safety radio traffic.

Externally, PIOs use both news media and responding partner agency Web sites to collect incident information and to identify new resources. PIOs also monitor news media coverage for information. Another source of viable information is the Washington County Consolidated Communications Agency (WCCCA), which is the county's 9-1-1 dispatch center.

### **3.4.3 Collection Tools**

To accomplish the collection function, PIOs routinely use cell phones, direct-connect radios, a regional PIO listserv, the Internet, television, EOC SitStat displays, face-to-face communications and amateur radio. Responding PIOs use a JIS to both collect and coordinate information.

## **3.5 Methods of Coordination**

### **3.5.1 Joint Information Center (JIC)**

#### **3.5.1.1 JIC Operations**

A JIC enhances information coordination, reduces misinformation and maximizes resources, making it a good option when emergencies are fast moving, long lasting and/or potentially dangerous to life, property and the environment.

Establishing a JIC is a viable option when two or more agencies or jurisdictions are involved in an emergency response and coordinating the release of incident information would be best managed from a central facility. PIOs working in a JIC benefit from pooled resources, face-to-face communications, a variety of PIO talents, greater personal safety than field PIOs experience, and media recognition that the JIC is a location for official information.

A JIC may be established at the County EOC and at or near an incident. PIOs working at an EOC JIC collect and analyze countywide incident information. They broker stories to the news media on countywide issues (e.g., checking on elderly neighbors during prolonged winter storms, procedures for purifying drinking water,

health concerns associated with flood waters, dealing with psychological stressors). They support the County Public Inquiry Center by providing call takers with key messages and information. They inform media on what is going on countywide. JICs can also be established at or near incident scenes. PIOs working at Field JICs provide service to the news media who gather there. Their role is specific to an incident, answering questions on what happened and what the neighboring public should do about it. All JICs are connected through the JIS in an effort to ensure that information is collected, coordinated and disseminated effectively.

As possible, the County will provide PIO support and supplies to a Field JIC established in the county. If there is a need for a Field JIC to exist for an extended period of time, the lead jurisdiction for the incident will be asked to provide a facility, computers, phones, printers and fax machines, as needed, along with equipment/facility support personnel. If they are unable to provide a facility and equipment, EOC Logistics may be asked to assist in the acquisition of a suitable facility/equipment.

When possible, involved agencies will provide a PIO to work a shift in the EOC JIC. In this capacity, the departments, agencies, and organizations that contribute to joint information management in the JIC do not lose their individual identities or responsibility for programs, but rather contribute to an overall unified and coordinated message.

When an incident affects multiple counties, a Regional JIC may be established to ensure more effective coordination and common messaging. PIOs throughout the region may work at this Regional JIC or work at a county JIC. For larger events, multiple JICs will be established. All JICs should include representatives from affected jurisdictions, agencies, private-sector entities, and nongovernmental organizations.

### **3.5.1.2 JIC Organization and Management:**

The JIC Lead PIO manages JIC operations and coordinates approvals from the ICs for the release of information. For large scale activations, an Assistant Lead PIO is assigned to help manage JIC operations, especially when the JIC Lead PIO is in planning meetings.

The JIC Lead PIO is supported by a JIC Coordinator who supervises daily operations of the JIC, executing plans and policies as directed, working with the EOC's Logistics Section to obtain equipment and facilities, and collecting and archiving all public information products (e.g., talking points, news releases, briefing booklets, news conference agendas, flyers, photographs, news clips of televised interviews, media contact logs, etc.).

Assigned JIC staff perform pre-identified job functions. The JIC Lead PIO assigns specific functions to responding PIOs. Commonly, PIOs assume several job functions and work in one of three branches:

**Information Gathering and Analysis:** Collects, processes, and verifies information from multiple sources about the incident/situation and coordinates the development of key messages with the Information Production and Dissemination Branch.

**Information Production and Dissemination:** Receives confirmed information, coordinates the release of information, develops key messages with the Information Gathering and Analysis Branch, identifies target audiences, and utilizes appropriate resources and tools to communicate key messages.

**Field Operations:** Works closely with PIOs or responders at an incident to gather facts, identify responding partners and coordinate media visits and VIP tours. Provides field updates to the Information Gathering and Analysis Branch. Where there is no active JIC or PIO near the incident scene, Field Operations may also work with on scene responders to establish an onsite media staging area.

### **3.5.2 Joint Information System (JIS)**

The JIS provides the mechanism for integrating public information activities to ensure coordinated and consistent message development, verification, and dissemination, making it an essential tool for responding PIOs.

The JIS allows for coordination and integration with additional agencies as they respond to the incident; federal, state, and local partners; and private-sector entities and nongovernmental organizations. All organizations that participate in and contribute to the JIS do not lose their individual identities or responsibility for their own programs or policies.

PIOs from County departments, outside jurisdictions and organizations interact on a regular basis to share information and ideas. This regular interaction is a part of networking and professional courtesy. When an event occurs that prompts activation of Command, the assigned PIOs use the JIS to communicate with PIOs from other responding jurisdictions and agencies and coordinate what each will do and say as representatives of their particular organizations.

If an incident requires the activation of a DOC or the EOC, the Lead PIO will take steps to formalize and structure the JIS to support communication and coordination between all responding departments, jurisdictions, and organizations. The decision to formalize the JIS is based on the complexity of the situation and the need to ensure coordination and integration of messages. Coordination and integration is accomplished by posting information on the County Web site or other Web-based system or portal and using the PIO listserv and/or scheduled briefings between PIOs to compare notes and develop common messages. The briefings are accomplished using phones, email, conference calls, and face-to-face communications.

### **3.6 Message Approval**

Before any public information is disseminated, the Lead PIO will meet with the IC to establish a process for approving its release. In the field, approval may be verbal enabling the PIO to respond to media inquiries from the scene. In a DOC, the IC may choose to

initial each news release to signify approval. In an EOC setting with a unified command structure, approval from multiple ICs may be required.

## **3.7 Methods of Dissemination**

### **3.7.1 Telephone Based**

#### **3.7.1.2 Public Inquiry Center (PIC)**

The Washington County Public Inquiry Center is activated whenever an emergency generates a significant public demand for quick and accurate information and assistance. Policies regarding who can authorize the activation of the Public Inquiry Center are included in the “Washington County Public Inquiry Center Activation Manual.”

The primary location for the PIC is on the main floor of the County’s Public Services Building in Hillsboro. The PIC is equipped to support up to 10 call takers and a manager. Call takers are trained to only release information provided by the designated EOC/JIC PIO and/or a recognized authority in the EOC/DOC (e.g., Red Cross for public shelter locations, LUT DOC for road closures, TriMet for impacted bus/train schedules). Public Inquiry Center managers are also trained to report any commonly expressed public question/concern that has not been addressed.

If not already activated, the EOC Lead PIO requests and receives approval from the IC and then coordinates with the Logistics Chief to determine/discuss the hours of operations, expected duration, and staffing needs/shifts. The EOC Lead PIO directs staff to coordinate with the Public Inquiry Center manager to provide incident information and recommended actions for the public (talking points).

#### **3.7.1.2 Community Notification System (CNS)**

Public information staff can disseminate critical and timely information through the use of an electronic public warning system, CNS, which is managed by WCCCA. CNS is a telephone-based system that can deliver recorded messages to citizens living in selected areas of the county. Recipients can be selected by use of Geographic Information System (GIS) tools.

### **3.7.2 News Media Based**

#### **3.7.2.1 News Releases**

Reports on an incident and related public recommendations (news release) are distributed (fax/email) to the news media, affiliated PIOs, activated DOCs and other activated EOCs, as well as County staff. They are also posted in the EOC, on the County’s Web site and made available to the media via FlashNews (Web-based posting service). Detailed contact lists for news media are maintained and utilized regularly by affiliated PIOs.

### **3.7.2.2 News Conferences**

Presentations on incident activities by one or more agency representatives to attending news media personnel (news conferences) are arranged and managed by EOC/JIC public information staff. Both the primary and alternate County EOCs provide facilities to support news conferences.

### **3.7.2.3 Emergency Alert System (EAS)**

This alert and warning system uses the broadcast media to announce conditions that pose an immediate threat to public safety. Alert messages may be written by PIO staff or other command and general staff. EAS messages are approved by the IC and then transmitted via WCCCA.

## **3.7.3 Electronic and Web-Based**

### **3.7.3.1 County Web Site**

The County Web Specialist posts news releases and related incident public information on the County Web site. Designated County LUT staff can also post emergency road/bridge information 24/7 to the County's Web site. Through news releases, the public is encouraged to access information from this posting. Regional PIOs, partner agencies, and County staff also benefit from this effort.

### **3.7.3.2 Reader Boards**

Electronic reader boards are used to communicate important information to motorists. Although reader board messages must be short and there is often an impact to traffic flow, they are easily noticed by drivers. The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) operates the only fixed reader board (located on Hwy 26) in the county along with portable reader boards mounted on their incident response vehicles. In addition, County LUT and some other public works agencies in the county own or have access to portable reader boards.

## **3.7.4 Direct Contact**

### **3.7.4.1 Route Alerting**

Quickly notifying residents of an imminent danger can be accomplished through route alerting. Vehicles that are equipped with sirens and public address systems can drive through a targeted area, announcing critical information.

### **3.7.4.2 Door-to-Door**

Knocking on doors and distributing flyers are direct methods of getting information to residents. Though time-consuming and labor intensive, they are effective ways to verify who did and did not receive the information. The same information can also be posted in areas where it will be noticed by congregating/passing public.

### **3.7.4.3 Community Information Meetings**

Community-based meetings in areas affected by an emergency are an effective tool for getting information to the people who need it the most and who appreciate the

opportunity to clarify their understanding by asking questions in person. Updates on the emergency's impact, descriptions of available resources, financial assistance, and future plans by responders can be effectively explained during community information meetings. These meetings are most appropriate for areas that are isolated from other media by the emergency, or for incidents where effects are localized.

#### **3.7.4.4 Placement of Information in Public Places**

Placing flyers, pamphlets, brochures in public places (e.g., libraries, recreation centers, senior centers, schools, and nonprofit service centers) is an effective way of getting information into the hands that need it. This method is convenient and especially helpful for people who can not access information electronically.

### **3.8 Communicating with Special Populations**

In an effort to meet the emergency information needs of all county citizens, extra efforts will be made to communicate with populations who may not be able to access needed information through conventional means. To do this, County PIOs will rely on both internal and external resources. Some of these include:

- Pre-identified staff with language/translation skills
- County staff who have day-to-day contact with special needs clients
- County staff who have working knowledge of organizations within the county that provide assistance to at-risk groups and individuals
- Leaders of represented ethnic, cultural, disabled and religious organizations
- Media serving specific ethnic/cultural groups
- Language banks

## **4 Organization and Assignment of Responsibilities**

### **4.1 Task Assignments**

#### **4.1.1 Board of Commissioners**

- Coordinate with elected officials from other impacted local jurisdictions.
- As County spokespersons, describe response/recovery actions County responders are taking, encourage citizens to take recommended steps to protect themselves and their property and provide reassurance to those impacted.

#### **4.1.2 County Policy Group**

- Monitor developing/ongoing events in coordination with the County EOC and Department Operations Centers (DOCs)

- Coordinate with policy-level officials from other impacted local jurisdictions
- Coordinate policy regarding the release of emergency public information with the Board of Commissioners and the IC.
- When appropriate, coordinate with the EOC Lead PIO to issue statements addressing public concerns and issues

#### **4.1.3 County Emergency Operations Center (EOC)**

- Coordinate public information collection, verification, production, and dissemination both within the County organization and countywide. (PIO, Planning, Operations, IC)
- Provide emergency information and instructions to the general public, private institutions, businesses, industry, and disaster relief organizations. (PIO)
- When needed, coordinate with affected jurisdictions to establish a JIC and provide staff/support as possible. (PIO, Logistics)
- When needed, activate and support the County Public Inquiry Center to answer questions and address concerns from the public. (PIO, IC, Logistics)

#### **4.1.4 Department of Land Use & Transportation DOC**

- Provide situation status of county roads, bridges and damaged buildings to the media. Following EOC activation, coordinate the dissemination of news releases and related information with the EOC. (PIO, Planning, Ops)
- Update emergency road/bridge closures and related information on the County's Web site. (PIO, Planning, Ops)
- When needed, activate and utilize the Washington County Public Inquiry Center to supplement department resources in response to a significant public demand for information. (PIO, Logs, IC)

#### **4.1.5 Department of Health and Human Services DOC**

- Provide situation status of health and human services impacts (e.g., public health, environmental health, mental health, animal services, solid waste, aging services, etc.) to the media following EOC activation. (PIO, Ops, Public Health Officer)
- Develop public health advisories and alerts that include recommendations for public protective actions, and provide them to the news media as needed. Following EOC activation, coordinate the dissemination of news releases and related information with the EOC. (PIO, Ops)
- When needed, activate and utilize the Washington County Public Inquiry Center to supplement department resources in response to a significant public demand for information. (PIO, Logs, IC)

**4.1.6 Sheriff's Office DOC**

- Provide situation status of law enforcement impacts (e.g., evacuations, security, curfews, etc.) to the media following EOC activation. (PIO, Ops)
- Develop public safety advisories and alerts that include recommendations for public protective actions, and provide them to the news media as needed. Following EOC activation, coordinate the dissemination of news releases and related information with the EOC. (PIO, Ops)
- When needed, activate and utilize the Washington County Public Inquiry Center to supplement department resources in response to a significant public demand for information. (PIO, Logs, IC)

**4.1.7 All County Departments**

- Provide subject matter experts to address relevant incident impacts and departmental actions.
- When needed, provide additional staffing to support EPI functions at the EOC, JICs, DOCs and the Public Inquiry Center.

**4.1.8 Land Use and Transportation Department**

- Provide staff for guidance and assistance in addressing emergency land use, permitting, traffic/transportation management, building inspection, and other related department activities and impacts.

**4.1.9 County Health and Human Services Department****4.1.9.1 Public Health Officer**

- Monitor developing/ongoing public health events.
- As a County spokesperson, describe response/recovery actions County responders are taking and encourage citizens to take recommended steps to protect themselves.

**4.1.9.2 Department Director and Division Managers**

Provide staff for guidance and assistance in reaching special needs populations who are unable to access emergency information and recommendations in traditional ways.

Develop recommendations in response to public health, environmental health, mental health, animal services, solid waste, and aging and disability services concerns in coordination with other public health officials, healthcare providers, and/or aging and disability service agencies.

**4.1.10 County Sheriff's Office**

- When needed, provide security and traffic control at PIO managed events including news conferences, community information meetings and VIP visits.

**4.1.11 County Housing Services Department**

- As needed, develop guidance and recommendations for emergency and public housing in coordination with other providers. Coordinate the distribution of this information with the EOC JIC.

**4.1.12 County Support Services Department**

- Facilities and Parks Services Division:
  - When needed, identify and secure facilities for emergency public information functions (e.g., JIC, Public Inquiry Center, media rooms).
  - Provide on-call staff to respond to facility needs in support of EOC/DOC/JIC/County Public Inquiry Center activations that occur after hours.
- Information Technology Services Division:
  - When needed, provide additional equipment and capabilities (e.g., computers, printers, data/voice ports) to the County EOC, DOCs, JICs and Public Inquiry Center.
  - When needed, provide additional staff (24/7) for technical support during EOC, DOC, JIC and Public Inquiry Center activations.
- Human Resources and Risk Services Division:
  - Ensure that Washington County staff not involved in the response has access to critical information (e.g., life safety recommendations, available assistance programs, recovery resources/information) released from the DOCs/EOC.
- Communication Services Division:
  - Provide Web Specialist support to post pertinent incident information on the County's Web site.
- Central Services Division:
  - Provide printing and delivery services in support of getting incident information and recommendations to the affected public.

**4.1.13 Cooperative Library Services:**

- Recommend methods of reaching affected and hard to reach populations through library services and established contacts.

- Provide distribution support of incident information (e.g., flyers, posters, brochures) provided by the EOC JIC, to libraries and other appropriate locations for public access.

#### 4.1.14 American Red Cross

- Report information on emergency public shelters to the EOC JIC.
- When possible, assign a Red Cross liaison to the Washington County EOC to better communicate and coordinate with PIOs on public shelter locations and directions.

## 5 Direction and Control

When a DOC or DOCs are activated without a concurrent EOC activation, department PIOs will disseminate emergency information to the media, department staff and the County's Emergency Management Office as directed by the DOC IC(s).

### EOC Activation

- Upon activation of the County EOC, the IC will designate a Lead PIO who will then activate other PIOs to staff an EOC/JIC organization large enough to respond to the incident. Upon arrival, the Lead PIO will report to the IC, and other assigned PIOs will report to the Lead PIO.
- Upon EOC activation, the IC(s) will establish procedures for approving news releases before they are disseminated. Routine information may only require the approval of the Lead PIO, while other, more sensitive information (e.g., crime scene specifics) may require the approval of one or more ICs. When a unified command structure is used, all ICs will be involved in determining the approval process.
- During EOC activations, incident information is released to the media by public information staff working in the EOC, DOC(s) and JIC(s). In addition, agency PIOs not working at a County EOC or JIC will release agency-specific information directly to the news media from their agency (agency's operations center, if activated) and coordinate with the County EOC/JIC by sending copies of news releases.

PIOs responding to an incident in the field report to on-scene Command and coordinate information with the supporting DOC or EOC.

The County Public Inquiry Center will only release incident information and recommendations received from the EOC/JIC PIO and identified source experts (e.g., Red Cross for shelter locations, TriMet for bus/train schedule impacts, LUT DOC for road closures, HHS DOC for public health recommendations). All others wishing to make specific information available to the public through the Public Inquiry Center must contact the EOC Lead PIO.

## **6 Administration and Logistics**

### **6.1 Administration**

For emergencies not requiring activation of the EOC, County departments will be responsible for gathering, analyzing, producing, disseminating (e.g., to news media, partner agencies, County staff as appropriate) and documenting emergency information within the scope of department responsibilities.

For emergencies requiring activation of the EOC, County departments will coordinate information dissemination with the EOC Lead PIO.

The JIC Manual is a primary resource for County PIOs. It contains information on how the emergency public information function is structured and staffed, policies and approval descriptions, specific functions to be performed, samples of news release formats and hazard-specific talking points.

### **6.2 Logistics**

#### **6.2.1 Staffing**

The EOC and DOCs have minimal levels of pre-assigned PIOs. For large scale events, additional PIO resources will be acquired through existing partnerships with county jurisdictions/agencies and requests via the PIO listserv.

#### **6.2.2 Facilities and Equipment**

The County maintains the ability to activate a primary EOC/JIC (located at the Law Enforcement Center (LEC), an alternate EOC/JIC (located at WCCCA), and a Public Inquiry Center (located at the County Public Services Building (PSB).) Additional PIO facilities will be acquired by Logistics.

#### **6.2.3 Resources**

Plans and procedures for activating EOCs, DOCs, JIC(s) and the County Public Inquiry Center are published separately from this annex and include:

- Washington County EOC Activation Manual
- LUT DOC Activation Manual (under development)
- JIC Manual (under development)
- County Public Inquiry Center Activation Manual (under development)

Contact information is maintained and updated on a regular basis and made available to PIOs within the county. Contact lists include:

- News media serving Washington County
- Regional PIOs

## **7 Annex Development and Maintenance**

The Emergency Management Office will maintain this annex in cooperation with County departments identified in Section IV (Organization and Assignment of Responsibilities).

Each tasked County department will develop and maintain procedures to implement its responsibilities under the plan.

## **8 References**

- Washington County Basic Plan (component of the EOP) (2006)
- Alert and Warning Annex (2004)
- IS-702: NIMS Public Information Systems (2006)

## **9 Tabs**

- Tab 1 - JIC Manual
- Tab 2 - Washington County Public Inquiry Center Activation Manual

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**Tab 1 - JIC Manual**

[To be inserted by County at a later date (published separately - under development)]

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**Tab 2 - Washington County Public Inquiry Center  
Activation Manual**

[To be inserted by County at a later date (published separately - under development)]

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