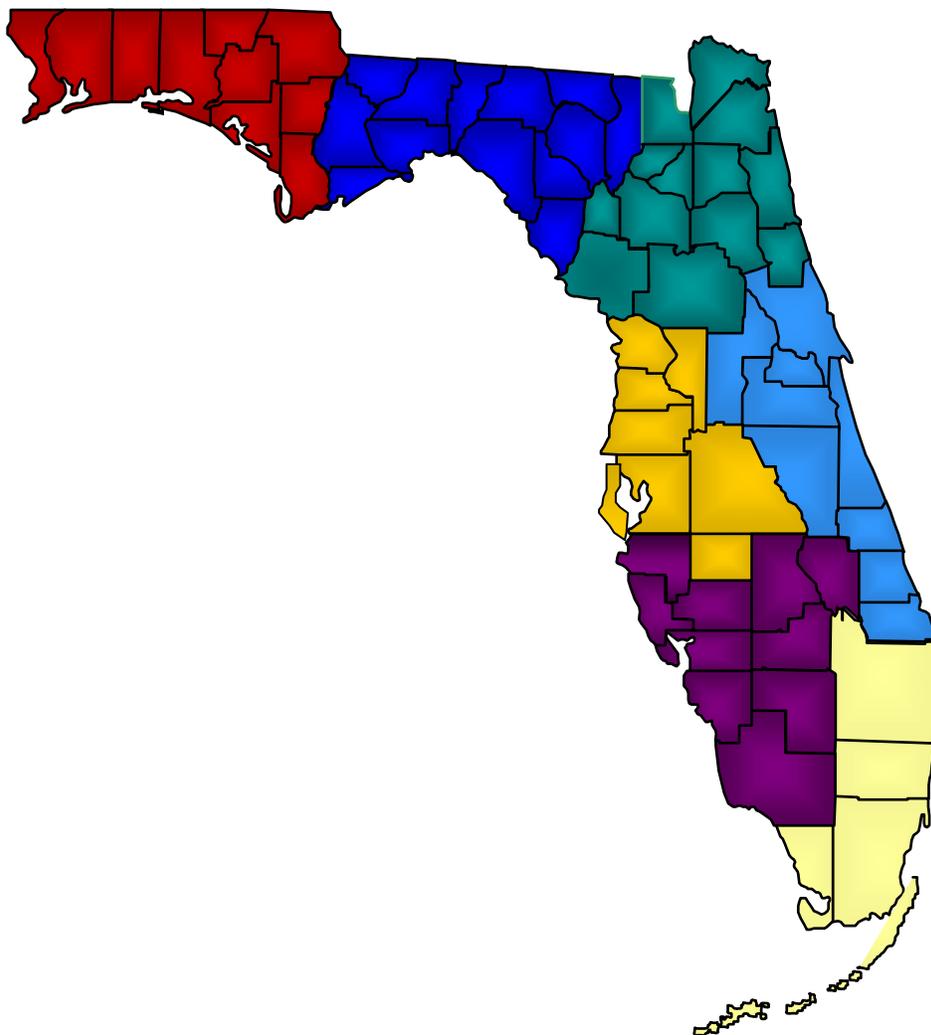


# PUBLIC INFORMATION

## Joint Information Center (JIC) and Joint Information System (JIS) Guidelines

**RDS  
TF**



Approved by  
DOMESTIC SECURITY OVERSIGHT  
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## **Forward/Concept of Operations**

The National Response Framework (NRF) is based upon the principle that “incidents begin and end locally, and most are wholly managed at the local level” and that “the number and type of resources must be able to expand rapidly to meet needs associated with a given incident”. Accordingly, these guidelines are developed to support the role of the local PIO within the Incident Command System (ICS) for expanding incidents.

These recommended guidelines provide a model Joint Information Center (JIC) Plan for local Public Information Officers (PIOs) to support the management of local events and incidents of all types. The guidelines:

- Provide guidelines for local departments to establish, staff and manage a Joint Information Center (JIC), and;
- Provide the process for obtaining additional resources, (i.e. Public Information Officers (PIOs), and equipment (i.e., Mobile Joint Information Centers, TacPaks), support resources) through local and state Emergency Operations Centers for incidents that exceed local capability and capacity.

Local jurisdictions that already have an approved JIC Plan can use the processes described in these guidelines to obtain additional PIOs and support resources.

## **Overview – Why JIC/JIS Guidelines?**

Local jurisdictions manage day-to-day incidents very well, however, catastrophic incidents, regardless of their cause, will place tremendous strain on local information personnel and will likely overwhelm them very quickly. These guidelines are developed to help the PIO “ramp up” quickly to meet extraordinary information demands using existing, standardized state systems and processes to obtain additional local, regional and state resources. To support the PIO, the JIC Toolkit (Pages 43-54) contains electronic press forms and templates that can be loaded onto a network or laptop for ease of use in the field.

## **Model JIC/JIS Plan**

Accurate, timely, relevant and concise public information is essential for successful response to a widespread community threat, such as hurricanes, wildfires, tornadoes, freezes, toxic spills and criminal activities. The skill and professionalism with which emergency managers communicate vital information to the public -- through the news media and other communication channels -- can be the difference between a successful response and a tragedy. A good emergency public information plan is an essential element of an emergency response. In a disaster, citizens need to know where to go, what to do and what not to do. Effective public information efforts reassure and bolster the public’s confidence. People need to know that amid scenes of apparent chaos, there is a steady hand of leadership in command of the incident. There must be a professionally staffed public information structure to coordinate and disseminate

information efficiently.

## **The Role of the Public Information Officer (PIO)**

Public Information Officers provide critical information to the public during events and incidents. Beyond the typical daily networking of Public Information Officers (PIOs), the National Incident Management System (NIMS) is the formal organization model by which Public Information Officers coordinate pre- and post-event/incident emergency communications. Public information in the NIMS is based on these principles:

- The PIO supports and reports to the Incident Commander.
- Public information functions must be coordinated and integrated across all jurisdictions and functional agencies.
- Organizations participating in incident management retain their independence.
- The Incident Commander approves all media releases, written or verbal.

In all responses, there should be a designated Lead PIO (or co-lead PIOs). This person is a member of the command staff within the Incident Command System (ICS) and reports directly to the Incident Commander. The Lead PIO is the “official” spokesperson.

### **BASIC PUBLIC INFORMATION RESPONSIBILITIES**

The basic functions of a public information operation are, as follows:

- Respond to inquiries from the news media and the public
- Monitor the news media to detect and correct misinformation and identify emerging communication trends or issues
- Advise the Incident Commander on public information issues and advocate for the community to ensure public information needs are met
- Manage the release of emergency public information and warnings
- Coordinate, clear with appropriate authorities, and disseminate accurate and timely information related to the incident
- Ensure equipment and personnel are sufficient to meet the public information need
- Constantly inform and apprise elected officials, agency heads and other leaders as to the status of the incident

Depending on the size of the incident, these functions may be accomplished by one PIO or a team of PIOs within a Joint Information Center (JIC).

### **Definition of Joint Information System and Joint Information Centers**

The National Incident Management System (NIMS) defines a Joint Information Center (JIC) as *“the physical location where public information staff involved in incident*

*management activities can collocate to perform critical emergency information, crisis communications, and public affairs functions”.*

When PIOs work cooperatively to issue accurate and timely information to the impacted public, they are often organized at a fixed facility as a JIC. The JIC operates within the larger network of information management that constitutes the Joint Information System (JIS). In Florida, the standard for organizing multi-agency public information as a JIS is set by the Florida Comprehensive Emergency Plan (CEMP). It is assigned the responsibility to oversee public information needs during large-scale incidents.

Under the Emergency Support Function (ESF) operating structure, ESF 14 (Public Information) coordinates public information operations with the county’s municipalities and other agencies involved in a disaster, as well as with state and federal agency public information programs.

The incident’s lead agency will determine the need to implement a JIC based on the complexity of the incident and the need to ensure coordination and integration of messages from multiple agencies. During widespread and prolonged disasters, multiple Joint Information Centers (JICs) may be formed as part of the JIS.

## **Anatomy of Incident Management**

### **The National Incident Management System (NIMS)**

The National Incident Management System (NIMS) provides that local jurisdictions be capable of establishing public information systems to support onsite operations, using Joint Information System (JIS), and how the local JIC relates to the Joint Information System (JIS).

The JIS/JIC is responsible for gathering, verifying, coordinating, and disseminating information to the public and incident management personnel.

### **The Incident Command System (ICS)**

Within the Incident Command System (ICS) the PIO is a Command Staff position who has responsibility for all interaction between Command and the media and who coordinates the release of information on the incident situation and response efforts from Command to the media. A Public Information Officer may designate one or more assistants from either the same or another assisting agency or jurisdiction.

In expanding incidents, the PIO may establish a Joint Information Center (JIC) to manage the information needs for the incident. When local and state Emergency Operations Centers (EOC) are activated public information is coordinated within Emergency Support Function 14 as the larger Joint Information System (JIS).

### **The Florida Emergency Response Authority and Structure**

The specific authority for these guidelines and their general procedures are provided by:

Chapter 252, Florida Statutes, State Emergency Management Act

Chapter 23, Part I, Florida Statutes, Florida Mutual Aid Act  
Chapter 943, Florida Statutes, Domestic Security/Terrorist Event  
Chapter 381, Florida Statutes, Public Health: General Provision  
Chapter 570, Florida Statutes, Agriculture, Horticulture, and Animal Industry  
Chapter 870, Florida Statutes, Affrays; Riots; Routs, Unlawful Assemblies  
The State of Florida Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP)  
Executive Order 80-29, Disaster Preparedness

Florida's all-hazards emergency response structure is built on a strong foundation of interdisciplinary and interagency regional collaboration and a very robust local, regional and statewide mutual aid response capability. Three primary statutory provisions establish the governance framework and operational response plans and structure for Florida:

**F.S. 252**, The State Emergency Management Act which mandates the development of the Florida Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP);

**F.S. 23**, The Florida Mutual Aid Act which mandates the development the Florida Mutual Aid Plan for Law Enforcement; and

**F.S. 943**, The Florida Department of Law Enforcement Act, amended post 9/11, mandating the creation of the Regional Domestic Security Task Forces.

Together they provide firm overarching guidance consistent with the National Response Framework to plan for and respond to any type of natural or manmade incident regardless of its size or magnitude.

### **Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan Summary and ESF Structure**

Chapter 252, F.S., outlines the statutory authority that gives the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) and other state agencies their authority to respond in support of local government. The Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) is the planning document under which all of the state agencies organize their support for preparation, response, recovery, and mitigation of all emergencies and disasters that may affect Florida.

The CEMP also outlines the response and recovery activities with volunteer organizations active in disasters, and the business community, to reduce the effects of an emergency and/or disaster. Each county has its own emergency management office partially funded by the state, and each county has its version of the CEMP, which complements the state plan.

The CEMP is based on the premise that the local government may face a disaster beyond its capability. Therefore, the state of emergency is the device that local government uses to indicate they are facing a situation that may warrant assistance. The state of emergency is good for 7 days and allows local government to request state or federal resources. Federal assistance is requested and coordinated through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The CEMP is divided into three sections: the Basic Plan, Emergency Support Function (ESF) appendices, and Hazard Specific Annexes.

### **Incident/Disaster Classification**

Chapter 252.35(a), F.S., requires the CEMP to address minor, major and catastrophic disasters. These levels are defined as:

1. Minor Incident/Disaster: Any disaster that is likely to be within the response capabilities of local government and results in only minimal need for additional assistance. *(NIMS Incident Classification Type 5 or Type 4)*

*Minor disasters typically can be managed by the local impacted jurisdiction with the assistance of county-to-county or in-region Mutual Aid as provided by both the Florida Law Enforcement Mutual Aid Plan and the Florida Fire Chiefs Association (FFCA) Statewide Emergency Response Plan (SERP). The State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) will be notified and will monitor the event but will not likely activate. Level 3 is the normal day-to-day monitoring where County Warning Points (CWPs) notify the State Warning Point (SWP) of various incidents or events.*

2. Major Disaster: Any disaster that will likely exceed local capabilities and may require a broad range of state and federal assistance. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will be notified and potential federal assistance will be predominantly recovery-oriented. *(NIMS Incident Classification Type 3 or Type 2)*

*Major disasters may exceed the ability of local government to handle with local mutual aid agreements and will generally require at least some state resource support, including law enforcement, communications support, and the movement of both in-region and out-of-region assets to respond to the disaster. The SEOC may move to a Level 2, partial activation, and may have planning, resource support, and some of the affected ESFs to support the response. Level 2 may be activated when one or more of the ESFs are involved in supporting local government for an extended period of time.*

3. Catastrophic Disaster: Any disaster that will require massive state and federal assistance, including immediate military involvement. Federal assistance will involve response as well as recovery needs. *(NIMS Incident Classification Type 1)*

*A catastrophic disaster will initiate a Level 1 activation of the SEOC, which includes all 18 ESFs response to the SEOC, and all elements of the CEMP in support of local government. Level 1 is full activation and may include federal response to a disaster event affecting the state.*

### **Governor's Executive Order**

*The Governor will issue an Executive Order declaring that a State of Emergency exists, thereby activating the CEMP. The Executive Order authorizes and releases state resources to respond in support of local government and may include authorization to activate the National Guard, lifting tolls on the roadways, and suspending purchasing procedures to streamline support to local government. Once the Governor executes an Executive Order, consideration will be given to requesting a Federal Disaster Declaration.*

In summary, the CEMP establishes the framework for how local, state and federal counterparts work together to handle disasters and defines the process for requesting resources, where the resources are to come from, and how the resources will be paid for in response to declared incidents. Note: no reimbursement system is established for non-declared incidents.

### **State Command Structure**

The Governor, by state constitution and state statute, assumes direct operational control over all or any part of the emergency management functions during a state of emergency declared through an Executive Order and has the ultimate responsibility for major disasters affecting the State of Florida:

- The Governor, through an Executive Order designates a State Coordinating Officer, usually the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) Director.
- State Command may include the designated responsibilities for crisis management through the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (F.S. 943) and consequence management through the Division of Emergency Management (F.S. 252).
- The Governor may designate the State Health Officer to coordinate biological or radiological response efforts (F.S. 381), or the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services authorized representative to coordinate food safety and contamination issues (F.S. 570).
- The SEOC will be activated at the appropriate level in support of State Command. All necessary ESFs will be activated according to protocol.
- The Joint Operations Center (JOC), if established, has the responsibility of coordinating the federal response for the event. The size and location(s) of the incident will determine the location of the JOC.

### **Emergency Support Functions (ESFs)**

To facilitate effective operations, the CEMP adopts a functional approach that groups the types of assistance into 18 ESFs, each headed by a lead agency or organization which has been selected based on its authority, resources and capabilities in that functional area. The primary agency appoints an Emergency Coordination Officer (ECO) to manage that function in the SEOC.

Collectively the 18 ESFs comprise the State Emergency Response Team (SERT). Each of the ESFs are described in appendices to the Basic Plan and contain a method of operation and the responsibilities of the primary and support agencies that will respond in support of local governments. Each ESF is led by a state agency, but is supported by a large number of support agencies. These support agencies may be

other state agencies, volunteer agencies, non-profits, or associations which are prepared to assist with personnel or equipment.

**The chart below depicts each ESF and the designated lead agency/organization:**

<b>ESF</b>	<b>Function</b>	<b>Lead Agency</b>
1	Transportation	Department of Transportation
2	Communications	Department of Management Services Division of Communications
3	Public Works and Engineering	Department of Transportation
4	Fire Fighting	Department of Financial Services State Fire Marshal
5	Information and Planning	Division of Emergency Management
6	Mass Care	Department of Business and Professional Regulation
7	Resource Support	Department of Management Services Division of Purchasing
8	Public Health and Medical	Department of Health Division of Emergency Medical Operations
9	Search and Rescue	Department of Financial Services State Fire Marshal
10	Hazardous Materials/Environmental Protection	Department of Environmental Protection
11	Food / Water	Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
12	Fuel /Energy	Department of Environmental Protection Public Service Commission
13	Military Support	Florida National Guard
<b>14</b>	<b>Public Information</b>	<b>Division of Emergency Management</b>
15	Volunteers and Donations	Volunteer Florida
16	Law Enforcement and Security	Florida Department of Law Enforcement
17	Animal Issues	Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
18	Business Industry And Economic Stabilization	Office of Tourism and Economic Development

Chapter 252.38, Florida Statutes, delineates the emergency management responsibilities of political subdivisions in safeguarding the life and property of citizens and other persons within the political subdivision. Counties shall perform emergency management functions within their territorial limits and conduct those activities pursuant to Chapter 252.31-252.91, and in accordance with state and county emergency management plans and mutual aid agreements. Florida counties have the authority to establish, as necessary, a primary and one or more secondary emergency operating centers (EOC) to provide continuity of government, and direction and control of emergency operations. Florida's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan

(CEMP) outlines the importance of local governments, local and state emergency operations centers (EOCs), seven Regional Domestic Security Task Forces (RDSTF), and federal agencies in accomplishing all phases of emergency management within the state. The CEMP addresses the need for state and local Emergency Support Function #14 (Public Information) including the operation of a Joint Information System and Joint Information Center, as needed in an incident.

## **Local Events or Incidents**

### **Establishing a JIC**

It is recognized that public information needs vary by incident. However, a JIC may be established in the following cases:

- When the IC of a large-scale incident determines the public information needs will exceed available resources.
- The incident will be long-term, and will generate intense local, state, national and possibly international news media.
- The incident or event involves multiple jurisdictions and/or disciplines.
- When the (city/county) Emergency Operations Center is activated.

There are many examples of events nationwide in the past few years where there was clear need for a Joint Information Center – Elizabeth Smart kidnapping, D.C. Sniper, Columbine High School shootings, Oklahoma City bombing, 2004 Gulf Coast hurricanes, commercial airline crashes and 9/11.

A JIC is commonly in one location, with 15-30 people working out of a single facility. An incident might be long-term and attract national news media attention, thus depleting the resources of the affected agency. A JIC can be tailored to fit the needs of the incident.

The JIC is responsible for interfacing with the public and news media and/or with other agencies with incident-related information requirements. The JIC develops accurate and complete information on the incident's cause, size, and current situation; resources committed; and other matters of general interest for internal and external audiences.

The JIC is organized to manage and facilitate the flow of information to the news media and the public. The JIC satisfies the immediate local, regional, national and sometimes international demand for information.

The JIC meets the needs of the public and the news media by pooling PIO assets. Effective coordination of these assets provides the public and news media with fast, accurate information. PIOs at the JIC continue to represent their respective agencies, while at the same time receiving the benefits of a coordinated public information approach. During a JIC operation, agency spokespersons are autonomous; no agency has authority over another. However, JIC members work together and support one another.

A JIC is most successful when the agency PIOs working within it are capable of effective cooperation and communication. PIOs working in a JIC must have the professional skills and abilities to share their agency's public information objectives, their knowledge, and their work products.

Benefits of a JIC include:

- Fact-checking and coordinating information among agencies before issuing news releases
- Holding joint news conferences
- Providing "one stop shopping" for the news media with all information coming from a single place

JIC responsibilities:

- Develop, recommend and execute public information plans and strategies on behalf of the Incident Commander(s)
- Continuously inform elected officials, agency directors, etc. of the incident status
- Gain and maintain public trust and confidence
- Be the primary source of information
- Gather information about the crisis
- Ensure the timely and coordinated release of accurate information to the public by providing a single location from which information is released
- Coordinate with regional, state, national public information agencies
- Monitor public perception of the crisis
- Monitor news programming to ensure accurate release of information
- Inform the Incident Commander(s) of public reaction, attitude and needs
- Advise the Incident Commander about public affairs issues that could impact the response
- Monitor and control rumors/inaccurate information
- Plan and implement communications plan for recovery

For all incidents, the responsibility for meeting the public information needs falls upon the lead agency and/or jurisdiction. The PIO from that agency becomes the Lead PIO. However, the lead agency may delegate the responsibility for public information to another agency, assuming they've obtained concurrence from the agency to which they want to delegate the responsibility for public information. For example, an agency without a full-time or professional PIO may ask to delegate the work of public information to the county government PIO and that PIO's public information staff.

The Lead PIO, in conjunction with the Incident Commander (IC), should assess public information needs on an-ongoing basis and determine if staffing and resources are sufficient to meet the demands. If the Lead PIO and/or IC determine that the public information needs will exceed the lead agency's resources, it can request additional PIO support from agencies involved in the incident, local PIO networks, the Regional

Domestic Security Task Force (RDSTF), PIO Cooperative or Public Information Networks (PIN) or the local EOC.

In all cases, when requesting additional PIO resources, the lead agency must ensure that PIO resources are managed effectively and have a clear understanding of the public information needs.

### **PIO Position Typing**

To assist with determining the type of public information officers needed to assist, the following “typing” of PIOs is based upon guidelines established by the State of Florida Working Group, as follows:

#### Type I:

The Type I PIO will be qualified to serve as Lead PIO.

#### Type II:

Type II PIOs can serve in any capacity deemed necessary by the Lead PIO, however, should not serve as Lead PIO. Also, when and where practical, the Type II PIO should not be deployed alone, on an event.

#### Type III:

A Type III PIO may or may not meet the above requirements and is not eligible for deployment, however, may provide support services to a JIC during a local event.

PIO Type	Training	Experience	Can Serve
Type I	Basic & Adv. PIO or equivalent	Five years + One Deployment	Lead PIO, Team Leader
Type II	Basic PIO	Two Years	Team Member
Type III	N/A	N/A	Local JIC Only

### **Location of the JIC**

The Joint Information Center (JIC) is the designated location from which public information is coordinated and released. The decision of where to locate a JIC will be made by the Lead PIO in consultation with Incident Command and the Logistics Section (if established).

The JIC functions best when all components are co-located. The location of the JIC can be predetermined, if possible, and the site should be evaluated to ensure:

- It is large enough to accommodate sufficient staff
- It has telecommunications support
- It has computer and other Information Technology support
- It has ample parking
- If possible, has a PIO work area separate from a news conference news media area

It is important that proximity to Incident Command should be considered when determining the appropriate JIC facility. This is important for the Lead PIO and other spokespersons that will need to address the news media in news conferences. Unfortunately with the unpredictability of disasters, a pre-determined JIC site is not always feasible and IC and PIOs needs to be flexible when activating and trying to staff a JIC for an incident.

A JIC can be tailored to meet the needs of the incident. An event might be long-term and attract national news media attention, thus swamping the resources of the affected agency. However, a smaller version of the JIC could be implemented depending on the situation and need.

### **Establishing a Virtual JIC**

A widespread event, such as a hurricane or influenza pandemic, might require that PIOs they stay in their respective areas due to intense damage to local infrastructure or fear of exposure to the disease. In these conditions, PIOs coordinate their activity by means of radios, phones, e-mail and the Internet as a *Virtual JIC*. A Virtual JIC links all participants through technological means when geographical restrictions, incident management requirements, and other limitations preclude physical attendance by PIOs at one central location.

### **Announcing the JIC**

It is very important that the location of the JIC be announced as quickly as possible for the benefit of the response organizations and the media. The formal establishment of a JIC is a critical step toward consolidating media activities for the benefit of the total response.

## **Escalating Incidents (No Disaster Declaration)**

### **Mutual Aid Resources - Florida Mutual Aid**

The Florida Mutual Aid Act established pursuant to Chapter 23, F. S., authorizes "mutual aid agreements," between two or more law enforcement agencies, permits voluntary cooperation and assistance, as well as operational assistance of a routine or emergency law enforcement nature across jurisdictional lines. The agreement must specify the nature of the law enforcement assistance to be rendered, the agency or entity that shall bear any liability arising from acts undertaken under the agreement, the procedures for requesting and for authorizing assistance, the agency or entity that has command and supervisory responsibility, a time limit for the agreement, the amount of any compensation or reimbursement to the assisting agency or entity, and any other terms and conditions necessary to give it effect. (Note: Assistance provided via mutual aid is generally not reimbursable).

### **Regional (RDSTF) Assets**

The Regional Domestic Security Task Force (RDSTF) is an important component of Florida's domestic security structure. With Regional Operation Centers in Pensacola,

Tallahassee, Jacksonville, Orlando, Tampa, Fort Myers, and Miami, the RDSTFs provide coordination of effort among emergency responder agencies in the preparation for, prevention of, response to, mitigation of, and recovery from a terror attack.

The overall mission of the RDSTF is to protect the people of Florida from a terrorist attack, and, if attacked, to provide response assistance in the most efficient manner. Based on the guidance in 943.0312, F.S., the RDSTF operates under two conditions: prevention of a terrorist attack and coordination of the initial emergency services response to a terrorist attack.

Florida's strategically-located special operations teams and other response assets can be deployed during all-hazards incidents. Enhanced RDSTF Response Teams and assets include but are not limited to:

*Fire-based:*

Hazardous Materials Teams, Urban Area Search and Rescue Teams, Technical Rescue Teams, Decontamination Teams, Incident Management Teams, Florida DEP Emergency Response Team, enhanced CBRNE detection equipment caches and Mutual Aid Radio Caches (MARC)

*Law Enforcement-based:*

SWAT teams, Hazardous Devices Teams (HDT), Forensics Response Teams (FRT), Waterborne Response Teams (WRT) and Law Enforcement Security Teams

*Health/Medical-based:*

Mass-casualty Teams, State Medical Response Teams, Epidemiological Response Teams, Environmental Health Strike Teams, Special Needs Management Teams and Alternate Medical Treatment Site Teams

*Florida National Guard:*

44th Civil Support Team and other FLNG units

*Public Information-based:*

PIO Deployment Database and Mobile Joint Information Centers

*Interoperable Communications:*

Emergency Deployable Interoperable Communications Systems (EDICS), Emergency Deployable, Wide-Area Remote Data Systems (EDWARDS) and Florida Interoperable Network (FIN)

## **Escalating Incidents (Disaster Declaration)**

### **Declared Incidents**

Incidents often result in the declaration of an emergency by the executive branch of local, state or federal government. In such cases, federal support is increased using resources and federal financial assistance to impacted communities. The local response remains essentially the same but with the expectation of enhanced state and federal assistance throughout the period of the disaster declaration.

## **Multiple JIC Locations**

Commonly, incidents that result in disaster declarations cover multiple jurisdictions, including multiple counties. In such cases, management control using ICS is possible using more complex ICS structures. Accordingly, the public information components of those structures must be able to coordinate public information. This is sometimes accomplished using multiple JICs operating within an Area Command or Incident Complex. Regardless of the ICS structures that are in place, the ability to maintain accurate and timely public messages is paramount.

## **Accessing State Resources**

### **State PIO Deployment Team/PIO Deployment Database**

The Florida Fires Chief's Association maintains a database of PIOs, by type, who can respond throughout the state to support local departments. The following are procedures detailing team activation and responsibilities. A local department requesting PIO resources through the local EOC typically initiates the process.

### **Statewide PIO Deployment Team Activation**

- A request will be made from an EOC or DEM official for a Public Information Officer (PIO). The request will be taken at the State EOC, logged into *Constellation* for tracking and forwarded to ESF 14, and ESF 4 & 9 for action.
- ESF 4 & 9 or ESF 14 will notify the PIO Deployment Team Coordinator with the request.
- The coordinator will obtain information on type of incident, incident location, anticipated deployment duration, name of reporting supervisor, number of PIOs needed and state tasking number.
- If the request is for more than one PIO, a team leader must be deployed. In most instances PIOs are deployed in teams of two.
- Deployment Team members, in affected regions, are generally contacted for availability first due to response time.
- Team members are notified of the deployment request via the *MIR3* system. This system is an alerting program that can send a simultaneous request to multiple team members in a selected region or statewide. Members receive an email, phone call, alpha page or text message with the request details. Members can then either accept or decline the deployment per call instructions. The team coordinator receives a list of available PIOs and can make deployment assignments based on the available resources.
- Unless otherwise noted, the standard time frame for deployment is two (2) hours from the mission assignment received from the State EOC/Deployment Team Coordinator. Under certain circumstances a more rapid deployment may be deemed necessary by the State EOC and authorized as "Rapid Activation". Time frame for this activation is one (1) hour.
- Once a team member has accepted the assignment, the Deployment Coordinator will notify the state official who made the request, ESF 14 and the regional coordinator of the team member's home jurisdiction.

### **Arriving at Deployment Destination**

When Deployment Team members arrive at an assignment, the Lead PIO can expect the following.

- Team members may be deployed to one of the following areas: Field Incident Command Post or Staging Area, County Emergency Operations Center or State Emergency Operation Center.
- On arrival team members will register at the operations table or check in table.
- Once registered team members will report to one of the following: Local PIO handling incident, Incident Commander (IC), County Emergency Manager (CEM) or State Supervisor for ESF 14.

### **Field Procedures**

- Deployment Team members can act as assisting PIOs to the Lead PIO. If there is no lead PIO then the deployed PIO or team leader will assume the roll of lead PIO duties.
- Should the local PIOs need relief (exhaustion, check on family, etc) the Deployment Team can assume all PIO responsibilities until the local team returns.
- The team leader will evaluate the emergency incident and coordinate work assignments with others including works schedules and rest periods. Should the need for additional PIOs arise, the IC or CEM will need to approve additional PIOs, and a new tasking number may be issued.

### **Daily Assignments**

- Team members will maintain a record of hours worked, daily activities and assignments. This information will be tracked on ICS Form 214 and submitted daily to the Lead PIO, Team Leader, IC, CEM or Plans Officer.
- All releases will be faxed or emailed to ESF 14 desk at the State EOC.
- The Deployment Team leader will make contact with the ESF 14 desk daily by phone or email and submit their daily activity. They will make contact with the State Deployment Team Coordinator every other day for briefings.
- Team members shall check in and out each day through the incident Operations Section for accountability.

### **Deployment Conclusion/Completion**

- Once the mission is complete and team members have been released by the IC or CEM the team leader will contact the ESF 14 desk at the State EOC and the State Deployment Team Coordinator.
- If the current mission ending date has arrived and the IC or CEM still needs assistance, a new tasking number or extension must be requested through the State EOC. The EOC may assign a new tasking number or extend the current tasking date.

### **Requesting Logistical Resources**

Through the RDSTF, each region is issued logistical equipment for the purpose of supporting JIC operations. The regions maintain a number of TacPaks and a Mobile Joint information Center.

### **Mobile JICs (Mobile Joint Information Center)**

Through funding to the Regional Domestic Security Task Forces, all seven regions of the state now have a functioning Mobile Joint Information Center (MJIC). The MJIC is designed to be a resource of public information officers deployed in the field or to an area with no established workspace. Although each of the seven MJIC are configured differently, they provide the same basic capabilities, including air conditioned work space, multiple TVs, and other support equipment ( printers, fax machines, and other equipment).

The request to deploy a Mobile JIC may be made in multiple ways, depending on the reason for the request and the length of deployment:

- A. If the MJIC is needed for a training drill, display, or short-term emergency event, it may be requested through the local agency responsible for the unit. This would be for a one-two day event.
- B. If the MJIC is needed for a long-term emergency event, meaning a deployment of up to a week or longer, the request should be made through the county emergency manager to the State EOC, in order for the request to be logged in EM Constellation; the SEOC's tracking software. After the request is received at the SEOC, it will be filled by the closest MJIC available and the requesting person will be notified.

When any type of request is made, it is vital to include the following information:

- Person requesting the MJIC and contact information.
- Specific information about the event (training drill, tornado, etc.).
- Requested time of unit arrival.
- Location where the unit is needed, including GPS coordinates, if possible.
- Duration of event, if known.

The requesting agency is responsible for clean, fueling and submitting any paperwork necessary for potential cost reimbursement. If repairs are needed during the deployment, contact the agency responsible for maintaining the MJIC.

### **Announcing the Mobile JIC**

As with the opening of a JIC, the Lead PIO should announce the placement of the mobile JIC, its location and activities that will be taking place at the Mobile JIC.

As each Mobile JIC is slightly different the local PIO is best served to become familiar with its capabilities and requirements prior to the need.

**TAC PAK (Tactical Communications Package)**

The RDSTF has secured several TacPaks for each region. Like the Mobile JICs, TacPaks are issued to individual agencies for safekeeping and maintenance.

The TacPak serves as an office in a box. It contains all the essential items a PIO needs to set up a temporary field operation in a remote or satellite location.

TacPaks are available, upon request, through the agency they are assigned. A Tasking Number ***is not*** necessary to request a TacPak.

## **The Catastrophic Incident Plan (Cat Plan)**

The Division of Emergency Management (DEM) in cooperation with FEMA, are engaged in a planning project in the event a catastrophic incident should occur in the State of Florida.

A catastrophic incident is defined as an event which affects a large majority of the population and geographic areas and one in which infrastructure is so badly impacted that in-state resources are incapable of managing the incident.

During a catastrophic event, customary forms of communications, transportation, and, operations may be severely hampered or non-existent.

An essential component of the Cat Plan is public information. The Cat Plan project is on-going at the time of this writing. Once completed, the PIO portion of the Cat Plan, in its entirety, will be attached to this document as an addendum.

## **De-Escalating the Incident**

As the incident stabilizes and the operational needs begin to diminish, the need for other resources can be reduced. This is a critical step to allow the host jurisdiction to release resources in an orderly fashion and *at the appropriate time*.

Consistent with the principles of the Incident Command System, the orderly demobilization process is as important as acquiring response for the incident. The Lead PIO or JIC Manager should work with the Planning Section (Demobilization Unit Leader, if established) to develop a demobilization plan for personnel and equipment assigned to the JIC.

## **Preparing to Demobilize**

The Incident Commander, working with the Operations Section Chief, will determine when resources supporting the incident can be reduced. These decisions will require the Lead PIO to make staff reduction plans for PIOs and staff supporting the JIC(s) that should be incorporated into the overall incident demobilization plan.

As with any other resource, the personnel assigned to the JIC should complete all remaining assignments and be thoroughly debriefed prior to being released. Depending on the nature of the incident, critical incident stress debriefing or other medical evaluations may be warranted. If offered, PIOs should be included.

## **Demobilization Plan**

A demobilization plan provides for the safe, orderly and effective release of personnel and equipment. The Planning Section Chief or the Demobilization Unit Leader typically performs this function. The Lead PIO should provide release priorities and any special instructions to the entity responsible for developing the demobilization plan. Of course, if personnel have to travel any significant distance, they should be released after a satisfactory rest period.

## **JIC Staffing and Position Responsibilities**

### **Appendix 1: Suggested JIC Positions**

Each JIC should, at a minimum, consist primarily of PIOs and support personnel from the primary agencies responding to an incident. Administrative and Information Technology personnel play key roles within a JIC allowing PIOs to focus on the primary duties associated with developing and delivering media messages.

Each JIC will have a Lead PIO and a JIC Manager, who supports the Lead PIO. Depending on the nature of the incident, one PIO can fill more than one role.

The following positions are recommended:

#### **Lead PIO**

##### **Responsibilities:**

- Determines need and coordinates establishment of the JIC.
- Ensures the JIC staff is assigned to appropriate sections.
- Establishes public information goals and objectives ensuring that accurate and timely information is provided to the news media, citizens, government officials, elected officials and other interested parties.
- Ensures the informational goals and objectives are met.
- Ensures continuous dialogue with the Incident Commander.
- Establishes a schedule for news conferences and briefings.
- Makes recommendations to the Incident Commander based on information received and generated by the JIC.
- Resolves disputes regarding public affairs issues between agencies and responsible parties.
- Deactivates the JIC.

The Lead PIO supports the information needs of the response and the Incident Commander; establishes, maintains and deactivates the JIC; and represents and advises the Incident Commander on all public information matters relating to the incident.

#### **Working with the Incident Commander**

The Lead PIO will stay in contact with the IC as much as possible. The Lead PIO needs to make recommendations to the IC concerning rumors and what information the public needs about the evolving incident. The Lead PIO also will prepare the IC before news conferences and interviews, making sure the Incident Commander knows what the speaking points are and what questions might be expected.

The Lead PIO is the face on the incident. In the absence of the on-scene commander and other key figures, the Lead PIO is the person with whom the public most likely will become familiar as the incident progresses. Even if the Lead PIO does not have a large

speaking role in front of the cameras, he/she still will be seen managing the news conferences, facilitating interviews and generally being a source of information.

The Lead PIO should be from the incident's lead agency. If it is not clear which agency is in charge, it is up to responding PIOs to determine who will serve as Lead PIO, even if only to fill the role temporarily until the situation clarifies.

### **Establish JIC goals**

As the JIC forms and the incident unfolds, the Lead PIO needs to talk with the Incident Commander about what the information goals and objectives of the JIC should be. These goals and objectives ensure that the public receives the key information to ensure their safety and peace of mind. When the JIC is ready to "go live," the Lead PIO needs to ensure that everyone in the JIC understands the goals and has no conflict with them.

### **Schedule News Conferences, Stay Abreast of Incident**

Based on information from the JIC staff and the Incident Commander, the Lead PIO needs to establish a schedule for news conferences and briefings. The Lead PIO needs to consider carefully the news media's deadlines and the availability of the incident's key personnel. The Lead PIO will coordinate news conference content such as who will speak and what the main talking points will be.

The Lead PIO needs to have a constant handle on the pulse of the JIC. As each new development occurs, the Lead PIO needs to know about it as soon as possible, before the information is released to the public. He/she needs to have up-to-date casualty figures, status of individual rescue operations, basic knowledge about road closures, the discovery of new threats and anything else that will help fill in a complete picture of the operation. The Lead PIO also needs to know about rumors circulating and any incorrect information distributed by the news media. The Lead PIO will obtain this information from a number of different sources, and so he needs to have good organizational skills to keep everything straight.

### **Issue News Releases**

The Lead PIO will be responsible for writing regular news releases about the evolving incident. He/she may have assistants compose the releases, but he/she has the responsibility to dictate content, review them before their release and obtain appropriate clearance from the Incident Command. (*See Appendix 1 – JIC Toolkit - for information about news release procedures.*)

### **Resolve Disputes**

The JIC's goal is to present a unified message to the public and the media. The Lead PIO needs to be aware of any conflicts among agencies and use all resources available to resolve these disputes. The public's safety and rumor control is much more important than jurisdictional wrangling, and this needs to be stressed to everyone involved. It can be confusing or even dangerous if agencies produce conflicting information.

## **Deactivating the JIC**

As the incident winds down, the Lead PIO can scale back JIC operations in coordination with the incident commander. The Lead PIO needs to determine when a JIC no longer is needed and send out final news release announcing the closure.

## **Assistant Lead PIO(s)**

### **Responsibilities:**

- Writes JIC news releases.
- Writes news conference talking points.
- Prepares spokespersons and/or subject matter experts to deliver their interviews.
- Fills in for Lead PIO.
- Stays abreast of everything that is happening.
- Take incoming media calls/inquiries and triage.
- Oversee and ensure coordination among work room of PIOs from different agencies (see separate job description on Manager of PIO Work Room)

Assistant Lead PIO(s) might not be needed for every incident. They primarily are used when the incident is long-term and the Lead PIO's workload is too heavy for one person. Assistant Lead PIO(s) assume the roles assigned to them by the Lead PIO. These roles may include the responsibilities listed above or other responsibilities as the incident dictates.

An Assistant Lead PIO might step in to fill in temporarily for the Lead PIO when he/she is away, making decisions and keeping the information flowing in his/her absence. While the Lead PIO is tasked with staying in contact with the Incident Commander, the Lead PIO Assistant(s) can maintain communication with other important members of Incident Command.

### **News Media Monitoring and Corrections**

This person needs to keep track of what the news media is reporting. Ideally, the monitor will have multiple televisions and radios each tuned to different stations. However, the monitor will have to make do with what is available. The monitor needs to track misinformation, and whether the JIC's communication goals are getting out through the news media. All rumors, concerns raised by news stories, and misinformation should be reported immediately to the appropriate agency PIO, PIO Working Room Manager or Lead PIO.

### **Web Content & Posting**

A webmaster or PIO with skills in web-based communications is responsible for posting information about the incident to the appropriate agency website. Posted information may include news releases, informational bullets and summaries of the JIC's main messages as communicated through news conferences, briefings and interviews. The PIO or staff person filling this role needs to be proficient in web site maintenance and troubleshooting, and be able to post pictures, sound files and text.

### **Researcher (background/fact sheets/news media kits)**

The researcher will assemble information pertinent to the incident and be ready to disseminate it as needed. For instance, if a plane crashed at Daytona International

Airport, the researcher would need to gather general background information about the type of plane that crashed, basic facts about the airport, biographical information about key people, etc. The researcher is also tasked with creating news media kits and fact sheets to be handed out to reporters at news briefings.

## **JIC Facility Manager**

### Responsibilities:

- Assists in opening the JIC facility.
- Ensuring that JIC equipment (e.g. phone lines, copier, printer) is operational.
- Establishes work schedule for personnel.
- Ensures that JIC staff complete the necessary ICS paperwork.
- May request and secure appropriately Typed PIOs to work in the JIC.
- Handles sign-in and sign-out for PIOs checking into and out of the JIC.

The JIC Facility Manager is a behind-the-scenes facilitator who primarily focuses on the operation of the facility and equipment which keep the JIC operating.

The JIC Facility Manager establishes JIC working hours and an operating schedule ensures documentation of the JIC operations and advises the Lead PIO on JIC capabilities.

Examples of issues and questions the JIC Facility Manager can address are: working phone lines for phones and faxes; how to acquire office supplies; feeding everyone in the JIC during a long-term incident; acquiring TVs and radios for media monitoring; acquiring news conference equipment such as a podium, microphone and backdrop; keeping track of who is working in the JIC and who might need relief; obtaining maps and graphics of the affected area.

### **Scheduling**

The JIC Coordinator creates a work schedule based on the needs of the incident. The JIC Coordinator needs to work with everyone from the Lead PIO to the Field PIOs to make sure personnel are afforded breaks and down time. Some JIC personnel might need to take care of personal matters directly related to the incident, such as making sure family members are safe during a hurricane.

### **Additional Support**

The JIC Facility Manager may need to establish and supervise Assistants to handle logistical tasks such as news conference room set-up, restocking supplies or picking up food.

## **Manager of PIO Work Room (also an Assistant Lead PIO)**

### Responsibilities:

- May establish assistants to help manage their workload within the PIO Work Room.
- Provides direction on issues of concern that emerge among the agency PIOs but that can be handled at that level.
- Determines which issues need to be brought to the attention of the Lead PIO;
- Ensures that PIOs in the Work Room are coordinating their information releases.
- Notifies PIOs of overarching JIC releases or news conferences of which they need to be aware.
- Tracks the issuance of news releases.
- Briefs Lead PIO regularly.
- Supervises Field PIOs.
- Establishes and maintains a status board that enables all PIOs working in the room to have a comprehensive picture of incident response (may delegate this responsibility to an assistant if the incident warrants).
- Coordinates with rumor control and citizen hotline representatives.
- Coordinates with the JIC Facility Manager.

The PIO Working Room Manager is tasked with making sure the information flows properly throughout the JIC.

He/she needs to make fact checking and coordination among agency PIOs easy. One of the main goals of the JIC is to give agency PIOs the ability to cross reference information with other PIOs to resolve conflicting information before it is released to the public. The Manager of the PIO Work Room needs to facilitate this flow and be on the lookout for conflicting information that isn't verified.

### **Track News Releases and Queries**

The Manager will maintain a system for the timely release and accurate, organized tracking of news releases issued by the Lead PIO office and the agency PIOs. The Manager also needs to be aware of active news media queries and help ensure no news media queries are neglected.

### **Work with Lead PIO**

The Lead PIO will need constant updates about what is happening with the individual agencies. The Manager of the PIO Work Room needs to organize the information produced by agency PIOs for quick presentation to the Lead PIO. The Manager also needs to track down answers to questions posed by the Lead PIO.

### **Liaison to Citizen Call Center**

The Manager of the PIO Work Room is a liaison with the Citizen Call Center (or whichever title the jurisdiction gives to their method for taking calls from citizens who

need information about the incident). When the Citizen Call Center gets rumors, questions or unverified information, they ask the Manager of the PIO Work Room to use their network of agency PIOs (typically those within the Work Room) to get the correct information. The Manager of the PIO Work Room also ensures that the Citizen Call Center has copies of news releases and other pertinent information issued by the JIC.

### **Supervise Field PIOs**

The Manager of the PIO Work Room also keeps track of Field PIOs to make sure they have everything they need and take status reports that are needed by the Lead PIO. Agency PIOs can help the Manager with this, especially if the Field PIOs belong to their agency, but ultimate responsibility for a link to the Field PIOs rests with the Manager of the PIO Work Room.

### **Status Board**

This is an important aspect of the JIC. All information should be posted in a central location that is visible and accessible to all JIC personnel. Everyone in the JIC can refer to this board to see what the latest information is without having to track down other agency PIOs. One of the guiding principles of the JIC is to provide fact checking and information coordination among agencies before releasing information. The status board is the focal point of this effort. The latest casualty numbers, listing of relief agencies, road closings, etc. should all be displayed.

The person in charge of the status board needs to be organized and have clear, legible handwriting. This person should create the best way to organize the variety of information without making it too complicated. A person viewing the status board shouldn't have to spend several minutes reading huge lists to find the information needed. Color-coding the board items or having multiple boards with related items is preferred.

This person also needs to watch for conflicting information and be aggressive about resolving differences. The cardinal rule is to post only verified information.

### **Issuing News Releases (News Release Manager)**

Depending on the number of releases being issued by agency PIOs and the JIC, the Manager of the PIO Work Room may assign a staff person, or PIO, the responsibility of distributing and logging all news releases issued through the JIC. This staff position is called the News Release Manager. The News Release Manager will use the news release log (*template found on page 37*). All PIOs are to give the News Release Manager their releases for distribution. The News Release Manager will send out the releases in numerical order based on the news release log. The news releases will be sent out by the News Release Manager via fax and e-mail. The News Release Manager will provide electronic copies of the news releases to the webmaster for posting on the JIC website. Extra copies of the news releases will be made to give to any reporters working at the JIC. Finally, the releases are e-mailed to all JIC personnel (if possible) and three copies of the release are filed: on a clipboard or notebook to be used a reference in the PIO Work Room; on a clipboard or in a notebook for reference in the Lead PIO's office; in a three-ring notebook for archive purposes.

All news releases will be issued sequentially and will include time and date.

## **Field PIOs**

### Responsibilities:

- Gathers information from on-scene for the JIC.
- Coordinates on-scene interviews.
- Coordinates news media pools and additional access to scene for news media.
- Needs to know the incident response personnel.

Field PIOs typically are at the incident scene with their respective agencies, gathering information from their agencies' field personnel as the incident unfolds. Field PIOs are an integral part of JIC's information flow. They are able to witness first hand significant events and quickly report back to the JIC. They also are able to assist in tracking down information and check on rumors as requested by the JIC. However, the information still should be cleared through the agency's commander or the Incident Commander before release.

### **Have the Gear, Know the People**

The Field PIO can be helpful to the JIC only if there is reliable communication. If the Field PIO doesn't have a radio or working cell phone, the JIC and Field PIO need to make obtaining communication equipment a priority.

Optimally, Field PIOs need to be familiar with the incident response personnel and vice versa. The Field PIO also should know the rules and procedures commonly used by the responding agencies. It will be difficult for a Field PIO to establish trust and confidence with the incident response personnel if they don't know one another.

Field PIOs should be sent to the scene with proper gear. Not having identification, rain gear, a jacket, proper shoes or other important items could prevent the Field PIO from doing the job effectively.

### **Interviews and Escorts**

Field PIOs usually conduct on-scene interviews with reporters, arrange for incident response personnel to do interviews, and escort reporters through affected areas with approval from the appropriate commanders. Field PIOs might need to coordinate reporter pools once permission for incident scene access is granted.

### **“Out of Sight, Out of Mind”**

Field PIOs will be tracked by the PIO Working Room Manager and the Agency PIOs so as not to be forgotten.

## **JIC PIOs (PIOs who populate the PIO Work Room)**

### Responsibilities:

- o Coordinates information with other agency PIOs.
- o Follow procedures and guidelines of the JIC.
- o Works autonomously issuing information from their agency or about their agency's response.

Agency PIOs are in the JIC for one main purpose: to provide the public with fast, accurate information. To best serve that purpose, agency PIOs gather in one location to coordinate information and avoid conflicting, confusing messages. Having agency PIOs readily available provides the chance to fact check and consolidate important information before release to the public.

Agency PIOs answer to their individual agencies' leaders. They don't necessarily follow orders from other JIC personnel. However, the procedures and guidelines established by the JIC should be followed to ensure the JIC's effectiveness.

## **Setting up the JIC: Tasks**

### **Equipment and Assignments**

The JIC Facility Manager is responsible for the equipment and supplies and should test the phones, faxes and other resources. General office supplies are expected to be provided by individual Agency PIOs as they arrive with their own emergency call-out boxes.

As PIOs arrive in response to the call-out, the Lead PIO assigns responsibilities based on needs matched to experience and ability (*see page 5 for typing of PIOs*). It can be assumed that agencies already involved in the emergency will have their PIOs actively engaged. However, it's important to consider whether those agency PIOs will need assistance or relief. The need for Field PIOs should be weighed against the need for personnel in the central JIC. Some PIOs, especially those in hospitals, will be more effective working from their offices rather than at the JIC.

Administrative and logistical role assignments are invaluable to the smooth functioning of the JIC.

As people assume their roles, they should have sufficient time to get prepared before officially declaring to the public and the news media the JIC is operational. Burying the JIC under a mound of calls and requests before it's ready to handle them could doom the JIC to failure. Despite the fast-paced nature of emergency situations, it must be realized it will take time to form a JIC.

### **Briefing Personnel, Official Opening of the JIC**

Once the majority of the responding PIOs are present, the Lead PIO or their Assistant will conduct a JIC briefing. It's essential to ensure all personnel are knowledgeable of the situation and have a basic understanding of how the JIC has been set up.

The Lead PIO and JIC Facility Manager will decide when the JIC is staffed sufficiently to be opened. The first news release should announce the opening of the JIC and list all pertinent information, such as: phone and fax numbers, agency and personnel represented at the JIC location, etc.

## Appendix 2: JIC Toolkit

### News Release Procedures

#### Procedures:

- News releases come from the Lead PIO and agency PIOs.
- All news releases are sent through the Release Manager.
- All news releases are to be approved by the IC.

The Lead PIO and staff are responsible for news releases throughout the course of the incident. These releases should provide a comprehensive, “big-picture” view of the incident and meet the JIC goals established by the Lead PIO.

Agency PIOs can release their own specific information. They can send out their own news releases, or incorporate their information into a Lead PIO release.

Agency PIOs can do their own releases if their information is time sensitive and can't wait for a Lead PIO release to be compiled. A separate news release also can be done if the information is extensive or better served if it is a stand-alone release. For instance, the American Red Cross might choose to have a listing of blood donation locations included in a Lead PIO release, but may want to do a longer, stand-alone release about severe blood shortages.

Lead PIO releases should use the templates on page 38. Agency PIOs who issue separate releases are encouraged to use the template on page 39. This template provides for agency PIOs having their agency's title displayed prominently at the top of the release but maintains JIC uniformity to let the news media know the news release is coming from the JIC.

The Lead PIO office and agency PIOs should have them approved by their agencies. Once the news release is ready to be issued to the news media, the writer records the news release on the Release Log (*find template on page 37*) maintained by the Release Manager. This will assign a number to the news release. The news release then is given to the Release Manager, in hard copy and electronic form, who will take care of distribution.

Agency PIOs who wish to have items included on a Lead PIO release are encouraged to use the template on page 40.

### News Conferences

#### General Objectives and Aides:

- Adhere to the talking points.
- Avoid making conference political.
- Utilize the checklist on page 41.

When dealing with multiple agencies during an event, it's important to make sure all agencies have a voice in the news conferences without bogging it down with endless speakers and politics. News agencies attend/cover a news conference as long as pertinent information is offered.

It's essential to plan news conferences well in advance. The JIC should have established basic goals when first formed, and it's important to ensure the news conferences are focusing on those goals.

Basic talking points should be established and stressed up front. Talking points should address the questions foremost in the public's mind and focus on public safety. The talking points should be communicated to all speakers and speakers should be encouraged to stay on message.

## **Checklist: Opening a JIC**

### **Steps taken by Lead PIO, Assistant Lead PIOs, and JIC Facility Manager**

- Determine who is the Lead PIO.
- Determine the JIC location.
- Assign a JIC Facility Manager.
- Ensure the chosen location is available and usable.
- Send PIO call-out. Include in message where to meet and who to call for more information.
- Check/assemble supplies and equipment.
- Test equipment. Are phones and faxes working, etc.?
- Maintain roster of responding PIOs and other support personnel.
- Assign PIOs and other personnel to roles as applicable.
- Once a majority of PIOs are present, hold a situation assessment briefing.
- Announce to the news media that the JIC is operational.
- First news release lists JIC personnel, phone and fax numbers etc.

## Recommended Items for a PIO “Go Pack” or Emergency Call-Out Box

The following items are recommended for stocking an Agency PIO’s “Go Pack” or “Emergency Call-Out Box”. Agency PIOs are expected to bring these Go Packs to the JIC where they are working.

- Agency identification
- Business cards
- Lap top computer (with battery, charger, AC plug)
- Wireless modem (“air card”)
- Cell phone (with charger, AC plug, car charger) and preferably with Internet access (e.g. Blackberry, Treo, or some similar device)
- 800 mhz radio with charger
- Flashlight with batteries
- Inverter (for car accessory outlet)
- Office supplies (pads of paper, folders, pens, pencils, sharpener, stapler, staples, paper clips, tape, scissors, markers, etc.)
- Contact lists (for news media and your agency) and your agency’s news release templates in the following forms:
  - On hard drive of lap top
  - In memory stick
  - Hard copies
  - Examples: ESF 14 documents, important contact information for PIN, Dept., media, etc.
- Map Book
- Rain/weather gear
- Safety vest
- Basic personal grooming/hygiene supplies
- Waterproof container to pack it all in

## **JIC Technology and Equipment**

- Printer
- Printer paper
- Flash drive or disks/CDs
  - JIS plan and other such file resources
  - Copies of various forms and checklists, etc.
- Extra notebooks, pens and pencils
- Blank nametags or something for news media credential IDs
- Corkboard and/or dry erase board
  - Thumbtacks, dry erase markers, eraser
- Tape
- Sticky Pads
- Clipboards
- Paperclips, binder clips, rubber bands
- Markers
- Scissors
- Stapler
- Surge protector/power strip and extension cord



# NEWS RELEASE

## [Event Name] Joint Information Center

---

JIC Main Phone Line: (XXX) XXX-XXXX JIC FAX: (XXX) XXX-XXXX

---

Time/Date

Contact: John Doe / (XXX) XXX-XXXX / Email:

Event Title and Release number (such as: Hurricane AI, Release #22)

### ***HEADLINE WILL GO HERE***

Body of the release here. Body of the release here.

Body of the release here. Body of the release here.

Body of the release here. Body of the release here.

-30-



## Information for inclusion in JIC news release

**From:** Agency Name

**POC:** Agency PIO

**Date and Time Submitted to Lead PIO office:** Jan 1, 2009, 1:30 p.m.

---

### **LEAD PIO OFFICE NOTES FOR WHEN RELEASE IS COMPLETE:**

Release number this information was included in:

List any changes that were made:

---

### **AGENCY PIO NOTES TO LEAD PIO OFFICE:**

Include here notes/directions for the Lead PIO office news release writer.

---

### **TEXT FOR RELEASE:**

Put the text of what you want put in the news release here exactly as you would like to see it published so that the news release writer can just copy and paste.

## **Checklist: Holding a News Conference**

- ❑ Decide who needs to be present by determining the types of questions that need to be answered. (If no new information is available, do not hold a news conference/briefing.)
- ❑ Take deadlines for print/broadcast media and other community events into consideration when scheduling a conference (as a guideline, no later than 3 p.m. for print publications or evening news, no later than 9 p.m. for nightly news).
- ❑ Notify news media of time, location and topic of the briefing/conference.
- ❑ If possible, include visual aids such as large, colorful maps, photos, etc. (If possible, have visual aids available online for download.)
- ❑ Attempt to hold informational portion of the conference to less than 30 minutes and provide ample time to answer news media questions.
- ❑ At the end, announce time and location of next news conference.

### **Room set-up:**

- ❑ Rows of chairs with wide aisles between them.
- ❑ Raised stage areas in the back of the room for photographers.
- ❑ Raised stage in front of room complete with podium and possibly a table and chairs for speakers.
- ❑ No white background behind stage. Use a color and decorate with plants.
- ❑ Visible Web site address and JIC signage/logo.
- ❑ Appropriate lighting and sound system.
- ❑ Provide water and glasses for speakers.
- ❑ Provide easy ins and outs for speakers. (Use security if necessary.)

### **Speaker tips:**

- ❑ Arrange speakers in order of appearance.
- ❑ Prepare speakers on angles/types of questions they may be asked.
- ❑ Discuss how to transition between speakers.
- ❑ Discuss management of questions and timeframe.

# News Media Inquiry (Intake Form)

No. \_\_\_\_\_ (in order received)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ A.M./P.M.

Inquiry Received from: \_\_\_\_\_ (person)

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Reporter/Editor with: \_\_\_\_\_ (organization)

Deadline:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Question/Inquiry:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Response:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Is follow-up needed? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, when? \_\_\_\_\_

Notes:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# First 48 Hours Checklist

## Critical First Steps After Verification

### Notification

1. Ensure your leadership is aware of the emergency and that they know you are involved.
2. Use your crisis plan's notification list to ensure all of the communication chain of command is aware and know you are involved.
3. Give leadership your first assessment of the emergency from a communications perspective and inform them of the next steps you are taking.

### Coordination

1. Contact local, State, and Federal partners now.
2. If potential criminal investigation, contact FBI counterpart now.
3. Secure spokesperson as designated in the plan.
4. Initiate alert notification and call in extra communication staff, per the plan.
5. Connect with the Joint Information Center-make your presence known.

### Media

1. Be first: Provide a statement that your agency is aware of the emergency and is involved in the response. (Use the Template for Prescribed, Immediate Response to Media Inquiries.)
2. Be credible: Give directions to media about when and where to get updates from your agency.
3. Be right: Start monitoring media for misinformation that must be corrected now.

### Media

1. Trigger your public information toll-free number operation now if you anticipate the public will be seeking reassurance or information directly from your organization. (You can adjust hours of operation and number of call managers as needed.)
2. Use your initial media statement as your first message to the public.
3. Ensure your statement expresses empathy and acknowledges the public's concern about the
4. Give the pre-cleared facts you have, and refer the public to other information sites, as appropriate.
5. Remind the public that your agency has a process in place to mitigate the crisis.
6. Start monitoring public calls to catch trends or rumors now.

### Partners/Stakeholders

1. Send a basic statement to partners (the same as to the media) to let them know you are thinking about them.
2. Use prearranged notification systems (preferably e-mail Listserv®).
3. Engage leadership to make important first phone calls, based on your plan, to partners and key stakeholders to let them know your agency is responding.
4. Use the internal communication system (e-mail) to notify employees that their agency is involved in the response and that updates will follow. Ask for their support.



## **Incident Situation Summary**

Date and time:

Location:

Nature of incident:

Estimated number of victims:

Potential or critical infrastructure involved:

Evacuation status:

Response status:

Protective measures initiated:

Lead agency:

## Incident Verification

*It is important to verify the initial reports of an incident and to make sure that you have correct information. Verified information is a critical factor in making appropriate decisions regarding the incident.*

Have all the facts been received? (to the best of your knowledge?)

Did the information collected come from formal, credible sources such as a local, state, or federal agency?

Do you have similar reports about the incident from more than one source?

Is the information from different sources consistent?

Is the characterization of the event plausible?

If necessary, was information clarified through subject matter experts?

*If you can answer “yes” to these key checkpoints, you have completed the key steps to verifying the situation.*

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*Note: Verification is not a function for just one person. It requires input from a variety of sources.*

## **Message Development for Emergency Communication**

Step 1: Consider the following general factors

1. Target audience(s) (e.g., general public, health providers):
2. Purpose of messages (e.g., give facts/update, respond to media):
3. Method of delivery (e.g., TV interview, press release):

Step 2: Consider the six basic emergency message components

1. Expression of empathy:
2. Clarifying facts

Who:

What:

Where:

When:

Why:

How:

3. What we don't know:
4. Process to get answers:
5. Statement of commitment:
6. Referrals (for more information):
7. Next scheduled update:

Step 3: Decide what are the three most important message topics for you to cover

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Step 4: Develop a complete key message for each of your three message topics

### **TOPIC 1:**

Complete message:

Additional supporting facts (if any):

Soundbite:

**TOPIC 2:**

Complete message:

Additional supporting facts (if any):

Soundbite:

**TOPIC 3:**

Complete message:

Additional supporting facts (if any):

Soundbite:

**Step 5: Check your messages for the following and revise, if needed**

- Positive action steps
- Honest/open tone
- Applied risk communication
- Test for Clarity
- Use simple words, short sentences
- Avoid jargon
- Avoid humor
- Avoid extreme speculation
- Avoid judgmental phrase

## JIC Equipment and Supplies Checklist

Equipment	Location	How to obtain it
Fax machine (preprogrammed for broadcast fax releases to media and partners)		
Computers (on LAN with e-mail Listservs® designated for partners and media)		
Laptop computers		
Printers for every computer		
Copier (and backup)		
Several tables		
Cell phones/pagers/personal data devices and e-mail readers		
Visible calendars, flow charts, bulletin boards, easels		
Designated personal message board		
Small refrigerator		
Paper		
Color copier		
A/V equipment		
Portable microphones		
Podium		
TVs with cable hookup		
VHS VCR		
CD-ROM		
Paper shredder		
Copier toner		
Printer ink		
Paper		
Pens		

<b>Equipment</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>How to obtain it</b>
Markers		
Highlighters		
Erasable markers		
FedEx and mail supplies		
Sticky Notes		
Tape		
Notebooks		
Poster board		
Standard press kit folders		
Organized B-roll beta format (keep VHS copies around for meetings)		
Formatted computer disks		
Color-coded everything (folders, inks, etc.)		
Baskets (to contain items not ready to be thrown away)		
Organizers to support your clearance and release system		
Expandable folders (indexed by alphabet or days of the month)		
Staplers (several)		
Paper punch		
Three-ring binders		
Organization's press kit or its logo on a sticker		
Colored copier paper (for door-to-door flyers)		
Paper clips (all sizes)		

## Template for Pre-scripted, Immediate Response to Media Inquiries

Use this template if the media is “at your door” and you need time to assemble the facts for the initial press release statement. Getting the facts is a priority. It is important that your organization not give in to pressure to confirm or release information before you have confirmation from your scientists, emergency operations center, etc. The following are responses which give you the necessary time to collect the facts. Use the Template for Press Statement for providing an initial press release statement after the facts are gathered.

**NOTE:** Be sure you are first authorized to give out the following information.

Date:            Time:

Approved by:

### Pre-scripted Responses

#### If on Phone to Media:

- We’ve just learned about the situation and are trying to get more complete information now. How can I reach you when I have more information?
- All our efforts are directed at bringing the situation under control, so I’m not going to speculate about the cause of the incident. How can I reach you when I have more information?
- I’m not the authority on this subject. Let me have (name) call you right back.
- We’re preparing a statement on that now. Can I fax it to you when it’s ready?
- You may check our Web site for background information, and I will fax/e-mail you with the time of our next update.

#### If in person at incident site or in front of press meeting:

- This is an evolving emergency and I know that, just like we do, you want as much information as possible right now. While we work to get your questions answered as quickly as possible, I want to tell you what we can confirm right now:
- At approximately (time), a (brief description of what happened).
- At this point, we do not know the number of (persons ill, persons exposed, injuries, deaths, etc.).
- We have a (system, plan, procedure, operation) in place for just such an emergency and we are being assisted by (police, FBI, DHS) as part of that plan.
- The situation is (under) (not yet under) control and we are working with (local, State, Federal) authorities to (contain this situation, determine how this happened, determine what actions may be needed by individuals and the community to prevent this from happening again).
- We will continue to gather information and release it to you as soon as possible. I will be back to you within (amount of time, 2 hours or less) to give you an update. As soon as we have more confirmed information, it will be provided.
- We ask for your patience as we respond to this emergency.

*Notes: Depending on the incident, immediate protective measures may need to be provided. Consider using an expression of empathy, if appropriate.*

## Template for Press Statement

If the media is “at your door” and you need time to assemble the facts for this initial press release statement, use the Template for Pre-scripted, Immediate Response to Media Inquiries. Getting the facts is a priority. It is important that your organization not give in to pressure to confirm or release information before you have confirmation from your scientists, emergency operations center, etc.

The purpose of this initial press statement is to answer the basic questions: who, what, where, when. This statement should also provide whatever guidance is possible at this point, express the association and administration’s concern, and detail how further information will be disseminated. If possible, the statement should give phone numbers or contacts for more information or assistance. Please remember that this template is meant only to provide you with guidance. One template will not work for every situation.

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: (name of contact)

PHONE: (number of contact)

Date of release: (date)

### Headline—Insert your primary message to the public

Dateline (your location)—Describe the current situation in two or three sentences.

Insert a quote from an official spokesperson demonstrating leadership and concern for victims. “ ”

Insert actions being taken.

List actions that will be taken.

List information on possible reactions of the public and ways citizens can help.

Insert a quote from an official spokesperson providing reassurance. “ ”

List contact information, ways to get more information, and other resources.

List information on possible reactions of the public and ways citizens can help.

Insert a quote from an official spokesperson providing reassurance. “ ”

List contact information, ways to get more information, and other resources.

# Public Information Emergency Response Call Tracking

Time of call:        a.m./p.m.

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**Nature of call:**

*Specific information contained in stock materials:*

- Clarify recommendations
- Current status of the incident
- Hot topic 1
- Hot topic 2

*Request for referral:*

- For more information
- For medical attention
- Other

*Feedback to agency:*

- Complaint about specific contact with agency
  - Complaint about recommended actions
  - Concern about ability to carry out recommended action
  - Report additional information on incident
  - Rumor or misinformation verification (briefly describe)
- 

**Outcome of Call:**

Reassured caller based on scripted information

*Referred caller to:*

- Expert outside the department
  - Personal doctor or healthcare professional (if health related)
  - Red Cross or other nongovernment organization
  - FEMA or State emergency management agency
  - Other
- 

**Action needed:**

None

Return call to: Caller's name:        Telephone number:

Gender: M / F

*Return call urgency:*

- Critical (respond immediately)
- Urgent (respond within 24 hours)
- Routine

Call taken by:        Date:





**GENERAL MESSAGE (ICS 213)**

TO:	POSITION:	
FROM:	POSITION:	
SUBJECT:	DATE:	TIME:

MESSAGE:

SIGNATURE:	POSITION:
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REPLY:

DATE:	TIME:	SIGNATURE/POSITION:
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