

GRAYS HARBOR COUNTY CEMP

External Affairs

This document serves as Emergency Support Function #15 (ESF#15) of the Grays Harbor County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP).

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Table of Contents

Introduction 1
 Purpose 1
 Scope..... 1
 Planning Assumptions..... 1
Concept of Operations..... 1
 General..... 1
 Organization..... 2
 Joint Information Center/System (JIC/JIS) 2
 Emergency Alerts 3
Phases of Emergency Management..... 3
 Mitigation and Preparedness Activities 3
 Response and Recovery Activities 4
Responsibilities 5
 Primary Agencies 5
 Emergency Operations Center (EOC)..... 5
 Public Information Officer (PIO) 6
 Joint Information Center (JIC)..... 6
 Support Agencies 6
Acronyms 7

Primary Agencies:

Grays Harbor County Emergency Management (GHC EM)

Public Information Officers from the County and Municipalities

Support Agencies:

Community Organizations

Grays Harbor Communications Center (E911)

Grays Harbor County Departments

Municipalities

Public and Private Media (Cable, television, radio, and newspaper)

Special Purpose Districts

Washington State Emergency Management Division (EMD)

Introduction

Purpose

Emergency Support Function 15 (ESF #15) External Affairs provides for sufficient mobilization of county assets during emergencies or disasters to provide accurate, coordinated, and timely information to impacted communities, emergency responders, governments, media, and the private sector.

Scope

ESF #15 details the establishment of a command staff position to coordinate communications to various audiences. ESF #15 applies to all county departments and municipality governments that may require public affairs/information support or whose public affairs/information support and assets may be employed during an incident of countywide significance.

Planning Assumptions

The Grays Harbor County Joint Information Center/System (JIC/JIS) will do everything possible to ensure that the information provided is consistent, accurate, complete, and promptly delivered using communication methods that will disseminate information as widely as possible to affected populations. County departments, cities and community organizations will provide updates regarding response and recovery activities to the EOC and maintain up-to-date contact lists for their identified Public Information Officers (PIO).

It is neither implied nor should it be inferred that this plan guarantees that a perfect response to an emergency or disaster will be practical or possible. No plan can shield individuals from all events. While every reasonable effort will be made to respond to emergencies or disasters, resources, and or systems may be overwhelmed. Some events provide little or no warning to implement operational procedures and all emergency plans are dependent upon tactical execution, which may be imperfect. This plan can only be fulfilled if the situation, information exchange, extent of actual capabilities and resources are available at the time of the incident.

Concept of Operations

General

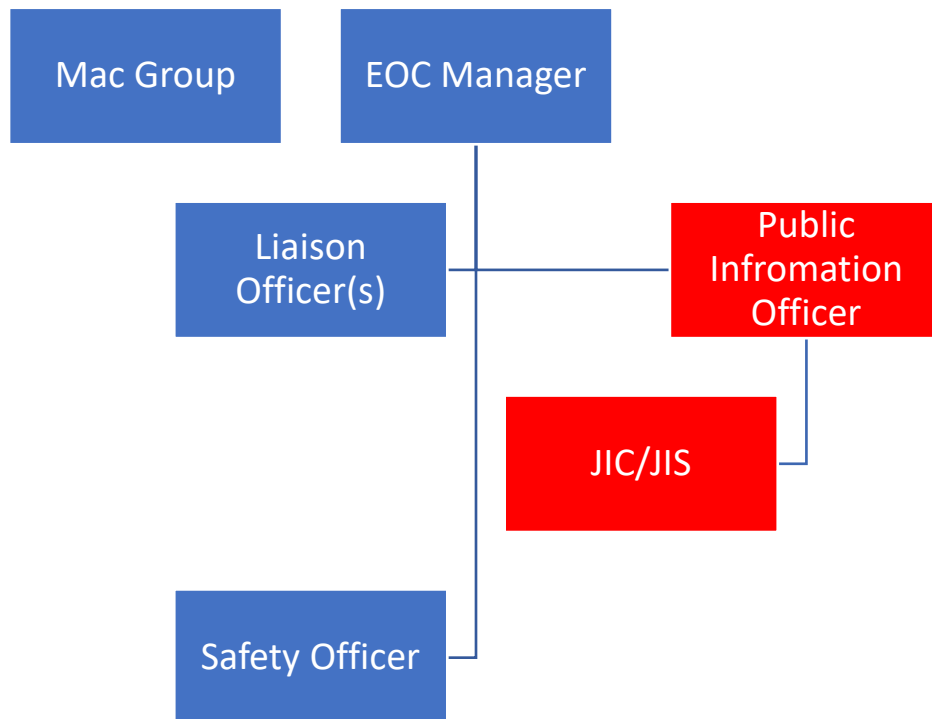
When an emergency occurs within Grays Harbor County that requires active Public Information, the Incident Commander or EOC Manager is responsible for activating a Public Information Officer (PIO). The PIO will coordinate activities between the EOC, Incident Command Post (ICP), assistant Public Information Officers, the Washington State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC), and the JIC, when activated.

Upon activation, the PIO will coordinate and disseminate accurate and timely disaster related information. The PIO will determine methods for disseminating local emergency information depending on available means as appropriate to the emergency. This may include radio, newspaper, television, electronic communications, mobile public address systems, and door-to-door.

Primary and support agencies will provide communication resources to the JIC when requested and as resources allow.

Organization

The Public Information Officer (PIO) is a command-level position within the EOC. When ESF #15 is activated within the EOC, the PIO will report directly to the EOC Manager. The PIO may have assistant PIOs and other agency’s PIOs reporting to the lead PIO. The PIO may organize the Joint Information Center/System based on the nature of emergency and needs to public information.



Joint Information Center/System (JIC/JIS)

A Joint Information Center (JIC) and Joint Information System (JIS) may be needed to support local public information efforts, and during recovery operations. The JIS is the method of operating during an Incident while the JIC is a central location to facilitate operations of the JIS. The JIC is also a facility where the PIO and staff can coordinate and provide information on the incident to the public, the media, and other agencies.

The PIO will determine the location and staffing needs of the JIC. The EOC is responsible for supporting the JIC. The JIC may be co-located with the EOC. The County and each city may designate an assistant PIO to operate within the JIC/JIS.

Emergency Alerts

When activated, ESF #15 plays an essential role in relaying of emergency alerts from authorized authorities. When the public must take action to prepare or protect itself, the local warning systems will activate as time and resources allow. Warning could take the form of one or more of the following:

- Grays Harbor County Emergency Alerts
- Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA)
- Emergency Alert System (EAS)
- All-Hazard Alert Broadcast Systems (AHABS)
- NOAA All-Hazard Alert Weather Radios
- Social Media Alerts and Posts
- Website Posting
- Volunteer resources
- Posting of traffic signs
- Providing local warning information to local media
- Other mechanisms as appropriate

Release of these alerts need to be coordinated through all levels of the EOC. Use of technical equipment may need to be coordinated through Logistics and ESF #2.

Phases of Emergency Management

Mitigation and Preparedness Activities

- Identify areas where public education programs (i.e., personal preparedness) are needed.
- Develop staffing procedures and checklists for the JIC.
- Assign and train personnel to appropriate level National Incident Management System (NIMS)/ICS training in order to function effectively with Incident Command and/or the JIC.
- Identify possible locations for a JIC and press conferences.
- Develop and maintain a list of equipment needed to activate the JIC.
- Develop and maintain an updated media contact list.
- Prepare for rumor control to address and correct misinformation and eliminate confusion.

- Prepare pre-scripted messages for quick delivery

Response and Recovery Activities

- Assess the scope, magnitude, extent, and the potential duration of the incident.
- Obtain status reports on all local and county activities, as needed.
- Collect information concerning field operations, as needed.
- Coordinate with the EOC and primary and supporting agencies to develop a flow of information, including situation reports, health advisories, and other public information releases concerning the response and recovery efforts.
- Establish and operate a JIC when appropriate. If activated, affected primary agencies will send a PIO to the JIC as requested by the Incident Commander.
- Establish and maintain contact with the pertinent elected officials representing the affected area to provide information on the incident.
- Conduct media briefings on a regular basis.
- Monitor media and implement rumor control process when appropriate.
- The EOC will coordinate with the PIO before deactivating ESF #15.
- Inform the State EOC PIO of response activities.
- Coordinate with the appropriate agencies to deactivate the JIC.
- Disseminate information when disaster assistance programs are available.
- Keep elected officials informed of recovery activities.

Responsibilities

Primary Agencies

- Activate and manage the JIC as necessary to support emergency operations in accordance with ICS.
- Each jurisdiction will designate staff to serve as the local PIO who coordinates information from that jurisdiction, if available.
- Coordinate public information activities with other participating agencies.
- Collect and coordinate information from all private and public sources to monitor overall response.
- JIC staffing for extended operations will be coordinated by the PIO and maintained as long as indicated. This will be accomplished with staggered shifts staffed by JIC members.
- Obtain approval for release of information from the EOC Manager.
- Conduct and/or coordinate regular press conferences at the JIC.
- Enlist agency staff to respond to media questions on technical or agency issues if necessary.
- Provide maps, charts, status reports, photos, schematics, or other displays that clarify the emergency or disaster situation in support of press conferences and/or briefings.
- Monitor media broadcasting articles to check for accuracy. Monitor and log incoming calls for information and rumor control.
- Notify all affected jurisdictions and stakeholders of the operational and situational conditions and provide frequent and regular status updates.
- Provide updates for the Grays Harbor County Emergency Management (GHC EM) website regarding the scope of the emergency or disaster, the impact to the county, emergency action steps, evacuation, collection sites, water and food distribution, etc.
- Coordinate communication resource requests outside of mutual aid agreements with the EOC.
- Designate the chief elected official or his/her designee as chief spokesperson following an emergency or disaster. Coordinate public information to the chief elected official and with the SEOC PIO.
- Primary and support agencies will ensure that a continuity of operations plan is in place to maintain essential services.
- Primary and support agencies will participate in drills and exercises to test existing plans and procedures.
- Primary and support agencies will participate in post-disaster briefings and development of an After Action Report.

Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

- Maintain maps and status boards.

- Serves as the collection point for information/situation reports regarding the status of the emergency.
- Establish citizen call center with the assistance of Grays Harbor County Central Services.
- Coordinate points of contact for agency representatives requesting expedient information from the JIC.

Public Information Officer (PIO)

- Develop news releases and other materials.
- Manage rumor control and obtain verification of all information prior to release.
- Respond to media inquiries as appropriate.
- Conduct on-air press conferences.
- Set up a media hotline with the assistance of Grays Harbor County Central Services.
- Disseminate information approved by the Incident Commander.
- Document, in chronological order, the information provided to the media and public. This entails the collection of releases, recordings of interviews (if possible), the sequence of statements and briefings, etc.
- Coordinate interviews and provide escorts as needed.
- Monitor other media to prevent redundancy and rumors.
- Monitor web and/or internet updates.
- Maintain current incident information on the county website.

Joint Information Center (JIC)

- Collect and analyze information from the EOC, hotlines, media, web and internet, etc.
- Determine information needs of local community.
- Provide information to the public concerning the status of the disaster and how to obtain relief services.

Support Agencies

- Assist the PIO and JIC by providing pertinent public information for dissemination to media sources and, as appropriate, fact sheets for distribution to the public. Participate in press conferences and briefings upon request.
- Interrupt regular programming and report emergency information as requested by the JIC.

Monitor and log incoming calls for information and rumor control. Monitor media broadcasts and articles for accuracy.

Acronyms

AAR	After Action Review/Report
ACCESS	A Central Computerized Enforcement Service System
AEC	Grays Harbor Auxiliary Emergency Communications
ARC	American Red Cross
AWC	Alert and Warning Center
CAA	Clean Air Act
CAMEO	Computer Aided Management for Emergency Operations
CEMNET	Comprehensive Emergency Management Network
CEMP	Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
CHEMTREC	Chemical Transpiration Emergency Center
DMAT	Disaster Medical Assistance Team
DMCC	Disaster Medical Control Center
DMORT	Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team
DNR	Washington State Department of Natural Resources
DOH	Washington State Department of Health
DSHS	Washington State Department of Social and Health Services
E911	Grays Harbor Emergency Communications
EAS	Emergency Alert System
ECY	Washington State Department of Ecology
EHS	Extremely Hazardous Substances
EMD	Emergency Management Division
EMPC	Emergency Management Planning Committee
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
EPCRA	Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act
ERG	Emergency Response Guide Book

ESF	Emergency Support Function
GETS	Government Emergency Telecommunications Service
GHC EM	Grays Harbor County Emergency Management
GHC EOC	Grays Harbor County Emergency Operations Center
IC	Incident Commander
ICS	Incident Command System
ICP	Incident Command Post
JIC	Joint Information Center
JIS	Joint Information System
LECC	Local Emergency Communications Committee
LEPC	Local Emergency Planning Committee
NAWAS	National Warning System
NIMS	National Incident Management System
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NRC	National Response Center
NRF	National Response Framework
OSCCR	On-Scene Control and Coordination Radio
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
PIO	Public Information Officer
PSAP	Public Safety Access Point
RCW	Revised Code of Washington
SDS	Safety Data Sheet
SEOC	State Emergency Operations Center
SERC	State Emergency Response Commission
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
TERC	Tribal Emergency Response Commission
UC	Unified Command

WAC Washington Administrative Code

WEA Wireless Emergency Alerts

WPS Wireless Priority Service