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| **Public Information Officer**  (reports to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)  **Objectives**   * Serve as the primary public information coordination point between the organization, the media, the EOC, other public information officers and the general public. * Ensure that all stakeholders receive complete, accessible, accurate, and consistent information about life safety procedures, public health advisories, relief and assistance programs and other vital information through a variety of methods. * Coordinate media releases with Public Information Officers representing other affected emergency response agencies within the Operational Area. * Work with the media to provide accurate information, interviews and press conferences. * Organize the format for press conferences in conjunction with the EOC Director. * Maintain a positive relationship with the media representatives. * Establish a system to manage rumor control. | |
| MC900431585 | **Activation – During the Event** |
|  | Ensure that your leadership is aware (especially if it comes from the media and not the EOC) of the emergency and that they know you are involved.   * Give leadership your first assessment of the emergency from a communication perspective and inform them of your next steps. *Remember: Be first, be right, be credible.* |
|  | **Be first**: Provide a statement that your agency is aware of the emergency and is involved in the response.  **Be right**: Start monitoring media for misinformation that must be corrected.  **Be credible**: Tell the media when and where to get updates from your agency.   * Use your initial media statement as your first message to the public. * Ensure that your statement expresses empathy and acknowledges public concern about the uncertainty. * Give the precleared facts you have and refer the public to other information sites as appropriate. * Remind people that your agency has a process in place to mitigate the crisis. * Start public call-monitoring to catch trends or rumors now. |
|  | Change recording on organization main phone line. |
|  | Trigger your public information hotline number operation now if you anticipate that the public will seek reassurance or information directly from your organization. (You may adjust hours of operation and number of call takers as needed.)   * Hotline recordings should include date, time and next update time. * Refer to Hotline Phone Bank Setup Guide * Check to see if 2-1-1 is able to provide this service.   **For evacuation**, have a separate hotline for employees and vendors.   * Redirect phones to cell phones, answering service, Google Voice, etc., as needed, if leaving a building. |
|  | Establish contact with the Op Area PIO and any other agency PIOs involved and provide your contact information. Ensure partners are saying the same thing.   * Coordinate information with any on-scene Public Information Officers (Fire or Law Enforcement). There must be ONE UNIFIED message. * Send a PIO to the Command Post, if appropriate. * Coordinate with the Public Health Officer for public health and advisories. * Identify any subject matter experts or other authorities who should be consulted. * Request mutual aid PIO assistance ASAP. * Is a Joint Information Center needed? Yes? (See JIC Setup Guide). * If there is potential for criminal investigation, contact your FBI counterpart now. |
|  | Log in to PIO event email (gmail account, etc)   * Acknowledge all emails received *and archive them* * Delete any emails that are not related to this event. |
|  | Establish a media contact log to keep track of callers.   * Consider a MEDIA ONLY phone number. * Determine if a media information center is required (Refer to Media Information Center Setup Guide) |
|  | Determine PIO staffing needs and make proper notifications. |
|  | Ensure that file copies are maintained of all information released.   * Provide copies of all releases to the EOC Director. |
|  | Determine all appropriate notification methods for the event and confirm the systems are functioning. |
|  | Keep the EOC briefed and remind them to refer all media requests to you and NOT to release information unless it is in a press release.   * BE PROACTIVE. GET information from the EOC team. They will be too busy to bring it to you. |
|  | Work with EOC Team to develop an information distribution list of stakeholders and the best methods for reaching them. (*Use Stakeholder/Distribution Worksheet*)   * Always include dispatch center, media, elected officials and staff. * Other stakeholders may include schools, churches, hospitals/clinics, nonprofits. * Methods may also include website, social media, sign boards, nextdoor.com, CERT and Ham Radio.     Send a basic statement to partners and stakeholders to let them know you are keeping them in the loop. Use prearranged notification systems.  Engage leadership to make important first phone calls, based on your plan, to partners and key stakeholders to let them know that your agency is responding.  Work with Personnel Unit/HR to notify employees that the organization is involved in the response and that updates will follow. Ask for their support. |
|  | When preparing messages/announcements:  Prepare incident public information messages using the following priorities:   * Life safety instructions (Alert & Warning) * Emergency Status Information * Public health advisories * Incident status, available services * Road closures and available transportation routes, Situation Status Unit. * Recovery information * Other useful information * Always refer the public to websites or phone numbers to get more information and tell them when to expect updates. * Make sure all information is CONFIRMED. * Ensure that announcements, emergency information and materials are translated and prepared for special populations (non-English speaking, hearing impaired, etc.). * Make messages short and simple to understand. (5th grade reading level) * Do not release names of deceased until next of kin are notified.   (*Refer to Appendix D1 Message Preparation Guide*)  ***Submit information to the EOC and any other group that the information may impact*, BEFORE sending it out to all media, stakeholders and the general public. Give folks time to prepare for public response to the message.** |
|  | Ensure that a rumor control function is established to correct false or erroneous information.   * Monitor media broadcasts and develop follow-up news releases to control rumors. |
|  | Conduct team safety briefings for field response and office assignments. Periodically check team members for fatigue and mental state. |
|  | Interact with the other EOC sections, branches and units to provide and obtain information relative to public information operations.   * Coordinate with the Situation Status Unit and identify the method for obtaining and verifying significant information as it is developed. |
|  | Review procedures with EOC Director.   * EOC Director approves all media releases. * Keep the EOC Director advised of all unusual requests for information and of all major critical or unfavorable media comments. * Discuss recommendations for press conferences, media staging areas * Review stakeholder list and translation requirements. * Recommend procedures or measures to improve media relations. |
|  | Activate the “Current Emergency page” of the organization’s web site and publicize to the public and the media. Keep information current. |
|  | Develop content to publish. Monitor and maintain releases for Nixle or Alert SCC as required. |
|  | Develop and publish a media-briefing schedule, to include location, format, times and distribution of handout materials.   * Give copies to Dispatch Center, other PIOs and post in the EOC, Command Post(s) and CERT ARK. Consider QR Codes when appropriate. * Notify media. |
|  | Prepare for possible press conferences. (Refer to Press Conference/Media Interview Guide)   * Identify spokesperson(s) (*Refer to Tips When Talking With Media*) * Prepare talking points with approval of EOC Director, or designee. * Review media frequently asked questions. * Ask for questions, in advance, if possible. * Prepare press packets and provide written information and the spelling of names whenever possible. * Are translation or ASL interpreters needed? |
|  | At the request of the EOC Director, prepare media briefings for members of the Board of Directors and provide other assistance as necessary to facilitate their participation in media briefings and press conferences. |
|  | Arrange media and dignitary tours of the disaster site.   * Coordinate any accommodations or transportation requests with Logistics. * Ensure that adequate staff is available at incident sites to coordinate and conduct tours of the affected areas. |
|  | Maintain a positive relationship with the EOC team, media representatives and stakeholders. |
|  | OSHA regulations require notification to OSHA when there are three or more hospitalizations from an accident or if there is a fatality. Environmental regulations require notification if there is chemical spill or release that exceeds threshold quantities. Notify Finance/Claims for injuries and Operations for chemicals. |
|  | Plan for memorial activities, if needed. |
|  | **Shift Change/Transfer of Duties** |
|  | Review Generic Shift Change/Demobilization Checklist. |
|  | Conduct shift change briefings in detail, ensuring that in-progress activities are identified and follow-up requirements are known. |
|  | Take the documentation you have kept and write up a brief report that outlines the cause of the crisis, how it was handled, successes and failures, and recommendations for change. Determine if any follow up needs to be done with media, employees, families or others and proceed in a timely manner. |
|  | **Demobilization** |
|  | Review Generic Shift Change/Demobilization Checklist. |
|  | Will an anniversary event be needed? |
|  | Prepare final press releases and advise media representatives of points-of-contact for follow-up stories. |
|  | **Readiness - Before the Event:** |
|  | Review Generic Readiness Checklist. |
|  | Assemble personal go kit (EOC Appendix 12) and PIO Supply kit (Crisis Comm Appendix 2) |
|  | Establish processes for information management including   * Gathering * Analysis * Organizing, writing, producing * Approval – All agencies * Documentation * Display and distribution * Monitoring – Media, Internet, Special Interest Groups |
|  | Take [CSTI PIO course(s).](https://csti-ca.csod.com/catalog/CustomPage.aspx?id=20000553&tab_page_id=20000553&tab_id=20000590)  Take FEMA IS 100.c and IS700 basic training online  [Take FEMA Social Media training](https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=is-42.a)  *Additional training at the end of the document* |
|  | Prepare a press packet of basic organization background information. |
|  | Organize and train PIO team. Maintain a list of contact numbers.   * Consider making a call out list in the notification system. * Consider an online message board or What’s App to share information |
|  | Create a set of printable and digital site maps to help convey information. |
|  | Maintain a media contact list and establish working relationships with them. |
|  | Review, update and test all website and equipment operating instructions used to support your function.   * Identify other equipment needs and make purchases, as needed. |
|  | Identify all possible internal and external stakeholders groups and gather contact information for emergency message distribution.   * Identify special groups who may need translated messages or culturally appropriate messages. Review the Stakeholder Worksheet (Appendix F4) * Identify any groups who should be added to the Alert/Warning system for notifications. * Identify the best methods of communication to reach each group. * Ensure multiple means of communication (voice, text, email, television, AM/FM radio, ham radio, other two-way radio, satellite phone, hotline, website, social media, etc.) and test regularly. |
|  | Establish a separate, formal notification plan for employees’ immediate families and close relatives in the event of loss of life, missing personnel, etc. Additionally, ensure that caregivers, day care operators and others upon whom employees may depend for family member support can receive appropriate information.   * Ensure that a formal system exists to integrate new hires into the crisis communication plan. |
|  | Consider a “hidden” website that can be activated on short notice to provide information during an emergency.   * Ensure it can be accessed remotely. * Ensure it can handle “spikes” in traffic during crisis. * Website should be 508 compliant with metadata descriptions, alt text, ability for user to specify the text, font and background colors, etc. |
|  | Review, update and test all website and equipment operating instructions used to support your function. Ensure there is remote access to all websites. |
|  | Develop sample news releases or radio/TV messages include:   * Basic initial broadcasts about investigating the problem * Basic safety instructions for earthquake, shooting, storm * Identify visual and hearing impaired and non-English speaking populations and develop procedures to provide public information to these populations |
|  | Identify equipment and supplies needed for press conferences and make purchases, as needed. Review Appendix D2   * Find a signage vendor with multiple regional locations to use for signage needs before, during and after disaster. |
|  | Set up cloud storage to share resources with your team. Ensure you can add external organizations.   * Include organization background information, critical documents, key contacts, passwords, etc. * Prepare and store easy to edit press releases, alert and warning templates. [Samples](http://calalerts.org/resources.html) |
|  | Coordinate with the Logistics section to identify an area where the team can rest. Consider purchasing cots or other supplies. |