ESF 15 — Public Information

Purpose

Emergency Support Function (ESF) 15 describes how the County will disseminate information to the public and other partners during times of emergency (e.g., evacuation/shelter-in-place orders, water boil notices, emergency sheltering information, situational awareness notifications, etc.).

Coordinating Agencies

PRIMARY AGENCY: Public and Government Affairs (PGA)
SUPPORTING AGENCY: Clackamas County Communications (CCOM), Clackamas County Disaster Management (CCDM), Transportation and Development (DTD) Clackamas County Sheriff's Office (CCSO), Clackamas County Fire District #1 (CCFD#1)

Scope

Activities within the scope of ESF 15 include:

- Ensure community members have timely and accurate information during times of emergency so they act to preserve their life and safety.
- Support County departments and local and tribal partners in the timely and accurate dissemination of information to the public, media, and private sector.
- Lead the development of consistent an accurate messaging and dissemination
- Serve as point of contact for local government and agency elected or appointed officials, tribal representatives, elected or appointed special district representative and stakeholders.

Response

Response activities take place during an emergency and include actions taken to save lives and prevent further property damage in an emergency situation.

Response roles and responsibilities for ESF 15 include:

All Tasked Agencies
- ❑ Provide situational updates to the County EOC, as required, to allow for the development of timely and accurate public messaging.
- ❑ Provide a representative to the County EOC, when requested, to support ESF 15 activities.

PGA
- ❑ Serve as the lead/EOC PIO.
- ❑ Advise On-Scene and EOC Command on all public information issues.
- ❑ Coordinate timely, consistent information with participating agencies and jurisdictions.

Response

- ❑ Provide staff for field PIO and JIC activities.
- ❑ Develop and operate the JIS.
- ❑ Prepare and obtain EOC Command approval for all incident information releases sent to media, employees, and city and regional partners.
- ❑ Keep employees and the public updated on incident status.

CCOM
- ❑ Serve as the County Warning Point for receiving and disseminating warning information and notifying appropriate officials.
- ❑ Provide Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) back-up services to LOCOM.
- ❑ Operate as one of two PSAPs in the County system.
- ❑ Operate CCENS.
- ❑ Activate the Emergency Alert System (EAS) for Clackamas County in conjunction with CCDM.

LOCOM
- ❑ Provide PSAP back-up services to C-COM.
- ❑ Back up C-COM as the County Warning Point.
- ❑ Operate the Code Red community notification system for the LOCOM areas that contract for those services.

WCCCA
- ❑ Operate as the PSAP in the designated West County area of responsibility.
- ❑ Activate the EAS for Clackamas County as requested.

CCDM
- ❑ Activate the EOC.
- ❑ Operate CCENS in conjunction with C-COM.
- ❑ Activate the EAS in conjunction with C-COM.
- ❑ Coordinate with city, regional, and State counterparts.

CCDM
- ❑ Participate in on-scene PIO and EOC JIC activities.
- ❑ Assist in disseminating emergency public information.
- ❑ Collaborate with PIO staff to develop and disseminate alert and warning messages.

Local Fire Agencies
- ❑ Participate in on-scene PIO and EOC JIC activities.
- ❑ Assist in disseminating emergency public information.
- ❑ Collaborate with PIO staff to develop and disseminate alert and warning messages.

H3S
- ❑ Participate in PIO/JIC activities.
- ❑ Helps develop risk communications messages.
- ❑ Assists in identifying and contacting access and functional needs populations.

Law Enforcement
- ❑ Participate in on-scene PIO and EOC JIC activities.
- ❑ Assist in disseminating emergency public information.
- ❑ Collaborate with PIO staff to develop and disseminate alert and warning messages.

EOC Operations

When ESF 15-related activities are staffed in the EOC, the PGA representative will be responsible for the following:

- Serve as Public Information Officers
- Serve Liaison Officers with supporting agencies and community partners.
- Provide a primary entry point for situational information related to public information and government relations.
- Share situation status updates related to public information to inform development of the Situation Report.
- Participate in and provide ESF 15-specific reports for EOC briefings.
- Assist in development and communication of ESF 15-related actions to tasked agencies.
- Monitor ongoing ESF 15-related actions.
- Coordinate ESF 15-related staffing to ensure the function can be staffed across operational periods.

Coordinating with Other ESFs

The following ESFs support ESF 15-related activities:

- **All ESFs.** All functions will provide situation status updates and subject matter expertise to inform development of public messaging as well as disseminate approved messaging.

Preparedness

Preparedness activities take place **before** an emergency occurs and include plans or preparations made to save lives and to help response and recovery operations.

Preparedness roles and responsibilities for ESF 15 include:

All Tasked Agencies
- ❑ Develop operational plans for ESF 15 activities, as appropriate.
- ❑ Participate in ESF 15 related trainings and exercises as appropriate.

PGA
- ❑ Coordinate regular review and update of the ESF 15 annex with supporting agencies.
- ❑ Participate in required trainings and exercises to develop the skill-sets required to effectively serve as the jurisdiction's PIO.
- ❑ Coordinate and operate a JIC to support the coordination of public messaging amongst multiple response partners.
- ❑ Maintain a media contact roster.
- ❑ Facilitate collaborative planning to ensure the County's capability to support ESF 15 activities.
- ❑ Develop pre-scripted warning messages for known hazards, in conjunction with CCDM.

CCDM
- ❑ Maintain operational capacity of the County EOC to support public information activities.
  - ❑ Develop pre-scripted warning messages for known hazards, in conjunction with PGA.
  - ❑ Develop methods for distribution of materials to the public, including materials for non-English-speaking groups, if appropriate.
  - ❑ Establish and maintain systems to support public information.

Recovery

Recovery activities take place **after** an emergency occurs and include actions to return to a normal or an even safer situation following an emergency.

Recovery roles and responsibilities for ESF 15 include:

All Tasked Agencies
- ❑ Demobilize response activities.
- ❑ Maintain incident documentation to support public and individual assistance processes.
- ❑ Participate in all after-action activities and implement corrective actions as appropriate.

Mitigation

Mitigation activities take place **before and after** an emergency occurs and activities that prevent an emergency, reduce the chance of an emergency happening, or reduce the damaging effects of unavoidable emergencies.

Mitigation roles and responsibilities for ESF 15 include:

All Tasked Agencies
- ❑ Participate in the hazard mitigation planning process for the County.
- ❑ Provide agency and incident data to inform development of mitigation projects to reduce hazard vulnerability.

CCDM
- ❑ Conduct public education programs as an ongoing activity.

ESF 15 – Public Information

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ESF 15 Tasked Agencies	
Primary County Agency	Public and Governmental Affairs (PGA)
Supporting County Agency	Transportation and Development (DTD) Clackamas County Communications (CCOM) Clackamas County Disaster Management (CCDM) Clackamas County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) Responding fire agency or Clackamas County Fire Defense Board
Community Partners	Local media (print, television, radio and electronic) Washington County Consolidated Communications Agency (WCCCA) Lake Oswego Communications (LOCOM)
State Agency	Oregon Office of Emergency Management
Federal Agency	Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency

1   Introduction

1.1   Purpose

Emergency Support Function (ESF) 15 describes how the County will disseminate information to the public and other partners during times of emergency (e.g., evacuation/shelter-in-place orders, water boil notices, emergency sheltering information, situational awareness notifications, etc.).

1.2   Scope

Activities encompassed within the scope of ESF 15 include:

- Ensure community members have timely and accurate information during times of emergency so they act to preserve their life and safety.
- Support County departments and local and tribal partners in the timely and accurate dissemination of information to the public, media, and private sector.
- Lead the development of consistent and accurate messaging and dissemination.
- Serve as point of contact for local government and agency elected or appointed officials, tribal representatives, elected or appointed special district representatives and stakeholders.

2   Situation and Assumptions

2.1   Situation

The County faces a number of hazards that may necessitate the dissemination of information to the public and other partners. The following considerations should be taken into account when planning for and implementing ESF 15 activities:

- The ability to disseminate information to the public during a disaster can be hampered by a variety of things including power outages and damage to telecommunication infrastructure.
- Providing information to the public during a disaster or emergency event can be crucial in reducing the mortality rate and avoiding panic situations. It can also reduce the effect of secondary threats or cascading impacts so that the public is able to take preventative measures.

- Clackamas County PublicAlerts is a method for the dissemination of emergency warnings and providing instruction to the public. The County also uses social media and other electronic means to communicate with the public. These systems rely on telecommunication infrastructure to function, which can be damaged or destroyed during a large-scale emergency. (See ESF 2. Communications for more information about PublicAlerts.)

During emergencies, Public and Government Affairs (PGA) is responsible for the County Public Information Officer (PIO) and Liaison Officer functions and coordinates with Clackamas County Disaster Management (CCDM), On-Scene Command, and Emergency Operations Center (EOC) staff to deliver timely and accurate emergency public information to inform the community, minimize confusion, recommend protective measures, and quell rumors. EOC Command and the lead PIO jointly identify incident-specific emergency public information objectives, and the lead PIO activates the County Joint Information Center (JIC), as appropriate or as needed, to perform those functions necessary to achieve the designated information objectives.

Clackamas County will use all available communication methods to provide timely and consistent information to County officials and employees, individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs, citizens at large, cities, and neighboring jurisdictions.

PGA will partner with media outlets to get emergency information to its target audience. Media such as television, radio, social media and news media websites enable rapid public notification of impending threats and recommended protective actions.

2.2   Assumptions

ESF 15 is based on the following planning assumptions:

- Emergencies and disasters may occur without warning at any time of day or night and may cause mass casualties.
- A public education and information program will help save lives and property during emergencies and disasters if the public knows how to prepare for them.
- In an emergency situation, the public will demand information about the emergency and the protective actions being taken.
- The County has no control over how print and broadcast media will cooperate in broadcasting, publishing, and posting on the web detailed disaster-related instructions for the public.
- Normal means of communications in the affected areas may be either destroyed or largely incapacitated; therefore, only limited and incomplete information is anticipated from the disaster area until communications can be restored.
- Responding agencies will coordinate to ensure accurate information is provided to the JIC if established or to the public in accordance with the established Command structure.
- Sufficient numbers of trained support personnel will be available to help coordinate public information and interface with the media and appropriate agencies.
- Demands for information from media outside the jurisdiction will be significantly increased in a disaster.
- Rumors often abound during emergencies. It may be hours before officials know the facts. Rumor control procedures will be directed by the designated County PIOs or co-lead JIC PIO's and will help limit incorrect information from affecting emergency response activities.
- The County PIOs maintain a listing of media contacts and EAS networks and rely on those contacts and networks for the dissemination of emergency public information.

- In a major emergency or disaster a JIC may be set up to help facilitate the information flow between agencies and the general public.
- Information is one of the first casualties of a disaster. The lack of information or contradictory information and misinformation may cause confusion. The public may accept as valid rumors, hearsay, and inaccurate information that may cause unnecessary fear and confusion.

3 Concept of Operations

3.1 General

Public Information Officers (PIOs) conduct public information activities every day, usually in an agency- or jurisdiction-specific role (e.g., representing fire or law enforcement agencies or city officials). Field PIOs report directly to On-Scene Command, and the EOC lead PIO reports directly to EOC Command. The lead PIO staffs and operates a JIC comprised of PIO representatives from participating agencies and organizations, with staffing requirements based on incident specific need. PIOs must obtain EOC Command approval prior to the release of any incident information.

All ESF 15-related activities will be performed in a manner consistent with the National Incident Management System and the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act.

- In accordance with the Basic Plan and this ESF Annex, PGA is responsible for coordinating ESF 15-related activities. Plans and procedures developed by the primary and supporting agencies provide the framework for carrying out those activities.
- Requests for assistance with public information will first be issued in accordance with established mutual aid agreements and once those resources have been exhausted, a request may be forwarded to the State Emergency Coordination Center.
- The County EOC will provide guidance for the coordination of public information resources.

3.2 At-Risk Populations

The PIO coordinates with the appropriate EOC sections to provide the disabled and access and functional needs (DAFN) populations with agencies/organizations with relevant information. These organizations assist in disseminating alert and warning and ongoing emergency information to the elderly, hearing or vision impaired, non-English-speaking, homeless, and citizens with physical or mental challenges, or homebound or with other access or functional needs.

Clackamas County Communications (CCOM), Lake Oswego Communications (LOCOM), and Washington County Consolidated Communications Agency (WCCCA) have TTY/TDD capability, text to 9-1-1 and access to interpretation services.

The Department of Health, Housing, and Human Services (H3S) is the County point of contact for information on contacting clients, functional needs facilities, and alternative methods of reaching functional needs populations.

3.3 Joint Information System

Providing timely and accurate public information during a major emergency or disaster of any nature is critical to the overall response efforts. A Joint Information System (JIS) will be implemented in conjunction with the Incident Command System (ICS), and a local and/or regional JIC will be established under Unified Command. During a regional or statewide

emergency, the County will ensure that procedures are coordinated with those implemented by State and regional PIOs.

Depending on the size and nature of an incident, the JIC may be co-located with an existing EOC/command post or could be designated as an independent facility. A lead PIO, representing the lead agency for the response, will be assigned to the incident and will maintain the following responsibilities:

- Coordinate information sharing among the larger PIO network.
- Develop and distribute materials to the general public and media partners.
- Implement information clearance processes set by EOC Command.
- Schedule media briefings in a designated location away from the EOC and other emergency operations.

3.4   Working with the Media

3.4.1   Media Briefing Facilities

During a major emergency or disaster, media briefing areas may be established in a facility that is capable of handling them.

3.4.2   Media Access to the Scene

- In cooperation with the EOC and the Safety Officer, the on-scene Incident Commander may allow media representatives restricted access to the scene, accompanied by a member of the Public Information staff. This should be done with consideration for the safety of media personnel, the impact on response, and the wishes and concerns of the community members affected by the disaster.
- If it is not safe or practical to admit all media representatives to the scene, a media "pool" may be created, in which media representatives select one camera crew to take video footage for all. If even such controlled access is impractical, a "staged" photo opportunity to tape response vehicles or support activities may satisfy the media's need for video footage.
- Response personnel must be protected from unwanted media intrusion. Off-shift personnel should be provided uninterrupted rest. It may be necessary to provide security to facilities where response personnel are housed and disconnect the telephones to ensure privacy.
- Victims and families should be provided access to public officials without having to face media, as appropriate.
- The media may be allowed access to response personnel, at the discretion of the on-scene Incident Commander, only if such an interview does not interfere with response efforts.
- Response personnel will not comment on the incident without the consent of the Incident Commander. Inquiries should be directed to the designated PIO, with approval of the EOC Command and the department of jurisdiction.

3.5   Alert and Warning

Local, State, and/or federal authorities may issue alert and warning messages to warn officials, County employees, residents, neighboring jurisdictions, and others of an impending emergency or disaster. CCOM is the 24/7 Warning Point for the County. When CCOM receives warning of severe weather or other potential hazards, it notifies appropriate officials, such as the Disaster Management Duty Officer, law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical responders in the field and the on-call PGA information officer.

3.5.1 Disaster Management Notification

CCOM notifies the Disaster Management Duty Officer when:

- Emergencies affect multiple jurisdictions and may require Disaster Management resources or coordination.
- A three-alarm or greater fire occurs; CCOM pages the Fire Operations Center, which includes CCDM Duty Officer.
- A major weather event impacts the County (routine warnings are not paged, but approaching or in-process events with potentially severe impact are).
- A large hazardous material incident occurs.
- A terrorist incident is suspected or confirmed.
- On-Scene Command requests such notification.

The EOC becomes the primary coordination point for incident response, amateur radio, and satellite telephone communications.

3.5.2 Employee Notification

PGA uses an Internal Employee Notification System to provide emergency information to County employees, including

- **In-house hotline:** Employees call a pre-designated phone number for recorded emergency information messages.
- **Countywide e-mail:** County Admin, PGA and or Safety, sends an e-mail message simultaneously to all personnel in the system.
- **Countywide voice mail:** PGA transmits emergency information to all employees on the voice-mail system.
- **Countywide fax:** PGA transmits emergency information to all County fax machines.
- **Courier service:** PGA may also use couriers to deliver emergency information.

PGA has instructions on how to activate the Internal Employee Notification System.

3.5.3 Public Notification

The County uses Public Alerts when a life-threatening hazard requires immediate protective action, with participating broadcast stations and cable operators transmitting the emergency alert over their networks. Public Alert messages may not exceed two minutes and are designed to provide a brief, initial warning to be followed by more detailed information. WCCCA and the Oregon Office of Emergency Management (OEM) provide back-up activation capability.

Citizens are encouraged to monitor local radio and television broadcasts for emergency information. The North American Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Alert Net also provides effective emergency warning for weather-related hazards.

3.5.4 Community Notification Systems

3.5.4.1 Sirens

Clackamas County does not have a Countywide siren warning system. Vehicles with sirens may be used to get the public's attention in localized emergencies.

3.5.4.2　Mobile Public Address Systems

Most police and fire vehicles are equipped with public address systems that may be used to warn the public in localized emergencies.

3.5.4.3　Door-to-Door Warning

Door-to-door warning may be required in some emergencies, especially when actions such as evacuation are necessary. Emergency responders and other agency workers or volunteers , including Clackamas County Sheriffs, may visit individual households, apartments, or structures to provide emergency information/instructions.

3.5.4.4　Telephone Warning – Community Notification System

The County may use the Public Alert system (Everbridge) to warn the public in areas at risk. Messages will inform citizens of the incident and the protective actions they should take.

3.5.4.5　County Website

The County will post warning and ongoing emergency information on the County website at www.clackamas.us

3.5.5　National Warning System

The National Warning System (NAWAS) is a government-to-government warning system that connects the National Warning Center to each state and, in turn, to the designated warning points in each county. As the 24/7 Warning Point for Clackamas County, CCOM continuously monitors NAWAS.

3.6　Dissemination of Ongoing Emergency Public Information

The PIO is responsible for:

- Collecting, coordinating, and disseminating emergency information.
- Advising on-scene and EOC Command on information and media issues.
- Advising County officials.
- Responding to media and public inquiries.
- Using an established JIS structure and procedures to coordinate incident information.
- Staffing the JIC based on incident-specific needs.
- Developing and implementing media strategy during the incident.

The PIO may use the Public Inquiry Center, if activated, to assist in preventing or correcting public misinformation about an incident and to answer public inquiries. The PIO will coordinate with EOC staff to identify a single telephone number for the public to call for emergency information. This line is staffed by call-takers trained to handle resident calls and knowledgeable about current incident status. Clackamas County also has cable television and internet web teams that post information on their respective media.

3.7   Coordination with Other ESFs

The following ESFs support ESF 15-related activities:

- **All ESFs.** All functions will provide situation status updates and subject matter expertise to inform development of public messaging as well as disseminate approved messaging.

4   Emergency Coordination

4.1   Cities

Cities have primary responsibility for warning residents of hazards. When time permits, cities should coordinate emergency public information activities with the County EOC PIO/JIC. If urgency precludes prior coordination, they should advise the EOC PIO/JIC as soon as practical of the emergency situation and the public information released to their citizens.

Cities are encouraged to develop a local JIS/JIC system to coordinate emergency public information activities with the County and neighboring cities.

4.2   County

On-Scene Command performs emergency public information functions unless a PIO has been designated. Normally, the lead fire or law enforcement agency provides the on-scene PIO. The County PIO can provide support to the on-scene PIO as needed.

During EOC activation, CCDM will request that PGA staff the EOC PIO position that reports directly to EOC Command. The PIO will coordinate incident information with all agencies and jurisdictions involved in the incident, following Clackamas County JIS Plan guidelines.

The EOC PIO will determine the level of EOC JIC staffing required to manage incident-specific emergency public information that may range from a single information officer on scene to a full activation of the County JIC. Initial configuration of the EOC JIC is normally two shifts, comprising one lead PIO, one media monitor, one or more writers and news gatherers, and one web editor and graphics support.

The PIO will ensure that all incident-related information—including media releases, advisories, public service announcements, public education pieces, talking points, and any other information created for public or government consumption—is approved by On-Scene or EOC Command before it is released.

4.3   Special Districts and Utilities

During incidents impacting their area of responsibility or services, special districts and utilities may be requested to assign a PIO representative to the EOC JIC.

4.4   Regional

The Regional Disaster Preparedness Organization (RDPO) has developed a regional JIS/JIC concept of operations.

Clackamas County is a participant in the Inter-County Omnibus Mutual Aid Agreement, which provides a framework for counties to request mutual aid from each other in emergencies. A

copy of the agreement and updated information regarding current participants is available in the EOC Library.

The Intra-State Mutual Assistance Compact provides for non-reimbursable assistance among local governments. To receive reimbursement for resource assistance provided under this statute, participants must agree to a reimbursement request in writing before resources are dispatched.

4.5   State and Federal Assistance

Clackamas County PIOs will coordinate with their counterparts at the State and Federal level, sharing incident information at all levels on a regular basis. The County PIO will integrate state and federal emergency public information activities into the County JIS/JIC.

5   ESF Annex Development and Maintenance

PGA will be responsible for coordinating regular review and maintenance of this annex. Each primary and supporting agency will be responsible for developing plans and procedures that address assigned tasks.