

## ANNEX 15

### ESF -15 - PUBLIC INFORMATION

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COORDINATING: South Carolina Emergency Management Division

PRIMARY: SC Department of Administration; SC Department of Agriculture; SC Department of Health and Environmental Control; SC Department of Labor License and Regulation; SC Department of Natural Resources; SC Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services; SC Department of Public Safety; SC Department of Transportation; SC Law Enforcement Division; SC Department of Administration, SC Commission for Minority Affairs; Forestry Commission; Lt. Governor's Office on Aging; SC Educational Television; SC Criminal Justice Academy; SC School for the Deaf and Blind; SC Commission for the Blind; SC Department of Social Services; SC Department of Education; SC Department of Motor Vehicles; SC Department of Commerce; SC Department of Insurance

SUPPORTING: SC National Guard; SC State Guard

#### I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Generation of timely public information coordinated with the appropriate level of government is essential to avoid or minimize loss of life and property if a disaster is imminent or has occurred.
- B. Before, during, and after emergency operations, the State will apprise the public through reports to the news media, the internet, the Emergency Alert System (EAS), and various alternative media.
- C. State services and assistance provided under this function shall include the delineation of responsibilities and protective actions to be taken to provide the general public with essential information, and the documentation of emergency actions and operations implemented or proposed by written, verbal or photographic means.

#### II. PURPOSE

Provide effective public information through coordination with appropriate Federal, State, and local agencies and organizations to minimize loss of life and property before, during, and after an emergency or disaster.

#### III. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

- A. The Public Information Section of the South Carolina Emergency Management Division (SCEMD) is responsible for all ESF-15 administrative, management, planning, preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery activities to include developing, coordinating and maintaining the ESF-15 Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).

- B. ESF-15 supporting agencies will assist the SCEMD in the planning and execution of the above.
- C. ESF-15 personnel will be familiar with the National Response Framework and the corresponding annex with Federal counterpart concepts, actions and responsibilities. This familiarization will include, but not be limited to, the organization, structure, functions and responsibilities of the Incident Management Assistance Teams (IMAT), and the Joint Field Office (JFO).
- D. Dissemination of Public Information
  - 1. Disaster and emergency information from South Carolina government shall be clear, concise, and accurate regarding the existing situation, actions being taken by authorities, and those to be taken by the population.
  - 2. On behalf of the Governor, the Director of SCEMD, through ESF-15, is responsible for informing the public of emergency and disaster operations within the State.
  - 3. The dissemination of public information during emergency and disaster operations is done with the advice and consent of the Governor's Director of Communications, who reserves the authority to intervene, to assume control, or to disseminate supplementary public information at any time.
    - a. ESF-15 will keep the Governor's Director of Communications informed of media-related events as they unfold and will provide such information on a continuing and timely basis.
    - b. ESF-15 will provide timely and continuing information to the Governor's Director of Communications, and make appropriate recommendations if requested.
  - 4. ESF-15 will provide and/or coordinate situation briefings, press conferences, taped messages, photographs, news accounts, statistics on injuries and fatalities, and other information to the news media as appropriate, to include information targeted for non-English speaking individuals and/or special needs populations.
  - 5. On behalf of the State, ESF-15 will provide similar materials and briefings for State and Federal officials and coordinate State and local information/news releases with related Federal, State, and local agencies and officials. ESF-15 will coordinate with the Governor's Director of Communications regarding such activities.
  - 6. The South Carolina EAS will be activated appropriately according to established area, State, and national EAS procedures.

- E. State agencies or department will make their public information, public relations, or public affairs personnel available to augment ESF-15 when requested, to include non-English speaking individuals and/or access and functional needs populations.
- F. Coordination of Public Information
  - 1. ESF-15 will establish a Joint Information System (JIS) of public information personnel from all affected jurisdictions, agencies, and private sector organizations.
  - 2. ESF-15 will coordinate Public Information efforts to prevent and counter rumors, hearsay, and inaccuracies, and to ensure accurate, timely, and consistent emergency public information.
  - 3. ESF-15 will coordinate efforts to report and document emergency/disaster operations at the SEOC and/or near the incident site.
  - 4. Under certain circumstances, and with approval of the Governor's Communications Director, State agencies or departments may issue press statements. However, the State agencies or departments must coordinate these with ESF-15 prior to release.
- G. Joint Information Center
  - 1. If appropriate, ESF-15 will establish a Joint Information Center (JIC). Representatives of State Agencies and jurisdictions may provide emergency public information from this location.
  - 2. The State JIC will normally be co-located at the SEOC. However, based on the event or the site or hazard-specific plan, the State JIC may be located at a separate location.
- H. ESF-15 will consult with appropriate department or agency representatives concerning implementation of emergency or disaster public information activities.
- I. When the Public Information Phone System (PIPS) is activated, ESF-15 will provide public information personnel to support PIPS.
- J. State ESF-15 will coordinate with Federal ESF-15 to obtain federal assistance as required.

#### **IV. ESF ACTIONS**

- A. Preparedness
  - 1. Develop a public information program to educate the public regarding the effects of common, emergency, and disaster situations.

2. Develop plans to coordinate with international, national, state and local news media for emergency operations, before, during and after emergency situations.
3. Develop plans to conduct a multi-agency/jurisdiction coordinated public information program during emergencies and disasters.
4. Develop plans and programs to educate news media that ESF-15 is the primary information center during emergency situations, unless otherwise directed by the Governor's Director of Communications.
5. Develop procedures to organize and operate the State Emergency Response Team (SERT) media briefing area and/or a JIC.
6. Be prepared to engage multi-lingual personnel to translate EAS messages, news releases, and public service announcements, for all hazards affecting the state.
7. Secure lists of qualified interpreters/translators to relay public information.
8. Develop and maintain social media engagement procedures for the State Emergency Response Team during activations of the SEOC.
9. Encourage the public to develop disaster plans and kits.
10. Provide evacuation information to the affected public.
11. Develop and implement a training program for all ESF members.
12. Develop and maintain a roster with contact information of ESF-15 personnel.
13. Ensure procedures are in place to document costs for any potential reimbursement.
14. Participate at least annually in State exercises and/or conduct an exercise to validate this Annex and supporting SOPs.

B. Response

1. Alert agencies whose personnel, equipment, or other resources may be used.
2. Provide EAS messages and news releases in common language and terminology to inform the public. Coordinate with established hotline systems.
3. Provide emergency public information to special needs populations, as well as non-English speaking individuals.

4. Coordinate with news media regarding emergency operations.
5. Provide mass notification to urban and rural populations and provide periodic media updates.
6. Execute a multi-agency/jurisdiction coordinated public information program.
7. Organize and operate a SERT press briefing area and a joint information center, as appropriate.
8. Supplement local emergency management public information operations, as necessary, and when resources are available.
9. Provide public information personnel to support PIPS.
10. Provide ESF-15 representation on the Recovery Task Force.

C. Recovery

1. Continue public information activities to include updating the public on recovery efforts including public health notices for clean up on private property while ensuring all public notices are available in alternative formats.
2. Plan for arrival of and coordination with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) ESF-15 (External Affairs) personnel in the SEOC, and the JFO.
3. Process and disseminate disaster welfare and family reunification information.
4. Ensure emergency information concerning safety and disaster assistance is provided to the public in coordination with each ESF utilizing available communications channels.
5. Support long-term recovery priorities as identified by the Recovery Task Force.

D. Mitigation

1. Support and plan for mitigation measures including monitoring and updating mitigation actions in the State Hazard Mitigation Plan.
2. Review, evaluate, recommend, and comment on proposed State Hazard Mitigation Plan amendments, upon initiation and within the review period.
3. Support requests and directives from the Governor and/or FEMA concerning mitigation and/or re-development activities.

4. Document matters that may be needed for inclusion in agency or state/federal briefings, situation reports and action plans.

**V. RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A. General. ESF-15 support agencies will maintain contact with and prepare to execute missions in support of ESF-15 during periods of activation.

- B. South Carolina Emergency Management Division

1. Identify, train, and assign personnel to staff ESF-15 in the SEOC.
2. Develop and implement a training program regarding EOC operations/processes for all ESF-15 members.
3. Develop a public information program to educate the public regarding the effects of emergency and disaster situations.
4. Develop plans to coordinate with news media and external agencies for emergency operations, before, during and after an emergency.
5. Develop plans to conduct a multi-agency/jurisdiction coordinated public information program during emergency and disaster situations.
6. Develop plans and programs to educate news media that ESF-15 is the primary information center during emergency situations, unless otherwise directed by the Governor's Director of Communications.
7. Develop procedures to organize and operate a SERT media briefing area and/or a joint information center.
8. Develop pre-scripted EAS messages and news releases for all hazards to include hurricanes, earthquakes, nuclear incidents, and dam failures in traditional and alternative media.
9. Coordinate with local and County Public Information Officers on the dissemination of news releases and other public information materials.
10. Develop and maintain social media plans and procedures for the State Emergency Management System.

- C. SC Department of Health and Environmental Control

Provide personnel to augment ESF-15 during emergencies and disasters.

- D. SC Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services  
Provide personnel to augment ESF-15 during emergencies and disasters.
- E. SC Department of Agriculture  
Provide personnel to augment ESF-15 during emergencies and disasters.
- F. SC Department of Natural Resources  
Provide personnel to augment ESF-15 during emergencies and disasters.
- G. SC Commission for Minority Affairs
  - 1. In coordination with SCEMD Public Information develop and disseminate written Spanish language disaster/preparedness Public Service Announcements (PSA), news releases, and other disaster related public information to local/county emergency management offices, and applicable broadcasts/print media outlets.
  - 2. During periods of activation and at other times as requested, provide bi-lingual services during print/on-air broadcast media interviews, press conferences, and other live media events.
  - 3. Develop plans/procedures to ensure widest distribution of disaster information via Spanish language print and broadcast media outlets.
- H. SC Law Enforcement Division  
Provide personnel to augment ESF-15 during emergencies and disasters.
- I. SC Department of Labor License and Regulation  
Provide personnel to augment ESF-15 during emergencies and disasters.
- J. SC Department of Transportation  
Provide personnel to augment ESF-15 during emergencies and disasters.
- K. SC Department of Public Safety  
Provide personnel to augment ESF-15 during emergencies and disasters.
- L. The Lt. Governor's Office on Aging  
Provide personnel to augment ESF-15 during emergencies and disasters.

M. SC Educational Television

1. Provide technical support and assistance in statewide public communications from the State Emergency Operations Center.
2. Provide technical assistance to communicate with the deaf, blind, and non-English speaking populations.

N. SC School for the Deaf and Blind

1. Provide assistance to communicate with the deaf and blind populations.
2. Identify coordinate and provide sign language interpreters during a disaster.
3. Assist in developing media content in a format accessible by persons with sensory impairments.

O. SC Forestry Commission

Provide personnel to augment ESF-15 during emergencies and disasters.

P. SC Criminal Justice Academy

Provide personnel to augment ESF-15 during emergencies and disasters.

Q. SC Commission for the Blind

Identify resources available before, during, and after a disaster to communicate with citizens that are visually impaired or blind.

R. SC Department of Administration

Provide personnel to augment ESF-15 during emergencies and disasters.

S. SC Department of Social Services

Provide personnel to augment ESF-15 during emergencies and disasters.

T. SC Department of Education

Provide personnel to augment ESF-15 during emergencies and disasters.

U. SC Department of Motor Vehicles

Provide personnel to augment ESF-15 during emergencies and disasters.

V. SC Department of Commerce

Provide personnel to augment ESF-15 during emergencies and disasters.



W. SC Department of Insurance

Provide personnel to augment ESF-15 during emergencies and disasters.

**VI. FEDERAL ASSISTANCE**

A. This Annex is supported by the National Response Framework ESF-15 (External Affairs).

B. Federal ESF-15 consists of the following functional components:

- External affairs
- Community relations
- Congressional affairs
- Public affairs
- State and local coordination
- Tribal affairs
- Private sector external affairs coordination
- Planning and products

C. ESF-15 provides the External Affairs Officer to the Unified Coordination Staff during an incident requiring a coordinated Federal response. The External Affairs Officer, or ESF-15 Officer, serves as the primary external affairs advisor to the Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO) and Unified Coordination Group, if designated.

D. ESF-15 may provide the same support to a National Special Security Event.

E. Public information personnel will arrive with the initial FEMA IMAT, will initially co-locate with the SEOC, and then operate from either the JFO or SEOC.