



Functional Annex – Emergency Public Information

Approved (March 3, 2025)

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1 Purpose

The purpose of this annex is to outline the means, organization, and process by which Washington County will provide appropriate information and instructions to the public during emergency situations.

2 Situation and Assumptions

2.1 Situation

Washington County is subject to a number of natural and human-made hazards that can threaten public health and safety and create a need to communicate emergency information to the public.

Emergencies may develop slowly (e.g., severe winter storm and flood), allowing sufficient time to effectively disseminate information to the public. Other emergencies may occur suddenly (e.g., wildfire, earthquake, and hazmat release), hindering the ability of staff to inform the public.

During emergencies, the public needs timely, accurate information about the situation and appropriate instructions regarding protective actions they should take to minimize injuries, loss of life and damage to property.

Language, access and functional needs, culture, and other factors affecting an individual's ability to receive and understand emergency messages require that the information be provided in multiple formats and through a variety of means.

Nationally, an increasing percentage of the public relies on digital applications and media sites for news and information. These internet-based channels for receiving information have outpaced traditional sources in recent years.

Although demand for traditional media sources has declined over time, radio, television, print media outlets, and trusted relationships are still needed to effectively distribute emergency information and recommended actions to the public, as well as address disinformation.

Washington County and various jurisdictions within the county share a single broadcast media market with the rest of the Portland/Vancouver metropolitan area.

Public information staff will cooperate with the news media whenever possible.

Washington County and partner agencies also provide public information through multiple social media platforms, both during emergency and nonemergency times.

In large-scale or unusual emergencies, the public and local, national and international media will demand information simultaneously.

The timely dissemination of accurate emergency information and recommended actions will enhance community recovery.

Washington County maintains and/or has access to the following public information assets and resources:

- People: Washington County has several employees who can fill the role of public information officer (PIO) and provide PIO support. Most large departments within the organization have at least one PIO and several individuals who provide public information regularly, have been trained through the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) program, and would be able to step into the Joint Information Center (JIC) in a supporting capacity. Some of the smaller departments and programs have employees who engage in communications activities as well.

Additional PIO resources may be available from cities, special service districts, and agencies within Washington County, the Portland metro region and the state. In general, PIOs are in short supply and not available to assist others if their own jurisdictions have been, or could be, impacted.

Washington County Cooperative Library Services supports a network of libraries within the county that can assist by making pertinent information available to the public.

Supportive groups in the county include community participation organizations (CPOs) which can assist with the distribution of information at the neighborhood level (e.g., community meetings in impacted areas where information on recovery resources is critical).

Culturally specific community-based organizations (CBOs) can also help by reaching out to specific ethnic/cultural audiences with emergency information and assistance.

- Information Collection and Dissemination Tools: The County uses a variety of tools for collecting information and disseminating it to the public. Some primary tools include:
 - Everbridge, the County's emergency alerting software. Everbridge can send alerts to wide areas of the community using: the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS), a landline subscriber database, and opt-in public alert contact information. Everbridge is managed by Washington County Emergency Management. The 911 center (WCCCA) can also operate the system.
 - Social Media, incident maps, agency websites, and other internet-based communication tools. Media releases and other information, such as links to pertinent information and public resources, can be shared through these methods.
 - 211 Info, a statewide resource for information and referral. This service can provide insight into the questions and needs Washington County communities are asking about. 211 is often used as the main public inquiry line for many emergency responses.
 - The County Public Inquiry Center (PIC). The PIC is a physical or virtual center, supported by County employees and trained volunteers which provides

information and answers questions from the public using approved responses/messages. Through the PIC, PIOs can also receive feedback from the public as to what kind of information is needed.

- Regularly updated contact lists. The three main contact lists available to the PIOs are: PIOs associated with partner agencies operating within Washington County boundaries; the Regional PIO list; and the regional media contact list.
- Public Information Facilities: The County provides space in both its primary and alternate EOCs for public information functions. Facility resources include computers, telephones, televisions, fax machines, and printers. The primary EOC can accommodate a JIC on site or support one closer to an incident. The primary EOC also has access to a video recording studio. JIC equipment/resources are basic and would require augmentation for a multi-day event.
- Cloud- and internet-based applications: The County has access to several cloud- and internet-based applications which can support file sharing, joint document creation and editing, instant messaging communications and virtual meetings. These applications allow PIO operations to occur in a decentralized or virtual capacity when needed.

2.2 Assumptions

- Information dissemination resources (including media and local government) will be available to facilitate timely delivery of information to the public.
- Sufficient communications capability will be available to allow information collection and dissemination.
- Partner agencies will support this plan by providing PIOs (when possible) to participate in the public information function.
- Open and effective coordination and dissemination of emergency information will increase public trust in local authorities, thereby enhancing public cooperation and compliance with issued guidance and directives.
- The public will turn to social media sites, internet-based applications, TV, radio, and the web for information.

3 Concept of Operations

3.1 Definitions

3.1.1 County

In this annex, when the word “County” is capitalized it refers to Washington County government. When the word “county” is lowercase it refers to the geographic boundaries of Washington County.

3.1.2 County Public Inquiry Center (PIC)

A virtual or physical organization activated by the Washington County EOC to provide information to the public about incident activity, impacts, and available resources. It can also serve as a point to receive public offers of assistance to volunteer and/or donate goods.

3.1.3 Department Operations Center (DOC)

Specially equipped facility from which department staff conduct operational activities and resource management in relation to their area of expertise. If the EOC is activated, a DOC holds a subordinate position in the allocation of resources and management of information countywide.

3.1.4 Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

A specially equipped facility from which County officials exercise strategic direction and control and coordinate policy, resources and information in an emergency situation. An EOC can operate in a virtual capacity depending on the needs of the response.

3.1.5 Joint Information Center (JIC)

A centralized virtual or physical location in a fixed facility (e.g., EOC) or near an incident scene that enhances information coordination, reduces misinformation, and maximizes resources by co-locating Public Information Officers (PIOs).

3.1.6 Joint Information System (JIS)

A mechanism for integrating public information activities during an emergency to ensure coordinated and consistent message development, verification, and dissemination, while allowing participants to retain organizational identity and autonomy.

3.1.7 Lead PIO

The PIO in charge of the emergency public information function at the EOC, DOC, JIC or in the field. Lead PIOs report directly to Command at their location.

3.1.8 Public Information Officer (PIO)

A person who has been assigned by an organization to manage the collection and validation of incident information, create related messaging and materials, and disseminate it to the public using social media, traditional media, and other means. A PIO is usually also responsible for communicating with other groups (e.g., coworkers, governmental agencies, other PIOs).

3.2 Activation

Following a natural or human-made disaster, emergency public information is managed at the department level and expands as the complexity and size of the disaster increases. Not all disasters increase in size, so many responses will begin and end at the department level, often in a Department Operations Center (DOC).

If an incident is forecasted to occur (e.g., winter weather, extreme heat, wildfire), Public Information Officers will issue warning messages to the public. Each department is responsible for messaging about topics related to their focus area. For example, in advance of a wildfire, HHS will message about wildfire smoke and keeping inside air clean; the Sheriff's Office will

message about the three levels of evacuation; and LUT will message about where to find updated road information in the event of evacuation. PIOs from affected departments will informally coordinate their messaging ahead of time via routine channels.

After an incident occurs, emergency public information will be conducted first by the PIOs in the lead responding department. If the lead responding department does not have a dedicated PIO, then one will be requested and re-assigned from a non-affected department. If the incident requires more public information support than the responding department has, additional PIOs may be requested from non-impacted departments.

The Public Information Officers' key responsibilities include:

- Interface with the public and media and with other jurisdictions/organizations that have incident-related information needs.
- Support on-scene responders and the incident PIO.
- Gather, verify, analyze, and report on relevant media coverage and social media conversations.
- Quickly dispel rumors and correct misinformation circulating online or via the media.
- Craft clear messages in plain language that all can understand, including people with access and functional needs (AFN).
- Disseminate information on websites, social media, and other tools or platforms.

3.3 Escalation

If the incident becomes complex enough to activate the EOC, the lead department PIO transitions into the Lead PIO role in the EOC. The Lead PIO requests additional PIO staff from the County's roster, or from local, regional, or state partners if all other sources have been exhausted. The Lead PIO is responsible for assigning jobs, setting the daily briefing and meeting schedule, alerting the team to Command's priorities, making goals, and monitoring work. If the scope of the workload becomes too great for one PIO to manage, an assistant Lead PIO can be requested and assigned.

A County PIC can be activated if there is a need for a centralized source for information in response to public questions. The need for a PIC may be determined in the County EOC or at the request of WCCCA when their lines begin to get overwhelmed with incident related questions. The PIC can start small, with just a single answering point, and grow as the needs from the public increase. The PIC can be a virtual or physical location. The Lead PIO is responsible for working with Logistics to activate this but can delegate to other PIO staff as needed.

3.4 Coordination

PIOs coordinate internally across departments and externally with partner agencies to ensure messages are accurate, aligned, and timely. PIOs may coordinate with others at the local, state, and federal level, as well as those in the private sector and nongovernmental organizations. Coordination can occur through email, text, phone calls, coordination calls, situation reports, on site meetings, and other resources.

Within the County, it is the County EOC Lead PIO or designee's responsibility to ensure coordination between responding agencies and participate in the Regional Joint Information Center (JIC).

During response, a JIC may be established at the County EOC, virtually, and/or at/near an incident.

JIC operations:

- Gather, verify, coordinate, and disseminate consistent messages.
- Enhance interagency coordination and integration.
- Provide message integration opportunities from various levels of incident management and subject matter experts.
- Correct misinformation.
- Maximize public information resources and varied PIO talents.
- Serve as an official information source for the media.
- Are flexible, modular, and adaptable.

At the direction of the Lead PIO, PIOs working at an EOC JIC:

- Collect and analyze countywide incident information.
- Manage the release of timely and accurate emergency public information and warnings.
- Interact with the news media by responding to inquiries, developing news releases and talking points, and pitching stories on countywide issues (e.g., checking on elderly neighbors during prolonged winter storms, procedures for purifying drinking water, health concerns associated with flood waters, dealing with psychological stressors).
- Advise the incident commander (IC) on public information issues.
- Support elected officials and other members of the Policy Group as they prepare and deliver statements to the media/public on the emergency situation.
- Regularly inform internal staff of incident impacts and related activities.
- Support the PIC by providing call takers with key messages and information.
- Develop new messaging based on feedback and frequently asked questions from the PIC.
- Inform media and public on what is going on countywide.

An incident JIC or Public Information Unit may be established by Unified Command if needed to support response. The agencies making up Unified Command will be responsible for providing the necessary facilities and equipment for the incident JIC/Public Information Unit and may request support from the County EOC if the needs exceed their capabilities. PIOs within the incident JIC/Public Information Unit will coordinate with the County PIOs through the JIS to share information, provide situational awareness, and update communication resource and topic needs.

When possible, if the EOC JIC is a physical location, involved agencies will provide a PIO to work a shift in the facility. If the JIC is virtual, responding agencies will send public information representatives to conference calls and participate in cloud-based document creation and review.

When participating in a JIC/JIS, the departments, agencies, and organizations that contribute do not lose their individual identities or responsibility for programs but rather contribute to an overall unified and coordinated message.

3.5 Catastrophic Incident Response

In the event of a catastrophic incident which significantly damages normal modes of communication (e.g., phone, internet, television), responding PIOs will use any communication system still operational to share incident information and coordinate the dissemination of messages to the public. Catastrophic incidents will require physical JICs as virtual coordination will not be an option. In the case of a catastrophic incident, JICs may be established at each level of incident management – local, state, regional, and national – as required. County PIOs may be asked to represent County concerns from an EOC JIC, a Field JIC or a Regional JIC as needed.

If routine communications systems are not available, efforts to establish a physical JIC will occur in anticipation of the restoration of needed communications systems. Alternate methods of communication will be identified and utilized as needed.

If phone lines are operational, the County Public Inquiry Center will be activated. The PIC will not receive public calls until EOC JIC staff have provided call takers with approved messages and information.

3.6 Response Operations

3.6.1 JIC Organization and Management:

The JIC is filled by the following positions (depending on the size and needs of the response):

- JIC Lead PIO – Responsible for managing JIC operations, formalizing the JIC structure, assigning job functions to responding PIOs, reporting to leadership, and coordinating content approvals from the incident commanders (ICs).
- Assistant Lead PIO - Assigned to help manage JIC operations if the response exceeds a single PIO's span of control. Responsible for overseeing JIC operations while Lead PIO is in planning meetings.
- JIC Manager - Supervises daily operations of the JIC such as requesting and orienting new JIC staff, gathering and reporting information from responding PIOs to the Lead PIO, working with the EOC's Logistics Section to obtain equipment and facilities, and collecting and archiving all public information products (e.g., talking points, news releases, briefing booklets, news conference agendas, flyers, photographs, links to online articles, media contact logs).
- JIC Group Supervisors – Activated when the number of PIO staff working in the three focus areas (explained below) exceeds the span of control for the Lead PIO and Assistant PIO. Responsible for overseeing the specific work completed by PIO staff, offering guidance and content revision, and seeking input from and reporting as needed to the lead PIO.

- JIC PIO Staff - Individuals assigned to provide tactical support, as determined by the Lead PIO. Support tasks may include: social media management, media relations, media monitoring, supporting spokespersons, producing coordination call takeaways, acting as an onsite media liaison, updating FAQ documents, etc.

3.6.2 Information Gathering

Effective communication starts with gathering good information. PIOs use a number of different sources to gather information and determine what should be included in news releases, on the incident website, and on social media. These include:

- SitStat Unit staff.
- Interviews with field responders and safety officers.
- Guidance from subject matter and/or technical experts.
- Public safety radio traffic.
- Partner agency websites.
- Existing media coverage.
- Washington County Consolidated Communications Agency (WCCCA), (the county's 9-1-1 dispatch center).
- Trusted relationships with other PIOs.
- Multi-Agency Coordination (MAC) Groups.
- Local, regional, and state coordination calls.

PIOs routinely gather information from the above sources using a variety of communication methods, including, but not limited to: cell phones, direct-connect radios, a regional PIO listserv, the Internet (agency websites and social media), television, EOC SitStat displays, face-to-face communications, and amateur radio.

Once information is gathered, PIOs need to verify its accuracy before putting it into public messaging.

3.6.3 Message Development

After gathering pertinent information, public information personnel coordinate to establish unified key messages that address informational needs prioritized according to local, state, tribal, territorial, and federal incident management priorities and strategies. The goal is to get accurate, consistent information to the right people at the right time so they can make informed decisions.

Messages may include:

- The incident's current situation.
- What responders know and don't know.
- Recommended protective measures.
- How to access assistance.
- Current response and recovery actions.
- Other matters of general interest for internal and external audiences.
- When and where they can expect additional information.

Messages may also be developed based on social media monitoring and situational awareness. Social media can help identify areas of confusion or gaps in messaging.

When developing and delivering messages, PIOs will strive to:

- Present a short, concise, and focused message using plain language.
- Make the most important points immediately.
- Give action steps in positives, not negatives.
- Repeat key talking points.
- Use bridging techniques to bring the interview back to key messages.
- Share only information within their field of practice and/or connect with subject matter experts outside of their field of practice.
- Prioritize message timing/delivery to limit the chance of overwhelming the public.
- Provide accessible and multi-lingual messages.
- Provide messages in multiple formats.
- Utilize multiple modes of communication to ensure efficacy.

3.6.4 Message Approval

Generally, IC approval is necessary for media releases. For smaller deliverables like social media posts and website updates, the Lead PIO is responsible for approval. The IC and Lead PIO can discuss at any time if changes to this structure are necessary. Messages may need to be reviewed and approved by subject matter experts (like the County Health Officer, for example) before IC approval occurs.

Forms of message approval include:

- Verbal.
- Physical initials/signatures.
- Email approval.
- Multiple review and approval (often the case with unified command).

For any message that needs verbal or physical sign off, PIOs should give advance notice to leadership regarding the upcoming need for approval. If messaging is especially urgent, PIO will inform leadership so approval can occur in a timely fashion.

3.6.5 Methods of Dissemination

Following message approval, EOC PIOs will push messaging out through a number of different avenues to ensure all members of the community have access to the information. The specific methods used will be determined based on the availability of technology and the needs of the community that the messaging is for.

These methods include, but are not limited to:

3.6.5.1 News Media Based

3.6.5.1.1 News Releases

Media releases are emailed to the media, affiliated PIOs, activated DOCs, and other activated EOCs, as well as County staff. They are also posted in the EOC, on the County's website and made available to the media via FlashNews (Web-based posting service). Detailed contact lists for news media are maintained and utilized regularly by affiliated PIOs.

3.6.5.1.2 Press Conferences

Presentations on incident activities by one or more agency representatives to attending media personnel (press conferences) are arranged and managed by EOC/JIC public information staff. Both the primary and alternate County EOCs provide facilities to support press conferences.

3.6.5.1.3 Emergency Alert System (EAS)

This alert and warning system uses the broadcast media to announce conditions that pose an immediate threat to public safety. Alert messages may be written by PIO staff or other command and general staff. EAS messages are approved by the IC and then issued by EOC or WCCCA staff.

3.6.5.2 Web-Based

3.6.5.2.1 County Website

The County has access to several websites for releasing and updating public information:

- County homepage
- Emergency Management Current Incidents website
- LUT's WC-Roads website
- Incident-specific websites and maps
- Hazard specific websites

3.6.5.2.2 Social Media

Washington County has access to several Facebook, Twitter/X, YouTube, Instagram, and Nextdoor accounts which can be used to share critical information and direct the public to websites with additional information. These include, but are not limited to:

- WC Facebook
- WC–Condado de Washington Facebook
- WC HHS Facebook
- WC Sheriff's Office Facebook
- WC Twitter/X
- WC Sheriff's Office Twitter/X
- WC Nextdoor (multiple individual user accounts)

- WC-Roads Twitter/X
- WC YouTube
- WC Sheriff's Office YouTube
- WC Instagram

3.6.5.2.3 Social Media Live Events

Public Information Officers can conduct Facebook Live events to share more detailed response and safety information, clarify confusing guidance, and answer public questions without having to use the news media as an intermediary.

3.6.5.2.4 Distribution Lists/List-Servs

The County maintains several list-servs of community partners, local emergency managers, media partners, etc. and can send updates, situational awareness, overviews of key messages, or news releases to partners via these email list-servs.

3.6.5.3 Telephone Based

3.6.5.3.1 Public Inquiry Center (PIC)

The PIC is a virtual or physical phone bank that is activated to support public information and increasing public inquiries during an emergency.

The Lead PIO has authority to request activation of the PIC from the IC, and is responsible for coordinating and overseeing set up, training, and staff assignments.

3.6.5.3.2 PublicAlerts

Public information staff can disseminate critical and timely information through an electronic public warning system, PublicAlerts, which is managed by Washington County Emergency Management. The current PublicAlerts platform, Everbridge, can deliver messages via text, email, and recorded phone message to specific areas, or to all individuals in Washington County. Depending on the nature of the information and severity of the warning, these messages can be sent either to opt in users in the system or to every cell phone connecting to a cell tower in the target area.

3.6.5.4 Direct Contact

3.6.5.4.1 Route Alerting

Quickly notifying residents of an imminent danger can be accomplished through route alerting. Vehicles equipped with sirens and public address systems can drive through a targeted area, announcing critical information.

3.6.5.4.2 Door-to-Door

Knocking on doors and/or distributing flyers are direct methods of getting information to residents. Though time-consuming and labor intensive, they can be effective ways to verify who did and did not receive the information, and ensure everyone is aware of the

situation and recommended safety actions. The same information can also be posted in areas where it will be noticed by congregating/passing public.

3.6.5.4.3 Community Information Meetings

PIOs can use community meetings to share updates on the emergency's impact, descriptions of available resources, financial assistance, and future plans by responders.

These meetings are most appropriate for areas that are isolated from other media by the emergency, or for incidents where effects are localized.

3.6.5.4.4 Placement of Information in Public Places

Placing flyers, pamphlets, brochures, or daily updates in public places (e.g., libraries, recreation centers, senior centers, schools, and nonprofit service centers) is an effective way of getting information into the hands that need it. This method, while time-consuming for PIOs, is helpful for people who cannot access information electronically.

3.6.5.4.5 Reader Boards

Electronic reader boards are used to communicate important information to motorists. Although reader board messages must be short and may impact traffic flow, they are easily noticed by drivers. The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) operates the variable message signs in the county along with portable reader boards mounted on their incident response vehicles, which could be requested. In addition, County LUT and other public works agencies in the county own or have access to portable reader boards.

3.7 Limited English Proficiency Implementation

Considering Washington County's ethnic and linguistic diversity, the EOC PIOs make every effort to make emergency information available and accessible to all individuals in Washington County, regardless of their English proficiency. It is important to determine which populations are at greater risk and to use the most appropriate method(s) to reach these target populations.

At a minimum, information related to life-safety needs to be translated or transcreated (created in English and other languages simultaneously, giving consideration to all language needs) and distributed in Spanish. As resources allow, these types of messages should be translated or transcreated and distributed in some or all safe harbor languages (federally required languages to provide information in based on demographics). For information on the County's Safe Harbor languages see the Safe Harbor Languages [Horizons webpage](#) (internal employees only).

To ensure information is available in multiple languages, County PIOs will rely on both internal and external resources, including but not limited to:

- Pre-identified staff with language/translation skills.
- Bilingual staff in the JIC during response.
- Contracts with translation and interpretation companies.

- County staff who have day-to-day contact with communities of color, individuals with access and functional needs, and others with additional considerations and needs.
- County staff who have working knowledge of organizations within the county that provide assistance to at-risk groups and individuals.
- Leaders of represented ethnic, cultural, access/functional needs and religious organizations.
- Media serving specific ethnic/cultural groups.

4 Organization and Assignment of Responsibilities

4.1 Task Assignments

4.1.1 Board of Commissioners

- Act as County spokespersons by using approved messaging to describe response/recovery actions County responders are taking, encourage community members to take recommended steps to protect themselves and their property, and provide reassurance to those impacted.

4.1.2 County Policy Group

- Coordinate policy regarding the release of emergency public information with the Board of Commissioners and the IC.
- When appropriate, coordinate with the EOC Lead PIO to issue statements addressing public concerns and issues.

4.1.3 County Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

- Coordinate public information collection, verification, production, and dissemination both within the County organization and countywide. (PIO, Planning, Operations, IC)
- Provide emergency information and instructions to the general public, private institutions, businesses, industry, and disaster relief organizations. (PIO, Liaison Officer)
- When needed, coordinate with affected jurisdictions to establish a JIC and provide staff/support as possible. (PIO, Logistics)
- When needed, activate and support the County PIC to answer questions and address concerns from the public. (PIO, IC, Logistics)

4.1.4 All County Departments

4.1.4.1 Departments with Public Information Staff or Operation Centers

- When needed, provide subject matter expertise and/or staff at least one position in the EOC JIC to provide situation status updates, support creation of key messages, and update websites and social media with pertinent response information.
- Representatives' areas of expertise:
 - HHS: public health guidance, disease control and prevention, epidemiological data, environmental health, mental health, animal services, solid waste, aging services
 - LUT: county roads, bridges and damaged buildings, emergency land use, permitting
 - Sheriff's Office: law enforcement impacts (e.g., evacuations, security, curfews), public safety advisories and alerts that include recommendations for public protective actions
 - Housing: emergency and public housing, needs of houseless individuals and related considerations

4.1.4.2 County Internal Services

- When needed, support public information efforts in manner consistent with technical expertise and department function:
 - Facilities, Fleet & Parks Services:
 - Identify and secure facilities for emergency public information functions (e.g., JIC, Public Inquiry Center, media rooms).
 - Provide on-call staff to respond to facility needs.
 - Information and Technology Services (ITS):
 - Provide additional equipment and capabilities (e.g., computers, printers, data/voice ports) to the County EOC, DOCs, JICs, and Public Inquiry Center.
 - Provide technical support for EOC, JIC, and PIC operations
 - County Administrative Office:
 - Communicate critical information (e.g., life safety recommendations, available assistance programs, recovery resources/information) released from the DOCs/EOC to County staff.
 - Mail & Print Services (Within Facilities, Fleet & Parks): Provide printing and delivery services of incident information.

4.1.4.3 Cooperative Library Services

- Recommend methods of reaching affected communities and/or communities facing language or cultural barriers through library services and established contacts.
- Support distribution of incident information (e.g., flyers, posters, brochures) provided by the EOC JIC, to libraries and other appropriate locations for public access.

5 Direction and Control

When a DOC or DOCs are activated without a concurrent EOC activation, department PIOs will disseminate emergency information to the media, department staff, County Administration, the Board of Commissioners, and the County’s Emergency Management Office as directed by the DOC IC(s). DOC PIOs can request support from other County PIO staff without the activation of the EOC.

Upon activation of the County EOC, the IC will designate a Lead PIO and establish procedures for approving news releases before they are disseminated. The Lead PIO, with support, will activate other PIOs to staff an EOC/JIC organization large enough to respond to the incident and oversee PIO operations.

PIOs responding to an incident in the field report to on-scene Command and coordinate information with the supporting DOC or EOC.

The County Public Inquiry Center will only release incident information and recommendations received from the EOC/JIC PIO and identified source experts (e.g., Red Cross for shelter locations, TriMet for bus/train schedule impacts, LUT DOC for road closures, HHS DOC for public health recommendations). All others wishing to make specific information available to the public through the PIC must contact the EOC Lead PIO.

6 Administration and Logistics

6.1 Administration

For emergencies not requiring activation of the EOC, County departments will be responsible for gathering, analyzing, producing, disseminating (e.g., to news media, partner agencies, County staff as appropriate) and documenting emergency public information within the scope of department responsibilities.

For emergencies requiring activation of the EOC, County departments will coordinate public information dissemination with the EOC Lead PIO.

The JIC Manual is a primary resource for County PIOs. It contains information on how the emergency public information function is structured and staffed, policies and approval descriptions, specific functions to be performed, samples of news release formats, and hazard-specific talking points in multiple languages.

6.2 Logistics

6.2.1 Staffing

The EOC and DOCs have minimal levels of pre-assigned PIOs. Emergency Management keeps a record of trained and available public information staff within the County who can be requested for support. For large-scale events, additional PIO resources may be acquired through existing partnerships with county jurisdictions/agencies and requests via the PIO listserv.

6.2.2 Facilities and Equipment

The County maintains the ability to activate a primary EOC/JIC (located at the Law Enforcement Center or LEC). The County is also able to activate both the JIC and PIC virtually using ITS technology and cloud-based software. Additional PIO facilities will be acquired by Logistics.

6.2.3 Resources

Plans and procedures for activating EOCs, DOCs, JIC(s), and the County Public Inquiry Center are published separately from this annex and include:

- Washington County EOC Activation Manual.
- LUT DOC Activation Manual (under development).
- JIC Manual
- County Public Inquiry Center Activation Manual (under development).

Contact information is maintained and updated on a regular basis and made available to PIOs within the County. Contact lists include:

- News media serving Washington County
- Regional PIOs
- Community-based organizations

7 Annex Development and Maintenance

The Emergency Management Office will maintain this annex in cooperation with County departments identified in Section IV (Organization and Assignment of Responsibilities).

Each tasked County department will develop and maintain procedures to implement its responsibilities under the plan.

8 References

[Washington County Basic Plan](#) (component of the EOP)

[Alert and Warning Annex](#) (2004)

[LEAP Policy](#) (internal employees only)

9 Tabs

Tab 1 - JIC Manual

Tab 2 - Washington County Public Inquiry Center Activation Manual