

ANNEX 15 (ESF-15)

PUBLIC INFORMATION

PRIMARY: Office of The Adjutant General, South Carolina Emergency Management Division

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

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. Before, during, and after emergency operations, the public will be apprised through reports to the news media, through the internet, and through the Emergency Alert System (EAS) and in various alternative media.
- B. State services and assistance provided under this function shall include the delineation of responsibilities and protective actions to be taken so as 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 South Carolina Emergency Management Division 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). All ESF-15 supporting agencies must assist the South Carolina Emergency Management Division in the planning and execution of the above. All ESF-15 personnel will be trained on the principles of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Incident Command and integrate those principles into all ESF-15 planning and response operations.

- B. Disaster and emergency information from South Carolina government shall be clear, concise, and accurate information regarding the existing situation, actions being taken by authorities, and those to be taken by the population. Every effort will be made to prevent and counter rumors, hearsay, and inaccuracies.
- C. Coordination with all appropriate departments, agencies, and organizations will be performed to the maximum extent, to ensure accurate, timely, and consistent emergency public information.
- D. 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. 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. 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.
- E. Public information, public relations, or public affairs personnel of any state agency or department will be made available to augment ESF-15 when requested, to include non-English speaking individuals and/or special needs populations.
- F. The South Carolina EAS will be activated appropriately according to established area, state, and national EAS procedures.
- G. A coordinated effort to report and document emergency/disaster operations will be conducted at the SEOC and/or near the incident site. A joint information system (JIS) of public information personnel from all affected jurisdictions, agencies, and private sector organizations may be established. If appropriate, representatives of those jurisdictions may provide emergency public information from a joint information center (JIC). Under some circumstances, state agencies or departments may issue press statements. However, these statements must be coordinated with ESF-15 prior to release.
- H. Situation briefings, press conferences, taped messages, photographs, news accounts, statistics on injuries and fatalities, and other information shall be provided to the news media as appropriate, to include information targeted for non-English speaking individuals and/or special needs populations.
- I. The State 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.

- J. ESF-15 will consult with appropriate department or agency heads concerning implementation of emergency or disaster public information activities. Timely and continuing information to the Governor's Director of Communications will be provided, and appropriate recommendations will be made if requested.
- K. When activated, provide public information personnel to support the Public Information Phone System (PIPS).

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 joint information center.
6. Develop and maintain multi-lingual pre-scripted EAS messages, news releases, and public service announcements, for all hazards to include hurricanes, earthquakes, nuclear incidents, and dam failures.
7. Encourage the public to develop disaster plans and kits.
8. Provide evacuation information to the affected public.

9. Participate in state exercises and conduct, at least annually, an ESF-15 exercise to validate this annex and supporting SOPs.
10. Update public information responder listing, as necessary.
11. Develop and implement a training program for all ESF members.
12. Develop and maintain a roster with contact information of all ESF personnel.
13. Ensure all ESF-15 personnel integrate NIMS principles in all planning. All ESF personnel must complete all required NIMS training, as outlined in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) training guidance.
14. Secure lists of qualified interpreters/translators to relay public information.
15. Ensure procedures are in place to document costs for any potential reimbursement.
16. Support the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) by ensuring ESF personnel are trained on EMAC responsibilities, by pre-identifying assets, needs and resources that may be allocated to support other states, and by maintaining related information in WebEOC.
17. Provide ESF-15 representation on the Recovery Task Force.

B. Response

1. Alert agencies whose personnel, equipment, or other resources may be used.
2. Provide timely and accurate 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. Identify and provide a liaison officer for each EMAC request, to facilitate arrival and onward movement of EMAC support at appropriate staging area.

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. Anticipate and plan for arrival of and coordination with FEMA, ESF-15 personnel in the SEOC, and the Joint Information Office (JFO).
3. Process and disseminate disaster welfare and family reunification information.
4. In coordination with each ESF, ensure that related emergency information can be provided to the public concerning safety and resources required for disaster recovery.
5. Utilize available communications channels so appropriate information can be disseminated by ESF-15 to the public concerning safety and resources required for disaster recovery.
6. ESF-15 will support long-term recovery priorities as identified by the Long-Term Recovery Committee and Recovery Task Force.
7. SCEMD personnel will coordinate community relations functions with FEMA staff and other state agencies in the aftermath of a disaster.

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: All agencies need to train personnel on EMAC procedures to include: identifying agency resources to sustain emergency operations, pre-scripting anticipated needs on specific EMAC messages, and listing agency resources available for interstate and intrastate mutual aid missions.
- B. Office of The Adjutant General, South Carolina Emergency Management Division
 1. Identify, train, and assign personnel to staff ESF-15 in the SEOC.
 2. Notify all ESF-15 supporting agencies upon activation.
 3. Develop and implement a training program regarding EOC operations/processes for all ESF-15 members.
 4. Develop and maintain, with input from participating agencies, a roster with contact information of all ESF personnel.
 5. Develop a public information program to educate the public regarding the effects of emergency and disaster situations.
 6. Develop plans to coordinate with news media for emergency operations, before, during and after an emergency.
 7. Develop plans to conduct a multi-agency/jurisdiction coordinated public information program during emergency and disaster situations.

8. 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.
9. Develop procedures to organize and operate a SERT media briefing area and/or a joint information center.
10. 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.
11. Coordinate with local and county public information officers on the dissemination of news releases and other public information materials.

C. SC Department of Health and Environmental Control

1. Identify, train, and assign personnel to maintain contact with and prepare to execute missions in support of ESF-15 during periods of activation.
2. Provide personnel to augment ESF-15 during emergencies and disasters.

D. SC Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services

1. Identify, train, and assign personnel to maintain contact with and prepare to execute missions in support of ESF-15 during periods of activation.
2. Provide personnel to augment ESF-15 during emergencies and disasters.

E. SC Department of Agriculture

1. Identify, train, and assign personnel to maintain contact with and prepare to execute missions in support of ESF-15 during periods of activation.
2. Provide personnel to augment ESF-15 during emergencies and disasters.

F. SC Department of Natural Resources

1. Identify, train, and assign personnel to maintain contact with and prepare to execute missions in support of ESF-15 during periods of activation.
2. Provide personnel to augment ESF-15 during emergencies and disasters.

G. SC Commission for Minority Affairs

1. Identify, train, and assign personnel to maintain contact with and prepare to execute missions in support of ESF-15 during periods of activation.
2. In coordination with SCEMD Public Information develop and disseminate written Spanish language disaster /preparedness Public Service Announcements (PSAs), news releases, and other disaster related public information to local/county emergency management offices, and applicable broadcasts/print media outlets.
3. 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.
4. Develop plans/procedures to ensure widest distribution of disaster information via Spanish language print and broadcast media outlets.

H. SC Law Enforcement Division

1. Identify, train, and assign personnel to maintain contact with and prepare to execute missions in support of ESF-15 during periods of activation.
2. Provide personnel to augment ESF-15 during emergencies and disasters.

I. SC Department of Labor License and Regulation

1. Identify, train, and assign personnel to maintain contact with and prepare to execute missions in support of ESF-15 during periods of activation.

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

J. SC Department of Transportation

1. Identify, train, and assign personnel to maintain contact with and prepare to execute missions in support of ESF-15 during periods of activation.
2. Provide personnel to augment ESF-15 during emergencies and disasters.

K. SC Department of Public Safety

1. Identify, train, and assign personnel to maintain contact with and prepare to execute missions in support of ESF-15 during periods of activation.
2. Provide personnel to augment ESF-15 during emergencies and disasters.

L. The Lt. Governor's Office on Aging

1. Identify, train, and assign personnel to maintain contact with and prepare to execute missions in support of ESF-15 during periods of activation.
2. Provide personnel to augment ESF-15 during emergencies and disasters.

M. SC Educational Television

Provide technical assistance to communicate with the deaf, blind, and non-English speaking populations.

N. SC School for the Deaf and Blind

Provide assistance to communicate with the deaf and blind populations.

1. Identify sign language interpreters
2. Coordinate the provision of sign language interpreters during a disaster.
3. Ensure media is delivered in a format accessible by persons with sensory impairments.

O. Forestry Commission

1. Identify, train, and assign personnel to maintain contact with and prepare to execute missions in support of ESF-15 during periods of activation.
2. Provide personnel to augment ESF-15 during emergencies and disasters.

P. Criminal Justice Academy

1. Identify, train, and assign personnel to maintain contact with and prepare to execute missions in support of ESF-15 during periods of activation.
2. Provide personnel to augment ESF-15 during emergencies and disasters.

Q. Commission for the Blind

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

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 and 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)/Federal Resource Coordinator (FRC), Unified Coordination Group, and Principal Federal Official (PFO), if designated. ESF-15 may provide the same support to a National Special Security Event. Public information personnel will arrive with the initial FEMA Incident Management Assistance Team (IMAT), will initially co-locate with the SEOC, and then operate from either the Joint Field Office (JFO).

- D. All State 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 make up, functions and responsibilities of the Incident Management Assistance Teams (IMAT), and the Joint Field Office (JFO).
- E. State ESF-15 will coordinate with Federal ESF-15 to obtain federal assistance as required.

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