

**MADISON COUNTY EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN  
ANNEX D  
EMERGENCY PUBLIC INFORMATION**

Updated: January 29, 2009

Primary Agency:	Public Information Officer
Support Agencies:	Administration
	Health Department
	Sheriff's Department
	Emergency Management
	Others as required or requested

**I. PURPOSE**

This annex presents a plan of action to provide prompt, authoritative and understandable emergency information to the public for natural and technological emergencies and nuclear attack threat.

**II. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS**

A. General

1. Madison County Public Information efforts will focus on specific, event-related information.
2. This information generally will be of an instructional nature focusing on such things as warning, evacuation and shelter. It also is important, to keep the public informed of the general progress of events. A special effort will be made to report the facts as accurately as possible and provide advice concerning necessary protective actions. Rumor control will be a major aspect of the information program and will operate from the EOC.
3. Within the National Response Framework, Public Information is an emergency support function (ESF-15)

B. Execution

1. Ongoing public education programs will be conducted to increase public awareness of potential hazards and necessary responses.
2. The County Public Information Officer (PIO) will coordinate with Regional/County media to provide information and education programs relating to emergency management.
3. Public information documents for major hazards will be prepared and maintained during normal periods of readiness. Documents will be ready for immediate publication and dissemination. When evacuation is imminent, public information will expand its capabilities to answer public inquiries and prepare new or modified public announcements.
4. For the attack hazard, information about relocation will be, distributed to the population via the print and electronic media. Maps and instructions also will be used on TV and radio.

### **III. ORGANIZATION**

#### **A. Organization**

1. The Public Information Officer (PIO) is appointed by the Emergency Management Coordinator.
2. The County will establish an emergency information center at the EOC as a point of contact for the media during an emergency and provide necessary staff and equipment to support its operation.

### **IV. DIRECTION AND CONTROL**

1. General -The Public Information Officer is responsible for all news releases and public information disseminated at the county level. In times of emergency the PIO will operate from the EOC if appropriate.
2. Educational and Public Information Programs -The PIO will provide the media with information on new developments affecting emergency management. The PIO also will utilize other types of information and programs on emergency management such as delivering lectures or presentations, organizing tours of the EOC, distributing education brochures and showing films.

### **V. CONTINUITY OF GOVERNMENT**

The line of succession is:

1. Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners
2. County Manager
3. Emergency Management Coordinator

### **VI. ADMINISTRATION AND LOGISTICS**

- A. Media Organizations - A list of media organizations can be found in the County Resource Manual.
- B. Films and Publications - Films, videos and publications dealing with various aspects of emergency management are available from various sources including the local, area, and State Office of Emergency Management and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.
- C. Accounting procedures to recover costs incurred for emergency operations will be established by the County Finance Officer.

#### Attachment 1

#### **Public Information Disaster Preparedness/Response Checklist**

- When notified, report to the Emergency Operations Center and serve in the Command Group until relieved or the incident is terminated.
- Receive a situational briefing. Ask questions and address public information concerns.
- Advise the EOC of the availability of resources, including the number of personnel and communications to/from media representatives.

- Maintain a listing of local and area media outlets and the names and contact numbers for representatives of the media.
- Meet with and maintain a close working relationship with media personnel.
- Establish a media center and communicate its location to the media.
  - The media center should be located in reasonable proximity to the EOC, but never *in* the EOC.
  - Publish or post times for media briefings.
  - Equip the media center with telephones, and/or other communications.
  - Equip the media center with a copy machine or have one readily available to copy press releases, fliers or other information/handouts.
  - Ensure the media center has backup power (generator).
  - Equip the media center with "camera props" (i.e. County seal, backdrop curtain, chairs, tables, charts, graphics, etc.).
  - Ensure local/state/federal officials that will be asked to speak to the media arrive at the media center at least fifteen (15) minutes before any media briefing.
- Prepare public information materials in accordance with the Public Information Officer's Guide.
- Never release public information until it has been approved by the EOC Command Group and/or the Incident Commander.
- Establish and maintain communications with field Incident Commanders and shelters/mass care areas.
  - Routinely contact each "field" location to determine their public information needs.
  - Report needs to the Command Group and/or Incident Commander and make recommendations.
  - At each contact with "field" locations, remind them not to speak directly with the media until information has been cleared for release.
  - If necessary and/or time and personnel permit, visit "field" locations and assist with the media.
- Ensure that public information preparation materials and equipment are on hand or readily available (i.e. computer, word processors, copy paper, copier, printers, etc.).
- Train additional personnel to assist and/or relieve you.
- Whenever possible or appropriate, attend a media relations continuing education course each year.
- Be prepared for and develop plans to distribute public information to citizens who are without power, without means of direct communications (i.e. no telephone) or who are in isolated areas.
- Be prepared for and develop plans to distribute public information in both English and Spanish.
- Be prepared for and develop plans to, if necessary, hand deliver fliers or other public information door-to-door with minimal personnel, time, and equipment.

- Ensure the public is informed about the location of:
  - Shelters
  - Distribution centers for food, water, ice, etc. and the "rules" and times of operation of distribution centers.
  - Dangerous areas or areas that no one will be allowed.
  - Emergency medical services (i.e. field trauma centers, field hospitals, etc.).
  - Disaster Assistance Centers (if established).
  
- Carry out other public information functions as directed by the Command Group and/or Incident Commander.