

JOINT INFORMATION SYSTEM PROTOCOLS
2023-2025

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LEAD AGENCY: Varies depending on location and type of incident or event.

SUPPORT AGENCIES: All other governmental, non-governmental, private and non-profit organizations involved in or affected by the incident or event.

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

This appendix establishes procedures and protocols for Emergency Support Function #15 (ESF #15), or External Affairs (Public Information), which supports incident management during planned events, emergencies and declared disasters through a Joint Information System (JIS) or Joint Information Center (JIC). Eagle County's intent for ESF #15 is exactly the same as ESF #15 at the state and federal level: To unite all internal and external communications within External Affairs in order to provide consistent and coordinated information.

SCOPE

Eagle County's emergency public information actions before, during, and after any emergency will be determined by the severity of the emergency as indicated by the local, tribal or state agencies that are involved, or as perceived by the public. A significant emergency public information response will involve many city, county, and state agencies. ESF #15 describes those agencies and their responsibilities.

POLICIES

AUTHORITIES

Derived from local jurisdictional authorities.

SITUATION

EMERGENCY/DISASTER CONDITIONS AND HAZARDS

A natural or man-made emergency or disaster may occur at any time.

PLANNED EVENTS

Eagle County is often the host for planned events or situations that may create significant public interest.

ASSUMPTIONS

- An incident or incidents have occurred, or public perception is such that people believe they have been placed in danger by a natural or technologically-caused emergency or disaster.
- The incident(s) require responding agencies to provide information and instructions to the public about the incident and actions people should take to save and protect lives, property, economy, and the environment. Responding agencies also would provide information to reduce public concerns about the incident and response activities.
- A planned event or situation is of a magnitude that the Joint Information System should be utilized.

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

GENERAL

- Local jurisdictions are responsible for providing their citizens with information on the incident and what immediate protective actions they should take, such as taking shelter or evacuating.
- When the Eagle County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is activated (see Emergency Operations Plan pages 18 through 19 and Appendix B), the organization and scope of ESF #15 operations will be established in accordance with the needs and requirements of the response. In addition, the organization of ESF #15 will reflect National Incident Management System (NIMS) principles for Emergency Public Information, especially the principle that the Public Information Officer supports Incident Command and “represents and advises the Incident Commander on all public information matters relating to the management of the incident.”

ORGANIZATION

- **Local Jurisdiction Information Support Structure**
In accordance with the NIMS and Incident Command System, the local jurisdiction should designate a public information function to provide information and instructions to its citizens before, during, and after an emergency or disaster.
- Once the Eagle County EOC is established, the JIS shall be activated and the personnel assigned to the public information role at the incident level, should coordinate their emergency public information actions with the Eagle County JIC.
- **State Information Support Structure**
To reduce inaccuracies and misinformation, the State will initiate a JIS to coordinate information with participating local, state, and federal agencies. Based on the urgency of the situation and the need for inter-agency cooperation, agencies should attempt to coordinate emergency public information through the Governor's Office.

PROCEDURES

- Jurisdictions involved in the incidents or events will be notified and
- requested to provide staff support for a JIC.

- The State will coordinate via the JIS with federal agencies to provide federal-level information to the public following a natural or man-made disaster or emergency, as necessary. The state's ESF #15 will collaborate with and support locating and managing the operations of a JIC, Joint Operations Center or Joint Field Office.

MITIGATION, PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE AND RECOVERY ACTIVITIES

All Pertinent Agencies:

- Identify and train appropriate staff to implement the public information responsibilities outlined in this plan, including required NIMS training courses.
- Prepare and coordinate public information resource materials to be used for an emergency or disaster.
- Participate in training and exercise programs to test emergency public information and JIS-JIC programs and procedures.

RESPONSIBILITIES

LEAD AGENCY(S)

The JIC Manager shall be appointed based upon jurisdiction and availability.

- Establishes ESF #15 operations to provide instructions and information to the public about a natural or man-made emergency or disaster.
- Coordinates the planning, production, dissemination and evaluation of emergency public information through all phases of an emergency or disaster.
- Coordinates the dissemination of information and instructions to the general public and special needs populations; the media; local and state government officials; non-governmental organizations and members of the business community.
- Provides information on the emergency or disaster, its impact on the county, county response actions, and agency support being provided.
- Provides information on recovery programs designed to return affected areas as nearly as possible, to their pre-incident condition.

SUPPORT AGENCIES

Local Public Information Officers (PIO's)

As listed below, the following Eagle County agencies are committed to providing general public information officer support, as requested, during response and recovery activities, should an emergency, disaster, or hazard-specific incident occur:

Agency

U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Land
Management
Colorado Department of Transportation
Colorado Parks and Wildlife

Colorado State Patrol
Eagle County Government
Eagle County Paramedic Services
Eagle County Coroner
Eagle County School District
Eagle County Sheriff's Office
Eagle River Fire Protection District
Eagle River Water and Sanitation District
Greater Eagle Fire Protection District
Town of Avon
Town of Avon, Police Department
Town of Gypsum
Town of Minturn
Town of Vail
Town of Vail, Fire Department
Town of Vail, Police Department
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service
Vail Mountain School
Vail Recreation District
Vail ResortsInc.
Vail Valley Foundation
Vail Health

AMERICAN RED CROSS/SALVATION ARMY

Provide the JIC with information on location of shelters or assistance centers, and assistance being provided to people affected by an emergency or disaster.

STATE OF COLORADO, OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Should an emergency be declared that involves threats to lives and property within the State of Colorado, either through local or partner request for action or through a declared State of Emergency, the Public Information Officer for the Office of Emergency Management can, in coordination and with the approval of the Incident Commander or State EOC Manager, establish a JIS and commence JIS activities as soon as possible. In this instance, the Public Information Officer, now Lead PIO or designee will contact relevant local, state and federal Public Information Officer or public affairs staff.

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

- Coordinates federal-level emergency public information through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security following a natural or man-made emergency or disaster.

- Collaborates with and supports locating and managing the operations of a JIC, if requested.

VI. RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

Resource requirements are identified in supporting plans and procedures.

VII. JIC ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

