

Emergency Support Functions Annex
ESF-15 EXTERNAL AFFAIRS



ESF Coordinator:

Office of the County Administrator
*Public Affairs and Communications
Division*

Primary Agency:

Office of the County Administrator
*Public Affairs and Communications
Division*

Section:

Management and Control
Public Information Officer

Support Agencies:

Loudoun County Fire and Rescue
Department of Information Technology
Loudoun County Sheriff's Office

Community Lifeline(s):

Communications

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

Emergency Support Function (ESF)-15 External Affairs provides guidance and direction to designated agencies responsible for providing incident-specific public information during a significant event.

Scope

ESF-15 External Affairs coordinates the resources necessary to provide incident-specific public information during a significant event. Activities within the scope of ESF-15 functions include: monitors, crafts, and disseminates public messaging; delivers accessible, verified, updated, and authorized information to the public; coordinates all official briefings and news conferences; and establishes and maintains a Joint Information Center (JIC).

For the purpose of this document, traditional media is defined as but is not limited to: news releases, website updates, news conferences, current voice and text alerting systems, and the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS). Social media is defined as but is not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

Relevant Laws, Statutes, Plans, and Policies

- ▶ Loudoun County Emergency Operations Center Policies and Procedures Guide
- ▶ Major Event Hotline Procedures
- ▶ Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) Memorandum of Agreement

ESF Planning Assumptions

The Public Affairs and Communications Division maintains an active list of trained County personnel to assist with public information and hotline activities during a significant event.

ORGANIZATION

ESF Responsibilities

- ▶ Reports to and takes direction from the EOC Manager.
- ▶ Provides informational updates to the Planning Section.
- ▶ Identifies plans, policies, and procedures necessary to resolve public information issues during the significant event.
- ▶ Documents information and actions related to external affairs missions and assignments.
- ▶ Utilizes current methods and procedures to process requests for assistance.
- ▶ Submits a detailed record of costs and expenditures to the Finance and Administration Section.

Agency Roles and Responsibilities

Office of the County Administrator (CA)

Public Affairs and Communications Division (PAC)

- ▶ The agency recognized with ESF coordination and primary responsibility. The Public Affairs and Communications Division is responsible for the overall ESF leadership and coordination associated with the release of incident-specific public information during a significant event.

Loudoun County Fire and Rescue (LCFR)

- ▶ Serves as the department with primary responsibility for creating public information related to fire, rescue, or EMS services to include search and rescue and hazardous materials.

Department of Information Technology (DIT)

- ▶ Serves as the department with primary responsibility for providing personnel, equipment, and facilities necessary for the establishment of the major event hotline.

Loudoun County Sheriff's Office (LCSO)

- ▶ Serves as the agency with primary responsibility for creating public information related to law enforcement services.

MISSIONS AND ASSIGNMENTS

- Mission 1:** Manages resources necessary to monitor, craft, and disseminate public messaging during a significant event.
- Assignment 1-1: Identifies, prioritizes, procures, and allocates available resources and systems to deliver consistent and ongoing public information.
 - Assignment 1-2: Establishes and operates the major event hotline to respond to public inquires.
 - Assignment 1-3: Considers future (in the subsequent 12 to 24-hour period) resource requirements and conveys to EOC leadership.
- Mission 2:** Delivers accessible, verified, updated, and authorized information to the public by utilizing traditional and social media mechanisms.
- Assignment 2-1: Creates messages to inform or instruct the public regarding appropriate measures related to the significant event.
 - Assignment 2-2: Coordinates, validates, and reviews all information from the incident scene or the EOC prior to public release.
 - Assignment 2-3: Obtains approval from the EOC Manager for all information prior to public release.
 - Assignment 2-4: Responds to inquiries from the public through an activated major event hotline or official social media platforms.
- Mission 3:** Coordinates all official briefings and press conferences.
- Assignment 3-1: Creates talking points for elected officials and County leadership.
 - Assignment 3-2: Identifies, secures, and publicizes key information regarding briefings or press conferences.
 - Assignment 3-3: Develops and publishes a media-briefing schedule, to include location, format, preparation, and distribution of handout materials.
 - Assignment 3-4: Coordinates with on-scene public information officers to ensure consistent message delivery.
- Mission 4:** Establishes, maintains, and operates a JIC.
- Assignment 4-1: Operates a local JIC utilizing personnel and resources necessary to deliver accessible, verified, updated, and authorized messages.
 - Assignment 4-2: Provides representation for any regional, state, or federal JIC.

COMMUNITY LIFELINE(S)

Communications

1. Alerts and Warnings (Local Alerts/Warnings, Integrated Public Alerts and Warning System)
 - ▶ Identify the alerts and warnings necessary to provide emergency public information.
 - ▶ Determine impact to response operations and how they will improve if component is stabilized.
 - ▶ Identify actions that must be taken to improve alerts and warnings.
 - ▶ Evaluate factors that may limit the ability to make improvements.
 - ▶ Establish timeline for issuance of alerts and warnings.