

Attachment D

Emergency Public Information

Introduction

EPI's Public

The EPI function gives the public accurate, timely, and useful information and instructions throughout the emergency period. The EPI organization initially focuses on the dissemination of information and instructions to the people at risk in the community. However, the EPI organization also must deal with the wider public's interest and desire to help or seek information. People may call to find out about loved ones. They may call to offer help, or simply send donations. They may even urge Federal action. Good, timely information can help prevent overloading a jurisdiction's communications network, its transportation infrastructure, and its staff.

EPI and Warning

Some jurisdictions use a single annex for warning and EPI. Warning can be treated as one phase of informing the public, depending on the hazard.

For some hazards (e.g., nuclear power plant accidents), a jurisdiction may have only a few minutes to alert those at risk. Pre-scripted information must go out with the initial warning. EPI also follows up with what is happening, what the response organization is doing, and what else the public should do for its safety. For other hazards (e.g., hurricanes), the media can get the public's attention days in advance. EPI can feed preparedness information into an established media-public link, and give updates to the media and the public after impact. For still other hazards (e.g., an earthquake), there may be no useful warning. The hazard event itself gets the public's attention, and EPI follows (e.g., after an earthquake, to help prepare the public for aftershocks).

In this Guide's approach, a warning annex focuses on the specialized system and procedures the jurisdiction's government uses to learn of imminent danger and to alert those at risk quickly, before impact. An EPI annex deals with developing messages and accurate information for the public, getting the information out, and monitoring how the information is received throughout the emergency period. The warning system is one means for an EPI organization to get information out, and an EPI annex must address coordination with those responsible for the warning system.

EPI and Media Relations

For its information and instructions to reach area residents, an EPI organization must develop ties to all media in--or around--the jurisdiction. These ties usually carry over from strictly EPI matters (when government has something to say or show and needs the media to relay it) into news coverage (when the media have to relay their stories and need government to say or show something). For most jurisdictions, media relations become a natural extension of the EPI function--all part of a PIO's job.

When media relations are limited to local media, this usually is not a problem. Local media, like the EPI organization, remain after the emergency. They share concern for the community's welfare, and they answer to the community for the service they provide. Local media, being sensitive to community needs, can work with the PIO to focus on strict EPI concerns and attend to news as time and circumstance permit.

Media relations become a challenge when the demand for news coverage overwhelms an EPI organization's ability to perform its basic mission: to provide timely, accurate, and useful information and instructions to area residents. This can happen when national media, and many "local" media representatives from outside the area, converge on the jurisdiction.

This Guide's approach is to treat media relations as a part of the PIO's job (since the EPI organization needs the media to get information out), and to recommend that an EPI annex treat media convergence as a contingency to be planned for--not as the principal concern of the EPI organization.

Developing an EPI Annex

Purpose

An EPI annex describes the means, organization, and process by which a jurisdiction will provide timely, accurate, and useful information and instructions to area residents throughout an emergency.

Situation and Assumptions

This section should describe the planning environment for the EPI function and show what uncertainties have been treated as fact. Planners might consider the following:

Situation

- *General.* A situation section should list the hazards that face the jurisdiction. It should note which types of emergency (if not all) would require activation of the EPI response organization. If a given hazard requires special planning provisions, the section

should mention that hazard-specific appendices have been developed for the annex.

➤ *Means of Dissemination.* A situation section should give relevant facts about the means available to the jurisdiction for transmitting EPI. Relevant facts include:

- *Identified Resources.* The section should describe the principal means by which EPI will be disseminated (EAS; television, radio, and cable outlets not participating in EAS; newspapers and specially printed material). A listing of these should be attached to the annex and address hours of operation for radio/TV/cable stations, circulation (morning/evening, daily/weekly) of newspapers, language covered, and points of contact (day/night/weekend). The section also should describe what back-up means can be used (vehicle-mounted public address systems, door-to-door).
- *Coverage.* The section should describe the area covered by broadcast stations and give at least a rough idea of audience access to cable and newspapers (e.g., number of subscribers).
- *Vulnerability.* The section should note how the means for disseminating EPI could be harmed by hazards that face the jurisdiction. (The section can reference maps and/or any similar discussion in the jurisdiction's Warning Annex.) Contact *with* the means of dissemination also should be addressed, if the jurisdiction relies only on the telephone system.
- *Dependency.* Along with vulnerability, a local EPI annex should note any dependency on out-of-town media (e.g., printers and newspapers).

➤ *Audience.* A situation section should give relevant facts about the audience for EPI. Relevant facts include:

- *Special Needs Groups.* The section should list the jurisdiction's non-English speaking groups in excess of some

planning threshold (e.g., five percent of population) and note the foreign language media that could be used to communicate with these groups. It also should note other factors that affect people's ability to receive, act on, or understand EPI. These might include sight or hearing impairments, being in custodial institutions (e.g., schools, nursing homes, hospitals, etc.), or being unfamiliar with the area and its hazards (as is the case with tourists).

- *Preparedness.* The section may note whether ongoing public preparedness campaigns are conducted and whether printed material is available in telephone books, at key locations, or from community groups to which it has been distributed.

Assumptions

- *Media.* Relevant assumptions about the media include:
 - *Local Cooperation on EPI.* Local media will cooperate in placing the community's need for EPI ahead of the need for news coverage, at least in the initial warning and response phase of an emergency. (As appropriate, written agreements for commercial broadcast media to disseminate EPI may be prepared.)
 - *External Media Interest.* Some events, or even forecast events, can bring many reporters, photographers, and camera crews to an area; this will create heavy demands on the EPI organization, requiring augmentation. External media will be interested less in details than in spectacle and "human interest" stories of universal appeal and quick impact.
- *Audience.* Relevant assumptions about the audience may address:
 - *Preparedness.* The section may note what level of preparedness is assumed. Public awareness campaigns will not have been 100 percent effective, especially in jurisdictions with many tourists and transients.

- *Demand for Additional Information.* People will want more information and will call to get it if possible.

Concept of Operations

The concept of operations section provides general information on how EPI is to be disseminated to the public. It describes policies, protocols, and a sequence of activity.

General

This section should address who activates the EPI organization, how the organization is notified, and where personnel should report (e.g., the EOC). It should set forth priorities for EPI activity: production and dissemination of EPI, response to public inquiry, monitoring and rumor control, and media relations. It also should set forth a jurisdiction's policy to have a single release point for EPI (such as a public information center), to focus EPI on specific emergency-related information, and to provide positive and reassuring information when possible.

Phased Activity

- *Increased Readiness (e.g., Forecast Event)*
 - *Actions.* Following are actions that may be taken with more than a day's notice. The list is not all-inclusive.
 - Coordinate with “CEO,” Evacuation Coordinator, Mass Care Coordinator, and Warning Coordinator to determine status of plans and timing of actions.
 - Establish and maintain contact with media. Provide preparedness information and any instructions, as cleared by “CEO.”
 - Arrange for accelerated printing of camera-ready EPI material (e.g., evacuation instructions/maps and Family Protection Program leaflets), if needed to supplement/restock existing print material.
 - Ensure distribution of printed material to broadcast media, to preselected locations (e.g., grocery stores), and/or via newspaper.
 - Monitor media.

- Augment public inquiry and/or media relations staffs, if needed. Set up any additional facilities for EPI operations (e.g., separate telephone bank or media center) with support from the Communications Coordinator.
- *Message Content.* Following is suggested general content for pre-impact messages. These will depend on the amount of time available for action and on the particular hazard. Hazard-specific information and instructions should be appended to the annex.
 - Hazard.
 - Estimated area and time of impact.
 - Property protection measures (e.g., sandbagging, taping windows).
 - Disaster supply kit for surviving 72 hours.
 - Evacuation instructions (departure time, routes, mass care facility locations, etc.), if feasible to evacuate.
 - Instructions on how to protect and care for young children, pregnant women, and senior citizens.
 - Instructions on how to protect and care for companion and farm animals (location of animal shelters, provisions and requirements--e.g., use of leashes or cages--for transport of companion animals, etc.)
 - Other "do's and don't's" if not feasible to evacuate, such as stay indoors, close all doors and windows, etc.
 - How (and how often) government will be in touch with the public during the emergency.

- Telephone numbers for specific kinds of inquiry (if staffed).

➤ *Limited Warning Available*

- *Actions.* Following are EPI actions that may be taken with limited notice. The list is not all-inclusive.
 - Coordinate with “CEO” and Evacuation Coordinator to determine what protective action will be taken, (limited) evacuation or in-place shelter.
 - Complete “stand-by” EPI instructions with particulars of the event. Coordinate with Warning Coordinator to ensure warning system (e.g., EAS, route alerting, door-to-door canvassing) is activated and ensure EPI is being disseminated.
 - Contact media to repeat and update initial warning (especially if not provided through EAS) and provide EPI contact name(s) and telephone number(s).
 - Monitor media.
- *Message Content.* Following is suggested general content for pre-impact messages with limited warning available. Again, these will depend on the particular hazard. Hazard-specific information and instructions should be appended to the annex.
 - Hazard; kind of risk posed to people and property.
 - Area at risk and predicted time of impact.
 - Protective action instructions. These may address specific groups (e.g., parents with school children in the area) as well as the general public.
 - Reference to any useful information at-hand (e.g., in telephone book).

- What government is doing or will do.
 - How (and how often) government will be in touch with the public during the emergency.
- *After Impact.*
- *Actions.* Following are EPI actions that may be taken after the impact of an emergency. The list is not exhaustive.
 - Establish and maintain contact with media. Provide information and any instructions, as cleared by “CEO” or his/her designee.
 - Monitor media reports and telephone inquiries for accuracy and respond as appropriate to correct rumors.
 - Augment public inquiry and/or media relations staffs, if needed. Set up any additional facilities for EPI operations (e.g., separate telephone bank or media center) with support from the Communications Coordinator.
 - Arrange for printing of camera-ready EPI material (e.g., Family Protection Program leaflets and health and safety instructions), if needed.
 - Ensure distribution of printed material to broadcast media, to preselected locations (e.g., grocery stores), to volunteer groups or other response and recovery personnel that may go into residential areas, and/or via newspaper.
 - Compile chronology of events.
 - *Message Content*
 - Current situation assessment.

- Current government actions.
- Survival instructions (for those affected or still potentially affected).
- How/where to get what help (for those affected).
- Health hazards information.
- How/where to get help for companion and farm animals.
- Restricted areas (for those not affected).
- Telephone number for inquiries regarding survivors.
- What to do and whom to contact in order to offer help.
- Telephone number for donations offers and inquiries, accompanied by donations policy (send money and make check payable to..., critical needs include X but please don't send Y..., package donations such and such way).
- How and how often government will be in touch with public during the emergency.
- Instructions for evacuees to return home.

*Internal
Coordination*

The concept of operations section should address how the jurisdiction will coordinate EPI in order to "speak with one voice." The section should provide for one PIO and alternate, designated by the "CEO," for dissemination of official EPI and instructions through the media to the public. It should provide for management of EPI out of one location. It should provide for coordination between individual agencies' public affairs officers and the PIO. It also should provide for coordination between public affairs officers dispatched to the scene of event and the central location for EPI (e.g., briefings before the public affairs officer goes to the scene and regular contact thereafter). Coordination must include

procedures for verifying and authenticating information, and for obtaining approval to release information.

The concept of operations section also should address how the jurisdiction will deal with media convergence. (This could be by reference to a separate appendix to the annex.) Provision should be made for possible transfer of some duties to the Office of the Chief Executive (in jurisdictions where there is a press secretary, for example), use of a trained local media person to help with out-of-town media (where resources are more limited), or obtaining assistance from another level of government's public information staff. Provision should be made for establishing a separate media center, if EOC briefing space is inadequate. Provision also should be made for credentialing media representatives and for coordinating with law enforcement to allow media access to the scene (if it is safe to do so). The section should make clear who decides to implement such provisions.

*Interjurisdictional
Coordination*

Local-Local. The concept of operations section should address coordination between city and county, or between local jurisdictions that rely on the same media resources.

Local-State. State law and plans define the framework for local and State coordination on EPI. States and localities should consider how they will coordinate in emergencies with or without a Governor's declaration of emergency. This may include support for media relations.

Local-State-Federal. In disasters that threaten to overwhelm a State's capability to respond and support its local governments, the Federal Government may be asked to deploy to the affected State under the FRP. The FRP calls for maximum coordination of agencies' information releases through a Joint Information Center (JIC) to ensure consistency and accuracy. The JIC is a single location where the media have access to information and the public affairs personnel of various agencies can consult with one another. The resources of the JIC are made available to State, local, and voluntary agencies so that all levels of government may conduct public information activities together. This is the best way to ensure that local, State, and Federal officials are using the same information and are not making inconsistent statements. If a single local-State-Federal JIC is not a viable option, public affairs personnel, decision-makers, and news centers are to be connected by electronic mail, fax, and telephone in a "Joint Information System" (JIS). In a JIS, releases of information should be coordinated to ensure that everyone is using the most recent and accurate data.

**Organization
and
Assignment of
Responsibilities**

The EPI organization should be depicted in a chart. The organization may be built around distinct areas of responsibility (e.g., information gathering and production, monitoring and rumor control, public inquiries, and media relations). It is not always necessary for each "box" to be filled by a different person; it is necessary to be *able* to staff each "box" to meet increased demands on the EPI organization (e.g., for public inquiries or media relations). Charts can reflect augmentation. See Figure 5-D-1. The following types of tasking may be assigned to the agencies, organization chiefs, and individuals listed in the left margin below:

*Chief
Executive
Official
("CEO")*

- Serves as primary spokesperson before media, or delegates function to PIO.
- Gives final approval to release of emergency instructions and information, or delegates function to PIO.
- In cases where Incident Command has been established, provides policy guidance on the transfer of authority to release information from the ICP to the EOC should the incident exceed a predetermined level.
- Designates location for media briefings (e.g., EOC conference room).
- Approves implementation of any special provisions for media convergence.

*Public
Information
Officer
(PIO)*

- Manages all aspects of EPI on behalf of "CEO."
- Assumes EPI functions delegated by "CEO."
- Ensures timely preparation of EPI materials and their dissemination.
- Ensures that public is able to obtain additional information and provide feedback (e.g., with hotline for public inquiries).
 - May establish center for disaster welfare information, and cooperate with any Disaster Welfare Information (DWI) services provided by the ARC.

- Coordinates with appropriate officials (Mass Care Coordinator, Health and Medical Coordinator, etc.) to obtain necessary information.
 - Ensures gathering of necessary information and timely preparation of news releases.
 - Briefs public affairs officers who go to the incident site.
 - Schedules news conferences, interviews, and other media access (subject to any special media convergence provisions).
 - Supervises the media center.
 - Assigns print and broadcast monitors to review all media reports for accuracy.
 - Coordinates rumor control activity.
 - At the request of the Resource Manager, obtains media assistance in disseminating information to potential donors on unmet needs, items that are not needed and should not be donated, cash donations policy, and other donations-related matters.
 - Maintains a chronological record of disaster events.
- Emergency Manager*
- Advises “CEO” on when to disseminate emergency instructions to the public.
 - Assists the PIO with news releases and rumor control.
- EAS Stations*
- Store "canned" EPI messages (other than warnings) and disseminate this information at the PIO's request.
 - Disseminate information when requested to do so by “CEO” or his/her designee.

<i>Local Media Organizations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Store/maintain advance emergency packets for release at the PIO's request. ➤ Verify field reports of emergency's development with PIO. ➤ Cooperate in public education efforts.
<i>Chief School Official</i>	Disseminates emergency information to school population as appropriate.
<i>Resource Manager</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provides PIO with unmet needs requests from Donations Team to be solicited from businesses and the public, as well as other donations-related information.
<i>Voluntary Organizations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide support to public inquiry telephone lines, as requested by PIO. ➤ Provide support in disseminating printed EPI material, as requested by PIO.
<i>All Tasked Organizations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide information as requested by PIO. ➤ Clear all emergency-related news releases with the jurisdiction's PIO. ➤ Provide public affairs officers to support EPI activities, as requested by PIO. ➤ Refer media inquiries to PIO.
Administration and Logistics	The administration and logistics section addresses the administrative and general support requirements for the EPI function.
<i>Administration</i>	The section should address reporting and information flow for the EPI function, or reference the relevant SOPs. Common reports <i>from</i> EPI would include press coverage summaries and/or clips, public reaction and

concerns (based on telephone inquiries or even post-disaster "town meetings"), and a final chronology of events.

Logistics

- *Staffing.* The section should indicate how a "core" EPI staff is to be augmented to handle a surge in the public's and the media's demands for information.
- *Facilities and Equipment.* The section should describe what facilities are to be used for EPI and where they are located. The basic facility is the EOC and its conference room or media center. Other possible facilities would be a telephone bank and a separate, larger media center. The section should describe how additional facilities will be obtained, and who obtains them. SOPs should be developed for setting up these facilities and referenced here. The section also should describe special equipment needs for EPI facilities and how they will be met.
- *Suppliers/Agreements.* The section should reference agreements with suppliers (e.g., printers). An attachment to the annex should list day and night points of contact for such suppliers, as well as for media outlets.

Plan Development and Maintenance

This section should describe who is responsible for coordinating revision of the jurisdiction's EPI Annex, keeping its attachments current, and ensuring that SOPs and other necessary implementing documents are developed.

Authorities and References

Authorities would include the jurisdiction's emergency management statute or ordinance. References might include 47 CFR , Part 73, Subpart G, Emergency Alert System, as amended; the Local Area or State EAS Plan; and supporting SOPs. FEMA and the ARC have also produced several useful Family Protection Program brochures, as listed in the bibliography. These could be referenced if used.

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