

*Los Alamos Site Office &
Los Alamos National Laboratory*

**Emergency
Public Information
Plan**

**National Nuclear Security Administration
U.S. Department of Energy
Los Alamos, New Mexico**

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The University of California for DOE/NNSA

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Emergency Public Information Plan

The Emergency Public Information Plan and Appendices have been approved for implementation by



Ed Wilmot
Manager, Los Alamos Site Office

6/6/04
Date



G. Peter Nanos Jr.
Director, Los Alamos National Laboratory

6/1/04
Date

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Emergency Public Information Plan

Purpose

This plan sets forth Emergency Public Affairs procedures for emergency events involving NNSA Los Alamos Site Office (LASO) and Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL). LASO's Public Affairs Office and LANL's Communications and External Relations Division (CER) are committed to providing factual, accurate, and timely information to employees, the public, the media, and community, state and federal officials about emergency events at any LASO/LANL facility within the constraints of privacy, classification, proprietary information or other restrictions.¹ The LASO's Public Affairs Office (PAO) and CER Division coordinate activities, share information and consult as required with its counterparts at NNSA Headquarters Office of Congressional Intergovernmental and Public Affairs and with the University of California Office of the President.

This plan incorporates the requirements identified in Department of Energy Order 151.1B, Chapter IX, "Public Affairs Policy and Planning Requirements," DOE Emergency Management Guides 151.1-1, Volume 3-2 "Offsite Response Interfaces," Volume 4-4, "Emergency Public Information" and Volume 5-4 "Training and Drills." This plan is designed to ensure that during an emergency, public information and communication policies are effectively implemented and are consistent with DOE/NNSA contract language governing CER Division activities and that information about emergency response actions is routinely communicated to site constituents.

Related Documents

U.S. Department of Energy Orders:

- 151.1B, Comprehensive Emergency Management System
- 151.1B, Chapter IX Public Affairs Policy and Planning Requirements

U.S. Department of Energy Guide:

- 151.1-1, V4-4 Emergency Public Information
- 151.1-1, V3-2 Offsite Response Interfaces
- 151.1-1, V5-4 Training and Drills

¹Note: CER Division also may provide communications support to DOD or DOE programs for which LANL is required to provide emergency support. Those events, however, are owned by the federal agency and CER serves only in a supporting role.

LANL Emergency Management Plan (Chapter 10, Public Information)
LA-12900 REV. 1.3
LIR 403-00-01.0

LANL Emergency Management Implementing Procedures
Procedure 10, revision 7

LANL Emergency Management Field Response Operating Guidelines Information Officer

Objective

This plan establishes a flexible program to implement an information response for a variety of emergency situations throughout the entire incident, including the recovery phase. This plan identifies LASO PAO and CER management and staff positions and associated responsibilities. It also identifies management and staff interactions required before, during and after an emergency.

This plan describes the objectives of the LASO PAO and CER emergency public information program as it relates to responsible organizations, employee communication, the public and other stakeholders, media interface and releases, information coordination and dissemination, training and non-crisis public/media education.

This plan addresses the establishment of a Joint Information Center (JIC) if one becomes necessary. JIC activation is a NNSA DOE-owned process; therefore, the decision to activate a JIC is made by the local NNSA representative at the LANL Emergency Operations Center in consultation with the LASO Public Information Officer (See Appendix 5). The nature and scope of the emergency drives the activation of the JIC. CER assists with staffing of the JIC when it is activated.

Scope

This plan defines emergency public information functions and responsibilities related to various emergency events that may affect NNSA DOE property and/or the health and safety of NNSA DOE or contractor personnel and the public.

LASO PAO and the CER Division's three offices – Community Relations, Government Relations and Public Affairs – share responsibility for information dissemination to employees, the public, other stakeholders, and news media during a LASO/LANL incident. CER representatives will work with LASO PAO to keep NNSA HQ Office of Congressional Intergovernmental and Public Affairs and counterparts at the University of California informed.

Emergency public information activities are based on the type and classification of the emergency. Emergency classifications include Alert, Site Area Emergency and General Emergency. The number of personnel required to respond effectively will vary with the nature, severity and duration of the emergency.

An Alert or Site Area Emergency may require only partial notification and activation of public information staff while a General Emergency will require a full notification and activation. Although a Site Area Emergency may affect only onsite personnel and facilities, the public should be notified when such an incident occurs. Providing such information in a timely manner enhances LASO's/LANL's public trust and credibility.

Emergency Classification

Operational Emergencies are unplanned, significant events or conditions that require time-urgent response from outside the immediately affected site or facility. Operational Emergencies may involve degradation of personnel health and safety, the environment, security and safeguards, or the release or loss of control of hazardous materials. DOE guidelines classify operational emergencies by degree of severity, depending on the actual or potential consequences of the emergency situation. The methods for recognizing and responding to facility status are integrated to facilitate a smooth transition from normal operational activities to off-normal/unusual or emergency response.

The three classes of hazardous material operational emergencies in ascending (more severe) order are as follows:

ALERT – An “Alert” is an incident that represents a substantial actual or potential degradation in the level of safety. The incident may have created or could lead to a release to the environment of radioactive or other hazardous material. Such a release is not expected to affect the public or require protective actions.

SITE AREA EMERGENCY – A “Site Area Emergency” (SAE) is an incident that has created actual or potential major failures of systems or functions needed for protection of workers, the public or the environment. An SAE could result in releases beyond the facility boundary that exceed Protective Action Criteria for radiological releases or Emergency Response Guidelines for toxic materials release. The release is not expected to travel beyond the institutional boundary, however, and so is not expected to directly affect the general public.

GENERAL EMERGENCY – A “General Emergency” is an event or condition with actual or imminent catastrophic reduction of safety systems with the potential or actual loss of hazardous material in sufficient quantity to exceed Protective Action Criteria offsite. For such conditions, mobilization of available onsite and off-site resources to deal with the event and its consequences are necessary.

Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

The LANL EOC is the location where oversight of a response to emergency situations and support to emergency responders is conducted. The EOC team will communicate with the various onsite emergency response teams, facilities, HQ, the JIC (when activated), and outside agencies regarding emergency actions. The LANL EOC is located at TA-69-33 (See Appendix 6)

If the EOC is activated, the LASO Duty Office notifies the LASO PIO and the CER receives notification from Emergency Management & Response and mobilizes staff to report to the EOC.

LANL Press Center

The LANL Press Center will be activated in the event of an emergency prior to JIC activation. The Press Center is located at LANL Public Affairs Office, TA-00, Building 767, 123B Central Park Square, Los Alamos, NM and will serve as the location where approved news releases will be and media inquiries will be directed prior to JIC activation. If a JIC is activated, Press Center staff will transfer operations there.

Joint Information Center (JIC)

The Primary JIC is located at the University of New Mexico Los Alamos Campus, Building 2, 4000 University Drive, Los Alamos, NM. Two alternate JIC locations have been established to meet the requirements of DOE Order 151.1B (See Appendix 6).

The LASO PIO or a designee is responsible for establishing and supporting JIC operations. The NNSA representative at the LANL Emergency Operations Center, in consultation with LASO PIO, will determine the need for JIC activation. In the event no NNSA representative is in the EOC, the LANL Emergency Manager, in consultation with the LASO PIO, will determine JIC activation. If there is no NNSA representatives in the EOC, the LANL Emergency Manager, in consultation with the LANL Primary Public Affairs Officer, will determine the need for activating the JIC and notify the LASO Duty Officer and NNSA HQ Office of Congressional Intergovernmental and Public Affairs.

If a JIC is activated, LASO, NNSA DOE and contractor personnel will provide communications and administrative support staff to the JIC for the duration of the emergency. Other federal, state, and local agencies may deploy representatives to the JIC. The JIC provides workspace and equipment for LASO/LANL, local, tribal and state governments, and other response organizations' staff assigned to prepare and/or coordinate the release of information for outside agency use and for the public and media. The JIC staff will use only approved information or previously created and approved background information on LASO/LANL and its facilities and operations.

Other agencies represented at the JIC may develop and release their own information regarding their response to the incident, but all such information should be coordinated among designated spokespersons of organizations represented at the JIC to ensure all speak with "one voice" for maximum credibility. All information released by agencies represented at the JIC will be shared among participating organizations and should reflect a common information base concerning facility status, emergency events and anticipated emergency operations that affect LASO/LANL, local, tribal and state governments, NNSA DOE and other federal agencies. Other agencies' public information systems may be used in conjunction with the JIC to disseminate information.

In the event that a non-NNSA DOE, LASO/LANL event occurs and the offsite agency responsible activates the JIC to address the emergency, LASO/LANL will provide personnel and resources to assist the off-site agency's response.

Emergency Public Information Organization

The EPI Plan establishes an emergency public affairs organization with assigned positions and responsibilities. Each position has a primary and alternate (back-up) assigned. A second alternate will be assigned on a to-be-determined basis, dependent upon personnel availability. Staffing will depend on the extent and nature of the emergency. In some cases, some positions and their responsibilities may be combined, as needed.

The leaders of the three CER offices, in coordination with the CER Division Leader, will direct the assignment of LANL CER staff during emergencies (see Appendix 7-9). The LASO PAO and the CER Division Leader will ensure that appropriate staffing, facilities and equipment are provided to facilitate emergency public information responsibilities at LANL and to support field activities as needed.

If a JIC is activated CER staff will fill the positions of media and public inquiry response team, media monitoring team, news manager, technical spokesperson and employee communications coordinator. If necessary, NNSA may direct CER staff to fill additional roles. (See Appendix 8)

Positions are as follows:

- LASO PIO
- PAO Primary
- PAO Secondary
- PAO Support Staff
- Community Relations Office (CRO) Primary
- CRO Secondary/New Writer
- CRO Support Staff
- Government Relations Office (GRO) Primary
- GRO Secondary
- Press Center Manager
- PIO on-scene
- JIC Manager
- News Manager
- DOE Spokesperson
- Media and Public Inquiry Teams
- Media Monitoring Team
- Employee Communications Coordinator
- Technical Spokesperson
- Off-site PIOs (outside agencies)
- Authorized Derivative Classifier
- Administrative Support Staff
- Security Staff

Emergency Public Information Staff Selection

The CER Division Leader or designee will review CER emergency response staffing assignments annually to ensure accuracy of listed individuals and staff availability. Staff assigned to roles in the EOC will be required to review and update training annually, at a minimum.

Off-Hours LASO PAO and CER Recall

In the event that the EOC is activated during off-hours, EM&R will use a call-out list of LASO PAO and CER individuals; the first CER person from the list contacted will report to the EOC and assume the role of CER-EOC Primary. The LASO PAO individual will assume the PIO role. The CER Primary is responsible for initiating the rest of the CER alert tree to ensure awareness of the event and allow CER management to recall sufficient staff to fulfill CER responsibilities. If a Radiological Assistance Program team or the Accident Response Group deploys and requests assistance, the LASO PAO or CER staff designee trained for these roles will deploy with the team.²

Responsibilities During Emergency Response Activities

During emergencies the LASO PAO and CER Division advises and counsels management about communications issues associated with the emergency; generates and distributes informational updates to employees, public and other stakeholders, and news media; responds to employee, public and media inquiries; establishes and updates employee communications; and coordinates media interviews and/or briefings.

Roles and Responsibilities:

LASO PIO (in EOC)

- Coordinates EOC emergency public information activities with CER. Advises and counsels the NNSA Representative and other management including whether activation of a JIC is advisable.
- Establishes and maintains communications with the on-scene PIO (if applicable), NNSA and NNSA HQ Office of Congressional Intergovernmental and Public Affairs, DOE-HQ Public Affairs, and JIC Manager if a JIC is activated. Provides approved media releases, fact sheets and photos to NNSA and DOE-HQ Public Affairs.
- Coordinates information release with appropriate off-site agency PIOs.
- The JIC will be established, directed and coordinated by the senior NNSA DOE operations/field office public affairs manager or a designee.

²Note: An off-site RAP or ARG response may require calling in a backup person to assume the CEREOC Primary function.

PAO-EOC Primary

- Directs and coordinates with the LASO PIO EOC emergency communication activities, including the gathering of information for news releases, inquiry responses and other informational updates.
- Advises and counsels Emergency Director regarding communications issues and concerns, including presence of media or activists on site.
- Either directly or through the CER-EOC Secondary position, establishes and maintains communications with the CER Division Leader, CER offices, on-scene PIO, and JIC Manager, if a JIC is activated.
- Ensures operational review and approval by the Emergency Director and LASO PIO of news release, inquiry response or other information. Also obtains classification and legal review, if required, before information is released.³
- With the LASO PIO directs staffing of the JIC through the CER offices according to JIC staffing plan, if JIC activation is necessary.

PAO-EOC Secondary

- Provides support to EOC Primary to maintain effective communications links.
- Prepares news release, inquiry responses, background information and other information updates as needed in coordination with the CER-EOC Primary.
- Directs distribution of approved information to CER offices.
- Ensures that news releases and other information are conveyed to the JIC by appropriate means (e-mail, fax or hand-carry).

PAO Support Staff

- Provides all necessary logistical support to actions of CER-EOC Primary and Secondary, including maintaining phone logs and other records of EOC actions, distributing information as required, researching information and other duties as assigned.

CRO-EOC Secondary

- CRO will focus on representing the Laboratory to community leadership, local elected officials and special interest groups. This could include ongoing information updates of the status of the emergency and response to it.
- Assists Primary to accomplish communication requirements with local, state and federal entities

³ Absent LASO PIO or NNSA representative at the EOC, the LASO Director or Duty Officer should be contacted to provide local NNSA review and approval.

CRO-EOC Secondary

- Provides all necessary logistical support to actions of CER-EOC Primary and Secondary, including maintaining phone logs and other records of EOC actions, distributing information as required, researching information and other duties as assigned.

GRO-EOC Secondary

- GRO will focus on representing the Laboratory to congressional delegation offices, state legislative leaders, tribal leaders and state executive branch agencies. This could include ongoing information updates of the status of the emergency and response to it.
- Assists Primary to accomplish communication requirements with local, state and federal entities
- GRO's Tribal Team Leader is responsible for ensuring effective communications to Tribal entities during emergency situations. This could include ongoing informational updates of the status of the emergency and response to it.

GRO-EOC Support Staff

- Provides all necessary logistical support to actions of CER-EOC Primary and Secondary, including maintaining phone logs and other records of EOC actions, distributing information as required, researching information and other duties as assigned.

Press Center Manager

- Manages Press Center activities and staff. Maintains information flow with LASO Public Affairs Specialist and CER-EOC Primary.
- Oversees distribution of news releases in coordination with LASO PAO.
- Schedules and moderates media briefings if necessary. Conducts pre-briefing meetings with EOC management and spokespersons.

On-Scene Public Information Officer

The Incident Command structure of LANL's Emergency Management and Response Operation includes a position of Information Officer in the field. CER may be asked by EM&R to staff that position, or CER may request to send a staff member to the scene to fill the position of information officer, as it helps with overall information gathering and assists the institutional response.

- LANL CER employee dispatched with a response team. The PIO reports to and provides communications counsel to the Incident Commander and may be asked to support local or state emergency response organizations on scene with information coordination.
- Establishes and maintains communication with the CER-EOC Primary or LASO PIO.
- Directs and coordinates all emergency public information activities at the scene with IC approval and appropriate EOC liaison.

- Coordinates with the IC, the CER-EOC Primary and the LASO PIO preparation for, and conducting of, on-scene media briefings, when it is practical to hold them.

JIC Manager

- Has management oversight of the JIC facility and staff, responsible for set-up and security, ensuring equipment needs are met, and the timely release of accurate and understandable public information.
- Communicates with the LASO PIO and CER-EOC Primary.
- Assures news media are notified of JIC activation.
- Conducts pre-media briefing meeting with LASO, LANL, NNSA/DOE management and spokespersons. Moderates media briefings and ensures their videotaping for documentation.
- Ensures all completed documents and forms are kept and brought to the EOC for documentation.

News Manager (Located in JIC)

- Oversees all matters pertaining to interactions with the media to include equipment hookups, phone lines, press packets, media releases, and commitments for further information made during media briefings.
- Keeps JIC Manager and Administrative Support Staff up-to-date on what media are present, and reports to the JIC Manager any trends in media questioning.
- Prepares for media briefings alerting JIC management to media and public questions pertaining to specific information.
- Ensures distribution of approved media releases.
- Assists security, if necessary, with media access into the JIC.

DOE Spokesperson

- Briefs media and/or public on site response and recovery activities and event status.

Media and Public Inquiry Teams

- Team Leader attends JIC briefings and provides latest authorized information to team members in written format.
- Team members maintain a log of and respond to media inquiries.
- Team members provide updates to the media not present at the JIC.
- Team members inform Leader of rumors and unresolved questions/issues to get resolution
- Team leader acts rapidly upon rumors or misinformation conveyed.

Media Monitoring Team

- Records TV and radio broadcasts.
- Reviews broadcast and print stories for inaccuracies and rumors, and provide JIC
- Manager or Press Center Team Leader with reports.

Employee Communications Coordinator

- Inform employees and respond to their inquiries and liaison responsibility with employee families

Technical Spokesperson (Located in the EOC/Press Center/JIC/On Scene)

- Assists DOE spokesperson and/or actually serves, due to media training, as the on-camera/for quote subject-matter expert.
- Provides technical information support as needed to the JIC Manager, PAO or Press Center Manager.
- Establishes and maintains communications with the EOC subject matter experts to gather information concerning the onsite emergency conditions and actions for the support of information needs
- Analyzes reported information and provides input to the JIC Manager, PAO, PIO, or News Writer for development of statements for the media.

Off-site PIOs (outside agencies)

- Provide accurate and timely information to the public regarding ongoing emergency operations within their jurisdictions. Coordinate release of information with JIC Manager or Press Center Manager.
- Participate in all media briefings whenever possible.
- Keep respective agencies apprised of information released from the JIC or Media Relations Center.

Authorized Derivative Classifier

- On call for events that may have security implications and to review news releases for classified material if necessary.

Administrative Support Staff (Press Center/JIC)

- Attend staff briefings when possible.
- Provide clerical support to Press Center/JIC staff.
- Maintain a file for, and provide distribution of, all approved media releases.
- Maintain a file for all other agency releases, media and public inquiries, and rumors.

Security Staff

- Direct access within the JIC, including the establishment and staffing of access control points within the building.
- Work with News Manager to ensure arriving media are registered and badged.

Emergency Information Audiences

Employees

LASO/LANL and contractor employees need prompt, accurate information to protect themselves and others. Employees need to be aware of emergency activities because they may be required to take protective actions. In addition, employees perform a valuable function helping to provide factual information to their families and friends.

Stakeholders

Stakeholders include community and Tribal leaders, offices of local, state and federal elected officials, general public, and special interest groups. Stakeholders will have an interest in any emergency situation at LASO/LANL, and may need to be advised of protective actions to undertake.

Media

This includes local, regional, national and international print and electronic media representatives. Media provide a conduit for getting information out to the public, and can drive an institution's response because of their need for information on a rapid timescale. Every effort will be made to provide prompt, accurate information to all media. Media can serve as the vital link to the local community affected by an emergency. They can provide protective action instructions if necessary and assist in the transmission of factual information to regional and national media.

Information Coordination

NNSA and DOE

The LASO PIO is responsible for coordinating emergency information activities with NNSA and DOE HQ public affairs offices. The LASO PIO will establish contact with NNSA and DOE HQ public affairs and/or their representative in the HQ EOC as soon as possible. In the event of a major emergency, the LASO PIO may be tasked to furnish information simultaneously to both the HQ EOC and the NNSA and DOE HQ public affairs offices. The LASO PIO may request that the NNSA Service Center's Office of Public Affairs (OPA) take over coordination of information with NNSA and DOE HQ public affairs offices so that the LASO PIO may continue to deal with public information responsibilities for the emergency at the site.

NNSA and DOE HQ public affairs directors and/or their representatives are responsible for directing HQ public information activities during emergencies. They will ensure that appropriate staffing facilities, and equipment are provided to facilitate emergency public information responsibilities at HQ and will support field activities as needed. As part of the coordination responsibilities, the LASO PIO will relay to the on-scene PIO any information requests, suggestions, or recommendation originating from NNSA and DOE HQ public affairs.

Coordination of emergency public information with HQ is done in accordance with DOE Order 151.1A Chapter IX, "Public Affairs Policy and Planning Requirements," Section 4, Response Phase, Sub-sections g. and h.

- g. The Director of Public Affairs and the Headquarters Emergency Manager shall be informed of all DOE or NNSA emergency public information actions. These notifications shall be made as soon as practicable but are not required prior to issuing news releases or public statements.
- h. The DOE or NNSA official responsible for emergency public information review and dissemination shall approve initial news releases or public statements. Following initial news releases and public statements, updates shall be coordinated with the Director of Public Affairs.

Pre-approved information

Several types of material can be developed and approved in advance and held on standby for use during emergencies. These materials include general fact sheets about LASO/LANL (budget, size, staffing, etc.) and its principal programmatic responsibilities; fact sheets about LASO's/LANL's principal facilities for handling hazardous and/or radioactive materials, which would be of interest during emergency situations (TA-55, CMR, TA-54, etc.); and general information about emergency classification levels and emergency response activities. Such materials generally are developed by CER and approved by the relevant subject matter experts. (See Appendix 13)

EOC approved Information

During an emergency, the CER Primary at the EOC is responsible for gathering information about the emergency and LASO/LANL response activities and obtaining approval for its release. Approval comes from the Emergency Director and the NNSA representative in coordination with the LASO PIO. Absent LASO or other NNSA representation at the EOC, the CER Primary will contact the LASO Director, Public Affairs Director or Duty Officer for local NNSA review and approval of a news release before it is issued. The Emergency Director will draw upon other subject matter experts at the EOC, as he or she deems necessary to ensure factual accuracy of the material proposed for release.

If public health and safety warrant urgent release of information and NNSA review is not forthcoming the Emergency Director can approve and release such information and ensure it is concurrently sent to LASO and NNSA HQ public affairs offices.

In addition, information for some incidents may require review for classification or privacy or other legal considerations. The CER Primary at the EOC is responsible for ensuring that such review occurs when necessary.

Information developed and approved on scene

The On-Scene Public Information Officer (PIO), as part of the Incident Command response structure, can release information at the scene of the emergency prior to the EOC becoming operational with approval of the IC. Once the EOC is operational all information must be approved by the EOC prior to release.

Information Coordination and Off-site Notifications

Emergency public information planning includes provisions for cooperation and coordination of public information with other federal, state, tribal and local response organizations. Proper coordination ensures the accuracy of information flow during an emergency to organizations regarding the emergency, protective actions recommended, status of the situation and its termination.

The LANL Emergency Response Organization has responsibility for initial, formal notifications to outside agencies. LANL CER shares information with outside agencies through the JIC structure or through follow-up communications to its constituents after initial EOC notifications have been made. Coordination between the CER-EOC team and the EOC Notification Specialist is necessary for an effective CER response

Initial event information approved for release is distributed first to CER offices and LASO PAO. Subsequent information will be coordinated with all appropriate offices and then distributed as stated above and in addition sent to the JIC, if it has been activated. The CER offices then transmit the approved information to their constituents.

Employee Communications

Employee communications during and after an emergency are essential. Employees need to know appropriate response actions to take during an emergency. Employees also can assist in the overall effectiveness of disseminating emergency public information and protecting employee health and safety. Providing timely and accurate information to employees helps limit the spread of rumors, maintains calm behavior, and facilitates the effective management of the emergency event. Providing protective action information to off-site employees also is important. It will let them know if and when it is safe for them to report to work. Employees also can be an effective means for getting out information, both official and unofficial.

CER's Public Affairs Office coordinates through several means distribution of approved information to employees about the emergency, including protective action instructions.

- Managers receive information and updates through e-mail, which they are instructed to share with employees in their organizations
- PAO also has authority to send all-employee e-mails, and uses that avenue when the situation requires reaching as many employees as possible as quickly as possible
- The online Daily Newsbulletin posts information as it is received⁴
- An Update telephone line provides LASO/LANL site status reports; it is available as a local or toll-free number for people outside the local calling area⁵
- Employees can make specific inquiries about the emergency by contacting PAO⁶

CER also has established with the Information Management Division a coordinated sharing of information to create an emergency Web page for employees that presents all approved information.⁷ Various types of background information will be pre-positioned at this Web site, which will be activated in times of emergency response. In addition, informational updates specific to the emergency situation will be posted to the site.

Local radio and television stations also will be contacted to assist in providing emergency information to off-site employees and employee families.

Government Relations Stakeholder Communications

During emergency-response activities the GRO will focus on representing the Laboratory to congressional delegation offices, state legislative leaders, tribal leaders and state executive branch agencies. GRO will use approved information coming from the EOC in its communications, and will rely principally on telephone and e-mail to communicate with its constituencies.

Community Relations Stakeholder Communications

CRO's response activities will focus on representing the Laboratory to community leadership, local elected officials, and special interest groups. CRO also is the point of contact for public inquiries and maintains a toll-free call-in number for information and rumor control.⁸ CRO will use approved information coming from the EOC in its communications, and will principally rely on e-mail and telephone to communicate with its constituencies

⁴ The Newsbulletin is at <http://www.lanl.gov/orgs/pa/newsbulletin>

⁵ Update can be accessed by calling 505-667-6622 or (toll-free) 877-723-4101

⁶ PAO's main number for employee inquiries is 505-667-7000

⁷ The URL for the emergency web page is <http://www.lanl.gov/emergency>

⁸ CRO's toll-free number for public inquiries is 888-841-8256.

Media Relations

News Releases and Briefings

The news media are the conduit through which public perception of the LASO/LANL and NNSA DOE are developed. Therefore, media relations are of utmost importance. Every effort has been made in this plan to accommodate the needs of the media to ensure optimum cooperation and fair and accurate information dissemination.

The LASO/LANL emergency public information staff is to be accessible, prompt, courteous, and forthcoming in dealing with the media prior to, during, and after emergency events. Credibility is imperative, and every effort will be made to promote a good media interface. Only information considered classified, confidential, proprietary, or of potential damage to national security will be withheld. When public and/or personnel health and safety are in jeopardy, the emergency will be addressed immediately and candidly.

For use during the initial stages of an emergency event, “fill-in-the-blank” news release templates have been prepared (See Appendix 17). They are available in this plan and as part of the materials maintained at the EOC; they are maintained and updated at PAO. In addition, a news release letterhead is also available. These materials provide a means for consistent appearance of information released, which helps establish the authenticity of the information and guide the media to additional information.

An initial release should go out as soon as possible and may be done either verbally or in written format once information approval has been completed. NNSA DOE should adhere to the standards of other Federal agencies and private industry by releasing information within one hour of the event.

Operational requirements associated with some emergencies may dictate a delay in issuing a news release – for example, in a hostage situation it may not be desirable to initiate an immediate notification to media because it may compromise security and response activities in progress. LASO/LANL commit to issuing a statement to the news media in as prompt a fashion as possible given the circumstances of the individual incident.

Subsequent releases will be prepared and distributed as soon as additional approved information is available. News releases will have the time and date recorded on them and will be numbered for easy reference. The CER-EOC team will maintain a complete file of any materials developed and approved for release from the EOC. Copies of approved news releases will be posted or otherwise provided to the EOC staff. When the JIC is activated, a release listing telephone numbers for the public and media to call for emergency information will be prepared and issued. Approved new releases will be e-mailed, faxed or otherwise distributed to the JIC and to CER offices for distribution to their constituents.

Media briefings should be held as emergency events and media interest warrant. Additional briefings or interviews may be conducted with technical experts if necessary. LASO PAO/CER will select technical spokespersons for the media briefing in consultation with the Emergency

Director. The spokespersons will be chosen for their knowledge relevant to the situation and their ability to communicate in a clear fashion to a lay audience (See Appendix 19). Media briefings should be announced in advance so maximum attendance and information dissemination can be achieved.

Media briefings and interviews should be scheduled with media deadlines in mind, and should be announced in advance so maximum attendance and information dissemination can be achieved. Media briefings can be used to help dispel rumors and to correct misinformation. Information provided at briefings, during interviews or in releases will be appropriately coordinated with LASO/LANL public affairs and management, in consultation and outside response organizations as required. Information provided at briefings, during interviews, coordinated with NNSA-HQ and DOE-HQ.

Public/Media Education

Information will be distributed periodically to the public and media to inform them about LASO's/LANL's emergency response programs and protective action guidelines.⁹ The public and media should be kept informed of general preparedness and exercise information and other LASO/LANL activities conducted to ensure public and environmental health and safety. Such information should be disseminated through a variety of means to ensure wide distribution. The information should include topics on sheltering procedures, risks and hazards at LANL, and appropriate radio frequencies and/or television stations used for disseminating emergency public information.

LASO PAO, CER and CRO work in coordination with the Emergency Management and Response Group (S-8) and Risk Reduction and Environmental Stewardship-Meteorology and Air Quality (RRES-MAQ) to provide non-profit training for state government employees in Santa Fe and Albuquerque as well as for the New Mexico State Police and other identified members of non-profit community organizations. CRO helps these organizations with training, preparation of all necessary documentation (emergency management plans), and in the identification and mitigation of their hazards.

Media awareness briefings and materials will be offered periodically so print and electronic media representatives may become acquainted with the facility management, emergency plans and emergency public information points of contact.

Public and media education also will include information on available phone services that provide site status information (Locally at 505-667-6622 or toll-free at 877-723-4101).

Numbers for the JIC will be publicized when the JIC is operational.

⁹Note section 10.3 of the LANL Emergency Management Plan

Training, Drills and Exercises

The effectiveness of the emergency public information program is dependent on regular exercises and drills. Training will be provided to the LASO PAO and CER staff within the guidelines of LASO's/LANL's emergency management system. All persons with a response role will participate in a sufficient number of drills and exercises to ensure they are capable of performing their responsibilities during an emergency. Required drills and exercises will be held periodically with particular attention placed on the organization effectiveness, methodology and procedures of gathering, coordinating, and disseminating information to the public.

All personnel assigned to an emergency response position will receive training in their respective functions, as well as in the overall organizational emergency response planning.

Drills and exercises should be held at least annually for members of the LASO PAO and CER staff. This will include the annual emergency exercise but also will include additional training opportunities that LANL's Emergency Management and Response Group conducts, such as on tabletop exercises, presentations on emergency response and other efforts.

Performance-based training includes

- An overview of emergency management and emergency public information systems, with an emphasis on understanding the information needs of the public, the media, and onsite and outside agencies.
- A review of the roles and responsibilities within LASO PAO and CER.
- A review of how to effectively gather, verify, coordinate and release timely and accurate information as established in the emergency public information plan.
- Specific training for news writers and spokespersons that emphasizes operating in a high-stress environment.
- Specific training for telephone teams that emphasizes answering the types of difficult questions likely to be asked during an emergency.
- A review of updated emergency public information plans and procedures, significant changes to the emergency management organization and the status of off-site interface.
- A review of problem areas identified during drills and exercises. Any problem areas or deficiencies will be emphasized during subsequent training sessions.