

**Coordinating Agency:**

Department of Homeland Security

**Cooperating Agencies:**

All

## INTRODUCTION

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### Purpose

This Public Affairs Support Annex describes the interagency policies and procedures used to rapidly mobilize Federal assets to prepare and deliver coordinated and sustained messages to the public in response to incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response.

### Scope

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As part of the Secretary of Homeland Security's responsibility to coordinate incident management under Presidential directive, the National Response Framework (NRF) Incident Communications Emergency Policy and Procedures (ICEPP) provides detailed guidance to Federal incident communicators on activities to be initiated in conjunction with incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response. It is applicable to all Federal departments and agencies responding under the NRF. It establishes mechanisms to prepare and deliver coordinated and sustained messages regarding incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response, and provides for prompt Federal acknowledgement of an incident and communication of emergency information to the public during incident management operations.

The ICEPP is comprised of two annexes contained in the NRF:

- **Public Affairs Support Annex:** Describes the interagency policies and procedures for incident communications with the public.
- **ESF #15 Annex:** Outlines the functions, resources, and capabilities for external affairs.

Additionally, the ESF #15 Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) exist within the parameters established by the NRF. The SOP establishes specific procedures and protocols for ESF #15 to support Federal domestic incident management during an incident requiring a coordinated Federal response.

The policies outlined in all of these documents are based on, and flow through, the NRF, the National Incident Management System (NIMS), and the ESF #15 SOP, which further outlines the guidance, protocols, and tactics of the Joint Information System (JIS), the Incident Command System (ICS), and Federal external affairs actions. All of these elements are integrated with and supported through the ESF #15 resource management structure.

### Policies

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The NIMS institutes an integrated concept, termed "incident communications," as the approach used to manage communications with the public during incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response. Incident communications incorporates the following processes:

- **Control:** Identification of incident communications, primary and supporting department and agency roles, and authorities for release of information.
- **Coordination:** Specification of interagency coordination and plans, notification, activation, and supporting protocols.
- **Communications:** Development of accessible message content such as incident facts, health risk concerns, pre-incident and post-incident preparedness recommendations,

warning issues, incident information, messages, audiences, and strategies for when, where, how, and by whom the messages will be delivered.

General guidance on the authority to release information is in accordance with existing plans, operational security, law enforcement protocols, designated coordinating and primary agency assignments, and current procedures. Nothing in this annex limits the authority of local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area authorities to release information regarding an incident under their jurisdiction, particularly if it involves immediate health and safety issues.

Local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area authorities retain the primary responsibility for communicating health and safety instructions for their population. Information should be made available in languages other than English and in alternate formats, as necessary.

Integration and teamwork among local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, and Federal authorities is essential. Local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area authorities are encouraged to contact Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Public Affairs as they release initial or follow-on information. DHS Public Affairs engages with local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, and affected private sector counterparts as soon as possible during an actual or potential incident to synchronize overall incident communications to the public.

## CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

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### General

During an incident, local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, and Federal authorities share responsibility for communicating information regarding the incident to the public. These actions are a critical component of incident management and must be fully integrated with all other operational actions to ensure the following objectives are met:

- Delivery of incident preparedness, health, response, and recovery instructions to those directly affected by the incident.
- Dissemination of incident information to the public, including individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs.

The Joint Information Center (JIC) structure provides a supporting mechanism to develop, coordinate, and deliver messages. It supports the Incident Commander or Unified Command and the associated elements of the ICS.

A Federal core group develops, coordinates, and delivers information and instructions to the public related to:

- Federal assistance to the incident-affected area.
- Federal departmental/agency response.
- National preparations.
- Protective measures.
- Impact on non-affected areas.
- Federal law enforcement activities.

Assignments to this core group are determined by the DHS Office of Public Affairs (OPA) in accordance with jurisdictional and statutory responsibilities, operational tasks, areas of expertise and responsibility, and the nature and location of the incident.

The DHS OPA has primary responsibility for coordinating the Federal incident communications effort by:

- Providing a leadership role during domestic incidents when significant interagency coordination is required.
- Identifying Federal department and interagency participants, and arranging conference calls and other activities necessary for ESF #15 coordination.
- Establishing a strategic communications flow during an incident requiring a coordinated Federal response.
- Designating an ESF #15 team comprised of external affairs officials from various Federal Government departments and agencies.
- Providing coordination with the Homeland Security Council (HSC) and other entities within the Executive Office of the President on matters related to dissemination of incident-related information to the public.

## Communications Team

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The Federal Government operates as a team to ensure successful incident communications with the public. From initial notifications to final recovery actions, the Federal team must operate and speak with a unified voice and consistent message that is coordinated not only with the different Federal authorities involved in an incident, but also with affected local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area authorities.

The organizational approach for public affairs and incident communications with the public relies on the following organizations and positions:

- **Incident Management Planning Team (IMPT):** As a member of the DHS IMPT, a DHS OPA planner writes public affairs annexes for each of the National Planning Scenarios.
- **Joint Information Center:** A JIC is a central point for coordination of incident information, public affairs activities, and media access to information regarding the latest developments. In the event of incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response, JICs are established to coordinate local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, Federal, and private sector incident communications with the public. Major announcements, daily briefings, and incident updates from the JIC are coordinated through DHS Public Affairs; affected local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area leadership; and the interagency core group prior to release. This must be closely assessed and agreed upon in the early stages of an incident by all involved in incident communications with the public.
- **Incident JIC:** The incident JIC is the physical location where all public affairs professionals involved in the response work together to provide critical emergency information, media response, and public affairs functions. The JIC serves as a focal point for the coordination and dissemination of information to the public and media concerning incident preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation. The JIC may be established at an on-scene location in coordination with local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area agencies depending on the requirements of the incident. In most cases, the JIC is established at or is virtually connected to the Joint Field Office (JFO), under the coordination of DHS Public Affairs. However, the most important consideration concerning location will be the proximity to the incident. It would likely be established following multiple hurricanes or other natural disasters. This JIC is also the location military public affairs officers should deploy to if a Joint Task Force is established to support the incident.
- **Virtual JIC:** A virtual JIC links all participants through technological means (secure or non-secure) when geographical restrictions, incident management requirements, and other

limitations preclude physical attendance by public affairs leadership at a central location. The National Incident Communications Conference Line (NICCL) is a Virtual JIC. Virtual JICs continue as long as the situation warrants and prevents collocation of public affairs assets.

- **Satellite JIC:** The Satellite JIC is a forward-deployed component of an incident JIC. Smaller in scale, a Satellite JIC is established to provide a scalable and flexible capability for timely release of information, as the incident situation evolves. A Satellite JIC may be established to support a specific press event.
- **Area JIC:** Multiple JICs may be used when there are multiple JFOs to support the area command ICS structure. Procedures and processes specified in the NIMS and the ICEPP should be employed whenever multiple JICs are operating in support of the same or related incidents and jurisdictions. Coordination between the Area JICs is important to ensure mutual awareness and consistency in messaging and public instructions between all participants.
- **National JIC:** The National JIC is activated when an incident requires a coordinated Federal response. Incidents of great magnitude with high media interest require Federal coordination that is expected to be of a long duration (i.e., weeks or months). The incident would likely affect a large area of the country. A National JIC could be established outside Washington, DC, or any other major metropolitan area following a Federal continuity of operations (COOP) plan.
- **JIC Staffing Components:** JIC organization and staffing components are based on the template established in the ESF #15 SOP.
- **External Affairs Officer:** ESF #15 provides the External Affairs Officer to the JFO Unified Coordination Staff during an incident requiring a coordinated Federal response. The External Affairs Officer, or ESF #15 Officer, serves as the primary external affairs advisor to the Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO)/Federal Resource Coordinator (FRC), JFO Unified Coordination Group, and principal Federal official, if designated.

The External Affairs Officer reports to the ESF #15 Director and the Unified Coordination Group. Specific duties include coordinating and developing the external affairs and communications strategy in support of the Unified Coordination Group and the Incident Action Plan; coordinating the external affairs information flow within the JFO and among other local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, and Federal counterparts; and facilitating site visits by governmental officials, foreign dignitaries, and other VIPs. The External Affairs Officer differs from a press secretary, who may be assigned to directly support a principal Federal official, when designated.

Other ESF #15 personnel include:

- **Multistate/Single Principal Federal Official – ESF #15 External Affairs Officer:** Certain coordinated Federal responses may require a single designated principal Federal official for the incident with multiple FCOs and staffs in affected states. In this case, an ESF #15 Deputy External Affairs Officer for the respective state(s) and supporting FCO(s) will be identified. In order to ensure unity of effort, ESF #15 Deputy External Affairs Officers will coordinate activities with the principal Federal official's ESF #15 External Affairs Officer.
- **Initial ESF #15 External Affairs Officer:** This officer may be assigned in the event of a no-notice incident requiring a coordinated Federal response, pending arrival of the permanently assigned officer.
- **Other External Affairs Staff Personnel:** Include the ESF #15 Deputy and Executive officers, a Press Secretary, a principal Federal official liaison (if a principal Federal official is

appointed), and Assistant External Affairs Officers for Congressional Affairs; state, Local, and Tribal Affairs; the Private Sector; Community Relations; and Planning and Products.

The organizational approach for public affairs and incident communications with the public also includes the following coordination systems:

- **National Incident Communications Conference Line (NICCL):** The NICCL is a standing conference line designated, maintained, and supported by DHS Public Affairs as the primary means for interagency incident communications information sharing during an incident requiring Federal coordination. DHS Public Affairs provides guidance to Federal interagency public affairs headquarters staffs and affected authorities through the NICCL.
- **State Incident Communications Conference Line (SICCL):** The SICCL is a dedicated Federal-state incident communications conference line also designated by DHS Public Affairs to facilitate the inclusion, transmission, and exchange of incident management information and messaging to all states and territories.
- **Private Sector Incident Communications Conference Line (PICCL):** The PICCL is a standing line for use by the Critical Infrastructure/Key Resources (CIKR) incident communications coordinators. Access information will be coordinated and disseminated by DHS Infrastructure Protection and DHS Public Affairs to provide timely public information to the CIKR sectors during an incident requiring Federal coordination and response.
- **Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN):** HSIN provides the incident communications team with an encrypted online Web system for record communications, chat room capability, and a real-time capability to post and review documents. The HSIN also is used by the DHS National Operations Center (NOC) to coordinate Homeland Security operations with interagency participants. DHS Public Affairs manages access, account support, and administrative issues relating to the HSIN for public affairs coordination.
- **Connectivity and Operations Center Support:** In the event that normal communications are lost or degraded, the core group communicates with DHS Public Affairs through respective local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, and Federal emergency operations and command centers. The NOC provides support for this task. Department and agency incident communications COOP plans should incorporate relocation and alternate operating location provisions.

## Managing Incident Communications

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For incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response, Federal public affairs offices must immediately work together across all departments and the ESFs to communicate with the public. The integration and coordination of the public information office associated with each ESF will ensure the Federal Government is communicating a complete message. This section describes incident communications control processes that delineate primary roles, primary agency functional areas, and authority for release of information.

**Initial Actions:** The NOC Senior Watch Officer and the DHS Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs (AS/PA) have specific responsibilities for immediate actions in the event of an incident. These include:

- **Incident Requiring a Coordinated Federal Response:** The NOC Senior Watch Officer notifies the DHS AS/PA and Director of Incident Communications, who in turn direct implementation of the ICEPP and immediate public affairs staffing to respond to the incident.

- **Other Domestic Incidents:** The ICEPP may be implemented by the DHS AS/PA at the discretion of the Secretary of Homeland Security in support of other domestic incidents requiring NOC participation.

The DHS National Joint Information Center (NJIC) will serve as the Federal incident communications coordination center during incidents. The virtual Federal interagency team and NICCL are controlled from the NJIC.

**Assignments:** For an incident requiring a coordinated Federal response, DHS Public Affairs coordinates the Federal activities related to incident communications with the public. Departments, agencies, and other authorities may retain primary incident communications responsibility for specific tasks. Primary assignments are confirmed during initial conference calls and may include the following:

- Preparedness
- Protective measures
- Incident management
- Law enforcement
- Medical or behavioral health
- Environmental
- Family assistance and victim issues
- Communications for individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs
- Evacuation/sheltering of animals, including household pets and service animals
- Search and rescue
- Technical or forensic matters
- Recovery assistance
- Federal personnel management

**Interagency Public Affairs Directors:** Federal interagency public affairs directors and their public affairs offices maintain a close working relationship with the DHS AS/PA and the Director of Incident Communications.

**Initial Coordination:** Establishing communications with participants is a primary objective during the first minutes of plan activation. A streamlined process ensures that appropriate participants and decisionmakers are linked together (by virtual or other means) to manage incident communications with the public. In coordination with White House communications, the Secretary of Homeland Security makes initial formal statements and public safety recommendations supported by other Cabinet officers and senior officials, as appropriate. DHS Public Affairs establishes communications paths to enable the following:

- **Headquarters Level:** Consultation with White House Communications, DHS senior leadership, the NOC, and the IMPT.
- **Interagency Level:** Consultation with the Federal interagency through the NICCL from the OPA. The conference line is activated and used to communicate with interagency public affairs officials and affected local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area counterparts. Federal interagency public affairs participants are designated and a virtual headquarters-level JIC assesses control, coordination, and communications issues for incident communications with the public. The initial conference assesses and assigns primary agency roles and reaches agreement on releases, talking points, and sustaining communications effort and strategy.
- **Incident Site:** When an incident occurs within their jurisdiction, local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area authorities take the lead to communicate public information regarding the incident. DHS Public Affairs makes every attempt to establish contact with the

incident site(s) and participating local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, and Federal communicators to gain incident facts, operational response updates, media coverage, and messages under consideration or already delivered.

- **News Media:** Contact with key news media to inform them about the incident and its status, provide initial information to counter speculation and rumors, and make available, where necessary or known, immediate operational, health, and safety guidance. Departments and agencies should closely coordinate media queries during this critical phase to ensure that the approved interagency plan is being executed.

**Sustaining Coordination:** Leadership for incident communications with the public uses the JIS and incident communications processes to organize and operate a sustained, integrated, and coordinated strategy ensuring the delivery of timely, accurate, consistent, and accessible information to the public. Resources for these activities are provided through ESF #15. This sustained coordination effort includes local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, Federal, and nongovernmental entities involved with incident communications with the public. DHS Public Affairs coordinates department and independent agency headquarters-level communications with the public as necessary throughout the incident, focusing on both the incident locale and non-affected areas to ensure continuity and synchronization between the local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, and Federal communications teams.

### Actions Supporting Incident Communications With the Public

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Actions supporting incident communications with the public are keyed to the major components of incident management and incorporate special considerations as appropriate to the specific circumstances associated with the incident. Phrasing of incident communications actions and special considerations that relate to incident communications with the public are detailed in the following subsections. Information for the public needs to be made available in languages other than English and in alternate formats as necessary through all phases of an incident.

#### Actions Relating to Incident Management Components

**Preparedness:** Preparedness for incident communications activities includes those measures taken before an incident to prepare for or mitigate the effects. Preparedness as it relates to incident communications with the public includes:

- Evacuation, warning, or precautionary information to ensure public safety and health and effective transportation and sheltering of animals, including household pets or service animals.
- Public and media education, including weapons of mass destruction information.
- Preparation and readiness to develop and deploy public service announcements and health advisory information.
- Testing and coordination of emergency broadcast and alerting systems.

Preparedness communications guidance and messaging support is provided through a number of resources, including websites. Some of those sites are: [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov), [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov), [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov), and [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org). Other Federal department and agency websites provide authoritative and scientifically based information on threats, health preparedness, and recovery-phase actions.

**Response:** Response processes mitigate the effects of unanticipated problems and facilitate orderly management of an incident. Response activities for incident communications with the public include:

- Rapid mobilization of incident communications resources to prepare and deliver coordinated, sustained, and accessible messages according to a well-planned strategy. DHS Public Affairs coordinates the Federal incident communications response.
- Immediate and continuing dissemination of operational, health, or safety instructions, if necessary. This may also include evacuation or decontamination instructions.
- Coordination of initial Federal announcements regarding an incident with local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area authorities to ensure that the public is receiving a consistent and accessible message.
- Activation of ESF #15 to support the incident communications effort with appropriate resources.
- Making available pre-identified subject-matter experts to the media to provide accurate scientific, medical, and technical response information.
- Designation of an ESF #15 External Affairs Officer to support the principal Federal official, if one is designated.
- Establishment of a JIC near the incident site to support the JFO and principal Federal official, if one is designated.
- Dissemination of information to the public on reassurance that authorities are implementing response and recovery actions to ensure the health, safety, and security of the public.
- Communications to other, non-affected states about incident details, preparedness measures, and reassurance through the SICCL.
- Deployment of public affairs resources from other Federal departments and agencies as required by the scope of the incident.
- Development and implementation of a joint sustaining communications plan and effort by local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, and Federal authorities that ensures accessible means of outreach to individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs.

General planning guidance for incident communications with the public is contained in Table 1 at the end of this annex. This matrix reflects incident actions and commensurate incident communications response activities for a nonspecific incident requiring Federal coordination. Key communications phase activities are summarized.

**Recovery:** Incident communications and public affairs efforts are sustained as long as necessary to continually reassure, inform, and respond to public information needs. These efforts are closely coordinated with local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area authorities. Recovery programs include mitigation components designed to avoid damage from future incidents. Typical recovery actions for incident communications with the public may include:

- Providing accessible public information on response and progress in restoring normalcy. Emphasis is placed on mitigating or reducing social and emotional anxiety and concern.



- Providing accessible public information on disaster assistance and support resources.
- Recognition of the efforts of responders, citizens, and the private sector.

### **Public Alerting and Mass Communications Systems**

The Emergency Alert System (EAS) is a tool for the President to quickly send important emergency information to the Nation using radio, television, and cable systems. The EAS is available for local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area use, but such use is voluntary on the part of the EAS participant.

**ESF #15 Release Authority:** Through authorized spokespersons, the Federal Government will respond to media requests for information, interviews, and imagery. The ESF #15 Officer is authorized to approve press releases, interviews, news briefings, and statements to the media. Significant policy statements and potentially sensitive external materials should be coordinated with the FCO, FRC, or principal Federal official (if appointed) before release. Spokespersons are identified as early in the response process as possible. Spokespersons may include incident management leadership and public affairs professionals. Local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, and Federal incident communications with the public must ensure that spokespersons are fully prepared with current information and incident facts, incident messages, and incident management roles and responsibilities. Scientific, technical, and medical experts should be identified and available for briefings and interviews throughout the incident. These experts are critical to ensuring that a message is clearly transmitted into common terms and is received by the audience with credibility.

**Media Access:** Media may be embedded in Federal Government departments and agencies responding to a domestic incident. Access is based on the adherence to ground rules and policies in the ESF #15 SOP. Media access will not be granted if ongoing law enforcement operations or the prosecution of forthcoming legal action will be jeopardized.

### **Individuals with Disabilities and Others with Access and Functional Needs**

Individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs must also be considered by authorities as a community prepares to respond to an incident. Emergency communications, including public information associated with emergencies, must be in accessible formats for persons with disabilities and individuals with limited English proficiency. The types of information important to deliver to individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs include the location of physically accessible shelters and food, availability of transportation, and health care locations and availability.

### **Animal Evacuation and Sheltering**

Authorities must consider the needs of owners of animals, including household pets and service animals, as a community prepares to respond to an incident. Emergency communications, including public information associated with emergencies, must address evacuation, transportation, and sheltering of individuals and their animals. The types of information important to deliver to these populations include the identification and location of animal-friendly shelters and food; specific local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area transportation programs available for household pets; and reunification of animal populations with their human counterparts. Also critical is clear guidance in disaster messaging that differentiates animal-related issues such as decontamination, quarantine, and hazmat incidents.

### **Medical and Mental Health Support**

Federal resources; local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area authorities; the American Red Cross; and other agencies and organizations provide mental health assistance and support to the public following an incident requiring Federal coordination. This includes efforts to mitigate concerns, anxiety, and fear from new attacks or incidents, and to instill public confidence in the capabilities of responders, authorities, and plans.

### **Non-Federal Incidents**

Many incidents do not require the direct involvement of the Secretary of Homeland Security. However, DHS and its OPA may assume responsibility or provide a major role during these domestic incidents when significant interagency coordination is required. Notification, activation, and response processes are discussed in preceding sections of this annex. Communications with the public during major domestic incidents are based on the following activities:

- DHS Public Affairs assesses the requirements for incident communications with the public in coordination with the NOC and coordinates Federal public affairs activities for the incident, unless otherwise directed by the Secretary;
- DHS Public Affairs contacts the affected local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area counterparts and, through mutual agreement, confirms primary roles and plans; and
- In coordination with participating local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area counterparts, the core Federal departmental/agency group develops and delivers public information and instructions. Primary assignments are determined in accordance with jurisdictional and statutory responsibilities, operational tasks, areas of expertise and responsibility, and the nature and location of the incident.

### **Catastrophic Planning**

In the event of extraordinary levels of mass casualties, damage, or destruction, communications may be challenging. The Catastrophic Incident Annex outlines the resources and capabilities used in support of such an event. Numerous Federal departments and agencies would be involved in communications, especially in the event DHS OPA is not capable of coordinating and communicating.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

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### **Coordinating Agency: DHS**

DHS, through the AS/PA and OPA:

- Plans, prepares, and executes Federal leadership and ESF #15 resource management during incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response and other domestic incidents.
- Coordinates plans, processes, and resource support to field operations for incident communications with the public through ESF #15, coordinates incident communications plans and processes with the White House Office of Communications and HSC, and coordinates interagency core group and JIC plans and processes.
- Designates an Operations Director based on the type and nature of the incident.
- Designates an ESF #15 External Affairs Officer to support the incident principal Federal official, if one is designated.

## Public Affairs Support Annex

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- Coordinates Federal plans and processes for incident communications with the public with local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area authorities as necessary.
- Coordinates plans and processes for incident communications with the public with nongovernmental organizations.
- Disseminates information related to incidents to the public.

## Federal Departments

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Federal departments and independent agencies:

- Plan, prepare, and execute their respective processes for incident communications with the public during incidents requiring Federal coordination.
- In conjunction with strategic communications guidance from DHS, assume certain primary agency responsibilities for incident communications with the public when assigned or consistent with specific departmental and agency authorities.
- Disseminate incident information to the public within their functional areas of responsibility.
- Ensure that departmental and agency plans incorporate the provisions contained in the NRF for incident communications with the public.

## Responsibilities for ICEPP Administration

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Responsibilities for the ongoing management, maintenance, update, and administration of the ICEPP are assigned as follows:

- **Responsibility:** The DHS AS/PA is responsible for preparation, management, and maintenance of the ICEPP.
- **Oversight:** The HSC provides oversight and coordination of policy issues relating to the ICEPP. The HSC and the DHS AS/PA jointly coordinate interagency clearance on the ICEPP, pending changes, exercise and incident lessons learned, and resolution of interagency coordination issues. Interagency Policy Coordinating Committees review and comment on proposed routine changes to the ICEPP.
- **Recurrent Review:** The DHS AS/PA reviews the ICEPP annually. Urgent changes are coordinated through the interagency process in an expeditious manner as necessary throughout the year.
- **Exercises and the National Exercise Program (NEP):** The ICEPP and the ESF #15 SOP are the primary Federal plans for incident communications with the public and are to be used for interagency exercises and those scheduled within the NEP.
- **Incident Communications Public Affairs Coordination Committee (ICPACC):** The ICPACC is a Federal interagency contact group incorporating public affairs representatives from all Cabinet departments and agencies to increase awareness, teamwork, and interoperability among Federal incident communications staffs. The ICPACC is not charged to conduct formal policy review, but may assess interagency issues dealing with the Public Affairs Support Annex. The DHS AS/PA manages the ICPACC and meets on a quarterly basis or as needed. The ICPACC meeting location rotates throughout the Federal Government to increase awareness and foster public affairs and interagency cohesiveness.

**Table 1. Interagency Incident Communications Planning Guide**

Incident Time	Incident Activity	Actions
<p><b>First Hour</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incident</li> <li>• First official reports</li> <li>• Unconfirmed facts and rumors</li> <li>• First media reports</li> <li>• Potential live TV reports</li> <li>• Public has immediate need for information and possible health and safety instructions.</li> <li>• Media has immediate need for facts, information, and subject-matter experts.</li> <li>• Witness media reports</li> <li>• Victim family reports</li> <li>• Potential incident video</li> <li>• Unconfirmed casualty reports</li> <li>• Potential voluntary or directed evacuations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NOC notified of incident.</li> <li>• Activate ICEPP protocols.</li> <li>• DHS NJIC activated.</li> <li>• Notify interagency of NICCL call.</li> <li>• DHS OPA initiates communications with affected local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, or private sector incident site communications counterparts.</li> <li>• ESF #15 is activated.</li> <li>• Local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area authorities may make first releases about the incident.</li> <li>• Initial health and safety release.</li> <li>• Emergency Alert System may be activated.</li> <li>• NOAA Weather Radio may be used to broadcast warning information.</li> <li>• NICCL Interagency call assesses:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Control/lead agency.</li> <li>• Coordination/planning.</li> <li>• Communications.</li> <li>• ESF #15 activation and deployments.</li> <li>• Virtual JIC established.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Secretary of Homeland Security and/or other Cabinet and senior officials make first formal statement within an hour of the incident.</li> <li>• SICCL call with nonaffected states and territories.</li> <li>• Web page posted by DHS; links to other interagency websites.</li> <li>• Subject-matter experts identified.</li> <li>• ESF #15 activation order distributed.</li> <li>• ESF #15 External Affairs Officer and other personnel designated.</li> </ul>

Incident Time	Incident Activity	Actions
<p><b>First Day</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing heavy media coverage</li> <li>• Media questions on the new alert status (if changed) and safety of the Nation and citizens</li> <li>• Response and recovery continues</li> <li>• Potential rumors</li> <li>• Continuing victim and family coverage in media</li> <li>• Search and rescue operations</li> <li>• Possible decontamination issues</li> <li>• Delivery of medicines, as appropriate</li> <li>• Arrival of supporting Federal resources, including principal Federal official, medical, response, law enforcement, and incident communications with the public</li> <li>• Questions from media on why the incident happened and potential incidents elsewhere in the Nation</li> </ul>	<p>Interagency effort continues to focus on Federal response, protective measures, and reassurance; messaging includes deterrent measures, preparedness, and disaster assistance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homeland Security Advisory System (HSAS) level changed if necessary and protective measures incorporated in interagency plan for incident communications with the public.</li> <li>• DHS Public Affairs continues close coordination with NOC.</li> <li>• Followup statements and declarations by national leadership               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terrorism</li> <li>• Disaster</li> <li>• Emergency declarations</li> <li>• Stafford Act</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Followup NICCL calls continue while incident JIC is established to support JFO and incorporate local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, and Federal authorities.</li> <li>• Incident JIC will perform functions per the ESF #15 SOP.</li> <li>• ESF #15 is activated and employed to coordinate resources for incident communications with the public.</li> <li>• Daily briefing routine established in coordination with all local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, and Federal authorities.</li> <li>• Principal Federal official's ESF #15 External Affairs Officer prepares to deploy, if a principal Federal official is designated.</li> <li>• Participating Federal departments and agencies publish supporting releases in accordance with interagency plan.</li> <li>• Messaging addresses potential medical or health safety instructions.</li> <li>• DHS Public Affairs coordinates preparation and distribution of nationally televised public service and health advisories.</li> <li>• Federal and other Web pages updated, coordinated, and linked.</li> <li>• JIC distributes statistical information, graphics, video, and photos as appropriate.</li> <li>• DHS initiates contact with the private sector through the PICCL.</li> </ul>

Incident Time	Incident Activity	Actions
<p><b>First Week</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response and recovery continues.</li> <li>• Potential diminishing media coverage</li> <li>• Continuing victim and family coverage</li> <li>• Search and rescue operations</li> <li>• Possible decontamination issues</li> <li>• Disaster recovery, assistance support, and effectiveness of government and responder efforts</li> <li>• Delivery of medicines, as appropriate</li> <li>• Continued deployment and progress of supporting Federal resources, including medical, response, law enforcement, and incident communications with the public</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interagency effort continues to focus on Federal response, protective measures, and reassurance; messaging includes deterrent measures, preparedness, and disaster assistance.</li> <li>• Daily briefing routine continues in coordination with all local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, and Federal authorities.</li> <li>• DHS Public Affairs continues close coordination with NOC.</li> <li>• Incident JIC continues to support JFO; JIC performs standard functions and coordinates with principal Federal official's ESF #15 External Affairs Officer.</li> <li>• ESF #15 resource coordination continues.</li> <li>• Federal participating departments and agencies continue to release supporting updates in accordance with interagency plan.</li> <li>• DHS Public Affairs coordinates nationally televised public service and health advisories.</li> <li>• Subject-matter experts continue to be made available.</li> <li>• Federal and other Web pages updated, coordinated, and linked.</li> <li>• Incident JIC distributes statistical information, graphics, video, and photos as appropriate.</li> <li>• Potential VIP visits to incident.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Recovery</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media coverage greatly diminished.</li> <li>• Potential formal investigations</li> <li>• Emphasis on victims, cause of the incident, and effectiveness of response and recovery effort</li> <li>• Identification of personal stories and special situations</li> <li>• Impact of incident on the non-affected states and society</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Federal interagency effort focuses on plan recovery, and support and assistance to victims and affected populations.</li> <li>• ESF #15 resource coordination continues.</li> <li>• Preparedness measures and readiness to manage follow-on incidents.</li> <li>• ESF #15 spokespersons continue to provide briefings with local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, and Federal team to support recovery plan.</li> <li>• JIC continues to document and release information on plan execution, recovery efforts, and disaster recovery assistance.</li> <li>• Responders identified for recognition.</li> </ul>