

Public Affairs Field Guide

Joint Field Office Operations
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FEMA

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS MISSION

To contribute to the well-being of the community following a disaster by ensuring the dissemination of information that:

- Is timely, accurate, consistent and easy to understand;
- Explains what people can expect from their government; and
- Demonstrates clearly that FEMA and other federal, state, local and voluntary agencies are working together to provide the services needed to rebuild communities and restore lives.

DISASTER OVERVIEW

Types of Disasters

The size and scope of the disaster determines the level of response and the extent of operations initiated by public affairs. Disasters can be divided into three broad categories:

Catastrophic:

There is widespread destruction and devastation of homes and business and/or infrastructure and public property. Based on initial observation, it is evident that the response is beyond the combined capabilities of the state and local governments. The governor is likely to request a disaster declaration prior to any preliminary damage assessment. A presidential disaster declaration is likely to be signed within hours of the governor's request. The event dominates news worldwide.

Severe or nationally significant:

There is widespread destruction of homes and businesses and/or infrastructure and public property. Initial observations indicate that response and recovery is likely to be beyond the capability of the state and local governments. The governor may request a disaster declaration before preliminary damage assessments are completed. The request may be expedited so that the president, within a matter of hours or a few days, can sign a major disaster declaration. The event is the subject of ongoing national media coverage.

Localized:

Usually characterized by destruction of homes and businesses and/or infrastructure and public property. Occasionally, localized disasters or emergencies may be declared when the impact of a specific event causes undue hardship on an area or population. A preliminary damage assessment is completed and findings indicate the response is beyond the combined capability of state and local governments. FEMA and the White House then review the request. Having a disaster declaration signed may take anywhere from several hours to a few days or weeks, depending on the nature of the request and the information provided by the state. The event may receive some short-term national media coverage.

ANATOMY OF A DISASTER

Incident

An event causing destruction or losses that may trigger a disaster declaration. May be a flood, fire, tornado, hurricane, or other event as specified in Public Law 93-288 as amended (the Stafford Act).

While the event may be considered a disaster in a given area, as far as FEMA or other federal agencies are concerned, no federal recovery programs may be implemented until the President signs a disaster declaration. Not all incidents result in presidential declarations. According to the Stafford Act, response to the incident must be beyond the combined capabilities of local and state governments to qualify for a declaration.

Initial Federal Response

Regional Response Coordination Center (RRCC) is activated. Staff is deployed to an RRCC at either the regional office or federal regional center to provide technical assistance and coordinate with state officials. (Note: the RRCC may be staffed before an incident occurs, i.e., a hurricane.)

National Response Coordination Center (NRCC) may be activated at FEMA headquarters depending on the projected scope and potential impact. A full NRCC with all Emergency Support Functions (ESF) may be activated or only a partial NRCC with a limited number of functions included. With a limited NRCC, the Information and Planning Function (ESF-5) will most likely be activated to generate situation reports and other documents. (Note: The NRCC may be staffed before an incident, i.e., a hurricane.)

ESF 15/External Affairs operations may be established at the headquarters NRCC in catastrophic or nationally significant incidents.

Satellite broadcast transmissions may be initiated from headquarters in catastrophic or nationally significant incidents.

National Emergency Response Team (ERT-N) may be deployed by the director of FEMA in catastrophic or near-catastrophic situations, providing staff to direct the response in support of state and FEMA regional resources.

Preliminary Damage Assessments (PDA): The state asks FEMA, through the regional office, to participate in a preliminary damage assessment for a potential human services (Individual Assistance) and/or infrastructure (Public Assistance) disaster declaration. Teams consisting of representatives from FEMA, the state, and other federal or state agencies (as appropriate) review the impact on individuals, households and public facilities.

Members of the media may ask to cover PDA teams. It may be appropriate to refer such requests to state or local officials; the regional public affairs officer may make the determination with the state regarding the need for public affairs personnel to handle media for the PDA teams.

PDA findings are used as the basis for the governor's request for a presidential declaration and also are used by FEMA in developing two key documents: the Regional Summary and the Regional Analysis and Recommendations. These documents are prepared after a request for a disaster declaration is received from the governor. Neither are public documents; they are only recommendations. In some incidents, the governor's request may be submitted to FEMA prior to a PDA.

Governor's Request

The governor will request a major disaster declaration based on a determination by the state that the response is beyond the combined capabilities of the local and the state governments. The request is submitted through FEMA to the White House. Once a request is received, it is considered "in process" until a determination is made by the White House. It is not appropriate to tell the media where in the process it is (at the region, the director has it, it is in the White House, etc.), but simply "in process." The disaster declaration can be made in a matter of hours in a catastrophic situation or as long as several weeks depending on the nature of the request.

Regional Summary/Regional Analysis and Recommendations

These documents outline the scope of the losses and make recommendations as to the needs of the disaster-affected area. Neither the documents nor the recommendations are to be made public.

Presidential Disaster Declaration

If the incident is of significant severity and magnitude to warrant a major disaster or an emergency declaration, the President signs the declaration. If, after careful review by FEMA and the White House, it is determined that the situation is not beyond the capabilities of the state and local governments, a request may be denied. A letter explaining the denial is sent to the governor by the director of FEMA. States have the right to appeal.

When a disaster is declared, the President identifies the scope of the assistance programs and the director of FEMA designates the affected counties. The President appoints a Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO) to direct the federal response and recovery activities. The FCO has the authority to include additional counties if further evaluation proves such action is warranted.

The White House makes an initial announcement of the disaster declaration. Media notification and the first news release regarding specifics about the declaration and the disaster assistance programs is written and disseminated by the headquarters Public Affairs Division.

Registration and Information Line Activated

(1-800-621-FEMA and www.fema.gov)

The National Teleregistration Center (NTC) is activated immediately in disasters involving Assistance to Individuals and Households programs. An application for assistance can either be made via the toll-free teleregistration number, or online via the FEMA website.

Joint Field Office (JFO) Established

Generally the JFO is established within 48 hours of the declaration to provide a base of operations for federal and state agencies involved in response and recovery activities. External Affairs, which includes the Joint Information Center (JIC) and Planning and Products (P&P), is located at the JFO.

ESF 15/External Affairs Established

An external Affairs operation is established to coordinate the dissemination of information about all state and federal disaster response and recovery programs to all stakeholders. As part of this operation, Public Affairs sets up a **Joint Information Center (JIC)**, inviting representatives from all federal, tribal, state, local and voluntary agencies that provide response and recovery services to co-locate and be part of JIC operations. Public Affairs also supports the **Planning and Products (P&P)** component with creative services, strategy/messaging and liaison staff.

Disaster Recovery Centers (DRC)

DRCs may be opened at locations designated by local and state officials. Disaster victims are able to meet with representatives of various federal, state and voluntary agencies on a face-to-face basis to discuss their case and should have registered before they arrive.

Federal/State Agreement

The federal/state agreement details the terms under which federal aid is granted, including any cost-sharing provisions. The governor and the regional director sign this document. Timing of the signing and focus relative to media attention varies. Usually, the governor determines whether the signing will be a media event or a quiet ceremony, and whether it will be held before or after the federal/state meeting. The FCO or Regional Administrator (RA) may have preferences regarding this.

Federal/State Meeting

This is a meeting of representatives from all federal, state, and voluntary agencies offering programs for people and communities affected by the disaster. This meeting is important for public affairs, particularly if Individual Assistance (IA) programs have been activated.

The External Affairs Officer (EAO) may be asked to speak about public affairs policies and organization for that declaration. A briefing for other federal and state agency PAOs may be held at this time to discuss the Joint Information System (JIS) and staffing, if the scope of the disaster warrants it.

Initial Public Assistance Activities

Briefings are held by the state at central locations in declared counties to inform eligible applicants about the scope of the disaster aid and how to apply for federal funding.

THE JOINT INFORMATION SYSTEM

Partnership and teamwork are key when it comes to achieving the joint information system mission and implementing successful public affairs programs following a major disaster. When assigned to a disaster, PAOs are key members of the staff of the FCO. They are also a component of the headquarters Public Affairs Division. Each member of the public affairs staff is responsible for fostering positive working relationships with all program areas and with other federal, state and voluntary agency personnel.

Working with Headquarters External Affairs

As part of the public affairs operation, PAOs working in the JIC or Planning & Products, at the Joint Field Office or anywhere in the field, are responsible for communicating information about FEMA's programs and how these programs affect individuals at the local and state level. PAOs should view their relationship with HQ much like that of working in a local public affairs office for a large national corporation. A great deal of the work is handled at the local level, but the central messaging and the manner in which information is communicated are directed by national policy. The lead External Affairs Officer (EAO) is responsible for maintaining communications with HQ.

Working with the Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO)

The External Affairs Officer (EAO) is the key advisor to the FCO on public affairs matters. This means that good working relationships between the public affairs team and members of the FCO's immediate staff are essential. The EAO is part of the FCO's decision-making team. He or she meets with the FCO on a regular basis, attends all senior staff meetings and is included in meetings involving policy and the implementation of programs that could have an impact on public opinion regarding the response, recovery and mitigation operations.

Working with the State Public Affairs Officer (PAO)

FEMA's EAO and the state PAO manage the JIC and Planning and Products. The state PAO most often will be the PAO from the state emergency management agency, but in some cases, could be the PAO from another agency in the governor's office or a state disaster reservist. The state PAO reports to the State Coordinating Officer (SCO) and serves as the primary media contact for the state. The state PAO can offer valuable insights into crucial issues and in dealing with the state and local media. In the early phases of the response and recovery operations, coordination with the governor's press secretary may be necessary regarding media strategies for initial announcements and media events. The state PAO will usually know how the governor's office generally sets the stage for these early media events.

The External Affairs Model

In the JFO, the External Affairs model is used for strategic coordination of public messages. External Affairs components in the JFO are: Public Affairs (JIC and P&P), Congressional Affairs, Intergovernmental (tribal, state, local), Community Relations, Private Sector and Cyber Affairs. Coordinating the strategic messaging within External Affairs is crucial to a successful media campaign. In large disasters there may be an assigned external affairs officer. In smaller disasters External Affairs coordination will be a joint responsibility of all components.

Working with Congressional Affairs (CA)

Coordination with the Assistant External Affairs Officer for Congressional Affairs is a very important part of public affairs activities. The Assistant External Affairs Officers for the JIC and Planning & Products meet regularly with their Congressional counterpart. Congressional Affairs needs to be kept informed of all anticipated news conferences and media events. Public affairs need to know about congressional tours and concerns. Congressional Affairs may ask that appropriate congressional staff be included on the distribution list for news releases and other materials.

Working with Community Relations (CR)

It is important for Public Affairs and Community Relations to work closely together. Public Affairs shapes the message, Community Relations is responsible for delivering the messages to key audiences. Community Relations Specialists are in direct contact with disaster victims on a daily basis and can provide critical information about what is happening on the ground in affected areas. Public Affairs develops and provides Community Relations with fliers on the toll-free application and information line, the opening of Disaster Recovery Centers (DRC) and FEMA/state/local community meetings. The Community Relations team is often located in close proximity to the Joint Information Center and Planning & Products to facilitate the kind of coordination and communication that is necessary for a successful public information campaign. The Assistant External Officers meet daily with their Community Relations counterpart.

Working with Intergovernmental Affairs (Tribal, State and Local)

Tribal, State and Local Affairs assists Public Affairs with direct communications, interaction and outreach to public and elected officials. Tribal Affairs provides procedures to facilitate incident management programs and explains resources available to tribal governments, assisting them in protecting their families, community livelihood, and cultural and environmental resources.

Working with the Private Sector

Public Affairs works with the DHS Liaison to the Private Sector to coordinate communications, thus get messages out about disaster assistance to impacted employees through company databanks, chambers of commerce and local and regional business networks.

Working with Cyber Affairs

Cyber Affairs has been identified as a new component under ESF 15, but is still a “work-in-progress.” When it is fleshed out, more information will be available about its role, responsibilities and how it will work with other ESF 15 components – particularly the Private Sector. At this point, it is a developing function under the ESF 15 concept of operation.

Working with Program Managers

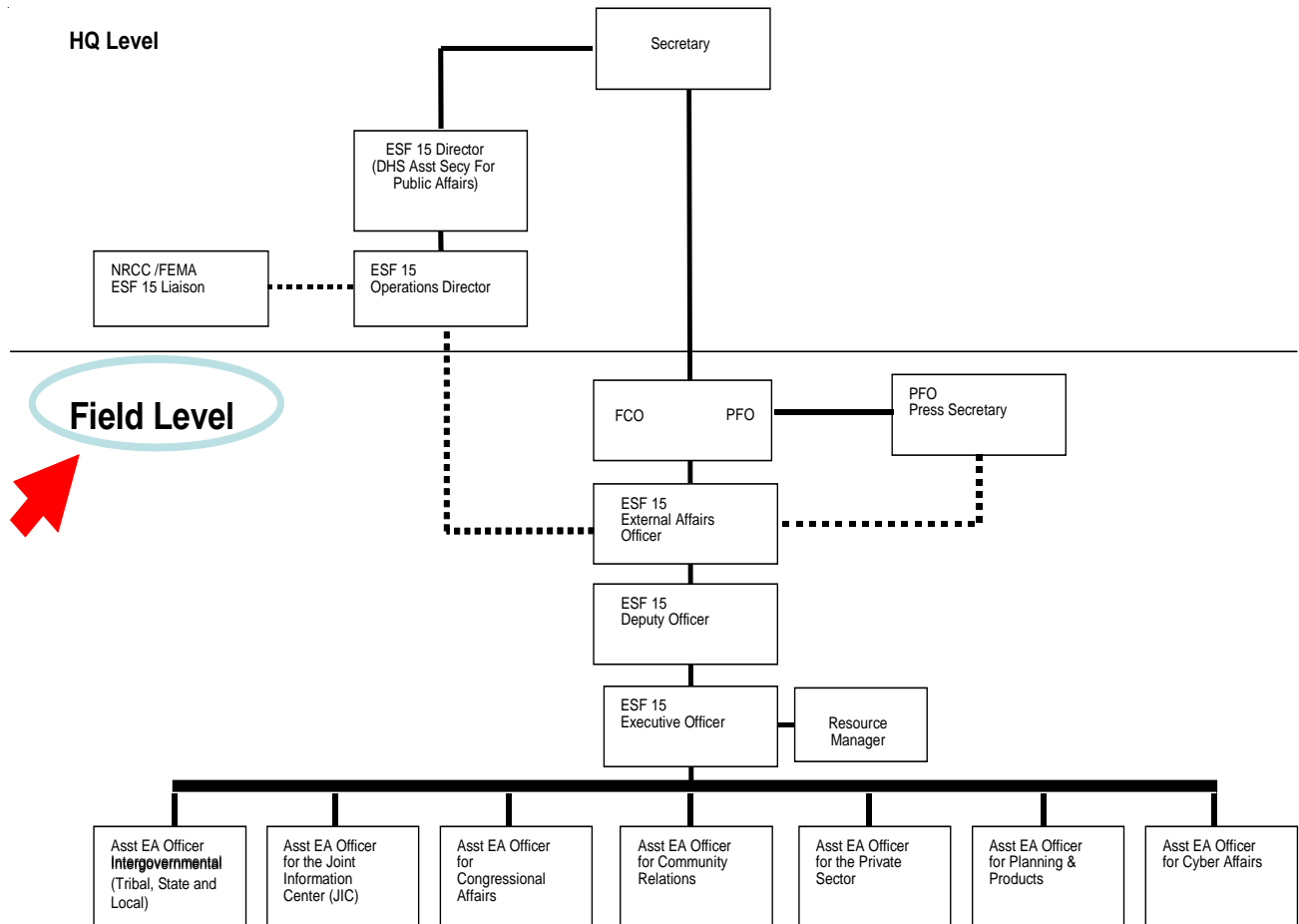
Program Managers are the best source of accurate and current information about disaster programs. It is very important to understand the demands facing program managers and other recovery workers and to respect their technical expertise. When possible, make sure demands of the media do not interfere with program operations. Program Managers should be alerted to any potential problems that arises in the media and kept informed of public affairs activities. Media training may be provided to program managers if they are identified as spokespersons.

Working with Public Affairs Officers from Other Agencies

Cooperation and understanding among Public Affairs staff from all of the agencies activated under the National Response Plan (NRP) are central to the joint information system. Public Affairs Officers from other federal and state agencies often work in the Joint Information Center (JIC) as their agencies’ on-site spokespersons where they generate news releases and respond to media inquiries as part of the JIC team. A PAO may be assigned primarily to support the overall JIC mission and lend individual particular expertise and talents to the operation. The things to remember in working with representatives from other agencies is always have them review releases that refer to their programs and send requests for information to the appropriate spokesperson.

ESF-15 / External Affairs

Organization and Functions



ESF-15 EXTERNAL AFFAIRS OFFICER

TASK 1:

Establish strategies and tactics to meet incident objectives. Coordinate with Operations Section Chief and Branch Directors to establish priorities and messages. Serve as a trusted External Affairs advisor to the Principal Federal Official (PFO), FCO, and JFO Coordination Group and Staff.

TASK 2:

Manage External Affairs resources in accordance with the Incident Action Plan (IAP). Oversee the establishment of the physical setup for the JIC. Anticipate decreasing workloads and release assigned personnel in a timely manner.

TASK 3:

Oversee External Affairs functions. Maintain close working relationship with state counterparts on joint messages and other External Affairs activities. Establish a relationship with the private-sector and non-governmental organizations. Oversee JIC operations including news conferences, editorial board meetings and other meetings as needed.

TASK 4:

Lead Operations Section personnel. Establish and communicate basic work procedures (e.g., work hours, rotation schedule, contact list, staggering of work hours). Monitor employee performance to assess the need for possible rest or rotation.

TASK 5:

Coordinate, communicate, and report information. Gather information to include in the required reports by monitoring work progress, personal observations, and reports from assigned personnel. Communicate any significant changes to the IAP for all affected parties.

TASK 6:

Create an open and team-based work environment. Encourage open communication and input from assigned personnel. Promote a teamwork environment that encourages individuals to share knowledge, work cooperatively, engage in continuous learning, and contribute fully to team-based efforts. Take corrective action when problems arise. Recognize effective individual and team performance.

ESF-15 DEPUTY OFFICER

TASK 1:

Reports directly to the External Affairs Officer.

TASK 7:

Oversee the ongoing professional development of assigned personnel. Arrange for ongoing training and professional development for assigned personnel to develop required skill sets. Coach and guide personnel in techniques and skills for handling challenging interactions and difficult situations.

TASK 2:

Supports the Coordinator in management of the ESF.

TASK 3:

The Deputy represents the External Affairs Officer on the JFO Coordination Staff when the incumbent is unavailable.

TASK 4:

Overall management of the ESF 15 staff, personnel, administration and logistics, and effective functioning of the ESF 15 team

ESF-15 EXECUTIVE OFFICER

TASK 1:

Reports directly to the ESF 15 Deputy External Affairs Officer.

TASK 2:

Specific duties include management of ESF 15 Assistant External Affairs component officers and their functions.

TASK 3:

Assures that components are working as a team with unity of effort.

This position frees the Deputy to assist the EAO in incidents while the Executive Officer continues to provide oversight and management of the ESF team. [Note: this position may not be required subject is to the nature of the incident, duration, and staff.]

RESOURCE MANAGER

TASK 1: Coordinate arrangements for any and all office space and equipment that is needed to support areas such as the Media Center and External Affairs Office.

TASK 2: Support the Assistant External Affairs Officer to establish the External Affairs office.

TASK 3: Organize the Joint Information Center (JIC) and ensure that it is operating efficiently.

TASK 4: Support the Assistant External Affairs Officer for the JIC and the Operations Unit Leader by supervising all operational and logistical support administrative activities, including staffing, interoffice communications, daily staff meetings, briefing book (Smart Book), and distribution of products.

TASK 5: Work with JFO Logistics Section staff to ensure proper setup of the External Affairs office, including sufficient space, supplies, and equipment for FEMA, State, and other agency External Affairs personnel.

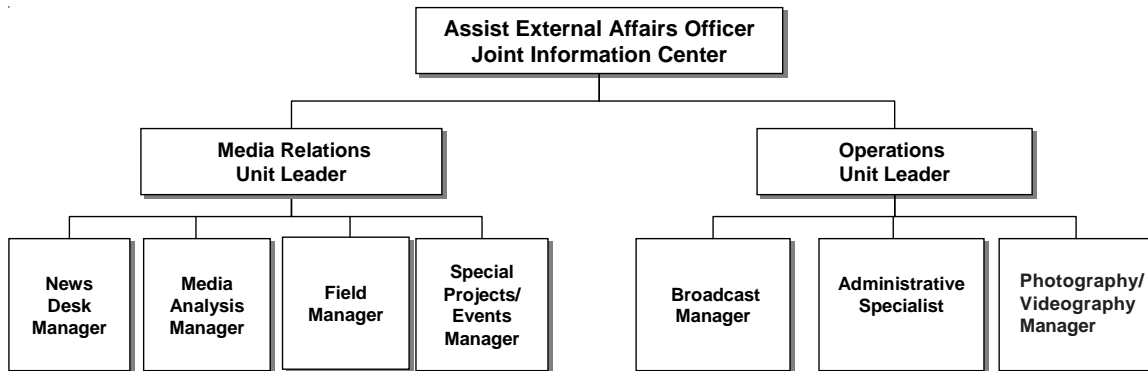
TASK 6: Oversee contracts for items such as satellite trucks, Recovery Times printing, advertising placements, and any other contracting needs.

TASK 7: Serve as the day-to-day support to External Affairs for technical support computers, printers, televisions, office space, equipment needs, and Joint Information Center (JIC) support.

TASK 8: Coordinate with elements within the Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO) staff.

TASK 9: Coordinate with Planning Section, Logistics Section, and Finance/Administration Section personnel, as necessary.

ESF 15 TASKS FOR JOB FUNCTIONS



ASSISTANT EXTERNAL AFFAIRS OFFICER – JIC

TASK 1

Perform initial Joint Information Center (JIC) actions to ensure the timely delivery of information.

- Develop a list of authorized media spokespersons with the External Affairs Officer.
- Prepare a memo listing spokespersons and outlining when and how they are to be used.
- Provide media training to spokespersons.
- Coordinate and prepare the FCO and other disaster personnel for media interviews.
- Consult with Headquarters (HQ) Public Affairs Office on handling requests for information from national media.
- Contact the other Assistant External Affairs Officers to assess special information requirements and/or political sensitivities.
- Coordinate JIC activities for the Federal/State Meeting (e.g., notify media of the meeting, explain the External Affairs mission and the JIC concept of operations, provide press kits and establish contact with media at the meeting, and provide a separate sign-up sheet for members of the media).
- Schedule briefings for other agency Public Information Officers (PIOs) on the Joint Information System (JIS) concept and JIC operations.
- Notify other federal, state, and voluntary agencies that the JIC is being established, and create a contact list.
- Develop a JIC staffing and organizational chart in conjunction with regional External Affairs Officers, HQ Public Affairs Office, and ESF-15, as needed.
- Coordinate to ensure that the JIC is staffed with personnel from appropriate federal, state, and voluntary agencies (e.g., American Red Cross, Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Small Business Administration, Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Labor, etc.).
- Request that other Assistant External Affairs Officers be located within or adjacent to the JIC, if possible.
- Acquire space, equipment, and supplies and operations support.
- Develop a schedule with the Administrative Specialist, to include daily staff meetings, daily program updates for the media, reports for HQ Public Affairs Office and the JFO Section Chiefs

TASK 2

Perform ongoing activities necessary to ensure proper communication and coordination between FEMA External Affairs and other stakeholders.

- Maintain a close working relationship with the state's lead PAO on all matters pertaining to JIC efforts.
- Coordinate JIC activities and information dissemination with the state's lead PAO, as well as PAOs from other federal, state, local, and voluntary agencies.
- Prepare designated personnel for presentations, media interviews, news conferences, and other special events.
- Conduct news conferences, editorial board meetings, and other meetings, as needed.
- Schedule spokesperson(s) to conduct interviews with the media, community, and VIPs.

TASK 3

Coordinate with the External Affairs Officer to ensure proper coordination and timely information exchange.

- Refer requests for interviews from national media to the External Affairs Officer and HQ Public Affairs Office and report all contacts with networks or national media.
- Manage the response to sensitive or potentially controversial information.

TASK 4

Coordinate effectively with the Assistant External Affairs Officer—Congressional Affairs to ensure proper coordination and timely information exchange.

- Inform Congressional Affairs of anticipated news conferences, briefings, and other media activities.
- Provide copies of all products (e.g., news clippings, news releases, fact sheets, fliers, posters).
- Share information on trends, issues, demographics, politics, and recurring questions posed by the media.

TASK 5

Coordinate effectively with Community Relations to ensure proper information exchange.

- Set up a system to allow JIC field operations to work cooperatively with Community Relations teams.
- Seek information from the Assistant External Affairs Officer – Community Relations regarding demographics in the disaster area (multilingual, multicultural, and special needs populations) when targeting messages to disaster victims.

TASK 6

Close out the JIC operation and provide information to the appropriate parties.

- Notify the media of the JIC closing and provide regional contact information.
- Provide a closeout package to the regional External Affairs Officer.

TASK 7

Manage JIC staff.

- Assign tasks and establish priorities for staff members.
- Provide clear direction, assignments, and guidance to effectively structure and organize work activities, maximize productivity, and fulfill the incident objectives.
- Develop and communicate emergency procedures that are consistent with the safety and security plans in a timely manner.

- Provide for the safety and welfare of assigned personnel during the entire period of supervision.
- Lead by example through acting in a fair and ethical manner toward others and demonstrating commitment to public service.
- Conduct orientation sessions and arrange on-the-job training for new hires.
- Arrange for ongoing training and professional development for assigned personnel to develop required skills.
- Coach and guide personnel in techniques and skills for handling challenging interactions and difficult situations.
- Coach personnel so that they can develop and maintain skills.
- Verify that assigned personnel attend mandatory training.
- Write performance appraisals and discuss the results with staff members.
- Complete task book assessment records and discuss the results with staff members.

TASK 8

Create an open and team-based work environment.

- Encourage open communication and input from assigned personnel.
- Foster consensus-building among assigned personnel.
- Create a work environment where individuals are treated fairly in accordance with FEMA guide lines.
- Promote a teamwork environment that encourages individuals to share knowledge, work cooperatively, engage in continuous learning, and contribute fully to team-based efforts.
- Distribute work equitably and appropriately among team members.
- Take corrective action when problems arise.
- Recognize effective individual and team performance.

TASK 9

Train and mentor new External Affairs staff members.

- Provide an overview of the JFO operations (e.g., office layout, key staff, key meetings, administrative information).
- Establish training plan, activities, and assignments.
- Create opportunities to shadow more experienced staff members.
- Provide guidance and feedback to new staff members as necessary to support performance.
- Develop staff members' skill sets by allowing them to take lead on issues and in meetings
- Encourage field experience in other program areas.

MEDIA RELATIONS UNIT LEADER

TASK 1

Manage the news desk function within the Joint Information Center (JIC).

- Oversee the operation of the news desk by ensuring that the news desk provides appropriate and timely answers to reporters' questions and maintains a record of media contacts.
- Notify media analysis staff and Assistant External Affairs Officer – JIC immediately of any potential problems identified during an interview, including inaccurate information expressed by a reporter, confrontational or argumentative attitudes, or reports of rumors, problems, or misinformation in the community.
- Refer inquiries about FEMA policies and critical issues to the Assistant External Affairs Officer – JIC.

- Refer inquiries from national media about FEMA policy to the Assistant External Affairs Officer – JIC, the Regional External Affairs Officer, and the Headquarters (HQ) Public Affairs Office.
- Refer basic inquiries on specific programs provided by other federal or state agencies to the designated PAO for that specific agency.
- Review information about FEMA programs to be provided to the media, based on current, approved fact sheets, news releases, and talking points.
- Report media contacts and other activities to the JIC Field Coordinator at least twice daily.
- Provide the JIC Field Coordinator with newspapers and reports on local media coverage for media analysis staff.

TASK 2

Develop and maintain positive working relationships with the news media based on honest and open communication.

- Analyze media market in the disaster area by consulting with FEMA Regional External Affairs Officers, State PAO, Community Relations, and Planning and Products, and by identifying all commercial news media and cable outlets, including those that serve people with special needs or interests.
- Develop good working relationships with reporters, editors, and news directors.
- Maintain awareness of and sensitivity to media deadlines.
- Verify that all media inquiries are answered promptly.
- Answer requests for information, even if only to report that the information is not available or will not be available until a designated time.
- Reply to questions thoroughly and accurately without providing more information than is requested.
- Maintain honesty and openness in answering questions and get back to reporters as quickly as possible with correct answers.
- Avoid discussions with reporters about the programs of other agencies; refer those questions to the appropriate agency contact.
- Deal with requests in a diplomatic manner.

TASK 3

Oversee the media monitoring to ensure that all relevant information is gathered and transmitted.

- Obtain adequate equipment at the JIC to monitor key outlets.
- Verify that personnel are monitoring news on all outlets and over the Internet.
- Arrange for resources to monitor multilingual news reports and compile media analysis and synopsis of major issues.
- Obtain, read, and clip relevant coverage from daily newspapers.
- Coordinate arrangements for Field Specialists, Community Relations staff, and Disaster Recovery Center managers to collect disaster-related clips from the media outlets in the field and send copies to the JIC.
- Present copies of major stories or coverage reflecting potential problems immediately to direct supervisor and Assistant External Affairs Officer – JIC.
- Provide copies of significant clips to the Assistant External Affairs Officer – JIC for distribution at the morning Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO) staff and/or planning meeting.
- Send copies of significant clips to the External Affairs Officer and the HQ Public Affairs Office as soon as possible.
- Distribute daily clips to the Regional Office and to the HQ Public Affairs Office.

TASK 4

Manage the analysis of information and develop reports to identify and summarize developing news issues.

- Oversee the identification of trends in media coverage.
- Review developing and ongoing issues that are likely to have significant impact on achieving response and recovery objectives.
- Manage the development and distribution of summaries of media coverage as often as necessary.
- Manage “rapid response” actions to incorrect information, hot issues, and other problems to ensure that accurate information is being conveyed through the news media and to the community.

TASK 5

Oversee special projects/events.

- Review plans for special projects/events.
- Coordinate special projects/events with other components of External Affairs (e.g., Congressional Affairs, Community Relations, Planning and Products, etc.) and JFO sections as needed.
- Coordinate logistics and resource support for the project/event, as needed.
- Verify that contingency plans are established for potential problems/issues.
- Review the types of media coverage desirable for project/event.
- Arrange to deploy translators, as needed.
- Work with Planning and Products to coordinate messages and material development.
- Identify and forward all follow-up actions to appropriate parties.
- Assess the project/event to identify lessons learned.

TASK 6

Oversee Media Relations Unit operations.

- Review/approve a field staffing plan based on geographic factors and Community Relations assignments to ensure JIC Field Specialist availability in locations where media are likely to be covering the progress of the disaster recovery.
- Obtain communications equipment and supplies to support Media Relations operations.
- Coordinate with the Assistant External Affairs Officer – Community Relations and assign a JIC Field Specialist to each Community Relations counterpart when possible.
- Verify that JIC Field Specialists are assigned to cover openings of Disaster Recovery Centers, public assistance briefings, and other events likely to generate media attention.
- Verify that field activities are coordinated with JIC personnel from other declared states when working shared media markets.
- Review field operations report and verify follow-up on media requests from the field.

TASK 7

Manage Media Relations Unit resources.

- Brief and assign personnel in accordance with the Incident Action/Coordination Plan.
- Assess workload and develop an approved staffing plan to request the appropriate numbers and types of resources.
- Identify Unit priorities, strategies, and tactical activities for accomplishing the incident objectives for the upcoming operational period.
- Determine the appropriate organizational structure based on the complexity of the incident and the current objectives.
- Review the organizational structure and make needed adjustments to maintain an appropriate span of control.
- Place orders for supplies, services, equipment, or other support with the Logistics Section.
- Allocate resources within the Unit.
- Resolve logistical problems reported by subordinates.

FIELD OPERATIONS MANAGER/SPECIALIST

TASK 1

Gather and disseminate information in the field as a representative of the Joint Information Center (JIC).

- Establish and maintain positive, professional working relationships with the media.
- Create a schedule to visit each media outlet in assigned area and arrange for at least one follow-up visit or phone call.
- Provide information about FEMA programs to the media, based on current, approved fact sheets, news releases, and talking points.
- Report media contacts and other activities to the Field Unit Manager at least twice daily.
- Provide the Field Unit Manager with newspapers and reports on local media coverage for media analysis staff.
- Gather information about perceptions regarding response and recovery process.
- Call the Field Unit Manager with any questions regarding updates and accuracy of information.
- Refer all inquiries on FEMA policy and issues to the Field Unit Manager for further referral to the Assistant External Affairs Officer – JIC.
- Refer inquiries for detailed information about other federal, state, and voluntary agency programs to the Field Unit Manager.
- Brief Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) managers and staff about interacting with the media and provide the DRC manager with both personal contact information, as well as that of the Field Unit Manager.
- Communicate regularly with Community Relations counterpart to identify information needs.

TASK 2

Develop and maintain positive working relationships with the news media based on honest and open communication.

- Develop good working relationships with reporters, editors, assignment staff and news directors.
- Maintain awareness of and sensitivity to media deadlines.
- Respond promptly to all media inquiries.
- Answer requests for information, even if only to report that the information is not available or will not be available until a designated time.
- Reply to questions thoroughly and accurately without providing more information than is requested.
- Maintain honesty and openness in answering questions and get back to reporters as quickly as possible with correct answers.
- Avoid discussions with reporters about the programs of other agencies; refer those questions to the appropriate agency contact.
- Deal with requests in a diplomatic manner.

TASK 3

Develop and maintain current and accurate media lists.

- Contact the Headquarters (HQ) Public Affairs Office for a copy of the current media list being used prior to the JIC being established.
- Work closely with Community Relations, Planning and Products, and the JFO Planning Section to identify all populations affected by the disaster.
- Analyze the media market in the disaster area by consulting with FEMA Regional External Affairs Officers, State PAO, Community Relations, and Planning and Products, and by identifying all commercial news media and cable outlets, including those that serve people with special needs or

interests.

- Compare the HQ Public Affairs Office media list to local media guides and/or media lists provided by the State PAO and FEMA Regional Office to make sure the primary media list is accurate and complete.
- Provide the primary media list to Media Relations at the JIC when established.
- Create a “flash or hot media” list for rapid dissemination of critical messages.
- Refine the primary media list by determining key newspaper, radio, and television outlets aimed at reaching all populations affected by the disaster.
- Develop and maintain a current and accurate media list based on demographic information that identifies all target populations, including populations that are culturally diverse and have special needs.
- Identify market features and terrain that may limit broadcast and newspaper coverage for media serving the disaster area.
- Identify and update key media contact information throughout the disaster operation to ensure that contact information is comprehensive and current.
- Work with the JIC office support staff to maintain and disseminate the updated media list.

Note: The following tasks are completed when assigned as the JIC Field Manager.

TASK 4

Coordinate activities between the JIC and the field and ensure proper information gathering and dissemination.

- Establish daily reporting procedures.
- Work with the Administrative Specialist to obtain communications equipment and supplies.
- Coordinate with the Assistant External Affairs Officer – Community Relations and assign a JIC Field Specialist to each Community Relations counterpart when possible.
- Assign JIC Field Specialists to cover openings of Disaster Recovery Centers, public assistance briefings, and other events likely to generate media attention.
- Team JIC Field Specialists with other agency PAOs, or assign tasks to appropriate PAOs from other agencies when specific issues arise in the field.
- Send fact sheets, press releases, public service announcements, and current information to JIC Field Specialists.
- Coordinate activities with JIC Field Managers from other declared states when working shared media markets.
- Compile field operations report and work with Media Relations and others to follow up on media requests from the field.

TASK 5

Manage JIC Media Relations Unit personnel.

TASK 6

Create an open and team-based work environment.

TASK 7

Train and mentor new External Affairs staff members.

NEWS DESK MANAGER/SPECIALIST

TASK 1

Operate the news desk by providing appropriate and timely answers to reporters' questions and maintaining a record of media contacts

- Answer incoming calls from media and provide routine responses using prepared talking points or information available from approved news releases or fact sheets.
- Emphasize the “message of the day” when responding to a reporter’s questions.
- Record questions that cannot be answered immediately and call back when the answers are formulated.
- Notify Media Relations and the Assistant External Affairs Officer—JIC immediately of any potential problems identified during an interview, including inaccurate information expressed by a reporter, confrontational or argumentative attitudes of reporters, or reports of rumors, problems, or misinformation in the community.
- Refer inquiries about FEMA policies and critical issues to the Assistant External Affairs Officer—JIC or authorized spokesperson.
- Refer inquiries from national media about FEMA policy to the Assistant External Affairs Officer—JIC, the Regional External Affairs Officer, and the Headquarters (HQ) Public Affairs Office.
- Refer basic inquiries on specific programs provided by other federal or state agencies to the designated PAO for that specific agency.
- Refer reporters seeking in-depth information about FEMA programs, policies, and procedures to the External Affairs Officer, Assistant External Affairs Officer—JIC, Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO), appropriate program lead, or authorized spokesperson.
- Make callouts to media as necessary (e.g., promote story and feature ideas to target media, update media with current statistics).
- Keep detailed log of contacts including name, media outlet, date/time of contact, phone numbers, nature of inquiry, and results through the VOCUS system.
- Submit daily log to office support staff for filing or entry into the VOCUS database.
- Send media contact logs and reports through VOCUS to Media Relations Unit Leader and Assistant External Affairs Officer—JIC at the close of each day.
- Keep references handy (e.g., Smart Book, statistics, other state and federal contact information)

TASK 2

Develop and maintain current and accurate media lists.

- Contact the HQ Public Affairs Office for a copy of the current media list being used prior to the JIC being established.
- Work closely with Community Relations, Planning and Products, and the JFO Planning Section to identify all populations affected by the disaster.
- Analyze the media market in the disaster area by consulting with the Media Relations Unit Leader, Assistant External Affairs Officer—JIC, Regional External Affairs Officer, State PAO, and Community Relations, and by identifying all commercial news media and cable outlets, including those that serve people with special needs or interests.
- Identify language needs of people affected by the incident and key media to reach those audiences.
- Compare the HQ Public Affairs Office media list to local media guides and/or media lists provided by the State PAO and FEMA Regional Office to make sure the primary media list is accurate and complete.
- Develop and maintain a comprehensive and current multilingual media list based on demographic profiles, information from state or local PAOs, current media guidebooks, and media requests.
- Provide primary media list to all JIC personnel and the Assistant External Affairs Officer—JIC.

- Send primary media list to the HQ Public Affairs Office for reference.
- Create “flash or hot media” list for rapid dissemination of critical messages.
- Refine primary media list by determining key newspaper, radio, and television outlets aimed at reaching all populations affected by the disaster.
- Develop and maintain current and accurate media list based on demographic information that identifies all target populations, including populations that are culturally diverse and have special needs.
- Identify market features and terrain that may limit broadcast and newspaper coverage for media serving the disaster area.
- Identify and update key media contact information throughout the disaster operation to ensure that contact information is comprehensive and current.
- Work with the JIC office support staff to maintain and disseminate the updated media list.

TASK 3

Develop and maintain positive working relationships with the news media based on honest and open communication.

MEDIA ANALYSIS MANAGER/SPECIALIST

TASK 1

Monitor the news media to ensure that all relevant information is gathered and transmitted.

- Work with the Administrative Specialist to obtain adequate equipment at the Joint Information Center (JIC) to monitor key outlets.
- Build a list of relevant media links using selected Internet sites (i.e., Gebbie, Newslink, Newspapers Online, Radio-Locator, TV Radio World, the American Journalism Review, and traditional search engines).
- Do Internet searches for news stories in local daily and weekly newspapers and TV station websites. Copy and paste stories into computer-generated Media Monitoring and Analysis report, (i.e. Microsoft Word).
- Deliver copies of the Media Monitoring report to the Assistant External Affairs Officer – JIC for distribution at the morning Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO) staff and/or planning meeting. Distribute daily media monitoring and analysis report to the Regional Office and to the HQ Public Affairs Office.
- Monitor news over the Internet and update information throughout the day.
- Monitor each broadcast as it happens during the response and recovery. Include in the daily Media Monitoring report.
- Monitor radio news broadcasts over the Internet when the station is otherwise unavailable.
- Record TV broadcasts as needed.
- Monitor television news in areas where field personnel may not be present using Internet video.
- Monitor multilingual news reports from Internet searches of media websites and compile media analysis and synopsis of major issues.
- Arrange for Field Specialists, Community Relations staff, and Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) managers to collect disaster-related clips from the media outlets in the field which do not have Internet capabilities and send copies to the JIC.
- Present major stories or broadcast coverage reflecting potential problems immediately to direct supervisor and Assistant External Affairs Officer—JIC.
- Send significant news stories to the External Affairs Officer and the Headquarters (HQ) Public Affairs Office as soon as possible.

TASK 2

Analyze information and create reports to identify and summarize developing news issues.

- Identify trends in media coverage.
- Identify developing and ongoing issues that are likely to have significant impact on achieving response and recovery objectives.
- Compile and distribute summaries of media coverage as often as necessary.

TASK 3

Provide rapid response to incorrect information, hot issues, and other problems to ensure that accurate information is being conveyed through the news media and to the community.

- Establish procedures with the Assistant External Affairs Officer—JIC for dealing with critical media issues.
- Work closely with other JIC managers to ensure they alert rapid response when inaccurate or misleading information is published or broadcast.
- Work closely with the JIC Field Manager, Congressional Affairs Officer, Community Relations, and others to identify the source of inaccurate or misleading information, assess the potential problems or impact of rumors, and use JIC operations and other resources to disseminate correct information through the news media.
- Anticipate potential hot issues and work with other External Affairs staff to develop and implement strategies designed to present a positive understanding of FEMA programs and policies.
- Notify the Assistant External Affairs Officer—JIC immediately of any inaccurate or misleading coverage.
- Keep the Assistant External Affairs Office—JIC informed of any existing or potential issues.
- Call the reporter, editor, news director, or publisher to correct inaccurate or misleading information.
- Arrange an interview, media briefing, or editorial board meeting with the FCO or another knowledgeable program lead to counter inaccurate reports or misconceptions.
- Draft talking points with the correct information in coordination with Planning & Products for the FCO, news desk staff, and JIC Field Manager
- Maintain media log and records of the details and nature of rapid response media contacts.
- Document problems and explain how each was resolved, and send a report to the Assistant External Affairs Officer—JIC as needed.

SPECIAL PROJECTS/EVENTS MANAGER/SPECIALIST

TASK 1

Plan special projects/events.

- Research the purpose of the project/event.
- Establish objectives for the project/event.
- Determine the key parties to involve in the project/event.
- Coordinate with other components of External Affairs (e.g., Congressional Affairs, Community Relations, Planning & Products, etc.) as needed.
- Coordinate with Operations Section program elements as needed.
- Develop an implementation plan and schedule.
- Arrange logistics and transportation for the project/event, as needed.
- Establish contingency plans for potential problems/issues.
- Determine the types of media coverage desirable for project/event.
- Arrange to deploy translators, as needed.
- Work with Planning & Products to coordinate messages and material development.

TASK 2

Conduct special projects/events.

- Implement the project/event in accordance with the plan.
- Identify and forward all follow-up actions to appropriate parties.
- Document statements made or report information collected during the project/event.
- Assess the project/event to identify lessons learned.

OPERATIONS UNIT LEADER

TASK 1

Manage the JIC Operations Unit.

- Oversee the broadcast services and support.
- Oversee photography and videography services and support.
- Oversee the JIC office management and administrative services and support.
- Coordinate with External Affairs Critical Resources and the JFO Logistics Section to obtain needed resource support.
- Verify that broadcast, photography, and videography priorities are being met.
- Resolve competing priorities to ensure that services and support are provided where needed.
- Elicit feedback on the effectiveness and efficiency of the JIC operations.

TASK 2

Manage JIC Operations Unit resources.

- Brief and assign personnel in accordance with the Incident Action/Coordination Plan.
- Assess workload and develop an approved staffing plan to request the appropriate numbers and types of resources.
- Identify Unit priorities, strategies, and tactical activities for accomplishing the incident objectives for the upcoming operational period.
- Determine the appropriate organizational structure based on the complexity of the incident and the current objectives.
- Review the organizational structure and make needed adjustments to maintain an appropriate span of control.
- Place orders for supplies, services, equipment, or other support with the Logistics Section.
- Allocate resources within the Unit.
- Resolve logistical problems reported by subordinates.

TASK 3

Manage JIC Operations Unit personnel.

TASK 4

Create an open and team-based work environment.

TASK 5

Train and mentor new External Affairs staff members.

BROADCAST MANAGER/SPECIALIST

TASK 1

Plan and conduct broadcast operations.

- Work in coordination with the Planning & Products component to produce public service campaigns, video documentation, and special productions.
- Serve as a lead field coordinator for all satellite transmissions including, but not limited to, live JIC press conferences/events; supporting video feeds of press events; live/tapped satellites tours/appearances to local/national media; video feeds to other government agencies/offices; and coordination of satellite activities with FEMA HQ studio personnel.
- Arrange for remote live interview feeds.
- Direct technical aspects of live interview feeds and other productions, checking and switching between video sources, and taking responsibility for the on-air product, including camera shots and graphics.
- Monitor broadcasts to ensure that content conforms to FEMA/DHS policies and regulations.
- Observe pictures through monitors, and direct camera and video staff concerning technical aspects and composition.
- Test equipment in order to ensure proper operation.
- Act as liaison between technicians and Joint Information Center (JIC) staff.
- Provide logistical support for public meetings and presentations.
- Process and distribute imagery and video products in a timely manner.

PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEOGRAPHY MANAGER/SPECIALIST

TASK 1

Perform photo shoots in accordance with the needs and priorities of the External Affairs operation.

- Coordinate with the Operations Unit Leader and Assistant External Affairs Officer—JIC to establish priorities for photo shoots.
- Establish a schedule (locations, contacts, etc.) for photographing disaster activities.
- Evaluate equipment and photo services needs.
- Emphasize people in photos (i.e. victims and disaster workers).

TASK 2

Review, document, and store photographs using the standard operating procedures of the HQ Public Affairs Office operation.

- Review and eliminate duplicate, bad quality, and insignificant photos.
- Keep written records of each photo taken that includes places and names of recognizable people and any consent form for photographs published with a person's name.
- Write photo captions for selected photos including the date shot, disaster name and number, location, subject, full names of recognizable people, etc.
- Send selected photos to the HQ photo desk and place on the External Affairs shared drive at the JFO if needed.
- Supply photos to the HQ Public Affairs Office, FEMA's Web team, Planning & Products, and the Recovery Times Specialist, as needed.
- Coordinate photo documentation activities with the HQ photo desk.

TASK 3

Conduct video shoots in accordance with the priorities and needs of the operation.

- Coordinate with the Operations Unit Leader and Assistant External Affairs Officer—JIC on priorities for shooting.
- Establish a schedule (locations, contacts, etc.) for taping disaster activities.
- Evaluate equipment and video services needs.
- Call the HQ TV studio to develop a comprehensive shot list.
- Coordinate with Broadcast Operations Unit Manager for all video feed schedules.

TASK 4

Log and transfer video footage using HQ Public Affairs Office standard operating procedures

- Keep logs of all tapes.
- Send all masters to the HQ TV studio and arrange for dubs, as needed.
- Coordinate video documentation activities with the HQ TV studio.

ADMINISTRATION MANAGER/SPECIALIST

TASK 1

Organize, supervise, and ensure proper setup of the Joint Information Center (JIC) in a timely manner.

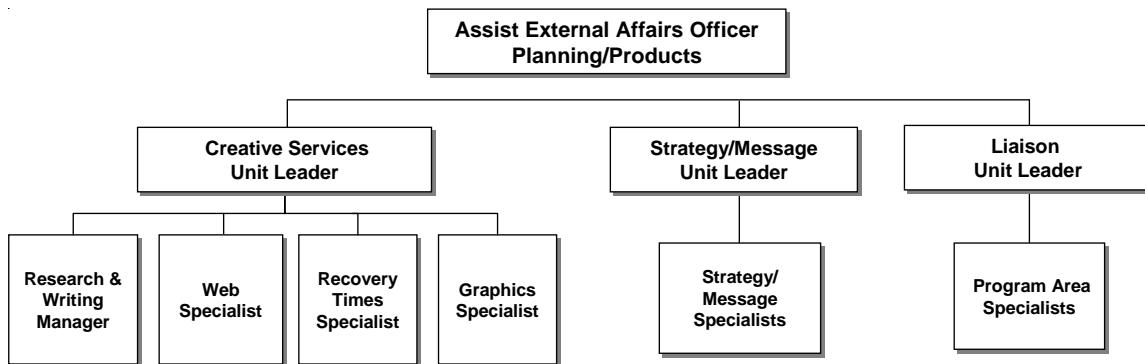
- Support the Assistant External Affairs Officer—JIC and the Operations Unit Leader in establishing the office.
- Organize the JIC and ensure that it is operating efficiently.
- Support the Assistant External Affairs Officer—JIC and the Operations Unit Leader by supervising all operational and administrative activities, including staffing, interoffice communications, daily staff meetings, briefing book (Smart Book), and distribution of products.
- Work with JFO Logistics Section staff to ensure proper setup of the JIC including sufficient space, supplies, and equipment for FEMA, state, and other agency personnel.
- Obtain Planning Section Reports, Situation Reports (SitReps), and other information needed for JIC operations and distribute as needed.
- Oversee personnel requirements including timesheet and voucher processing.
- Prepare purchase orders for contract services such as distribution services, translation services, and production services.
- Establish and maintain a good working relationship with JFO Logistics section staff including communications and computer network operations.

TASK 2

Meet the needs of the JIC staff by providing all required office support.

- Obtain office supplies for the JIC.
- Maintain filing, copying, and distribution systems.
- Post and/or distribute JFO correspondence to JIC staff.
- Update internal postings of statistics, recovery center locations, message of the day, clippings, etc.
- Maintain staffing list that includes personnel and telephone numbers, JIC call-down list, weekend work schedule, and JIC organizational and functional charts.
- Prepare and update briefing kits for new JIC staff members in coordination with the Planning and Products component.
- Distribute daily clips, news analysis summaries, and news releases to JFO leadership.

- Set up and maintain the JIC filing system to include disaster documents, fact sheets, copies of invoices, printing contracts, legal notices, daily reports, fliers, and handouts/brochures.
- Keep sufficient copies of news releases, public service announcements, and fact sheets on file for ongoing distribution.
- Distribute products to the media and verify receipt.



ASSISTANT EXTERNAL AFFAIRS OFFICER—PLANNING & PRODUCTS

TASK 1

Perform initial External Affairs Planning & Products actions to ensure the timely delivery of information.

- Consult with the External Affairs Officer and state Public Affairs Officer (PAO) to assess the scope of the disaster and relevant External Affairs issues, such as local political sensitivities, lessons learned from previous disasters, demographic and multilingual considerations, and potential national media interest.
- Develop a written weekly External Affairs plan to include daily messages, media events, and editorial products in coordination with External Affairs functions.
- Contact the other Assistant External Affairs Officers to assess special information requirements, political sensitivities and special needs—i.e., language, illiterate populations, etc.
- Determine the appropriate number of liaisons needed and assign those immediately to begin a flow of information from operations.

TASK 2

Perform ongoing activities necessary to ensure proper communication and coordination between FEMA External Affairs and other stakeholders.

- Manage External Affairs Planning & Products support of FEMA response, recovery, and mitigation activities.
- Maintain a close working relationship with the state's lead PAO or other state contacts, such as the Community Relations Officer on all matters pertaining to the joint External Affairs effort.
- Coordinate information dissemination with the state's lead PAO, as well as PAOs from other federal, state, local, and voluntary agencies.
- Conduct strategy and planning meetings, liaison meetings, and other meetings as needed.

TASK 3

Coordinate with the Executive Officer to ensure proper coordination and timely information exchange.

- Advise the Executive Officer on current and potential issues that affect public perception, as needed.
- Attend staff meetings that could impact public opinion on response, recovery, and mitigation operations.
- Obtain approval of news releases and all other materials distributed to the media and disaster victims from the Executive Officer and program areas.
- Provide the Executive Officer with copies of public information materials (i.e., news analyses, news releases, External Affairs plan, etc.).

TASK 4

Coordinate effectively with all Assistant External Affairs Officers—Congressional Affairs to ensure proper coordination and timely information exchange.

- Establish a routine for communicating about messages, the release of information, potential problems, and special events; and for determining whether information is reaching intended audiences.
- Add appropriate staff to the distribution list for news releases and other materials,
- Provide copies of all products (i.e., news clippings, news releases, fact sheets, fliers, posters).
- Determine the needs of all other component groups in External Affairs for produced products and develop specific material for them

TASK 5

Develop strategic planning and messaging in coordination with Liaisons and other Assistant External Affairs Officers.

- Determine a daily meeting structure for the sharing of information between the liaisons, the Assistant External Affairs Officers, and others.
- Establish a future issues timeline that can be used to anticipate events and processes that typically occur for the purpose of developing strategic planning
- Determine appropriate messaging for any issue with a plan for distribution of that messaging

CREATIVE SERVICES UNIT LEADER

TASK 1

Manage the Creative Services function.

- Identify internal and external customers' needs for the Creative Services function.
- Review products to ensure that they are accurate, consistent, and clear.
- Verify that products comply with all applicable standards and style manuals.
- Verify that products comply with accessibility requirements including Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.
- Oversee Web and graphic services and support, as well as Research & Writing.
- Oversee the content development of the disaster-specific portions of the "Recovery Times."
- Coordinate with External Affairs Critical Resources and the JFO Logistics Section to obtain needed resource support.
- Acquire translation services in coordination with External Affairs Resource Manager and/or with the Finance/Administration Section in order to translate products quickly.
- Verify that product priorities and deadlines are being met.
- Resolve competing priorities to ensure that services and support are provided where needed.

- Establish and maintain approval procedures that ensure required sign-offs are obtained from program leads, External Affairs Officer, Assistant External Affairs Officers, State lead PAOs, State Coordinating Officer, Federal Coordinating Officer, Headquarters Public Affairs Office, and other agency PAOs before production and release of written materials.
- Ensure distribution of all approved materials.
- Verify that systems are in place for backing up documents and ensuring continuity of operations.
- Verify that filing and recordkeeping systems are established and being maintained.
- Elicit feedback on the effectiveness and efficiency of the products being produced.

TASK 2

Manage Creative Services Unit resources.

- Brief and assign personnel in accordance with the Incident Action/Coordination Plan.
- Assess workload and develop an approved staffing plan to request the appropriate numbers and types of resources.
- Identify Unit priorities, strategies, and tactical activities for accomplishing the incident objectives for the upcoming operational period.
- Determine the appropriate organizational structure based on the complexity of the incident and the current objectives.
- Review the organizational structure and make needed adjustments to maintain an appropriate span of control.
- Place orders for supplies, services, equipment, or other support with the Office Manager.
- Allocate resources within the Unit.
- Resolve logistical problems reported by subordinates in coordination with Office Manager.

TASK 3

Manage Creative Service Unit personnel.

- Assign tasks and establish priorities for staff members.
- Provide clear direction, assignments, and guidance to effectively structure and organize work activities, maximize productivity, and fulfill the incident objectives.
- Develop and communicate emergency procedures that are consistent with the safety and security plans in a timely manner.
- Provide for the safety and welfare of assigned personnel during the entire period of supervision.
- Lead by example through acting in a fair and ethical manner toward others and demonstrating commitment to public service.
- Conduct orientation sessions and arrange on-the-job training for new hires.
- Arrange for ongoing training and professional development for assigned personnel to develop required skills.
- Coach and guide personnel in techniques and skills for handling challenging interactions and difficult situations.
- Coach personnel so that they can develop and maintain skills.
- Verify that assigned personnel attend mandatory training.
- Write performance appraisals and discuss the results with staff members.
- Complete task book assessment records and discuss the results with staff members.

TASK 4

Create an open and team-based work environment.

TASK 5

Train and mentor new External Affairs staff members.

RESEARCH & WRITING MANAGER/SPECIALIST

TASK 1

Write accurate, consistent, and clear documents.

- Establish a system for assigning and tracking writing projects.
- Gather, manage, and analyze information from all sources in the External Affairs organization and JFO.
- Write draft of products such as talking points, fact sheets, news releases, Op-Ed pieces, public service announcements, and fliers.
- Develop materials needed to support VIP visits to the disaster site and the Joint Information Center (JIC).
- Prepare media kits and materials for JIC Field Specialists that include disaster fact sheets, Governor's request letter, declaration letter, current press releases, and program fact sheets.
- Consult with all components of External Affairs about needed products (i.e., fliers, brochures).
- Edit materials for disaster-specific accuracy, consistency, and clarity.
- Download templates or sample documents from the FEMA Public Affairs Intranet for guidance on language and style.
- Adapt templates and sample documents to make products relevant to the existing situation.
- Ensure that facts are double checked, even in previously approved copy.
- Call to verify all telephone numbers contained within a story.
- Edit information by using the AP style book, FEMA/DHS style guide, and FEMA writers handbook.
- Spell check and proofread every document.

TASK 2

Produce documents and all other printed materials in an efficient manner.

- Establish and maintain approval procedures that ensure required sign-offs are obtained from program leads, External Affairs Officer, Assistant External Affairs Officers, State lead Public Affairs Officers (PAOs), State Coordinating Officer (SCO), Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO), Headquarters Public Affairs Office, and other agency PAOs before production and release of written materials.
- Establish work order procedures for External Affairs and other JFO staff to request the design and production of written materials.
- Create, design, and produce printed fliers, brochures, posters, and other documents for External Affairs and other JFO organizations.
- Create and post a large "writing project status sheet" listing all writing projects, due dates, assignments, and status.
- Obtain boilerplate releases and other materials in Spanish from the FEMA Intranet.
- Arrange for translation services in coordination with External Affairs Resource Manager and/or with the Finance/Administration Section in order to translate products quickly.
- Identify backup persons who can review and approve releases and other materials when the authorized "sign-off" personnel are unavailable.
- Keep file copies of approval forms and approved drafts.
- Establish procedures for routing completed materials.
- Coordinate distribution of approved products in the JFO with External Affairs support staff.
- Work with the finance/administration section to arrange contracts for Creative Services, as needed.

RECOVERY TIMES SPECIALIST

TASK 1

Support the writing and production of “*Recovery Times*” by coordinating with sources, checking information, and obtaining necessary approvals.

- Coordinate with FEMA HQ editor to determine general content needed for issue, target audience, and any special language needs.
- Coordinate with Assistant External Affairs Officer—Planning & Products for story assignments, as needed.
- Work with State PAO to get state messages included in the first edition.
- Obtain messages from State Coordinating Officer (SCO) and Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO).
- Arrange for photo assignments with Photography Specialist or obtain photos by contacting local newspapers, state agencies, and other federal agencies or through other means.
- Review photographs to ensure that they are high resolution and scanned using appropriate scale and width.
- Work with state PAO to obtain current, accurate state agency telephone numbers to be printed in “*Recovery Times*.”
- Contact FEMA HQ editor to discuss which boilerplate articles are available/suitable and what needs to be developed by Creative Services Unit writers.
- Write success stories that profile disaster victims and their experiences with FEMA/state response and recovery assistance and mitigation programs.
- Spell check and proofread every article.
- Compile facts from printed material and other pertinent sources, and get preliminary story approval from sources.
- Verify all telephone numbers contained within a story and in the “clip-and-save” phone box.
- Obtain written in-house approval on stories using External Affairs sign-off sheet and request that reviewers edit for content only and not style, grammar, etc.
- Arrange for translations for “*Recovery Times*.”
- Send approved “*Recovery Times*” content and sign-off sheet to FEMA HQ editor.
- Obtain sign-off on final proof by Assistant External Affairs Officer—Planning & Products, External Affairs Officer, state lead PAO, FCO, SCO, and other officials, as needed, including the reviewer’s initials on each page.
- Send initialed proofs to HQ and file originals.

TASK 2

Develop and implement a plan to distribute “*Recovery Times*” so that it reaches the target audience in a timely and efficient manner.

- Consult with Assistant External Affairs Officer—Planning and Products, state PAO, Community Relations, Congressional Affairs, Disaster Recovery Centers, and others to identify “*Recovery Times*” target audience, quantity needed, types of distribution system needed, and potential bulk distributors (i.e., newspapers in declared areas).
- Determine rough publication schedule (i.e., number of issues to be prepared, number of copies to be printed and delivery date) with Assistant External Affairs Officer—Planning & Products and FEMA HQ editor.
- Call or visit potential distributors to enlist their cooperation in distributing “*Recovery Times*,” to explain the purpose of the publication, its content, and its size.
- Establish a distribution plan and provide plan to FEMA HQ Editor (i.e., number and addresses of where copies are to be sent, name and phone number of contact, and date when issues are to be delivered).

- Keep a log of participating distributors, one page per distributor, showing name of contact person, address to which newsletters are to be sent, telephone number, method of determining quantity (i.e., 15 per library), and total quantity requested.
- Enter quantity requests in the log in the same order as received.
- Contact all JFO Sections to determine quantities they will need.
- Determine how “*Recovery Times*” will be delivered to each distributor (i.e., drop ship by printer, pickup at JFO, local courier, personal delivery) and enter this information in the log.
- Assess benefits of free distribution versus paid and decide best course of action in conjunction with Assistant External Affairs Officer—Joint Information Center.

WEB SPECIALIST

TASK 1

Monitor and post updates from reports to the Web.

- Elicit Web requirements from External Affairs personnel.
- Conduct Web-based research to identify related resources and information sources.
- Prepare content to be posted on the Web as HTML and Adobe Acrobat documents.
- Post Federal Register notices to the Web daily.
- Troubleshoot Web issues reported by JFO personnel, businesses, and citizens.
- Repair broken Web links.
- Monitor and correct spelling, grammar, and link errors on Web sites.
- Provide Web addresses/URLs for inquiries for information (internal and external requests).
- Update and populate internal <http://pao.fema.net/> site to accommodate “Media Library” with all resources including actual Taking Points, FAQ’s, etc.
- Update and populate external <http://www.fema.gov/pao/> to accommodate revised list of “Writing Resources” templates.
- Verify that products posted comply with Government Information Technology (IT) policies, guidelines, data documents, reports, processes, and procedures.
- Verify accessibility of Web products in accordance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.

GRAPHIC SPECIALIST

TASK 1

Monitor and post updates from reports to the Web.

- Elicit graphic design requirements from External Affairs personnel.
- Use software applications to design print-based and electronic graphic elements.
- Design and develop web applications using current multimedia technologies.
- Use PowerPoint or other software to create effective and visually-appealing briefings.
- Use desktop publishing software to format information, such as fliers and brochures to enhance the appeal and readability of information.
- Close caption multimedia elements for compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.
- Select and enhance photographs for inclusion in materials.
- Create graphics and charts to support the presentation of analytical data and results.
- Comply with FEMA/DHS publication standards and procedures.
- Prepare files for electronic printing; check printer proofs and initial print runs.
- Support any special projects, such as ads, certificates, etc.
- Be flexible and creative to meet the unique needs of the disaster operation.

STRATEGY-MESSAGING UNIT LEADER/SPECIALIST

TASK 1

Coordinate messaging between the JFO staff, ESF-15 components, federal departments and agencies, White House Communications, and state, local, territorial, and tribal communications counterparts.

- Acquire information from all External Affairs elements.
- Coordinate with the JFO Planning Section.
- Organize raw information (databases, charts, graphs) to establish a common operating picture.
- Assess the validity and reliability of information.
- Analyze the information to identify relationships, patterns, and trends.
- Collect additional information to verify/validate information accuracy prior to planning or reporting.
- Describe the implications of findings for DHS, FEMA, state, local, territorial, tribal, and private-sector entities.
- Advise the Assistant External Affairs Officer – Planning and Products for emerging issues and trends.
- Respond to special tasking from the Principal Federal Officer (PFO), Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO), External Affairs Officer, and other parts of the JFO leadership.
- Develop and/or update strategic communications plans.
- Prepare the ESF 15 Daily Summary in coordination with other federal, state, local, territorial, tribal, and private-sector counterparts as appropriate.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of messaging and communication plans.

LIAISON UNIT LEADER/PROGRAM SPECIALIST

TASK 1

Maintain appropriate communication with key program areas as External Affairs liaison.

- Provide communication links with key program areas within the JFO Operations Section and with federal, state, and voluntary agencies not present in the JFO; and with other entities involved in the recovery (i.e., Disaster Recovery Centers, National Flood Insurance Program, National Processing Service Center, etc.).
- Maintain open communication and positive working relationship between JFO program areas and External Affairs by acting as the single point of contact for assigned areas.
- Serve as beat reporter for External Affairs, developing specific program knowledge and the ability to identify potential problems related to assigned areas.
- Identify program facts or activities that need to be promoted in news releases, public service announcements, and/or media briefings, or otherwise disseminated to disaster victims or affected communities.
- Meet with program leads daily to check progress of activities.
- Provide regular reports on program meetings and discussion to unit leader for internal External Affairs distribution.
- Gather daily numbers and activities reports and attend staff and other program area meetings.
- Establish a good working relationship with program staff members.
- Participate, as appropriate, in program policy discussion in order to provide an External Affairs perspective on any changes or new guidance.
- Assist with the development of material to communicate program policy changes both internally and externally.

TASK 2

Manage External Affairs liaison activities effectively to ensure information is reported in a timely and appropriate manner

- Establish External Affairs liaison reporting procedures to inform External Affairs and JFO personnel of potential programmatic concerns or problem areas.
- Establish procedures for liaisons to provide story ideas or special needs to be addressed to External Affairs for development and promotion.
- Provide daily activities and findings report to the Assistant External Affairs Officer—Planning & Products.
- Notify the Assistant External Affairs Officer—Planning & Products immediately of any critical developments or information that may need External Affairs action.
- Support an External Affairs liaison workstation in the program area, as needed.

RESOURCE TOOLS

In November 1994, FEMA began providing information to the public via the Internet. In just a year, more than one million users had accessed the emergency information posted on FEMA's homepage on the World Wide Web. The system is updated daily by HQ Public Affairs with news releases, feature stories and a wide variety of agency and program-specific information sent to headquarters electronically by FEMA Public Affairs staff working in Joint Field Offices.



Objectives

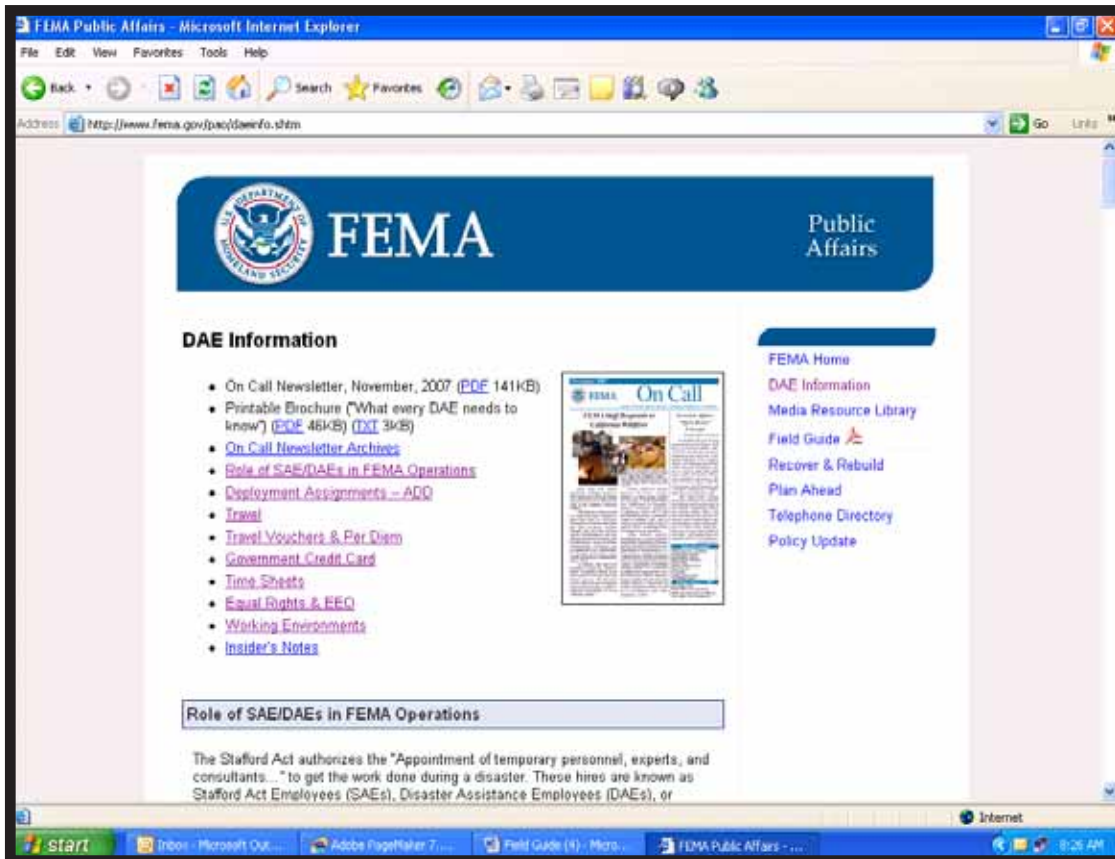
Provide information about the response and recovery effort and disaster assistance programs available to disaster victims in a particular state following a disaster declaration.

Promote an understanding of disaster response, recovery, mitigation and preparedness programs and policies and how people can apply and what they can expect after they apply.

Provide a chronological account of the disaster response, recovery and mitigation process following a disaster.

External Affairs Website

The External Affairs Division has established a web site specifically for disaster external affairs reservists. Public Affairs DAEs may access and download the latest version and updates to the Public Affairs Disaster Operations Field Guide, recent issues of the External Affairs supplement to the “On Call” reservist newsletter, links to the Media Relations site, and other helpful information for DAEs and fulltime staff alike. From your home computer or on assignment at a disaster, visit www.fema.gov/pao/daeinfo.shtm.



DHS Interactive

The Public Affairs Division uses the Department of Homeland Security's interactive website to post the Media Resource Center for disaster public affairs officers to use. Included on this website are updated templates of press releases, backgrounders, talking points and public service announcements. Flyers and other brochures are also available.



Instructions

Registering to Use DHS Interactive With a Non-DHS Email Address and Instructions for Entering the Public Affairs Pages on DHS Interactive

1. Go online to interactive.dhs.gov.
2. Select register for a sponsored account.
3. Complete the information in the boxes. Do not put spaces, dashes or symbols between the telephone number or organization.
4. Click the submit box once (The screen will not change) (If you get an error message try again)
5. Check your email to verify your request was received. If you do not have verification within a half hour register again.
6. You will be notified when you are sponsored. However, you can also attempt to access the site.

Instructions for Entering the Public Affairs Pages on DHS Interactive

1. Go online to interactive.dhs.gov.
2. Login (Your username is the email address you provided when you registered. Your initial password will be provided, in an email, but you will have the opportunity to change it.)
3. On the left side of the screen click "Communities."
4. Scroll down to "FEMA Public Affairs" and click that link.
5. In the center of the page click "Visit the Public Affairs site on DHS Interactive."

Short Cut

1. Click “Visit the Public Affairs” site on DHS Interactive in the center of the page (directions #5 above).
2. On the internet browser tool bar click Favorites, then click Add to Favorites
3. The next time you wish to enter the Public Affairs Page, open the Internet browser, on the Internet browser tool bar click Favorites, FEMA Public Affairs will be on the list, click the link and you will be directed to the FEMA Public Affairs Page.

If you questions or cannot register or access the FEMA Public Affairs link contact Alexandra Kirin at 202-646-4526.

Instructions for Entering the Public Affairs Pages On DHS Interactive

If you know your dhsonline.dhs.gov password then follow Directions 1. If you do not know your dhsonline.dhs.gov password, follow Directions 2.

Directions 1

1. Go online to interactive.dhs.gov.
2. Login (Your username is the email address you provided when you registered. Your initial password will be provided, in an email, but you will have the opportunity to change it.).
3. On the left side of the screen click “Communities.”
4. Scroll down to “FEMA Public Affairs” and click that link
5. In the center of the page click “Visit the Public Affairs” site on DHS Interactive

Short Cut

1. After you scroll down to “FEMA Public Affairs” and click that link.
2. Click “Make This My Homepage” at the top center of the page.
3. The next time you login to the interactive page click “My DHS Homepage” on the left hand side of the page (this will automatically link you to the FEMA Public Affairs link).

Directions 2

1. Go online to dhsonline.dhs.gov.
2. Under the “DHSONline” login tab click lost password.
3. Enter your email address in the box and push the blue arrow.

Your password will be immediately emailed to you. You can now follow Directions 1 using your new password.

To change your password

1. Go online to dhsonline.dhs.gov and login.
2. On the left side of the page in the my account box in the lower section of the Home tab click “My Profile.”
3. In the center of page, click “Change Password”and follow the directions.

If you cannot access the FEMA Public Affairs link, then contact Blair Gately at 202-646-3878.

WORKING IN THE FIELD

GETTING TO A DISASTER AND AND BACK AGAIN

Deployment Availability

The Automated Deployment Database (ADD) system requires that reservists call the toll-free number 1-888-853-9648 to let FEMA know whether or not you are *available* for deployment. Reservists can call and change their status as often as necessary, but it must be at least every 30 days. If not, the status in the database will automatically be changed to *not available*. That means you don't get called for disaster assignments. If you are listed as *available* in the database, you are expected to deploy to the disaster area in a timely manner. If you are *available* in the system but cannot deploy to the assignment, it is considered a "refusal" and will be noted as such on the your employee record.

You are required to do the following:

Unless you are deployed, you are required to record your availability for deployment at least once each month, using the appropriate toll-free number. Please note that when you record your status for deployment as *available*, you are making yourself available to deploy for a period of not less than two weeks, and to any location where FEMA conducts disaster operations with 24 hours.

If you record your status as *available* for deployment, but refuse to deploy, failure to provide an adequate rationale for inaccurately recording your availability could result in termination.

You are required to accept deployment orders of any type only from FEMA's Deployment Support Office located in the Human Resources Division. Your region should no longer contact you for this purpose. Your region may contact you to inform you of a training opportunity, meeting or other non-disaster specific travel, but even in these cases, the Deployment Support Office will issue your deployment orders.

Once deployment travel arrangements are made, any situation causing more than an 8-hour delay beyond your required arrival time must be reported using the following process:

- When using National Travel, you are required to inform the travel agency of your change in itinerary, and request their assistance in expediting your arrival; and
- When using your own vehicle, you are required to call ADD at 1-888-853-9648 and leave a message explaining the reason for the delay and your new anticipated arrival time.

Immediately upon arrival at your deployment site (i.e., JFO, training or meeting location), you are required to check in with ADD by phone at 1-888-853-9648 and following the instructions provided. You are also required to use this same number when checking out and when updating your deployment information, such as lodging or your work phone number.

Checklist for Deployment

Although you should try to limit your personal belongings to what you can carry, following is a list of items you should consider when packing for deployment:

- Prescription medicine
- Medication for colds, headaches, etc.
- Driver's license
- Government credit card
- FEMA ID
- Important phone numbers
- Field guide
- Vitamins
- Sunscreen
- Extra pair of glasses or contacts
- FEMA jacket, shirts and cap

Travel Vouchers and Government Travel Card

You are responsible for filling out and filing your travel vouchers. Depending on the size of the disaster, there may be personnel at the JFO to assist you. You should file a voucher at least every two weeks. This means zeroing out your balance at your hotel and filing a voucher even though you are staying on. Use original receipts only, taped or pasted to a sheet of paper with your name and social security number on each page. Copy and keep a set for yourself. When you are at the JFO, travel vouchers are to be signed by someone who has signature authority. If you have to file a voucher and you are no longer at the JFO, mail it to your cadre manager. After filing a voucher, you may call Disaster Travel Payments at 800-310-3169 to find out the status of the voucher payment.

You are responsible to the credit card company for your bill, regardless of when you get reimbursed. This is why it is important to file a travel voucher every two weeks. If you know you are going to be unable to pay your balance on time, call them regularly to discuss the situation.

Do not use your card for personal use or to withdraw cash unless you are on official travel or have been deployed. Currently (as of November, 2006), all cardholders are limited to approved withdrawals of \$100 per week, not to exceed \$400 in a month. Be very careful about your bill. Some DAEs have been terminated for abuse of their government travel card, and the credit card company is now informing credit bureaus of accounts more than 90 days past due.

Payroll and Per Diem

Pay periods are based on a bi-weekly system, beginning on Sunday and ending the following second Saturday. Use a Time and Attendance Worksheet for Joint Field Offices supplied by the JFO. Claim time worked in active duty status beginning from the time you leave home to travel to the JFO, as well as for the return trip when you leave the JFO to return home. Per diem status begins when you leave home and continues until you return home.

Make sure you know who your cadre manager is, which region you are assigned to and who your timekeeper is and the fax number. You will need to include this information on your timesheet.

Checking In and Checking Out of the JFO

When you are released from the disaster response operation or go to another one always check out. This entails going to Administration, getting the checkout form and getting the appropriate signatures on it before you leave. Turn in time sheets and equipment such as cell phones and pagers—**and don't forget to call ADD at 1-888-853-9648 to check out.**

Overtime and Travel Policy

(FEMA Human Resources Division, May 2006)

When was the Overtime policy updated?

The Overtime Policy instruction 3200.1 was updated January 18, 2006. This instruction supersedes FEMA Instruction 3200.1, Overtime Policy, dated October 1, 1984.

What is the purpose of this policy?

This instruction establishes DHS, FEMA policy on (a) overtime (paid and compensatory); (b) incorporates the minimum standards for employees covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act; (c) provides guidance with respect to overtime working in connection with disasters; (d) provides guidance with respect to overtime worked in connection with official travel; and (e) describes the policy on employees performing work at home for which they will receive compensation.

When a DAE is ordered to report to a disaster site, the employee is considered to be in travel status beginning when?

Under 3200.1(12.e), when a DAE is ordered to report to a disaster site, the employee is considered to be in travel status from the time of scheduled departure from the common carrier terminal, when common carrier is used. Otherwise, travel status begins with departure from residence.

Are DAE employees entitled to compensation for their day of travel home from disaster site?

Yes. Under 3200.1 (5.c), travel shall be scheduled during the administrative workday whenever possible. Under 3200.1 (12.f), DAEs traveling to or from a disaster site will receive compensation, including overtime, if applicable for their time in travel status. Upon release and return home, DAEs are entitled to eight (8) hours of compensation for their day of travel. Example 1: If an employee does not work on the day of travel, they will receive eight (8) hours of compensation. Example 2: If an employee works three (3) hours and then returns home on the same day and spends three (3) hours traveling – they would be entitled to eight (8) hours. Example 3: If an employee works nine (9) hours and then returns home on the same day – they would receive no compensation for their travel time. Again, the intent of this change is to provide them eight (8) hours of compensation for their day of travel.

Are DAE employees entitled to compensation if they go from deployment assignment to travel for 2 days of training?

Yes. For example, a DAE goes from deployment assignment in Houston to Emmitsburg for 2 days of training (Tuesday/Wednesday); they receive eight (8) hours for travel days (Monday/Thursday). If an employee attends eight (8) hours of training and then returns home on the same day – they would receive no compensation for their travel home.

Is there a new time limitation for use of Compensatory Time?

Yes. Under 3200.1(10.c), if compensatory time is not used within 26 pay periods, it is forfeited unless failure to use it is due to an exigency of the service beyond the employee's control. This supersedes previous guidance of 13 pay periods. The timekeeper will control the time limitation for use of the hours.

Can employees earn compensatory time while on duty at disaster sites?

No. Under 3200.1(11.b), overtime worked by FEMA employees while on duty at disaster sites must be compensated as paid overtime for work performed by both exempt and nonexempt employees, provided the overtime work is authorized in writing by the Federal Coordinating Officer, Disaster Recovery Manager, or the Regional Director.

Who do I call if I have questions related to my pay?

You should always start with your timekeeper since they are responsible for submitting your work schedule that results in your salary payment. If the timekeeper is unable to provide you assistance you should then go to your TA Org Rep. A listing of all TA Org Reps and their phone numbers is available at the QuickTime web site entry screen.

Important Telephone Numbers and Addresses

Application and Information— 1-800-621-FEMA(3362)

FEMA TTY Registration Number
800-462-7585

Public Affairs Division, HQ

202-646-4600

Fax Number

202-646-4086

ADD Deployment Support

888-853-9648

FEMA Publications

800-480-2520

National Travel

800-294-8283

National Headquarters Address

FEMA

500 C Street, SW

Washington, DC 20472

202-646-4600

Headquarters Staff (As of May 14, 2008)

Office of External Affairs

Director – Jonathan Thompson

Deputy Director - Marty Bahamonde (Acting)

Public Affairs Division

- **Director**—Dan Stoneking (Acting)
- **Deputy Director**—Dan Stoneking
- **Executive Speechwriter**—Jim Kaplan
 - **Strategic Communications/Liaison Support**—Stacie Greff
 - **Mitigation**—vacant
 - **Special Projects/Events**—vacant
 - **Disaster Operations**—Ali Kirin (Acting)
 - **Disaster Assistance**—Ali Kirin
 - **Logistics**—Ali Kirin (Acting)
 - **National Continuity Programs**—Mary-Margaret Walker
 - **National Capital Region**—vacant
 - **National Media Operations**—Debbie Wing (Acting)
 - **News Desk**—Ali Kirin
 - **Media Monitoring/Analysis**—Tracey Batacan
 - **Broadcast Operations**—Paul Luke
 - **Electronic Media**—Aaron Skolnik
 - **Multilingual Outreach**—Marya Lopez-de Victoria, Cheria Brown
 - **New Media**—John Shea
 - **Internal Communications & Support**—Ann Voigt
 - **Internal Communications**—Alice Carr
 - **Internal Communications/Graphics**—Denis Bramblett
 - **Writing/Speakers' Bureau**—vacant
 - **Web Manager**—Sarah Hyder
 - **Web Content**—Michael Reed
 - **Photo Desk/Web Support**—Bill Koplitz
 - **National Preparedness**—Debbie Wing (Acting)
 - **Grants/Capabilities**—Marlene Phillips
 - **Community Preparedness**— vacant
 - **National Integration Center**—vacant
 - **USFA**—Tom Olshanski
 - **Technical Hazards**—Steve Horwitz
 - **Disaster Operations, Cadre and Training Management**—James McIntyre
 - **National Cadre & Training Manager**—Doug Welty
 - **Cadre Administrator**— Pamela Mack
 - **Disaster Operations & Support**—Barbara Ellis
 - **Disasster Support** - Barbara Janisch, Angela Hubbard

Regional Public Affairs Officers

Region	Name	Phone Number	Cell
R01	Marty Bahamonde	617-956-7547	202-841-7750
R02	Kristina Simpson	212-680-3609	337-281-4349
R03	Niki Edwards	215-931-5614	202-536-9084
R04	Mary Hudak	770-220-5226	404-909-1900
R05	Jean Baker	312-408-5515	312-316-9534
R06	Joyce Elliot	940-898-5140	940-367-5627
R07	Brian Bowman	816-283-7080	816-550-2064
R08	Ed Conley	303-235-4909	303-638-4844
R09	Kim Walz	510-627-7006	510-501-1655
R10	Mike Howard	425-487-4610	206-954-6857

Timekeepers

Region 1

Amy Corbiere 617-956-7556, Fac 617-832-4784 or Wanda Gaudet 617-832-4708, Fax 617-832-4754

Region 2

Michelle Sturman 212.680.3682, Fax 212-680-3690 or Mittie Brifu 212-680-3643

Region 3

Barbara Wolf 215-931-5684, Fax 215-931-5714 or Susan Houtz 215-931-5682, Fax 215-931-5714

Region 4

Denise Harris 770-220-5222, Fax 770-220-5208 or Patricia Dubose 770-220-5632

Region 5

Maria Poremba 312-408-5512, Fax 312-408-5521 or Robert Colangelo 312-408-5589

Region 6

Linda Massimi 940-898-5406, Fax 940-898-5388 or Donna Moore 940-898-5264

Region 7

Marsha Rawson 816-283-7058, Fax 816-283-7504 or Paula Wood 816-283-7028

Region 8

Jeanette Mitchell 303-235-4920, Fax 303-235-4865 or Steve Reaves, 303-235-4856

Region 9

Debbie Lewis 415-923-7001 or Loyce Picolotto 415-923-7281, Fax 415-923-7146

Region 10

Gianni Demoor 425-487-4774 or Leni Gordon 425-487-4785, Fax 425-487-4692

Florida Long Term Recovery Office

Ruth Stuart 407-850-7434, Fax 407-850-7556 or Shirley Schell 407-858-5049, Fax 407-858-2010

Gulf Coast TRO

Germaine R Carter 225-267-2946, Fax 225-379-4018

MEDIA ACCESS POLICY & OPERATIONS

Media Access Policy

SUBJECT: Guidance on Working Media Engagement During Disasters
DATE: August 24, 2006

MEMORANDUM FOR: All FEMA Employees

FROM: R. David Paulison, Director

SUBJECT: Guidance on Working Media Engagement During Disasters

Excellent media relationships are built on transparency, responsiveness, and credibility.

We engage daily with our federal, state and local partners to respond to and coordinate recovery from disasters and media will be understandably interested in our activities. It is important that we leverage this interest to educate the public about what FEMA does before, during and after a disaster. During disaster operations, it is highly likely that FEMA employees who are working in the disaster area will be approached by media. With this in mind, I want to establish guidance on how FEMA employees work with the media during response and recovery operations. The following guidance is consistent with ESF 15 SOP (Appendix 1 to Annex F, Section 3.2).

As part of response and recovery operations, FEMA employees are authorized to speak to the media, when approached, within the scope of their assigned duties and responsibilities. The guiding principle you should follow is: *If you own it or are responsible for it, you can talk about it.*

This media guidance allows us to be proactive in working with, educating and responding to the media during disasters. In employing this standard, employees must keep the following in mind:

1. Information should be straightforward and factual, and pertain to your immediate role and assigned responsibilities. Talk about what you do. Speculation, opinions and assessment beyond your area of responsibility should be avoided.
2. If you don't know—say so and refer the question to your Public Affairs contact for assistance.
3. As a reminder, information that is classified, breaches the Privacy Act, or involves proprietary information should not be released and employees must abide by Federal laws and regulations in protecting this information.
4. Expect that when you speak at public meetings or conduct briefings with partner organizations, it may be covered by the media. As with all interactions with agency customers, comments should be professional, factual and within the scope of your responsibilities. Media presence should not hinder you from speaking in these settings:
 - Responses to questions that involve multi-agency operations should be coordinated through the appropriate Joint Information Centers, Regional Public Affairs Officer, or HQ Office of Public Affairs
 - Questions about policy and senior leadership decision making should be directed to FEMA's Office of Public Affairs.

Our Public Affairs Officers provide valuable counsel in working with the media, and so in day-to-day activities, I ask that you continue to coordinate any requests for interviews, information or comment on agency programs and issues. In addition, any contact planned with media organizations, such as that required to proactively place story ideas or provide general information, should be coordinated in advance with Public Affairs as well. Questions regarding speaking to the media should be directed to FEMA's Office of Public Affairs.

FEMA employees are our best assets and our best ambassadors. Fundamental to FEMA's reputation is our openness, integrity and credibility. As we build this transparency within our organization, we will demonstrate the capabilities and experience of our agency, restore the nation's trust in our abilities, and show that FEMA is the preeminent national level agency for emergency management.

Purpose

The purpose of this appendix is to outline policy and guidelines for the federal domestic incident management media access program.

Rules of Engagement

For the safety and security of DHS units and media, media will adhere to established ground rules. Ground rules will be agreed to in advance and signed by media prior to access. Violation of the ground rules may result in the immediate termination of the access and removal from the disaster scene. These ground rules recognize the right of the media to cover JFO/Federal response operations and tell the stories of their important work.

Evaluations regarding media access will be granted with the following considerations:

National Security: Operational security or classified information must be protected.

Law Enforcement: Media access will not be granted if ongoing law enforcement operations or the prosecution of forthcoming legal action will be jeopardized.

Safety: Safety is paramount for all ESF 15 media access. Media will not be permitted to access with Response and Recovery teams if there is a significant risk of harm.

Local Approval: The federal response to disasters is at the request of local officials. At all times, response units will abide by local officials' commands and wishes. **Local officials may restrict media access to some disaster areas and those prohibitions are outside of our control.**

The following rules must be followed when media is allowed access to a federal response unit:

- Prior to access, media must provide proof of credentials and display credentials while participating in the access program.
- During the access, media must comply with the previously agreed to rules.
- The media is responsible for loading and carrying their equipment at all times.
- Media may live, work and travel as part of the units with which they are afforded access.
- Media will pay their own lodging expenses if staying at a hotel, motel, bed and breakfast or other commercial facility, as well as food and other travel expenses.
- Media will deploy with the necessary equipment to collect and transmit their stories, if required.
- Media must remain with their assigned unit at all times and shall not wander away from the unit or put the unit in any potential harm. Media may terminate their access opportunity at any time. However, if the access is in a restricted access location, media will be expected to adhere to ground rules until they can be transported outside of the restricted area. The Unit PAO or assigned team POC will provide, as the situation permits and based on the availability of transportation, movement back to the nearest location with commercial transportation.
- All interviews with federal employees or employees of federal contractors during the media access will be on the record unless stated otherwise.
- Media with access to units are not permitted to carry weapons.
- Media may report on type of units involved, characteristics of those units (size, number of personnel, types of resources they bring to bear, etc.)
- Media may report on names and hometowns of unit members, but only after obtaining their consent

- If a media representative is killed or injured in the course of the disaster response/recovery operation, the unit will immediately notify ESF 15 offices. FEMA HQ and DHS OPA will contact the reporter's own media organization(s), which will make next of kin notification in accordance with the individual's wishes.

Medical facilities, children, wounded or injured people

The following procedures and policies apply to coverage of fatalities and wounded, injured, and ill civilians and personnel:

- Media representatives will be reminded of the sensitivity of using names of individual casualties or photographs they may have taken which clearly identify casualties. The deceased are the responsibility of the respective state until next of kin can be notified and the authority to report this information must be granted by state authorities.
- Media visits to medical or mortuary facilities will be in accordance with applicable regulations, standard operating procedures, operations orders and instructions by attending physicians. Reporters who have access with NDMS teams will follow all guidelines set forth by the team, local officials, and/or the host medical facility to ensure patient privacy at all times. **Local officials may restrict media access to some disaster areas and those prohibitions are completely outside ESF 15/DHS OPA/FEMA OPA control.** Any violation of this guideline will be grounds for immediate removal from the program.
- Reporters may visit those areas designated by the facility commander, but will not be allowed in operating rooms during operating procedures.
- Permission to interview or photograph an adult patient will be granted only with the consent of the attending physician or facility commander and with the patient's informed consent, witnessed by the escort.
- "Informed consent" means the patient understands his or her picture and comments are being collected for news media purposes and they may appear worldwide in news media reports.
- With adult patient permission, media can photograph, videotape, record and interview that adult patient in waiting areas or between medical procedures with the understanding that the adult patient may rescind their permission at any time, that unit leaders may rescind the adult patient's permission on their behalf if doing so would be in the best interest of that adult patient; and with the understanding that medical procedures always take precedence and that any medical authority may end any interview at any time to perform such medical procedures.

Immunizations and personal protective gear:

- Media organizations should ensure that media are properly immunized before embedding with units. Recommended immunizations will vary from disaster to disaster. A general guide for immunizations would include tetanus, hepatitis a; hepatitis b; and possibly vaccinations against mosquito-borne illnesses. Before traveling, check with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), your FEMA OPA contact or your doctor.
- Because the use of personal protective gear, such as helmets, may be mandatory at some disaster scenes, media will be responsible for procuring/using such equipment at the direction of the unit leader. Whenever possible, FEMA OPA will give as much direction as possible on additional needed gear before departure.
- Media may be authorized and required to use additional personal preparedness equipment including nuclear, biological, or chemical protective equipment, firefighting turnout gear, wildfire fighting gear, Urban Search and Rescue safety equipment or other gear. Information on that gear will be provided before access. Unit leaders may provide gear on a temporary loan basis or reporters may be required to provide said gear, with specifications provided by FEMA OPA at their expense.

Security:

- Federal personnel shall protect classified information from unauthorized or inadvertent disclosure. Media provided access to sensitive information will be informed in advance by the unit leader or his/her designated representative of the restrictions on the use or disclosure of such information. When a question regarding reporting specific material, media will consult with the unit leader or his/her designated representative.
- The nature of the access process may involve observation of further sensitive information, including federal employee deployments and movements, response and recovery preparations, response capabilities and vulnerabilities and other information. When a unit leader or his/her designated representative has reason to believe that a media member will have access to this type of sensitive information, prior to allowing such access, he/she will take prudent precautions to ensure the security of that information. The primary safe guard will be to brief media in advance about what information is sensitive and what the parameters are for covering this type of information. If media are inadvertently exposed to sensitive information, they should be briefed after exposure on what information they should avoid covering.
- The federal response to disasters is at the request of local officials. **AT ALL TIMES**, response units and media provided access to the units will abide by local officials commands and wishes. **Local officials may restrict media access to some disaster areas and those prohibitions are completely outside of our control.** Travel into disaster sites will be coordinated through local public information officials and local authorities. If local authorities forbid media from entering sites, accessed media will abide by those orders.
- Media and PAOs will, at all times, follow any orders of the unit leader on-scene or his/her designee. If there are concerns, the PAO will discuss them with the unit leader, but the unit leader's decision will be final.

Other:

- Media will travel with PAO or designated team POC with the understanding that the POC is not a personal guide into the disaster site nor will the POC be responsible for providing other disaster information outside the scope of the Unit's work. Reporters understand that the opportunity for access with the unit's means that there may be long periods of time without much discernable action while units await assignment. And reporters understand that they may miss other events or stories related to the disaster while accessed with the team.
When purchasing gear, please consider the wide range of temperatures possible. For cold-weather gear, consider bringing clothing made out of polypropylene versus cotton and clothes that have wind-resistant or moisture-wicking features.
- News media personnel must carry and support any personal and professional gear they take with them, including protective cases for equipment, batteries, cables, converters, etc.

Internal Rules for Media Access with Disaster Teams

Internal Guidelines

The FEMA Office of Public Affairs (OPA) in Washington, DC, is the central office for coordinating all media access with national teams, to include allocating access slots to media organizations.

Unit leaders with a deployment order may invite local or regional media to access with them with coordination with and the approval of FEMA OPA. Unit leaders will inform these media, prior to deploying, that FEMA OPA is the approval authority for all media access and that their particular access may end after the unit's arrival on a disaster scene. The media organization may apply to FEMA OPA for continued access, but there is no guarantee and the media organization will have to make arrangements for and pay for the journalists' return trip.

Without making commitments to media organizations, deploying units may identify local media for potential embeds and nominate them to FEMA OPA at 202-646-4600. Information required to be forwarded includes media organization, type of media and contact information including bureau chief/managing editor/news director's name; office, home and cell phone numbers; pager numbers and email addresses. Submissions for embeds with specific units should include a unit recommendation as to whether the request should be honored. Unit leaders should also express, through their chain of command and Public Affairs channels to FEMA OPA, their desire and capability to support media embeds.

Freelance media will be authorized access if they are selected by a news organization as their access representative.

Reporters who happen upon units operating in the field may be permitted to join the team with the consent of the PAO assigned to the team in coordination with the team leader and FEMA OPA and Response Division, as well as the agreement of other accessed media.

Units will be authorized direct coordination with media after assignment and approval by FEMA OPA. All units with an accessed reporter will designate a Public Affairs Officer (PAO) to facilitate media coverage and access. The PAO will be responsible for checking in with FEMA OPA daily or as often as conditions allow. PAOs will also be responsible for forwarding questions about any other topic than the unit activities to FEMA OPA.

Accessed media operate as part of their assigned unit. Unit leaders will ensure the media are provided with every opportunity to observe actual operations. The personal safety of correspondents may be a reason to exclude them from actual operations, but every effort should be taken so that media can witness operations from a safe distance whenever possible.

If, in the opinion of the unit leader, a media representative is unable to withstand the rigorous conditions required to operate with his/her team, the leader, with consultation from the PAO, may limit the representative's participation with the unit to ensure safety.

Media will agree to abide by the FEMA OPA ground rules copy included in this document and provided to the media embed in exchange for access to the teams and unparalleled access to disaster sites. Any violation of the ground rules could result in termination of that media's embed opportunity.

If pooling is implemented, pool products will be made available to all accredited media on an equitable, no-fee basis. Media pool coordinators and bureau chiefs will be responsible for distributing media pool products. Media pooling will be decided upon in advance and correspondents will be notified before deployment if pooling will be implemented.

Issues, questions, difficulties or disputes associated with ground rules or other aspects of accessed media that cannot be resolved at the unit level by the PAO will be forwarded to FEMA OPA. Unit leaders who wish to terminate an access for cause must notify FEMA OPA prior to termination. If a dispute cannot be resolved through the JFO, FEMA OPA and the FEMA Response Division will be the final resolution authority. In all cases, this should be done as expeditiously as possible to preserve the news value of the situation.

Media Access - Suggested Gear List

Recommended items for media access:

- SUV or all-terrain type vehicle if needed for your equipment
- Gear you need to do your job and file your stories from the field, if needed – pens, pencils, pads, recorders, spare batteries, spare tape, spare digital media, etc
- Cushion-sole socks (hiking socks are good)
- Boots/sturdy shoes – steel-toed and/or steel-shanked boots may be required when embedding with some teams, ask for guidance
- Comfortable shoes – tennis shoes or other comfortable shoes when boots are not required
- Long pants – ABSOLUTELY REQUIRED when operating with USAR teams and other front-line disaster response teams
- Shorts – for warm-weather operations, NOT for operating in areas with heavy damage and safety issues
- Shirts – both long-sleeved and short sleeved
- Rain/wind resistant jacke
- Cold-weather coat, gloves, hat — if needed
- Thermal underwear — if needed
- Water — enough for three days
- Food to last three days – protein bars, canned meat, jerky, MREs, etc
- All personal hygiene: (one week’s supply)
- Toothbrush/paste
- Soap
- Deodorant
- Brush/comb
- Foot powder
- Prescription/non-prescription medications:
- Painkiller (aspirin, acetaminophen, ibuprofen, Naproxen)
- Antacid
- Vitamins
- If medications require refrigeration, notify in advance of deployment as refrigeration may not be available. There is no guarantee that these medications can be kept cold.
- Contact lenses and supplies
- Denture needs
- Sunglasses
- Insect repellent w/DEET
- Lip balm
- First-aid kit
- Ear plugs w/case
- Sunscreen
- Baby wipes or the adult version — Bath-size wipes are available in the camping section of sporting goods stores and are a must in areas without water.
- Identification, including ID with photo.
- Cash (suggested is \$100 in tens and \$20 spare tucked somewhere else) and various change.
- Flashlight w/batteries
- Hard hat – required with some teams
- Safety glasses – required with some teams
- Dust filter mask (fit-tested N-95 filter mask if working in areas with communicable diseases)

- Latex-free exam gloves if working in areas with communicable diseases
- Multi-purpose tool – knife, screwdriver, can-opener, etc
- Pocket sewing kit
- Waterproof matches
- Can opener for food (if kit contains canned food) and plastic flatware
- Cell phone with spare battery, charger and automobile charger
- Credit cards
- Health Insurance card or information
- Long-distance calling card
- Entertainment — Paperback book, deck of cards, etc.
- Battery-powered radio and extra batteries
- Sleeping bag and pillow
- Sleeping bag pad or inflatable mattress
- Travel alarm clock
- Towel
- Backpack/daypack
- Maps — Road, topographic if necessary
- This is not an all-encompassing list. Individual gear lists should be based on personal experience with activities in a prolonged primitive environment. Feel free to consult with FEMA OPA to help gauge appropriate gear.

Prohibited articles:

- Any weapons – if they won't let you have it on the plane, you shouldn't bring it, with the exception of a multi-purpose tool, which should be packed in checked baggage.
- Any controlled substances or alcoholic beverages.
- Destructive devices (explosives caps, tear gases, projectiles, etc.)
- Explosives and flammables (i.e. Heat tabs, sterno, etc.)
- White phosphorus matches
- Pornographic material
- Prescription drugs (restricted). Must be in original labeled container and not loose. Should be in hygiene kit.

Media Access Informed Consent Form

Whereas, I _____(NAME)_____, representing ____[Name of organization] _____, am about to travel with _____, and Whereas, I am doing so entirely upon my own initiative (or my own and my employer's initiative), risk and responsibility; and Whereas, I recognize that covering response/recovery operations at disaster scenes or elsewhere carries with it certain inherent risks to life, limb, and equipment; and Whereas, I recognize that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and other organizational elements of DHS, in pursuing the accomplishment of its primary mission, cannot guarantee my personal safety or the safety of my equipment, and I understand that my acknowledgement and execution of this consent and release is a condition to being credentialed to have media access with agency operations and receiving agency assistance or coordination with respect to that coverage. Now, therefore, in consideration of the permission extended to me, I do hereby for myself, my heirs, executors and administrators, (and on behalf of my employer, if any) release, remise, acquit, satisfy, and forever discharge DHS and FEMA and its member officers, agents and employees acting officially or otherwise, from any and all claims, demands, actions or causes of action, on account of my death or on account of any injury to me or my property which may occur from any cause during my stay, travel, and all ground, flight or water operations incident thereto.

I also acknowledge receipt of and agree to abide by any media access ground rules which have been provided to me by the agency, and to withhold any sensitive information which may be accidentally or improperly disclosed to me during the period of granted access or travel. I agree that all interviews with agency employees or employees of agency contractors during the media access will be "on the record" unless stated otherwise. During my stay with _____, I will not interfere with any operations. I understand that failure to comply with these restrictions may result in the loss of my or my employer's authorization to accompany _____ during mission operations or other agency activities, and may result in cancellation of my or my employer's participation in the agency's media access program.

I represent that I am authorized to execute this consent on behalf of my employer, if any.

Signature

Date

Printed Name

Media organization

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Please provide contact information for a person to be notified in an emergency (Preferably next immediate relative):

Witness

Witness

Handling Television Coverage of a Disaster Recovery Center

- Be polite, courteous and responsive.
- Remember that television reporters serve an important role in the recovery process by disseminating accurate information to the public. Your job is to help them get accurate information and a positive impression of the process. Primarily, you will be asked to provide background information about what is happening:
 - What is the process applicants follow?
 - How is it going?
 - Have you had any procedural problems?
 - What is the general impression of the day's activities?
 - How many people have been through the center?
 - What is the purpose of a center?
 - What is the mood of the victims?
- Remain in control of the situation at all times. Think about and decide in advance what your communications objectives are.
- Television crews should not be allowed to interfere with operations.
- Television reporters should be advised that general taping of procedures is acceptable, but that they must be given permission from individual disaster victims before shooting any close-up footage of them.
- Do not serve as a liaison between a television reporter and the applicants. Remember information regarding a disaster applicant is protected under the Privacy Act. No information regarding an applicant may be released to the media by a federal employee without the applicant's express written consent.
- Only a small portion of what you say to a television reporter may be used on the air; so choose your words carefully and stay away from unfamiliar subject matter. Do not be afraid to say, "I don't know," or to refer the reporter to someone with the appropriate expertise.
- Public Affairs most often will station personnel at recovery centers to assist with television coverage. When a PAO is present, reporters should be referred to the PAO.

Media Interviews

The following advice for media interviews is designed for program managers in a disaster recovery operation or others who may be asked by the PAO to appear on television for a "stand-up" interview or appear as a guest on a talk show. If you have any questions, contact the PAO.

Before the interview

- Arrive early and try to talk to the reporter before the interview to get an idea of the reporter's understanding of the issue. Offer to explain any details and points you think are important.
- Anticipate what might be asked. Think about and decide what your communications objectives are. Plan your responses and determine the major points you want to communicate.
- Make certain your facts come to mind easily and are up-to-date. The PAO can prepare a list of anticipated questions. Role-play the interview with the PAO.
- Keep current and be aware of the most recent news on the subject.
- Find out if there are other guests and know their positions on key issues.

During the interview

- Be relaxed and confident. You are the expert; you can and should maintain control of the interview.
- You can turn a related question toward the responses you want to make. Don't try to evade tough questions. Answer directly and in the most positive way possible.
- After each question, pause and think out your answer. Unless the interview is "live," blank space will be edited out. One way to buy time is to repeat the question before answering (If I understand you correctly, you are asking....) Keep your answers simple and direct. Avoid technical terms, jargon and acronyms.
- Speak to your intended audience in an honest and personable manner.
- Answer questions in concise 15- to 20-second segments, if possible.
- Do not give simple "yes" or "no" answers.
- Go into the answer as quickly as possible. Incorporate the question into your response, but it is best not to repeat the question verbatim.
- If you don't know the answer, say so and offer to get the information.
- Answer in positive, accurate statements without reinforcing erroneous perceptions. Don't repeat inaccurate information offered by the reporter.
- If you are questioned about facts which are totally incorrect, answer "No that is not correct . . ." and then expand on the facts.
- If you are being recorded and find you are bungling the answer, stop and say "I'd like to start that again." The revised version almost always will be used.
- Answer in complete statements, rather than adding to a reporter's statement. It is likely that your answers will be used without any of the questions.
- Do not refer to the reporter by name. The reporter may not be included when the report is aired.
- An important rule to remember with the media is, "There are no dumb questions; only dumb answers." Treat all questions as serious.
- In all interviews, there is always the possibility that you will be quoted out of context or made to look bad.
- Never speak to a reporter off the record. No interview is really off the record. Remember, everything you say to a reporter is quotable, even the off-hand comments after the interview is over.

You are the message

- How you look and convey your message may say more than your words. Look sharp; look interested; and convey an energetic appearance. Wear clothing appropriate to your position. Avoid wearing stripes and red.
- Remove dark glasses. Eye contact with the viewer is essential.
- A certain amount of nervousness is natural. It helps to get you "up" for the interview. Don't be bothered by it. Even seasoned professionals get nervous.
- Avoid nervous habits such as tapping feet, drumming fingers or swinging legs. They are distracting and often divert the attention from what you are saying.
- Concentrate on the interviewer and maintain good eye contact.
- Keep your head up, looking at the interviewer. Don't slouch or lean to one side. Don't make any unnecessary movements, but use your hands to gesture as you would normally.
- If the reporter holds the microphone in front of you, don't touch it. If using a lapel microphone, don't tilt your head down when speaking. Use your normal tone of voice. Let the reporter or sound technician worry about the rest.
- If sitting, sit up straight in a straight back chair, if possible, and avoid low, overstuffed chairs or swivel chairs. If wearing a coat, sit on your coattail so your jacket doesn't ride up on your neck.

After the interview

- Don't ask to see a written story or view a tape before it makes the news. The answer will almost always be no, so don't embarrass yourself and the reporter. The reporter may be willing to give you an edited copy.
- Provide the reporter with any promised information.
- Give the reporter as much background information as you have in written form. Be available to the reporter later if there are any follow-up questions.
- If a reporter botches the story and it contains many factual errors, advise the PAO. If no PAO is available, call the reporter and point out the factual errors. Be polite. Do not expect a retraction. If the same problems occur repeatedly with a particular reporter, advise the editor.

Guidance for Non-Public Affairs Staff

- When contacted by a reporter take the name, organization and telephone number. Tell the reporter a Public Affairs Officer (PAO) will call them right back. Then call the PAO. The PAO will talk with the reporter or arrange an interview with the person best able to respond to specific questions.
- If you are asked by Public Affairs to talk to a reporter, respond only to inquiries regarding your own area of participation or expertise. Refer requests regarding other program area to the Joint Information Center (JIC).
- Report all contacts with the media to the JIC.
- Report any problems—rumors, inadequate, incorrect, or negative coverage—to the Public Affairs Officer or your sector’s field PAO.
- Other tips for responding to questions from reporters:
 - Listen to the entire question before responding.
 - Avoid answering questions that call for speculation on your part; e.g., “Is this the worst disaster you have ever seen?”; “How much is the recovery effort going to cost?” or “How many applicants do you expect at the center?”
 - Beware of false assumptions and erroneous conclusions.
 - Avoid answering hypothetical questions.
 - Be alert to multiple questions.
- Information regarding a disaster applicant is protected under the Privacy Act. No information regarding an applicant may be released to the media by a federal employee without the applicant’s express written consent.
- If there are any problems, call the Public Affairs Officer immediately.
- **Be sure to tell members of the media about the Joint Information Center.** It is the one place where a reporter may find accurate, up-to-date, official information about the disaster response, recovery and mitigation programs. Provide the media with the telephone number of the JIC News Desk.

Working With the Media at Disaster Recovery Centers (DRC)

Guidance for DRC Staff

When a Disaster Recovery center (DRC) is established, a Public affairs Field Specialist should immediately make contact with the DRC Manager. The agency's Media Policy should be reviewed and contact information exchanged. The DRC Manager should be encouraged to provide basic information about the disaster process and the specific services being offered at the facility, but should be advised to **NEVER** discuss program specifics or policy issues.

QUESTIONS ABOUT FEMA POLICIES OR PROGRAMS MUST ALWAYS BE REFERRED TO THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER TO BE ANSWERED BY THE APPROPRIATE DESIGNATED SPOKESPERSON.

Media representatives are allowed into the centers. This includes television camera crews and photographers for newspapers and magazines. Ask reporters to cooperate by not interfering with the operations. While general filming of the goings-on at the center is acceptable, close-ups of interactions between disaster victims and agency representative require the victims' permission. Photographers also need to have the permission of individual victims in the center before taking pictures of them.

If reporters want interviews with applicants, they must arrange these interviews themselves. Interviews may be held inside Disaster Recovery Centers (DRC) as long as they do not interfere with operations. You should remain nearby to be available to provide correct information. Once the reporter is gone, report back to PAOs at the Joint Information Center. Personal information from applicants' files is protected by the Privacy Act and is not to be released to the media, nor is it to be photographed in any way.

Ask the media to help us help the disaster victims. Encourage the media to publicize the recovery center schedule, toll-free registration and Helpline numbers. Problems with the media should be referred to the on-site PAO or to the JIC. **Be sure to tell the media about the JIC**—it is the single source of accurate, up-to-date, official information about the entire disaster.

Media Contact Records

Record all media contacts, using log sheets for incoming and outgoing calls. An attempt should be made to keep track of media contacts at the Joint Field Office (JFO) and through other disaster recovery personnel in the field. Media logs include:

- Action taken
- Date
- Fax number
- Media outlet
- Name of PAO responding
- Nature of inquiry
- Reporter
- Telephone number

Getting this information may take a little extra time but it provides a tracking system and helps establish sound media relations. Information collected on log sheets is used to establish a card file of local reporters assigned to cover the disaster recovery. It is always helpful to have the name of a reporter who has indicated an interest in the story.

Rapid Response

Rapid Response takes immediate action to correct misunderstandings and misinformation that appears in the media or that could be disseminated by the news media.

Rapid Response is the primary troubleshooter for public affairs operations to ensure that accurate and fair information is disseminated about response, recovery, and mitigation programs. The role of a troubleshooter is to anticipate, prevent, and resolve issues.

Rapid Response is most often used to correct errors that have already been published or broadcast by responding immediately with facts and figures to any instances of misinformation or rumors that have been or could be perpetuated by the media.

Rapid Response helps to instill public confidence in FEMA, the state, and other agencies.

(Sample form is available on the next page)

RAPID RESPONSE

Today's Date: _____

Date of Report: _____

Time of Report: _____

Medium: **Newspaper** **Television** **Radio** **Internet** **Other**

Media Outlet: _____ **Reporter:** _____

Media Contact: _____

Contact #: Phone _____

Fax _____

Issue:

Response:

Submitted by: _____ **Submitted to:** _____

Time submitted: _____ **Response complete:** _____

Additional Information

The Privacy Act

The Privacy Act covers applicants for disaster assistance. This means that Public Affairs Officers must not release any information about applicants without their express written permission. For example:

You may not confirm that a specific individual has applied for assistance or discuss the status of anyone's application, even though he or she may have already talked to a reporter.

You may, however, speak in generic terms about particular types of problems. For example, a reporter says he knows of a disaster victim who applied weeks ago but his or her house has not yet been inspected. You may tell the reporter that while you cannot talk about this person's application, you can say that there can be a number of ways that something like this can happen. For example, the inspector may have tried several times unsuccessfully to contact the person to schedule the inspection, or the applicant may have withdrawn his or her application.

You may not give the name of an applicant to a reporter who wants to interview a disaster victim.

You may, however, contact an applicant and ask if he or she would like to talk to a reporter. You must make it clear that their decision will have no affect at all on their application for assistance, either favorably or negatively. If they do agree to an interview, you may give them the reporter's name and telephone number and let them initiate the contact. Never give a reporter an applicant's name or telephone number.

Public Information and Public Meetings

Public Affairs Officers may not withhold information that is deemed public information. This includes government-wide and agency-specific rules, regulations and instructions. **Information and written documents that are part of the decision-making process are not public, however, and should not be released.** For example, Preliminary Damage Assessments are used in the process of deciding whether or not to recommend that a particular area be declared a disaster area. They are not public information. The disaster declaration itself is public information and is released to the public through the news media.

Public meetings are meetings in which general information is shared about process, programs and procedures. Meetings where decisions are deliberated are not public meetings and thus are not open to the public. Applicant briefings are public meetings as are federal-state meetings.

FOIA Requests

Requests for agency records not considered to be public information are made formally under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). These requests must be in writing and sent to the Office of the General Counsel at FEMA Headquarters.

Public Notices

Several program areas are required to publish legal notices to announce the availability of federal funds for disaster recovery. Program managers will work through the Public Affairs Office to coordinate the placement of these notices. These notices generally are required for the Infrastructure, Mitigation and Housing Programs. In some cases, a combined notice will be used.

Steps for placing legal notices:

- Program manager contacts PAO regarding placement of legal notice.
- PAO determines most appropriate and cost-effective publication.
- The basic requirement is that the notice be published in the “paper of record” for the declared disaster area.
- Choices can include daily or weekly newspapers from the county, local, or major metropolitan area.
- Obtain cost estimates and deadline information from classified advertising or legal notice departments.
- Contact Operations Support for a purchase order.
- Remember, the PAO may be held responsible for costs of notices that are placed without approval.
- Obtain the copy for the public notice from the program area.
- Edit copy, verifying dates, names and locations.
- Send the public notice to the publication.
- Request tear sheet to both Public Affairs and Operations Support Offices.
- Request billing to Operations Support.

Notes: