

CHATHAM COUNTY EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN

APPENDIX 15-1 TAB A CEMA PIO FUNCTIONS

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ACRONYMS

ARC	American Red Cross
CCPIOA	Chatham County Public Information Officers Association
CEMA	Chatham Emergency Management Agency
DO	Duty Officer
DPIO	Deputy Public Information Officer
EAC	External Affairs Coordination (Appendix)
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
ESF	Emergency Support Functions
FAC	Family Assistance Center
GEMA	Georgia Emergency Management Agency
IC	Incident Commander
JFO	Joint Field Office
JIC	Joint Information Center
JIS	Joint Information System
LPIO	Lead Public Information Officer
MBA	Media Briefing Area
MSA	Media Staging Area
NIMS	National Incident Management System
PIO	Public Information Officer
PSA	Public Service Announcement
SCMPD	Savannah Chatham Metropolitan Police Department
VIPs	Very Important Persons
WEBEOC	Crisis Incident Management Software

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CEMA PIO FUNCTIONS

Within Chatham County and its municipalities the CEMA PIO will coordinate emergency public information (preparedness/awareness campaigns) during normal (day-to-day) activities for the County. When emergency incidents arise which call for the establishment of a PIO at the scene of an emergency/disaster, the on-scene IC is responsible for designating a specific PIO to address media inquiries. If additional PIO assistance is needed from CEMA, the on-scene PIO must contact the CEMA DO for support.

During major emergencies and disasters, the CEMA PIO will contact the Chatham County Public Information Coordinator and both will report directly to the EOC if activated. If the JIC is activated, the Chatham County Public Information Coordinator will assume the role of LPIO and the CEMA PIO will assume the role of DPIO.

Other appointed City/County Department PIOs (i.e.; fire or law enforcement) will advise their supervisors and/or department heads on media and public communications related to their specific departments, with coordination through the LPIO as appropriate. When the EOC is activated, all information releases should be coordinated through the LPIO before dissemination to ensure accuracy and consistency of message. When deemed necessary and appropriate the LPIO will activate the JIC to coordinate information with City/County departments, military installations, and private organizations, as well as the state and federal government.

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EXHIBIT 1 DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS

This section provides a general checklist for the CEMA PIO during normal (day-to-day) activities. More specific checklists pertaining to other aspects of the CEMA PIO's role are provided in following Tabs to this Appendix.

This checklist is highly useful to new members of the CEMA public information staff, and they should review it when joining the organization.

- Review the EAC Appendix, including Tabs, annually and update as required.

- Disseminate CEMA disaster preparedness information by available means to include television, radio, newspaper, social media technology, magazines, brochures, word-of-mouth, campaigns, presentations, special meetings, conferences, answering inquiries, newsletters, fliers, etc.

- Maintain a list of Translators who may assist with information dissemination to special needs populations including, but not limited to, the visual and hearing impaired and non-English speakers.

- Participate in emergency management mitigation and preparedness activities.

- Update CEMA brochures annually for print and distribution.

- Meet regularly with CEMA Director to discuss public information goals and strategy.

- Develop and maintain CEMA Weather and Emergencies Hotline to include weather advisories and preparedness tips for hazards that affect Chatham County.

- Organize and maintain the CCPIOA consisting of public information personnel from local response agencies, municipal PIOs, and private organizations' public relations personnel.

- Recruit emergency public information personnel, including clerical support staff, for JIC staffing and conduct regular training exercises.

- Establish a yearly awareness/preparedness campaign program which focuses on hazards within Chatham County.

- Participate in Chatham County drills and exercises to test the EAC Appendix and Tabs.

- Create and maintain templates for public information releases for all types of emergencies and disasters that may affect Chatham County. See Tab E- Planning and Products Section of EAC Appendix.

- Create and distribute PSAs and Infomercials with the Chatham County Public Information Coordinator.

- Update CEMA TV on Channel 16 and submit articles for submission into the Chatham County Connect quarterly through the Chatham County Public Information Coordinator.

- Conduct annual training with local media representatives and share with them the details of the EAC Appendix.

- Maintain a comprehensive list of media and other government and industry contacts.

- Establish a good working relationship with local media in which the CEMA PIO understands the different types of media, their deadlines and which audiences they specifically target.

- Prepare and obtain educational material for each potential hazard that could affect the jurisdiction. Distribute this information to the public. See Tab E- Planning and Products Section of EAC Appendix.

- Prepare “camera ready” information that can be quickly printed and distributed to each affected household at the time of an emergency. See Tab E- Planning and Products Section of EAC Appendix.

- Establish and maintain a JIC and Media Briefing Area (MBA) near the EOC. See Tab E- Planning and Products Section of EAC Appendix..

- Make arrangements for communications equipment and other supplies/equipment necessary for JIC functioning.

- Maintain CEMA Website with updates given to web developer.

- Develop status boards, maps, etc. for JIC and store in a convenient and safe location.

- Pre-identify subject matter experts in their fields for media briefings regarding accurate scientific, medical, and technical response information.

- Ensure all ESF-15 personnel integrate NIMS principles in planning efforts.

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EXHIBIT 2 EMERGENCY INCIDENTS

The CEMA PIO may be requested to support a LPIO (from a first response agency) on-scene or they may be requested to fill the role of LPIO on-scene. This section provides a general checklist for the CEMA PIO's functions during emergency operations. More specific checklists pertaining to other aspects of the CEMA PIO's role are provided in following Tabs to this Appendix.

This checklist is highly useful to new members of the CEMA public information staff, and they should review it when joining the organization.

- Request for on scene PIO support will be made to the CEMA DO and routed through the CEMA AD. The CEMA PIO will respond to emergency incidents as authorized by the CEMA Director.

- Ensure that enough staff is on-scene at an incident to handle media requests. If additional PIOs are required to assist with information distribution, advise Incident Commander (IC) or LPIO. If warranted, contact members from the CCPIOA to assist with distribution of information.

If the CEMA PIO is requested to fill the LPIO role for the incident:

- The IC is in charge of the emergency incident. The LPIO is to take directions from the IC and establish quickly what information may be released without additional authority.

If the CEMA PIO is requested to fill the LPIO role for the incident:

- The LPIO should be prepared to brief the media as soon as the role is established. The media will more than likely already be on-scene when the PIO arrives.

If the CEMA PIO is requested to fill the LPIO role for the incident:

- Attend all on-scene briefings for emergency personnel and stay close to the IC. Do not release any information without verification and approval from the IC. Remember that due to the nature of emergencies, the first information you receive is often wrong.

- Establish a media staging area (MSA) that is: 1) safe, 2) in close proximity to the action, 3) provides a backdrop for interesting video (i.e.; emergency equipment, etc.) and 4) respects the privacy of any victims.

- The media should be advised if an area is dangerous but this is not necessarily an excuse for keeping the media away from a scene. In most cases it is possible to arrange for footage and pictures to be taken near the actual scene of the incident. Strongly consider a press pool.
- The media may want to talk to the IC and/or on-scene officials at some point in the operation. Arrange to make this happen at regular intervals.
- Know which media is on the scene of an incident; All PIOs should rely on the relationships they have built during normal (day-to-day) activities.
- Review stock of written public information material and distribute as necessary.
- Disseminate information to the public on the assurance that authorities are implementing response and recovery actions to ensure the health, safety, and security of the public.
- Process and disseminate disaster welfare and family reunification information.
- Provide copies of all written news releases and summaries of all press conferences to the Incident Commander.
- Maintain a log and a file of all information released to the media.
- Monitor published and broadcast information for accuracy. Correct misinformation whenever possible.
- Ensure that all Chatham County populations (especially Special Needs populations) are notified. If a news conference is scheduled, ensure that a Sign Language Interpreter is available to translate. List of Special Needs Volunteers are located in Tab E- Planning and Products Section of EAC Appendix.
- If CEMA PIO is providing on-scene support to a LPIO, CEMA PIO will distribute all information releases as LPIO instructs.

- ❑ If the incident warrants, liaise with the American Red Cross (ARC) to determine if the ARC has established a Family Assistance Center (FAC) for families of victims involved.

- ❑ If the incident warrants, contact the Salvation Army to discuss some type of feeding schedule for on-scene media outlets.

- ❑ Stay informed to anticipate media inquiries and response to high profile and/or politically sensitive issues and initiatives, providing guidance to Command Staff, section chiefs, and/or stakeholders for media inquiries event.

- ❑ Assign a JIC member to assist elected officials and VIPs during response. If the JIC is activated, assign PIO to oversee the JIC Liaison Support Group (unit in the JIC that coordinates VIPs integration into response).

- ❑ Make available subject matter experts to the media to provide accurate scientific, medical, and technical response information.

- ❑ Continue to update the CEMA website while sending out CEMA Signals and CEMA Alerts to the public.

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EXHIBIT 3 DISASTERS OR MAJOR EMERGENCIES

This section provides a general checklist for PIOs during disasters or major emergencies. More specific checklists pertaining to other aspects of a PIO's role in an emergency management system are provided elsewhere in this manual.

This checklist should be reviewed periodically by the CEMA Public Information staff and updated as required. This checklist is highly useful to new members of the public information staff, and they should review it when joining the organization.

PIOs must have an established system for the gathering, coordinating, sharing and disseminating information during an emergency. PIOs must have all-important information from field sites during a disaster/emergency. PIOs need updates from the EOC when situations change. PIOs must have the first hand emergency information data received by a communications center. With information coming into an EOC or a JIC from all different directions coordination of this information is essential!

- CEMA PIO makes contact with CEMA Command Staff and discusses public information strategy.

- CEMA PIO contacts the Chatham County Public Information Coordinator and discusses public information strategy.

- Maintain contact with the EOC to obtain the latest information, to verify information, and have news releases authenticated by CEMA Command Staff.

- Fully mobilize the emergency public information organization (ESF-15) by sending out an email announcing teleconference at a specific time. Brief emergency public information staff on status of emergency situation and their duties. Determine shift assignments.

- Activate JIC. See Tab E- Planning and Products Section of EAC Appendix.

- Establish media briefing room near the EOC and JIC. See Tab E- Planning and Products Section of EAC Appendix.

- Release a summary statement, fact sheet and/or CEMA Alert as soon as possible after the disaster or emergency has happened. Remember to include Special Needs Populations!

Review and revise pre-scripted news releases as needed and then post on CEMA website and WTOC-CEMA Weather & Emergencies Hotline. Send CEMA Alert with same information.

- Topics to include but are not limited to: State Response Preparations; Homeowner/Property Precautions; Recovery Related Issues (insurance, pictures of property, important papers, etc); Issue PSAs on Recovery Topics; Evacuation Routes (Coordinate with Georgia Department of Transportation and SCMPD); Shelter Locations (what to take, pet shelters); Evacuation and Re-Entry Information; Shelters; Traffic Conditions; Public Health and Safety Topics; Volunteers and Donations Management.

- Contact Volunteer Language Translators to assist with distributing information to special needs populations. See Tab E- Planning and Products Section of EAC Appendix.

- Distribute copies of written news releases and summaries of press conferences to CEMA Command Staff and EOC staff via WebEOC. Post news releases on bulletin board inside the EOC.

- Make sure media releases are posted in the media briefing area and copies are distributed to members of the media through press kits or other means. See Tab E- Planning and Products Section of EAC Appendix.

- Set a media briefing schedule in advance and provide timely briefings from the EOC or JIC. Make sure proper public officials are available for technical questions.

- Assign a JIC member to maintain status boards and maps at the JIC.

- Assign a JIC member to assist elected officials and VIPS during response. If the JIC is activated, assign PIO to oversee the JIC Liaison Support Group (unit in the JIC that coordinates VIPS integration into response).

- Maintain a log and a file of information released to the media.

- Make contact with PIOs in other affected jurisdictions, at other government levels, and within the private sector, and jointly release information from the JIC.

- Monitor published and broadcast information for accuracy and correct any misinformation when possible.

- Review written public information material and distribute as necessary. See Tab E-Planning and Products Section of EAC Appendix.

- JIC PIOs should monitor press briefings and news conferences. Questions may come up during the briefings that staff members can immediately begin to verify, confirm, or research.

- JIC PIOs should monitor which media are present at the briefings. This can be beneficial when JIC needs to target a specific media or audience.

- Coordinate with the EOC Manager or the IC for media tours of the EOC and/or emergency scene if they will not hinder response efforts.

- Dispatch public information team, if appropriate, to take pictures, etc. for the media to use.

- Release information about approved areas from which persons may view the disaster scene. In choosing viewing areas, consider safety, traffic flow, and availability of traffic areas.

- Obtain and release telephone numbers the public can call for additional information or specific questions (Such as United Way 211).

- Obtain and release telephone numbers the public can call to volunteer assistance.

- Process and disseminate disaster welfare and family reunification information.

- Remember that the media can provide PIOs with information. They have cameras in the field and may have access to some information before you do! Plan for this to happen and build it into your system.

- Be prepared for the media. Coordination of information at the EOC or JIC is essential. No one wants to be blind-sided with a question they knew nothing about, especially when the information was available somewhere in the system!

- If the Incident requires a long-term recovery process:*
Continue to release information from the JIC as long as media interest is present.

- If the Incident requires a long-term recovery process:*
Accommodate State and Federal PIOs and assist them in releasing information on assistance programs through the JIS.

- If a Declaration of a Georgia State of Emergency is issued, coordinate equipment and staffing with GEMA ESF-15.

- The JIC remains fully activated and staffed until such time as a GEMA Joint Field Office (JFO) becomes operational or media interest declines to point where PIO activities can be handled with limited staff located at the EOC.

- Maintain records of expenditures and document resources utilized during recovery.

- Establish closing date of JIC.

- Gather all records kept during all phases of the emergency and prepare a chronological summary of all events, actions taken, inquiries made, and responses given. Collect newspaper clippings and TV footage.

- Survey local staff and local media for suggestions to improve public information response procedures in future emergencies.

- Write an after-action report and provide copies to CEMA Command Staff.