



Ventura County

Public Information Annex



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**This Public Information Annex to the Ventura County Emergency
Operations Plan was reviewed and Updated:**

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Authored by:

Kim Dellacort, Emergency Manager, Ventura County Sheriff

Bill Boyd, Emergency Manager, Ventura County Sheriff

Contributors:

Natalie Hernandez, Public Information Officer, Ventura County Executive Office

Senerey De Los Santos, Public Information Officer, Ventura County Sheriff

Joey Buttitta, Public Information Officer, Ventura County District Attorney's Office

Lydia Collins, Public Information Officer, Ventura County Health Care Agency

Ashley Humes, Management Analyst, Ventura County Executive Office

Brian Chong, Public Information Officer, City of Moorpark

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1 INTRODUCTION

This Public Information Annex addresses the County of Ventura’s comprehensive public information activities before, during, and after extraordinary emergency situations and natural, human-caused, or technological disasters. The Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), which this annex supports, designates the County of Ventura as part of the California Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) and the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

This Annex establishes plans and protocols for pre-incident public awareness and preparedness education, incident communications during response operations, and post-incident recovery communications, in alignment with Government Code §8560 and applicable California emergency management guidance.

The Communications and Information Management component of NIMS prescribes standardized communication and information management strategies and establishes the Joint Information System (JIS) to enable coordinated communication to the public, incident personnel, the media, and other stakeholders during and after a disaster. The public information function operates within the Command Staff of the Incident Command System (ICS).

Public Information operations within the County of Ventura are guided by the Whole Community approach as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The Whole Community framework recognizes that effective emergency management is a shared responsibility among residents, businesses, community-based organizations, schools, access and functional needs advocates, emergency responders, and government leadership. Public information strategies must therefore be inclusive, collaborative, and accessible to ensure all segments of the community can understand risks, take protective actions, and participate in preparedness, response, and recovery efforts.

Figure 2-1 Whole Community

The Whole Community framework integrates diverse community stakeholders into emergency planning and communication processes, as illustrated below in Figure 1.



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The Whole Community approach also contemplates the communication needs of community members with Access and Functional Needs in compliance with California Code, Government Code - GOV § 8593.3, Chapter 7, California Emergency Services Act, Article 6.5, Accessibility to Emergency Information and Services:

- (a) A county, including a city and county, shall, upon the next update to its emergency plan, integrate access and functional needs into its emergency

¹ Department of Homeland Security/FEMA. A Whole Community Approach to Emergency Management Principles, Themes and Pathways for Action. December 2011. PDF.

plan by addressing, at a minimum, how the access and functional needs population is served by the following:

(1) Emergency communications, including the integration of interpreters, translators, and assistive technology.

The following activities are examples of best practices integrated into emergency communication procedures:

- Key emergency messages sent via VC Alert include culturally competent English and Spanish translations. Tools available for delivery include text, voice, email, fax, numeric pager, TTY (Teletypewriter) and TTD (Telecommunications Device for the Deaf).
- Appropriate use of accessibility formats, which may include American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation for press conferences and video, video captioning, alternate text for images, and use of plain language.
- Adherence to the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines for online website format.

This Annex contains an Introduction, Concept of Operations and provides guidance on public information priorities and strategies through the Activation, Response and Recovery phases of an incident. The Appendices to this annex provide practical application guidance, templates, media management tools and reference materials to augment the communication priorities and strategies outlined.

1.1 PURPOSE

Systems and protocols for communicating timely and accurate information to the public are critical during crisis or emergency situations. This annex describes the principles, system components, and procedures needed to support effective emergency public information operations across all phases of emergency management.

This Annex provides the framework for:

- Pre-incident public awareness and hazard preparedness education
- Incident communications during activation and response
- Post-incident and recovery communications to support community stabilization and restoration.

It allows for the establishment of a Joint Information System (JIS) to support emergency response through effective development, coordination, and dissemination of emergency public information, as well as the establishment of a Joint Information Center (JIC).

This annex also outlines the responsibilities of various emergency management/public information staff and provides a framework for effective interaction with emergency management agencies, the media, and the public.

1.2 SITUATION

The County of Ventura is vulnerable to a wide range of disasters, outlined in the EOP, including earthquakes, floods, fires, dam failures, tsunamis, civil unrest, transportation accidents, drought, landslide/debris flow, and severe weather. Some disasters may be caused by accidental or intentional human activity, such as attacks in public places, civil unrest events, explosions; biological, chemical, or radiological releases; hazardous materials spills or other mass casualty incidents. The County is also potentially vulnerable to public health and agricultural emergencies.

During a disaster, disseminating timely, accurate and easily understood information to the public is critical:

- To alert citizens to an impending or occurring disaster
- To communicate protective measures to save lives and protect property
- To assist citizens, responding to and recovering from a disaster
- To provide ongoing recovery information, service updates, and community guidance following stabilization of the incident

In blue sky conditions, the County conducts ongoing public awareness and preparedness outreach to improve readiness for identified hazards and to enhance community resilience.

1.3 ASSUMPTIONS

The following assumptions provide the planning foundation for public information operations within the County of Ventura. These assumptions recognize the dynamic and often unpredictable nature of emergencies and disasters and establish the conditions under which public information systems, staffing, and coordination mechanisms are

expected to operate. They apply across all phases of emergency management, including preparedness, response, and recovery:

- During emergency situations, the public will require timely information and instructions on effective response and proper life-safety actions. An initial or holding statement may be necessary before an incident is fully understood.
- The local media will perform an essential role in communicating emergency instructions and the most current information to the public. Regional and national media may substantially increase information demand.
- Activation of a Joint Information System (JIS) will efficiently coordinate resources and messaging among impacted stakeholders.
- An activated Joint Information Center (JIC) will consolidate the Joint Information System into a common location for information coordination and dissemination.
- Telephone and internet communications may be disrupted during major incidents. Redundant systems and alternate dissemination methods will be necessary.
- Additional public information and administrative resources may be required during large-scale incidents.
- Misinformation and disinformation may circulate during incidents and must be actively monitored, addressed, and corrected.
- Post-incident communications will be necessary to support recovery operations, public assistance processes, and long-term community resilience efforts.

1.4 OBJECTIVES

The following objectives establish the framework for public information operations within Ventura County and guide the coordination, development, and dissemination of information before, during, and after emergencies.

The key objectives of this annex are:

- Define and articulate the roles and responsibilities of Public Information Officers (PIOs) and communications staff before, during, and after an incident.
- Establish protocols for pre-incident public awareness campaigns and hazard preparedness education.
- Define the purpose, function, and operational protocols of the Ventura County Operational Area Joint Information System (JIS) and Joint Information Center (JIC) during activation.
- Provide procedures and resources for use by PIOs and communications staff to ensure coordinated, accessible, and Whole Community information dissemination.
- Address best practices for communicating with members of the public living with access and functional needs.
- Ensure continuity of public information operations throughout extended incidents

and through the transition from response to recovery.

- Define post-incident communication procedures to support dissemination of recovery resources, public health guidance, damage reporting information, and after-action communication.

2 CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

The Public Information function operates across all phases of emergency management and is responsible for ensuring timely, accurate, coordinated, and accessible information is provided to the public, partner agencies, stakeholders, and the media before, during, and after emergencies or disasters.

Public Information operations within the County of Ventura are coordinated through the Ventura County Operational Area under the authority of the County Executive Office and the Ventura County Sheriff's Emergency Services. The Public Information Officer (PIO) serves as a member of the Command Staff within the Incident Command System (ICS) and, when activated, within the Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

Public Information activities are conducted in accordance with:

- The California Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS)
- The National Incident Management System (NIMS)
- Operational Area coordination protocols
- Applicable California Government Code requirements

The Ventura County Operational Area Joint Information System (JIS) provides the framework for coordinating messaging among County departments, cities, special districts, and partner agencies.

2.1 PUBLIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS

2.1.1 Mission

The mission of a Public Information System is to deliver timely, accurate, understandable, unified and trusted information during all five phases of emergency management: Prevention, Mitigation, Preparedness, Response and Recovery.

2.1.2 Method

In accordance with California Government Code §8560, Ventura County conducts ongoing pre- and post-incident public awareness and preparedness outreach to improve readiness for identified hazards in the Emergency Operations Plan. Preparedness outreach may also align with state and federal public preparedness campaigns such as earthquake, wildfire, flood, and tsunami awareness initiatives.

These efforts may include:

- Hazard-specific preparedness campaigns
- Community meetings and stakeholder engagement events
- Social media and website preparedness messaging
- Disaster preparedness public education guidance materials
- Promotion of VC Alert emergency notification system registration opportunities
- Coordination with city PIOs and Operational Area partners to ensure consistent preparedness messaging
- Development and maintenance of pre-scripted emergency message templates

Preparedness messaging emphasizes protective actions, evacuation planning, alert and warning registration, situational awareness, and a Whole Community perspective.

During an incident, the Public Information function may activate under any of the following conditions:

- Activation of the County Emergency Operations Center (EOC)
- Significant incident with anticipated public or media interest
- Multi-agency coordination requirements
- Direction from the Incident Commander or EOC Director

The PIO function maintains updated media contact lists, message templates, digital communication tools, and accessibility protocols to ensure rapid implementation during incident activation.

As response operations stabilize, public information priorities transition to recovery communications. Public messaging will continue until recovery operations transition to routine departmental communications.

During all phases of a disaster, effective public information systems consider internal and external stakeholders and follow a comprehensive four-step process: Information gathering, verifying, coordinating and disseminating. These steps form a continuous cycle, ensuring the accuracy, quality and effectiveness of public information.

Figure 2-1-2. Information Cycle



2.1.3 Information Gathering

The first step in the process of getting information to the public and additional stakeholders during an incident is information gathering. Information is collected from:

- On-scene Command – A source of ongoing, official information on the response effort.
- On-scene PIOs – Report to the JIS/JIC what they are observing and hearing at the incident from the news media, elected officials and their staff, and the public.
- Media Monitoring – Used to assess the accuracy and content of news media reports. It also helps to identify trends, breaking news and rumors. Social media must also be monitored.
- News Media Liaisons – A valuable source for gathering information and current issues directly from reporters.
- Public and Elected Officials – Inquiries from elected officials, community leaders, and the public point to the specific concerns of those in the affected areas.
- Hotline – If an information hotline is activated, information from the public may be received by call takers.

2.1.4 Verifying Information

The next step in the process is to verify the accuracy of the information that has been collected, by consulting:

- Official public information and agency representatives assigned to the JIS/JIC.
- On-scene Command – A source of ongoing, official information on the response effort.
- EOC Sources – EOC section coordinators and/or designees, including agency representatives should be asked to confirm information, according to their discipline, prior to release.
- On-scene PIOs – A valuable source for checking the accuracy of information reported to the EOC with reports from the news media, the offices of elected officials, and people on the scene.

2.1.5 Coordinating/Developing Information

The next step in the process is to coordinate with other PIOs within the JIS or the established JIC. Coordinating information involves:

- Establishing Key Message(s) – After gathering information, unified messages are crafted that address all informational needs and are prioritized based on the overall response and recovery strategy.
- Develop products with verified information that are consistent with messaging goals. These may include website and social media content, talking points/key messages, situation summaries for internal and external stakeholders, press releases, flyers, posters, advertisements, interviews, question and answer documents, public service announcements and the like.

2.1.6 Disseminating Information

The next step in the process is to disseminate the information to the public and incident stakeholders. This step involves:

- All official emergency public information shall be approved in accordance with the approval protocol established by the EOC Director or Incident Commander for the operational period
- Methods of dissemination should be based on the type of information, the intended audience and the availability/usability of communication outlets. It is important to prepare an array of platforms and methods to ensure the most comprehensive reach.

- Monitoring messaging, responses and feedback will ensure messages are communicated accurately and that the information meets the need.

2.2 JOINT INFORMATION SYSTEM

The Joint information System is the method of operating during an incident that allows PIOs from multiple agencies and stakeholder groups to coordinate and disseminate clear, unified messaging and instructions to the public during a disaster.

The goal of the JIS is to provide a structure for developing and delivering coordinated interagency messages, which includes developing, recommending and executing public information plans and strategies on behalf of the EOC Director.

In a disaster, the JIS provides the mechanism for integrating public information activities to ensure coordinated and consistent message development, verification, and dissemination, while still allowing participating organizations to retain their independence.

2.2.1 Functions

- Identify key information and determine the audience(s)/stakeholders.
- Craft clear and easily understood messages that convey key information.
- Prioritize messaging to ensure timely delivery and relevance to the public.
- Verify accuracy of information through appropriate channels.
- Disseminate messages using the most effective means available to ensure Whole Community reception. Applicable tools and techniques include news releases, media interviews, news conferences, websites, and social media.

2.3 CONSIDERATIONS

2.3.1 Access and Functional Needs

When the Joint Information System is activated, multiple communications channels are utilized to disseminate emergency instructions, updates, and critical information to keep all County residents informed.

In Ventura County, there are approximately 850,000 residents in the 10 cities and unincorporated areas. Efforts are ongoing to build and strengthen an emergency communications network that can quickly and effectively reach all sectors of the community during an emergency or disaster. In accordance with the California Code, Government Code § 8593.3, Chapter 7. California Emergency Services Act, part of those communication efforts are aimed at effectively reaching individuals living with Access and

Functional Needs and may include the integration of interpreters, translators, and assistive technology.

The target audiences in this annex are aligned and defined in accordance with FEMA’s Communication, Maintaining Health, Independence, Safety, Support, Self-Determination, and Transportation (CMIST) Framework. This approach provides flexibility for planning to address a broad set of common Access and Functional Needs (AFN) without having to define a specific diagnosis, status, or label.

Figure 2-2. The CMIST Framework



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The CMIST Framework also provides a set of considerations to assist public information officers in assessing and meeting communication needs during an incident response.

2.4 ORGANIZATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Typically, there is one jurisdiction, agency or organization that is impacted more significantly than others or organizations whose primacy has been pre-determined based on discipline or specialty. Those agencies will be considered Primary Agencies. Agencies with lesser impacts or who manage smaller facets of the response may act as Support Agencies.

²Administration for Strategic Preparedness & Response. “At-Risk Individuals with Access and Functional Needs.” Supporting At-Risk Individuals with Access & Functional Needs in Emergencies, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, aspr.hhs.gov/at-risk/Pages/at-risk_afn.aspx. Accessed 27 Feb. 2026.

2.4.1 Agency Primacy

In the absence of an EOC activation, the lead agency is determined based on the type of incident and responding agencies. The table below shows potential disasters and the agencies that would serve as the primary agency for each.

Table 2-1. Ventura County Primary Agencies

Lead Agency	Law Enforcement	Fire Protection District	Public Works Agency	Public Health Agency
Incident Type	Aircraft Civil Unrest Terrorism Utilities	Fire Hazmat Transportation Industrial	Dam Failure Oil Spill Flood Landslide/ Debris Flow	Pandemic Epidemic

In the event of an EOC activation, agencies will utilize the EOC as a central point of coordination. Primary agencies should be prepared to coordinate with other primary and support agencies through the Joint Information System/Center.

2.4.2 Primary Agencies

During an EOC activation, primary agencies are responsible for the following areas:

- Managing and coordinating a specific emergency support function relative to response and/or recovery.
- Ensuring that public information functions and operations are appropriately coordinated during and following a disaster.
- Support and engage the JIS when activated by providing trained PIO staff to the JIC. If requested, the primary agency will make appropriate staff available to coordinate and share information through alternative means if public information resources cannot be sent to an established JIC.

Before a disaster, primary agencies should:

- Organize staff and coordinate the emergency public information function for the individual organization.

- Maintain updated public information contact names and numbers as part of a PIO Resource Directory.
- Conduct training for collateral personnel who will function as members of the public information team, but whose normal duties do not include PIO functions.
- Establish designated facilities and establish procedures and protocols for emergencies and disasters.

2.4.3 Support Agencies

During an activation, support agencies should:

- Assist a specific primary agency with available resources, capabilities, or expertise in support of emergency support response operations, as coordinated by the representative of the primary agency.
- Organize staff and conduct their public information function in a way that is consistent with local primary agencies' public information functions and operations during and following a disaster.
- Coordinate respective public information within the Joint Information System (JIS).
- Provide trained PIO representatives or other appropriate individuals to the JIC, if requested.

2.4.4 Liaisons

A JIC Liaison provides coordinated two-way communication with operational area stakeholders involved in the response or recovery and/or other entities such as elected officials, community leaders, VIPs, and other governmental and NGO support agencies. This may include representatives from state or federal agencies or agencies supporting the incident through mutual aid.

When state or federal agencies are involved in incident response, Ventura County public information operations will coordinate messaging with California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) and federal partners through the Joint Information System to ensure consistent and unified public messaging.

3 ACTIVATION

3.1 EOC ACTIVATION LEVELS

Depending on the size and scope of an emerging incident or disaster, an EOC activation may call for Normal, Enhanced, Partial or Full staffing. A single response may also result in a progression or regression of EOC activation levels as the situation dictates. The responsibilities of the JIS/JIC will also be determined by the emerging incident or disaster and staffing needs assessed by the EOC Management Section. The Table defines the standardized activation levels along with recommended staffing models.

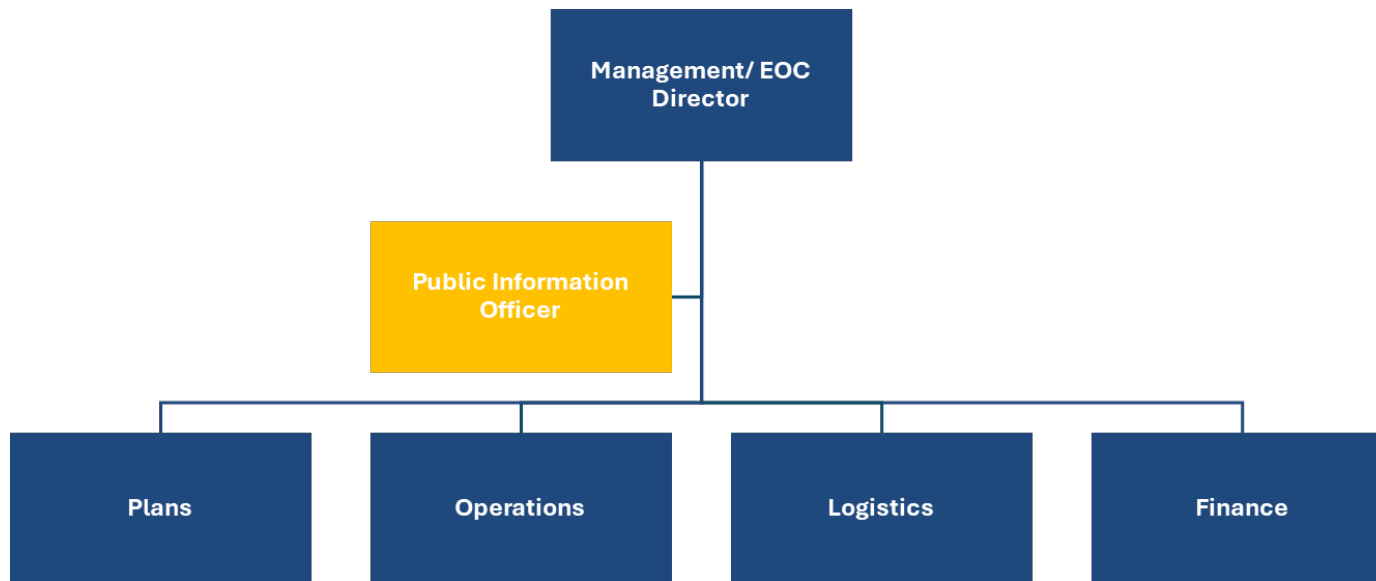
Table 3-1. EOC Activation Levels

Activation Level		Description	Staffing
1	Full Activation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A situation or threat requires 24/7 coordination, monitoring and support Incident may require extensive response and recovery efforts and significant resources 	<p>All General Staff positions activated, including applicable liaison positions</p> <p>Operations are being conducted on a 24-hour basis</p>
2	Partial Activation	A situation or threat has developed that requires coordination extending beyond the normal workday	EOC is partially staffed; limited or partial liaison support and technical specialist (based on incident needs)
3	Enhanced Operations	A situation or threat has developed that requires enhanced monitoring and coordination between jurisdictions or agencies	Duty Officer plus limited essential personnel focused on situational awareness
4	Normal Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Routine monitoring of low-level situations No event or incident is anticipated 	Duty Officer only

3.2 EOC ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

The EOC structure organizes roles and responsibilities according to function. The PIO and JIS function reside in the Management Section and under the direct supervision of the EOC Director. This maximizes coordination and information flow between all EOC sections and establishes the path of information with external stakeholders.

Figure 3-1. EOC Organization Structure



4 RESPONSE

4.1 PIO RESPONSIBILITIES

The PIO gathers, verifies, coordinates, and disseminates accurate and timely information on the incident's cause, size, current situation and desired public response. Below is a list of immediate tasks that will generally apply to an incident:

Main responsibilities include:

- Report to required location (Field, EOC, or JIC).
- Obtain situational awareness on incident scope and determine immediate information needs or limitations from Incident Commander or Emergency Operations Center Director.
- Determine JIS/JIC staffing and support needs.
- Confirm approval pathways when multiple agencies are involved.
- Develop key messages and identify delivery platforms.
- Establish information release strategy and cycle for news conferences and protocol for interviews, briefings and photo opportunities.
- Monitor media reporting for accuracy.
- Establish rumor monitoring and misinformation tracking.
- All PIO/JIC members must track attendance through proper check-in channels and maintain a Unit Activity Log, ICS Form 214.
- Conduct evaluation of incident communication activities and all required documentation.

The PIOs working in the JIC will have two primary functions:

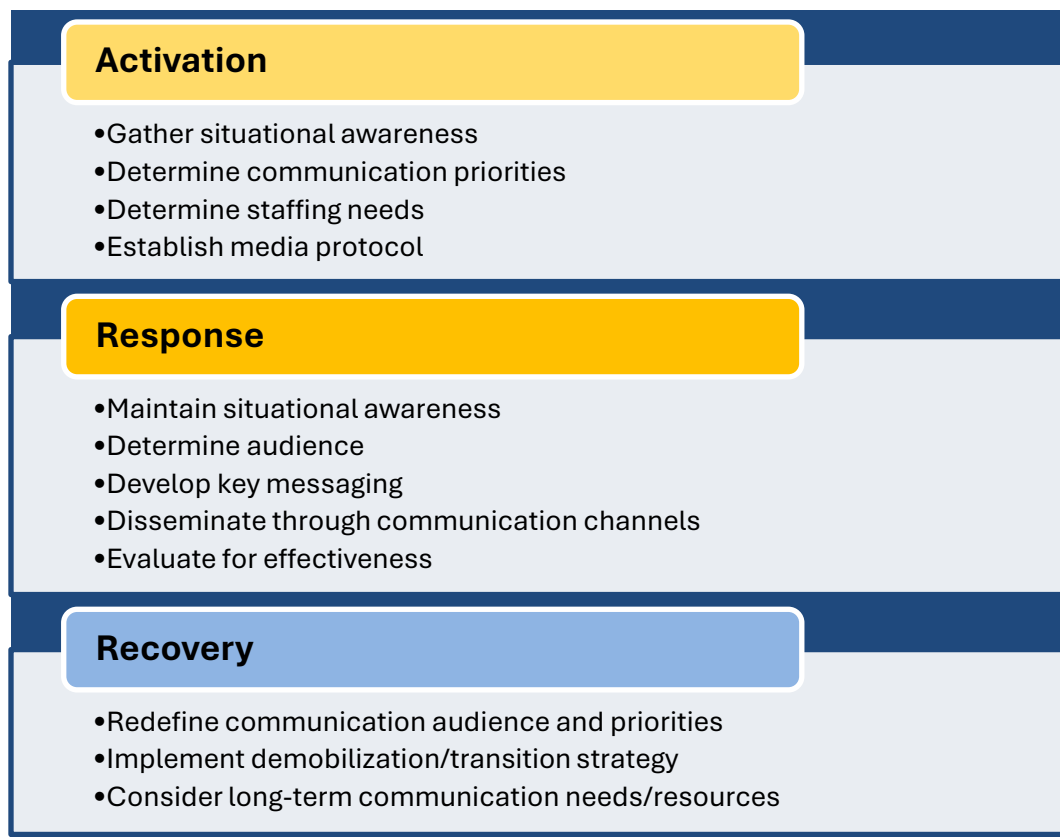
- Carry out activities that align with the incident objectives and JIC priorities.
- Support public information activities of their respective departments and agencies.

Operational Area jurisdictions, departments, and agency PIOs may be asked to staff various JIC functions regardless of the level of involvement of their respective departments. This will ensure an adequate number of PIOs are available to support emergency public information activities. In accordance with NIMS, only one lead PIO shall be appointed during the activation or operational period. The lead PIO is assisted by Unit Leaders based on functional needs.

4.2 COMMUNICATION PRIORITIES

There are three main phases to an incident where communication priorities and needs may change, intensify, or lessen throughout an incident. While each incident is unique, the following are examples of communication priorities over the Activation, Response, and Recovery phases.

Figure 4-1. Communication Priorities



During a disaster, it is important to deliver timely and accurate information to the public and stakeholders. The JIS members will develop a content strategy that reflects these priorities and ensures that the right messages get to the right audiences at the right time in a strategic, culturally competent manner. Elements of a content strategy include situation analysis, audience analysis, establishing communication goals and developing objectives, key messages, calls-to-action, identifying communication channels, timelines, and advanced planning.

The Joint Information System’s objectives, functions, considerations and priorities inform the strategies used during the activation, response and recovery phases.

A proactive approach to emergency communications will help set a tempo for the release of information to the media and public and establish the JIS/JIC as a primary and credible source of information.

Proactive methods include:

- As soon as possible, release a statement about the incident to the media and share it across all channels.
- If there is little information, the initial statement should confirm that the County is aware of the developing situation and will provide updates.
- Establish and publicize a media briefing schedule and follow through.
- Select a spokesperson. The Lead PIO may serve as a spokesperson or may delegate a spokesperson and coordinate additional spokespersons according to specific areas of responsibility and expertise. Spokespersons and subject matter experts should be selected based on the nature and needs of the incident and the ability to deliver credibility, confidence and communicate empathy.

4.3 COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

4.3.1 Composing Messages

In 2024, the California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services issued the State of California Alert & Warning Guidelines for writing alert and warning messages. To maximize warning effectiveness, the tone and language of a warning message should be:

- **Specific** – The message should make it clear which people are at risk and what protective action they should take. Inevitably, some people who are not at risk will receive the message; and they should be able to determine that from the message.
- **Consistent** – The public should receive consistent and mutually reinforcing messages through all media and from all sources.
- **Confident** – Even if the underlying information is uncertain, there should be no hedging or ambiguity about the protective action recommendations.
- **Clear** – Wording must be in plain language that can be easily understood. Technical jargon should be avoided.
- **Accurate** – If people learn or suspect they are not receiving correct and complete information, they may begin to ignore both the message and source.

Messaging Considerations

Some warning delivery systems have limitations on character length or composition that require a warning message to be brief. The alert and warning messages should address the five essential topics: Source, Threat, Location, Guidance/Time, Expiration Time. Figure 4-1 illustrates the elements of an effective message. Specifically, a clear message will identify the Source, Threat, Location, Guidance and expected Expiration Time, if available.

Figure 4-2. Message Components



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Crisis messaging research indicates that people under stress tend to experience diminished comprehension. Messaging needs to be concise, specific to the audience and clearly identify action items/instructions. Incorporating these crisis messaging concepts may improve audience receptivity, understanding and cooperation:

3 Mileti, Dr. Dennis. "Modernizing Public Warning Messaging." YouTube, 29 Jan. 2018, youtu.be/oYya009bc2M?si=nZUo5luSKnFhMx44.

Concise Messaging: Limit to 3 key messages, each within 9 seconds or 27 words, ensuring clarity for an audience with a 6th-8th grade reading level.

Message Structure: Use the "primacy/recency" principle, place the most important points at the beginning and end. Repeat key messages for reinforcement.

Credibility and Empathy: Cite credible third-party sources and provide a preamble that shows empathy and care to build trust, especially in high-stress situations.

Visual and Narrative Support: Use graphics, analogies, and personal stories to enhance understanding and retention, improving message recall by over 50%.

Balance Negative Messages: Support comprehension, counter misinformation and motivate positive actions with solution-oriented messages. Focus on what can be done to improve outcomes even when delivering difficult or negative news. Refraining from the use of words such as "no", "not", "never" will allow positive messaging to be better received.

A Message Map is a helpful tool that may be used to develop key messages and the appropriate supporting points. A Message Map template is provided in [Appendix B](#).

Misinformation

The JIS will monitor traditional and social media channels for misinformation, rumors, and disinformation that may impact public safety or confidence in response operations. When inaccurate information is identified, the JIC will coordinate corrective messaging through official channels and partner agencies to ensure the public receives timely and accurate information.

4.3.2 Delivery Strategy

A communication strategy must include appropriate methods of delivery. Audience needs and available resources will determine which methods of delivery are suitable for each incident.

A communication strategy considering a whole community approach should include a variety of delivery methods and outlets, utilizing multiple resources to ensure redundancy and efficacy in message delivery across a broad range of audiences. All messaging should bear in mind clarity and conciseness for community members experiencing crisis, as well as consider additional accessibility features for community members with Access and Functional Needs, such as translation and graphic design elements. Ventura County's

emergency preparedness and emergency websites ReadyVenturaCounty.org and VCEmergency.com both meet or exceed accessibility standards.

The JIS/JIC may use multiple outbound and inbound communications methods to reach all sectors of the community. In addition to the County's alert and warning systems, communication channels may include press conferences, press releases, mass media outlets, social media, email, town halls/community meetings, signage and public-facing websites.

4.3.3 Joint Incident Information Hotline

During a large incident, public information will be in high demand. The 9-1-1 dispatch centers will likely be overloaded. When the EOC is activated, a call center may be established to receive and respond to non-emergency calls from the public. The call center operates as part of the JIC and adheres to the same protocols for the release of information to the public. Information instructions and resources, such as an initial intake script, VCEmergency.com, provide talking points for call takers.

Ventura County Sheriff's Emergency Services has staffed, equipped and trained a collateral cadre of call takers, many of whom are bilingual (English/Spanish). Every effort is made to have a bilingual call taker available when the hotline is open. Call takers also have access to a third-party language line with access to interpreters fluent in over 200 languages.

4.4 JOINT INFORMATION CENTER

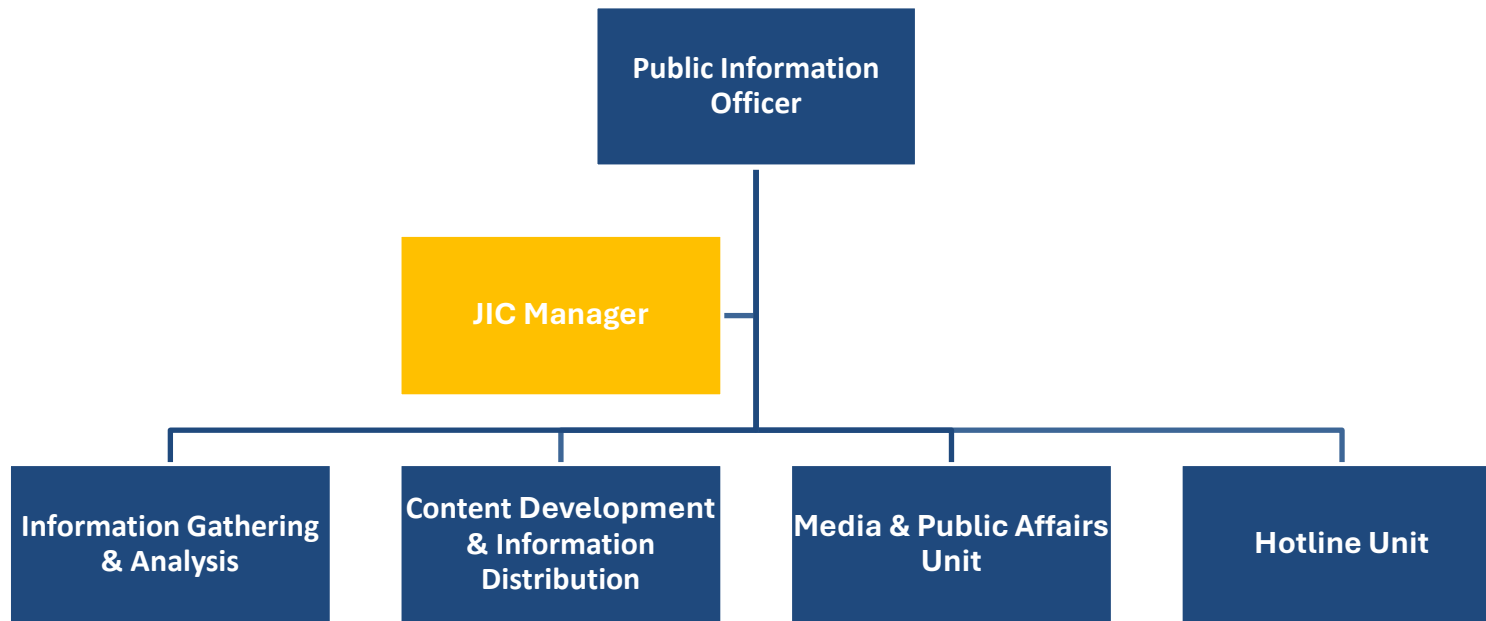
- Depending on the size and complexity of an incident the County EOC may be activated and the JIS may operate from a JIC.
- The Joint Information Center is a centralized location that facilitates coordinated public information operations during and after an incident.
- Enhanced information coordination reduces misinformation and maximizes resources by collocating PIOs as much as possible.
- Should be staffed and configured as efficiently as possible to meet the size, scope and demands of the incident, while effectively providing information to stakeholders and the public.
- Depending on the size, scope and incident-specific conditions, a JIC will likely take on one of two forms:
 - Incident - An incident-specific JIC is typically established at a single location in coordination with federal, state, and local agencies. It provides easy media access, which is paramount to success.

- Virtual – A virtual JIC is established when a physical co-location is not feasible. It connects PIOs through email, cell/land-line phones, faxes, video conferencing, etc.
- May be collocated with the Ventura County Emergency Operations Center (EOC).
- When the operational activities begin to decline, the JIC will begin to transfer public information back to the responsible jurisdictions and agencies. The decision to demobilize the JIC will be made by the EOC Director in consultation with the PIO and other Section Coordinators. Media should be notified that the functions of the JIC are being transferred back to regional and local PIOs.

4.4.1 Joint Information Structure

The JIS/JIC structure may be organized in the following sections to maximize the coordination and flow of information according to the established priorities.

Figure 4-3. Joint Information Structure



4.4.2 Joint Information Center Positions and Responsibilities

4.4.2.1 Public Information Officer

Reports to: EOC Director

During an EOC activation, the Public Information Officer will perform the following duties, unless otherwise delegated:

- Serves in the Management section of the EOC and reports directly to the EOC Director.
- Develops communication objectives from the Management Section from the EOC Action Plan.
- Leads the emergency communications and public information function from the Management Section or the Joint Information System/Center.
- Maintains a high level of situational awareness by attending all relevant briefings, conference calls, meetings and participating in the planning process.
- Ensures that the public within the impacted area receives timely, accurate, complete and consistent information and instruction regarding the incident.
- Develops the public information and communication plan and strategies, including establishing goals and objectives, tasks, activities and products, as well as performance measures for communication effectiveness and rumor control.
- Ensures that the public information function complies with California Code, Government Code § 8593.3, Chapter 7. California Emergency Services Act, including the integration of interpreters, translators, and assistive technology
- Keep the EOC Director advised of all unusual requests for information and of all major, critical, or unfavorable media comments.
- Establishes coordination with PIOs in the field or Incident Command Post.
- Establishes an information release protocol with the EOC Director and communicates to stakeholders.
- Maintains relationship with the media, answers questions, and facilitates new releases, press conferences, tours, and photo opportunities.
- Maintains relationship with and briefs elected officials and VIPs as directed by the EOC Director.
- Develops response to recovery communications transition plan for communicating post-disaster activities, services, resources, recovery information and incident closeout.
- Establishes a Joint Information System/Center, if the size, scope, scale and duration of the incident warrant.
- Evaluates current and extended staffing and resource needs for Joint Information Center
- Coordinates current and extended staffing and resource needs for the Hotline.

- Coordinates with the Logistics Section or JIC Manager to procure staffing.
- Establishes a media inquiry system.
- Coordinates with the Situation Status Unit of the Planning/Intelligence Section and defines areas of special interest for public information action. Identify means for securing the information as it is developed.
- Establishes documentation and retention protocol for all communication products.
- Ensures proper Demobilization protocol. (Ventura County Emergency Operations Plan)
- Maintains ICS 214 Activity Log

4.4.2.1 Assistant Public Information Officer

Reports to: Public Information Officer

- Reports to and works closely with the Lead PIO to implement the goals, objectives, tasks and activities of the Public Information Section and the Joint Information System.
- Serves as a liaison to the Field PIO and JIC Manager to ensure that strategic communications objectives are met.
- Maintains situational awareness by attending all relevant briefings, conference calls, meetings and participating in the planning process.
- Ensures that the public information function complies with California Code, Government Code § 8593.3, Chapter 7. California Emergency Services Act, including the integration of interpreters, translators, and assistive technology.
- Determines PIO staffing needs for the incident and, when needed, requests mutual aid from the Emergency Management Mutual Aid (EMMA), unless delegated to JIC Manager.
- Establishes media inquiry line and media communication cycle.
- Activates the public hotline call center, unless delegated to the JIC Manager.
- Ensures the development of materials needed to support VIP visits to the disaster site, Incident Command Post, or EOC.
- Prepares speakers for interviews.
- Conducts news conferences and community meetings.
- Arranges media tour and access.
- Assume the responsibilities of the PIO as directed.
- Oversees the development and approval for all key messages and communications products such as public messages, news releases, web, and social media content, talking points, and video.
- Works collaboratively with the JIC Manager, oversees all communications functions including hotline, media relations/events, social media and website communications, and community outreach.
- Maintains ICS 214 Activity Log.

4.4.2.2 JIC Manager

Reports to: Public Information Officer

In the absence of an Assistant Public Information Officer, the JIC Manager may perform the duties of the Assistant Public Information Officer. The JIC Manager will also perform the following duties, unless otherwise delegated:

- Secures room and necessary equipment.
- Reports to and works closely with the Assistant PIO to implement the goals, objectives, tasks and activities of the Public Information Section and the Joint Information System.
- Maintains the forward motion of the information cycle through coordination with the section leads of: Information Gathering & Analysis, Content Development & Distribution and Media & Public Affairs.
- Delivers relevant information to the Hotline Team.
- Works with Logistics Section to maintain proper staffing for each section.
- Establishes documentation protocol, including collection and retention guidelines for retention of information requests, evaluations, news releases, public service announcements, media contacts, news/video interviews, photographs, social media content, copies of agendas, flyers, talking points, staff assignments, etc.
- Oversees demobilization:
- Resolves all outstanding issues and commitments.
- Completes all follow-up communications for target audiences and stakeholders.
- In consultation with the EOC Director, prepares a deactivation news release which will include contact information for future information sources.
- Provides deactivation information to all operational area PIOs.
- Assign long-term follow-up communications responsibilities to appropriate PIOs.
- Provides updated status reports to all PIOs who will be taking over communications activities on behalf of their respective departments.

4.4.2.3 Information Gathering & Analysis Unit Leader

Reports to: JIC Manager

During an EOC activation, the Information Gathering & Analysis Unit Leader may perform or staff a team to perform the following duties, unless otherwise delegated:

- Works under the direction of the JIC Manager to ensure collection and analysis of all pertinent information regarding the incident.
- Assists in establishing goals and objectives for each operational period based on the communications plan and strategies defined by the Management Section and lead Public Information Officer.
- Assesses the staffing needs for the Information Gathering and Analysis Unit and communicates to the JIC Manager.
- Monitors media outlets, online communities, social media channels, radio broadcasts, etc. information regarding the incident, including rumor monitoring.
- Gathers information about the incident and displays it in the JIC so that it is easily accessible to personnel answering inquiries and producing written products.
- Coordinates with agencies/PIOs at ICPs to collect incident information.
- Coordinates with Content Development on message development.
- Maintains ICS 214 Activity Log.

4.4.2.4 Content Development & Distribution Leader

Reports to: JIC Manager

During an EOC activation, the Content Development & Distribution Unit Leader may perform or staff a team to perform the following duties, unless otherwise delegated:

- Works under the direction of the JIC Manager and with the Information Gathering and Analysis Unit develop and disseminate incident-related information products for stakeholder and public consumption.
- Assists in establishing goals and objectives for each operational period based on the communications plan and strategies defined by the Management Section and lead Public Information Officer.
- Coordinates with Information Gathering and Analysis to collect information for content development.
- Develops dissemination plan, including appropriate channels, timing and effectiveness of messaging.
- Assesses the staffing needs for the Content Development and Distribution Unit and communicates to the JIC Manager.
- Populates and maintains the emergency website.
- Develops written and digital products such as press releases, situation status reports, white papers, content for social media, photos, graphics, videos, emails, flyers, fact sheets, etc. for disseminating to the public.
- Ensures American Sign Language Interpreter is present during public meetings and media events.
- Ensures content is translated into Spanish and considers whole community audience access needs for dissemination.
- Maintains ICS 214 Activity Log.

4.4.2.5 Media & Public Affairs Unit Leader

Reports to: JIC Manager

During an EOC activation, the Media & Public Affairs Unit Leader may perform or staff a team to perform the following duties, unless otherwise delegated:

- Works under the direction of the JIC Manager to establish and maintain communication with the media and facilitate community outreach.
- Assists in establishing goals and objectives for each operational period based on the communications plan and strategies defined by the Management Section and lead Public Information Officer.
- Assesses the staffing needs for the Content Development and Distribution Unit and communicates to the JIC Manager, including a spokesperson, media liaison, community liaison, logistics and technical specialist.
- Establishes and maintains communication with media outlets.
- Provides on camera/phone interviews as needed.
- Keeps track of questions from media personnel, elected officials and community groups and provides follow-up.
- Establishes communication with community groups who can assist in disseminating information to communities with access and functional needs.
- As needed, coordinates with other JIC staff to plan and coordinate town meetings and other outreach activities.
- Facilitates and organizes logistics for press briefings and conferences.
- Coordinates with the Content Development team to prepare education and outreach materials for dissemination.
- Maintains ICS 214 Activity Log.

4.4.2.6 Hotline Unit Leader

Reports to: JIC Manager

When the hotline is activated, the Hotline Unit Leader will perform the following duties, unless otherwise delegated:

- Works under the direction of the JIC Manager to ensure callers reach a live operator, hear updates, and have their questions answered or are directed to the appropriate agency.
- Assists in establishing goals and objectives for each operational period based on the communications plan and strategies defined by the Management Section and lead Public Information Officer.
- Assesses the staffing needs for the Hotline Unit and communicates to the JIC Manager
- Refers pertinent incident information to the Information Gathering and Analysis Unit Leader.
- Posts updates and contact information in the hotline room for operators.
- Attends to callers with language access issues through the language interpretation technology.
- Assists operators in handling sensitive or complicated calls.
- Maintains ICS 214 Activity Log.

4.4.3 Initial Set up

- Begin each activation by assessing the situation.
- Prepare an initial holding statement for the public and the press. The statement may also be used on the VCEmergency website.
 - Work with Sheriff PIO or use graphic library to post to VC Sheriff social media channels.
 - Passwords and/or administrator access to be provided.
- Contemplate public information needs to determine information structure
 - Consider activating and staffing a Hotline (Activation instructions in EOC)
 - Estimate initial public information staffing needs
 - Contact the initial PIO team
 - Evaluate equipment needs (See checklist in 4.4.4)
- Develop communications strategy using templates (Appendices B and C).
- Establish a media relations strategy using the templates included in Appendices.
- Develop a documentation protocol to save all files within an incident-specific folder or shared drive, using consistent naming convention.

4.4.4 Equipment for a JIC

The primary JIC location for Ventura County is in the Emergency Operations Center at 165 Durley Avenue, Camarillo, CA 93010. If the preferred location is not available, the following is a list of recommended logistical considerations:

Room Specifications:

- Accommodates 15+ people.
- Adequate wall space for projector images, maps, etc.
- Adequate number of tables/chairs
- Adequate wall outlets
- Able to be secured/locked
- Compliance with fire safety and local building codes
- Must be Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible

Infrastructure:

- Basic electrical, plumbing, temperature control and restrooms
- Adequate Internet connectivity
- Landline or VoIP phone for the Media
- Landline or VoIP phones for staff
- Hotline laptop cache
- Digital projector
- Extension cords/tape for securing

Office Supplies:

- Dry-erase board, notepads, printer paper
- Writing instruments (pens, pencils, dry erase markers)
- Binder supplies: stapler, paper clips, hole punch, sticky notes, etc.

Electronic Equipment:

- Color printers and scanners
- Large plotter for printing maps and other large visuals (available in EOC)
- Portable radio/scanner
- Digital handheld dictation recorder
- Portable display color television (for alternate location)
- Cameras, cellular phones
- Digital media (external drives, SD cards)
- Batteries for all applicable devices
- Solar backpack for charging
- Universal cell phone chargers

Safety Equipment:

- Badges/credentials to identify JIC staff positions
- Battery operated flashlights and extra batteries
- Hand-crank or solar powered AM/FM radio
- First-aid kit and automated external defibrillator (AED)

4.4.5 Documentation

The Emergency Operations Center Public Information Officer will maintain reports and records, as necessary, regarding the operation of a Joint Information Center. Such reports may be included in after-action reports or incident response critiques.

The Emergency Operations Center Public Information Officer will provide invoices for and/or estimates of expended resources to the appropriate staff following the deactivation of a Joint Information Center.

Reimbursement for expended resources used at a Joint Information Center will be accomplished with the normal procedures used for reimbursing other emergency resources.

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5 RECOVERY

The recovery process begins as soon as possible after the incident occurs and may be concurrent with the response phase. During incident response, the same JIS may be used to specialize in recovery communications regarding repopulation, damage assessments, and Local Assistance Centers. At the direction of the EOC Director, the EOC will be deactivated, and the PIO and Joint Information Center operations will be demobilized.

Public Information for the transition from Response and to an extended Recovery period is overseen by the County Executive Office. Many County agencies may offer relief or assistance to Ventura County residents and businesses. Central coordination under the authority of the County Executive Office is recommended. The County Executive Office Public Information Officer will activate and/or update and maintain the County's Recovery website <https://recovery.venturacounty.gov/> as the central coordination point for public information and vetted services offered.

Recovery communications may include:

- Disaster assistance and relief program information
- Debris removal guidance
- Public health advisories
- Infrastructure restoration updates
- Community meetings and recovery briefings

5.1 DEACTIVATION PROCEDURES

When incident operations begin to demobilize, public information activities will transition from emergency response communications to ongoing recovery and routine information functions. The deactivation of Joint Information System (JIS) or Joint Information Center (JIC) operations will occur in coordination with incident command and operational leadership to ensure that all critical communications responsibilities are completed and that stakeholders, partner agencies, media, and the public continue to receive clear information regarding recovery activities and future points of contact. The following procedures guide the orderly demobilization of public information resources, transfer of communication responsibilities, and documentation of incident-related communications activities.

- Resolve outstanding communication issues and/or commitments.
- Complete all follow-up communications for target audiences and stakeholders.

- If appropriate, prepare a deactivation news release that will include contact information and future information resources.
- Assign long-term communication responsibilities to appropriate PIOs; transfer all appropriate information, status reports and communication assets/plans.
- Return equipment to inventory and remove temporary permissions to software.
- Remove temporary permissions from media software and dissemination tools.
- Ensure that incident-related communication records are preserved and that key observations are captured to support documentation, evaluation, and future improvement of emergency public information operations.
- Archive and preserve incident-related communication records, including social media posts, media inquiries, situation updates, and public messaging, in accordance with county records retention policies.
- Document public information activities, challenges, and lessons learned to support the development of an After-Action Report.

6 ADMINISTRATION

6.1 DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

6.1.1 Annex Updates

The Public Information Annex will be updated in alignment with Emergency Operations Plan, to which this is an annex to ensure that plan elements are valid and current. A core planning group, consisting of Sheriff's Emergency Services, and Public Information Officers from the following Ventura County agencies: Sheriff's Office, Fire Department, Public Works Agency, Health Care Agency and County Executive Office.

The Director of Emergency Services will also review documents that provide the legal basis for emergency planning to ensure compliance with SEMS/NIMS requirements and modify, as necessary.

6.2 TRAINING AND EXERCISE

The County should conduct periodic training and exercises involving the Public Information function with partner agency public information officers, as well as participating county collateral staff.

This Annex and associated appendices will be reviewed and updated in conjunction with EOP revisions or following significant incidents, exercises, or changes in law or guidance.

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7 APPENDICES

7.1 APPENDIX A: SAMPLE BRIEFING/DAILY TASK AGENDA

The purpose of the JIC Briefing is to establish a common operating picture, determine priorities, identify potential issues and receive information from the JIC team. Briefings are led by the Lead/Deputy PIO, JIC Manager, or a designee:

- Provide a status report on the incident and response or recovery operations.
- Establish messaging priorities and strategies.
- Assign new activities
- Share trends, such as questions, rumors, misinformation and counter measures.
- Share updates on press conference coordination/schedule.
- Identify areas for enhanced coordination and/or engagement.
- Discuss need for additional resources or logistics
- Review deadlines and key events
- Section leader reports on unit activities, insights, accomplishments and needs.
- Closeout

7.2 APPENDIX B: MESSAGE MAP TEMPLATE

MESSAGE MAP

Subject:
Stakeholder:
Question or Concern:

Key Message 1	Key Message 2	Key Message 3
Supporting Information 1:1	Supporting Information 2:1	Supporting Information 3:1
Supporting Information 1:2	Supporting Information 2:2	Supporting Information 3:2
Supporting Information 1:3	Supporting Information 2:3	Supporting Information 3:3

4

⁴ Vincent T. Covello, Message Mapping, Risk and Crisis Communication (WHO Conference on Bioterrorism and Risk Communication, Geneva, October 1, 2002), Center for Risk Communication

7.3 APPENDIX C: MESSAGE APPROVAL WORKFLOW

Message development should follow the information cycle and be aligned with incident objectives outlined by the Management Section via the EOC Director. The Lead PIO will establish objectives for the JIC in alignment with the Director's priorities.

Messaging should be approved by the appropriate channels. An approval protocol may be established by the Lead PIO at the beginning of an activation or when the staffing model requires expansion.

An example of message approval flow could look like:

- Message Assigned
- Lead PIO Review
- Coordinate with Plans Section or other stakeholders
- Confirm w/ Management Section
- Disseminate

7.4 APPENDIX D: PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE



Ventura County **SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

Jim Fryhoff - Sheriff | John Reilly - Undersheriff
800 S. Victoria Avenue, Ventura, CA 93009 | 805.654.2385 | VenturaSheriff.org

MEDIA RELEASE

Nature of Incident:

Location:

Date & Time:

Unit(s) Responsible:

Narrative:

Prepared by:

News Release Date:

Media Follow-Up Contact:

###

7.5 APPENDIX E: PRESS CONFERENCE CHECKLIST

A press conference (aka presser or news conference) is advantageous when information needs to be widely and/or simultaneously disseminated. The press offers the ability to reach multiple outlets and a large audience at once, delivering a unified message and is an effective way to communicate when time is critical.

Below are some items to consider when deciding whether to hold or prepare for a press conference:

Type of Press Conference

- Single Speaker
- Multiple Speakers
- VIP/Media Tour and Press Conference
- Town hall
- Scrum (Improvised)

Delivery Method

- Live via News Media
- Livestream
- Recording

Location

- Inside the Agency
- Outside the Agency
- On location or scene of incident

Logistics

- Weather
- Equipment transportation/setup
- Access - Secured or open?
- Security
- Parking
- Shelter
- Power
- Internet Access

Speaker Preparation

- Single or Joint agency speakers?
- Subject Matter Experts needed?
- Podium Speaker List
- Introduction Sequence
- Anticipated questions
 - Language/Translation needs
- Exit strategy for speakers

Message

- Key Message – Start with a holding statement
- Use Message Map to develop key messages
- Develop Single Overriding Communication Objective (SOCO) and keep returning to that objective
- Tell the public what they need to know
- Keep current information at the forefront
- Utilize SMEs to aid in credibility
- Stick to themes:
 - Here is what happened
 - Here is what we are doing Here is what you need to know
 - We have a plan in place
 - Here is what it means for you

Stay Focused

- Use pivot points to return to key messaging:
- The important thing to remember is...
- Again, our goal is to ...
 - What we need everyone to understand is...

7.6 APPENDIX F: MEDIA INQUIRY INTAKE FORM



VENTURA COUNTY SHERIFF Emergency Services

Media Inquiry
Joint Information Center

Incident Name: _____

Date/Time of Inquiry: _____

Received By (Name & Role):

Media Outlet Name:

Reporter Name:

Reporter Contact Info:

Phone:

Email:

Story Deadline (Date/Time):

Type of Media:
 TV Radio Print Online Social Media Other: _____

Inquiry Topic: (e.g., wildfire, evacuation orders, shelter availability, road closures)

1

Specific Questions Asked by Reporter:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Information Provided / Response: (Include key messages or refer to approved talking points)

Responded by:

Follow-Up Actions Needed:

- Schedule interview
- Provide written statement
- Call back with more info
- Refer to another agency: _____
- Other: _____

Date/Time Responded: _____

Notes:

2

7.8 APPENDIX H: SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY (INTERNAL)

During the course of an emergency response, social media will be a vital tool for communication with the public. It is important for authorized social media publishers in the JIS/JIC to understand terms of use for both internal and external users. Below are some guidelines for public information officers who will be using official social media channels to post information and/or engage with the public via comments. The public social media use policy follows the internal guidance and is posted on sheriff.venturacounty.gov

General Guidelines for Internal Use:

When Using Official Accounts, Authorized Social Media Publishers shall:

- Be respectful, professional, ethical, and comply with all VCSO policies, and local, state, and federal laws.
- Use proper grammar and avoid technical terms or abbreviations unless there is a common understanding of its meaning.
- Ensure the information communicated is accurate and complete. If a mistake is made, it should be disclosed and promptly corrected.
- Be transparent and truthful. Remember, you may be personally responsible for your content. Always be careful and considerate. Consider community perspectives and possible outcomes, reactions and feedback. Once the words are posted, they cannot be retrieved.
- Be judicious. What is published is widely accessible and will be available for a long time, so consider the content carefully. A social media post could be used in a legal action against VCSO or its employees.
- Stay current and consistent with the goals set by VCSO for quality communications with the community.

When using Official Accounts, Authorized Social Media Publishers shall not:

- Post personal information, except for names of VCSO employees whose job duties include being available for contact by the public (e.g. member of the PIO cadre, watch commander, etc.), or as specifically authorized by the Sheriff's Adjutant PIOs or the Agency Public Information Officer.
- Post something that makes you or anyone else even the slightest bit uncomfortable. Get a second opinion and trust your instincts. If you have to ask if content is appropriate, it is probably the wrong answer. Ultimately, what you post is your responsibility.
- Post comments, photographs, or videos that could discredit or embarrass the Ventura County Sheriff's Office.
- Express personal or political views, concerns or perspectives through content, tone or depictions in postings.

- Reveal confidential information as defined by any county policy, or local, state, or federal law.
- Post anything that would infringe upon another’s property rights, such as copyrighted material.
- Post any content that engages in political or religious advocacy or commentary or supports or opposes any ballot issue or candidate for office.
- Post any content that is prohibited on Official Ventura County Sheriff’s Office Accounts.

Responding to Public Comments:

Public comments are allowed on Official Accounts. The authorized social media publisher shall hide any comment that contains prohibited content as described in the social media terms of use. Hidden comments should be reported to the lead PIO and/or JIC Manager for further review.

Individuals shall not be blocked and content on Official Accounts shall not be deleted simply because they are critical of the Ventura County Sheriff’s Office, its officials, or employees, or because the agency or Authorized Publisher otherwise dislikes what the content says or represents. Content may be deleted by VCSO authorized social media publishers, the JIC lead PIO and/or JIC Manager only when it violates the social media terms of use policy.

Social Media Posts are Public Records:

Any content published on an Official Account, including but not limited to lists of subscribers, posted communications, and communications submitted for posting, may be considered a public record for purposes of the California Public Records Act. The office or special team responsible for maintaining the Official Account shall preserve and maintain records in an accessible format so that the records can be reviewed and, when appropriate, produced in response to a request for public records. Include a statement on the Official Account clearly indicating that any content posted may be subject to public disclosure upon request.

7.9 APPENDIX I: SOCIAL MEDIA TERMS OF USE (EXTERNAL)

The following section describes the Social Media Terms of Use for the public posted on sheriff.venturacounty.gov:

SOCIAL MEDIA TERMS OF USE

The Ventura County Sheriff's Office maintains its social media profiles as limited public forums, intended to provide information about the Ventura County Sheriff's Office to the public. We welcome relevant and appropriate contributions and comments from visitors.

The pages are intended to serve as public awareness channels between the public and the Ventura County Sheriff's Office on its posted topics. They are not intended to serve as a means for the public to report emergencies, as they are not continually monitored. The Ventura County Sheriff's Office will not comment on its pages concerning specific details of criminal investigations, administrative investigations, or personnel matters. The Ventura County Sheriff's Office will not engage in protracted dialogue on issues on its pages.

Due to the fact that the pages are public and potentially visible to people of all ages and diverse backgrounds, posts should be respectful, civil and considerate. Comments, weblinks, videos, and photos posted are monitored by site administrators, and inappropriate content will be removed as soon as possible and without prior notice. The Ventura County Sheriff's Office reserves the right to remove inappropriate content, including, but not limited to those items that contain:

- Abusive, profane or vulgar language
- Sexual content, graphic or obscene material, or material that would otherwise violate the law if published on this site
- Racist or discriminatory statements
- Threats or defamation of any person or organization
- Personal attacks upon individuals
- Publication of private or identifying information about a particular individual
- Violation of the legal ownership interest of another party
- Promotion of violence
- Promotion of illegal activity
- Promotion of commercial services / products
- Personally identifiable or medical information
- Multiple similar / duplicate comments / posts (commonly referred to as "spamming").

Content may be removed if it violates the established Terms of Use or materially interferes with the intended purpose of the limited public forum. Please note that profanity settings are enabled on the pages, and comments with such language are automatically hidden (not deleted).

The Ventura County Sheriff's Office does not preclude persons from making postings based on their viewpoint.

The Ventura County Sheriff's Office will not edit your comments to make them compliant with the Terms of Use. Therefore, please ensure that any comments comply with this policy if you would like them posted. Persons who violate these terms of use may be precluded from making future postings on this site.

The Ventura County Sheriff's Office disclaims any and all responsibility and liability for any materials deemed inappropriate for posting, which cannot be removed in an expeditious and otherwise timely manner.

All comments posted to the pages are bound by each social media platforms' Statement of Rights and Responsibilities, and the Ventura County Sheriff's Office reserves the right to report any violation with the intent of each company taking appropriate and reasonable responsive action. For more information about the Ventura County Sheriff's Office please visit our website at <http://www.venturasheriff.org/>.

Privacy

To protect your personal privacy and the privacy of other persons, please do not include personally identifiable or sensitive information in your posts, such as Social Security numbers, phone numbers or addresses. Posting comments to this site will grant the Ventura County Sheriff's Office and anyone reading this site permission to copy, distribute, make derivatives of, display, or otherwise utilize the comment.

No Endorsements

The opinions expressed by visitors to this page do not reflect the opinions of the Ventura County Sheriff's Office, its elected official and/or employees. Comments may not be reproduced for the purpose of stating or implying the Ventura County Sheriff's Office's endorsement or approval of any viewpoint, product, service, entity, or organization. Any references on this site to commercial entities, products, services, or other non-governmental organizations or individuals are provided solely for informational purposes or are provided by the Web hosting service. Such references do not constitute an official endorsement of any product, person, or service.

Release of Liability

By accessing this site, you agree to release the Ventura County Sheriff's Office from claims, demands and damages (actual and consequential) of every kind and nature, known and unknown, arising out of or in any way connected with any dispute involving the posting of comments to or any other content on this site. In entering into this release, you expressly waive any protections (whether statutory or otherwise) that would otherwise limit the coverage of this release to include only those claims which you may know or suspect to exist in your favor at the time of agreeing to this release.

Amendments

This policy may be updated or amended at any time.

8 REFERENCES

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