

ANNEX I

PUBLIC INFORMATION

August 2025

**Brazos County Interjurisdictional
Emergency Management**

APPROVAL & IMPLEMENTATION

Annex I

PUBLIC INFORMATION

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Sep 3, 2025

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Date

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Sep 18, 2025

Date

RECORD OF CHANGES

Annex I

PUBLIC INFORMATION

Change #	Date of Change	Entered By	Date Entered

ANNEX I

PUBLIC INFORMATION

I. AUTHORITY

- A.** See Section I of the Basic Plan for general authorities.
- B.** Texas Local Government Code, Chapter 203 (Management and Preservation of Records).

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this annex is to outline the means, organization, and process by which we will provide appropriate information and instructions to the public during emergency situations. This annex also provides for public education to be conducted in advance of emergency situations to reduce the likelihood that citizens will place themselves in hazardous situations that may require an emergency response.

III. EXPLANATION OF TERMS

A. Acronyms

ARC	American Red Cross
EAS	Emergency Alert System
EMC	Emergency Management Coordinator
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
IC	Incident Command/Commander
ICP	Incident Command Post
JFO	Joint Field Office
JIC	Joint Information Center
JIS	Joint Information System
LWP	Local Warning Point
NIMS	National Incident Management System
PIO	Public Information Officer
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
TDEM	Texas Division of Emergency Management
TV	Television
WEA	Wireless Emergency Alerts

B. Definitions

Public Information: Information provided to citizens before, during, and after emergency situations/incidents specifically including instructions on how to protect personal health, safety, and property or how to obtain assistance.

IV. SITUATION & ASSUMPTIONS

A. Situation

1. Brazos County faces a number of hazards which may cause emergency situations; see Section IV of the Basic Plan for a summary of those hazards and their possible impact.
2. During emergencies, the public needs timely, accurate information on the emergency situation and appropriate instructions regarding protective actions that should be taken to minimize injuries, loss of life and damage to property.
3. For some slowly developing emergency situations (such as river flooding or hurricanes), there may be several days for local government and the media to provide detailed information about the hazard and what citizens should do.
4. For other emergency situations, there may be no warning, leaving the public information system unable to react rapidly enough to properly inform the public about the hazard and what to do about it. For this reason, it is important that the public be advised of likely hazards and what protective measures should be taken to lessen the effect of an emergency and/or disaster.

B. Assumptions

1. An effective program combining both education and emergency information can significantly reduce loss of life and property. Many people may not engage with or retain pre-emergency education due to time, resource, or language barriers, or because they do not perceive an immediate risk. This makes it critical to prioritize effective communication during emergencies and disasters.
2. Local media will cooperate in disseminating warning and emergency public information during emergency situations and may participate in pre-disaster awareness programs and other disaster education activities.
3. Some emergency situations may generate substantial media interest and draw both local media and media from outside the local area, overwhelming the available emergency public information staff.

V. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

A. General

1. Pursuant to the National Incident Management System (NIMS) operating principles and protocols, public information efforts should generally focus on specific event-related information. This information will generally be of an instructional nature focusing on such things as warning, evacuation, and shelter. Appendix 2 describes some basic emergency information needs.
2. By providing accurate and timely information about emergency response efforts, this helps build public confidence, reduces the spread of misinformation, and reassures the community that the situation is being effectively managed.
3. Educational efforts are to be directed toward increasing public awareness about potential hazards and how people should prepare for them. All information and education efforts will rely heavily on the cooperation of every type of media organization.

B. Information Dissemination

1. In the initial stages of an emergency, the Local Warning Point (LWP) may have to act on time-sensitive hazards. Annex A provides the LWPS for alerts/warnings. Within the limits of the authority delegated to it, the (LWP), will determine if a warning needs to be issued, formulate a warning if necessary, and disseminate it. Pre-scripted emergency messages have been prepared for likely hazards and are included in Annex A, Warning. A list of these messages is provided in Appendix 5. These pre-scripted messages may be used as written or tailored as needed for specific circumstances.
2. As messages are limited to two minutes, EAS warning messages may have to be supplemented with Special News Advisories prepared by the Public Information Officer (PIO) staff that contain amplifying emergency information. Special News Advisories are generally disseminated to media outlets by email. Copies of the pre-scripted messages, which include warning messages and Special News Advisories, are maintained and located in Annex A, Appendix 5.
3. In the initial stages of an emergency, the LWP will, within the limits of the authority delegated to it, determine if a warning needs to be issued and formulate a warning (using pre-scripted messages to the extent possible), and disseminate it. Appendix 2 of Annex A provides general guidelines for activation of the local warning system. When the CEOC has been activated, it will normally determine who needs to be warned and how. The CEOC will normally formulate warning messages and public instructions. The LWP will execute the warnings by activating the warning system. The PIO or the CEOC may disseminate emergency public information directly to the media.
4. The systems described below will be used to issue warnings and instructions to the public. To facilitate dissemination of warning and public instructions, a set of pre-scripted warning messages and public information messages suitable for use in likely emergency situations has been developed. They are included in Annex A, Appendix 5.

5. These pre-scripted messages may be used as written or tailored as needed for specific circumstances.
 - a. Outdoor Warning System.
 - b. Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS)
 - c. Wireless Emergency Alerts
 - d. Emergency Alert System
 - e. NOAA Weather Radio.
 - f. Route Alerting & Door- to-Door Warning.
 - g. Cable Television Interrupt.
 - h. Telephone Warning/Information Systems
 - i. Texas A&M University Code Maroon Warning System.
6. Broadcasters and cable companies must carry national security warnings and messages initiated by the President; they may broadcast alerts and messages initiated by state and local governments. The Federal Communications Commission encourages licensees to broadcast local warning and instruction messages, but the final decision on broadcasting such messages rests with the broadcasters.
7. Broadcasters and cable operators expect EAS to be used for life-threatening emergencies.
8. When the Incident Command System is activated for an emergency, the Incident Commander (IC) will normally warn the public in and around the incident site. A designated PIO at the Incident Command Post (ICP), assisted by the affected jurisdiction's PIO staff, if necessary, will normally provide information on the emergency to the media if the EOC has not been activated. All information relayed to the media by the PIO will be approved by the IC, regardless of the command structure – single or unified.
9. Once the EOC has been activated for an emergency, the EOC Manager will normally determine the need for additional warning and instructions. The PIO staff will formulate additional warning messages and public instructions, using the sample messages contained in Annex A as a basis, where appropriate. The LWP will normally execute such warnings by activating the warning system, including transmitting EAS messages to broadcasters. The PIO staff will disseminate Special News Advisories and other emergency public information materials to the media directly using its contact list.
10. In the case of large-scale emergencies or disasters, a Joint Information Center (JIC) may be established. The JIC, an element of the Joint Information System (JIS) developed to provide information to the public during an emergency, is a working facility where the emergency public efforts of all participating jurisdictions, agencies, volunteer organizations, and other responders can be coordinated to ensure consistency and accuracy. In federally declared incidents, a JIC will typically be set up as part of the Joint Field Office (JFO).

11. The following means will be used to provide emergency information and instructions to the public:

- a. EAS broadcasts by radio, television, and cable companies.
- b. Special news broadcasts by radio, television, and cable companies.
- c. Local newspapers.
- d. Cable local government access channel.
- e. Cellphone/Telephone warning/information system.
- f. Mobile units with public address systems, such as police and fire units.
- g. Bryan/College Station 2-1-1 Texas system.
- h. The local government Internet site(s).
- i. Social Media

C. Providing Emergency Information to Special Populations

Special populations will be provided with information on emergency situations and appropriate instructions by the following methods:

1. Visually impaired: EAS messages and news advisories on radio, NOAA Weather Radio, or by door-to-door notification
2. Hearing-impaired: Captioned EAS messages and news advisories on television, print media
3. Non-English Speakers: Warning messages and news advisories in Spanish on radio, in print or by door-to-door notification.

D. Resources

The PIO shall maintain a Media Roster that contains the names, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail addresses of each of the media resources listed below. See Appendix 1 for an example.

1. Broadcast Television

- a. KAMU-TV
- b. KAGS-TV
- c. KBTX-TV
- d. KRHD-TV

2. Radio

- a. KAMU-FM
- b. KBXT-FM, KORA-FM, KJXJ-FM, KAPN-FM, KTAM-AM
- c. KEOS-FM
- d. KKYS-FM, KAGG-FM, KNFX-FM, KVJM-FM
- e. KLTR-FM
- f. KNDE-FM, KMKV-FM, WTAW-AM, KZNE-AM, KAGC-AM, KWBC-AM
- g. KTTX-FM, KWHI-AM
- h. WTAW

3. Newspapers

- a. The Eagle (daily)
- b. The Battalion (daily while the University is in session)

4. Other

- a. Bryan Texas Utilities shares a variety of information, utility assistance and alert and warning programs, and resources in mailed format to customers.
- b. Multiple entities and organizations issue press releases, social media posts, and blogs to keep the public engaged and informed on community events, resources, forecasted threats, and incident information

E. Five Mission Areas of the National Preparedness Goal

1. Prevention

- a. Utilize public education opportunities to promote community resilience practices ahead of a disaster/emergency
- b. Annually meet with the interjurisdictional PIO group to ensure all contacts are up to date
- c. Host PIO trainings
- d. Engage vulnerable populations in prevention messaging

2. Protection

- a. Test communication platforms through exercises
- b. Develop and maintain pre-scripted emergency messages for all-hazards
- c. Maintain updated media contact lists

3. Mitigation

- a. Conduct hazard awareness programs.
- b. Develop systems to enhance information dissemination during emergency situations.

4. Response

- a. Develop, obtain authorization, and release public information on the emergency situation.
- b. Conduct media monitoring to determine the need to clarify issues and distribute updated public instructions.
- c. Manage rumor control.

- d. Conduct news conferences and arrange interviews as needed.
- 5. Recovery
 - a. Provide public information relating to recovery processes and programs.
 - b. Compile a record of events.
 - c. Assess the effectiveness of public information and education programs.

VI. ORGANIZATION & ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

A. General

1. The overall responsibility for providing emergency information and instructions to the public rests with the County Judge or Mayor(s) or University President for their respective jurisdiction.
2. The County Judge or Mayor(s) or the University President shall provide general guidance for Public Information programs and appoint a PIO or ensure one is appointed.
3. The PIO will manage and coordinate all emergency public information related activities and direct such staff as may be assigned or recruited to assist in those activities.
4. Trained public information specialists will staff PIO positions at the Incident Command Post and in the EOC.

B. Task Assignments

1. The County Judge and/or Mayor(s) or University President will:
 - a. Ensure that the jurisdiction has implemented and institutionalized processes and procedures to coordinate and integrate public information functions including the development of a public education program for emergency situations.
 - b. Authorize release of all IC approved incident information to the media.
 - c. Ensure that a JIC is activated when warranted by the incident.
2. The PIO will:
 - a. Represent and advise the IC on all public information matters relating to the management of the incident.
 - b. Ensure the IC approves the release of all incident-related information.

- c. Coordinate and integrate public information functions across jurisdictions and functional agencies as required.
- d. Develop accurate and complete information on the incident for both internal and external consumption.
- e. Coordinate the overall emergency public information efforts of local government.
- f. Serve as the official Jurisdictional representative in the JIC.
- g. Assist the EMCs in conducting public education programs as an ongoing activity.
- h. Develop and disseminate public information materials and maintain a stock of informational materials for emergency use based on hazards likely to confront the jurisdiction. Such materials should include:
 - 1) General materials dealing with the nature of hazards and basic protective actions to take in the event of an emergency, including shelter-in-place and evacuation.
 - 2) Hazard specific instructions on "where to go and what to do" in an emergency.
 - 3) Information on how emergency warnings are disseminated and the meaning of warning signals.
- i. In coordination with law enforcement, fire departments, and the EMC(s), develop pre-scripted warning messages for known hazards for use by the local warning point and the EOC.
- j. Develop methods (i.e., newspaper supplements, prepared TV/radio scripts for broadcast stations) for distribution of Emergency Public Information materials to the public, to include materials for non-English speaking groups, if appropriate.
- k. In cooperation with the EMC, coordinate with broadcasters (radio and television stations and cable television companies) to develop procedures for local government to disseminate warning messages and emergency information through the broadcast media.
- l. Authenticate sources of information, verify for accuracy, and obtain authorization before issuing news releases.
- m. Provide authorized news releases to the media while keeping the Emergency Management Director, the EMC(s) and other appropriate officials informed of message content.
- n. Monitor media coverage of emergency operations for accuracy of reports and issue corrections where necessary.
- o. Take action to control rumors.

- p. Brief potential IC, department heads and key staff, and the EOC staff on basic public information needs, working with the media, and media access during emergency operations. See Appendices 2, 3 and 4 for further information on these subjects.
- q. Maintain a media briefing area as designated by the IC or EOC Manager.
- r. Periodically brief the media on local warning systems and warning procedures.
- s. Maintain a Media Contact Roster. See Appendix 1 for a sample.
- t. Compile printed and photographic documentation of the emergency/disaster.
- u. Develop public information emergency checklists for known hazards. See Appendix 6.
- v. Anticipate and be prepared to handle unscheduled inquiries from the media and the public.
- w. Train a group of government employees and/or volunteers to staff PIO positions at the ICP and in the EOC.

3. The EMC will:

- a. Advise the County Judge and/or Mayor(s) or University President when to disseminate emergency instructions to the public.
- b. Coordinate with the PIO in the development of pre-scripted emergency messages.

Conduct public education programs as an ongoing activity.

- c. Identify concerns raised by the public, rumors, and other issues involving citizens to the PIO so they may be addressed in public information activities.

4. All local government departments and agencies will:

- a. Refer media inquiries during emergency situations to the PIO.
- b. Assist the PIO in responding to requests for information from the public or the media.

5. Media companies are expected to:

- a. Disseminate warning messages and special news advisories provided by local government to the public as rapidly as possible.
- b. Participate in periodic tests of the EAS and other warning systems.
- c. Provide coverage of emergency management activities.
- d. Work with PIO and EMC on public educational programs relating to emergencies.

- e. Check accuracy of information on emergency operations with the PIO or EMC.

VII. DIRECTION & CONTROL

A. General

1. The County Judge, Mayor(s), and University President has overall responsibility for the emergency public information program, provide general guidance for emergency-related public education and information activities, appoint a PIO, and in conjunction with the IC, approve all information released to the news media.
2. The PIO shall direct all emergency public information activities, coordinating as necessary with other individuals, departments, and agencies performing other emergency functions.
3. To the extent possible, the PIO shall release, upon approval, all information to the public and the media during emergency operations. During emergency operations, departments and agencies shall refer media inquiries to the PIO.

B. Line of Succession. The line of succession for the PIO is:

1. City of Bryan
 - a. Director of Communications and Marketing
 - b. Deputy City Manager
 - c. Affected Department(s) PIO
2. Brazos County
 - a. Public Communications Officer
 - b. Brazos County Sheriffs PIO
 - c. Emergency Management Coordinator
 - d. Web-Content Administrator
3. City of College Station
 - a. Public Communications Director
 - b. Assistant Public Communication Director
 - c. City Manager or Designee
 - d. Department PIO(s) appropriate to the situation
4. Texas A&M University
 - a. Marketing and Communications PIO
 - b. Marketing and Communications Assistant PIO
 - c. University Police PIO
5. City of Wixon Valley
 - a. Mayor
 - b. Mayor Pro-tem
6. City of Kurten
 - a. Mayor
 - b. Mayor Pro-tem

VIII. READINESS LEVELS

A. Readiness Level 4 - Normal Conditions

See the mitigation and preparedness activities in Section V, Sub-section E, Phases of Management

B. Readiness Level 3 - Increased Readiness

1. Monitor the situation.
2. Check and update Media Contact Roster.
3. Alert media of the increased threat so they are aware of the situation and are prepared to disseminate warnings and public instructions if necessary.

C. Readiness Level 2 - High Readiness

1. Monitor the situation.
2. Review pre-scripted warning messages and public instruction messages; draft updated versions or additional messages tailored for the impending threat.
3. Alert personnel for possible emergency operations; identify personnel for increased staffing during primary vulnerability period.
4. Determine requirements for additional pre-emergency public information and instructions and produce and disseminate those materials.
5. Consider placing public information personnel on shifts to provide for increased situation monitoring and to conduct additional public information planning.

D. Readiness Level 1 - Maximum Readiness

1. Monitor the situation.
2. Update warning messages as necessary.
3. Update public information materials based on current threat and disseminate.
4. Provide information to the media on local readiness activities.
5. Place selected off-duty personnel on standby to increase staffing if necessary.
6. Staff public information positions in the EOC or at the ICP when activated.

IX. ADMINISTRATION & SUPPORT

A. Media Contact Roster

The PIO shall maintain a contact roster for the media organizations that are involved in local emergency management programs. A sample is provided in Appendix 1.

B. Records

1. The PIO shall maintain a file of all news advisories and press releases issued during emergency operations.
2. The PIO shall also compile and maintain copies of newspaper articles, videotapes of emergency operations and news broadcasts relating to an emergency, and other media materials distributed for use in post-incident analysis and future training activities.

C. Educational Programs

1. The PIO and/or the EMC(s) shall conduct disaster educational programs to increase citizen preparedness. Educational programs may include presentations in schools and for community organizations, displays at local public gatherings, community meetings, distribution of educational materials, and other activities. The local media may be willing to assist with such activities and local businesses may be willing to sponsor such events and assist with costs. Educational brochures may also be distributed with regularly scheduled government, utility, or business mailings.
2. The PIO and/or the EMC(s) shall obtain and maintain materials for disaster-related public education. A wide variety of educational materials dealing with emergency management and disaster preparedness are available. Materials include pamphlets, posters, videotapes, DVDs, and complete training curricula for school children. Many publications are available in ready-to-distribute form or as fact sheets whose content can be incorporated into locally developed materials. Materials available include emergency preparedness information of general interest and specialized preparedness publications for school children, the elderly, and people with various disabilities. Public education materials relating to emergency management are available in a variety of foreign languages.

D. Training

Members of the public information staff, for whom public information is not their primary daily work, should attend public information training, preferably training focusing on emergency public information activities.

X. ANNEX DEVELOPMENT & MAINTENANCE

A. Development. The EMCs and PIO are responsible for developing and maintaining this annex.

B. Maintenance. This annex will be reviewed annually and updated in accordance with the schedule outlined in Section X of the Basic Plan.

- C. Operating Procedures.** The PIO is responsible for developing and maintaining Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) covering recurring public information tasks.

XI. REFERENCES

- A. FEMA, *FEMA Publications Catalog*
- B. FEMA, *Comprehensive Preparedness Guide (CPG-101)*
- C. FEMA web site: www.fema.gov
- D. American Red Cross web site: www.redcross.org
- E. Department of Homeland Security, *National Incident Management System*

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1	Media Contact Roster
Appendix 2.....	Public Information Needs
Appendix 3.....	Working with the Media
Appendix 4.....	Media Access & Identification
Appendix 5.....	List of Pre-scripted Emergency Messages
Appendix 6.....	Public Information Checklists
Tab A	Public Information Checklist for Flooding
Tab B	Public Information Checklist for Hazmat Incident
Tab C	Public Information Checklist for Hurricanes

MEDIA CONTACT ROSTER

1. Radio

- A. Station Name: KAMU-FM
 1) Address: TAMU, MS 4244, College Station, Texas 77843
 2) Frequency & Operating Hours: 90.0 FM, 24 hours
 3) Contact Name: Jay Focol
 4) Telephone Number: 979-845-5612, Fax: 979-845-1643
 5) E-mail Address: jayfocol@kamu.tamu.edu
- B. Station Name: KBXT-FM, KORA-FM, KJXJ-FM, KAPN-FM, KTAM-AM
 1) Address: 1240 E. Villa Maria Rd, Bryan, Texas 77802
 2) Frequency & Operating Hours: 101.9 FM, 98.3 FM, 103.9 FM, 107.3 FM, 1240 AM, 24 hours
 3) Contact Name: Lance Parr, Chief Eng.
 4) Telephone Number: 979-820-3468 Fax: 979-776-0123
 5) E-mail Address: parr.lance@gmail.com
- C. Station Name: KEOS-FM
 1) Address: P.O. Box 78, College Station, Texas 77841
 2) Frequency & Operating Hours: 89.1 FM, 24 hours (no one on-site from 1am – 6am)
 3) Contact Name: Lance Parr, Chief Eng.
 4) Telephone Number: 979-820-3468, Fax: 979-779-7259
 5) E-mail Address: parr.lance@gmail.com
- D. Station Name: KKYS-FM, KAGG-FM, KNFX-FM, KVJM-FM
 1) Address: 1716 Briarcrest Dr., Ste 150, Bryan, Texas 77802
 2) Frequency & Operating Hours: 104.7 FM, 96.1 FM, 99.5 FM, 103.1 FM, 24 hours
 3) Contact Name: Steve Earnhart
 4) Telephone Number: 979-846-5597, Fax: 979-268-9090
 5) E-mail Address: Steve.Earnhart@iheartmedia.com
- E. Station Name: KLTR-FM
 1) Address: 530 W. Main Street, Brenham, Texas 77833
 2) Frequency & Operating Hours: 94.1 FM, 24 hours
 3) Contact Name: Ryan Henderson, Gen. Manager
 4) Telephone Number: 361-781-2313, Fax: 979-836-9435
 5) E-mail Address: Ryansaved@yahoo.com
- F. Station Name: KNDE-FM, KMKV-FM, WTAW-AM, KZNE-AM, KAGC-AM, KWBC-AM
 1) Address: 2700 Earl Rudder Fwy. South, Ste. 5000, College Station, Texas 77845
 2) Frequency & Operating Hours: 95.1 FM, 100.9 FM, 1620 AM, 1150 AM, 1510 AM, 1550 AM, 24 hours
 3) Contact Name: Ben Downs, General Manager
 4) Telephone Number: 979-695-9595, Fax: 979-695-1933
 5) E-mail Address: radio@bryanbroadcasting.com
- G. Station Name: KTTX-FM, KWHI-AM
 1) Address: P.O. Box 1280, Brenham, Texas 77834
 2) Frequency & Operating Hours: 106.1 FM, 1280 AM, 24 hours

- 3) Contact Name: Tom Whitehead, General Manager
- 4) Telephone Number: 979-836-3655, Fax: 979-830-8141
- 5) E-mail Address: tom@ktex.com

2. Television

Station Name: KAGS-TV

- 1) Address: 2800 S. Texas Ave., Ste. 110, Bryan, Texas 77802
- 2) Frequency & Operating Hours: 24 hours
- 3) Contact Name: Robert Dwyer General Manager
- 4) Telephone Number: 979-703-8404, Fax: 979-703-8409
- 5) E-mail Address: rdwyer@kagstv.com

Station Name: KBTX-TV

- 6) Address: 4141 E. 29th Street, Bryan, Texas 77802
- 7) Frequency & Operating Hours: 24 hours
- 8) Contact Name: Josh Gorbitt, News Director
- 9) Telephone Number: 979-846-7777,
- 10) E-mail Address: josh.gorbitt@kbtv.com

Station Name: KAMU-TV

- 1) Address: TAMU, MS 4244, College Station, Texas 77843
- 2) Frequency & Operating Hours: 24 hours
- 3) Contact Name: Kelly Brown
- 4) Telephone Number: 979-845-5611, Fax: 979-845-1643
- 5) E-mail Address: kelly.brown@kamu.tamu.edu

Station Name: KRHD -TV

- 1) Address: 1716 Briarcrest Drive Suite 220, Bryan, Texas 77802
- 2) Frequency & Operating Hours: 24 hours
- 3) Contact Name: Taylor Helmes
- 4) Telephone Number: 254-757-2525, 979-691-5743, Fax: 979-260-3458
- 5) E-mail Address: news@KXXV.com

3. Newspapers

Name: The Eagle

- 1) Address: P.O. Box 3000, Bryan, Texas 77805
- 2) Distribution Area: Brazos County and contiguous counties, daily
- 3) Contact Name: Kelly Brown, Editor
- 4) Telephone Number: 979-731-4656
- 5) Fax Number: 979-776-0496
- 6) E-mail Address: kelly.brown@theeagle.com

Name: The Battalion

- 1) Address: MSC, Ste. L400, 1111 TAMU, College Station, Texas 77843-1111
- 2) Distribution Area: Texas A&M University, daily while school is in session
- 3) Contact Name: Student Editor (changes annually)
- 4) Telephone Number: 979-845-3315
- 5) Fax: 979-845-2647
- 6) E-mail Address: editor@thebatt.com

PUBLIC INFORMATION NEEDS

1. Background

During emergencies, it is essential to provide the public with timely, accurate information to ease concerns and prevent panic or inappropriate actions. Social media serves as the primary channel for rapidly sharing updates directly with the community, allowing for real-time communication and engagement. Traditional news media remains a close second, helping to broaden the reach and provide more extensive coverage and context. Using both channels together reduces the volume of public inquiries that could otherwise divert local government resources from critical response and recovery tasks. Agencies should make every effort to coordinate both social and news media, recognizing their vital role in keeping the public informed.

2. Information Needs

The following types of information shall be provided to the public in detail as soon as possible:

A. What Happened

- 1) Nature of incident or emergency
- 2) Location
- 3) Time of occurrence
- 4) Situation resolved or response on-going
- 5) Cause (Until an investigation has determined the cause with reasonable certainty, it is not advisable to speculate.)

B. Current Response Actions

- 1) What actions have been or are being taken to protect public health and safety and public and private property and the environment?

C. Known Damages

- 1) Homes
- 2) Businesses
- 3) Government buildings
- 4) Infrastructure – roads, bridges, parks, etc.

D. Casualties

- 1) Number dead and apparent cause
- 2) Number injured and nature/severity of injuries and where being treated
- 3) Number missing and circumstances
- 4) General identification of casualties – age, sex, situation (employee, homeowner, responder, etc.)
- 5) Names of casualties – only released after next of kin have been notified

E. Evacuations

- 1) Areas and facilities evacuated
- 2) Approximate number of evacuees

F. Shelter & Mass Care

- 1) Shelters open – number of shelters open, the locations, and whether or not pets are allowed
- 2) Approximate number of persons being housed in shelters
- 3) Mass feeding site or other mass care facilities in operation – name and number of persons being served.
- 4) Clearly state donation needs to avoid larger donations management issues

G. Status of Utilities

- 1) Electric service
- 2) Telephone system
- 3) Water system
- 4) Sewer system
- 5) Natural gas distribution

H. Road and Facility Closures

I. Organizations Responding

- 1) Local government
- 2) State agencies
- 3) Federal agencies
- 4) Volunteer groups

J. Means of contacting evacuees

K. Areas to which access is restricted and the reason(s) for such restriction

L. For ongoing emergency situations, planned response activities

M. In the recovery phase:

- 1) Disaster assistance programs available
- 2) How to apply for disaster assistance

3. Collection and Dissemination of Information

Information shall be collected and disseminated as soon as possible by the appropriate personnel. All incident-related information must be approved by the IC or EOC Manager prior to dissemination.

- A. Where an ICP has been established and a qualified public information staff member is at the scene, the IC may provide information directly to the media if the EOC is not activated. If no qualified public information staff member is present at the scene, the IC

or a member of his staff should pass situation information to the PIO release to the media.

- B. Where an ICP has been established and the EOC has been activated, information from the incident scene will normally be passed to the PIO at the EOC/JIC. The PIO will utilize reports from the scene and other available pertinent information to brief the media and prepare news advisories for release to the media.
- C. The Shelter and Mass Care Officer is responsible for collecting information on shelter and mass care activities and providing that information to the PIO.
- D. The Energy and Utilities representative in the EOC is responsible for obtaining information on the status of utilities and providing it to the PIO.
- E. Law Enforcement and Public Works/Engineering are responsible for obtaining information on road closures and facility closures and providing it to the PIO.
- F. The PIO is responsible for the collection of information from the IC, the EOC staff, and other sources and agencies. The PIO staff is responsible for the preparation of news releases, for the dissemination of information directly to the news media, and, where appropriate, for making arrangements for announcements directly to the public via radio and/or television hookups.
- G. Hospitals are responsible for the dissemination of information concerning casualties and deaths. They generally have policies restricting the release of detailed information without permission of patients or their families. This information that they choose to release will normally be disseminated directly to the news media. The PIO should request that the EOC be provided with copies of any information released to the media.

WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

1. What to do when working with the media:

- A. Identify your spokesperson beforehand.
- B. Have a number the media can or knows to call when they need information.
- C. Make certain the person answering the phones knows to whom to direct media calls.
- D. Get all the information you can from those in charge before you talk with the media.
- E. Write out the answers to these questions for **your** use:
 - 1) What happened?
 - 2) When did it happen?
 - 3) Where did it happen?
 - 4) Why did this happen?
 - 5) Who's responsible, involved, injured?
 - 6) How many were hurt or killed? What are their names/ages/addresses?
 - 7) Can I shoot video/take photos? How close can I get?
 - 8) Who can I talk to?
 - 9) What is your agency doing about it?
 - 10) What resources are available to the community?

2. When you talk with the media:

- A. Tell the truth and if related to the incident, ensure the IC has approved the information.
- B. Be courteous and do not play favorites.
- C. Avoid "off the record" remarks.
- D. Never say anything you would not want to see printed or broadcast.
- E. Stay on top of the interview by listening to the reporter's questions.
- F. Do not accept the reporter's definitions of what happened.
- G. Pause, think; ask for more time if you need it.
- H. Respond only to the question you have been asked. Do not speculate.
- I. Stick to the core message.
- J. Stay true to your word. For example, if you tell the media, "I have availability for three questions," adhere to that limit to maintain credibility and control.

MEDIA ACCESS & IDENTIFICATION
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1. Media Access

In recognition of the public's right to know as much information as possible about a disaster, local response agencies will cooperate with legitimate news media representatives and provide equal access to information and, within the limits of safety and other response needs, access to the media staging area near the incident scene to various news organizations. News media representatives are required to cooperate with response personnel as directed for safety and efficient operation.

- A. The IC or his designated representative will allow media access to the media staging area near the incident scene as is consistent with safety and does not disrupt critical operations.
- B. The EMC, in coordination with the PIO, shall establish rules for media access to the EOC. When the EOC is activated, representatives of the news media may be provided access to those areas of the EOC designated by the EMC. As a general rule, press briefings will not be conducted in the EOC because they can disrupt on-going EOC operations; briefings will normally be conducted in the press area of the EOC. Photo shoots and interviews may be conducted in the EOC, but these should be scheduled to minimize disruption.
- C. Hospitals establish their own rules of access for news media representatives, and these may vary for individual circumstances. For emergency situations where there have been substantial casualties, it may be desirable for hospitals to provide a pressroom or other designated area with access to telephones for the use of news media representatives.
- D. When incident scenes are on private property, the property owner may establish and enforce policies regarding access by the media and other persons who are not emergency responders.

2. Media Identification

Representatives of news media will be considered to have satisfactory identification if they have:

- A. A media company identification card with photo that identifies them as a media representative, unless there is reason to believe that the identification is not genuine.
- B. Texas Department of Public Safety Press identification card.

LIST OF PRE-SCRIPTED EMERGENCY MESSAGES
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The following pre-scripted emergency messages have been prepared and are included in Appendix 5 Tab A –H of Annex A, Warning:

1. Warning – General Incident
2. Warning – Road/Facility Closure
3. Warning – Shelter-in-Place
4. Special News Advisory – Pre-Evacuation
5. Warning – Urgent Evacuation
6. Warning – Mandatory Evacuation
7. Special News Advisory – Supplemental Evacuation Information
8. Special News Advisory – Schools & Public Facility Status

PUBLIC INFORMATION CHECKLISTS

This appendix includes the following Emergency Public Information Checklists:

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| Tab A | Public Information Checklist for Flooding |
| Tab B | Public Information Checklist for Hazmat Incidents |
| Tab C | Public Information Checklist for Hurricanes |

Public Information Checklist for Flooding

✓	Pre-Emergency Phase
	1. Conduct public education activities and distribute preparedness materials highlighting local flood risk areas, precautionary actions, and protective actions.
	2. In coordination with the EMC, maintain a set of pre-scripted warning and public instructions messages ready for use. See Annex A to Basic Plan.
	3. Coordinate with school authorities/PIOs on policies/procedures for announcing school closures.
	4. Review local Hazard Analysis and Annex E to the Basic Plan to identify potential flood risk areas and evacuation routes.
	5. Coordinate with Animal Control, Animal Shelter, and other organizations to determine availability of facilities for evacuated pets and large animals.
	6. Coordinate with PIOs from local response agencies and volunteer groups and develop an effective PIO-to-PIO communication system.
	Readiness Phase
	1. Ensure the PIO receives current information on flood watches & warnings.
	2. Coordinate with the Shelter and Mass Care Officer to determine likely shelter sites.
	3. Coordinate with Law Enforcement to determine planned/likely evacuation routes.
	4. In coordination with the EMC, update precautionary action and evacuation message(s). See Annex A of EM Plan.
	5. Develop maps of likely evacuation areas and evacuation routes that can be provided to the media.
	6. Disseminate property protection and evacuation preparedness information to public through media.
	Emergency Response Phase
	1. Provide evacuation area and evacuation route maps to media.
	2. Release evacuation recommendation through warning system.
	3. Release information on how transportation will be provided for those who lack it.
	4. Release public instructions on securing property, evacuation routes, and what to take with you.
	5. Release information to media on shelter and mass care facilities available.
	6. Release information to the media on where persons needing assistance should call.
	7. Release special instructions for those evacuating pets.
	8. Release information on curfews and travel restrictions in effect within evacuation areas.
	9. Release information on disaster welfare inquiry procedures.
	10. Advise the public not to return to the evacuation area until told to do so.
	11. Inform media of emergency response actions and organizations participating.
	12. Emphasize the importance of not self-dispatching to volunteer assistance as it can disrupt operations and cause additional emergencies.

✓	Post-Emergency Phase
	1. Coordinate with Law Enforcement to obtain information on routes for return of evacuees and areas where reentry is restricted due to damage.
	2. Coordinate with EMC to obtain and release damage assessments to media, updating as additional information becomes available.
	3. Release information to the media on return of evacuees and preferred reentry routes, if any.
	4. Release information to the media on access controls for damaged areas, if any.
	5. Provide public information on safety precautions for entering damaged buildings and the need to document damage and contact insurance companies.
	6. Release information on disaster relief/recovery programs and facilities.
	7. Release information to media on termination of shelter operations
	8. Release information on debris removal activities.
	9. Release information on volunteer assistance for home cleanup and repair.

Note: This public information checklist is designed for slowly developing floods. For a fast-breaking flood situation, it may not be feasible to conduct some of the readiness activities listed.

Public Information Checklist for Hazmat Incidents

✓	Pre-Emergency Phase
	1. Review local Hazard Analysis and Annex E, to obtain information on potential Hazmat risk areas and evacuation routes.
	2. Conduct public education activities and distribute preparedness materials highlighting local Hazmat risk areas, precautionary actions, and protective actions.
	3. In coordination with the EMC, maintain a set of pre-scripted warning and public instructions messages ready for use. See Annex A.
	4. Coordinate with school authorities, other PIOs, and local media on policies/procedures for announcing school closures or evacuations.
	5. Coordinate with special facilities or special needs populations and local media on policies and/ procedures for announcing closures or evacuations.
	6. Coordinate with PIOs from local response agencies and volunteer groups and develop an effective PIO-to-PIO communication system.
	7. Coordinate with local media to ensure thorough understanding of Hazmat response operations and protective actions such as shelter-in-place and evacuation.
	8. Disseminate evacuation preparedness information to the public.
	9. Engage with the Local Emergency Planning Committee
	Readiness Phase
	1. Ensure the PIO receives current information on potential Hazmat incidents.
	2. Coordinate with the Shelter and Mass Care Officer to determine likely shelter sites.
	3. Coordinate with Law Enforcement to determine planned/likely evacuation routes.
	4. In coordination with the EMC, update precautionary action and evacuation message(s). See Annex A to the Basic Plan.
	5. Develop maps of likely evacuation areas and evacuation routes that can be provided to the media.
	Emergency Response Phase
	1. Provide information to the media and public about the incident to include information on the nature of the incident, the expected duration of the incident, instructions to the community on evacuation or shelter in place procedures, symptoms of contamination, and potential health-risks.
	2. Disseminate property protection and evacuation preparedness information to the public through the media.
	3. <i>Shelter in Place Actions</i>
	a. Release shelter in place recommendation through the media.
	b. Provide shelter in place instructions to the media.
	c. Provide maps of geographic area that will shelter in place.

Emergency Response Phase (Continued)	
4. Evacuation Actions	
	a. Release evacuation recommendations through the media.
	b. Provide evacuation area and evacuation route maps to the media.
	c. Release information transportation assistance for those without access
	d. Release public instructions on securing property, property protection, and essential items to take when evacuating.
	e. Release information to the media on available shelter and mass care facilities.
	f. Release special instructions for evacuees with pets, including details on pet-friendly shelters and available animal sheltering facilities.
5. General Actions	
	a. Release information to the media indicating where individuals who need assistance should call.
	b. Release information on curfews and travel restrictions within evacuation areas.
	c. Release information on disaster welfare inquiry procedures
	d. Advise the public not to return to the evacuated or shelter-in-place areas until clearance is given by authorized officials.
	e. Inform the media of emergency response actions and organizations participating.
Post-Emergency Phase	
	1. Coordinate with law enforcement to obtain information on routes for return of evacuees and areas where reentry is restricted due to damage.
	2. Coordinate with EMC to obtain and release damage/contamination assessments to the media and update them as additional information becomes available.
	3. Release information to the media regarding the return of evacuees and any designated reentry routes.
	4. Release information to the media on access controls for damaged areas, if any.
	5. Provide public information on safety precautions for entering damaged areas the need to document damage and contact insurance companies.
	6. Release information on disaster relief/recovery programs and facilities.
	7. Release information on termination of shelter operations.
	8. Release information on decontamination activities.
	9. Release information on volunteer assistance.
	10. Release information on clean-up/decontamination activities, if needed.
	11. Keep the public and media informed of long-term clean-up activities, potential long-term health effects, liability information, and future mitigation efforts.

Note: As most Hazmat incidents occur without significant warning, it may not be feasible to conduct some of the activities listed in the Readiness Phase.

Public Information Checklist for Hurricanes

✓	Pre-Emergency Phase
	1. Conduct public education activities and distribute preparedness materials highlighting local hurricane risk areas, precautionary actions, and protective actions.
	2. In coordination with the EMC, maintain a set of pre-scripted warning and public instructions messages ready for use. See Annex A to the Basic Plan.
	3. Coordinate with school authorities/PIOs on policies/procedures for announcing school closures.
	4. Review local Hazard Analysis and Annex E to Basic Plan, to identify potential hurricane risk areas and evacuation routes.
	5. Disseminate information on the availability of facilities for evacuated pets and large animals.
	6. Coordinate with PIOs from local response agencies and volunteer groups and develop an effective PIO-to-PIO communication system.
	7. Disseminate information emphasizing the need for ride sharing during an evacuation.
	Readiness Phase
	1. Ensure the PIO receives current information on hurricane watches & warning.
	2. Coordinate with the Shelter and Mass Care Officer to determine likely shelter sites that could be used during the recovery phase.
	3. Coordinate with Law Enforcement to determine planned/likely evacuation routes.
	4. In coordination with the EMC, update precautionary action and evacuation message(s). See Annex A to the Basic Plan.
	5. Develop maps of likely evacuation areas and evacuation routes that can be provided to the media.
	6. Disseminate property protection and evacuation preparedness information to public through media.
	7. Disseminate information to special need facilities and those in mobile home/trailer parks recommending an early precautionary evacuation.
	Emergency Response Phase
	1. Provide evacuation area and evacuation route maps to the media.
	2. Release evacuation recommendation through the warning system.
	3. Release information on transportation assistance for those without access.
	4. Release public instructions on securing property, evacuation routes, essential items to take when evacuating
	5. Release information to the media on available shelter and mass care facilities available.
	6. Release information to the media on where persons needing assistance should call.
	7. Release special instructions for those evacuating with pets.
	8. Release information on curfews and travel restrictions in effect within evacuation areas.
	9. Release information on disaster welfare inquiry procedures.
	10. Advise the public not to return to the evacuation area until clearance is given by authorized officials.
	11. Inform the media of emergency response actions and participating organizations.
	12. Release information on the availability of food service, gas stations, and medical facilities.

✓	Post-Emergency Phase
	1. Coordinate with Law Enforcement to obtain information on routes for return of evacuees and areas where reentry is restricted due to damage.
	2. Coordinate with EMC to obtain and release damage assessments to the media, updating as additional information becomes available.
	3. Release information to the media regarding the return of evacuees and any designated reentry routes.
	4. Release information to the media on access controls for damaged areas, if any.
	5. Provide public information on safety precautions for entering damaged buildings and the need to documenting damage and contacting insurance companies.
	6. Release information on disaster relief/recovery programs and facilities.
	7. Release information to the media on termination of shelter operations
	8. Release information on debris removal activities.
	9. Release information on where to obtain disaster mental health/crisis counseling services.
	10. Release information on volunteer assistance for home cleanup and repair.