**Introduction**

**Purpose:**

Provide for efficient and coordinated continuous flow of timely information and instructions to the public using all available communications media prior to, during, and following an emergency or disaster.

**Scope:**

Provide emergency public information actions before, during, and following any emergency. Potentially public information response could involve personnel from all jurisdictions, organizations, agencies, and areas within the affected area.

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<table>
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<th>Primary Agency:</th>
<th>Support Agencies and Organizations:</th>
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<td>Fauquier County PIO</td>
<td>- Local TV Stations</td>
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<td>- Local Radio Stations</td>
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<td>- Local Newspapers</td>
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<td>- Communications Division</td>
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Organization and Responsibilities

General:

The Public Information/Affairs Office is responsible for providing the community with information on impending or existing emergencies, to include immediate protective actions they should take such as sheltering or evacuation, as well information regarding recovery operations.

If the situation warrants, a Joint Information Center (JIC) may be activated. The JIC will be located at the EOC but off the operations floor. Agencies involved will staff telephones and coordinate media activities under the supervision of the DFREMPIO or EPIO.

All agencies and organizations are responsible for providing the PIO with appropriate timely information about the incident and actions needed to save lives and protect property.

Responsibilities/Actions:

- Develop standard operations procedures (SOPs) to carry out the public information function;
- Develop and conduct public information programs for community/citizen awareness of potential disasters, as well as personal protection measures for each hazards they may face;
- Develop Rumor Control Procedures;
- Prepare advance copies of emergency information packages for release through the news media during actual emergencies;
- Regularly brief local news media personnel, community officials, local, state, and federal agencies on External Affairs policies, plans, and procedures;
- Maintain current contact info for local radio stations, televisions stations, cable companies, websites, and newspapers to be utilized for public information releases;
- Maintain support agreements and liaison arrangements with other agencies and the new media, if needed; to streamline the information flow.
- Maintain arrangements to provide a briefing room for the media in the vicinity of the EOC.
- Coordinate with VDEM PIO, Governor’s Press Secretary and the Secretary of Public Safety to prepare initial press releases;
- Assist with the preparation/transmission of EAS messages, if needed;
- Disseminate news releases and daily Situation Reports from the EOC.
- Disseminate information to elected officials through the legislative liaison function;
- Establish, with assistance from other county agencies, a Public Inquiry Center for the general public to call for information;
Fauquier County Emergency Operations Plan
Emergency Support Function # 15

- Assign someone to keep the Facebook, Twitter, other public warning/information accounts egularly updated with accurate information
- Monitor the media to insure accuracy of information and correct inaccurate as quickly as possible;
- Plan and organize news conferences with the Governors staff, if necessary;
- Provide information to the public about available community disaster relief assistance and mitigation programs;
- Keep public officials briefed
- Facilitate communications between the public and other agency officials to ensure that affected people have access and knowledge about benefits for which they may be eligible.

Organization:

- A Public Affairs Officer may be appointed to serve as the primary communities’ coordinator. Other community officials will serve within the JIC.
- Additionally, the community will establish a Community Relations (CR) plan which will include incident specific guidance and objectives at the beginning of the incident. Conducting the CR function is a joint responsibility between community, local, state, and federal personnel. If needed Field teams will be created. These teams assist in the rapid dissemination of information, to identify unmet needs, to establish an ongoing dialogue and information exchange, and to facilitate collaborative community, local, state, and federal planning and mutual disaster recovery support.

Concept of Operations

Routine Operations
- Inform citizens about the importance of preparedness and creating emergency plans.
- Create working relationships with local media

Increased Readiness
- Utilizing the media keep citizens alerted to the threat and any essential information such as shelter openings and evacuation plans
Mobilization Phase
- Keep the citizens of affected areas updated on shelter activity.
- Let the public know where to go and numbers to call to get information

Response Phase
- Continue to keep the citizens of affected areas updated on shelter activity

Recovery
- Continue to keep the citizens of affected areas updated on recovery status and information.
- Field citizens and media’s questions about the recovery effort.