

EMERGENCY SUPPORT FUNCTION # 15 External Affairs Annex

PRIMARY AGENCIES

Mohave County Manager
Mohave County Emergency Management
Mohave County Sheriff's Office
Mohave County Public Health
Incorporated Cities
Tribal Governments

SUPPORTING AGENCIES

Department of Emergency and Military Affairs
Other State and Federal Agencies as dictated by the event

I. Purpose, Scope, Situation, and Assumptions

Purpose

- Provide guidance and procedures for disseminating Emergency Public Information (EPI) in support of the county's response and recovery to an emergency/disaster.
- Provide for the effective collection, monitoring, management, and dissemination of accurate, useful, and timely information to media outlets during emergency/disaster.
- Disseminate emergency instructions, protective actions, and disaster assistance information to the public.
- Provide long-term public education efforts related to hazard awareness, family protection planning, and emergency self-help.

Scope

- This ESF applies to all county departments and coordinates all county public information activities during an emergency or disaster.
- This ESF provides procedures for implementing a countywide Joint Information System (JIS) including the county, cities, and tribes to develop common emergency public information and avoid conflicting and uncoordinated information releases to the media and public.

Situation and Assumptions

- Effective measures can be taken to enhance survival and minimize hardship during a State of Emergency or Major Disaster by providing EPI to the public. During an emergency/disaster, the public requires survival instructions, information regarding disaster relief and government response and recovery operations.
- It is important to inform the public of hazards, protective actions, and preparedness measures they can employ to reduce the impact of hazards on themselves and their community before an emergency/disaster occurs.
- A public affairs program combining both public education and community information will help to significantly reduce disaster related casualties, property damage and economic loss.
- The principal means by which EPI will be disseminated will include the Integrated Public Alert & Warning System (IPAWS) and Emergency Alert System (EAS); television, radio, and cable-outlets; the AZEIN System; Mohave County Emergency Management (MCEM), Mohave County County Manager or his designee, Mohave County Public Health (MCDPH) and main Mohave County websites; social media outlets (Twitter, Facebook); and newspapers, press releases, and flyers. Back up means for public information will include vehicle public address systems and door-to-door contact during critical periods and in locations with life-safety incidents.
- Methods for communicating with Access and Functional Needs groups will be considered based on the ability of people to receive, act on, or understand EPI messages. These might include sight or hearing impairments and custodial institutions, i.e., schools, nursing homes, hospitals, and prisons.
- Major events create significant media interest that will bring out-of-state reporters, photographers, and camera crews to an incident. This will create a heavy demand on the county's Joint Information System.

II. Concept of Operations

- Contact with the media will be established as soon as possible following the onset of an event and will be maintained before, during, and after termination of an event.

- Priority for media and public information dissemination will be rapid notification to affected populations of life safety threats and emergency protection or evacuation measures. This dissemination will be the responsibility of Incident Commanders in conjunction with County Emergency Management, for unincorporated areas, and city emergency managers, for incorporated communities.
- All affected political subdivisions and agencies will participate in the countywide Joint Information System (JIS) for collecting and sharing emergency information and establishing commonality and concurrence for media/public information releases.
- Mohave County media relation efforts will provide information on such activities as the Mohave County Emergency Operations Center (MCEOC) operations and related state response functions. It is important to keep the media informed of the general progress of associated events. Efforts will be made to report positive information regarding emergency response to reassure the public that the situation is being dealt with, utilizing appropriate resources.
- Education efforts will be directed toward increasing public awareness about hazards and how people can successfully deal with them.
- Information and education efforts will rely on the cooperation of commercial media organizations, including both electronic news gathering and print sources.
- County agencies involved in emergency response operations, exclusive of routine emergencies normally handled by the Sheriff's Office and County Public Health, will coordinate, and obtain prior approval of news releases regarding their operations with the Mohave County Manager or a designated Department Director or designee. The County Manager or designee will approve such news releases for dissemination after their review and vetting by the Incident Commander.
- A designated Department Director, acting as County PIO within the Mohave County Emergency Operations Center (MCEOC), or the County Manager or their designee, will be responsible for advising the County Manager of pertinent policy issues regarding emergency information and for establishing press conferences for County Officials, including the Board of Supervisors. MCEM will support and assist in these efforts in concert with PIOs from other county, city, and state agencies and the private sector.

- When a Presidential Declaration of an Emergency or Major Disaster has been issued, the County Manager or a designated Department Director will coordinate with the State PIO to establish policies concerning joint news releases.
- For major incidents within the jurisdiction of an incorporated city or a Tribe, the designated PIO – whether the County Manager, Department Director, or designee – will establish contact with the PIO of that jurisdiction to coordinate media releases involving any Mohave County government/agency involvement or on issues that may impact county populations outside the local jurisdiction. A designated PIO will participate in any Joint Information Center (JIC) established within a local jurisdiction when county participation is directed by the County Manager.
- A Joint Information Center (JIC) may be established in a designated room in the County Administration building (700 W. Beale, Kingman) upon the recommendation of the County Manager or a designated Department Director, in consultation with MCEM and any affected political subdivision or outside jurisdiction, to coordinate multi-agency news releases. Depending on the nature of the emergency, the JIC may include PIO's from incorporated cities, fire districts, the private sector, and state and federal agencies. Media releases will be coordinated among all PIO's prior to release to ensure consistent public messaging.
- The Integrated Public Alert & Warning System (IPAWS), which includes Emergency Alert System (EAS) activation, the RAVE automatic phone system, and the Wireless Emergency Alert system (cell phone text messaging), will be used to convey information releases to the media for immediate dissemination to the public, upon request to the Sheriff's Office Dispatch from the field Incident Commander or Emergency Management. In certain instances, it may become necessary for the Governor or other designated public officials to request activation of the EAS to provide information directly to the public.
- A Public Inquiry phone bank will be activated at the direction of MCEM or MCDPH in emergency situations. The public should dial 1-928-753-8665 to be routed to the phone bank for emergency information.

III. Organization and Assignment of Responsibilities

Emergency Public Information (EPI)

- **County**

○ **The Mohave County Manager or a designated Department Director will:**

- Conduct public information, media relations, and community education programs.
- Provide authority for the release of county-level information to the public and coordinate and approve disaster related media releases from all county departments.
- Serve as, or assign, a Public Information Officer in the Mohave County EOC, when activated, and manage PIO-trained county employees designated as assistants in the EOC and the Joint Information System or Center.
- Serve as primary county representative in the countywide Joint Information System and as director of a county level Joint Information Center (JIC), if activated.
- Coordinate with Mohave County Public Health for the operation and public information content of the Public Inquiry phone bank.
- Provide support for the EPI program.
- Designate media briefing locations, produce media briefings, coordinate media interviews with officials, and schedule media visits to disaster sites and the County EOC,
- Monitor media reports, collect media information useful in managing the event, and prepare media releases to correct or clarify inaccurate media reports (including social media posts), utilizing assistance from department PIO's.
- Maintain, in coordination with MCEM, a system for receiving and handling information inquiries from the public and government officials.

• **Incorporated Cities, Tribes**

- For incidents wholly within the boundaries of the incorporated cities and the Native American tribes, public information releases will be conducted in accordance with the procedures of those jurisdictions.
- For incidents involving multiple jurisdictions, the public information officers of the jurisdictions, with approval by the governing authorities as specified in internal jurisdictional procedures, will coordinate media releases, and determine the need for, and the location of, a Joint Information Center.
- **Arizona Emergency Information Network (AZEIN)** is a webpage and social media outlet maintained by Department of Emergency and Military Affairs for posting current updates on emergencies throughout the state; it is linked to MCEM's webpage.

Outreach Programs

- **Mohave County Emergency Management (MCEM)** is responsible for coordinating/conducting public affairs programs related to overall county emergency preparedness and the county EOP and EOC. MCEM will coordinate with MCSO, Mohave County Public Health, NWS, and other agencies to support outreach by individual agencies for their individual responsibilities and jurisdictions.
 - Educational Programs: There are many types of activities associated with the educational outreach program, such as:
 - The media is provided with information on both public emergency preparedness suggestions and emergency developments affecting emergency management functions. This information reaches the public via television, cable, radio, newspapers, and social media.
 - Lectures and other group presentations are provided to organizations and community-based institutions.
 - Tours of the MCEOC, briefings on emergency management and division responsibilities are provided to groups, including schools, service organizations, scouting organizations, and other interested organizations.
 - Informative educational brochures are distributed to county emergency services/management offices, the public, and organizations in support of emergency preparedness and outreach efforts.

IV. Direction, Control, and Coordination

Emergency Public Information (EPI)

- Direction and coordination of emergency County Public Information activities will be provided by the County Manager or a designated Department Director:
 - In coordination with MCEM when the County EOC is not activated, and.
 - Under the EOC Director when the County EOC is activated.
- For Sheriff's Office routine emergency situations, the Sheriff's Office PIO will direct public information activities for that department.

Outreach Programs

- Each County department will conduct individual public outreach under the general media guidelines established in county policy.

V. Administration, Finance, and Logistics

- Reports from the EPI program will include after action reports, press coverage summaries and/or audio/video clips and inputs into the EOC and MCEM Logs.
- The facilities and equipment for an emergency PIO are in the MCEOC.