

Public Affairs Support Annex

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1 **Coordinating Agency:** Department of Homeland Security

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3 **Cooperating Agencies:** All

4
5 **I. Introduction**

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7 **A. Purpose:** The Public Affairs Support Annex describes interagency incident
8 communications procedures to rapidly mobilize Federal authorities to prepare and deliver
9 a coordinated and sustained message in response to Incidents of National Significance.
10 The National Response Plan – Incident Communications Emergency Policy and
11 Procedures (NRP-ICEPP) establishes mechanisms to rapidly lead and mobilize Federal
12 authorities to prepare and deliver a coordinated and sustained message regarding
13 Incidents of National Significance. Subject to available facts, scientific analysis, and
14 national security, the ICEPP provides prompt Federal acknowledgement of an incident
15 and communicates emergency information to the public during response and recovery
16 operations.

17
18 **B. Objectives:** During an Incident of National Significance, Federal, State, local, and Tribal
19 authorities are responsible for communicating information to the public. Incident
20 communications is a critical component and must be fully integrated with all operational
21 actions to ensure that the incident communication efforts support and achieve the
22 following objectives:

- 23
24 1. Delivery of incident preparedness, health, response, and recovery instructions;
25 and
26
27 2. Dissemination of incident public information.

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29 **C. Scope:** This Annex links the NRP Incident Communications Emergency Supplement
30 (formerly known as the ICEP), Emergency Support Function (ESF) #15, and the
31 Catastrophic Incident Supplement, Appendix 10. They are hereafter referred to
32 collectively within this document as the NRP-ICEPP.

33
34 The NRP-ICEPP provides guidance to Federal incident communicators on activities to be
35 initiated in conjunction with Incidents of National Significance and domestic incident
36 response. Incident communications process actions contained are executed to support
37 and flow *through* the frameworks established under the NRP, National Interagency
38 Management System (NIMS), the Joint Information System (JIS), and the Incident
39 Command System (ICS).

40
41 **II. Policy:** *Incident communications* is adopted by the NRP as a concept of operations to manage
42 communications activities for Incidents of National Significance and lesser incidents without broad
43 national impact. Incident communications incorporates the following *processes*:

44
45 **A. Control:** This identifies the incident communications lead, lead departments and agency
46 roles, and authority and authorities for release of information.

47
48 **B. Coordination:** This addresses interagency coordination and plans, notification,
49 activation, and supporting protocols.

50
51 **C. Communication:** This addresses known incident facts, health risk concerns, preincident
52 and postincident preparedness recommendations, warning issues, incident information,
53 messages, audiences, and who, when, where, and how will the messages be delivered.
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- D. Incident Communications Planning Assumptions:** Homeland security incident communications planning assumptions are detailed below:
1. The public will look to DHS and other Federal, State, and local incident communications leadership for immediate factual information, preparedness and response advice, and updates;
 2. Existing communications resources such as telephones, cellular phones, the Internet, and even media outlets may be destroyed or degraded; and
 3. Teamwork and use of standardized incident communications processes facilitates rapid development, deployment, and sustainment of a coordinated messaging effort.

III. Concept of Operations

- A.** Incident communications processes necessary to support management of Incidents of National Significance and domestic incidents. It incorporates the following (see Table 1):
1. **ESF #15:** This Emergency Support Function details Federal incident communications authorities, resources, and capabilities and is incorporated within the NRP.
 2. **NRP Catastrophic Incident Supplement:** Appendix 10 to this special purpose NRP component contains incident communications *resource* information to support catastrophic incidents. This appendix is contained within the NRP Catastrophic Incident Supplement.
 3. **Incident Communications Emergency Supplement (ICES):** The ICES is intended for use by the public affairs component of Federal authorities with major NRP or Incident of National Significance response functions. The NRP-ICES provides supplementary detail on incident communications response activities. The NRP-ICES is issued as a stand-alone supporting document to the NRP.

**TABLE 1. —National Response Plan:
Incident Communications Emergency Policy and Procedures (NRP-ICEPP)**

	PLAN TITLE	PURPOSE	LOCATION
NRP– INCIDENT COMMUNICATIONS EMERGENCY POLICY AND PROCEDURES	Public Affairs Annex	Primary Federal incident communications plan and procedures	NRP
	ESF #15	Primary Federal incident communications/external affairs authorities, resources & capabilities.	NRP
	CIRA	Federal incident communications resources for catastrophic incidents	NRP (Appendix 10)
	ICES-Supplement	Supporting Federal incident communications plan & procedures	Issued separately

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1 **B. Responsibilities:** Incident communications responsibilities are assigned as follows:
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- 3 1. The Department of Homeland Security, through the Assistant Secretary for
4 Public Affairs (DHS AS/PA) and Office of Public Affairs (DHS OPA), will:
5
6 a. Plan, prepare, and execute Federal incident communications leadership
7 processes during Incidents of National Significance and other domestic
8 incidents;
9
10 b. Coordinate incident communications plans and processes using
11 resources and field operations established through ESF #15;
12
13 c. Coordinate incident communications plans and processes with the White
14 House Office of Communications and Homeland Security Council (HSC);
15
16 d. Coordinate interagency incident communications plans and processes;
17
18 e. Coordinate Federal incident communications plans and processes with
19 State, Tribal, and local authorities as necessary;
20
21 f. Designate a Public Affairs Officer (PAO) to support the incident Principal
22 Federal Official (PFO);
23
24 g. Coordinate incident communications plans and processes with
25 nongovernmental organizations; and
26
27 h. Disseminate public information.
28
29 2. Federal departments and independent agencies will:
30
31 a. Plan, prepare, and execute respective incident communications
32 processes during Incidents of National Significance and other domestic
33 incidents, and in conjunction with strategic communications direction by
34 DHS;
35
36 b. Assume certain lead agency incident communications responsibilities
37 when assigned or consistent with specific departmental and agency
38 authorities;
39
40 c. Disseminate public information within their areas of responsibility; and
41
42 d. Ensure that departmental and agency plans incorporate incident
43 communications provisions contained in the NRP.
44

45 **C. ICEPP Administration**

- 46
47 1. **Responsibility:** The DHS AS/PA is responsible for preparation, management,
48 and maintenance of the NRP-ICEPP. The Director of Incident Communications
49 in DHS OPA manages and coordinates issues relating to national incident
50 communications and coordination with Federal, State, local, tribal and
51 nongovernmental counterparts.
52
53 2. **Oversight.** The HSC provides oversight and coordination of policy issues
54 relating to the NRP-ICEPP. HSC and the DHS AS/PA jointly coordinate
55 interagency clearance on the NRP-ICEPP, pending changes, exercise and

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incident lessons learned, and resolution of interagency coordination issues. The interagency Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC) reviews and comments on proposed routine changes to the NRP-ICEPP.

3. **Recurrent Review:** The DHS AS/PA reviews the NRP-ICEPP annually and, in accordance with review procedures established for the NRP, coordinates development of proposed changes to the NRP-Public Affairs Annex and to ESF #15. Urgent changes are coordinated through the interagency process in an expeditious manner as necessary throughout the year.
4. **Exercises and the National Exercise Program (NEP):** The NRP-ICEPP is the primary Federal incident communications plan during interagency exercises and those scheduled within the NEP.
5. **Incident Communications Public Affairs Coordination Committee (ICPACC):** The ICPACC is a Federal interagency contact group incorporating public affairs representatives from all cabinet departments and independent agencies that meets quarterly to increase awareness, teamwork, and interoperability among Federal incident communications staffs. The ICPACC is not charged to conduct formal policy review, but may assess interagency issues process matters dealing with the Public Affairs Annex. The DHS AS/PA manages the ICPACC.

IV. Actions

The NRP-ICES specifies incident communications activities corresponding to and in support of operational measures relating to preparedness, prevention, response, and recovery. The Department of Justice (DOJ), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and DHS coordinate closely during prevention actions to ensure that a unified incident communications message is delivered. Incident communications prevention includes dissemination of:

- Public information detailing changes in the Homeland Security Threat Advisory System (HSAS) status level;
- Public information describing protective measures;
- Requests by law enforcement authorities for public assistance, information, and cooperation; and
- Public information describing homeland security threats.

A. Initial Activities: Preparedness related public information includes:

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1. Evacuation, warning, or precautionary information to ensure public safety and health;
2. Public education and supporting documentation;
3. Federal, State, local, and Tribal incident communications;
4. Media education, including weapons of mass destruction (WMD) information;
5. Exercises and training with risk communications;
6. Identifying subject-matter experts for availability during an incident;
7. Preparation and readiness to develop and deploy public service announcements and health advisory information; and
8. Testing and coordination of emergency broadcast and alerting systems.

B. Response: Execution checklists, teamwork, and incident communications processes will mitigate unknown elements and facilitate orderly management of the incident. Sustaining actions are developed and implemented. Response incident communications activities include:

1. Activation of ESF #15 and the processes in support of the NRP and other plans. DHS Public Affairs coordinates the Federal incident communications response;
2. Immediate and continuing dissemination of health or safety instructions, if necessary. This may also include evacuation or decontamination instructions;
3. Coordination of initial Federal announcements about an incident with State, local, and Tribal authorities to ensure that the public is receiving a consistent message;
4. Coordination at the Federal interagency level;
5. Designation of a PAO to support the PFO;
6. Establishment of a JIC to support the Joint Field Office (JFO) and ICS;
7. Designation of a lead public information officer (PIO) to coordinate field-level Federal public information and manage the JIC;
8. Reassurance that authorities are implementing response and recovery actions to ensure the health, safety and security of the public;
9. Communications to other, nonaffected States about incident details, preparedness measures, and reassurance;
10. Deployment of public affairs resources from other Federal departments and agencies as required by the scope of the incident;
11. Deployment to the incident site of the Secretary of Health and Human Services Emergency Response Team (SERT), incorporating public affairs personnel; and
12. Development and implementation of a joint sustaining communications plan and

1 effort by Federal, State, and local authorities.

2
3 **C. Recovery:** The incident communications and public affairs efforts must be sustained as
4 long as necessary to continually reassure, inform, and respond to public information
5 needs. This effort must be closely coordinated with State and local authorities. Recovery
6 programs include mitigation components designed to avoid damage from future incidents.
7 Typical incident communications recovery actions may include:

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9
- 10 1. Providing public information on incident response and progress in restoring
11 normalcy. Emphasis is placed on mitigating or reducing social and emotional
12 anxiety and concern;
 - 13 2. Providing public information on disaster assistance and support resources; and
 - 14 3. Recognition of the efforts of responders and citizens.

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17 **D. Domestic Incidents:** Many incidents do not rise to the level of an Incident of National
18 Significance or require the direct involvement by the Secretary of Homeland Security.
19 However, DHS and its Public Affairs staff may assume a leadership role during domestic
20 incidents when interagency coordination is required. Notification, activation, and
21 response processes are discussed in subsequent sections of this Annex. Domestic
22 incident communications processes include the following:

- 23
- 24 1. DHS Public Affairs determines the incident communications requirements in
25 coordination with the DHS Homeland Security Operations Center (HSOC).
 - 26 2. DHS Public Affairs identifies a core department and agency participant group
27 (usually based on operational participation), and arranges conference calls and
28 coordination. DHS Public Affairs likely acts in the capacity of incident manager.
 - 29 3. The core department group develops and delivers coordinated public information
30 and instructions. Lead assignments are determined in accordance with
31 operational tasks, areas of expertise and responsibility, and the nature and
32 location of the incident.

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35 **V. Control**

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37 **A. Control Processes:** When an actual or potential Incident of National Significance
38 occurs, it is imperative that Federal participants immediately must work together to
39 manage incident communications. This section describes incident communications
40 control processes. Control, within this context, addresses processes that delineate
41 incident communications lead roles, lead agency functional areas, and notional authority
42 for release of information.

43
44
45 **B. Primary Department and Agency Assignments:** Upon activation of the NRP, DHS
46 Public Affairs leads the Federal incident communications effort. Departments, agencies,
47 and other authorities may retain the incident communications primary responsibility for
48 specific tasks. Primary assignments are assessed and confirmed during initial
49 discussions and conference calls. Agency assignments may include the following:

- 50
- 51 1. Incident management;
 - 52 2. Law enforcement;
 - 53 3. Medical or health;
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- 4. Family assistance and victim issues;
- 5. Technical or forensic matters;
- 6. Environmental;
- 7. Protective measures;
- 8. Search and rescue;
- 9. Preparedness;
- 10. Recovery assistance; and
- 11. Federal personnel management.

C. Core Group Participants: Department and agency core group participation is reflected in the matrix below. DHS Public Affairs uses this matrix for initial coordination planning purposes. These core assignments are drawn from the Interagency Incident Management Group--Standard Operating Procedures (IIMG SOP). Participation may be supplemented by other Federal, State, local, tribal, and nongovernmental authorities.

TABLE 2. —Core Group Federal Departments and Agencies

Dept/Agency	Chemical WMD	Bio WMD	Rad WMD	Nuclear WMD	Non-WMD Terrorist	Mass Migration	Natural Disaster
White House	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
DHS	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
HHS	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
DOD	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
DOE			X	X			
DOJ/FBI	X	X	X	X	X	X	
USDA	X	X	X	X			
VA	X	X	X	X	X		
DOC/FCC	X	X	X	X	X		X
DOT	X	X	X	X	X		X
EPA	X	X	X	X	X		X
NRC			X	X			
OPM	X	X	X	X	X		X
American Red Cross	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

[COMMENT: Should USPS be in this table?]

1 **D. Authority to Release Information:** The interagency incident communications group
2 works closely in the first minutes of an incident to ensure that all necessary information is
3 available and coordinated for timely and accurate dissemination. General guidance on
4 authority to release information is in accordance with existing plans, operational security,
5 law enforcement protocols, designated lead agency assignments and current procedures.
6

7 **VI. Coordination**
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9 **A. Content:** The Federal Government operates as a team to ensure success with incident
10 communications. From initial notifications to final recovery actions, the team must
11 operate and speak with a unified voice and consistent message. NIMS, the JIS, JICs,
12 and incident communications processes reinforce this and provide frameworks to make it
13 possible. This section describes connectivity options, notification and activation,
14 sustaining communications, interagency coordination, and JIC establishment.
15

16 **B. Coordinating Systems:** Available systems for notification, activation, and coordination
17 of immediate communications include the following (which do not include specialized
18 Federal *operational* warning and control systems):
19

- 20 1. **Phone (Secure and Nonsecure):** Nonsecure phone communications are used
21 when permitted by the nature of the incident and security. Discussions of a
22 classified nature must be conducted on secure systems. Conference calls are
23 used to rapidly link all parties, permit the sharing of key facts, and incident
24 information, and facilitate execution of incident communications processes.
25
- 26 2. **Virtual JIC**
27
- 28 3. **National Incident Communications Conference Line (NICCL).** The NICCL is
29 a standing conference line designated, maintained, and supported by DHS Public
30 Affairs as the primary means for interagency incident communications
31 information sharing *during* an Incident of National Significance. DHS Public
32 Affairs provides Federal interagency public affairs headquarters staffs with
33 instructions for NICCL operations.
34
- 35 4. **E-Mail.** E-mail management with unclassified web systems.
36
- 37 5. **Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN).** HSIN provides the incident
38 communications team with an encrypted on-line Web system for record
39 communications, chat room capability, and a real-time capability to post and
40 review documents. The HSIN also is used by the DHS HSOC to coordinate
41 homeland security operations with interagency participants. DHS Public Affairs
42 retains a public affairs "site" on HSIN for use by the Federal interagency during
43 Incidents of National Significance or domestic incidents. DHS Public Affairs
44 coordinates access, account support, and administrative issues relating to the
45 HSIN.
46
- 47 6. **Command and Operations Center Support.** In the event that normal
48 communications are lost or degraded, the core group communicates with DHS
49 Public Affairs through respective Federal, State, local, and Tribal emergency
50 operations and command centers. The DHS HSOC provides support for this
51 task. Department and agency incident communications continuity of operations
52 (COOP) plans should incorporate relocation and alternate operating location
53 provisions.
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C. Notification and Plan Activation

1. **Incident Leadership:** The HSOC Senior Watch Officer notifies the DHS AS/PA who will direct activation of the NRP-ICES and immediate public affairs staffing support to the IIMG, and NRCC as required.
2. **Domestic Incident Notification and Activation:** The NRP-ICES processes can be activated by the DHS AS/PA for domestic incidents where enhanced incident control, coordination, and communications among participating Federal departments and agencies are necessary. Coordination and control is determined subject to the scope of the incident. The DHS AS/PA advises the HSOC prior to activation of the Plan for major incident situations.

D. Initial Coordination: Establishing communications paths with incident participants is a primary objective during the first minutes of Plan activation. These paths provide a streamlined process to ensure that appropriate participants and decisionmakers are linked together (by virtual or other means) to manage incident communications. DHS Public Affairs establishes paths with the following entities:

1. **Executive:** Consult with White House Communications.
2. **DHS Headquarters:** Consult with DHS senior leadership, including the IIMG and HSOC.
3. **Incident Site:** Consult with the incident site public affairs leadership. When an incident occurs, State and local authorities initially take the lead for communicating public information regarding the incident. DHS Public Affairs, using DHS regional components, makes every attempt to establish contact with key incident site and participating Federal, State, local and tribal communicators to learn details about the incident, operational response, media coverage, and messages under consideration or already delivered.
4. **Interagency:** Consult with the Federal interagency incident communications group. The NICCL is activated and used to communicate with the interagency incident communications group. State, local, tribal, and nongovernmental organizations may be included in the NICCL as required. Interagency core group participants are designated and a virtual headquarters-level JIC assesses control, coordination, and communications issues. The conference assesses and assigns primary agency roles and reaches agreement on the content of the first release, talking points, and details on announcement of the information.
5. **News Media:** Contact key news media to inform them about the incident and its status, provide initial information to counter speculation and rumors, and make available, where necessary or known, immediate health and safety guidance. Departments and agencies should closely coordinate media queries during this critical phase to ensure that the approved interagency plan is being executed.

E. Sustaining Coordination: The Joint Information System (JIS), through employment of incident communications processes, provides an organized, integrated, and coordinated mechanism to ensure the delivery of timely, accurate and consistent information to the public during an Incident of National Significance. This incorporates the plans, protocols, and structures used to provide information to the public. It is inclusive of Federal, State, local, tribal, and nongovernmental organization incident communications efforts and professionals. Sustaining coordination must continue as a team effort, at all levels.

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1. **Federal Interagency:** DHS Public Affairs coordinates department and independent agency headquarters-level incident communications as necessary throughout the incident, focusing on both the incident locale and nonaffected areas. This ensures continuity and synchronization between the Federal, State, local, and tribal incident communications teams (see Section V).

2. **Joint Information Centers:** Following an Incident of National Significance or domestic incident, JICs are established to coordinate the Federal, State, local, and Tribal incident communications effort. A JIC is a central point for coordination of incident information, public affairs activities, and media access to information about the latest developments.
 - a. **National JIC:** Initially, and at the national level, a virtual JIC led by DHS Public Affairs coordinates information among Federal departments and agencies. If necessary, a National JIC may be established. If established, Federal departments and agencies may be requested to provide representatives to the National JIC. A National JIC may be used when an Incident of National Significance is anticipated to have an extended duration (i.e., weeks or months) and when the incident affects a large area of the country.

 - b. **Incident JIC:** The JIC is a physical location public affairs professionals from organizations involved in the response work together to provide critical emergency information, media response, and public affairs functions. The JIC serves as a focal point for the coordination and dissemination of information to the public and media concerning incident prevention, preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation. The JIC may be established at an on-scene location in coordination with State, local, and tribal agencies depending on the requirements of the incident. In most cases, the JIC is established at, or is virtually connected to, the JFO, under the coordination of DHS Public Affairs. (Information detailing the organization and structure of a JIC is contained in NIMS, Chapter II and ESF #15 Annex and the DHS/EPR/FEMA Emergency Information Field Guide.)
 - (1) **JIC Staffing Components:** Subject to the nature of the incident, the following should be represented in the JIC:
 - (a) Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) public information officer for health and medical support issues and coordination;
 - (b) DHS/EPR/FEMA public information officer and staff;
 - (c) FBI public information officer and staff (when activated in support of a terrorist incident);
 - (d) Other Federal agency public information officers, as required; and
 - (e) State and local public information officers.

 - (2) **JIC Information Management:** The JIC develops, coordinates, and disseminates unified information. News releases issued by the JIC are cleared internally through the JFO Coordination

1 Group to ensure consistent messages, avoid release of
2 conflicting information, and prevent negative impact on
3 operations. This formal approval process ensures protection of
4 law enforcement-sensitive information. The JIC closely
5 coordinates release of information with the Federal interagency
6 incident communications group through DHS Public Affairs.
7

8 (3) **Multiple JICs:** The JIS and incident communications concepts
9 should be employed when multiple JICs are operating in support
10 of the same or related incidents. This ensures mutual
11 awareness and consistency in messaging and public instructions
12 between all participants.
13

14 (4) **DHS Principal Federal Official PAO:** The PFO is supported by a
15 dedicated DHS public affairs officer who functions as the press
16 secretary for the PFO, coordinates media activities for the PFO,
17 provides strategic communications guidance to the JIC, and
18 serves as a designated spokesperson when directed by the
19 PFO.
20

21 **VII. Communications**
22

23 **A. Content:** This section describes incident communications planning factors, resources,
24 warning and alert systems, health safety and preparedness, release and flow of
25 information, spokespersons, the sustaining communications plan, and messaging.
26

27 **B. Developing the Message:** Although Interagency message development is inclusive,
28 rapid, and comprehensive, the nature of an incident may inhibit accomplishment of this
29 team effort. This will be exacerbated if relocation by DHS Public Affairs or other Federal
30 departments and agencies is initiated.
31

32 **C. Delivering the Message:** Message delivery during a potential or actual Incident of
33 National Significance requires use of all available mechanisms and the development of
34 aggressive and creative solutions when traditional tools of communication are not
35 available.
36

37 **D. Receiving the Message:** The public, especially those who require evacuation or other
38 guidance, must have the capability to receive the message. The ability of the public to
39 receive messages and instructions must be considered throughout an incident, and be
40 made known to incident management leadership on a recurrent basis so that appropriate
41 delivery mechanisms are implemented.
42

43 **D. Risk Communications:** Professionals who support this Annex should be trained and
44 conversant in risk communications and are expected to employ these provisions during
45 actual incident management. (HHS and the CDC publish excellent reference guidance
46 on risk communications.)
47

48 **E. Information Security:** An Incident of National Significance may involve classified or
49 sensitive information. Public information and public education efforts in support of
50 Incidents of National Significance must be conducted using proper protocol and
51 procedures for the handling of classified or sensitive information. Operational leadership
52 and the communication team must balance the security of classified and sensitive
53 information with the responsibility to provide the public with critical emergency information
54 and protective action guidance.
55

1 quickly send important emergency information to a specific area. The EAS is
2 designed to account for multiple sources of activation (not just broadcast media
3 but also cable television, satellite, pagers, and such new forms of digital
4 technology as Direct Broadcast Satellite, High Definition Television, and Video
5 Dial Tone) to deliver EAS messages and to account for the needs of such special
6 populations as the deaf and those with differing language requirements. (EAS
7 replaced the Emergency Broadcast System (EBS)).
8

9 **a. Activation and Operation:** When the activation order is given by
10 national authorities to DHS/EPR/FEMA, the agency can access
11 broadcast stations around the nation within several minutes. Authorities
12 can deliver emergency messages and instructions in audio format.
13

14 **b. State Use:** The EAS is available for State use. States are required to
15 maintain a supporting plan to cover EAS operations. DHS/EPR/FEMA
16 coordinates EAS management issues with State authorities.
17

18 **2. NOAA Weather Radio:** NOAA Weather Radio (NWR) is a nationwide network
19 of radio stations broadcasting continuous weather information direct from a
20 nearby National Weather Service office. NWR broadcasts National Weather
21 Service warnings, watches, forecasts and other hazard information 24 hours a
22 day. In conjunction with the EAS, NWR provides an "all-hazards" radio network,
23 making it a single source for comprehensive weather and emergency
24 information. NWR also broadcasts warning and post-event information for all
25 types of hazards: natural (e.g., earthquakes and volcano activity), man-made
26 (such as chemical or environmental incidents), and terrorist attacks.
27

28 **3. DHS/EPR/FEMA Mobile Emergency Response System (MERS):**
29 DHS/EPR/FEMA's MERS provides mobile telecommunications, operational
30 support, life support, and power generation assets for the on-site management of
31 and all-hazard activities. MERS provides a deployable broadcast radio capability
32 for multi-media communications, information processing, logistics, and
33 operational support to Federal, State, and local authorities during Incidents of
34 National Significance and domestic incidents. MERS is a valuable recovery
35 resource to update the public and affected population.
36

37 **4. DHS/EPR/FEMA Recovery Radio Network:** DHS/EPR/FEMA works with local
38 broadcasters to set up the Recovery Radio Network, which provides official
39 information hourly, several times a day, about the incident response and
40 recovery effort by offering a pool feed to local stations. Distribution can be
41 provided through the EAS network. All broadcasters are required to have
42 equipment to monitor and air EAS programs, and most primary EAS stations
43 have portable, remote pick-up equipment that can be installed in the JIC.
44 Alternatively, telephone or two-way radio can be used to deliver programming to
45 the EAS distribution point. The Recovery Radio Network is implemented by a
46 team whose size depends on the scope of the incident.
47

48 **5. Other:** DHS and support agencies will utilize any and all other available means
49 to provide critical information to the public when traditional modes of
50 communication are not available.
51

52 **M. Preparedness:** Incident communication preparedness efforts provide the public and the
53 news media information and instructions needed to immediately comprehend and act
54 following an Incident of National Significance. Preparedness measures are summarized
55 below:

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1. **Public Preparedness:** Preparedness guidance is provided through a number of sources, including:

a. **Websites:** The DHS Website, *Ready.gov*, and the Websites from the Department of Energy, Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control, and Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which provide authoritative and scientifically based information, and information on threats, health preparedness, or postincident actions.

b. **News Releases and Interviews:** Interviews with subject-matter experts, technical experts, and nongovernmental authorities can summarize incident issues in layman's terms. These subject-matter experts are made available to the news media to provide fact-based information and objective analysis of an incident and related issues. DHS Public Affairs develops and airs national public service announcements to educate and reassure the public on the specific incident and related medical or mental health concerns following Incidents of National Significance.

N. **Response:** General incident communications planning guidance is contained in Table 5 at the end of this Annex. This matrix reflects incident actions and commensurate incident communications response activities for a nonspecific Incident of National Significance. Key communications phase measures are summarized.

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TABLE 5. —*Interagency Incident Communications Planning Guide*

INTERAGENCY INCIDENT COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING GUIDE INCIDENT OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE		
Incident Time	Incident Activity	Actions
First Hour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incident • First official reports • Unconfirmed facts and rumors • First media reports • Potential live TV reports • Public has immediate need for information and possible health and safety instructions • Witness media reports • Potential incident video • Potential voluntary or directed evacuations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DHS HSOC notified • IIMG activated • NRP-ICES activated • NICCL activated • DHS Public Affairs initiates communications path contacts, including contact with incident site • State and local authorities may make first releases about the incident • Initial health and safety release (TBD) • EAS may be activated • NOAA Weather Radio system provides initial warning information • Interagency assesses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Control (leads) ○ Coordination ○ Communications, and first release announcement • Initial incident communications strategy agreed upon with interagency • Secretary, DHS, or other senior officials make first public announcement • DHS Public Affairs initiates outreach and liaison with nonaffected State incident communications officials • Splash Web page updates DHS and links to other interagency Websites • Overall, Federal Government focuses on incident support and national messages

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TABLE 5. —*Interagency Incident Communications Planning Guide (Continued)*

INTERAGENCY INCIDENT COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING GUIDE INCIDENT OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE		
Incident Time	Incident Activity	Actions
First Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for rumor continues • Continuing heavy media coverage • Continuing victim and family coverage in media • Search and rescue operations • Possible decontamination issues • Delivery of medicines, as appropriate • Arrival of supporting Federal resources, including medical, incident response, law enforcement, and incident communications • Questions from media: What happened, numbers of victims, impact, Federal response and resources • Media requests for live interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal interagency effort continues to focus on support to incident site, reassurance, and preparedness in nonaffected States • HSAS level changed if necessary and protective measures incorporated in interagency incident communications plan • JIC established to support JFO and incorporate Federal, State, and local authorities; JIC performs standard functions • Daily briefing routine established in coordination with all Federal, State, and local authorities • PFO PAO designated and deployed • Federal supporting departments and agencies publish supporting releases in accordance with interagency plan • Messaging addresses potential medical or health safety instructions • DHHS deploys SERT • DHS Public Affairs coordinates preparation and distribution of nationally televised public service announcements and health advisories • Subject-matter experts made available • Information to support incident impact and assistance resources incorporated in daily messaging • Web pages continue to be updated, coordinated, and linked • JIC distributes statistical information, program availability fact sheet information, information on field-level activities, graphics, video, and photos as appropriate

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TABLE 5. —*Interagency Incident Communications Planning Guide (Continued)*

INTERAGENCY INCIDENT COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING GUIDE INCIDENT OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE		
Incident Time	Incident Activity	Actions
First Week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response and recovery continues • National media coverage wanes • Local media coverage continues • Continuing victim and family coverage • Search and rescue operations • Possible decontamination issues • Media questions regarding assistance support and effectiveness of government efforts • Delivery of medicines, as appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal interagency effort continues to focus on support to incident site and reassurance and preparedness for nonaffected States • JIC supports JFO, performing standard functions • Daily briefing routine continues in coordination with all Federal, State, and local authorities • PFO PAO provides strategic guidance to JIC, and serves as spokesperson • Federal supporting departments and agencies continue to release supporting updates in accordance with interagency plan • Messaging addresses potential medical or health safety instructions • DHS Public Affairs coordinates preparation and distribution of nationally televised public service and health advisories • Subject-matter experts support continues • Information to support incident impact and assistance resources is incorporated in daily messaging • Web pages continue to be updated, coordinated, and linked • JIC distributes statistical information, program facts, graphics, video, and photos as appropriate • Potential VIP visits to incident site

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TABLE 5.—*Interagency Incident Communications Planning Guide (Continued)*

INTERAGENCY INCIDENT COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING GUIDE INCIDENT OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE		
Incident Time	Incident Activity	Actions
Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Media coverage diminished• Emphasis on victims, cause of the incident, and effectiveness of response and recovery effort• Identification of personal stories and special situations• Impact of incident on the nonaffected States and society	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Federal interagency effort focuses on plan recovery, support, and assistance to victims and affected populations• Preparedness measures and readiness to manage follow on incidents• JIC continues to provide briefings with Federal, State, and local team to support recovery plan• JIC continues to document and release information on plan execution and recovery efforts• Responders identified for recognition

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