

# Tribal Relations Support Annex

Draft: 9 July 2004

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1 **Coordinating Agencies:** Department of Interior–Bureau of Indian Affairs

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3 **Cooperating Agencies:** All

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5 **I. Introduction**

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7 **A. Purpose**

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9 This annex provides guidance to all components of the Federal government for establishing  
10 relations with Indian tribes during Incidents of National Significance. The purpose of tribal  
11 relations is to ensure that affected Indian tribes and their communities are aware of available  
12 Federal assistance programs and processes in the event of an Incident of National  
13 Significance.

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15 **B. Scope**

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17 This annex covers all aspects of Federal government relations with Indian tribes.  
18 Implementation of the various aspects of tribal relations and support is discussed further in  
19 ESF #15.

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21 **II. Policies**

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23 Tribal relations facilitates Federal department and agencies' compliance with various laws  
24 and Executive Orders mandating that the Federal government deal with Indian tribes on a  
25 government to government basis. This status reflects Indian tribes' right of self-government  
26 as sovereign domestic dependent nations and the requirement that the Federal government  
27 consult and collaborate with tribal governments on matters affecting the tribes.

28  
29 The primary official responsible for supporting Indian tribes is the Assistant Secretary – Indian  
30 Affairs (ASIA).

31  
32 The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) implements tribal affairs policy, appoints a tribal relations  
33 coordinator, and deploys field officers and other available personnel to assist Indian tribes in  
34 dealing with Incidents of National Significance.

35  
36 Each Federal Agency will work with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and BIA  
37 officials in the Joint Field Office (JFO) to support incident response efforts and will assign a  
38 tribal liaison to the response, if necessary. Federal liaisons are responsible for assessing and  
39 documenting the social, political, and cultural aspects of an incident area that might affect  
40 response and recovery effort.

41  
42 The DHS appoints a tribal relations officer to the JFO and coordinates data sharing with  
43 Federal agencies and departments when necessary to comply with the requirements of the  
44 NRP.

45  
46 **III. Concept of Operations**

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48 **A. General**

- 49  
50 1. Federal departments and agencies prepare for and respond to incidents in  
51 coordination with affected Indian tribes through the Tribal Relations Coordinator,  
52 collecting relevant information on the situation, alerting and deploying required tribal  
53 relations staff to or near the affected area. The ASIA and/or BIA will provide  
54 information, coordinate and monitor efforts, as needed.  
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- 1                   2.       DHS will provide a tribal relations officer who will work in conjunction with the BIA-  
2                   appointed Tribal Relations Coordinator. Other Federal departments and agencies will  
3                   provide support and staff, as needed to provide outreach and coordination services to  
4                   the tribes through the Tribal Relations Coordinator.  
5

6       **B.       Organization:** The following organization applies nationally and regional.  
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8                   1.       **Operations**  
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- 10                   a.       The Tribal Relations Operations Element is located with the JFO and is  
11                   comprised of the tribal relations coordinator from BIA, the tribal relations  
12                   officer from DHS, and support staff assigned to facilitate tribal relations. The  
13                   Operations Element is responsible for organizing and managing the tribal  
14                   relations field component to facilitate government-to-government relations  
15                   with Indian tribes, and interface with community organizations, and disaster  
16                   victims.  
17                   b.       The field component may be divided into geographic areas and sectors,  
18                   depending on the size and nature of the incident.  
19

- 20                   2.       **Support:** Depending on the size and nature of the incident, the Tribal Relations  
21                   Operations Element may include an Information Element to manage the timely flow of  
22                   information to and from the FCO, JFO, tribal relations field component and others as  
23                   needed.  
24

25       **C.       Notification Procedure:** In response to an anticipated or actual event, tribal relations  
26                   officials will be notified, activated and deployed through the Tribal Relations Coordinator. The  
27                   Tribal Relations Coordinator will coordinate with Indian tribes.  
28

29       **D.       Actions:** All Federal government actions are taken in a manner that supports government-  
30                   to-government relations with tribes to the extent possible. A tribe may, however, opt to be  
31                   treated as a local government and deal directly with State and local officials.  
32

- 33                   1.       **Prevention:** Federal agencies provide all possible support to Federally recognized  
34                   tribes in preventing all-hazard incidents. This support includes cooperating with  
35                   State, local, and private entities in identifying critical infrastructure and key resources  
36                   located on or interdependent with Indian tribes.  
37

- 38                   2.       **Preparedness:** Federal agencies cooperate with Federally recognized tribes to the  
39                   extent possible to promote tribal all-hazards preparedness.  
40

- 41                   3.       **Response:** The number of Federal tribal relations field officers and extent of  
42                   involvement throughout incident response and recovery operations is governed by  
43                   procedures set out in ESF #15.  
44

- 45                   4.       **Recovery:** The Tribal Relations Operations Element ensures recovery operations  
46                   follow guidance from the JFO Coordination Group.  
47

48       **IV.       Responsibilities**  
49

50       **A.       Coordinating Agency: Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs**  
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- 52                   1.       In conjunction with the incident-affected Indian tribes, ensures an efficient and  
53                   reliable flow of incident-related information between Indian tribes and the Federal  
54                   government.  
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2. Supply the Tribal Relations Coordinator with a staff of trained personnel.
  3. Establishes and adheres to standardized procedures that provide for a consistent level of tribal relations with Indian tribes.
- B. Cooperating Agencies: All Federal Departments and Agencies**
1. Provide services as stated in National Response Plan, Executive Orders, and other applicable authorities.
  2. Conform to appropriate Tribal Relations guidelines.
  3. DHS provides liaisons to staff tribal relations functions in coordination with DOI.