

RICHLAND COUNTY EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN
ESF 15 - EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

LEAD COORDINATING AGENCY: Richland County Emergency Management

SUPPORT AGENCIES: Richland County Public Information Officers
Richland County Administrator's Office
Richland County Sheriff's Department
Richland County Health & Human Services
Richland County Elected Officials

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose

Establish a mechanism to provide accurate, coordinated and timely information to the general public in the event of an emergency or major disaster situation.

B. Scope

1. A significant emergency will involve many county and local agencies' media organizations. ESF 15 assistance will be provided as requested.
2. ESF 15 coordinates county information to provide the appropriate public information support to federal, state, and local governments.

II. POLICIES

- A. Provide information in a timely, consistent and unified method to state, local, private and tribal organizations.
- B. Local jurisdiction will provide immediate and vital information to the general public and state, local and private organizations regarding response and recovery activities.
- C. The State may start an emergency public information operation to augment or enhance local jurisdiction capability or when requested by county emergency management agency.
- D. The designated Richland County Public Information Officers, when requested by the Richland County Emergency Management Director, have the primary responsibility for the coordination of public information activities in Richland County.
- E. The Governor's Office has lead responsibility as the official spokesperson for state public information activities. State Public Information Officers will coordinate and provide timely information to the Governor's press office.

III. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

A. General

1. Upon notification, the Richland County Public Information Officer(s) (PIOs) will report to the Richland County Emergency Operations Center (EOC), or sign-in to WebEOC, to coordinate and disseminate accurate and timely disaster-related information.
2. The County PIO or another designated PIO will work with the County Administrator, Emergency Management Director and Public Health Officer, whether or not the EOC is activated, to issue appropriate press releases, situation reports and conduct media interviews.
3. The County PIO will coordinate working with the Emergency Management Director to ensure there is appropriate PIO staffing.
4. Initiate rumor control procedures by monitoring media sources, as appropriate.

B. Organization

Richland County operates under the Incident Command System (see Richland County Basic Plan). ESF 15 operates as the Information Unit in the ICS.

ESF 15 coordinates with Wisconsin Emergency Management, as well as local units of government, including sharing press releases, briefings, etc.

ESF 15 may co-locate to the disaster area to support local public information efforts and, in recovery operations, may relocate to the Joint Information Center (JIC) as needed.

C. Phases of Emergency Management

1. Preparedness Activities
 - a. Identify areas where public education programs (i.e., personal preparedness) are needed.
 - b. Develop 24-hour shift change and staffing procedures and checklists for supporting agencies.
 - c. Identify ESF-specific training requirements.
 - d. Identify locations for media briefings.
 - e. Encourage county, local and private organizations to attend WEM public information course.
 - f. Develop and maintain a roster of ESF 15 personnel, including address, telephone, cellular, facsimile numbers and e-mail addresses.

- g. Develop equipment lists
- h. Ensure the support agencies can access their respective agencies' networks from the County EOC.
- i. Develop and maintain an accurate media contact list.
- j. Develop procedures for rumor control inquiries.

2. Response Activities

- a. Assess the scope, magnitude, extent and duration of the incident.
- b. Request ESF 15 Support PIOs based on incident assessment.
- c. Obtain a status report on all local and county activities, as needed.
- d. Collect information concerning field operations and activities.
- e. Coordinate with EOC Manager, County Administrator, response agencies, affected municipalities and state/federal/private organizations to develop a flow of information, including situation reports, health advisories and other public information releases concerning the response and recovery efforts.
- f. Publish public information on County website, County Department Facebook page and NIXLE and disseminate the information to local radio and television stations and distribute information packets to residents affected by the incident.
- g. Coordinate with Health & Human Services for notification to individuals with disabilities.
- h. Attend briefings and gather information for situation updates.
- i. Document and maintain a record of incoming and outgoing communications.
- j. Establish and operate a Joint Information Center (JIC) when appropriate. If a JIC is activated, send a representative to that location, if appropriate.
- k. Work with the County Administrator to establish contact with the pertinent elected officials representing the affected area to provide information on the incident.
- l. Conduct media briefings on a regular basis.
- m. Monitor media and implement rumor control process when appropriate. Monitor television and radio broadcasts, websites, newspapers, etc., to ensure correct information is being put out to the public, and take corrective action if necessary.
- n. EOC will coordinate with Lead PIO before deactivating the ESF 15.
- o. Inform the Wisconsin Emergency Management PIO of response activities.

3. Recovery Activities
 - a. Coordinate with appropriate agencies to deactivate the JIC if activated.
 - b. Disseminate information on recovery programs or available disaster assistance programs available.
 - c. Work with the County Administrator and Emergency Manager to keep elected officials informed of recovery activities.
 - d. EOC Manager will coordinate with Lead PIO before deactivating the ESF 15.

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Primary Agency

Lead Public Information Officer

1. Assess the public affairs implications of the incident.
2. Support the County Administrator, Emergency Manager, Public Health Officer and/or chief elected official, of the affected jurisdiction, with disseminating emergency public information.
3. Designate appropriately trained staff person to serve as the County PIO to coordinate all county public information.
4. Manage EOC public information activities and JIC operations.
5. Coordinate and prepare official public information activities/statements with other participating agencies and affected municipalities.
6. Assist local officials with disseminating information (e.g., protective action recommendations) through the proper channels (e.g., local media, EAS, newspapers, webpages, NIXLE and social media.)
7. Collect and coordinate information from all sources (e.g., the State EOC, county EOC, Command Post, rumor control) to monitor overall response.
8. Obtain approval for release of information from the IC/UC or Emergency Manager.
9. Conduct and/or coordinate regular news conferences at a site at or near the EOC and/or the JIC.
10. Enlist appropriately trained staff to respond to media questions on technical or agency issues if necessary.
11. Monitor media broadcasts and articles to check for accuracy. Monitor and log incoming calls for information and rumors.

12. Designate the County Administrator, Emergency Management Director, Chief Elected Official or Sherriff as chief spokesperson following an emergency or disaster. Coordinate public information through the Emergency Manager Director, the Incident Commander and with the State PIO.

B. All Support Agencies Responsibilities

1. Provide PIO(s) to assist (if necessary) at the scene, JIC or the EOC as requested by Richland County Emergency Management.
2. Assist the Lead PIO by providing pertinent public information for dissemination to media sources and, as appropriate, fact sheets for distribution to the public. Participate in news conferences and briefings upon request.
3. Coordinate information with other PIO(s) including other local agencies and volunteer organizations.
4. Monitor and log incoming calls for information and rumors. Monitor media broadcasts, webpages, social media and articles for accuracy.
5. Provide maps, charts, status boards, schematics or other displays that clarify the disaster situation in support of news conferences and/or briefings.

V. RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

Equipment for Lead PIO

- Laptop Computer – specific for Lead PIO functions
- Ipad
- MiFi
- Cell Phone
- Media Contact List
- Office Supplies (trays, clipboards, paper, pens, etc.)

Equipment for EOC; JIC; Command Post

- Printer
- Fax Machine
- Telephone/Cell Phone
- Telephone Directories
- Office Supplies (trays, clipboards, paper, pens, etc.)
- Maps
- ICS Forms/Logs

VI. REFERENCES (located in EOC)

See *Richland County Emergency Response Basic Plan*.

VII. GLOSSARY/ ACRONYMS

See *Richland County Emergency Response Basic Plan*, Attachment 8 .

VIII. ATTACHMENTS


Attachment 1: Agency Approval Signature Sheets
Attachment 2: Accurate and Timely Information

IX. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Emergency Contact List for Public Information Officers

ATTACHMENT 1 – Agency Approval Signature Sheet

The undersigned have hereby reviewed and approved ESF 15 (Public Information) of the Richland County Emergency Operations Plan.



County Administrator

5 May 2022
Date



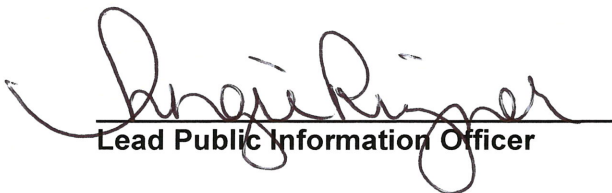
Emergency Management Director

5-5-2022
Date



Health & Human Services Director

5-4-2022
Date



Lead Public Information Officer

5-4-2022
Date

Attachment 2

Accurate and Timely Information

A. PURPOSE

Transmission of information in a timely manner to the public, emergency service organizations, hospitals and health care centers, and other governmental agencies is vital to operations at a WMD/Large Scale Natural Disaster/High Casualty Incident. However, the release of such information must be carefully controlled so as to ensure accuracy. Conflicting or inaccurate information can contribute to public alarm and distrust of the agencies managing the situation.

B. RELEASE OF INFORMATION FROM THE SCENE TO THE MEDIA

1. A Public Information Officer (PIO) will be appointed by the Incident Commander (IC) at the scene of a WMD/Large Scale Natural Disaster/High Casualty Incident.
2. In the event an EOC is opened, the on-scene PIO will be integrated into the system to assist with information release.
3. If an act of terrorism is involved or suspected, the FBI will take the lead on public information and will be integrated into the system to assist with information release.
4. Personnel in the EOC will follow protocols that guide the receipt and distribution of information to local and national media. Information and briefings will be conducted at regular intervals as determined by the Emergency Management Director, County Administrator and IC
5. In the event of a [CBRN](#) terrorism event, a Public Health representative will be present at all media briefings to answer questions related to the incident.
6. Representatives from key emergency services will also be present at briefings to provide immediate technical assistance to the PIO.
7. Area alerting systems and media outlets such as NIXLE, WRCO and FB will be used to provide accurate and timely information regarding sheltering or evacuation instructions. The Emergency Alert System will be used when appropriate.

C. RELEASE OF INFORMATION FROM THE SCENE TO HOSPITALS AND HEALTH CARE FACILITIES

1. Check, confirm and ensure that medical and patient information provided to area hospitals is accurate and uniform in nature.
2. Individual patient information, i.e., number of patients being sent to a particular hospital, unit transporting, and general patient condition and/or triage category, shall be communicated by the Transportation Group or Unit of the EMS Ops Branch.

3. In the event of a WMD incident, information regarding possible agents involved shall only be relayed to area hospitals once a reasonably accurate determination of said agents has been made.
4. Communications systems will likely be monitored by the media. Interception of broadcasts may contribute to the dissemination of sensitive personal information by media outlets. Therefore, in the event personal medical information must be communicated between the scene and hospitals, in accordance with [HIPAA](#) requirements, command personnel should consider handling this via a secure communications channel, i.e., landline telephones, cell phones, secure internet transfers or encrypted radios.

D. COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN EMERGENCY SERVICES AGENCIES

1. Area public safety communications centers will be notified as appropriate.
2. Emergency services units responding to the incident will receive briefings upon arrival at the designated staging area.
3. On-scene emergency services personnel are not to disseminate information to the media or public unless expressly directed to do so by the IC.

E. COMMUNICATIONS WITH PATIENT FAMILY MEMBERS

1. In the event there are large numbers of injuries or fatalities, a Family Assistance Center will be established.
2. The Health and Human Services and the Coroner's Office will assign staff to function as a liaison to family members of injured or deceased persons. VOAD/NGOs such as the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, Catholic Charities, Lutheran Social Services, 211 may be called upon to assist staffing the FAC.

Appendix 1

EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST FOR PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICERS

PIO – EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT CONTACTS

<u>PIO EM Contacts</u>		<u>WORK</u>	<u>PERSONAL</u>
Darin Gudgeon, Emgy Mgmt	darin.gudgeon@co.richland.wi.us	647-8187	608-604-7736
Rose Kohout, Public Health	rose.kohout@co.richland.wi.us	649-5965	608-475-1467
		608-341-7578	608-822-3094
Clint Langreck, County Administrator	clint.langreck@co.richland.wi.us	649-5960	608-475-0009
Tracy Thorsen, HHS	tracy.thorsen@co.richland.wi.us	649-5935	608-780-2162
Barb Scott, MIS	barb.scott@co.richland.wi.us	649-5922	608-604-3511
Angie Rizner, PIO	angie.rizner@co.richland.wi.us	649-5921	608-604-2177
Sheriff, RCSD	sheriff@co.richland.wi.us	647-2106	
Chief Deputy Clay Porter, RCSD	clay.porter@co.richland.wi.us	647-2106	
Lieutenant Dane Kanable, RCSD	dane.kanable@co.richland.wi.us	647-2106	608-604-9126
Chief Billy Jones, RCPD	jones@rcpolice.net	647-2103	608-475-1061
Lieutenant Lauren Moe, RCPD	moe@rcpolice.net	647-2103	
Chief Brian Jones, RCFD	bjones@rcfdwi.com	647-4556	
Shane Stibbe, Park & Rec	shane.stibbe@richlandcenter.com	647-8108	
Bruce Roesler, Richland Hospital	bruce.roesler@richlandhospital.com	647-1880	641-229-0534
Mike Compton, UW-P/R	compton@uwplatt.edu	647-6186	
Jared Burke, Richland School District	burj@richland.k12.wi.us	647-6106	
Julie Prouty, Ithaca School District	julie.prouty@ithaca.k12.wi.us	608-585-2512 x407	
Stacia Kohlstedt, St. Mary's School	stacia.kohlstedt@stmarysrc.com	647-2422	
Eagle School	principal@eagleschoolrc.org	647-6742	
Gary Syftestad, Weston School District	syftestad@weston.k12.wi.us	608-986-2151	
<u>Local Media Contacts</u>			
WRCO – News Desk	wrconews@wrcocom	647-2111	647-8025 fax
WRCO – Ron Fruit	rfruit@wrcocom		
Richland Observer, Dave McGowan	ads@richlandobserver.net	647-6141	
Richland Observer, Dawn Kiefer	editor@richlandobserver.net		
Shopping News, Linda Post	linda.post@wcinet.com	647-2911	
Marty Brewer, Co Board Chair	marty.brewer@co.richland.wi.us	383-0207	
Todd Coppernoll, Mayor	todd.coppernoll@richlandcenter.com	647-3466	608-770-9377
<u>Local Media Contacts – Extended</u>			
Countyline Connection (LaCrosse)	countyline@centurytel.net		
Cow Country 97 (Sparta)	newsroom@cow97.com		
Dodgeville Chronicle	news@thedodgevillechronicle.com		
Great Rivers 211	tahalver@gundluth.org		
Hillsboro Sentry Enterprise	sentry@mwt.net		
Lafarge/Viola	epitaph@mwt.net		
Lancaster/Platteville Radio	wglrnews@wglr.com		
Midwest News – Dave Collins	dcollins@mwt.net		

Vernon County Bulletin	vcb.news@lee.net
WDMP 99.3 (Dodgeville)	mail@99point3.com
Westby Times	thetimes@mwt.net
WVRQ Radio (Viroqua)	news@q102wvrq.com

Madison/Milwaukee Television & Newspaper Contacts

NBC 15	news@nbc15.com	Caroline Peterson	608-445-6266
WKOW 27	news@wkowtv.com	Jennifer Kliese	608-616-9569
WKBT 8	news8@wkb.com		
WISC-TV 3	tips@channel3000.com	Jeremy Nichols	608-220-1545
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel	jsmetro@journal sentinel.com		
Wisconsin State Journal	wsjcity@madison.com		

JOINT INFORMATION CENTER CONTACTS
a/o June 11, 2021

Community Partner PIO Contacts

WORK **PERSONAL**

Angie Rizner, Richland Co PIO	angie.rizner@co.richland.wi.us	608-649-5921	608-604-2177
Amber Burch, EM	amber.burch@co.richland.wi.us	608-647-6474	608-495-0480
Aaron Joyce, City of Richland Center	aaron.joyce@richlandcenter.com	608-647-3466	608-639-0071
Adam Hess, Ithaca School District	adam.hess@ithaca.k12.wi.us	608-585-2311	608-475-4499
Todd Ostrander, Richland School Dist	ostt@richland.k12.wi.us	608-647-6106	608-604-3265
Katie Glass, Southwest Tech	kglass@swtc.edu	608-822-2411	608-732-3886
John Christensen, UW-P/R	christensjoh@uwplatt.edu	608-561-1774	
Erin Barsness, Richland Hospital	erin.barsness@richlandhospital.com	647-6321x2454	608-604-8402
Lyle Kratochwill, Richland Hospital	lyle.kratochwill@richlandhospital.com	647-6321	608-475-9775
Tom Rislow, Pine Valley	tom.rislow@co.richland.wi.us	608-649-1723	608-317-5842 608-654-5464
Jackie Carley, Schmitt Woodland Hills	jackie.carley@mwt.net	608-647-8931	608-604-5609

Regional Partner PIO Contacts

Rose Smyrski, UW-Platteville Vice Chan	smyrskir@uwplatt.edu		608-642-0279
Paul Erickson, UW-Platteville CCO	ericksop@uwplatt.edu	608-342-1194	
Jeff Jelinek, Sauk Co EM PIO	jeff.jelinek@saukcountywi.gov		608-963-2585
Julie Durst, Grant Co PIO	jdurst@co.grant.wi.gov		
Julie Leibfried, Lafayette Co PIO	julie.leibfried@lafayettecountywi.org		