

APPENDIX G

CRISIS COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC INFORMATION



**City of
North Port, Florida**

**Crisis Communications and
Public Information Plan**

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose

The City of North Port's Crisis Communications Plan outlines the roles, responsibilities and protocols that will guide the City in promptly sharing information with all of City's audiences during an emergency or crisis. This plan is a part of City of North Port's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, adopted by the City Commission of the City of North Port and administered by the Emergency Manager.

For the purposes of this plan, a crisis is defined as a significant event that prompts significant, often sustained, news coverage and public scrutiny and has the potential to impact the City. A crisis could be precipitated by an emergency or a controversy. An emergency is a fire, hurricane, crime or other event that presents a threat and typically involves a response from police, fire or emergency medical personnel. A controversy better describes events such as a protest.

B. Scope

The audiences for this plan include City staff, residents, commerce, visitors, the media, national and international publics, and state and federal officials.

C. Consistent with the National Incident Management System

The City of North Port has adopted the National Incident Management System (NIMS), to include the Incident Command System (ICS) as the standard by which "no-notice events/incidents and pre-planned events will be organized and managed. Based on ICS guidance, and City protocols, ICS may be implemented at any level of emergency, for any situation, and by any qualified individual. The use of ICS includes all the standardized forms approved by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group, or the NIMS Integration Center of the US Department of Homeland Security.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN

Our guiding principle will be to communicate facts as quickly as possible, updating information regularly as circumstances change, to ensure the safety of the City and the continued operation of essential services. Our efforts to be simultaneously accurate and quick may mean that some communications are incomplete. We accept this, knowing that how we communicate in an emergency or a crisis will affect public perceptions of the City. Honesty and speed are the most effective means to avoid lasting impact to the institution and widespread second-guessing by the public, which expects immediate access to accurate information. A good offense is the best defense.

At the same time, we realize that in a crisis, people will likely expect us to have more information than we may have. That makes it imperative to speak with accuracy about what we know and not to speculate about details we do not know.

We will use multiple mediums to reach as many of our population as possible with accurate, timely information. This is especially important in the first hours and days of an emergency or a crisis. Our goal is to be open, accountable and accessible to all audiences, while also being mindful of legal and privacy concerns.

The objectives of this Plan are to establish and assign the public information functions for emergency or disaster activations. The public information plan is designed to inform and educate the public about hazards, threats to public safety, and risk reduction through various media. The public information plan provides for timely and effective dissemination of information to protect public health and safety, including response to public inquiries and rumors. Protocols are in place to interface with public officials and VIPs. Procedures include a process for obtaining and disseminating public information materials in alternative formats.

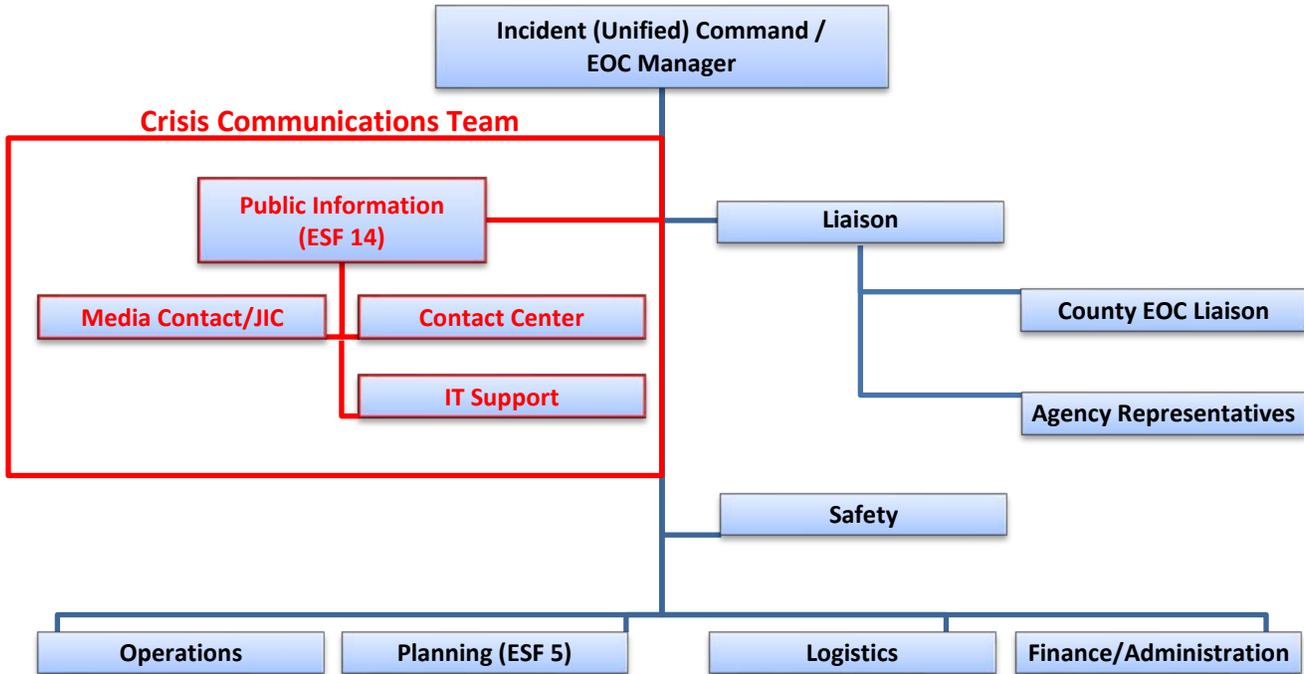
The emergency public information capability includes:

- a central contact facility for the media (i.e., Joint Information Center);
- pre-scripted information bulletins;
- method to coordinate and clear information for release;
- capability of communicating with special needs and diverse populations;
- protective measures guidelines; and
- designated and trained spokesperson(s) who have been qualified to deliver the City's message, appropriate to hazard and audience.

III. ORGANIZATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Organization

1. The Public Information Officer (PIO) position is established within the Incident Command System Organization as part of the Incident Commander's Command Staff. The City Manager shall appoint the PIO(s) for an event, crisis, or disaster.
2. The PIO is responsible to:
 - a. Provide a two-person successor list to Emergency Management Director.
 - b. Assemble and manage the Crisis Communications Team and function within the Emergency Operations Center.
 - c. Establish and operate a Joint Information Center (JIC) and Contact Center near the EOC, collecting information in the EOC, and from field unit PIOs. The JIC will be composed of PIO elements from each responding department/agency to include but not limited to City, State and Federal agencies.
 - d. Organize, schedule and manage media briefings regarding actual emergency preparedness, response, and recovery operations.
 - e. Prepare and disseminate emergency public information materials incidental to an emergency operation.
 - f. During and following an emergency, serve as the single official point of contact between City government and all media representatives.
 - g. Coordinate public information releases and rumor items with spokespersons for emergency response organizations and representatives of County, State and Federal governmental agencies as may be on scene in any official capacity.
 - h. Assist the essential services in developing and disseminating post-disaster health and safety instructions for the reoccupation of evacuated areas and storm damaged homes.



B. Crisis Communications Team Staffing

1. Public Information Officer, City Manager’s Office
2. Community Outreach Manager, City Manager’s Office
3. Customer Service Coordinators from Public Works and Utilities Departments
4. Information Technology support
5. Others as needed
 - Communicators for Contact Center
 - Field PIOs
 - Writers
 - JIC Facility Manager
 - Media Handlers

The City Manager or his/her designee will add or authorize the addition of other team members as appropriate under the circumstances and availability of staff.

C. Convening the Crisis Communications Team

The Crisis Communications Team will convene when the City Manager declares a Level 1 Emergency (the most severe category that presents significant risk to the

community) or has requested to assess communication needs for Level 2 or Level 3 emergencies. The City Public Information Officer or his/her designee will contact each member by phone and/or email to convene immediately.

Given the urgency of rapid communications, the City's Public Information Officer (PIO) or his/her designee has the authority to begin acting immediately, in consultation with the City Manager or his/her designee, until a broader decision can be made about how the City should proceed.

Also, the Public Information Officer may identify a potential crisis or controversy that is not an immediate emergency and assemble the Crisis Communications Team to prepare a communications strategy – again, as part of a coordinated City response.

Depending on the nature of the emergency or crisis, it may not be possible for the Emergency Leadership Team or their designees to convene prior to the timely notification. Once the Emergency Leadership Team meets and can determine whether the City is facing an emergency, execution of this plan can be adjusted accordingly.

D. Location

The Crisis Communications Team headquarters for most crises will be City Hall Room 243. The City PIO will maintain stocks of press packets, press identification badges, parking passes, and copies of this plan.

Since this room has limited conference capabilities, it may be replaced with another facility in the event of an extended crisis or emergency. The primary back-up location is the George Mullen's Activity Center (GMAC) or Morgan Family Community Center (MFCC). The team may move its headquarters to GMAC or MFCC in several circumstances, including technical limitations at City Hall or a need to be near the news media if they are set up at the disaster scene.

IV. RESPONSE

A. Implementation

The Crisis Communications Team will implement some, or all, of the steps outlined below based on circumstances, coordinating with the Emergency Leadership Team. Throughout a crisis, the team will meet frequently to review changing facts, assess whether key messages are reaching audiences and determine whether strategies need to change. The success of this plan rests on open and frequent communications among the City's Emergency Leadership Team and the Crisis Communications Team.

Contact information for leadership and communication officials is included in documents located on the City government's network P: drive.

- Team Contact List
- Senior Administrators
- Crisis Communications Team

Also, the document Checklist for Crisis Communications includes phone and mobile phone numbers and e-mail addresses for key communications personnel tasked with providing initial response.

In an emergency, our goal is to issue our first communication to key City audiences within 30 minutes of notification of the event, with regular updates as needed. Some situations may require even faster initial communications.

B. Immediate Response

The team will carry out these initial tasks immediately:

1. Convene the Crisis Communications Team for any Level 1 emergency.
2. Send management memo as appropriate.
3. Send media alert as appropriate.
4. Convene other communicators for emergency call center or other needs.

C. Secondary Response

Once the Crisis Communication Team convenes, the following tasks will be carried out by this team:

1. **Designate a secretary** who can maintain meeting notes, to-do lists, information files on the ongoing crisis and other items.
2. **Review and write down known facts** – those that can and cannot be released to the public – and determine whether a response is needed, and if that response is needed for all the City's key audiences. These facts will be used to fill in pre-scripted templates (see appendix) for news releases, text messages and other items that have already been developed. It is critical as the situation changes for new fact sheets to be developed.
3. **Develop several key messages** that will be included in all City communications.

One message typically will address what the City of North Port is doing to ensure the safety of community members. Identify protective measures

guidelines to be taken to provide the public with essential information on evacuation, sheltering, sheltering special needs populations and pet sheltering. [Examples: public messages that include instructions for tornadoes (i.e., sheltering in center of home), mosquito-borne illnesses (i.e., using repellent, wearing clothing that covers arms and legs), etc.] Another may need to be forward-looking and address what we are doing to make sure the crisis, or a problem with our response, doesn't happen again. Determine methods for obtaining and disseminating public information materials in alternative formats (e.g., flyers/ brochures/ handouts; internet; phone/CodeRED; or print, radio or television broadcast).

All the messages should evolve as circumstances change but will always aim to restore and maintain confidence and calm, balancing a sense of concern with resolve and action. Sample messages are included in the approved pre-scripted templates (see appendix). It is critical that City Emergency Leadership Team have copies of the most recent news releases and other messages so everyone is clear on what is being shared with the public.

4. **Determine who will act as spokespeople** – the City Manager will be the public face of the City, while the PIO will run briefings and handle media questions between such formal press gatherings. One or more members of the Crisis Communications Team may communicate key messages specific to their department.
5. **Update CityofNorthPort.com website** is paramount. Consideration should be made for written translations for the foreign-speaking residents of the City. The Team should keep in mind that the parties interested in the information will not always be solely residents and should be aware that seasonal residents and out-of-state family members may also need to be apprised of on-going emergency events.
6. **Open the Contact Center** to handle phone calls using a script developed from the key messages, facts and frequently asked questions (FAQs) the Crisis Communications Team has developed or have been obtained from the Sarasota County Contact Center.
 - a. Staff would initially come from customer service personnel from Utilities, Neighborhood Development Services and Public Works Departments. Supplemental staff may come from other departments.
 - b. Assign staff or volunteer to greet visitors at City Hall reception desk.

- c. Calls to City Hall's main number, 941-429-7000, would be forwarded to the Contact Center.
7. **Develop communications for the City Manager**, as appropriate. The City Manager will be tasked with keeping the City Commissioners informed and up-to-date with the latest key messages. The PIO will be responsible for generating and reviewing communications, including correspondence, e-mail messages, talking points, speeches or op-eds, in consultation with the appropriate members of the Crisis Communications Team. The PIO will then provide the City Manager the communications for distribution.
 8. **Coordinate with Sarasota County Communications (ESF-14) and the Charlotte County Public Information Office**, to ensure a consistent message between jurisdictions and to obtain a copy of their frequently-asked questions (FAQs) from their Contact Centers. Attend meetings, via conference call or in-person, as necessary and available.
 9. **Establish a Joint Information Center (JIC)** for the centralization of media personnel. The JIC will be composed of Public Information Officer (PIO) elements from each responding department/agency to include but not limited to City, State and Federal. This center will release public preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation information, as well as certain information on the disaster or emergency at hand such as shelter information, danger zones, and open or closed businesses. The JIC will establish a schedule for press briefings and release other information as needed.
 - a. It is the City's normal practice to permit news reporters and photographers to have open access to the City facilities for conducting interviews after they check in with the Public Information Officer. However, during crisis situations the PIO or his/her designee will determine if access needs to be restricted to avoid disruption to essential services and programs.
 - b. If that determination has been made, then news reporters and photographers will first be directed to a staging area at City Hall. During a severe crisis or in severe weather, the media area may be moved to the Mullen's or Morgan Centers. The PIO may also use other rooms for press events, as needed. The PIO will be responsible for opening this facility, bringing needed supplies (including identification badges, parking passes, media guidelines and press packets) and determining a schedule for 24-hour staffing. (See appendices for JIC Toolkit)

- c. Where practical, pool cameras can be set up for television journalists to share.
 - d. The PIO will coordinate press conferences and related media advisories, as needed. If the emergency requires the opening of a JIC, the PIO will coordinate equipping this center with such items as tables, chairs, podium, sound system, etc. Some emergencies may require that the JIC remain open 24 hours a day for an indefinite period. Should that occur, the City Manager has the authority to use communicators from around City government for staffing. In such a situation, no single person can or should be expected to work around the clock. Rather, the City Manager or his/her designee must tap and empower other communicators to assist with managing the facility and answering media requests.
 - e. The PIO shall arrange for a hearing-impaired interpreter to translate briefings to the deaf and hard-of-hearing community. Consideration should be made for a live or written translation for the Ukrainian and Russian residents of the City.
 - f. A security officer should be assigned to the JIC to prevent access to other parts of the building.
10. **Assign a staff member to monitor media, social media, and online coverage** to anticipate any problems in the way information is flowing to the news media and on the Internet. Summaries of relevant coverage will be provided to the City's Emergency Leadership and Crisis Communications Teams on at least a daily basis, or more frequently as needed.
11. **Schedule media briefings**, a minimum of one media briefing per day, to be held at a time when the information can have the best possible media/public exposure. The PIO shall brief staff members or officials that are requested to speak at the media briefings.
12. **Coordinate all VIP visits** and tours and chaperon them. The PIO will arrange briefings or meetings for visiting dignitaries, and provide the media with information regarding all visits and tours by dignitaries. If visiting dignitaries or public officials visit the EOC, the media shall be allowed access to them upon approval by the Incident Commander and the EOC Manager.
13. **Media Access to the EOC** shall be restricted unless approval is received from the Incident Commander and the EOC Manager. If permission is granted, media shall be escorted always by a member of the PIO team.

14. **Evaluate how to help our community recover**, return to normal and, if needed, regain faith in City government after the trigger event of the crisis is over, in coordination with the City Emergency Team. This may include the need for town hall meetings, letters from the Mayor expressing sympathy, detailed plans to prevent another such crisis, etc. The Community Outreach Manager shall manage this activity.

D. Approvals of outgoing information

Typically, the City uses a collegial approach of multiple approvals before communications pieces, including emails and news releases, are distributed. That system will not work in a crisis. Seconds matter in a crisis, and we will be judged by how quickly we share information with key audiences.

As a matter of policy, the City is committed to trying to meet these expectations. It recognizes the need for unusually crisp decision-making during a crisis to enable rapid, accurate communication in coordination with the institution's broader process. Pre-scripted templates have been approved in advance by City leadership and legal counsel to expedite the approval process during a crisis (see appendices). **Final approval for all communications rests with the Incident Commander or his/her designee.**

E. The End of the Crisis

The City Manager will determine when an emergency has ended and routine communications processes can resume. The decision to declare the emergency over will trigger a review of how the crisis was handled and how communications can improve.

F. After-Action Review

Within 10 days of the end of the event, assess how this plan functioned, address any needed updates and recognize the work of partners whose help was invaluable (i.e., assistance from communicators from other departments/agencies).

Coordinate the review of communications and information with the Emergency Manager who would be preparing the event's After-Action Report and Improvement Plan.

V. TRAINING AND PLAN MAINTENANCE

A. Spokesperson Training

The PIO and Emergency Manager will work together in identifying training opportunities for those selected as City or department spokespersons. At a minimum, spokespersons shall complete the following training programs:

- FEMA, IS-700: Introduction to the National Incident Management System (NIMS)
- FEMA, IS-702: NIMS Public Information
- FEMA, ICS-100: Introduction to the Incident Command System
- FEMA, ICS-200: Basic Incident Command System
- FEMA, ICS-300: Intermediate Incident Command System
- FEMA, G-290: Basic Public Information Course

Resource and time-permitting, spokespersons should complete the following programs:

- Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service, MGT-318: Public Information in an All-Hazards Incident
- National Disaster Preparedness Training Center, PER-300: Social Media for Natural Disaster Response and Recovery

Training records shall be maintained by the Human Resources Division.

As part of this process, the PIO will schedule media training sessions for senior administrators and key team members. After the initial session to train all key officials, sessions will be scheduled annually for people who are new to the Emergency Leadership Team, the Emergency Management Team or the Crisis Communications Team. Every two years, all members will attend a refresher course in media training.

Media training also will be necessary for certain officials who are neither part of the Emergency Leadership Team nor the Crisis Communications Team. The PIO will develop a list of such officials and offer media training on an annual basis.

B. Updating

Annually, this plan will be reviewed and updated as necessary.

The PIO will update phone lists for members of the Emergency Leadership Team and Crisis Communications Team. The PIO will oversee updates and improvements to email lists for internal audiences and updates of media lists and fact sheets.

C. Exercising

The City will conduct an annual drill of emergency management with participation by members of the Emergency Leadership Team. The crisis communications plan will be tested at these times with participation by members of the Crisis Communications Team.

The City, resources permitting, will also conduct at least one test annually of the CodeRED communication tools, which include email, text messaging, website, and phone line.

Appendix G1

Emergency Notifications Scripts

General Guidelines:

- Text messages may not be longer than (140) characters. They may also be used as social media posts.
- E-mail and voice mail messages should generally be the same message.
- There are two categories of notices for text messaging: Emergency and Urgent Situation.
 - **Emergency** – An incident or condition, expected or unexpected, that threatens life or safety and requires immediate action.
 - **Urgent Situation** – An incident or condition that does not pose an immediate threat to life or safety, but that is of a nature where timely receipt of information or instructions may directly affect the well-being of the recipient.
- Keep in mind the principles of public information officers: Be First, Be Right, and Be Credible. In other words, make sure the messages are timely, accurate, and useful.
- Each message should consist of the following three components:
 - Alerting (Attention management) – calling the user’s attention to the issue at hand
 - Informing (Information transfer) – what is happening, and what the user should and should not do
 - Reassuring (Affective or emotional payload) – be aware of the degree of sensitivity as to the audience.

Pre-scripted Messages

TEST

This is a test of City of North Port emergency alert system. If you have received this in error, send email to (individual).

This is a test of City of North Port Emergency Notification Service. This is only a test. In the event of an actual emergency, you would be given brief details and directed to visit the Web at (Emergency Website) for more information and instructions. If you have received this message in error or have difficulty with the transmission of this call, please send email to (individual). Thank you for participating in the City of North Port Alert Emergency Notification System.

ACTIVE SHOOTER /ARMED INTRUDER/SHELTER IN PLACE

Text Message/Social Media Post

EMERGENCY: A suspect with a weapon is (at location). Go to the nearest room and lock door. Follow authorities' instructions.

E-mail Message

City of North Port EMERGENCY! There is a suspect with a [type] weapon (at location). [Shots have been fired.] If you are on site, go into the nearest available room and lock the door. If you are not on (at location), stay away. THIS IS NOT A TEST! Wait for the all clear notification from City of North Port officials.

Voicemail Message

This is [name and title] with an EMERGENCY alert from City of North Port. There is a suspect with a [type] weapon (at location). [Shots have been fired.] If you are on site, go into the nearest available room and lock the door. If you are not (at location), stay away. THIS IS NOT A TEST! Wait for the all clear notification from City of North Port officials.

BIOLOGICAL THREAT

Text Message/Social Media Post

EMERGENCY: City received a biological threat. Prepare to evacuate. Follow authorities' instructions.

E-mail Message

City of North Port EMERGENCY! A biological threat has been received (at location). If you are near the area, prepare immediately for possible evacuation. Listen for instructions from City of North Port officials and follow them quickly and carefully. For additional information and updates go to (Emergency Website)

Voicemail Message

This is [name and title] with an EMERGENCY alert from City of North Port. We have received a biological threat that we deem credible. If you are near (at location), prepare immediately for possible evacuation. Listen for instructions from City of North Port officials and follow them quickly and carefully.

BOMB THREAT

Text Message/Social Media Post

ALERT: City received a bomb threat (at location). Evacuate. Follow authorities' instructions.

E-mail Message

City of North Port EMERGENCY! A bomb threat has been received (at location). If you are near (at location), prepare immediately for possible evacuation. Listen for instructions from City of North Port officials and follow them quickly and carefully. For additional information and updates go to (Emergency Website)

Voicemail Message

This is [name and title] with an EMERGENCY alert from City of North Port. We have received a bomb threat that we deem credible. If you are near (at location), prepare immediately for possible evacuation. Listen for instructions from City of North Port officials and follow them quickly and carefully. For additional information and updates go to (Emergency Website)

BOMB FOUND

Text Message/Social Media Post

EMERGENCY: A bomb has been found (location). Prepare to evacuate. Follow authorities' instructions.

E-mail Message

City of North Port EMERGENCY! A bomb has been found on the (location) in the [building]. Avoid the area, prepare immediately for possible evacuation. Listen for instructions from City of North Port officials and follow them quickly and carefully. Repeat, a bomb has been found (at location). For additional information and updates go to (Emergency Website)

Voicemail Message

This is [name and title] with an EMERGENCY alert from City of North Port. A bomb has been found (at location). Avoid the location, prepare immediately for possible evacuation. Listen for instructions from City of North Port officials and follow them quickly and carefully. Repeat, a bomb has been found in the (location). For additional information and updates go to (Emergency Website)

CIVIL DISTURBANCE*Text Message/Social Media Post*

EMERGENCY: A violent disturbance is occurring (location). Leave the area. Follow authorities' instructions. (135)

E-mail Message

City of North Port EMERGENCY! A violent disturbance has broken out (location). There is a risk of danger to participants and bystanders. For your own safety, leave the area. If you are not in the area, stay away. Follow instructions from City of North Port officials. For additional information and updates go to (Emergency Website)

Voicemail Message

This is [name and title] with an EMERGENCY alert from City of North Port. A violent disturbance has broken out (at location). There is a risk of danger to participants and bystanders. For your own safety, leave the area. If you are not in the area, stay away. Follow instructions from City of North Port officials. For additional information and updates go to (Emergency Website)

CHILD ABDUCTION*Text Message/Social Media Post*

IMPORTANT: A child has been abducted from (at location). For information on the suspect or child go to (Emergency Website)

E-Mail

A child has been abducted from (at location). Call 9-1-1 if the following suspect or child is seen: [type description of suspect and child]

Voice Mail

A child has been abducted from (at location). Call 9-1-1 if the following suspect or child is seen: [Give description of suspect and child]

EARTHQUAKE*Text Message/Social Media Post*

ALERT: An earthquake has occurred. Evacuate all buildings (at location) and remain outside until further notice.

E-mail message

Emergency! An earthquake has just occurred. For you safety, evacuate all buildings (at location). Remain outside for further information. We will provide updates as we receive more information. For additional information and updates listen to NOAA weather radio.

Voicemail message

This is [name, title] with an emergency alert from City of North Port. An earthquake has just occurred. For your safety, evacuate all buildings (at location). Remain outside for further information. We will provide updates as we receive more information. For additional information and updates listen to NOAA weather radio.

EVACUATION

This is the City of North Port. Officers are responding to a report of **(problem)** at **(location)**. Calmly evacuate the building using all available exits. Move away from the building. **(Repeat message three times)**

Problem Resolved: This is the City of North Port. The incident at **(location)** has been resolved and it is safe to return to normal activity. **(Repeat message three times)**

Building Evacuation to a specific direction

This is the City of North Port. Officers are responding to a report of **(problem)** at **(location)**. Calmly evacuate the building. Avoid **(location)**. Go to **(direction/landmark)**. **(Repeat message three times)**

Problem Resolved: This is the City of North Port. The incident at **(location)** has been resolved and it is safe to return to normal activity. **(Repeat message three times)**

EXPLOSION

Text Message/Social Media Post

EMERGENCY: There has been an explosion (at location). Prepare to evacuate. Follow authorities' instructions. (120)

E-mail Message

EMERGENCY! There has been an explosion (at location). If you are in the immediate vicinity, you should evacuate as instructed to by City of North Port officials. If you are not in the area, avoid the area so that emergency units can work unimpeded. Follow instructions from City of North Port officials.

Voicemail Message

This is [name and title] with an EMERGENCY alert from City of North Port. There has been an explosion (at location). If you are in the building or in the vicinity, you should evacuate as instructed to by City of North Port officials. If you are not in the area, you should keep at a safe distance so that emergency units can work unimpeded. Follow instructions from City of North Port officials.

FIRE

Text Message/Social Media Post

ALERT! There is a fire (at location). Evacuate. If you are not in the area, stay clear of the area.

E-mail Message

City of North Port EMERGENCY! A fire has been reported (at location), if you are in the [building], evacuate immediately. If you are not in the area, stay clear so that emergency units and firefighters can work unimpeded. Follow instructions from City of North Port officials.

Voicemail Message

This is [name and title] with an EMERGENCY alert from City of North Port. A fire has been reported (at location). If you are in the (at location), evacuate immediately. If you are not in the area, stay clear of the (at location) so that emergency units and firefighters can work unimpeded. Follow instructions from City of North Port officials.

FLOODING*Text Message/Social Media Post*

EMERGENCY: (At location) is currently flooding. Avoid the area. Monitor NOAA weather radio.

E-mail message

(Affected location) is currently flooding. If you are in the area, seek higher ground immediately. For additional information and updates listen to NOAA weather radio.

Voicemail message

This is [name, title] with an emergency alert from City of North Port. (Affected location) is currently flooding. If you are in the area, seek higher ground immediately. For additional information and updates listen to NOAA weather radio.

GAS LEAK*Text Message/Social Media Post*

ALERT: There is a gas leak and threat of fire (at location). Extinguish all flammable items. Follow authorities' instructions. (129)

E-mail Message

City of North Port EMERGENCY! There is a gas leak (at location) posing a threat of fire from accidental ignition. If you are in the vicinity, immediately extinguish any burners or other flames and prepared to evacuate. If you are not in the area, stay away. Follow instructions from City of North Port.

Voicemail Message

This is [name and title] with an EMERGENCY alert from City of North Port. There is a gas leak in (at location). It poses a threat of fire from accidental ignition. If you are in the vicinity, immediately extinguish any burners or other flames and prepared to evacuate. If you are not in the area, stay away. Follow instructions from City of North Port officials.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Text Message/Social Media Post

ALERT! There has been a hazardous release (at location). Prepare to evacuate. Follow authorities' instructions. (127)

E-mail Message

City of North Port EMERGENCY! There has been a release of a hazardous material (at location). If you are near the are leave now, all others stay away from this location so that emergency units and hazmat teams can work unimpeded. Follow instructions from City of North Port officials.

Voicemail Message

This is [name and title] with an EMERGENCY alert from City of North Port. There has been a release of a hazardous material (at location). If you are in the area leave now, all others stay away from this location so that emergency units and hazmat teams can work unimpeded. Follow instructions from City of North Port officials.

More Details

At approximately (time) today, a potentially hazardous material was released on the City of North Port in Building "?". As a result, building "?" is being evacuated while City of North Port officials are conducting a thorough investigation.

Occupants of Building "?" should take shelter in (location here) until further notice. All other members of the community should avoid the area. Building "?" will be re-opened once it is determined that the building is safe for occupancy. An update will be posted on this site at (time).

HOSTAGE INCIDENT

Text message/Social Media Post

ALERT– A hostage incident is unfolding in (at location). Evacuate immediately and avoid this area.

ISOLATED SHOOTING / STABBING EVENT, SUSPECT NOT IN CUSTODY

Text message/Social Media Post

City of North Port Alert: A [shooting/stabbing] has occurred (at location). A suspect is NOT in custody, Shelter in place. See email for more information. (138)

Email message

City of North Port Alert: A [shooting/stabbing] incident occurred [approximate time] at (at location). Police are on the scene and investigating. A suspect is NOT in custody. If you are (at location), go into the nearest room and lock door, if you are not (at location) stay away. Contact

9-1-1 if you see anything suspicious or have information on the case. Wait for the all clear form City of North Port officials.

Voicemail message

This is [name, title] with an emergency alert from City of North Port. A [shooting/stabbing] incident occurred [approximate time] (at location). Police are on the scene and investigating. A suspect is NOT in custody. If you are (at location), go into the nearest room and lock door, if you are not (at location) stay away. Contact 9-1-1 if you see anything suspicious or have information on the case. Wait for the all clear form City of North Port officials. For additional information and updates go to (Emergency Website)

ISOLATED SHOOTING / STABBING EVENT, SUSPECT IN CUSTODY

Text message/Social Media Post

ALERT: A [shooting/stabbing] has occurred at [building]. A suspect is in custody. Police are on scene.

Email message

City of North Port Alert: A [shooting/stabbing] incident occurred [approximate time] at [building location]. Police are on the scene investigating. This appears to be an isolated incident and a suspect is in custody. Even so, please be cautious and contact the Police at 9-1-1 if you see anything suspicious or have information regarding the crime.

Voicemail

This is [name, title] with an emergency alert from City of North Port. A [shooting/stabbing] incident occurred [approximate time] at [building location]. Police are on the scene investigating. This appears to be an isolated incident and a suspect is in custody. Even so, please be cautious and contact 9-1-1 if you see anything suspicious or have information regarding the crime.

LIGHTNING

Text Message/Social Media Post

EMERGENCY: Electrical storm! Lightning is striking on or near (location). Stay inside and away from metal objects.

E-mail Message

City of North Port EMERGENCY! Electrical storm lightning is striking on or near (location). Stay inside and away from metal objects until the storm has stopped. Monitor a NOAA weather radio.

Voicemail Message

This is [name and title] with an EMERGENCY alert from City of North Port. A major electrical storm with powerful and frequent lightning strikes is hitting City of North Port. Seek cover, stay away from metal objects, and remain inside until the storm has stopped. listen to NOAA weather radio.

MICRO BURST

Text Message/Social Media Post

EMERGENCY: Micro Burst! Micro Bursts are striking (at location). Stay inside and away from doors and windows.

E-mail Message

City of North Port EMERGENCY! Micro Bursts are striking (at location). Stay inside and away from doors and windows until the storm has stopped. For additional information and updates listen to NOAA weather radio.

Voicemail Message

This is [name and title] with an EMERGENCY alert from City of North Port. A major storm with powerful and frequent Microbursts is hitting City of North Port. Seek cover, stay away from doors and windows, and remain inside until the storm has stopped. For additional information and updates listen to NOAA weather radio.

MISSING PERSON

ALERT: (Individual) has been reported missing. Contact 9-1-1 with any information.

SEVERE WEATHER

ALERT: A Severe Weather report indicates potential impact to (at location). Monitor NOAA weather radio.

SEVERE ACCIDENT

City of North Port ALERT severe accident has occurred (at location). Check (City of North Port website) and email.

SHELTER IN PLACE

This is the City of North Port. Officers are responding to a report of **(problem)** at **(location)**. Get to a safe place and take precautions until given the all clear. **(Repeat message three times)**

Problem Resolved: This is the City of North Port. The incident at **(location)** has been resolved and it is safe to return to normal activity. **(Repeat message three times)**

STRUCTURAL FAILURE

City of North Port ALERT. A structural failure occurred in _____. Evacuate immediately and avoid this area. Check (Emergency Website) for further details.

SUSPICIOUS PACKAGE

City of North Port ALERT. A suspicious package found (at location). Evacuate immediately and avoid this area.

SUSPICIOUS PERSON

City of North Port ALERT. Police are checking a suspicious person around (at location). Find a secure location, lock doors, and stay away from windows.

TORNADO*Text Message/Social Media Post*

ALERT: A tornado warning has been issued for City of North Port. Listen to NOAA weather radio for more details.

E-Mail Message

City of North Port Alert: A tornado warning has been issued for the City of North Port. A tornado warning means that a tornado has been sighted on the ground and you should take immediate action to take cover. Stay away from windows, doors and walls that face the building's exterior.

- Go to a shelter area, such as a basement or the lowest level in the building;
- If there is no basement, go to the center of an interior room on the lowest level (closet, interior hallway) away from corners, windows, doors and outside walls;
- Put as many walls as possible between you and the outside;
- Get under a sturdy table and use your arms to protect your head and neck
- Do not open the windows.

If a tornado hits and you sustain injuries, or witness others being injured, call 9-1-1.

If the tornado warning is extended or lifted, an update will be posted at (Emergency Website)

Voice Mail Message

This is a City of North Port Alert emergency message for the City of North Port. A tornado warning has been issued until (time) today. A tornado warning means that a tornado has been sighted on the ground and you should take immediate action to take cover. For more details and updates listen to NOAA weather radio.

UNKNOWN SITUATION*Text Message/Social Media Post*

ALERT: Police are investigating an incident (at location). Please avoid the area. See email for more information (126)

E-mail Message

City of North Port EMERGENCY! Police are investigating an incident (at location). Please avoid the area. As we learn more information, we will provide further updates. Again for your safety avoid (at location) until you have been advised its All Clear.

Voicemail Message

This is [name and title] with an EMERGENCY alert from City of North Port! Police are investigating an incident (at location). Please avoid the area. As we learn more information, we will provide further updates. Again for your safety avoid (at location) until you have been advised its All Clear.

WILDFIRE EVACUATION

Text Message/Social Media Post

ALERT: There is a fast moving wildfire near the City. If you are (at location), evacuate immediately to (location).

E-mail Message

City of North Port Emergency! There is a fast moving wildfire near City of North Port. Evacuations have been ordered. If you are on (at location), evacuate immediately to (location). If you are not in the area, stay away.

Voicemail Message

This is [name and title] with an emergency from City of North Port. There is a fast-moving wildfire near City of North Port. Evacuations have been ordered. If you are (at location), evacuate immediately to (location). If you are not in the area, stay away.

WATER or SEWER FAILURE

ALERT: A water/sewer failure has occurred in (at location). The area is temporarily closed until the area is safe for re-entry.

More Details

At approximately (time) today, a water/sewer failure occurred (at location) in the City of North Port. The area will be closed until the area is safe for re-entry. An update will be posted on this site at (time). The City of North Port appreciates your patience, cooperation and understanding during this incident

ALL CLEAR

Text Message/Social Media Post

ALL CLEAR: The situation is all clear, see you email for more information. (87)

E-mail Message

Will need to be written real time after event to include summary of event and any safety tips (if applicable)

Voicemail Message

This will be written real time after event include summary of event and any safety tips (if applicable)

Warning – General Incident

1. The [County/City] Emergency Management [Office/Department] has issued the following warning for those who live, work, or are visiting in [County/the City]
2. An emergency involving [County/city] is currently in progress at: *[Describe location by reference to facility name (if known), street and cross street, other geographic features (rivers, rail lines, etc.), and neighborhood name where appropriate]*
3. Emergency personnel are currently responding to this incident and local officials are monitoring the situation. To keep yourself safe and avoid impeding the emergency response, please avoid this area until further notice.
4. To repeat, an emergency involving [County/City] is currently in progress at: *(Repeat location in 2 above)*. Please avoid this area.
5. Do not call [911] for information about the emergency. Instead, stay tuned to this station for additional official information.

Warning – Road/Facility Closure

- 1. The City of North Port Emergency Management has issued the following warning for those who live, work, or are visiting in the City of North Port.
- 2. It has been necessary to close certain local streets and highways due to:
 - flooding
 - heavy accumulations of snow and ice
 - fire / explosion
 - incident involving hazardous materials
 - Other:

- 3. As of _____ today, the following roads have been closed by law enforcement officials:

Street or Route _____ At or Between _____

Please avoid these routes.

- 4. If you must travel, use alternate routes, such as:
- 5. We recommend that you refrain from driving and remain at home due to the extremely bad travel conditions.
- 6. In addition, the following facilities have been closed due to the emergency situation:
- 7. Again, the roads and streets that have been closed are: *(Repeat list in 3 above)*
- 8. Please stay tuned to this station for additional information on the current emergency.

Warning - Shelter-in-Place

1. The City of North Port Emergency Management has issued the following warning for those who live, work, or are visiting in the City of North Port.
2. There has been an accidental release of hazardous material that is affecting a portion of the local area. People in the following area must take protective measures:
3. If you are located in this area, do the following immediately in order to protect yourself:
 - A. Go inside your home, workplace, or the nearest building that appears to be reasonably airtight and stay there. Take your pets with you.
 - B. Close all doors, windows, and any fireplace dampers.
 - C. Turn off any heating or cooling system that draws in air from the outside.
 - D. Keep your radio on and tuned to receive emergency announcements and instructions
 - E. Gather items that you may need to take with you if you are advised to evacuate.
4. People traveling in vehicles should seek shelter in the nearest airtight structure. If a suitable structure is not immediately available, travelers should roll up car windows, close air vents, and turn off the heater or air conditioner until they reach a suitable building.
5. If shelter is not immediately available, keep a handkerchief, towel, or damp cloth snugly over your nose and mouth until you get indoors.
6. (If school is in session.)
 Students at the following school(s) are taking shelter at their schools:

Parents should not attempt to pick up students at school until the hazardous situation is resolved and they are advised it is safe to do so.

 Students at the following school(s) [have been/are being] evacuated to other facilities:

Parents should not attempt to pick up students from schools that have been evacuated. Local officials will provide information on where to pick up school children as soon as it is available.
7. If you know of any neighbors or co-workers with hearing or language problems or functional and access needs, please advise them of this message.
8. Please do not call [911] or local emergency officials for information. Stay tuned to this station for additional information.

Special News Advisory – Pre-Evacuation

1. The City of North Port Emergency Management has issued the following warning for those who live, work, or are visiting in the City of North Port.
2. Due to the threat of [_____], it may be necessary for people who live, work or are visiting in the certain local areas to evacuate in the near future. This area(s) that may be at risk include:
3. Evacuation is NOT being recommended at this time. Local officials will advise you if evacuation is necessary. However, you should be prepared to evacuate if needed. To prepare, you should:
 - A. Assemble the following emergency supplies:
 - Clothing for your family for several days
 - Bedding, pillows, and towels
 - Prescription medicines & spare eyeglasses
 - Soap and toiletries
 - Baby food and diapers
 - Your address book or list of important telephone numbers
 - Your checkbook, credit cards, and cash
 - Your driver’s license and identification cards
 - A portable radio and flashlight.
 - B. You should also:
 - Gather suitcases, boxes, or bags to hold your emergency supplies.
 - Be prepared to secure your home or office and your property before you depart.
 - Ensure your car is in good shape and you have adequate fuel.
 - Decide where you will go if you must evacuate. Decide with relatives or friends or consider making hotel or motel reservations.
4. Potential evacuation routes from the area(s) at risk include:
5. Potential evacuation routes from the area(s) at risk are described in:
6. If you know of any neighbors or co-workers with hearing or language problems or functional and access needs, please advise them of this message. And if you have neighbors or co-workers who do not have transportation, offer to assist them if you can.
7. We want to emphasize that this is a PRECAUTIONARY message about possible evacuation. Evacuation is NOT being recommended now.

8. Keep your radio or TV on and listen for further information about this situation. Please do not call [911] or local emergency officials for information as this ties up telephone lines needed for emergency operations.

Warning Message – Urgent Evacuation

1. The City of North Port Emergency Management has issued the following warning for those who live, work, or are visiting in the City of North Port.
2. Due to [_____] that [threatens/is affecting a portion of the local area, the [County Judge/City Mayor] recommend that people in the following area evacuate immediately to protect their health and safety:

3. Recommended evacuation routes from the area(s) at risk include:

4. Be sure to take essential items such as:

- prescription medicines
- eyeglasses
- identification cards
- checkbook
- credit cards
- valuable papers

Do not delay your departure to collect other belongings.

5. Take your pets with you, but make sure you bring a leash, crate, or cage for them. Some shelters will not accept pets.
6. If you have no means of transportation or if you are physically unable to evacuate on your own, ask a neighbor to assist you.
7. If you know of any neighbors or co-workers with hearing or language problems or functional and access needs, please advise them of this message. And if you have neighbors or co-workers who need help or do not have transportation, offer to assist them if you can.
8. Repeating, local officials recommend the people in the following area(s) evacuate now: *(Repeat the area description in paragraph 2 above.)*
9. Please do not use your telephone except to report a true emergency. Stay tuned to this station for more information and instructions from local officials.

Warning Message – Mandatory Evacuation

1. The [The City of North Port Emergency Management has issued the following warning for those who live, work, or are visiting in the City of North Port.
2. Due to [___], the City Commission of the City of North Port, under Florida law, has ordered that people evacuate immediately the following area to protect their health and safety and the health and safety of possible rescuers:
3. Recommended evacuation routes from the area(s) at risk include:

4. Be sure to take essential items such as:

- prescription medicines
- eyeglasses
- baby supplies
- personal care items
- identification cards
- checkbook and credit cards
- valuable papers

Listen to this station for more information on what you need to take with you. Secure your home before you depart.

5. Take your pets with you, but make sure you bring a leash, crate, or cage for them. Remember some shelters will not accept pets
6. Decide where you will stay until the emergency is resolved. Staying with relatives or friends or in a hotel or motel is a good choice.
7. If you can't stay with friends or relatives or find a motel room, listen to this station for more information on the locations of public shelters.
8. If you have no means of transportation or if you are physically unable to evacuate on your own, ask a neighbor to assist you.
9. If you know of any neighbors or co-workers with hearing or language problems or functional and access needs, please advise them of this message. And if you have neighbors or co-workers who need help or do not have transportation, offer to assist them if you can.
10. Repeating, local officials, under Florida law, are ordering the people in the following area(s) to evacuate immediately: *(Repeat the area description in paragraph 2 above.)*

11. Please do not use your telephone except to report a true emergency. Stay tuned to this station for more information and instructions from local officials.

Special News Advisory – Supplemental Evacuation Information

1. The City of North Port Emergency Management has issued the following warning for those who live, work, or are visiting in the City of North Port.
2. Due to the threat of [____], local officials have recommended that people who live, work or are visiting in the following areas evacuate to protect their health and safety:
3. Use the following evacuation routes: [list evacuation routes]
4. You should take the following emergency supplies with you:
 - clothing for your family for several days
 - bedding, pillows, and towels for each family member
 - prescription medicines & spare eyeglasses
 - soap and toiletries
 - baby food and diapers
 - address book or list of important telephone numbers
 - checkbook, credit cards, and cash
 - driver's license and identification cards
 - portable radio and flashlight, with extra batteries
5. Plan where you will stay until the emergency is resolved. Staying with relatives or friends or in a hotel or motel is a good choice.
6. If you cannot find another place to stay, temporary public shelters will be/have been opened at:
7. Take your pets with you, but make sure you bring a leash, crate, or cage for them as well as pet food.
8. Secure your property before you depart. Shut off all appliances, except refrigerators and freezers. Lock all doors and windows.
9. Expect travel delays on evacuation routes. If you have a substantial distance to drive, you may want to take drinks and ready-to-eat food in your car in case you are delayed.
10. If you have no means of transportation or if you are physically unable to evacuate on your own, ask a neighbor to help you.
11. If you have neighbors or co-workers, who need help or do not have transportation, offer to assist them if you can.

12. If you know of any neighbors or co-workers with hearing or language problems or functional and access needs, please advise them of this message.
13. Please do not use your telephone except to report a true emergency. Stay tuned to this station for more information and instructions from local officials. If you missed some of the information in this advisory, it will be broadcast again soon.

Special News Advisory – School & Public Facilities

1. The City of North Port Emergency Management has issued the following warning for those who live, work, or are visiting in the City of North Port.
2. The current emergency involving [_____] has affected the operation of the number of local facilities. This advisory is intended to provide you an update on the status of schools, hospitals, nursing homes, and other key facilities.
3. All local public schools have been closed.
4. The following schools have been closed and students [are being/have been] returned to their homes:
5. The following schools have been evacuated and their students relocated to other facilities:

School _____ Students relocated to:

Parents should pick up their children at these host facilities.

6. The following hospitals and nursing homes have been evacuated and their patients relocated to other facilities:

Facility _____ Patients relocated to:

7. The following government offices, parks, recreation areas, and other public facilities have been closed:
8. Please stay tuned to this station for more information and instructions from local officials.
9. And please refrain from using the telephone unless you have a true emergency.

Appendix G2

Joint Information Center Toolkit

News Release Procedures

Procedures:

- News releases come from the Lead PIO and agency PIOs.
- All news releases are sent through the PIO.
- All news releases are to be approved by the Incident Commander.

The Lead PIO and staff are responsible for news releases throughout the course of the incident. These releases should provide a comprehensive, “big-picture” view of the incident and meet the JIC goals established by the Lead PIO.

Agency PIOs can release their own specific information. They can send out their own news releases, or incorporate their information into a Lead PIO release.

Agency PIOs can do their own releases if their information is time sensitive and can't wait for a Lead PIO release to be compiled. A separate news release also can be done if the information is extensive or better served if it is a stand-alone release. For instance, the American Red Cross might choose to have a listing of blood donation locations included in a Lead PIO release, but may want to do a longer, stand-alone release about severe blood shortages.

Agency PIOs who issue separate releases are encouraged to use the template. This template provides for agency PIOs having their agency's title displayed prominently at the top of the release but maintains JIC uniformity to let the news media know the news release is coming from the JIC.

The Lead PIO office and agency PIOs should have them approved by their director and the Incident Commander. Once the news release is ready to be issued to the news media, the writer records the news release on the Release Log maintained by the PIO. This will assign a number to the news release. The PIO will take care of distribution.

News Conferences

General Objectives and Aides:

- Adhere to the talking points.
- Avoid making conference political.
- Utilize the checklist.

When dealing with multiple agencies during an event, it's important to make sure all agencies have a voice in the news conferences without bogging it down with endless speakers and politics. News agencies attend/cover a news conference if pertinent information is offered.

It's essential to plan news conferences well in advance. The JIC should have established basic goals when first formed, and it's important to ensure the news conferences are focusing on those goals.

Basic talking points should be established and stressed up front. Talking points should address the questions foremost in the public's mind and focus on public safety. The talking points should be communicated to all speakers and speakers should be encouraged to stay on message.

Checklist: Opening a JIC**Steps taken by Lead PIO, Assistant Lead PIOs, and JIC Facility Manager**

- Determine who is the Lead PIO.
- Determine the JIC location.
- Assign a JIC Facility Manager (contact Property Maintenance)
- Ensure the chosen location is available and usable.
- Send PIO call-out. Include in message where to meet and who to call for more information.
- Check/assemble supplies and equipment.
- Test equipment. Are phones and faxes working, etc.?
- Maintain roster of responding PIOs and other support personnel.
- Assign PIOs and other personnel to roles as applicable.
- Once a majority of PIOs are present, hold a situation assessment briefing.
- Announce to the news media that the JIC is operational.
- First news release lists JIC personnel, phone and fax numbers etc.

Recommended Items for a PIO “Go Kit”

The following items are recommended for stocking an Agency PIO’s “Go Pack.”

- Agency identification
- Business cards
- Lap top computer (with battery, charger, AC plug) and broadband card
- Smartphone (with charger, AC plug, car charger)
- 800 MHz radio with charger
- Flashlight with batteries
- Inverter (for car accessory outlet)
- Office supplies (pads of paper, folders, pens, pencils, sharpener, stapler, staples, paper clips, tape, scissors, markers, etc.)
- Contact lists (for news media and your agency) and your agency’s news release templates in the following forms:
 - On hard drive of lap top
 - In memory stick
 - Hard copies
- Map Book
- Rain/weather gear
- Safety vest
- Basic personal grooming/hygiene supplies
- Waterproof container to pack it all in

JIC Technology and Equipment

- Printer
- Printer paper
- Flash drive or disks/CDs
- JIS plan and other such file resources
- Copies of various forms and checklists, etc.
- Extra notebooks, pens and pencils
- Blank nametags or something for news media credential IDs
- Corkboard and/or dry erase board
- Thumbtacks, dry erase markers, eraser
- Tape
- Sticky Pads
- Clipboards
- Paperclips, binder clips, rubber bands
- Markers
- Scissors
- Stapler
- Surge protector/power strip and extension cord

**NEWS RELEASE Agency Name Here
from the Joint Information Center**

Phone: (XXX) XXX-XXXX

FAX: (XXX) XXX-XXXX

Time/Date

Contact: John Doe / (386) 123-4567 / Email:

Event Title and Release number (such as: Hurricane AI, Release #22)

HEADLINE WILL GO HERE

Body of the release here. Body of the release here.

Body of the release here. Body of the release here.

Body of the release here. Body of the release here. Body of the release here. Body of the release here. Body of the release here. Body of the release here. Body of the release here. Body of the release here. Body of the release here. Body of the release here.

NEW INFORMATION:

- Bulleted list of the new facts not previously reported.
- Bulleted list of the new facts not previously reported.
- Bulleted list of the new facts not previously reported.

BACKGROUND:

- Bulleted list of facts previously reported of the incident.
- Bulleted list of the facts previously reported.
- Bulleted list of the facts previously reported.

NEXT UPDATE

Time and date of the next press release update and/or press conference.

Information for inclusion in JIC news release

From: Agency Name

POC: Agency PIO

Date and Time Submitted to Lead PIO office: Jan 1, 2009, 1:30 p.m.

LEAD PIO OFFICE NOTES FOR WHEN RELEASE IS COMPLETE:

Release number this information was included in: List
any changes that were made:

AGENCY PIO NOTES TO LEAD PIO OFFICE:

Include here notes/directions for the Lead PIO office news release writer.

TEXT FOR RELEASE:

Put the text of what you want put in the news release here exactly as you would like to see it published so that the news release writer can just copy and paste.

Checklist: Holding a News Conference

- Decide who needs to be present by determining the types of questions that need to be answered. (If no new information is available, do not hold a news conference/briefing.)
- Take deadlines for print/broadcast media and other community events into consideration when scheduling a conference (as a guideline, no later than 3 p.m. for print publications or evening news, no later than 9 p.m. for nightly news).
- Notify news media of time, location and topic of the briefing/conference.
- If possible, include visual aids such as large, colorful maps, photos, etc. (If possible, have visual aids available online for download.)
- Attempt to hold informational portion of the conference to less than 30 minutes and provide ample time to answer news media questions.
- At the end, announce time and location of next news conference.

Room set-up: (Contact Property Maintenance)

- Rows of chairs with wide aisles between them.
- Raised stage areas in the back of the room for photographers.
- Raised stage in front of room complete with podium and possibly a table and chairs for speakers.
- No white background behind stage. Use a color and decorate with plants.
- Visible Web site address and JIC signage/logo.
- Appropriate lighting and sound system.
- Provide water and glasses for speakers.
- Provide easy ins and outs for speakers. (Use security if necessary.)

Speaker tips:

- Arrange speakers in order of appearance.
- Prepare speakers on angles/types of questions they may be asked.
- Discuss how to transition between speakers.
- Discuss management of questions and timeframe.

News Media Inquiry (Intake Form)

No. _____ (in order received)

Date: _____

Time: _____ A.M./P.M.

Inquiry Received from: _____ (person)

Phone: _____

E-mail: Reporter/Editor with: _____ (organization)

Deadline:

Question/Inquiry:

Response:

Is follow-up needed? _____ If so, when? _____

Notes:

First 48 Hours Checklist

Critical First Steps After Verification

Notification

- 1. Ensure your leadership is aware of the emergency and that they know you are involved.
- 2. Use your crisis plan’s notification list to ensure all of the communication chain of command is aware and know you are involved.
- 3. Give leadership your first assessment of the emergency from a communications perspective and inform them of the next steps you are taking.
- 4. Use the internal communication system (e-mail) to notify employees that their agency is involved in the response and that updates will follow. Ask for their support.

Coordination

- 1. Contact local, State, and Federal partners now.
- 2. If potential criminal investigation, contact FBI counterpart now.
- 3. Secure spokesperson as designated in the plan.
- 4. Initiate alert notification and call in extra communication staff, per the plan.
- 5. Connect with the Joint Information Center-make your presence known.

Media

- 1. Be first: Provide a statement that your agency is aware of the emergency and is involved in the response. (Use the Template for Pre-scripted, Immediate Response to Media Inquiries.)
- 2. Be credible: Give directions to media about when and where to get updates from your agency.
- 3. Be right: Start monitoring media for misinformation that must be corrected now.

Media

- 1. Trigger your public information number operation now if you anticipate the public will be seeking reassurance or information directly from your organization. (You can adjust hours of operation and number of call managers as needed.)
- 2. Use your initial media statement as your first message to the public.
- 3. Ensure your statement expresses empathy and acknowledges the public’s concern about the
- 4. Give the pre-cleared facts you have, and refer the public to other information sites, as appropriate.
- 5. Remind the public that your agency has a process in place to mitigate the crisis.
- 6. Start monitoring public calls to catch trends or rumors now.

Partners/Stakeholders

- 1. Send a basic statement to partners (the same as to the media) to let them know you are thinking about them.
- 2. Use prearranged notification systems.
- 3. Engage leadership to make important first phone calls, based on your plan, to partners and key stakeholders to let them know your agency is responding.

Incident Situation Summary

Date and time:

Location:

Nature of incident:

Estimated number of victims:

Potential or critical infrastructure involved:

Evacuation status:

Response status:

Protective measures initiated: Lead

Agency:

Incident Verification

It is important to verify the initial reports of an incident and to make sure that you have correct information. Verified information is a critical factor in making appropriate decisions regarding the incident.

Have all the facts been received? (to the best of your knowledge?)

Did the information collected come from formal, credible sources such as a local, state, or federal agency?

Do you have similar reports about the incident from more than one source?

Is the information from different sources consistent?

Is the characterization of the event plausible?

If necessary, was information clarified through subject matter experts?

If you can answer “yes” to these key checkpoints, you have completed the key steps to verifying the situation.

Note: Verification is not a function for just one person. It requires input from a variety of sources.

Message Development for Emergency Communication

Step 1: Consider the following general factors

- A. Target audience(s) (e.g., general public, health providers):
- B. Purpose of messages (e.g., give facts/update, respond to media):
- C. Method of delivery (e.g., TV interview, press release):

Step 2: Consider the six basic emergency message components

- A. Expression of empathy:
- B. Clarifying facts (Who: What: Where: When: Why: How:)
- C. What we don't know:
- D. Process to get answers:
- E. Statement of commitment:
- F. Referrals (for more information):
- G. Next scheduled update:

Step 3: Decide what are the three most important message topics for you to cover

- A. 1.
- B. 2.
- C. 3.

Step 4: Develop a complete key message for each of your three message topics

TOPIC 1:

Complete message:

Additional supporting facts (if any): Soundbite:

TOPIC 2:

Complete message:

Additional supporting facts (if any): Soundbite:

TOPIC 3:

Complete message:

Additional supporting facts (if any): Soundbite:

Step 5: Check your messages for the following and revise, if needed

- Positive action steps
- Honest/open tone
- Applied risk communication
- Test for Clarity
- Use simple words, short sentences
- Avoid jargon
- Avoid humor
- Avoid extreme speculation
- Avoid judgmental phrase

JIC Equipment and Supplies Checklist

Equipment	Location	How to obtain it
Fax machine (preprogrammed for broadcast fax releases to media and partners)		
Computers (on LAN designated for partners and media)		
Laptop computers		
Printers for every computer		
Copier (and backup)		
Several tables		
Smartphones		
Visible calendars, flow charts, bulletin boards, easels		
Designated personal message board		
Small refrigerator		
Paper		
Color copier		
A/V equipment		
Portable microphones		
Podium		
TVs with cable hookup		
DVD/CD		
Paper shredder		
Copier toner		
Printer ink		
Paper		
Pens		

Equipment	Location	How to obtain it
Markers		
Highlighters		
Erasable markers		
UPS/FedEx/USPS supplies		
Sticky Notes		
Tape		
Notebooks		
Poster board		
Standard press kit folders		
Formatted computer disks		
Color-coded everything (folders, inks, etc.)		
Baskets (to contain items not ready to be thrown away)		
Organizers to support your clearance and release system		
Expandable folders (indexed by alphabet or days of the month)		
Staplers (several)		
Paper punch		
Three-ring binders		
Organization's press kit or its logo on a sticker		
Colored copier paper (for door-to-door flyers)		
Paper clips (all sizes)		

Template for Pre-scripted, Immediate Response to Media Inquiries

Use this template if the media is “at your door” and you need time to assemble the facts for the initial press release statement. Getting the facts is a priority. It is important that your organization not give in to pressure to confirm or release information before you have confirmation from your management and field staff, emergency operations center, etc.

The purpose of this initial press statement is to answer the basic questions: who, what, where, when. This statement should also provide whatever guidance is possible at this point, express the association and administration’s concern, and detail how further information will be disseminated. If possible, the statement should give phone numbers or contacts for more information or assistance. Remember that this template is meant only to provide you with guidance. One template will not work for every situation.

The following are responses which give you the necessary time to collect the facts. Use the Template for Press Statement for providing an initial press release statement after the facts are gathered. NOTE: Be sure you are first authorized to give out the following information.

If on Phone to Media:

- We’ve just learned about the situation and are trying to get more complete information now. How can I reach you when I have more information?
- All our efforts are directed at bringing the situation under control, so I’m not going to speculate about the cause of the incident. How can I reach you when I have more information?
- I’m not the authority on this subject. Let me have (name) call you right back.
- We’re preparing a statement on that now. Can I fax it to you when it’s ready?
- You may check our Web site for background information, and I will fax/e-mail you with the time of our next update.

If in person at incident site or in front of press meeting:

- This is an evolving emergency and I know that, just like we do, you want as much information as possible right now. While we work to get your questions answered as quickly as possible, I want to tell you what we can confirm right now:
- At approximately (time), a (brief description of what happened).
- At this point, we do not know the number of (persons ill, persons exposed, injuries, deaths, etc.).
- We have a (system, plan, procedure, operation) in place for just such an emergency and we are being assisted by (police, FBI, DHS) as part of that plan.
- The situation is (under) (not yet under) control and we are working with (local, State, Federal)

authorities to (contain this situation, determine how this happened, determine what actions may be needed by individuals and the community to prevent this from happening again).

- We will continue to gather information and release it to you as soon as possible. I will be back to you within (amount of time, 2 hours or less) to give you an update. As soon as we have more confirmed information, it will be provided.
- We ask for your patience as we respond to this emergency.

Notes: Depending on the incident, immediate protective measures may need to be provided. Consider using an expression of empathy, if appropriate.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: (name of contact)

PHONE: (number of contact)

Date of release: (date)

Headline—Insert your primary message to the public

Dateline (your location)—Describe the current situation in two or three sentences.

Insert a quote from an official spokesperson demonstrating leadership and concern for victims. “ ”

Insert actions being taken.

List actions that will be taken.

List information on possible reactions of the public and ways citizens can help. Insert a quote from an official spokesperson providing reassurance. “ ”

List contact information, ways to get more information, and other resources.

List information on possible reactions of the public and ways citizens can help.

Insert a quote from an official spokesperson providing reassurance. “ ”

List contact information, ways to get more information, and other resources.

NEW INFORMATION:

- Bulleted list of the new facts not previously reported.
- Bulleted list of the new facts not previously reported.
- Bulleted list of the new facts not previously reported.

BACKGROUND:

- Bulleted list of facts previously reported of the incident.

- Bulleted list of the facts previously reported.
- Bulleted list of the facts previously reported.

NEXT UPDATE

Time and date of the next press release update and/or press conference.

