



External Affairs

ESF 15



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Table 1-1: Coordinating and Supporting Agencies

Lead Coordinating Agency	Department of Military Affairs/Wisconsin Emergency Management (DMA/WEM)
Governmental Support Agencies	Department of Military Affairs (DMA) All other participating state agencies
Non-Governmental Support Organizations	2-1-1 Wisconsin All other participating non-governmental agencies
Private Sector Organizations	As appropriate
Federal ESF Coordinating Agencies	Department of Homeland Security (US DHS)

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose

To provide accurate, coordinated, and timely information to the public in the event of an emergency or major disaster situation through the news media, state agency websites, press conferences, social media, and other communications means.

1.2. Scope

ESF 15 coordinates state actions to provide the required external affairs support to local, tribal, territorial, and state incident response entities. ESF 15 integrates the components of the following:

- 1.2.1. Public affairs – provides a single point to collect, verify, and disseminate public information.
 - 1.2.1.1 Provides timely and accurate information regarding the status of the emergency response.
 - (1) In certain law enforcement-related incidents, federal, state, tribal, and local law enforcement agencies may need to withhold or delay sensitive information from public release to protect the integrity of the criminal investigation.
 - 1.2.1.2 Coordinates appropriate public information support to federal, state, local, county, and tribal governments.
 - 1.2.1.3 Coordinates the release of public information from state agencies and other groups/agencies, as appropriate.
 - 1.2.1.4 Assures the public that the state is responding to the emergency.
- 1.2.2. Rumor control – coordinates prompt and authoritative response or correction, or both, to trending incomplete, inaccurate, or ambiguous information related to the emergency.
- 1.2.3. Congressional/legislative affairs – facilitates access to disaster response information for Congressional and legislative members.



- 1.2.4. Joint Information Centers (JIC) ensure the coordinated release of information under ESF 15. *Note: See Attachment 1: Joint Information Center (JIC) Plan.*

1.3. Situation Overview and Planning Assumptions

- 1.3.1. Emergencies often create substantial public interest and considerable demand from the media for information. Providing accurate information based on confirmed reports is the appropriate response to that interest.
- 1.3.1.1 Assistance from communication or intergovernmental staff of federal, state, and non-governmental partners may be requested.
- 1.3.2. A disaster situation can cause damage to infrastructure and property, which may lead to disruptions to public safety and utility service. If utilities experience widespread outages, providing public information through phone, internet, and television outlets may be challenging.
- 1.3.3. To the fullest extent possible, all public information released by ESF 15 will be made available in the primary language or languages spoken by the affected community.

1.4. Policies

- 1.4.1. The lead public information officer (PIO) from WEM or a PIO designee from DMA coordinates ESF 15 during a disaster. Depending upon the type of disaster, however, an alternate state agency may provide the lead PIO (e.g. the Wisconsin Department of Health Services [WI DHS] during a public health emergency).
- 1.4.2. The governor's office has lead responsibility as the official spokesperson for state public information activities. The lead PIO coordinates with the governor's office, as appropriate.
- 1.4.3. ESF 15 coordinates with PIOs from federal, regional, state, local, and tribal units of government, private sector, and non-profit organizations as necessary to provide emergency public information.
- 1.4.4. Emergency public information activities may be managed through a Joint Information System (JIS) to coordinate and disseminate information from multiple agencies.
- 1.4.5. The lead PIO may enlist other state agency PIOs to serve as spokespersons on behalf of the state or on behalf of their agencies and to assist in the JIS. These activities are coordinated with the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) or Joint Information Center (JIC).



2. Concept of Operations

2.1. Mobilization

- 2.1.1. WEM public information staff will be notified of incidents that have potential state public information implications.
- 2.1.2. In the event the SEOC is elevated to Level 4, WEM's PIO or a designated PIO from DMA will support enhanced monitoring remotely to coordinate ESF 15.
- 2.1.3. In the event the SEOC is elevated to Level 3 or above, WEM's PIO or a designated PIO from DMA will report to the SEOC to coordinate ESF 15.
- 2.1.4. During mobilization of the SEOC, the WEM lead PIO or designee will notify other state PIOs to report to the SEOC or to a JIC.

2.2. Organization

- 2.2.1. In the event the SEOC has not been elevated, WEM's PIO or another designated state PIO will work with state emergency management staff and the governor's press office to issue appropriate press releases and incident reports and to conduct media interviews.
- 2.2.2. Depending on the severity of the situation, the governor's public affairs office will coordinate with the WEM PIO on media advisories and releases and will be available to reporters and news organizations.
- 2.2.3. ESF 15 may activate a JIC to coordinate and disseminate a variety of information including press releases, social media, press conferences, information for phone hotlines, and other communication tools. *Note: See ESF 15 Attachment 1: JIC Plan.*
- 2.2.4. ESF 15 may co-locate to the disaster area to support local public information efforts and in recovery operations may relocate to the joint field office (JFO), as needed.
- 2.2.5. The lead PIO along with the SEOC manager, WEM administrator, and TAG must approve all information produced by ESF 15 such as press releases, incident reports, fact sheets, and other materials.
- 2.2.6. The public hotline (WI-DIAL) provides a direct access to a source of official information where the public can get answers to questions, make requests, or provide comments during the response effort. The hotline also provides a feedback mechanism for response officials as an indicator of patterns, unconfirmed reports, rumors, or incomplete, inaccurate, or ambiguous information that may need to be addressed in news releases and briefings.

2.3. Agency Responsibilities

The WERP Basic Plan defines standardized tasks that constitute the response responsibilities of any agency that serves a role in emergency management. This following defines those



responsibilities that are unique to ESF 15 and is intended to be used in conjunction with the common tasks outlined in the Basic Plan and with specific duties assigned in the other ESFs.

Table 2-1: Response Activities

Action Item	Agency
<p>Public Affairs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Compile information on the incident, impacts, and response operations from all available sources. ▪ Coordinate with other ESFs, agencies, and state/federal/private/tribal organizations to develop a consistent flow of information including incident reports, health advisories, and other public information releases concerning the response and recovery efforts. ▪ Inform the governor’s press office, federal, state, tribal, and local officials of response activities. ▪ Provide incident-related information through the media and other sources in accessible formats and multiple languages to individuals, households, businesses, and industries directly or indirectly affected by the incident to the fullest extent possible. ▪ Monitor news coverage and social media for information related to the emergency to ensure accuracy. ▪ During media briefings and through social media and 2-1-1 Wisconsin, provide appropriate contact information for governmental agencies, non-governmental response organizations, the public hotline telephone number, and relevant website addresses. ▪ Manage news conferences and press tours of the incident area, as appropriate. ▪ Establish, staff, and operate a JIC, when appropriate. ▪ Establish and promote social media public information resources in the SEOC or JIC. ▪ Request mobilization of Wisconsin Disaster Information Assistance Line (WI DIAL), as appropriate. 	DMA/WEM
<p>Rumor Control (control of incomplete, inaccurate, or ambiguous information)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Respond to questions from the public. ▪ Activate and publicize an emergency public information line/call center, as necessary. ▪ Inform the SEOC and JIC of trending rumors. ▪ Respond promptly and publically to trending rumors with authoritative information from officials/subject matter experts. 	DMA/WEM
<p>Congressional/Legislative Affairs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish contact with state, federal, and congressional offices representing the affected area to provide information on the incident. 	DMA/DMA



- Arrange for incident site or SEOC visits for appropriate elected officials and their staff.

Respond to legislative/congressional inquiries.

2.4. Wisconsin Governmental Support Agencies

Table 2-2: State Government Support Agencies

Agency	Functions
Department of Military Affairs	<p>Agency as a whole</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide PIO(s) and web support to assist at the SEOC, scene, or JIC ,as requested. ▪ Provide legislative liaison(s).
All other participating agencies	<p>Agencies as a whole</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide PIO(s) to assist at the SEOC, scene, or JIC, as requested by the governor, WEM, or department secretary. ▪ Assist the lead PIO by providing pertinent public information for dissemination to media sources and, as appropriate, fact sheets for distribution to the public. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Participate in news conferences and briefings on request. ○ Coordinate information with other PIO(s). ○ Monitor media broadcasts and articles for accuracy.

3. Supporting Documents

3.1. Attachments

3.1.1. Joint Information Center (JIC) Plan

3.2. National Response Framework ESF 15



Table 3-1: Record of Changes

#	Date	Agency/Individual	Change
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Attachment 1

Joint Information Center Plan

Joint Information Center Plan



Wisconsin Emergency Response Plan
Joint Information Center Plan

ESF 15
Attachment 1

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1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose

- 1.1.1. Provide the media and the public with a single location from which to gain timely and accurate information about a particular event.
- 1.1.2. Establish guidance and assign responsibilities to ensure the maintenance of a State of Wisconsin emergency public information capability that disseminates accurate and timely information on potential and actual emergency incidents and major emergencies/disasters.
- 1.1.3. Develop and deliver coordinated interagency messages when discussing response efforts during a crisis.
- 1.1.4. Provide guidance to individuals staffing a joint information center (JIC), including for an incident at a nuclear power plant with the potential to affect Wisconsin.

1.2. Assumptions

- 1.2.1. This plan uses the word "utility" exclusively in reference to a nuclear power plant.
- 1.2.2. During disasters, the public and the media will need information about the situation and instruction on any protective measures to take.
 - 1.2.2.1 In certain law enforcement related incidents, federal and local law enforcement agencies or components of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (US DHS) may need to withhold or delay sensitive information from public release to protect the integrity of the criminal investigation.
- 1.2.3. Demand for information during a major disaster will be overwhelming if sufficient staff is not provided and if staff is not trained and operating from pre-established guidance.
- 1.2.4. The state will use multiple channels of communication during an incident, including:
 - 1.2.4.1 News releases
 - 1.2.4.2 News conferences
 - 1.2.4.3 News interviews via telephone and in person
 - 1.2.4.4 Social media and websites
- 1.2.5. The local media, particularly broadcast, and all media websites will perform an essential role in providing immediate and ongoing emergency instructions and information to the public.
- 1.2.6. Depending on the severity of the disaster, regional and national media will also cover the story and demand information and comments from state, tribal, and local officials.



- 1.2.7. Depending on the severity of the disaster, telephone communication may be sporadic or impossible. Local, tribal, and regional radio and television stations without emergency power may also be off the air.
- 1.2.8. Department of Military Affairs/Wisconsin Emergency Management (DMA/WEM) will operate a JIC during major disasters to coordinate and distribute emergency information to provide for:
 - 1.2.8.1 Informing the public of necessary protective actions to minimize loss of lives and property
 - 1.2.8.2 Accommodating large numbers of media representatives seeking information about the situation and response actions
- 1.2.9. All public information officers (PIOs) who work for state agencies as well as the public affairs officers with DMA may be asked to report to the JIC and/or the state emergency operations center (SEOC) during a disaster.
- 1.2.10. Staff from the University of Wisconsin system may assist at the JIC with social media.
- 1.2.11. The agencies participating in the JIC will share the information they have compiled with one another prior to media briefings.
- 1.2.12. The JIC monitors a variety of sources of news media, rumors, and trends to ensure that the public is receiving accurate information, including sources such as:
 - 1.2.12.1 Calls received by the Wisconsin Disaster Information Assistance Line (WI-DIAL)
 - 1.2.12.2 News broadcasts
 - 1.2.12.3 Social media
 - 1.2.12.4 Information received from the SEOC and county, tribal, and local emergency operations centers (EOCs).
- 1.2.13. The JIC promptly addresses trends and rumors in news releases or at media briefings.
- 1.2.14. For incidents involving a nuclear power plant utility:
 - 1.2.14.1 The staffing of the JIC will consist of representatives from the affected utility, the State of Wisconsin, and counties within ten miles of the affected plant.
 - 1.2.14.2 Additional representation at the JIC may consist of various federal, state, tribal, or non-governmental agencies/organizations or local governing bodies directly impacted by the incident.

2. Concept of Operations

2.1. Notification

- 2.1.1. Initial notification of the SEOC elevation to Level 3 or above will come from the WEM duty officer (DO) after conferring with the senior duty officer (SDO).



- 2.1.2. Upon notification of SEOC elevation, the WEM PIO (or designee) will report to the SEOC and, if warranted, notify other agency PIOs of the potential for JIC activation.

2.2. Mobilization – JIC for Incidents at Nuclear Power Plants

- 2.2.1. The State of Wisconsin may staff a JIC in the event of a nuclear power plant incident. Potential locations include:

- 2.2.1.1 For incidents at Point Beach Nuclear Plant (PBNP):

3060 Voyager Drive

Green Bay, WI 54311-8304

This JIC facility is owned by NextEra Energy, Inc. WEM has obtained key card access, to ensure appropriate WEM staff members can access the facility at any time.

- 2.2.1.2 For incidents at Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant (PINGP):

State of Minnesota, Homeland Security and Emergency Management

444 Cedar St., Suite 223

St. Paul, MN 55101

- 2.2.1.3 Other sites as necessitated by the location and nature of the incident

- 2.2.2. "Notification of Unusual Event" (NUE) or a non-classifiable event:

- 2.2.2.1 The SEOC may mobilize at Level 3 or higher at the discretion of the WEM administrator, SDO, or upon recommendation by the state radiological coordinator (SRC).

- 2.2.2.2 A JIC does not generally mobilize for a NUE.

- 2.2.3. "Alert" Emergency Classification Level (ECL) or a higher classification -- the SEOC and the JIC may mobilize at Level 3 or higher.

- 2.2.4. As some JICs are a considerable distance from the SEOC, PIOs representing the State of Wisconsin may deploy from other state agencies that have regional offices located near the relevant JIC to represent the State of Wisconsin/WEM.

- 2.2.5. Prior to JIC mobilization or arrival of state representatives to the JIC, the lead PIO from WEM may issue news releases from the SEOC. The SEOC PIO will provide copies of any media releases issued prior to JIC mobilization to other agencies at the JIC.

2.3. Mobilization –JIC for All Other Incidents

- 2.3.1. During major disasters, the WEM PIO will report directly to the SEOC if it is elevated to Levels 1, 2 or 3.

- 2.3.1.1 Depending upon the situation, the WEM PIO will activate the JIC.



- 2.3.1.2 Other state agency PIOs may deploy to the JIC to assist in the state response.
- 2.3.2. The JIC is the point of coordination for all state news releases and other forms of information about the disaster with approval by the SEOC manager, WEM administrator and TAG before dissemination.
- 2.3.3. WEM readiness levels
- 2.3.3.1 Level 5 and 4
- (1) WEM PIO staff members are at their normal duty section, answering media calls and issuing situation reports as needed regarding an incident.
 - (2) The PIO works with the WEM DO, SDO, and WEM administrator as needed to gather information.
 - (3) The WEM website, social media, and GovDelivery disseminate information.
- 2.3.3.2 Level 3
- (1) WEM PIO reports to the SEOC and provides public information regarding a disaster.
 - (2) This may include working 12-hour shifts, answering media calls, producing news releases (and in some cases situation reports), as well as updating the WEM website and social media.
 - (3) There may be coordination with local, tribal, federal, voluntary agency and private sector PIO's.
- 2.3.3.3 Level 2 & Level 1
- (1) A JIC mobilizes immediately when the SEOC opens, usually in proximity to the SEOC:
 - (A) To maximize all information resources
 - (B) To gather, verify, coordinate, and disseminate large volumes of information
 - (2) The necessary communication links are established and provided between the JIC and the SEOC.
 - (3) Communication links are coordinated between JIC staff and all field PIOs.

2.4. Coordination

- 2.4.1. A Joint Information System (JIS) is a network of PIOs working together via phone, email, or video-teleconference from their individual work locations or at a JIC.
- 2.4.2. The JIC is a location for agency PIOs to coordinate messages.
- 2.4.3. The JIC/JIS is a coherent system that may include:



- 2.4.3.1 State agency PIOs
- 2.4.3.2 Business, industry, and utility PIOs
- 2.4.3.3 Voluntary organization PIOs
- 2.4.3.4 PIOs from local, tribal, and federal government
- 2.4.4. For coordination in an emergency or disaster, it is essential that emergency public information emanate from a single point to ensure consistency and authenticity.
- 2.4.5. The lead state PIO, typically a WEM or DMA PIO, coordinates public information during an emergency.
- 2.4.6. The lead state PIO coordinates information released with the governor's communications director and other state agencies, as appropriate.

3. Procedures

3.1. General Considerations

- 3.1.1. The lead PIO and one or more assistant PIOs staff the SEOC and generate news releases.
- 3.1.2. The SEOC manager, WEM administrator, and TAG must approve and sign-off on all news releases prior to distribution.
- 3.1.3. Upon approval, the SEOC PIO staff sends news releases to state PIOs at the JIC for release to the media.
- 3.1.4. Timely, accurate release of information is a priority for the JIC. The JIC should release information:
 - 3.1.4.1 Within one to two hours of the SEOC and JIC leaders being informed of an incident.
 - 3.1.4.2 As soon as possible, preferably within an hour of the incident occurring, if the public needs life safety information.
- 3.1.5. The release of information may be through news interviews with media, news releases, and news conferences conveyed to the JIC in the form of:
 - 3.1.5.1 GovDelivery
 - 3.1.5.2 E-mail
 - 3.1.5.3 Posting on websites and social media
 - 3.1.5.4 Posting on a secured website such as WebEOC (for internal communications)
- 3.1.6. Detailed procedural checklists appear separately within a position binder that travels with the State of Wisconsin staff upon deployment to a JIC.
- 3.1.7. All staff at the SEOC, JIC, WI-DIAL, reception center, and shelter facilities share responsibility for noting rumors or trends.



- 3.1.7.1 Upon recognition of a rumor or a trend, staff should bring the issue to the attention of the lead spokesperson at the JIC and the lead PIO at the SEOC.
- 3.1.7.2 SEOC and JIC staff will take action to address the rumor or trend through a media briefing, news release, or information provided to the WI DIAL operators.

3.2. News Conferences

- 3.2.1. Hold news conferences daily or as needed, including representatives from appropriate agencies.
- 3.2.2. Coordinate news events with the governor's office.
- 3.2.3. Requests for Disaster Response Interpreters (DRI) to provide American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services will be coordinated, as needed.

3.3. News Releases and Incident Reports

- 3.3.1. Update information, as necessary.
- 3.3.2. Date and number all situation reports.
- 3.3.3. Distribute information to the over 5000 media, legislative, congressional, and state agency recipients included in:
 - 3.3.3.1 WEM media lists
 - 3.3.3.2 The GovDelivery system
- 3.3.4. Post information to the WEM website and the ReadyWisconsin Facebook and Twitter sites.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1. JIC Logistics

- 4.1.1. News conference locations
 - 4.1.1.1 During most emergency response and recovery operations, at various locations at Department of Military Affairs/Wisconsin National Guard Joint Force Headquarters, 2400 Wright Street, Madison, WI, including but not limited to Witmer Hall and the drill floor
 - 4.1.1.2 During an incident at a nuclear power plant, at the JIC in either Green Bay or Minneapolis
- 4.1.2. Space considerations – locate JIC as near as possible to the SEOC to:
 - 4.1.2.1 Reduce errors in transmission of information



- 4.1.2.2 Increase the speed with which information can be gathered, clarified, and confirmed
- 4.1.3. Equipment requirements
 - 4.1.3.1 Phones
 - 4.1.3.2 Computers, printers, and copiers
 - 4.1.3.3 Office supplies
 - 4.1.3.4 TVs to monitor media
 - 4.1.3.5 Malt Box for media for news conferences

4.2. JIC Organization Staffing

The roles and responsibilities of state agency staff, as outlined in the following chart, are scalable and flexible. When entities other than the State of Wisconsin own/manage JIC locations, the operational activities of each may vary slightly.

Table 1: JIC Roles and Responsibilities

Position	Functions
Lead Spokesperson	When the lead spokesperson is an individual other than the Lead JIC PIO: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Represents the state at media briefings held at the JIC ▪ Coordinates messages with the affected private sector partners, federal government, local or tribal government, and adjacent states (if applicable) to emphasize joint agency decision-making ▪ In the event of a terrorist action, the SEOC PIO will work with the FBI and other law enforcement agencies regarding the withholding of sensitive information from public release to protect the integrity of the criminal response and evidence collection process
Lead JIC PIO	When there is not a separate individual serving as lead spokesperson, combine those responsibilities with the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is typically a PIO from WEM or DMA ▪ Serves as the overall coordinator/supervisor for State of Wisconsin staff located at the JIC ▪ Coordinates with the incident commander or SEOC manager ▪ Schedules PIO staff throughout an incident to meet needs ▪ Coordinates all news releases, situation reports, and social media messaging ▪ Assists with coordination of news conferences ▪ Attends daily briefings and reports PIO activities at briefings ▪ Maintains contact with the SEOC PIO throughout the duration of the activation. ▪ Coordinates with other governmental and non-governmental PIOs ▪ Handles and logs all media calls ▪ Coordinates information with WI DIAL (when operational) ▪ Keeps governor’s office, WEM administrator, and TAG informed
JIC PIO (as many as needed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assists the lead JIC PIO/spokesperson in carrying out all activities ▪ Upon delegation by the lead JIC PIO/spokesperson , represents the state at media briefings.



Position	Functions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitors news media ▪ Assists with social media monitoring as needed
Senior Web/Social Media/Media Monitoring PIO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Oversees social media function (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, and website) ▪ Assists with social media monitoring and developing social media monitoring reports, focusing on trends, rumors, and possible upcoming events ▪ Reports critical social media postings to the lead JIC PIO/spokesperson and operations immediately
Social Media PIO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coordinates social media monitoring ▪ Develops social media staffing plan ▪ Produces social media messages ▪ Provides information to the lead JIC PIO/spokesperson for daily briefing reports
WEM Technical Advisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides technical information to the lead JIC PIO/spokesperson and assistant JIC PIOs on the WERP, and general emergency management practices, procedures, and laws in Wisconsin ▪ Assists with various administrative tasks, as necessary
Radiological Technical Advisor (For Radiological Incidents Only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Must have a working knowledge of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services Radiological Incident Response Plan ▪ Assists the lead JIC PIO/spokesperson and assistant JIC PIOs by serving as a technical expert for public health matters as they relate to radiation exposure ▪ Maintains contact with staff in the state radiological coordinator (SRC) room throughout the duration of the event to obtain information on dose assessment, field monitoring, health monitoring, and decontamination activities ▪ May participate in news conferences at the request of the lead JIC PIO/spokesperson to address media questions of a technical nature
Administrative Support (Working Under Various Titles)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Perform a variety of functions to assist the PIOs and technical advisors, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clerical work ○ Maintaining contact with the SEOC ○ Distributing of state and county news releases ○ Monitoring and contributing to the WebEOC event site ▪ May include sub-categories of administrative support such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Media line operator ○ WebEOC support ○ Administrative assistant



Wisconsin Emergency Response Plan
Joint Information Center Plan

ESF 15
Attachment 1

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