

Emergency Support Function (ESF) 15 – External Affairs

Coordinating Department

University Communications and Media Relations

Supporting Departments

University Advancement Division

Department of Public Safety (Emergency Management)

Supporting Outside Agencies

City of Colorado Springs (Public Communications and Department Public Information Officers),
University of Colorado System (University Communications)

Section I: Function Activation

Scope

The scope of this annex is to describe the functions and methods by which information will be distributed to the campus community, the public, parents, and other interested parties in the event of an incident or emergency on campus. The coordinated and sustained message delivery will be accomplished through multiple modes either independently through the campus or in conjunction with other first responding organizations and the City of Colorado Springs.

Concept of Operations

A. General

1. Public information is critical before, during, and after an emergency or significant incident. As such, the campus leadership in general, and those responsible for public information dissemination specifically, have a responsibility to ensure these needs are met.
2. For a small localized response, such as a Type V or Type IV Incident, UCCS public information resources may be sufficient to address inquiries from the public and media. In larger incidents or responses involving multiple agencies, a Joint Information Center (JIC) should be established to ensure message compatibility and commonality among agencies. This commonality may be vital to the life safety and property preservation of the campus community.
3. To ensure a common operating picture among response agencies and public information personnel, a two-way exchange of information must occur between the JIC, the Incident Command Post (ICP), and the campus and/or city Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) if activated.

B. Specific

1. Response

- a) The University Communications and Media Relations will be the sole source for official information in the event of an incident or emergency.
- b) All information to be released to the public will be channeled through University Communications and Media Relations. All information will be cleared through the EOC and/or ICP prior to public release. Such information includes but is not limited to:
 - i. Releases to print, radio, television, and other news media;
 - ii. Internally generated information releases via email, mass notification, print media, website updates, social media, etc.;
 - iii. Instructions or guidance crafted by outside agencies for campus release; and
 - iv. Any documentation or other related factual content approved for public release.
- c) In the event of a multi-agency or other large incident a Joint Information Center (JIC) will be established and appropriate personnel notified for coordination. The JIC will be preferentially co-located with or have direct communication with the ICP and/or EOC. Key guidance for the JIC includes but is not limited to:
 - i. Will serve as the focal point for preparation and distribution of public emergency information under the guidance of the EOC and ICP;
 - ii. Is the primary reception point for information to be consolidated for public use;
 - iii. Representatives from all involved agencies will be included in the collection and dissemination processes;
 - iv. All agencies will channel information for potential release through the JIC for approval;
 - v. Guidance received from outside sources, such as public health information or scientific background facts, will be approved for consistency prior to release;
 - vi. A log will be maintained of all information received and that is approved for release, as well as all actual releases;

- vii. JIC personnel will monitor media outlets for inconsistencies, incorrect information, notable facts not known to the JIC or the ICP/EOC, and any discrepancies will be addressed for further public release;
- viii. Under the guidance of the EOC and ICP, JIC personnel will arrange for interviews, news briefs, and tours; and
- ix. Personnel will coordinate visual support, such as photographs, maps, diagrams, fact sheets, etc. for media support.
- x. University Communications and Media Relations, and Emergency Management, will monitor outside media and communications outlets, as well as social media, to maintain a level of situational awareness.

2. Recovery

- a) Public information support will continue through the recovery phase until deemed complete by the EOC or ICP.
- b) Releases during the recovery phase may include rescinding of evacuation orders, further public health guidance, recovery center locations, etc.
- c) At the completion of public information support, activity logs, releases, media support products, and all other documentation will be turned in to the Documentation Unit at the EOC or ICP for inclusion in incident files and reports.

Section II: Pre-Event Coordination and Planning Responsibilities

Coordinating Department

University Communications and Media Relations

A. Mitigation

1. Assess the communication system at the campus level to determine best methods for public communications.
2. Identify responsibilities for in-progress and post-incident activities, and provide a system for maintaining communication among campus departments, city, county, state, and non-governmental agencies to ensure public information.

B. Preparedness

1. Identify and maintain a network of available resources to aid in notification and emergency communications during an incident.
2. Monitor social media outlets
3. Participate in training sessions and exercises.

4. Assist in evaluating departmental Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs).
5. Ensure administrative procedures are in place to aid communications control during emergency operations.

Supporting Departments

University Communications and Media Relations

- A. Provide additional public communications personnel to assist in incident communications.
- B. Assist in preparing media materials for public distribution.

Department of Public Safety

- A. Ensure resources are in place to support communications in the event of an incident (ie – Emergency Notification System, Alert page, social media outlets)

Supporting Outside Agencies and Facilities

City of Colorado Springs (Public Communications and Department Public Information Officers)

- A. Assist UCCS officials with public communications when incidents exceed campus capabilities.
- B. Establish a JIC when incidents warrant, inclusive of UCCS public information personnel and processes.
- C. Provide support with production and dissemination of mass media materials.

University of Colorado System (University Communications)

- A. Provide backup, support, and system guidance to UCCS public information efforts.
- B. Lead any system-wide public information efforts involving multiple CU system campuses.