

Tarrant County College

**Communications &
External Affairs Annex**

APPROVAL & IMPLEMENTATION

Communications & External Affairs Annex

Vice Chancellor for Communications and External Affairs

Date

COMMUNICATIONS & EXTERNAL AFFAIRS ANNEX

I. AUTHORITY

- A. See Section I of the Basic Plan for general authorities.
- B. Texas Local Government Code, Chapter 203 (Management and Preservation of Records).

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this annex is to outline the means, organization, and process by which we will provide appropriate information and instructions to the TCC Community during emergency situations. This annex also provides for public education to be conducted in advance of emergency situations to reduce the likelihood that faculty, students, and staff will place themselves in hazardous situations that may require an emergency response.

III. EXPLANATION OF TERMS

A. Acronyms

EAS	Emergency Alert System
EMC	Emergency Management Coordinator
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
IC	Incident Command/Commander
ICP	Incident Command Post
JFO	Joint Field Office
JIC	Joint Information Center
JIS	Joint Information System
LWP	Local Warning Point
PIO	Public Information Officer
TV	Television

B. Definitions

Public Information: Information provided to citizens before, during, and after emergency situations/incidents specifically including instructions on how to protect personal health, safety, and property or how to obtain assistance.

IV. SITUATION & ASSUMPTIONS

A. Situation

1. The District faces a number of hazards which may cause emergency situations; see Section IV of the Basic Plan for a summary of those hazards and their possible impact.
2. During emergencies, the TCC Community needs timely, accurate information on the emergency situation and appropriate instructions regarding protective actions that should be taken to minimize injuries, loss of life and damage to property.
3. For some emergency situations, there may be little or no warning when it happens, so it is important that the TCC Community be advised of likely hazards and what protective measures should be taken to lessen the effect of an emergency and/or disaster.

B. Assumptions

1. An effective program combining both education and emergency information can significantly reduce loss of life and property. However, many people are unconcerned about hazards until they may be affected and will not participate in or retain pre-emergency education; therefore, special emphasis must be placed on the delivery of emergency information during emergencies and disasters.
2. Local media will cooperate in disseminating emergency information during emergency situations.
3. Some emergency situations may generate substantial media interest and draw both local media and media from outside the local area, overwhelming the available emergency public information staff.

V. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

A. General

1. Pursuant to the National Incident Management System (NIMS) operating principles and protocols, public information efforts should generally focus on specific event-related information. This information will generally be of an instructional nature.
2. A special effort should be made to keep the TCC Community informed of the general progress of events. Reporting positive information regarding emergency response will help to reassure that the situation is under control. Rumor control must be a major aspect of the informational program.
3. Education efforts are to be directed toward increasing the TCC Community's awareness about potential hazards and how to prepare for them. All information and education efforts will rely heavily on the cooperation of every type of media organization.

Information Dissemination

1. In the initial stages of an emergency situation, the District may have to take action on time-sensitive hazards and determine if a warning needs to be issued, formulate a warning if necessary, and disseminate it.
2. When the Incident Command System is activated for an emergency situation, the Incident Commander will normally warn the public in and around the incident site. TCC Communications and External Affairs Team members, if necessary, will normally provide information on the emergency situation to the media if the EOC has not been activated.
3. Once the EOC has been activated for an emergency situation and the need for additional warning and instructions are necessary, TCC Communications and External Affairs Team members will assist in formulating additional warning messages and instructions.
4. In the case of large-scale emergencies or disasters where there are substantial external responders from other jurisdictions and/or state or federal agencies and the response and recovery effort may continue for an extended period, a Joint Information Center (JIC) may be established. The JIC, an element of the Joint Information System (JIS) developed to provide information to the public during an emergency, is a working facility where the emergency public efforts of all participating jurisdictions, agencies, volunteer organizations, and other responders can be coordinated to ensure consistency and accuracy. In federally declared incidents, a JIC will typically be set up as part of the Joint Field Office (JFO).
5. The following means will be used to provide emergency information and instructions to the public:
 - a. News broadcasts by radio, television, and cable companies.
 - b. Local newspapers.
 - c. Recorded information on the District's Information line.
 - d. The District's Internet site.
 - e. Official District Social Media outlets.

Resources

TCC Communications and External Affairs Team members shall maintain a Media Roster that contains the names, telephone and facsimile numbers, and E-mail addresses of each of the media resources listed below. See Attachment 1 for an example.

1. Broadcast Television
2. Radio
3. Newspapers

D. Phases of Management

1. Mitigation

- a. Develop systems to enhance information dissemination during emergency situations.

2. Preparedness

- a. Brief local media on District warning systems and coordinate procedures for transmitting emergency information to media.
- b. Train additional TCC Communications and External Affairs Team members. See Attachments 1-4.
- c. Brief District officials and emergency responders on working with the media. See Attachment 3.
- d. Maintain this annex, attachments, and appendices.
- e. Identify suitable facilities for a Joint Information Center.

3. Response

- a. Develop, obtain authorization, and release public information on the emergency situation.
- b. Conduct media monitoring to determine the need to clarify issues and distribute updated public instructions.
- c. Manage rumor control.
- d. Conduct news conferences and arrange interviews as needed.

4. Recovery

- a. Provide public information relating to recovery process and programs.
- b. Compile record of events.
- c. Assess effectiveness of public information and education program.

VI. ORGANIZATION & ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

A. General

1. The overall responsibility for providing emergency information and instructions to the TCC Community rests with the Vice Chancellor for Communications and External Affairs.
2. The Vice Chancellor for Communications and External Affairs shall provide general guidance for Public Information (PI) programs and appoint a Public Information Officer (PIO).
3. The PIO will manage and coordinate all emergency public information related activities and direct such staff as may be assigned or recruited to assist in those activities.
4. Trained TCC Communications and External Affairs Team Members will staff PIO positions at the Incident Command Post and in the EOC if necessary.

B. Task Assignments

1. The Vice Chancellor for Communications and External Affairs will:
 - a. Appoint a Public Information Officer (PIO).
 - b. Ensure that the District has implemented and institutionalized processes and procedures to coordinate and integrate public information functions including the development of a public education program for emergency situations.
 - c. Authorize release of all IC approved incident information to the media.
 - d. Ensure that a Joint Information Center (JIC) is activated when warranted by the incident.
 - e. Act as the Board of Trustees Liaison and fulfill the responsibilities as outlined in Board of Trustees Relations Appendix.
2. The Public Information Officer (PIO) will:
 - a. Represent and advise the IC on all public information matters relating to the management of the incident.
 - b. Ensure the IC approves the release of all incident-related information.
 - c. Coordinate and integrate public information functions across jurisdictions and functional agencies as required.
 - d. Develop accurate and complete information on the incident for both internal and external consumption.

- e. Coordinate the overall emergency public information efforts of the District.
 - f. Serve as the official District representative in the JIC.
 - g. Authenticate sources of information, verify for accuracy, and obtain authorization before issuing news releases.
 - h. Provide authorized news releases to the media while keeping the Vice Chancellor for Communications and External Affairs informed of message content.
 - i. Monitor media coverage of emergency operations for accuracy of reports and issue corrections where necessary.
 - j. Take action to control rumors.
 - k. Brief potential Incident Commanders, department heads and key staff, and the EOC staff on basic public information needs, working with the media, and media access during emergency operations.
 - l. Maintain a media briefing area in the vicinity of the EOC.
 - m. Maintain a Media Contact Roster. See Attachment 1 for a sample.
 - n. Compile printed and photographic documentation of the emergency/disaster.
 - o. Anticipate and be prepared to handle unscheduled inquiries from the media and the public.
 - p. Train a group of TCC Communications and External Affairs Team members and/or volunteers to staff PIO positions at the Incident Command Post and in the EOC.
3. The Director of Emergency Management will:
- a. Coordinate with the Vice Chancellor for Communications and External Affairs on when to disseminate emergency instructions to the TCC Community.
 - b. Identify concerns raised by the TCC Community, rumors, and other issues to the PIO so they may be addressed in public information activities.
4. All District departments and local agencies will:
- a. Refer media inquiries during emergency situations to the PIO.
 - b. Assist the PIO in responding to requests for information from the public or the media.

5. Media companies are expected to:
 - a. Disseminate information provided by the District to the public as rapidly as possible.
 - b. Provide coverage of emergency management activities.
 - c. Check accuracy of information on emergency operations with the PIO.

VII. DIRECTION & CONTROL

A. General

1. The Vice Chancellor for Communications and External Affairs has overall responsibility for the emergency public information program, shall provide general guidance for emergency-related public education and information activities, shall appoint a PIO, and in conjunction with the IC, approve all information released to the news media.
2. The Public Information Officer shall direct all emergency public information activities, coordinating as necessary with other individuals, departments, and agencies performing other emergency functions.
3. To the extent possible, the PIO shall release, upon approval, all information to the public and the media during emergency operations. During emergency operations, departments and agencies shall refer media inquiries to the PIO.

B. Line of Succession. The line of succession for the Vice Chancellor for Communications and External Affairs is:

1. TCC Communications and External Affairs Team Leader
2. TCC Communications and External Affairs Team Members as designated

VIII. READINESS LEVELS

A. Readiness Level IV - Normal Conditions

- a. Emergency incidents occur and District officials are notified. One or more departments or agencies respond to handle the incident; an incident command post may be established. Limited assistance may be requested from local jurisdictions pursuant to established inter-local agreements.
- b. The normal operations of the District are not affected, but examples may include but not limited to:
 - 1) Water leak
 - 2) Vehicle accident
 - 3) Personal injury
 - 4) Temporary equipment failure

B. Readiness Level III - Increased Readiness

1. Monitor the situation.
2. Check and update Media Contact Roster.
3. Alert media of the increased threat so they are aware of the situation and are prepared to disseminate warnings and public instructions if necessary.

C. Readiness Level II - High Readiness

1. Monitor the situation.
2. Draft messages tailored for the impending threat.
3. Alert TCC Communications and External Affairs Team members for possible emergency operations; identify personnel for increased staffing during primary vulnerability period.
4. Determine requirements for additional pre-emergency public information and instructions and produce and disseminate those materials.
5. Consider placing TCC Communications and External Affairs Team members on shifts to provide for increased situation monitoring and to conduct additional public information planning.

D. Readiness Level I - Maximum Readiness

1. Monitor the situation.
2. Update messages as necessary.

3. Update public information materials based on current threat and disseminate.
4. Provide information to the media on local readiness activities.
5. Place selected off-duty personnel on standby to increase staffing if necessary.
6. Staff public information positions in the EOC or at the ICP when activated.

IX. ADMINISTRATION & SUPPORT

A. Media Contact Roster

The PIO shall maintain a contact roster for the media organizations that are involved in local emergency management programs. A sample is provided in Attachment 1.

B. Records

1. The PIO shall maintain a file of all news advisories and press releases issued during emergency operations.
2. The PIO shall also compile and maintain copies of newspaper articles, videotapes of emergency operations and news broadcasts relating to an emergency, and other media materials distributed for use in post-incident analysis and future training activities.

C. Training

Members of the TCC Communications and External Affairs Team for whom public information is not their primary daily work should attend public information training, preferably training focusing on emergency public information activities. TDEM and FEMA offer Public Information Officer training.

X. ANNEX DEVELOPMENT & MAINTENANCE

- A. Development.** The Public Information Officer is responsible for developing and maintaining this annex.
- B. Maintenance.** This annex will be reviewed annually and updated in accordance with the schedule outlined in Section X of the Basic Plan.
- C. Operating Procedures.** The Public Information Officer is responsible for developing and maintaining SOPs covering recurring public information tasks.

XI. REFERENCES

- A.** FEMA, *FEMA Publications Catalog*
- B.** FEMA, *Comprehensive Preparedness Guide (CPG-101)*
- C.** FEMA web site: www.fema.gov
- D.** American Red Cross web site: www.redcross.org
- E.** Department of Homeland Security, *National Incident Management System*

ATTACHMENTS:

- Attachment 1 Media Contact Roster
- Attachment 2 Public Information Needs
- Attachment 3 Working with the Media
- Attachment 4 Media Access & Identification

APPENDICES:

Board of Trustees Relations

MEDIA CONTACT ROSTER

1. Radio

A. Station Name:

- 1) Address:
- 2) Frequency & Operating Hours:
- 3) Contact Name:
- 4) Telephone Number/Fax Number:
- 5) E-mail Address:

B. Station Name:

- 1) Address:
- 2) Frequency & Operating Hours:
- 3) Contact Name:
- 4) Telephone Number/Fax Number:
- 5) E-mail Address

2. Television

Station Name:

- 1) Address:
- 2) Frequency & Operating Hours:
- 3) Contact Name:
- 4) Telephone Number/Fax Number:
- 5) E-mail Address:

3. Cable Television Company

Name:

- 1) Address:
- 2) Service Area:
- 3) Contact Name:
- 4) Telephone Number
- 5) Fax Number:
- 6) E-mail Address

4. Newspapers

Name:

- 1) Address:
- 2) Distribution Area:
- 3) Contact Name:
- 4) Telephone Number
- 5) Fax Number:
- 6) E-mail Address

PUBLIC INFORMATION NEEDS

1. Background

During emergency situations, it is important to provide the TCC Community with adequate information on the situation as rapidly as possible to alleviate concerns and reduce the likelihood of panic or inappropriate actions. The news media are the primary means of disseminating such information by providing up-to-date information quickly to a wide audience. The information they provide reduces the time and manpower that the District would have to divert from response and recovery tasks to deal with (which could be an overwhelming number of inquiries from the TCC Community). Every effort should be made to cooperate with the news media in providing information and in recognition of the rights of the news media to perform their proper function.

2. Information Needs

The following types of information shall be provided to the public as soon as possible in as much detail as possible.

A. What Happened

- 1) Nature of incident or emergency
- 2) Location
- 3) Time of occurrence
- 4) Situation resolved or response on-going
- 5) Cause (Until an investigation has determined the cause with reasonable certainty, it is not advisable to speculate.)

B. Current Response Actions

What actions have been or are being taken to protect public health and safety and District?

C. Known Damages

- 1) District
- 2) Campus
- 3) Off Site Locations
- 4) Parking lots

D. Casualties

- 1) Number dead and apparent cause
- 2) Number injured and nature/severity of injuries and were being treated
- 3) Number missing and circumstances
- 4) General identification of casualties - age, sex, situation (employee, students, responder, etc.
- 5) Names of casualties - only released after next of kin have been notified

E. Status of Utilities

- 1) Electric service
- 2) Telephone system
- 3) Water system
- 4) Sewer system
- 5) Natural gas distribution

F. Closures

G. Organizations Responding

- 1) Local government
- 2) State agencies
- 3) Federal agencies
- 4) Volunteer groups

H. Areas to which access is restricted and the reason(s) for such restriction

I. For ongoing emergency situations, planned response activities

3. Collection and Dissemination of Information

Information shall be collected and disseminated as soon as possible by the appropriate personnel. All incidents related information must be approved by the IC prior to dissemination.

- A. Where an Incident Command Post has been established and if no qualified public information staff member is present at the scene, the Incident Commander or a member of his staff should pass situation information to the Public Information Officer for release to the media.
- B. Where an Incident Command Post has been established and the EOC has been activated, information from the incident scene will normally be passed to the Public Information Officer at the EOC. The Public Information Officer will utilize reports from the scene and other available pertinent information to brief the media and prepare news advisories for release to the media.
- C. The PIO is responsible for collection of information from the Incident Commander, the EOC staff, and other sources and agencies. The PIO staff is responsible for preparation of news releases, for the dissemination of information directly to the news media, and, where appropriate, for making arrangements for announcements directly to the public via radio and/or television hookups.

WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

1. What to do when working with the media:

- A. Identify your spokesperson beforehand.
- B. Have a number the media know to call when they need information.
- C. Make certain the person answering the phones knows to whom to direct media calls.
- D. Get all the information you can from those in charge before you talk with the media.
- E. Write out the answers to these questions for **your** use:
 - 1) What happened?
 - 2) When did it happen?
 - 3) Where did it happen?
 - 4) Why did this happen?
 - 5) Who's responsible, involved, injured?
 - 6) How many were hurt or killed? What are their names/ages/addresses?
 - 7) Can I shoot video/take photos? How close can I get?
 - 8) Who can I talk to?
 - 9) What is your agency doing about it?

2. When you talk with the media:

- A. Tell the truth and if related to the incident, ensure the IC has approved the information.
- B. Be courteous and don't play favorites.
- C. Avoid "off the record" remarks.
- D. Never say anything you would not want to see printed or broadcast.
- E. Stay on top of the interview by listening to the reporter's questions.
- F. Don't accept the reporter's definitions of what happened.
- G. Pause, think; ask for more time if you need it.
- H. Respond only to the question you've been asked. Don't speculate.
- I. Stick to the core message

MEDIA ACCESS & IDENTIFICATION

1. Media Access

In recognition of the public's right to know as much information as possible about a disaster, local response agencies will cooperate with legitimate news media representatives and provide equal access to information and, within the limits of safety and other response needs, access to incident scene to various news organizations. News media representatives are required to cooperate with response personnel as directed for safety and efficient operation.

- A. The Incident Commander or his designated representative will allow media such access to the incident scene as is consistent with safety and does not disrupt critical operations.
- B. The EMC, in coordination with the PIO, shall establish rules for media access to the EOC. When the EOC is activated, representatives of news media may be provided access to those areas of the EOC designated by the EMC. As a general rule, press briefings will not be conducted in the EOC because they can disrupt on-going EOC operations; briefings will normally be conducted in the press area of the EOC. Photo shoots and interviews may be conducted in the EOC, but these should be scheduled so as to minimize disruption.

2. Media Identification

Representatives of news media will be considered to have satisfactory identification if they have:

- A. A media company identification card with photo that identifies them as a media representative, unless there is reason to believe that the identification is not genuine.
- B. Texas Department of Public Safety Press identification card.