



Crisis Communication Assistance Plan

Revised 2023

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Plan Overview

This plan is intended to provide procedures for members of the Central Ohio Public Information Network (COPIN) to systematically provide support to member organizations seeking assistance in communicating information to the media, public and stakeholders regarding any type of all-hazard event or disaster or other emergency. It is designed to supplement local disaster response plans by providing competent, trained communications professionals to requesting agencies during a major emergency.

Depending on the type of disaster, members may find themselves as part of the lead agency responding to a disaster or major incident. This plan provides the ability for each agency/jurisdiction public information officer (PIO) to assist other departments with their communication needs, whether that be in person or remote.

COPIN has established this Emergency Assistance & Crisis Communication Plan that can be implemented if deemed appropriate by the Incident Commander and the Lead PIO. Public information officers from other response partner agencies may also be asked to staff the EOC to ensure consistent information.

This document includes guidance and general policy for providing assistance and includes suggested position tasks. In Franklin County, the primary JIC site is located at the Franklin County Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency, 5300 Strawberry Farms Boulevard in Columbus.

An Ad Hoc or Committee of the COPIN Board or COPIN Board and Membership will be responsible for performing a review of this plan every three years. Suggested revisions are forwarded to the COPIN chairperson for submittal to and approval by the proper oversight groups.

UPDATE COMMITTEE

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Approved by COPIN Board

January 11, 2023

Date

Adopted by majority of COPIN membership

April 15, 2023

Date

Emergency Assistance Policy

In a JIC, a group of public information representatives from various agencies cooperate to provide communications regarding a significant event. It is designed to handle public information needs on a larger scale than could be effectively managed by a single agency. Assistance can be provided in person or through remote methods. The JIC structure can expand or contract to meet the needs of the incident. The JIC is supervised by the Lead Public Information Officer (PIO), who is assigned by the Incident Commander (IC).

The Lead PIO is and has three primary responsibilities:

- **Gather incident data:** Obtain verified, up-to-date information from appropriate sources.
- **Inform the public:** Serve as the source of accurate and comprehensive information about the incident and the response to a specific set of audiences.
- **Analyze public perceptions of the response:** Employ techniques for obtaining feedback to provide response agencies with insight into community information needs, their expectations for the role to be played by the response agencies, and the lessons to be learned from specific response efforts.

The IC determines a primary JIC site based on the incident, but, if the scale of the emergency dictates, COPIN members can provide assistance on site, remotely or a combination. More than one person can fill a job duty if additional staff is available and needed. For example, you may need multiple people to write or monitor social and traditional media.

In Incident Command Staff structure, personnel who do not delegate authority are responsible for all duties under their purview. In a single PIO incident, that PIO is responsible for fulfilling all functions required for the event. It is suggested all positions have information packets for their position and all positions under them to ensure each individual knows all his/her responsibilities and tasks and can make informed decisions on delegating.

REQUEST ASSISTANCE FROM COPIN:

COPIN members should follow these steps to get help from the organization:

1. Contact a member of the COPIN Board to request assistance. Call: [###-###-####]
2. Provide details on your needs:
 - Number of people
 - Location: on-site, virtual or both
 - Address to report to or connection instructions
 - Type of PIO/JIC positions to fill or tasks to complete
 - Anticipated length of shift
 - When to report

COPIN Board contact will:

1. Send notification through the COHAN system requesting volunteers to assist.
2. Gather/manage the responses offering assistance.
3. Inform the requester on available COPIN volunteers.
4. Inform the COPIN volunteers on specifics details (when, where, shift length, and whom to report to).

JIC Overview

JIC activities generally are divided into three phases: activation, operations and deactivation. These activities are directed by the home agency.

I. ACTIVATION

1. Lead PIO designated.
2. JIC activated.
3. COPIN membership advised of needed for assistance.
4. First media advisory released.
5. JIC equipment and supplies set up.
6. JIC jobs assigned.

II. OPERATIONS

1. JIC staff given initial internal briefing.
2. Methods to ensure coordinated information established.
3. System developed for approval of fact sheets, talking points and media releases.
4. Hotline/social media/website operations launched.
5. Periodic briefings for media scheduled and held.
6. Periodic briefings for partners and other stakeholders scheduled and held.
7. Website and social media content updated.
8. Physical and mental well-being of JIC staff monitored.
9. Feedback monitored and rumors controlled.
10. Staff shift changes prepared and scheduled.

III. DEACTIVATION

1. Situation and media/public interest monitored and determination made to deactivate JIC.
2. Media notified of JIC closing, and to contact specific agencies with questions.
3. After-action debriefing held.
4. Equipment disassembled and stored.
5. After-action report written.

JIC ACTIVATION

1. **Decision to Activate**

The JIC is activated during an emergency at the discretion of the IC. The home agency takes the lead and notifies COPIN members if additional assistance is needed.

2. **Media Notification Before JIC Activation.**

Because it may take time to activate the JIC staff and equip the location, initial information about the emergency should be provided within the first 30 minutes through a media advisory. The Lead PIO sends this advisory after IC approval. Preliminary information about the event should also be placed on a voice mail recording, posted to social media and agency websites.

3. **Media Notification of JIC Activation.**

Once the JIC is open and staffed with communication capabilities in place, issue a second media advisory with important information for news media representatives covering the emergency/incident.

4. **JIC Facility and Equipment.**

Equipment in a JIC facility should include phone lines to handle media inquiries, government official contacts and outgoing calls; and a computer line connection workstations.

5. **The FCEMA JIC can be use as a media briefing area.**

If the Lead PIO determines the space is sufficient for the scope of the event, and if it affords soundproofing from the main JIC work space. The first person to arrive at the JIC will assist facility staff with setup. *Potential room layouts for each of the JICs that have had a site survey performed are in this manual.*

6. **JIC staff members check in.**

As staff members arrive, they sign in on a log sheet or check in electronically with the Administrative Support Workstation and obtain/confirm identification and PIO vest if needed and obtains an ICS-214. The JIC Operations Manager provides security staff with a copy of the roster for subsequent check-ins (if applicable).

7. **JIC Job Duties.**

The Lead PIO assigns JIC positions to members as deemed necessary. Suggested job duties in this manual can be expanded to multiple people or a single person can take on multiple roles as the situation dictates.

JIC OPERATIONS

1. JIC Functions

- Communicate with the respective emergency operations centers (EOCs).
- Prepare/package information about the emergency.
- Coordinate information among PIOs.
- Present information to the media and public.
- Obtain feedback and conduct rumor control.
- Offer administrative and operational support.

2. Becoming Operational.

The JIC may be declared operational when a minimum of one media information line is open and staffed.

3. Initial Internal Briefing of JIC Staff.

The Lead PIO should hold a situation briefing as soon as possible that include the following at a minimum:

- Incident status.
- Report on media notification.
- Report on partner notification and participation in JIC.
- A list of organizations or persons to whom information is due.
- Briefing of rumors and misinformation.

4. Information Coordination.

Each agency/jurisdiction staff person represented at the JIC is responsible for initiating and maintaining communications with their respective EOC or agency.

- Each agency retains the ability to issue its own single-agency special topic news release during JIC activation. Releases are to be shared with the JIC before release to ensure a consistent message.
- Use the following process for the coordination of information among agencies at the JIC:
 - » Each on-scene PIO gathers information from their respective EOC or agency to use in media briefings.
 - » Before federal, state and local information is released, coordinate to ensure consistency and accuracy.
 - » Timely relay information to the other spokespersons, post on JIC status boards and provide to concerned parties.
 - » Once sufficient information is gathered by the JIC staff, the IC, Lead PIO and JIC Operations Manager schedule a media briefing.
 - » Prior to the briefing, spokespersons meet to ensure understanding and coordination of information.

5. Important Note:

PIOs unable to leave their jurisdiction or agency to work in the JIC are to ensure their information is accurately shared with the JIC. If the Lead PIO does not receive information, he/she should assign a JIC staff member to call the PIO to obtain information to ensure consistency.

6. Development and Approval of Media Releases.

- Lead PIO decides there is sufficient information to issue a news release.
- Lead PIO works with JIC partners to draft the news release in an approved format and obtain approval from IC or his/her designee.
- Once information is approved by all agencies, distribute the news release. The JIC Operations Manager is responsible for sharing the media advisory with JIC staff.
- Provide the advisory to media before the next media briefing.

7. Media Coordination at the JIC.

Media access at the media briefing location is coordinated by the JIC Operations Manager and the Media Manager, with support as necessary by a Security Officer. Register media members then direct them to the designated media area.

8. Media Briefings.

The primary means of communicating with the media and the general public is through regular media briefings.

- For major incidents, the Lead PIO establishes a regular schedule of news briefings with a minimum of two briefings per day as long media presence warrants. The timing should help reporters meet news deadlines.
- Sample/suggested Schedule:
 - » Morning media availability — technical experts and/or PIO
 - » Afternoon media availability — IC and selected experts
 - » Evening media availability — technical experts and/or PIO
- If the incident occurs during the evening or early morning, hold the first news briefing before noon (10 a.m. or 11 a.m.). If it happens late morning or early afternoon, conduct the first news briefing by 3 p.m.
- Prior to each media briefing, the Lead PIO or Media Manager advises the media of the briefing protocol and provides information.
- Spokespersons from the involved agencies provide statements, updated information and answer questions. Technical advisers or subject matter experts are available to respond to questions or provide additional details as needed.
- Assistant PIO drafts a summary of each media briefing and provides it to JIC staff, on-scene PIO, spokespersons and the IC.
- Respond to rumors and incorrect information by media advisory, social media, announcement at subsequent media briefings, or direct contact with members of the public or the media.
- At least 30 minutes before each news briefing, Lead PIO meets with the spokespersons to review logistics, order of presenters, anticipated questions and use of graphics/props.
- Between briefings, a list of anticipated questions should be developed by the Lead PIO with input from JIC staff including those fielding questions from media, public and stakeholders.
- **Elected Officials and Other VIPs.** Lead PIO and IC discuss logistics, messages and other issues regarding the inclusion of these individuals as they may need to participate or insist upon participating in news briefings. A designee can be assigned the task of coordinating VIP visits.
- During each news briefing, the Media Manager records responses to reporter questions and notes unanswered questions. If possible, make a video recording of each briefing for playback to JIC staff and others.
- Soon after the news briefing, the Lead PIO or Assistant PIO should brief JIC staff on new information or policy statements.
- The Lead PIO ensures unanswered media questions receive follow up.

9. Hotline Operations.

- The hotlines answer general public questions, address concerns and detect, track and nullify rumors or incorrect information. They are generally filled with staff from the lead agency, but PIOs should provide them with tools to log incoming calls and reference materials such as fact sheets, prepared statements and media advisories.
- Operators maintain a log of citizen, medical and media queries.
- Information provided through the hotline is to be consistent with information provided to the media.
- Hotline operators are to only answer with verified information and not speculate.

10. Web Content Updates.

The Lead PIO should ensure a Web Manager is available to post accurate, timely information on websites. This is generally filled internally by the agency's IT department. All information is to be verified and not contradict information shared by partner agencies.

11. Stakeholder Communication.

The Lead PIO and IC ensure all stakeholders (partners, elected officials, etc.) receive accurate, timely information regarding the emergency prior to media briefings.

12. Communications Feedback and Rumor Control.

- Monitor traditional and social media to detect the broadcast of incorrect information by viewing local television and radio news programs, and news websites and social media.
- When incorrect information is detected by anyone, it is to be logged on an inquiry form and forwarded to the Lead PIO.
- Assistant PIO should prepare a response if needed and advise the EOC.

13. JIC Security.

If necessary, a local law enforcement agency or building security staff will provide security for the JIC during operations and assist with guiding media to proper locations.

14. JIC Transitions.

Depending upon the level of the emergency and the extent of media interest, operations can be during business hours, partial day with suspension in the overnight hours or 24 hours.

- The Lead PIO and JIC Operations Manager, in coordination with the participating agencies, may elect to suspend JIC operations during non-business hours, typically overnight. Use a voice mail system during the overnight suspension to receive media or public calls. Follow-up will be handled when JIC operation resumes.
- Shift Changes
 - » The JIC Operations Manager coordinates communications with JIC staff regarding shift changes. The standard length of a shift during 24-hour operations is 12.5 hours to allow for briefing and exchange of documents.
 - » JIC members arriving on the next shift will:
 - Arrive 30 minutes prior to shift change for the briefing.
 - Sign in, put on identification/PIO vest and pick up a ICS-214 form.
 - » JIC members ending their shift will:
 - Brief arriving members and turn over logs, notes and other pertinent data.
 - Sign out, turn in identification and submit a completed ICS-214 form.

JIC DEACTIVATION

1. **When to Deactivate the JIC.**

Following the conclusion of the emergency or at the point where there is diminishing media or public interest, the JIC enters the deactivation phase as directed by the IC.

2. **Media Notification of JIC Deactivation.**

- Media is notified that the JIC is being deactivated in the final Media Briefing.
- Media is referred to the appropriate PIO representatives for follow-up queries.

3. **JIC Staff All-Hands Meeting.**

- Once operations cease, the JIC Operations Manager leads a debriefing and after-action meeting to identifying concerns that arose during JIC operations.
- Following deactivation, each position submits to the JIC Operations Manager a report stating individual perspectives on the public information function.

4. **Disassembly and Storage of Equipment.**

All JIC staff members are responsible for assisting in the disassembly and storage of JIC equipment under direction of the JIC Operations Manager.

5. **Conduct a Hotwash.**

Identify lessons learned, areas for improvement, things that worked well, and similar information that should be distributed.

6. **After Action Report**

The JIC Operations Manager and Lead PIO submit a final after-action report to the Unified or Incident Commander.

Roles and Expected Tasks

All Positions

More than one person can fill a job duty if additional staff is available. The Lead PIO is responsible for deciding on what positions/roles need to be filled.

Certain roles and tasks are to be completed by all members during activation as they prepare for and complete their roles and transfer their position to another.

- Document significant actions taken on form ICS-214 Unit Log.
- Sign in and don identification (ID badge/PIO vest).
- Arrive 30 minutes prior to shift change.
- Brief incoming shift member if going off-shift.
- Turn over logs, notes or other pertinent data if going off-shift.
- Sign out at the admin support workstation and turn in badge (as applicable) if going off-shift.
- Be prepared to assist with after action reports.

Lead PIO

- Location: JIC
- Reports to: Incident Commander
- Role is generally filled by the Public Information Officer for the authority with jurisdiction.
- Leads and supports the information needs of the response.
- Establishes, maintains and deactivates the JIC.
- Oversees the activities for news and notifications.
- Guides Assistant PIOs, Field PIO and Media Relations Manager, delegating responsibilities as needed.
- Represents and advises the IC on all incident public information matters.

Assistant PIO

- Location: JIC or Remote
- Reports to: Lead PIO
- Handles delegated responsibilities from Lead PIO.
- Assists and advises the Lead PIO on all public information matters relating to the incident, acts as his/her representative during absences, and leads staff during the overnight shift if necessary.
- Ensures communications tasks within the JIC are handled, allowing the Lead PIO to execute the distribution of information.
- Assists the Lead PIO in the overall management and coordination of media activities (if not delegated to Media Manager); community relations and support; and audio-video, graphic and writing support.

WORKSTATION SUPPLIES

Ensure all staff have appropriate supplies on hand to successfully complete their roles. Consider redundancies if the incident could lead to a power outage.

- Contact lists (media, COPIN, stakeholders)
- General office supplies (pens, paper, hole punches)
- Auxiliary power source for cell phones
- Charging cords
- Electrical outlets
- Internet service
- Printer/copy machine
- Wet-erase or China markers, multiple colors
- Sign-in sheets
- Copies of ICS-214
- Flash drives with plans & templates
- Podium
- Microphone
- Batteries for microphone
- Backdrop for podium
- Maps of area
- Status boards
- Easels
- AP Style Book

Field PIO

- Location: On site of the Incident
- Reports to: Incident Commander and Lead PIO
- Coordinates sharing of information in the field.
- Handles delegated responsibilities from Lead PIO.
- Collects information at the site to share with JIC and EOC including photographs/video.
- Works with JIC operations to coordinate and triage all field/on-site media requests.

Media Manager

- Location: JIC or Remote
- Reports to: Lead PIO
- Coordinate media access during activation and operations.
- Maintain logs or other reports as deemed necessary.
- Respond to media inquiries.
- Conduct news briefings and interviews.
- Maintain multi-lingual capabilities, if necessary.

JIC Operations

- Location: JIC or FCEMA
- Reports to: Incident Commander and Lead PIO
- Manage overall operations and administrative activities.
- Supervise JIC daily operations; provide updates to JIC staff and PIOs.

Health Liaison

- Location: JIC or remote
- Reports to: Lead PIO
- Serve as the primary liaison between the JIC and the hospitals.

ABBREVIATION KEY

The following abbreviations are used throughout the plan for efficiency.

- EOC - Emergency Operations Center
- IC - Incident Commander
- JIC - Joint Information Center
- PIO - Public Information Officer
- EMA - Emergency Management Agency
- ICS - Incident Command System

Lead PIO

- **Location: JIC**
- **REPORTS TO: Incident Commander**

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Role is generally filled by the Public Information Officer for the authority with jurisdiction.
- Lead and support the information needs of the response.
- Establish, maintain and deactivate the JIC.
- Oversee the activities for news and notifications.
- Guide Assistant PIOs, Field PIO and Media Relations Manager, delegating responsibilities as needed.
- Represent and advise the IC on all incident public information matters.

UPON ARRIVAL AT JIC

- ◆ **Structure and Inform JIC Roles and Responsibilities**
 - Assign JIC job duties and consult with the JIC Operations Manager to confirm all critical positions are staffed.
 - Consult with EOC to obtain information on initial response to emergency.
 - Read all updates released by the EOC during activation and media advisories released by the affected agencies during activation.
- ◆ **Establish JIC Foundations**
 - Establish and maintain communications with the IC, EOC and other involved departments or agencies.
 - Implement communication requirements.
 - Establish set times to meet with the JIC staff during operation.
 - Coordinate with the IC on frequency of media briefings and post time for the first briefing.
 - Advise IC when the JIC is operational.

DURING JIC OPERATIONS

- ◆ **Manage JIC**
 - Attend all Emergency Operation Center (EOC) meetings/briefings.
 - Encourage open and successful internal communications among JIC participants.
 - Obtain approval from IC of all news releases and other communication prior to release.
 - Lead JIC staff meetings using a Meeting Checklist.
 - Delegate responsibilities to Assistant PIOs, Field PIO and Media Manager as needed to maintain control of communications.

◆ **Manage Incident Communications**

- Analyze public perception of ongoing events and make any needed adjustments to messages.
- Assure information is being sent to stakeholders.
- Create an open line of communication with PIOs who may be involved in the scene but do not have representation in the JIC to assure one consistent message.
- Coordinate information with other spokespersons.
- Advise other spokespersons and the EOC of public rumors and incorrect info in media.
- Respond to public and media information line queries.

◆ **Media Briefings**

- Schedule and oversee preparation for media briefings.
- Meet with JIC staff immediately following each media briefing to assure all new information, policies or outcomes are shared.
- Act as spokesperson for department/agency during news briefings.
- Immediately follow-up on unanswered media questions after each media briefing.
- Moderate all news briefings using News Briefing Checklist.

DURING JIC DEACTIVATION

- Issue final news media advisory on termination of JIC operation.
- Forward completed checklist, completed ICS-214 form, and any other documentation to the JIC Operations Manager.
- Lead final JIC staff debriefing.
- Work with the JIC Operations Manager to complete the After-Action report for the IC.

Assistant PIO

- **REPORTS TO: Lead PIO**
- **LOCATION: JIC or Remote**

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Handle delegated responsibilities from Lead PIO.
- Assist and advise the Lead PIO on all public information matters relating to the incident, act as his/her representative during absences, and lead staff during the overnight shift if necessary.
- Ensure communications tasks within the JIC are handled, allowing the Lead PIO to execute the distribution of information.
- Assist the Lead PIO in the overall management and coordination of
 - » Media activities
 - » Community relations and support
 - » Audio-video, graphic and writing support

UPON ARRIVAL AT JIC:

- Consult with the Lead PIO to receive initial task list.
- Establish computer and telephone link to the EOC and/or lead agency.
- Read all media advisories released by affected agencies during activation.
- Distribute media advisories to other media monitoring team members.
- Confer with other Assistant PIOs to ensure are all briefed.

DURING JIC OPERATIONS:

- Support the communications needs of the IC.
- Assist in the implementation of communication requirements.
- Consult with management and public affairs personnel on public communications policies.
- Schedule periodic media briefings upon direction of Lead PIO.
- Respond to citizen and media information line queries as needed.

◆ Manage Information

- Maintain a comprehensive and current media list containing points of contact, phone and e-mails addresses.
- Gather and coordinate information about the emergency with federal, state, county and city PIOs.
- Respond to inquiries from local, state and national governmental agencies.
- Generate/collect prep questions for the media briefings and prepare speakers for interviews.
- Produce detailed accounts of calls (name, organization, phone number, nature of inquiry and results).
- Monitor and assesses the content and accuracy of news media reports and assist in identifying trends and breaking issues. Advise Lead PIO, spokespersons and EOC of public rumors or incorrect information in media.
- Provide a written summary of each media briefing to the IC and all JIC staff.

◆ Prepare Communication Products

- Produce and gather graphics and logos for the incident.
- Develop and clear for release communication products.
- Communication products can be in electronic or hard copy format such as the following:
 - » News releases
 - » Talking points
 - » Briefing notes
 - » Social media graphics
 - » Frequently asked questions/fact sheets
 - » Public service announcements
 - » Posters and fliers
 - » Newsletters
 - » Infographics
- Work with internal IT department to manage event-related web sites and web pages, creating special web pages for the event if needed.
- Produce and provide audiovisual support as needed for use in JIC work areas.
- Produce quality photographs, video and/or audio visual records for the casebook.

◆ Community Relations

- Identify communities affected by the incident including any that require special action planning (e.g., non-English speakers, cultural differences, age).
- Maintain a comprehensive list of interested stakeholders including contact information.
- Share information with stakeholders and solicit feedback on how the response is being perceived.
- Respond to community inquiries. If information is not available, return call when answer is known or route to subject matter expert.
- Evaluate the information needs of the community.
- Analyze public perception of events including attitudes toward the incident and response organization.
 - » Determine how well community members comprehend command objectives/messages.
 - » Adjust messages as necessary.
- Develop and coordinate community outreach programs.
- If community meetings are needed:
 - » Schedule times.
 - » Determine format and arrange set up of facility/software.
 - » Identify, schedule and prepare appropriate personnel and subject matter experts.
- Participate in meetings hosted by the community.
- Inform the public of volunteer opportunities coordinated by assisting agencies.
 - » Route inquiries about volunteer opportunities to appropriate contact.

AT JIC DEACTIVATION:

- Issue final news media advisory/release on termination of JIC operations.
- Forward completed checklists and ICS-214 form, and any other documentation to the JIC Operations Manager.
- Provide audiovisual documentation of the deactivation.
- Participate in final JIC staff debriefing.
- Assure final information is available on all web sites, including recovery information.

Field PIO

- **REPORTS TO: Incident Commander and Lead PIO**
- **LOCATION: On site of the Incident**

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Coordinate sharing of information in the field.
- Handle delegated responsibilities from Lead PIO.
- Collect information at the site to share with JIC and EOC including photographs/video.
- Work with JIC operations to coordinate and triage all field/on-site media requests.

DURING FIELD INCIDENT OPERATIONS:

◆ Serve as Communication Extension

- Serve as a liaison between JIC operations and the field IC; regularly update both.
- Work with Lead PIO to obtain communication materials from JIC and get approval for release of information from the field.
- Direct media requests that cannot be sufficiently handled on-site to Lead PIO.
- Coordinate with Lead PIO to schedule expert spokespersons that are needed.

◆ Provide On-site Media Management

- Inform on-site media of the physical areas that are accessible versus restricted.
- Document media activities and media requests on log form.
- Prioritize, track and respond to on-site media requests.
- Schedule regular briefings for on-site media, working with Lead PIO and Field IC.
- Coordinate on-site media briefings or interviews.
- Act as spokesperson for basic media inquiries.
- Provide approved materials to on-site media.

◆ Collect and Document Information

- Organize, brief and provide talking points/message materials to spokesperson.
- Gather incident information and facts for the JIC.
- Produce incident casebook.
- Videotape and photograph at the incident scene as needed or requested.

JIC Operations

- **REPORTS TO: Incident Commander and Lead PIO**
- **LOCATION: JIC or FCEMA**

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Manage overall operations and administrative activities.
- Supervise JIC daily operations; provide updates to JIC staff and PIOs.

DURING JIC OPERATIONS:

- Consult with Lead PIO to establish staff work hours and daily operating schedule.
- Execute plans and policies as directed by the Lead PIO.
- Assure JIC Staff complete ICS-214 "Unit Log" and any other required documentation.
- Maintain JIC operations log book, track expenses and maintain other reports as needed.
- Complete the JIC Staff Contact List.
- Maintain records of all news summaries and media advisories issued by JIC.
 - » Attend media briefings.
 - » File all media advisories.
- Ensure relevant information is easily accessible for use by JIC personnel.
- Maintain incident map for JIC staff and media with information to include:
 - » General area affected
 - » Road closures
 - » Exact boundaries of evacuation areas
 - » Traffic reroutes around affected area
 - » Shelters opened
 - » Evacuation routes
 - » Access control points
 - » Worst disaster area
 - » Command post location
- Maintain status board that includes:
 - » Casualty figures
 - » Property damage
 - » Utility damage and repair status
 - » Major events
 - » Incident timeline
- Manage Stakeholders/VIPs.
 - » Notify stakeholders that the JIC has been activated.
 - » Coordinate VIP visits to the JIC or incident area and media briefings.
 - » Coordinate activities with spokespersons/PIOs.
- Consult Lead PIO about unresolved or sensitive issues.
- Coordinate flow of information among spokespersons, workroom and media monitoring rooms to facilitate rumor control and responses to inquiries.
- Help Lead PIO identify upcoming concerns and action items.

DURING JIC DEACTIVATION:

- Organize copies of documentation generated from self and other JIC staff.
- Lead the final JIC staff debriefing.
- Work with Lead PIO and Assistant PIOs to produce an After-Action Report.

Media Manager

- **REPORTS TO: Lead PIO**
- **LOCATION: JIC or Remote**

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Coordinate media access during activation and operations.
- Maintain logs or other reports as deemed necessary.
- Respond to media inquiries.
- Conduct news briefings and interviews.
- Maintain multi-lingual capabilities, if necessary.

DURING JIC OPERATIONS:

- Meet with JIC staff prior to the JIC being declared operational.
- Read media advisories released by affected agencies during activation.
- Media Registration/Logistics
 - Maintain and update media lists.
 - Secure supply of media folders and badges.
 - Set up media registration desk outside media briefing room.
 - Register media, issue name tags and direct them to proper location.
 - Coordinate and control media access during JIC operations and media briefings.
 - Maintain status board, maps and other visual aids in the briefing room and media workroom.
 - Assist the media with their technical needs (e.g., best location for media vans, setup of satellite dish, electrical hookup locations).
 - Escort media as needed and coordinate media access during JIC activation and operations.
 - Promote story and feature ideas to media.
 - Manage off-site media briefings.
 - Arrive at location early for set-up and coordination.
 - Reserve parking for spokespersons.

◆ Media Briefing

- Maintain media briefing clock.
- Set up of tables, podium, microphones and audiovisual equipment.
- Update media as needed on logistics (time, place) regarding upcoming media briefings.
- Review media advisories.
- Distribute any media advisories or handouts to media.
- Take notes at and prepare a summary of each media briefing.
- Assist reporters with any additional needs following each media briefing.

◆ Fact Gathering

- Consult with EOC to obtain information on initial response to emergency.
- Read all updates released by the EOC during activation.
- Gather information about the incident from Incident Command, Field PIO, Planning Section's Situation Unit and agency representatives from each response partner.
- Establish contacts and maintain regular times to pick up information from all sections within the ICS.
- Respond rapidly to breaking news and gather information for the other specialists in the JIC.
- Work with the Lead PIO to schedule appropriate spokespersons and VIPs necessary to conduct interviews with the media, community and distinguished visitors.

◆ Media Response

- Respond to routine inquiries using pre-approved talking points, speaker preparation, news releases and fact sheets Report rumors to Lead PIO.
- Select and prepare speakers prior to interviews. Draft answers to anticipated questions.
- Respond to media inquiries using approved information.
- Return all pending media calls.
- Log all ingoing and outgoing calls on the media log sheet.
- Report media call questions to the Assistant PIO for media briefing preparation.

◆ Media Monitoring

- Distribute media advisories to other media monitoring team members.
- Determine primary newspaper, radio, television and Internet outlets to monitor.
- Monitor and record appropriate news broadcasts on a media report log.
- Work with Audiovisual Support Staff to provide video/audio tapes of news broadcasts and printed clips to the Lead PIO, Assistant PIO or the EOC, if requested.
- Provide a report of updated information at any time upon request.
- Identify potential issues, problems and/or detrimental rumors and report the information immediately to the Lead PIO and appropriate agency or office.
- Report any discrepancies in news reports to the Lead PIO.
- Using inquiry forms, provide questions to the Lead PIO as needed.

◆ Image Management

- Shoot and edit high quality photographs and video that can be shared in print or broadcast.
- Catalog and manage all photos and videos.
- Provide photos and videos for posting on social media and the website.
- Provide photos and videos to the Administrative Assistant for the casebook.

◆ Rumor Control

- Identify and report any rumors that may cause issues or problems to the Assistant PIO.
- Verify the accuracy of the rumor and document results.
- Report results of each rumor investigation to Assistant PIO.

◆ Social Media

- Receive briefing from Assistant PIO and obtain account login and password information.
- Generate and post content to agency social media sites.
- Determine blogs and social media outlets to monitor.
- Gather perceptions from social media, public and other stakeholders about response efforts.
- Monitor the perceptions of the affected communities concerning the progress of the response and report to Lead PIO.

◆ POD Media Management

- Work with the Lead PIO and IC to determine location of the Media POD.
- Establish telephone and/or radio link to the Safety Officer/Media Liaison Officers on-site at each POD.
- Coordinate information with the Safety Officer/Media Liaison Officers on-site at each POD.
- Ensure relevant information is displayed for use by JIC staff and it is easily accessible to staff answering phones and producing written products.
- After consult with lead agency PIO, follow SOP to procure needed equipment.
- Track all expenses.
- Assure all media functions at the PODs are well organized and operating effectively.
- Serve as the primary point of contact in the JIC with the Safety Officer/Media Liaison Officers who are on-site at the PODs and help support their communications needs.
- Provide direction to the Safety Officer/Media Liaison Officer at each POD to ensure all functions are well organized and operating efficiently.

Health Liaison

- **REPORTS TO: Lead PIO**
- **LOCATION: JIC or Remote**

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Establish and maintain communication channels with hospitals.
- Coordinate sharing of information between hospitals and the JIC.
- Handle delegated responsibilities from Lead PIO.

DURING JIC OPERATIONS:

◆ **Serve as Primary Liaison with Hospitals**

- Serve as a liaison between JIC operations and hospitals; regularly update both.
- Obtain copies of all messaging released by hospitals.
- Coordinate with Lead PIO and hospitals to schedule expert medical spokespersons.
- Advise hospitals of public rumors or incorrect information.

◆ **Inform Media Managers on Hospital Information**

- Assure important hospital information is shared with the Lead PIO and/or Media Manager.
- Collect information to respond to hospital-related queries.
- Work with Lead PIO and hospital spokespersons prior to each media briefing to ensure consistent messaging.

Message Guidelines

MESSAGE PREPARATION TEMPLATE

- I. Prepare a statement of commitment, empathy or concern** to use as an introduction. Assume the perspective of your audience and address their primary concerns and use short sentences (less than 12 words).
Example: "Before I give you an update of the incident, I'd like to say our number one concern is the safety of the community" or "The most important objective in our operation is ensuring a resolution to this situation as soon as possible."
- II. Prepare one to three key messages** and incorporate them into a bridge between the sentence above and the body of your statement.
Example: "Precautionary vaccination is the best course of events and we're starting clinics later today."
- III. Clarify facts** and provide calls to action.
 - Who
 - What
 - Where
 - When
 - Why
 - How
- IV. Acknowledge unknown** information and explain process to get answers
- V. Repeat statement of commitment**
- VI. Provide follow-up information**
 - Contact for more information
 - Scheduled time of next update
- VII. Review message** for the following:
 - Positive action steps
 - Honest/open tone
 - Applied risk communication principles
 - Clear, simple words in short sentences
 - No jargon
 - No judgmental phrases
 - No humor
 - No speculation

NEWS BRIEFING INTRODUCTION CHECKLIST

I. General Guidelines

1. Set the tone for the news briefing.
2. Have a predetermined message for each news briefing. If you do not have a message, you do not need a news briefing.
3. Provide correct spellings for all names as well as the appropriate title and the person's position in the JIC/unified command.
4. Set a time limit with your speakers prior to starting the news briefing.
 - Do not let any one person dominate the time during the news briefing.
 - Take charge and use time as your authority.
5. Make yourself available at the end of the news briefing.
 - This builds relationships and establishes credibility with members of the media.

II. Checklist

- Introduce yourself.
- Explain the format of the news briefing.
- Provide the time frame (usually 30 to 45 minutes).
- Read the incident statement.
- Introduce the speakers.
- Moderate the question-and-answer period.
- Announce the time for the next news briefing.
- End the news briefing.

Media Relations: Media Contacts

MEDIA DATABASE

A media database is a repository of media contacts and journalists to contact when reaching out for earned media coverage.

The database should contain basic information about the media contact that lets you identify if they would be interested in your story and how to contact them.

The nature of news media is rapidly changing, so it is challenging to maintain a current list of contacts and outlets. Set aside time to regularly update your list, so you are prepared for a critical incident.

TIPS FOR CREATING A MEDIA CONTACT DATABASE

1. Identify Your Target Audience

Determine with whom you want to share information:

- Who is meant to watch, hear or read it.
- Which mediums are right for your information/story.

2. Identify Relevant Journalists

Determine what types of journalists are right for your database.

- Journalists may specialize in one specific kind of reporting or then may cover a wide range.
- Who is best to tell your story? (Business, Medical, Public Safety, Investigative, etc.)

3. Review Previous Coverage

Keep a record of previous earned media and refer back to see which journalists and media outlets provided the highest volume of coverage for your type of story.

4. Utilize Social Media Lists

Build media lists on social platforms as well.

- Journalists may prefer communicating via channels like Twitter or Facebook rather than being emailed or phone.
- Making journalists aware that you will post information on your social media accounts can assist with efficient sharing of information.

5. Build Relationships

Authentic relationships take time to build, but those who play the long game are rewarded with sustainable and fruitful partnerships down the line.

- Relationships are two way. Do not forget your local journalists during a critical incident when you may receive national or international attention.

6. Keep Your Database Up to Date

Journalists move around, especially as the number of outlets continues to shrink.

- A regular audit of your media contacts serves your outreach efforts.

MEDIA CONTACT INFORMATION

Maintain a list that includes the following information to ensure you reach the proper outlets to share your message.

- Name
- Media Outlet
- Position
- Email Address
- Phone Number(s)
- Social Media Accounts
- Beats/Topics Covered

MEDIA CONTACT LIST RESOURCES

Ohio News Media Association

- www.ohionews.org/awards/ONA/pt/sp/member_directory

Ohio Legislative Correspondents Association

- www.olca.info

EIN Presswire

- www.einpresswire.com/world-media-directory/4/ohio

Associated Press (Ohio)

- www.ap.org
- apcolumbus@ap.org
- 800-762-4841

Media Relations Templates

MEDIA ALERT: INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF INCIDENT

CONTACT:

PHONE:

TIME/DATE:

NEWS MEDIA ADVISORY | EMERGENCY INCIDENT [EVENT]

At approximately [TIME] today, the [AGENCY] received reports of [NATURE OF THE INCIDENT].

We have a system in place to address an incident such as this. We are being assisted by [NAMES OF ASSISTING AGENCIES] as part of that plan.

The situation is under investigation, and we are working with [LOCAL/STATE/FEDERAL] authorities to respond appropriately and to keep the public informed.

Additional information will be provided as soon as possible.

Approved By: _____

Date & Time: _____

MEDIA ALERT: ANNOUNCE DEDICATED INFORMATION LINE FOR MEDIA

NOTE TO EDITORS, ASSIGNMENT DESKS:

For information updates by telephone, a media telephone bank has been installed in the JIC.

The following telephone number is FOR MEDIA USE ONLY: [###-###-####].

Please do not release this number to the public. The public will be given a different number for information.

Approved By: _____

Date & Time: _____

MEDIA ALERT: ANNOUNCE MEDIA BRIEFING

MEDIA ADVISORY: NOT FOR PUBLICATION OR BROADCAST

CONTACT:

PHONE:

TIME/DATE:

AREA OFFICIALS TO HOLD NEWS BRIEFING ON [EVENT]

WHAT: Officials from the [LEAD AGENCY] and [OTHER AGENCIES AND PARTNERS] will hold a news briefing to discuss the local and state response to the [EVENT] and answer questions about the recovery effort.

WHEN: TIME | DAY | DATE

WHERE: AGENCY | BUILDING NAME | EXACT LOCATION/ROOM | CITY, STATE ZIP

PARTICIPANTS:

LIST ALL PARTICIPANTS WITH CONFIRMED SPELLING OF NAMES

BACKGROUND:

PROVIDE ONE OR TWO SENTENCES EXPLAINING THE SITUATION.

Example:

The president's designation of [NUMBER] counties in Ohio opens the way for a wide range of disaster assistance for victims affected by [DISASTER] as well as emergency protective measures and assistance to repair and replace public facilities.

Federal coordinating officer (NAME) will provide information on the response and recover process now under way and specifics regarding the kinds of assistance available to residents.

Media representatives should enter the [DESCRIBE] entrance of the building to sign-in.

A media workroom, equipped with telephones, is available at the JIC.

A JIC representative will be present to meet with media representatives.

All news briefings will be held in the media briefing room.

MEDIA BRIEFING MODERATOR SCRIPT

Welcome, ladies and gentlemen to today's news briefing.

We will present information on **[INCIDENT]**.

With us today is **[LIST PARTICIPANTS]**.

We will begin with some brief statements from the representatives of the JIC/unified command, then open the floor to your questions.

Because of the ongoing operations we will be available for **[SET NUMBER OF MINUTES]**.

Please allow time for everyone here to ask questions.

Following the news briefing, the joint information center staff and I will be available to help you further.

JIC Staff Contact List

LEAD PIO		
NAME		AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY
PHONE	EMAIL	HOME AGENCY
JIC OPERATIONS MANAGER		
NAME		AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY
PHONE	EMAIL	HOME AGENCY
FIELD PIO		
NAME		AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY
PHONE	EMAIL	HOME AGENCY
ASSISTANT PIO		
NAME		AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY
PHONE	EMAIL	HOME AGENCY
MEDIA MANAGER		
NAME		AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY
PHONE	EMAIL	HOME AGENCY
ROLE:		
NAME		AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY
PHONE	EMAIL	HOME AGENCY
ROLE:		
NAME		AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY
PHONE	EMAIL	HOME AGENCY
ROLE:		
NAME		AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY
PHONE	EMAIL	HOME AGENCY
ROLE:		
NAME		AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY
PHONE	EMAIL	HOME AGENCY

JIC Staff Contact List (con't)

ROLE:		
NAME		AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY
PHONE	EMAIL	HOME AGENCY
ROLE:		
NAME		AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY
PHONE	EMAIL	HOME AGENCY
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PHONE	EMAIL	HOME AGENCY
ROLE:		
NAME		AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY
PHONE	EMAIL	HOME AGENCY

Worksheets & Logs

MEDIA MONITORING WORKSHEET

MONITOR NAME	TIME/DATE	MOST RECENT NEWS RELEASE	
MEDIA MONITORED (TV/RADIO STATION/NEWSPAPER/WEBSITE)			
SYNOPSIS OF COVERAGE			
INACCURACIES			
SUGGESTED FIXES			
ASSIGNED TO		TIME/DATE RECEIVED	TIME/DATE RESOLVED
REMEDIATION TAKEN			

MEDIA REPRESENTATIVE		TIME/DATE	RECEIVED BY
MEDIA OUTLET		CONTACT INFO	
INQUIRY			
RESPONSE	<input type="checkbox"/> FORWARDED <input type="checkbox"/> DETAILED BELOW		
FOLLOW UP	<input type="checkbox"/> NONE REQUIRED <input type="checkbox"/> DETAILED BELOW		
ASSIGNED TO		TIME/DATE RECEIVED	TIME/DATE RESOLVED
SPECIFICS OF FOLLOW UP			
NOTES			

Sample Crisis Communication Plan

Contributed by the City of Dublin’s Communications & Public Information division in conjunction with the Dublin Police Department

DUBLIN POLICE DEPARTMENT CRITICAL INCIDENT COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

adapted for the Central Ohio Public Information Network (COPIN) Support Team



NRECC911

**NORTHWEST REGIONAL EMERGENCY
COMMUNICATIONS CENTER**

City of Dublin | Washington Township | City of Hilliard
Norwich Township | City of Upper Arlington | City of Worthington

Updated for use by COPIN: April 2024

The Dublin Police Department, in coordination with the City's Communications & Marketing team, has organized a critical incident media response plan that outlines steps to address the communication needs surrounding a dynamic or static incident in the City of Dublin. This includes processes and procedures to ensure the public and media have access to accurate and timely information in the event of a critical incident. The plan also summarizes key approaches and considerations to be communicated with media, stakeholders, the public and City employees during such an incident.

In fall 2022, this plan was amended for use by the Central Ohio Public Information Network (COPIN) Support Team and incorporated into that group's Joint Information Center plan.

Notes

Lead communications team is made up of the communicators from the municipality where the crisis/incident is occurring

Officer-involved critical incident (OICI)
(Special considerations during an OICI are denoted throughout)

1 | Incident Occurs

2 | (Police Work Occurs)

3 | Receive Information Request

- This request could come from the general public, media or social media
- This process could also originate from police or 911 services contacting the lead communications team about an incident and the team deciding to share information with the public (for life-saving information, e.g.)
- Catalog media request for all supporting team members to see and work from

4 | Gather Information

Communications team works with police/other public safety agencies, schools

- Status of incident
 - (static or dynamic)
- Type of incident
 - (i.e., traffic crash, hazardous material, criminal incident, mass casualty, officer-involved critical incident, active threat at a school, weather emergency)
- Timeline of events
- Related reports and video
- Collect 911 calls
 - Requests for 911 calls go to local 911 center
 - Communications team reviews to understand scope
 - Include municipality's legal division, if applicable
- Scope of online discourse regarding incident
- Injury info/status of involved people
- Demographics of all involved (age, physical description, residency, race, etc.)
 - Does race have bearing on the story?
 - When writing the message, if it doesn't affect the narrative, don't include
 - When able, share photo (of missing person, suspect, etc.) instead of including race
- **OICI:** Involved officer and citizen history
 - (Officer: i.e., work history regarding use of force, mental health)
 - (Citizen: i.e., pertinent criminal history, community status, mental health)

5 | Identify Situation (Is It Dynamic?)

Communications team works with police

Yes:

- Looking for suspect?
- Is the suspect identified?
- Is the public safe?
 - What action does the public need to take?
 - Share the police department's direction for resolving incident
- Are communicators needed on site?
- Do public safety partners or school district need to be contacted?
- Media staging area needed?
 - Share details with media
- Communications Director (or designee) designates roles in larger incident; includes Central Ohio Public Information Network (COPIN) support roles
 - Lead Public Information Officer (PIO)
 - Assistant PIO(s)
 - Field PIO(s)
 - Joint Information Center (JIC) Operations Manager

No:

- Static:
 - Affirm the public that it is safe
 - Share the police department's direction on next steps

6 | Assess Incident Info

Communications team works with police

- **Ask Police Command Staff:**
 - What do we know
 - What don't we know
 - What questions received from public/media
 - What questions do we anticipate
 - Verify/Notify
 - Next of kin
 - City manager/City Council
 - **OICI:** Involved officer's family
 - **OICI:** Internal (police only)
 - Send message from chief (or designee)
- Collect and share all info between communications team and command staff (and school district, if applicable)
- Consider Emergency Operations Center
 - Location: physical place; can be virtual
- Consider Joint Information Center
 - Can be independent of Emergency Operations Center; can be virtual; include COPIN designee(s)

7 | Decide Public Message Scope

Communications team works with police

* Emphasize to public this is preliminary info at every step

- Fatal?
- Injury?
- Undetermined?

- **Considerations:**
 - Alert legal division, based on chief, deputy chief or designee's direction, if applicable

 - What can be shared that won't compromise the investigation?

 - What info has already been shared (including misinformation) that needs to be verified/acknowledged/debunked?

 - What direction are we giving the public/request of public
 - Are holding statements applicable or helpful right now?
 - Evacuation? Shelter in place?
 - Do we need to provide instructions to public about sending video/photos that show victims/suspects?
 - How to lessen burden on 911 center
 - Tell people to stop calling 911? Where do people need to go?
 - Consider establishing Crisis Call Center (tip line) for witness info; include school district, if applicable

 - Consider press conference:
 - Fatal
 - Life-threatening injury
 - OICI
 - Incident at school
 - Personnel issue
 - Identify where/when conference will take place and spokesperson
 - Share details with media, public and internally

 - Body camera/cruiser footage release
 - Reviewed by jurisdiction's police records department
 - Consider giving a timeline to media about release

 - Nextdoor Alerts (would go to phones, if users are signed up)

 - Using available local call system; warning system (for outdoor event, e.g., tornado, severe weather); radio station (if all mediums fail/internet is down, use this)

 - **OICI:** Alert legal division
 - **OICI:** Share timeline of following investigation
 - Share names of entities involved (i.e., BCI)
 - **School incident:** In lockdown? What procedures other schools should follow? Reunification steps?

8 | Write Message

Communications team

* Emphasize to public this is preliminary info at every step

- **Determine three major talking points; each must:**
 - Be true
 - Show your compassion
 - Indicate municipality and police department are gathering information and want a solution

(via Mark Weaver, Communications Counsel)

- **Be honest, actionable, easy to understand**
 - Can we **acknowledge** awareness of what has happened?
 - Can we express **empathy** toward those who are affected? Do carefully without admitting blame
 - Can we declare our **values**?
 - (Already posted on website)
 - Can we describe the overall **approach** we will take to address the crisis and resolve it?
 - Can we make some kind of **commitment**?
 - **Procedural:** We'll update you when we know more
 - **Substantive:** We'll get to the bottom of this and fix it

(via Helio Fred Garcia, Logos Consulting Group)

- **Considerations:**
 - If applicable, consult with public safety partners (fire department) and/or school district
 - Connect with available diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) groups if incident is applicable to diverse communities
 - Are translation services required?
 - Work with DEI group members
 - **OICI/School Incident:** Are there appropriate holding statements to share?

9 | Share Message

Communications team

- * Emphasize to public this is preliminary info at every step
- * After chief of police and communications director (or designees) approval
- * If unified command involved, include partners

- Send press release to media

- Share release with 911 dispatchers

- Post to website; front page banner, if needed

- Share on social media
 - **Main:** Twitter, Nextdoor, Facebook, Instagram
 - Use emergency graphics
 - Is it best to make one platform the main source of information in this incident?
 - If yes, tell people to follow that channel
 - Link messages to website

- Internal message (to all staff)
 - **Dynamic situation:** Use available employee messaging system
 - **Static situation:** Email from City Manager/Chief, if applicable
 - **OICI:** Police Department will be alerted in #6; include all City staff to curb misinformation

- **Considerations:**
 - Do all other social media posts need to be halted during this time?

 - Share via available municipality applications; include directions

 - Connect with DEI groups to share within communities

 - If applicable, share with school district and public safety partners

 - Share with municipality's volunteers, boards, commissions

 - **School Incident:** Share via school channels to contact students, staff and parents
 - Ask school district to share messages
 - Share with school trustees

9 | Share Message

Communications team

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 - Share via available municipality applications; include directions

 - Connect with DEI groups to share within communities

 - If applicable, share with school district and public safety partners

 - Share with municipality's volunteers, boards, commissions

 - **School Incident:** Share via school channels to contact students, staff and parents
 - Ask school district to share messages
 - Share with school trustees

10 | (Public has the information regarding the incident)

11 | Continue to Update Public

Communications team

- The communications team will continue to monitor and answer questions posted to the municipality's social media channels related to the incident as information updates
- Requests for 911 calls go to 911 center
- Public records request process
- Manage internal communications
- Provide updated messages to City Council/ municipality leadership, DEI groups, volunteers, boards and commissions, school district and trustees

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