

APPENDIX TWO

WARNING and EMERGENCY PUBLIC INFORMATION

- I. **PURPOSE:** This appendix provides the structure for immediate dissemination of warnings and alerts to key officials and the general public.

- II. **SCOPE:** The warning and emergency public information system is to provide for coordination of information released to the news media and the general public in time of crisis in addition to warnings. These systems are multi-jurisdictional multi-agency process and effect all responding organizations.

- III. **ORGANIZATION**
 - A. **WARNING OFFICER:** The Director will act as warning officer for the City of Sequim and may designate alternate warning officers, as appropriate.

 - B. **INFORMATION OFFICER:** Each department will coordinate public announcements through the city Public Information Officer. The joint information center will be recognized in the event of a multi-jurisdictional event.

- IV. **RESPONSIBILITIES**
 - A. **WARNING OFFICER:** The warning officer is responsible for the rapid dissemination of warnings to key officials and the general public. Twenty-four hour capabilities may be accomplished by the designation of alternate warning officers. The warning officer will use the following facilities:
 - 1. **NAWAS (National Warning System)** - The primary NAWAS facility is located in the Peninsula Communications 911 Center (PENCOM). Clallam County Emergency Management will establish procedures for forwarding essential warning information to the City of Sequim as appropriate.

 - 2. **EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEM (EAS):** The EAS can be activated by designated local officials to broadcast official information to the public via local broadcast outlets. Each jurisdiction will designate those officials who are authorized to active EAS, as shown in the EAS Plan. The Emergency Alert System is available for local events from radio station KONP Port Angeles.

 - 3. **NOAA WEATHER RADIO:** The National Oceanographic Atmospheric Administration weather alert radio system can be activated by the Warning Officer and other locally designated officials.

 - 4. **PUBLIC SAFETY RADIO NETWORKS:** Local public safety communication centers and their paging capabilities will be utilized to disseminate information throughout the public safety community, as appropriate.

 - B. **PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER:** The Public Information Officer will be the point of contact

for the news media. Responsibilities of the information officer are:

1. Establish a joint information center (JIC) when appropriate.
2. Prepare information for release to the media and the public.
3. Obtain approval for all releases from the incident commander.
4. Coordinate all news media activities associated with the incident.
5. Coordinate the public information and rumor control process.
6. Monitor news media coverage of the incident.

V. WARNING EMERGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES:

A. Washington State Emergency Management:

1. Is responsible for ensuring the receipt and dissemination of significant national and state warning information throughout the state.
2. Is responsible for coordinating national, state, National Atmospheric and Oceanic Administration or other warnings via the National Alert Warning System (NAWAS) and the National Law Enforcement Teletype System (NLETS) through ACCESS.

B. Clallam County Emergency Management:

1. Prepares and maintains local warning plans, Suggested Procedures (SP), and call lists.
2. Coordinates the enhancement and helps maintain county-wide communications capabilities which can be utilized for warning purposes.
3. Is the secondary NAWAS answering point.
4. Coordinates with area's primary EAS stations (KONP and KVAC/KLLM radio) and ensures that the EAS plan is reviewed and updated, when appropriate.

C. The Peninsula Communications 911 Center (PENCOM):

1. Is the 24 hour point of contact for warning information for Clallam County and the cities of Sequim, Port Angeles, and Forks.
2. Is the NAWAS primary answering point.

D. The City of Sequim Emergency Management Director: Establishes and maintains an expedient warning receipt and dissemination capability in cooperation with Clallam County Emergency Management.

VI, WARNING POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

- A. State-wide warning fan out will be received by PENCOM over the National Warning system or A Central Computer Enforcement Service System (ACCESS). Upon receipt of warning or test

information PENCOM will fan out all warning information via ACCESS, telephone, and voice radio, as provided in their emergency Alert book.

- B. In the event of any national, state, or local incident requiring warning dissemination, PENCOM will alert the Sequim Emergency Management Director or alternate.
- C. Warning to the general public will be accomplished by all means available including the Emergency Alert System, National Weather Service Alert Weather radio system, door to door, media, sirens, voice radio, or any other workable method.

VII. EMERGENCY PUBLIC INFORMATION RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. In the occurrence of a major local, state or national disaster situation affecting the City of Sequim, the EM Director or a designated Public Information Officer (PIO) will be responsible for the coordination, preparation, and dissemination of all emergency information. Individual responding organizations or agencies, such as the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, etc., will speak for their own operations, as they choose. It is not the intent of the PIO to be a spokesperson for all agencies. The PIO's primary purpose is to coordinate information to ensure accurate information is being provided to the public and to monitor rumor control.
- B. In a localized emergency which involves a multiple agency response to a specific incident, a Public Information Officer may be assigned as part of the Incident Command Team conducting operations at the scene, normally working from a field command post
- C. In the event the EOC is activated, a PIO (either local personnel or support from a request to the state) will be assigned to the EOC to coordinate information from PIOs in the field and with incident command posts. The EOC will coordinate information between operations by acting as the information collection point and then disseminating information back out to those operations.
- D. Other emergency public information responsibilities include planning and coordination of procedures with the local media to ensure effective dissemination of emergency information and/or subsequent public instructions.
- E. The PIO will establish an information center (joint, if appropriate) at a location that affords access by the media.
- F. For each incident, the command agency will determine the media's official point of contact. The location of this point of contact shall be relayed to all appropriate communications centers and the EOC, if activated. During a large scale incident, the legislative authority shall have the opportunity to determine the location of the media's point of contact. They may also allow that authority to remain with the incident commander.
- G. All Agencies:
 - 1. In a major emergency or disaster situation, the release of all emergency information to the public shall be coordinated as best it can. The EOC can act as coordination point, as appropriate.
 - 2. Information concerning localized incidents will be released through the designated Director, the Public Information Officer, or by the Incident Commander.
- H. Media: In a major disaster situation, designated members of the media may be assigned public

information responsibilities at the Emergency Operation Center or will function from a field location to provide real time emergency public information or instructions.

- I. In an actual emergency, the EM Director or the designated Public Information Officer is responsible for:
 1. Distribution of information regarding emergency preparedness activities, by all available means. (This should be a coordinated effort with local chapter of the American Red Cross.)
 2. Coordination and dissemination of emergency information and authorized news release to the public.
 3. Establishing liaison with neighboring counties and their Public Information Officers in regional disasters, to avoid information overlap.
 4. Coordinating incident information between different commands and /or incident locations, when appropriate and disseminating information out to the appropriate commands and incidents.

VIII. EMERGENCY PUBLIC INFORMATION POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

- A. Prior to or during a local emergency, the EM Director will coordinate the dissemination of emergency information and subsequent instructions to the public, via the local media. Priorities for release to the public include:
 1. Presidential Declaration and announcements by federal officials.
 2. City government's instruction or announcements.
 3. Gubernatorial Proclamations and announcements or other state official announcements.
 4. City general information on details and progress.
 5. Information concerning individuals and families or the effects of the emergency on the population and resources.
- B. All public information released during an emergency situation will be coordinated through the EM Director or a designated Public Information Officer to minimize confusion
- C. The Emergency Alert System and all available local communications and warning systems will also be utilized for disseminating emergency public information.

IX. JOINT INFORMATION CENTER

In large events, or when more than one jurisdiction is impacted by the emergency, a Joint Information Center (JIC) may be established to coordinate the release of information. The designated information officers will equally and cooperatively staff and operate the JIC.

X. COOPERATION WITH THE JIC

All agencies and organizations involved in emergency response and recovery will contribute their

designated information personnel to the JIC in order to ensure accurate information regarding their individual operation is released to the media. All response and recovery agencies are required to cooperate with the JIC to the fullest extent possible regarding the release of any information involving the incident. Each participating agency will assist in providing current information to the PIO/JIC.

XI. DISSEMINATION OF WARNINGS AND INFORMATION TO SPECIAL POPULATIONS

There are limited provisions for special dissemination of warnings and information to persons who are hearing or visual impaired.

XII. DISASTER VICTIM INFORMATION SYSTEM

The disaster victim information systems provides for central coordination of casualty lists and other victim information. The disaster victim information system is coordinated by the American Red Cross.

XIII. RUMOR CONTROL

Each department will appoint staff as needed to work in coordination with the JIC and other public information systems for rumor control.