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# Public Information Annex

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## CHECKLIST FOR ALL DISASTERS

(There is no set order to these checklist items.)

*Started/Completed*

*Notes*

NOTE: See also checklists for Hazardous Materials Incidents,  
Flood, fire, winds or tsunami

### Before an Emergency

- Maintain an updated media contact list.
- Check PIO supplies in the Emergency Operations Center.

### During an Emergency – warning phase

- Review this plan.
  - Alert emergency public information staff to the situation and make tentative shift assignments.
  - Arrange for inspection and installation of communications equipment and other supplies/equipment necessary for emergency public information functions, including television, radio, maps, automatic telephone answering equipment (if available), display charts, and status boards.
  - Respond to media and public calls.
  - Review appropriate stock of emergency public information material, including Emergency Alert System messages.
  - Review emergency public information priorities.
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- Prepare public information for the hearing impaired and non-English speaking populations.
  - Warn the public and provide instructions on how to avoid the hazard or reduce its impact.

### During an Emergency - impact phase

- Ö Ö Go to the Emergency Operations Center if activated.
- Ö Ö While in the EOC, identify yourself according to EOC Standard Operating Procedures.
- Ö Ö Maintain an Activity Log.
- Ö Ö Release instructions that could save lives (top priority):
  - Ö Hazardous/contaminated/congested areas to avoid.
  - Ö Curfews.
  - Ö Road, bridge, freeway overpass, and dam conditions, and alternate routes to take.
  - Ö Evacuation:
    - Routes.
    - Instructions (including what to do if vehicle breaks down).
    - Arrangements for persons without transportation.
  - Ö Location of shelter/medical/coroner facilities, food, safe water.
  - Ö Status of hospitals.
  - Ö First aid information.
  - Ö Instructions on how to deal with fire.
  - Ö Emergency telephone number (otherwise request people not to use telephone). Stress to out-of-area media that people should NOT telephone into the area.
  - Ö Instructions/precautions about utility use, sanitation, how to turn off utilities if necessary.
  - Ö Essential services available—hospitals, grocery stores, banks, pharmacies, etc.

# Public Information Annex

## CHECKLIST FOR ALL DISASTERS, continued

Started/Completed

Notes

- Weather hazards (if applicable).
- Information for parents on the status and actions of schools (if in session).
- See hazard-specific checklists for samples of news releases to be made during specific emergencies.
- Obtain periodic situation updates from Emergency Operations Center Section Chiefs.
- Open Media Center if a number of reporters arrive in person at the Emergency Operations Center.
- Maintain Media Center status boards and maps. Monitor Emergency Operations Center status boards and resolve conflicts.
- Compile situation reports and provide hard copy of news releases to the other emergency operations staff as needed..
- Release emergency status information (second priority):
  - Media hotline number. Public hotline number.
  - Description of the emergency situation, including number of deaths and injuries, property damage, persons displaced.
  - Description of government and private response efforts (shelter, medical, search and rescue, emergency repair, debris clearance, fire/flood fighting, etc.).
  - Any of the top priority information in summary form on a “nice to know” rather than “vital to know and act upon” basis.
  - Status of local and Governor’s Proclamation, Presidential Declaration.
  - Where people should report or call to volunteer.
  - How people in other areas can obtain information about relative/friends in the disaster area, and how disaster victims can locate family members (work with Care and Shelter and the Red Cross).
  - Damage assessment figures when available.

# Public Information Annex

## CHECKLIST FOR ALL DISASTERS, continued

Started/Completed

Notes

- Monitor published and broadcast emergency public information for accuracy. Correct serious mistakes whenever possible. Use this opportunity to evaluate success of current efforts to provide information.
- Provide enough staff and telephones to handle incoming media and public calls and to gather status information with minimal delay.
- Ensure that official spokespersons are thoroughly briefed about all aspects of the emergency situation.
- Keep the Director of Emergency Services (DES) informed of all actions taken or planned.
- Keep Public Information Officers in other jurisdictions and at other government levels apprised of information released.
- Keep a file of all information, instructions and advice released to the public.
- Fully mobilize the emergency public information organization. Determine shifts and assignments. Brief emergency public information staff on the current situation.
- Request staff support, as needed, from the County staffing pool or neighboring jurisdiction's public information office.
- Release general survival/self-help information as appropriate.
- Release "media only" telephone numbers and public number.
- Respond to media/public calls.
- Record telephone messages for media and public hot lines and update as the situation changes (if automatic telephone answering equipment is available)
- Release public information numbers.
- Arrange for installation of communications equipment and other supplies/equipment necessary for emergency public information functions, including television, radio, maps, automatic telephone answering equipment (if available), display charts, and status boards.
- Establish Media Control Point near incident site.

# Public Information Annex

## CHECKLIST FOR ALL DISASTERS, continued

Started/Completed

Notes

- Maintain liaison with Incident Commander.
- Keep public information staff in the Emergency Operations Center informed of situation.
- Arrange interviews and media tours of the disaster area if such action will not hinder response efforts.
- Determine the status of local media outlets and telephone service. If telephones are not in service, set up an amateur radio (ACS/RACES) relay system for use by public information staff.
- Post hard copy of news releases.
- Attend periodic Emergency Operations Center briefings and policy meetings.
- Consider additional methods of distributing emergency instructions as required.
- Arrange media briefings and press conferences on a regular or "as needed" basis. Arrange for official spokesperson. Announce briefing times. Arrange media tours/filming (one crew at a time) of Emergency Operations Center and interview with Emergency Operations Center spokesperson(s), if such action will not hinder response efforts.
- Produce news releases as required.
- Provide emergency public information in foreign languages as required.
- Greet and badge visitors. Conduct situation briefings for visitors. Arrange accommodations and transportation for official visitors and media as necessary.
- Release information about approved vantage points from which persons may view the destruction. Consider safety, traffic flow, and parking.
- Periodically check Public Information staff for signs of agitation or fatigue and reassign or relieve them if possible.

### After an Emergency

- Update media contact lists.
- Assemble and check financial records; forward to Finance.

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## Public Information Annex

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### CHECKLIST FOR ALL DISASTERS, continued

Started/Completed

Notes

- Assemble and check operation reports; forward to DES.
- Continue to release status information on request.
- Release information on restoration of utilities and any travel restrictions still in effect.
- Release other useful information:
  - State/Federal assistance available.
  - Disaster Application Center opening dates/times/location.
  - Historical events of this nature.
  - Charts/photographs/statistics from past events.
  - Human interest stories.
  - Acts of heroism.
  - Historical value of property damaged/destroyed.
  - Prominence of those killed/injured.
- Gather all records kept during all phases of the emergency and prepare a chronological summary of all events, actions taken, inquiries made, and responses given. Collect newspaper clippings and TV videotapes, if available.
- Survey staff and the local media for suggestions on how to improve the public information response to future emergencies.

# Public Information Annex

## CHECKLIST FOR HAZARDOUS MATERIAL INCIDENTS

(There is no set order to these checklist items.)

Started/Completed

Notes

NOTE: Use this checklist as a supplement to the basic Checklist For All Disasters

### General

- All releases must be cleared through the Incident Commander and technical adviser (if available) at the scene or the Director of Emergency Services at the Emergency Operations Center.

### Unidentified material

- If incident is in a heavy traffic area, and alternate routes are available, notify media (primarily radio) and request frequent announcements of instructions to avoid the area. (Coordinate announcements with Fire and Sheriff.)
- Notify media with full explanation as soon as material has been identified. (Clear with Incident Commander and technical adviser to avoid unduly alarming or confusing the public.)

### Low Hazard - No General Evacuation

- Notify media (primarily radio) that an incident has occurred.
- Indicate alternate routes for traffic and request frequent announcements of instructions to avoid the area.
- Indicate nature of incident, precautions for public.
- Release hot line number for public inquires (if available and staffed).
- Indicate response agencies involved (coordinate with response agency Public Information Officers), clean-up efforts underway, time frame for resumption of normal traffic patterns, if known.

### High Hazard - General Evacuation

- Release all of the above information.
- Release evacuation instructions to media (primarily radio). Use established Emergency Alert System procedures as appropriate.
- Release shelter information when known (coordinate with Care and Shelter and Red Cross).

## Public Information Annex

### CHECKLIST FOR HAZARDOUS MATERIAL INCIDENTS, continued

(There is no set order to these checklist items.)

Started/Completed

Notes

- Have medical/technical spokesperson(s) available to describe the nature of the toxic substance, possible symptoms, and precautions for the public to take.
- Hold media briefings(s) at scene where Incident Commander and medical/ technical spokesperson can answer media questions. Arrange for similar media briefings at the Emergency Operations Center if needed.
- Be prepared to answer questions similar to these:
  - How many deaths or injuries were there?
  - Any property damage?
  - What response agencies were involved?
  - Why was the evacuation ordered?
  - Why wasn't evacuation ordered?
  - Number of persons evacuated.
  - What are the long-term effects on people and the environment? (Long-term studies have not been done on most chemicals. Be careful not to speculate).
  - What chemicals are involved?
  - How toxic are they?
  - What symptoms are produced?
  - What are their normal uses?
  - What precautions should residents take?
  - What company/agency was involved?
  - Is legal action being considered? Unless a definite "Yes" or "No" answer is known, do not speculate.
  - Has the company been involved in any other incidents recently?

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## Public Information Annex

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### CHECKLIST FOR HAZARDOUS MATERIAL INCIDENTS, continued

(There is no set order to these checklist items.)

*Started/Completed*

*Notes*

- Ø Does this jurisdiction have a plan for response to such incidents? If not, why not? If so, how did it work? (Answer honestly).
- Ø What hazardous material incident training is required for company workers at the location of the incident?
- Ø What hazardous material incident training is required for response personnel?
- Ø How can such incidents be avoided in the future? (Do not speculate. A possible answer: "This is a subject all the organizations involved will be exploring during the next few months. We all want to avoid incidents of this type.")

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# Public Information Annex

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## CHECKLIST FOR FLOOD OR TSUNAMI

(There is no set order to these checklist items.)

Started/Completed

Notes

NOTE: Use this checklist as a supplement to the basic Checklist For All Disasters

### General

- All releases must be cleared through the Incident Commander and technical adviser (if available) at the scene or the Director of Emergency Services at the Emergency Operations Center.

### Increased Readiness Phase

- Monitor dam or levee authority and engineers' reports.
- Provide prepared map(s) and script to local television station(s) for broadcast when authorized.
- Provide prepared radio message(s) to local radio stations for broadcast when authorized.

### Warning Phase: Evacuation ordered

- Monitor water levels and weather advisories.
- Monitor dam or levee authority and engineer's reports.
- Provide prepared map(s) and script to local television station(s). Include release instructions.
- Provide prepared radio message(s) to local radio stations. Include release instructions.
- Release information on where to buy sandbags and sand, if appropriate.
- Authorize broadcast of radio message(s) or access the Emergency Alert System (EAS).
- Coordinate with Sheriff to release evacuation instructions through patrol car and helicopter public address systems and door-to-door contact, as needed.
- Release information about school evacuation (in coordination with school authorities.)
- Authorize television broadcast of evacuation map(s) and script.

# Public Information Annex

## CHECKLIST FOR FLOOD OR TSUNAMI, continued

(There is no set order to these checklist items.)

Started/Completed

Notes

- Encourage people to visit, if possible, friends or relatives outside the potential hazard area.
- Release instructions for evacuating pets. (Animals will not be allowed in Red Cross shelters.)
- Broadcast information on:
  - Locations of shelters and emergency medical aid stations.
  - What to do if dam or levee failure occurs during evacuation.
  - What to do if vehicle breaks down during evacuation.
  - Potential dangers and traffic controls or other restrictions.
  - The number of persons being housed and fed at shelters.
  - Curfews and travel restrictions in the evacuated area.
- Advise the public not to return to the evacuated area until told to do so.

### Impact Phase: Sudden flooding occurs

- Activate the public information function at the Emergency Operations Center or other location as determined by the Director of Emergency Services.
- Request public information mutual aid if needed.
- Access the EAS; use surviving local radio stations (and other means as needed) to convey emergency instructions. Use regional stations if local ones are not broadcasting.

### After the Flood: Return home authorized

- Announce return home and any traffic or access controls in effect.
- Announce mass transportation pickup points for those without vehicles.
- Announce instructions for cleanup and telephone number for those (elderly or disabled) needing cleanup assistance.
- Announce procedures for reporting public and private damage (for damage assessment report).