

ANNEX B – COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of this annex is to provide a comprehensive Emergency Public Information capability within the Village. The goal of this system is to ensure that timely and accurate information can be disseminated to government departments and external agencies, the media, and members of the general public following the impact of an emergency or disaster.

Prior to an incident, the Communications Department is responsible for generating media releases and providing guidance to community residents about the hazards that might occur.

SITUATION AND ASSUMPTION

Accurate and expedited dissemination of information is critical when an emergency/disaster or WMD incident has occurred. Preservation of life and property may hinge on instructions and directions given by authorized officials. In the event of an emergency/disaster or terrorist attack, the public and the news media must be provided with accurate and timely information on emergency operations. Establishing and maintaining an effective rumor control mechanism will help clarify emergency information for the public. Initial interaction with the new media is likely to be implemented by the Communications Director or his designee, as directed by the Village Manager.

To facilitate the release of information, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) may establish a Joint Information Center (JIC) comprised of representatives from Federal, State, County, and local authorities for the purpose of managing the dissemination of information to the public, news media and businesses potentially affected by the incident. An act of terrorism is likely to cause widespread panic, and ongoing communication of accurate and up-to-date information will help calm fears and limit collateral effects of the attack.

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

Under Illinois law, local government is ultimately responsible for the protection of life and property within its respective jurisdiction. The Village Manager is responsible for ensuring that an emergency public information system is in place to generate news releases and information that will be distributed directly to the public. This information should include self-help and general instructional materials including the following:

- Health risks associated with the event
- Instructions for evacuees and affected residents
- Identification of special facilities such as evacuation staging areas, shelters and reception centers, feeding stations and first aid stations
- Available assistance from the government and private relief agencies
- On-going status reports on the progress of response and recovery efforts

More than one news center may be established following a disaster. However, one main center will coordinate and release information at any given time during the disaster response and recovery period to ensure accurate and timely dissemination of all information to the public and the new media. To the maximum extent possible municipal, county, state, federal, and private information will be coordinated prior to its release.

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The release of statistical data related to the incident will be verified prior to release. The type of data to be released will determine the department responsible for verifying its content. In instances of health related issues, the Oak Park Public Health Department will verify all information prior to its release. In instances of injuries, enforcement activities or other non-health related events, the Oak Park Police and Fire departments will work together to ensure that data is correct before it is disseminated to the public or with neighboring municipalities and the County.

Only the Village Manager's Office, through the Communications Department, will release the numbers of fatalities and the identification of the deceased after authorization to do so is obtained from the Cook County Medical Examiner (CC ME). The Village Manager should approve all official information to be released to the media prior to its dissemination. Official information will be released at the EOC or at a location determined by the Village Manager.

A representative of the Communications Department will set up near or in the EOC to respond to media requests for statements to the extent the Communication Director or Village Manager has previously approved. In the event of an emergency, the Communications Department will activate one or more of the following facilities to accomplish its mission:

Emergency Operating Center - Public Information Desk: This position is located in the municipal EOC and will provide the Communications Director with access to the Village management team and updated intelligence regarding the emergency/disaster. While activated, all official new releases issued by the Village will be cleared through this position. The individual at this location will have primary responsibility for interfacing with the public information officers of the adjacent stricken jurisdictions, Cook County Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (CCDHSEM) and the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA).

Citizen Information Center: This facility will be established in cooperation with the stricken jurisdiction(s) and CCDHSEM. The facility normally operates as a telephone bank where residents and concerned citizens can call to obtain factual information as well as be directed to areas where they can receive assistance. Personnel from the stricken jurisdictions should staff this facility jointly.

Forward News Media Center: This facility will be located near the Forward Command Post, near the incident or disaster site. The location of this facility will be coordinated with the stricken jurisdiction and should be staffed by public information personnel from the County, the stricken jurisdiction, and the Incident Commander's public information spokesperson, and the affected facility - if appropriate. Information released from this facility will be coordinated with the municipal, CCDHSEM and IEMA.

Joint Information Center (JIC): In the event of a multi-jurisdictional disaster, or if state or federal agencies become involved in the incident, a JIC will be established. The JIC is a physical location where Public Information Officers from the involved response and recovery agencies come together to ensure coordination of information to be released to the media and the public. This center becomes the central point for media access to the latest developments and emergency information. All information released is coordinated among the departments involved to assure its consistency and accuracy. The stricken jurisdiction (s), county, state and federal agencies will agree upon the location of this facility.

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The communications systems used for communications among all groups and individuals involved in emergency response are Nextel's, radios, cell phones and pagers.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION FOR FUNCTIONAL NEEDS POPULATION

The primary goal of emergency messages is to motivate functional residents and their families to take a desired action before and during a crisis. The Functional Needs Program is designed to reach the targeted populations in ways that grab their attention and change the way they think, so they will take action. This is a major challenge for individuals with disabilities. The National Organization on Disability (NOD) identifies three types of disabilities, sensory, mobility, and cognitive. Individuals with these disabilities are a cause of concern during emergencies and disasters. The following definitions are from NOD's Emergency Preparedness Initiative 9:

- A. Sensory: Persons with hearing or visual limitations, including total blindness or deafness.
- B. Mobility: Persons who have little or no use of their legs or arms. They generally use wheelchairs, scooters, walkers, canes, and other devices as aids to movement.
- C. Cognitive: The terms "developmental" and "cognitive" most commonly include conditions that may affect a person's ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, do math, or follow instructions. It is important to remember and understand that individuals can have more than one disability. However, it does not mean that vulnerable populations lack capacity. These individuals bring a tremendous amount of capacities, insights, and resources to those involved with safeguarding the public.

Emergency communication principles and practices are universal. There is no need to develop a separate functional needs population outreach communication plan.

Emergency Message content should include, when appropriate, incident facts, health risk concerns, pre-incident and post-incident preparedness recommendations, and where to access assistance in a format or language that a broad spectrum of the community can understand. Where necessary, the base content of these messages should be composed and translated into other languages in advance (with opportunity for collaboration and input from all interested stakeholders), leaving placeholders to insert the specifics of each emergency situation and the protective actions recommended.

Composing warning messages, directions, announcements, offers of assistance and other public information accessible to people with communications disabilities requires awareness of different needs, and familiarity with the capabilities and limitations of various communications technologies. There are many communication methods that can be utilized including, Oak Park's Rapid Notify System, phone, radio, television, website, email lists, bill inserts, word-of-mouth/hand languages spoken and signed, and social and community networks.

For people to act, they must understand the message, believe the messenger is credible and trustworthy, and have the capacity to respond. It is essential to utilize multiple redundant channels and alternative formats in alerting populations to an emergency. Yet, for cultural and linguistic minorities, readying the optimal method is a time-intensive task that must be accomplished by the PIO prior to an emergency.

WSCDC has its own communication system and emergency back-up system which can be used as an if the EOC systems fail during an emergency.

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Within the Village, the WSCDC Director is responsible for the operation of Police, Fire/EMS, and Public Works communications channels while each department maintains its own programmers and technicians. The IT Director is responsible to maintain proper operation of the computer and data systems.

Following is the line of succession of individuals with responsibility for coordination, control, and continuity of the Village's communications systems via WSCDC during an emergency:

1. WSCDC Director
2. WSCDC Deputy Director
3. ESDA Coordinator
4. IT Director

DIRECTION AND CONTROL

The Village of Oak Park EOC will be the central location for the direction and control of the Emergency Public Information System. The Village Manager, or designee, will coordinate news media releases with all other Village department heads, as well as the Communications Director as necessary, to ensure timely and accurate information to the public.

Following approval by the Village Manager all official news media releases will be issued through the Media Briefing Center. This facility may be used by the Village Manager for the purpose of making specific statements relating to the emergency or may be used by all department heads, with the Manager's and/or Village President's approval, in a panel form to discuss emergency operations. A copy of all news media releases will be forwarded to the Media Liaison Officer in the field and other Village department heads if applicable.

The EOC will provide primary direction and control under the Incident Command System for all emergency operations within the Village of Oak Park. The management team and Village Officials will staff the EOC at all times during a major emergency or disaster. All emergency responses to the disaster scene will be coordinated from the EOC by IMT members manning the EOC. WSCDC dispatchers should not directly dispatch units to the scene of the emergency or disaster without authorization from the on-scene Incident Commander or the management team in the EOC. WSCDC may provide a communications liaison for the EOC depending the type and size of the event.

Subsequent emergency responses will be dispatched directly by WSCDC by notifying the Incident Commander and/or the EOC of the subsequent incident. WSCDC shall relay all necessary information for tracking of resources to the EOC. Communication will be accomplished by messenger, telephone, or on one of the numerous radio frequencies available.

Representatives from each responding department having field responsibilities will respond to and direct their personnel from the Incident Command Post which will be the source of official information and a communications link between the EOC and the scene. These people will remain under the direct control of their department head operating from the EOC. Management team members will staff the EOC which is identified in the Basic Plan and Direction and Control Annex. The Communications Director is tasked with acting as the Public Information Officer within the EOC. He or she may designate a representative to operate from the EOC if the Village Manager so orders.

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CONTINUITY OF GOVERNMENT

The line of succession, defining the official spokesperson, for the Village of Oak Park will be:

1. Village Manager
2. Police Chief
3. Fire Chief
4. Communications Director

In the event that the Media Briefing Center is damaged, media information will be provided from another Village-owned building, as determined by the Village Manager.

MAINTENANCE, REVIEW AND UPDATING THIS ANNEX

It is the responsibility of the Communications Director for the maintenance, review and updating of this annex.

APPENDICES

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|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| Appendix D1 | Pre-emergency Operation Checklist |
| Appendix D2 | Response Operation Checklist |
| Appendix D3 | Recovery Operation Checklist |
| Appendix D4 | Media Outlets |
| Appendix D5 | Sample Preliminary Media Release |

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APPENDIX D1 - PRE-EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CHECKLIST

Complete: Yes/No	Develop and regularly update Media Outlet Resource listing found in EOC.
Complete: Yes/No	Develop public awareness materials for periodic release to the media and Village employees for the purpose of educating residents about potential community hazards and proper responses.
Complete: Yes/No	Develop working relationships with local representatives and brief them on their role in emergency operations.
Complete: Yes/No	Develop and train a Rumor Control Section that would be used during an emergency.
Complete: Yes/No	Conduct public education program. Such programs may include development of a cable television program on disaster preparedness and/or presentations before community groups.
Complete: Yes/No	Prepare draft medic releases for use during an emergency.

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APPENDIX D2 - RESPONSE OPERATION CHECKLIST

Complete: Yes/No	Following the onset of a major emergency, Public Information Officer should report to the EOC to confer with Village department heads on the situation.
Complete: Yes/No	The Public Information Officer should compile all available information and prepare a media release, providing at minimum the current situation; areas affected; and specific instructions to residents.
Complete: Yes/No	The Public Information Officer should ensure that the members of the media ready the Media Briefing Center (MBC) for use.
Complete: Yes/No	If appropriate, the Public Information Officer will request that a Media Liaison Officer be assigned by Command at the Command Post to serve as a media contact in the field.
Complete: Yes/No	If necessary and following activation of the Command Post, a communications link will be established between the Media Liaison Officer and the EOC.
Complete: Yes/No	Following the declaration of a "State Of Emergency" the Public Information Officer will open the Media Briefing Center and meet any members of the news media.
Complete: Yes/No	The Public Information Officer will notify all emergency response personnel, through their department heads, that the MBC is open and any arriving media should be routed to the MBC for official information. Note: Emergency response personnel should be advised to refrain from making any kind of "official statement" from the field, but rather refer the news media representative to the MBC.
Complete: Yes/No	The Public Information Officer will activate Rumor Control Section to ensure factual information is available to community residents. Rumor Control team members will monitor radio and television as well as Rumor Control telephones to attempt to discover and suppress any non-factual information.
Complete: Yes/No	The Rumor Control team will forward major rumors to the Public Information Officer so he can include the correct information in upcoming media releases.

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Complete: Yes/No	The Public Information Officer will provide copies of all media releases to members of the Village's management team, EOC staff, Command Post, and if applicable and possible, the CCDHSEM Duty Officer at 312-603-8185.
Complete: Yes/No	The Public Information Officer will schedule regular media briefings so the media will know in advance when information will be available. All briefings will be audio taped, at a minimum, to provide an accurate record of statements made to the media.
Complete: Yes/No	The Public Information Officer, with approval of the Incident Commander, may schedule field tours for media personnel to provide first-hand views of field operations.
Complete: Yes/No	If appropriate, the Public Information Officer should coordinate media releases with adjacent communities and the CCDHSEM to ensure factual information between all affected jurisdictions.

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APPENDIX D3 - RECOVERY OPERATIONS CHECKLIST

Complete: Yes/No	Coordinate releases with affected adjacent jurisdictions and the CCDHSEM to ensure continuity of the factual information.
Complete: Yes/No	Develop media releases designed to inform area residents of how to obtain recovery assistance.
Complete: Yes/No	Provide factual information to the media dealing with the Village's response and recovery operations.
Complete: Yes/No	Prepare factual informational releases to be hand delivered to residents unable to receive media reports, due to power failure, temporary relocation to shelters, etc.
Complete: Yes/No	Following the conclusion of emergency activities, the Public Information Officer will compile reports for inclusion into the Village records.

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APPENDIX D4 - MEDIA OUTLETS

Television

CLTV

Cable news
2501 W. Bradley Pl.
Chicago, IL 60618
630.368.4444
630.574.2588(fax)
www.cltv.trb.com
cltvdesk@tribune.com

WBBM

CBS Channel 2
22 W. Washington St.
Chicago, IL 60602
312.899.2200
312.899.7200 (fax)
www.cbs2chicago.com
drwhite@cbs.com

WFLD

Fox Channel 32
205 N. Michigan Ave.
Chicago, IL 60601
312.565.5533
312.819.1332 (fax)
www.myfoxchicago.com
foxnewschicago@hotmail.com

WGN

Ind. Channel 9
2501 Bradley Place
Chicago, IL 60618
773.883.3203
773.883.3204 (fax)
www.wgntv.com
gcaputo@tribune.com
wgn-tv-prog@tribune.com

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WLS

ABC Channel 7
190 N. State St.
Chicago, IL 60601
312.750.7197/7220/7070/7773
312.899.8019 (fax)
www.abc7chicago.com
wls.desk@abc.com
carrie.s.walker@abc.com

WMAQ

NBC Channel 5
454 N. Columbus Drive
Chicago, IL 60611
312.836.5658/5841
312.527.5925 (fax)
www.nbc5chi.com
pam.oliver@nbcuni.com

WGB0 - Univision

Channel 66 (Spanish language)
541 N. Fairbanks Ct., Suite 1100
312.494.6483
312.467.5814 (fax)
www.univision.com
univisionchicago@tv.univision.com
pgomez@univision.net

Radio

Illinois Radio Network

430 W. Erie, Suite 505
Chicago, IL 60610
312.640.5377
312.943.2620 (fax)
www.illinoisradionetwork.com

WBBM

AM 780
Two Prudential Plaza, Ste. 1100
Chicago, IL 60601
1.800.784.NEWS (6397)
312.297.7764
312.297.7801 (after hours)
312.297.7822 (fax)
www.wbbm780.com
dashe@wbbm-am.com

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WBEZ-FM (Chicago Public Radio)
848 E. Grand Ave., Ste. 1
Chicago, IL 60611
312.948.4650/4795/4796
312.832.3158 (fax)
www.chicagopublicradio.org/news
news@chicagopublicradio.org

WGN
AM 720
435 N. Michigan Ave.
Chicago, IL 60611
312.222.4730 (after hours)
312.222.5977 (fax)
www.wgnradio.com
cmeyerson@tribune.com

WLS
AM 890
190 N. State St.
Chicago, IL 60601
312.637.1389
312.984.5305 (fax)
www.wisam.com
jm@wlsam.com

Newspapers

Chicago Sun-Times
350 N. Orleans St., 9th Fl.
Chicago, IL 60654
312.321.2522
312.321.3084 (fax)
www.suntimes.com
metro@suntimes.com

Chicago Tribune
435 N. Michigan Ave.
Chicago, IL 60611
312.222.3540
312.222.4674 (fax)
www.chicagotribune.com
metro@tribune.com

Pioneer Press (Oak Leaves)
3701 W. Lake Ave.
Glenview, IL 60026
847.486.9200
847.486.7451 (fax)
www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/oak-park
sschering@pioneerlocal.com

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Wednesday Journal
141 S. Oak Park Ave.
Oak Park, IL 60302
708.524.8300
708.524.0447
www.oakpark.com/News
dhaley@oakpark.com

News Services

Associated Press – Chicago
10 S. Wacker Dr., Suite 2500
Chicago IL 60606
312.781.0500
312.781.1989 (fax)
www.ap.org
chifax@ap.org

Sun-Times News Group
wire@suntimes.com

Other

Steve Schering
Pioneer Local
708.674.4215
sschering@pioneerlocal.com

Tim Inklebarger
Wednesday Journal
708.613.3311
708.524.0447 (fax)
tim@oak.park.com

oakpark.patch.com

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APPENDIX D5 - SAMPLE PRELIMINARY MEDIA RELEASE

The following is a sample preliminary media release. It can be tailored in any way to fit the specific emergency.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date and Time

A ***type of incident*** caused widespread damage at **time today**, near **area, road, etc.**, in ***municipality name***. ***President name*** has declared a State of Emergency or Disaster, activating the community's Emergency Plan and deploying emergency workers including police, fire, public works employees and other municipal employees to the scene to provide assistance.

Statement should be made by President or his/her designee, if possible or practicable.

Give a brief description of EVENT, as we currently know of damage, deaths, injuries, etc. Residents in the affected area are asked to turn to radio station (*Insert your information here*), for further information and instructions.

The ***village*** Emergency Operations Center (EOC) has been activated. Municipal officials are meeting in the EOC to direct the emergency response and recovery efforts. More information will be provided as it becomes available.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

A Media Briefing Center (MBC) has been established at the ***name of facility*** at **address**. All news media representatives are encouraged to go to this location for current information on ***jurisdiction's name***, emergency response and recovery efforts. A Forward Media Center also is being established at ***location***, which is near the incident site.