Section III. Joint Information Center Staffing

3.1   PIO

Position Description

The PIO is responsible for developing and releasing public information about the incident to the media, incident personnel and other appropriate agencies and organizations.

Only one PIO will be assigned for each incident, including multi-jurisdictional incidents operating under an IC/UC. The PIO may appoint as many assistants (APIO or JIC Specialists) as necessary, and the assistants may also represent assisting agencies, jurisdictions or other response partners (such as private sector and NGOs).

The PIO is appointed by the IC/UC to support the information needs of the response; establish, maintain and deactivate the JIC; and represent and advise the IC on all public information matters relating to the incident. A person is assigned to this position based on skills and ability, not rank or employer.

Position Qualifications

Per NIMS, all Command Staff, including the PIO, should complete the following training:

- IS-100 (ICS 100) Introduction to Incident Command System.
- IS-200 (ICS 200) Introduction for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents.
- IS-700 National Incident Management System.
- IS-800.B National Response Framework, An Introduction.
- ICS-300 Intermediate Incident Command System for Expanding Incidents.
- ICS-400 Advanced Incident Command System, Command and General Staff-Complex Incidents.

The PIO is also recommended to be trained in:

- IS-250 Emergency Support Function #15.
- IS-702 National Incident Management System Public Information Systems.
- ICS-203 Introduction to Public Information.
- ICS-403 Incident Management Team Public Information Officer.
- ICS-420 Command and General Staff.
- E-388 Advanced Public Information Officer.
- G-290 Basic Public Information Officer.
- Risk Communications.

Responsibilities

- Support public information needs of the IC/UC. (See *Daily Checklist*, Appendix E)
- Obtain approval from Command to disseminate public information products.
- As appropriate, coordinate activities with ESF #15. (See *NRT JIC and ESF #15 operations during a Federal response*, Appendix A. See Job Aid 4, Appendix B)
- Advise Command on public information issues and concerns.
- Attend all Command Staff briefings and meetings. (See *Operational Planning "P"*, Appendix E)
- Share information gathered at Command Staff briefings and meetings with JIC Staff.
- Work closely with the Liaison Officer (LNO), Safety Officer (SO) and Intelligence Officer (INTO).
- Establish and equip a JIC and oversee its operations.
- Gather incident information.
- Inform the media and public.
- Provide public information to incident staff.
- Monitor the media, correct misinformation and identify trends and issues.
- Analyze public perceptions and develop public information strategies.
- Advise response leaders on public perception of the IC/UC and develop strategies to communicate on how the incident is being managed.

Position Specific Functions

Establishing a JIC

When the appointed PIO arrives to relieve the initial PIO, several actions must be taken to establish and manage a JIC. To assist in establishing and managing a JIC, *Job Aid 2 – Establishing a JIC* can be found in Appendix B.

Establishing a 24-hour Schedule

If demands are high, a 24-hour operating schedule may require multiple shifts, such as:

- A Shift: 6am to 3pm.
- B Shift: 2pm to 11pm.
- C Shift: 10pm to 7am.

The one-hour overlap in each 9-hour shift provides time for briefing and transition, and meets most major media deadlines. The C shift may only be required if the incident draws national or international media coverage from multiple time zones.

The decision to establish a C shift is made by the PIO and the IC/UC; however the PIO and/or JIC Manager should consider organizing JIC shifts to mirror those of the rest of the staff at the ICP. In the event a 24-hour schedule is required, an APIO will be assigned to perform the PIO's responsibilities when he or she is not present. The APIO has all of the responsibility and authority of the PIO.

Exchanging Information

Information Exchange Matrix 1 – Public Information Officers can be found in Appendix C. This information exchange matrix describes what types of information or resources the PIO should obtain from

specific response positions within the ICS organization and, if activated, ESF #15, as well as what information or resources the PIO should provide to those same positions.

Working with the Safety Officer, Liaison Officer and Intelligence Officer

The PIO meets regularly with the SO, LNO and INTO. The SO's main responsibility is to monitor safety conditions and develop measures for assuring the safety of all incident personnel. The PIO works with the SO to develop safety messages and escort media and VIPs to the incident site in a safe manner.

The PIO works with the LNO to obtain and provide information to agency representatives, public officials and other stakeholders. The PIO also works with the LNO to address stakeholder concerns, requests for briefings, tours and VIP visits.

The IC/UC may appoint an INTO as the incident requires. The INTO's main responsibility is to supervise, coordinate and participate in the collection, analysis, processing and dissemination of intelligence. The PIO works with the INTO regarding intelligence information and operational security. *Figure 1 – ICS Organization* (page 3) shows the INTO as part of the Command Staff. Depending on circumstances surrounding each incident the INTO may become a function within the General Staff as a technical specialist within the Operations Section or Planning Section, or as its own Section[2].

Demobilizing a JIC

The IC/UC determines when to deactivate the JIC based on the recommendation of the PIO. This decision would usually be made when media and public interest has diminished or when recovery and mitigation operations are complete. To assist the PIO with demobilization activities, *Job Aid 3 – Demobilizing a JIC* can be found in Appendix B.

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[2] 2008 FEMA Intelligence/Investigations Function Guidance Document