



COLORADO

**Division of Homeland Security
& Emergency Management**

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Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management

Joint Information System (JIS) and Joint Information Center (JIC)

Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)

September 1, 2013



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Joint Information System (JIS)/Joint Information Center (JIC) Standard Operating Procedures

Mission

The mission of the Joint Information System (JIS)/Joint Information (JIC) is to manage inbound and outbound information to the public, media and incident command during all-hazards events to ensure maximum protection of life-safety, property and the environment.

Assumptions

It is anticipated that a variety of federal, state and local agencies, as well as private sector and non-governmental organizations, may potentially become involved in any incident. Each organization should use internal public information/affairs plans which should include the application of the JIS and, as the situation warrants, a JIC.

It is also assumed that individuals charged with Public Information Officer responsibilities may also be responsible for a variety of aspects of incident management, as determined by resources and staffing available. These Standard Operating Procedures, therefore, represent a reference and starting point for managing information during an incident and are designed in a tiered-approach to accommodate resource limitations that can be expanded but which meet the essential operating criteria established by the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Incident Command System (ICS) standards. It is also recognized that the JIS and the JIC are both vehicles upon which the larger, Emergency Support Function (ESF) 15 is built and, while these mechanisms accommodate the breadth of activity under ESF-15, they do not represent the sum total of actions and area responsibilities of that function. For information regarding the broad scope of the ESF-15 function for the State of Colorado, please refer to the ESF-15 Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), to which this JIS/JIC SOP is an annex.

While a JIC is a central, physical location where the informational needs and demands of the public, media and incident commanders can be supported, the overriding concept of the JIC recognizes that each individual will continue to bring expertise from his/her own agency, will continue to represent the needs of his/her own agency as assigned by that agency, while receiving the benefits derived from coordinated information. Under the JIS/JIC concept, each agency representative has a commitment to share and coordinate information with all other participating agencies prior to its release to incident command, the media and the public. At no time should any agency determine or approve information outside their purview of responsibility or assignment within JIS or JIC. The JIC is designed only as a coordination, analysis and dissemination point; agency information must be approved within relative command structures prior to reaching the JIC. The primary benefit of this concept is that incident command, the media and the public receive accurate, timely and coordinated emergency information. It is essential that the JIS concept determine communication strategies throughout the emergency and activation of the JIC, as these concepts work simultaneously.



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Activation

The State of Colorado is a home rule state where the functions of the State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management are envisioned to support the efforts of local and regional emergency response, coordinate and meet requests for assistance when local resources are depleted or eliminated and to serve as the central incident command to coordinate State resources and response during events operating under an Executive Order of the Office of the Governor, State of Colorado.

Geographically, the State of Colorado is located in a region where a wide variety of natural and man-made threats have the potential to isolate and endanger lives and property. The operation of a JIS and JIC are mutually paired and are intended to be a tiered system, where a JIS will predicate the establishment or need for a JIC. In some cases, due to physical or resource limitations or where the incident response level does not warrant a central need for a JIC, a JIS may suffice.

JIS Activation

The most common type of information management coordination and, given technical capabilities are operational, often the most efficient type of coordination from a resource perspective, the activation of a JIS is flexible and can be operated in the absence or in anticipation of the activation of an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) or physical JIC. Any lead agency can establish a JIS to coordinate information management efforts on an event that requires additional eyes and ears support, or which crosses partner agency jurisdictions at the Lead Public Information Officer (PIO) discretion (in the instance of the State, through the Division of Emergency Management Public Information Officer). Examples of instances where a JIS might be appropriate or might be conducted in the absence of a formal JIC or EOC activation would include pandemic flu, unspecified threat information sharing, or long-term event planning actions. Activation of a JIS in these instances is the responsibility of the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management Public Information Officer, but should be accomplished in coordination with the Director of the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management or senior operations manager.

Should an emergency be declared that involves threats to lives and property within the State of Colorado, either through local or partner request for action or through a declared State of Emergency, the Public Information Officer for the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management can, in coordination and with the approval of the Incident Commander or State EOC Manager, establish a JIS and commence JIS activities as soon as possible. In this instance, the Public Information Officer, now Lead PIO or designee will contact relevant local, state and federal PIO or public affairs staff.

JIC Activation

Should an emergency be declared that involves threats to lives and property within the State of



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Colorado, either through local or partner request for State action within the purview of the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management or through a declared State of Emergency, the State Emergency Operations Center will make the decision, based on the recommendation of the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management's Public Information Officer to the Director or Deputy Director or equivalent Operational Command, to activate a Joint Information Center (JIC). Upon approval, the Lead PIO for the State response (i.e., the Public Information Officer for the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management) or designee will contact relevant local, state and federal PIO or public affairs staff. The PIOs from participating partner agencies, non-governmental organizations and private sector will then initiate their respective JIS/JIC activation procedures. The JIC may be housed co-located with the State EOC, in the working offices and Media room of the State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management Headquarters Building. However, depending on the resources and incident or should the State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management Headquarters Building pre-designated JIC working spaces not be available, then an alternate JIC location will be identified and established by the lead PIO and with the approval of the State EOC Manager.

Concept of Operations

Emergency management is generally broken down into five distinct phases:

Preparedness - Preparedness activities increase a community's ability to respond when a disaster occurs. Typical preparedness measures include development mutual aid agreements and memorandums of understanding, training for both response personnel and concerned citizens, conducting disaster exercises to reinforce training and test capabilities and presenting all-hazards education campaigns.

Protection – Protection activities mean actions taken to avoid an incident or to intervene to stop an incident from occurring. The actions are taken to protect lives and property. These actions may involve applying intelligence and other information as a countermeasures.

Response - Actions carried out immediately before, during and immediately after a hazard, impact, which are aimed at saving lives, reducing economic losses and alleviating suffering. Response actions may include activating the emergency operations center, evacuating threatened populations, opening shelters and providing mass care, emergency rescue and medical care, firefighting and urban search and rescue.

Recovery - Actions taken to return a community to normal or near-normal conditions, including the restoration of basic services and the repair of physical, social and economic damages. Typical recovery actions include debris cleanup, financial assistance to individuals and governments, rebuilding of roads and bridges and key facilities, and sustained mass care for displaced human and animal populations.

Mitigation - Mitigation refers to measures that prevent an emergency, reduce the chance of



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an emergency happening, or reduce the damaging effects of unavoidable emergencies. Typical mitigation measures include establishing building codes and zoning requirements, installing shutters and constructing barriers such as levees.

Successful information management and dissemination depends on seven steps.

Gather - The JIS/JIC must gather information from multiple and varied sources. Information gathered must be collected and tracked in an organized methodology.

Verify - Information gathered must be verified for accuracy, analyzed, and sources confirmed

Organize, Write, Produce - Incident Commanders and public/media need information presented in a useful form, organized by category, priority and value. Public information is produced in many forms including web-based dissemination, releases, images, and multi-media vehicles.

Review and Coordinate - Expedient but thorough review of information released is an essential part of the JIS/JIC process. Reviewers must coordinate with each agency that has information to be released. Given technological advances, however, review and release procedures must be addressed in a manner that facilitates front-line PIOs to act within a defined scope using approved talking points, but with the flexibility to engage immediately to manage outbound communications and efficiently route monitored or incoming information through the JIS for analysis, response or to help build subsequent information release efforts.

Document - Proper documentation is mandatory for all ICS/NIMS functions. In order to resolve a miscommunication or dispute, or in the case of litigation, activities must be documented.

Dissemination - JIS/JIC staff must use every internal/external means available to provide information to those who need it – including internal/external audiences.

Monitor - Monitoring media is a crucial function of the JIC. In a traditional sense, “media monitoring” was primarily focused on traditional media outlets – television, radio, paper. As technology develops, increasingly web-based media, including social media, as modified for use by traditional media, by the public and partner agencies/organizations must be integral to a JIS/JIC response. This monitoring of “open” information is a crucial function of both the JIS and the JIC. Staff must understand and codify what to watch and listen for, identify issues and inaccuracies. A two tiered system of flexibility for front-line PIOs to engage and clarify information, push pre-approved talking points, but ensure that observed information is provided back within the PIO structure and, as necessary, to incident command for that which is necessary for situational awareness and for operational decisions must be included in the JIS/JIC



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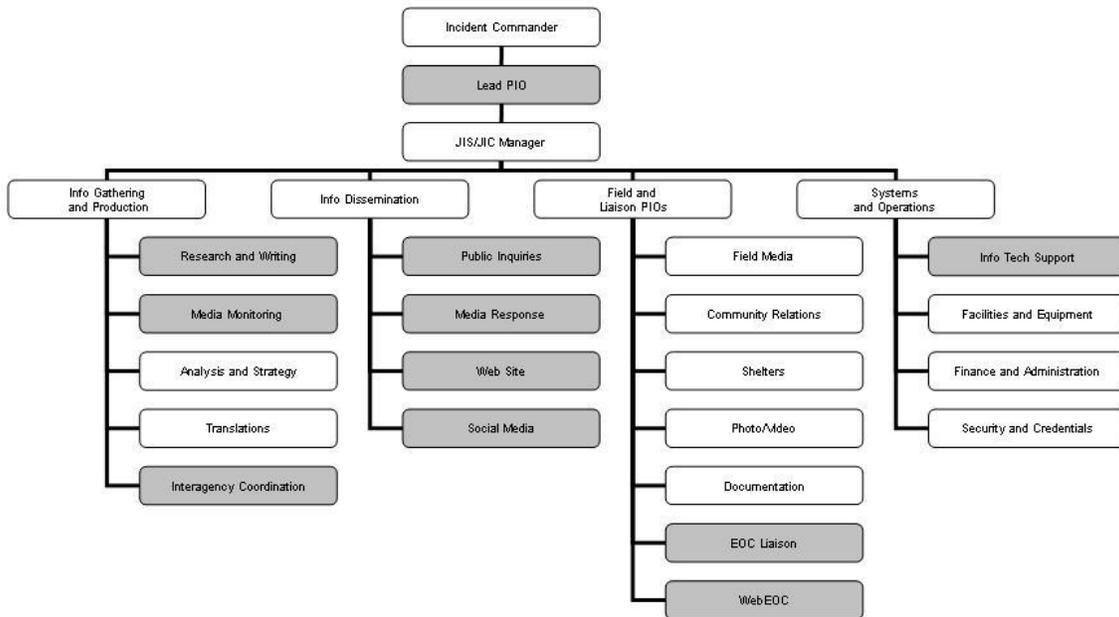
structure.

PIO Responsibilities

While the Joint Information System (JIS) and Joint Information Center (JIC) is best accomplished with adequate resources to staff sufficient slots to accomplish each of the phases identified above, resources at the local and State level are often constrained and complicated by incident timing and capabilities on-hand. For this reason, this Standard Operating Procedure document is intended to facilitate the accomplishment of the priority and subsidiary tasks of a PIO during an emergency response using national Joint Information System/Center standards, but augmented with Colorado-specific networks, local contacts and out-of-area resources. It is organized on a framework that models the groups/unit Incident Command System (ICS) responses under the National Incident Management System (NIMS) but is geared to enable a single resource Public Information Officer to accomplish priority tasks, by phase and supported with templates, to organize, delegate and augment activities to respond to an emergency.

The PIO Responsibility/Organization Chart below (larger handout located at Appendix C to this document) provides a guide to a responding PIO of what tasks must be accomplished in a tiered (priority and subsidiary) response.

PIO Responsibility Chart



***NOTE: Grey text indicates priority areas to cover, with other areas to cover based on incident complexity and resource availability. The grey areas would be the priority areas to assign incoming PIOs, if applicable, to assist in coverage.



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This PIO responsibility chart is a visual representation of the overall information management task.

For a Lead PIO, the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHSEM) Public Information Officer Checklist found at Appendix B to this document assists in detailed taskings (plus augmentation options within the Colorado Joint Information System to accomplish tasks - including specific PIO call numbers and online resources) to help a PIO organize and obtain resources specific to each emergency response phase. This checklist is designed for an all-hazards response but is organized in to operate in concert with PIO-specific tools as a decision-tree for a single source PIO to get through an incident and to seek Colorado PIO resources to assist.

To assist in the main hazards/threats in Colorado, templated factsheets and response forms have been developed by the State in coordination with partner agencies that provides message considerations and starting points for PIO response. These documents are located in the online Colorado Joint Information System. As this workbase develops, the facts and templates PIOs may use to respond will be further organized by main, recognized alert methods including press releases, reverse 9-1-1, text alerts, radio PSAs, etc, to help a PIO organize and respond to typical situations faced in Colorado through each phase of emergency management.

Also available as a reference to PIOs in the appendices to this document is a comprehensive Colorado Public Information Officer and Colorado Media Contact List.

This manual and supporting materials are also available on the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management's web site at www.DHSEM.State.CO.US on the Media page and also in the folders area within WebEOC.

Colorado Joint Information System (JIS) - Online

While the formal activation of the State of Colorado's JIS/JIC system is tied to the standup of the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC), a State Emergency Declaration or direct action by the Governor that instructs immediate State action in response to an event/incident, the Colorado Joint Information System has been established and created to encourage information-sharing, exchange and liaison opportunities during times between incidents to bridge the gap between communications needs in response to an emergency. Using the Situational Awareness Tool (<http://satool.org>) and the Facebook Colorado PIO Group page, http://www.facebook.com/home.php?sk=group_139723722750485&ap=1#!/home.php?sk=group_139723722750485&ap=1 the Colorado JIS supports the activities of federal, state and local public information officers to collaborate on the wide range of issues. Hosted on a State of Colorado-owned system, the joint effort between the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management and the Department of Public Health and Environment is intended as a broad support platform allowing exchange of information between public, private and volunteer



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PIO-equivalents involved in an event/incident response. In the event of an incident, the State PIO will utilize WebEOC for information-sharing with SEOC partners and to gather information regarding the incident.

In the event of an incident, the Lead PIO will ensure that all PIOs assisting at the State Emergency Operations Center and in the incident have access to the WebEOC as the primary source of information for obtaining and managing information flow for the PIO response. Using SA Tool and the FB page, all conference calls, documents, contacts, etc, will be electronically preserved to ensure response integrity. Should the All-Hazards Group not be accessible during an incident, the PIO and JIS/JIC support will use the forms and templates provided to maintain a paper track record of actions and coordination.

Colorado Virtual Operations Support Team

The Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management manages and coordinates the Colorado Virtual Operations Support Team (COVOST). The COVOST can be activated to support a local jurisdiction or the State EOC/JIC. The main purpose of the COVOST is to monitor media and alert the lead PIO to possible areas of concern. The COVOST is activated through WebEOC and utilizes a Request for Assistance form. The Request for Assistance Form will detail the support request from the local jurisdiction or State EOC. The COVOST is activated utilizing the Mission Set ESF-15 COVOST in WebEOC. There are currently three ESF-15 mission sets: COVOST, Public Information Team and Colorado National Guard Public Affairs Team. The Standard Operating Procedures are included in the COVOST Handbook in Appendix I.

Plan Development and Maintenance

This plan will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and, at least, every calendar year to ensure consistency of approach/contents with the State Emergency Operations Plan (SEOC) and response protocols.

Security

In the event a physical establishment of a Joint Information Center is necessary, in a location adjacent to the State Emergency Operations Center or the Alternate State Emergency Operations Center, the security protocols will follow the security protocols established for the State Emergency Operations Center. If additional security personnel or measures are necessary, the Lead PIO will work with Logistics to secure additional measures/staff.

Deactivation

At the conclusion of the event or as the State EOC is deactivated, the JIC will follow the deactivation protocols established by the State EOC. The JIC will provide written or electronic files that document the:

- News releases sent from the JIC
- Twitter messages
- Facebook messages



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- Fact Sheets
- Talking Points
- Backgrounders
- Any other documentation produced by the JIC.