



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF  
**ENERGY**

**Headquarters  
Office of Public Affairs**

**Emergency  
Public Affairs Plan**

The DOE HQ Office of Public Affairs Emergency Public Affairs Plan has been approved  
for implementation by:

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Dan Leistikow, Director, HQ Office of Public Affairs

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Joseph Krol, Director, HQ Office of Emergency Management

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Purpose

The Department of Energy (DOE) HQ Office of Public Affairs (PA) is committed to communicating information about the Department's work in a timely, accurate and accessible way to the news media, general public and employees.

This plan identifies:

- HQ PA emergency response actions for emergency events involving DOE.
- Processes and responsibilities for emergency information coordination and dissemination.
- HQ PA management, staff and field positions and associated responsibilities and interactions required before, during, and after an emergency.

This plan incorporates the requirements identified in: DOE O 151.1C, "Comprehensive Emergency Management System", Chapter IX, "Public Affairs Policy and Planning Requirements"

This plan is designed to document how public information and communication policies are implemented during an emergency. Related documents include:

- DOE O 151.1C "Comprehensive Emergency Management System" (Nov. 02, 2005)
- DOE G 151.1-4 "Response Elements (July 11, 2007), Chapter 9, Emergency Public Information"

## Scope

This HQ Emergency Public Affairs Plan (EPAP) applies to the response of HQ PA during an operational emergency involving DOE. The extent of HQ PA response is dependent on the severity or type of incident and those who require information on the emergency.

Events to which HQ PA might respond include:

- Emergency events at a DOE site/facility
- Non-DOE events (i.e. requests for DOE assistance by other federal agencies)
- Events that generate national media and congressional attention

This EPAP addresses:

- HQ PA emergency public information organization, procedures and processes;
- Draft and dissemination of media informational materials (i.e. press releases, fact sheets, statements, responses to questions and interview requests);
- HQ PA timely review of draft media informational materials developed by DOE sites or other DOE response locations;
- Gathering and monitoring information about an event or incident as it unfolds in order to be prepared to provide assistance as necessary; and,
- Developing and maintaining readiness of HQ PA personnel through training, drills, and exercises.

### **Concept of Operations**

When DOE headquarters or a DOE site/facility declares an emergency, it is expected to meet the public information obligations of the Department of Energy Orders, guidance and requirements and the comprehensive emergency management plans developed by each site.

This guidance and requirement includes the timely provision of media informational materials to HQ PA. Every effort should be made by the designated public affairs officers at the site level to consult with HQ PA on the initial dissemination of information to the public and media.

From the DOE O 151.1C “Comprehensive Emergency Management System”:

*Initial news releases or public statements must be approved by the Cognizant Field Element official responsible for emergency public information review and dissemination. Following initial news releases and public statements, updates must be coordinated with the DOE/NNSA (as appropriate) Director of Public Affairs and the Headquarters Emergency Manager.*

### **Field Coordination and Expectations**

In general, HQ PA, or its designee, will be the lead public affairs office involved in any incident that draws or could potentially result in attention from national or international media, the White House, the U.S. Congress or other federal agencies. HQ PA will be the lead PA office involved in an incident that directly involves other federal agencies.

The severity of an event or the type of event will impact the level of involvement by PA. If the event involves the health, safety and security of the general public or the potential to gain national or international attention, HQ PA may choose to be actively involved or the lead in the public affairs response to the emergency. If the incident is on a smaller scale or its impacts are limited to the site/facility, HQ PA may determine that the site PA official will be the lead in the public affairs response to the emergency.

If HQ PA determines that the situation warrants it, HQ PA will interface via video teleconference, telephone, and/or e-mail with the site during the emergency and may provide real-time public affairs guidance, direction and advice, both within and outside of the Headquarters Emergency Management Team framework, as necessary.

Depending on the event, PA may choose to have the site PA official handle the PA activities regarding the event. In this case:

- HQ PA will monitor the situation, but will not issue the media informational materials and will refer media inquiries to the site.
- The site will be the lead PAs office and will be responsible for issuing the media informational materials and responding to media inquiries.
- The site PA official will provide the final media information materials in a timely manner to HQ PA and the HQ Emergency Management Team (EMT) Emergency Manager.
- The site will ensure that PA and the HQ EMT Emergency Manager have the proper and latest information on the event.
- In accordance with DOE O 151.1C, Chapter IX, Section 4.h, the site will ensure that all updated press releases and public statements are coordinated with the HQ EMT Emergency Manager, as long as the HQ EMT is operational.

Regardless of who is the lead (HQ PA or the site PA official), timely coordination and consultation between HQ PA and the site PA official is essential to ensure that the most accurate and timely information is available regarding an incident involving DOE.

Once an emergency has been declared and response operations have begun, all media informational materials issued by the site PA official will be coordinated with HQ PA and the HQ EMT Emergency Manager. This coordination means that the site PA official in charge of the emergency public affairs activities will provide the latest information available, drafts and finalized copies of all media informational materials. Additional expectations and protocols are in Appendix A.

### **HQ PA Responsibilities**

HQ PA is responsible for directing the public information activities and material during emergencies. During an emergency or event, the ultimate role of HQ PA is to provide timely, factual public affairs information to:

- National or international media
- The public (through the media and via website)
- Employees (through federal and contractor employee communications protocols as well as through websites, e-mails and public media)
- Interested stakeholders (congressional, state, tribal and local government elected officials)
- DOE senior management
- Public affairs officials at federal agencies (e.g., DHS, FEMA, EPA)

HQ PA will ensure that the appropriate personnel, media briefing facilities and equipment are provided to facilitate emergency public information responsibilities at headquarters.

HQ PA will also ensure that federal and contractor field offices have provided for the same at their facilities.

HQ PA responsibility includes deploying a representative to the headquarters operations center to support an Emergency Management Team (EMT) (should one be established). The HQ PA representative will serve as the liaison between the site PA official at the site/facility impacted by the emergency.

HQ PA will ensure that all media informational materials are disseminated in a timely manner.

Whoever is determined to be the lead (HQ PA or the site PA) HQ PA response will make the final and ultimate determination on (1) what media information materials are released; (2) when the materials are to be released; and (3) to whom the materials should be released. The lead will work with the HQ EMT to ensure that the media informational materials are accurate and provide the most up-to-date information possible on the emergency.

### **Emergency Management Team Support**

If it is determined that an HQ EMT should be activated based on the severity of an event at a site/facility, the headquarters watch office will notify the HQ EMT participants. Personnel designated and notified per direction of NNSA's Associate Administrator for Emergency Operations (NA-40) are initially used to fill required positions (e.g., HQ EMT Emergency Manager, Primary Advisor, Emergency Response Coordinator, Briefing Team, and the HQ PA Representative). The initial team will begin to gather information for subsequent communication to the HQ EMT as a whole. See Figure 1 to illustrate this interaction.

#### **Figure 1: HQ PA Process When an EMT is Activated**

The HQ PA representative will advise the HQ EMT Emergency Manager when it is ready to begin participation. The HQ PA representative will review the information that is available on the status boards regarding the incident's status, significant events and actions taken. If applicable, the HQ PA representative will notify the Director of HQ PA when they are ready to begin and as soon as the HQ EMT is declared operational.

When an EMT is formed, the HQ PA representative at the EMT will keep the HQ EMT Emergency Manager (NA-40) and the Director of HQ PA informed of all public affairs activities occurring at or as a result of the impacted site/facility (onsite, offsite). This includes the preparation and release of media information materials (either by HQ PA or the site PA) and any media interest or requests for information.

The HQ PA representative will maintain contact and coordinate with the site PA official, ensuring timely, effective and accurate communications between the site/facility and HQ.

The HQ PA representative should work with the technical advisors at the HQ EMT to verify the technical accuracy of all media informational materials. Before the materials are released, they should be reviewed and concurred by the Director of HQ Public Affairs, the site PA official and the HQ EMT Emergency Manager.

A checklist for the HQ PA representative in the HQ EMT is at Appendix C.

### **Supporting Public Affairs Outside of DOE**

Depending on the event, it may be necessary for HQ PA to coordinate and/or support other emergency public affairs efforts with outside (federal or local) agencies and/or stakeholders. HQ PA will work with the other public affairs offices to provide support and requested information.

The HQ PA may also make recommendations to the HQ EMT Emergency Manager on the release of information to the White House, U.S. Congress, and/or state, local, tribal and foreign governments.

If there is an event/emergency involving the National Capitol Region (NCR), HQ PA should be prepared to provide a representative to the Department of Homeland Security (or designated lead agency) in the event that a facility is established to coordinate public affairs efforts. If a public affairs center is activated in the NCR, HQ PA will maintain contact with the site PA official and will coordinate and exchange information as needed.

### **Event Termination**

When the emergency phase has been terminated and recovery operations have begun, direct coordination between HQ PA and the site PA official will continue. If a recovery team is established, the HQ PA representative to the HQ EMT will consult with the Director of HQ Public Affairs on recovery responsibilities and the extent of HQ PA and the site's PA official participation.

### **Detailed Roles and Responsibilities**

This section defines what is expected of the following DOE HQ PA officials during an emergency:

- **DOE Director of Public Affairs:**
  - Identified as Director of Public Affairs in this EPAP.
  - Oversee development and maintenance of the DOE PA EPAP.
  - Provide copies of the EPAP to DOE public affairs employees (at headquarters and in the field), contractor public affairs employees, and the

- Director of Office of Emergency Operations or the HQ EMT Emergency Manager.
- Coordinate and manage the public information activities at the headquarters level as outlined in the EPAP.
  - **HQ PA Representative to the EMT**
    - Designated by the Director of Public Affairs as the primary HQOPA official serving the HQ EMT.
    - Directs and coordinates the emergency public information activities at the HQ EMT as outlined in the EPAP.
    - Advises, counsels and coordinates with the HQ EMT Emergency Manager, HQ PA and the site PA official on public affairs activities and response.
  - **Site Public Affairs Official**
    - Directs and coordinates the emergency public information activities as outlined in the EPAP at the DOE site/facility where the emergency incident occurred.
    - Coordinates and communicates with HQ PA and the HQ EMT Emergency Manager, providing accurate and timely information about the emergency.

### Training, Drills, and Exercises

The effectiveness of public affairs officials during an emergency is dependent on regular exercises and drills. All personnel assigned to a field or headquarters emergency response position (both HQ PA and site PA officials) should participate in training in their respective functions, as well as in the concept of operations of the entire organization to the emergency response.

Drills and exercises should be held at least annually for HQ PA and site PA officials. The drills and exercises may be held in conjunction with those conducted by NNSA's Office of Emergency Operations.

*DOE O 151.1C, Section 4.b(b) "Cognizant Field Elements. Cognizant Field Elements must have trained emergency response staff..."*

*DOE O 414.1C, Section 4.b(2) "Management Criterion 2 – Personnel Training and Qualification (a) Train and qualify personnel to be capable of performing assigned work."*



## Appendix A: HQ and Site Office Protocol

August 19, 2010

Headquarters  
**PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROTOCOL**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY**

### **Introduction**

This document describes guidelines and procedures to be followed by DOE contractor and federal PA offices. It covers media relations, Freedom of Information Act requests and emergency public information.

Public affairs officers at each of the site offices are in most cases the first point of contact for contractor communications staffs in all functions covered by this protocol document. Site PA officers will coordinate with the DOE headquarters offices of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs and Public Affairs, although direct contact between contractor PA and Headquarters may also be required.

### **Media Relations**

The need to inform the public and elected officials through the media about events and activities at DOE sites is a responsibility shared by both DOE federal and contractor congressional and public affairs staff members.

- Media interest in any event, protocol visit, scientific breakthrough, emergency, controversy or other information that could be of national consequence should be coordinated closely with the DOE headquarters office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs and Public Affairs.
- A description of all planned public information releases should be provided to PA in advance of scheduled release times for review.
- Unplanned news releases written in response to breaking news events should be discussed with PA by phone and email.
- HQ PA will alert site/field PA offices about press releases or other issues that affect the sites.
- Federal and contractor site PA offices should report all finalized public information releases in advance of scheduled distribution to allow time for notifications or to decide if DOE headquarters would like to issue either a joint release or instead issue the release from Headquarters.

- Since DOE is the facility landlord for all its sites, all news releases should contain a description of DOE's connection to the story, whether the connection is programmatic or through funding, or both.
- As much as practicable, any media issues being worked by site contractors should be coordinated with the relevant site federal office prior to discussions with HQ.
- Contractor and federal PA offices should participate in recurring DOE public affairs conference calls to report on site activities.

### **Emergency Public Affairs**

In an emergency, all contractor PA and site PA offices must provide factual, accurate and timely information to employees, the public and the news media. Therefore, all contractors and site offices are responsible for ensuring that public affairs considerations are taken into account in their organizations' emergency planning activities. In addition to this annex, DOE O 151.1C and the Basic Guidance for Public Information Officers (National Incident Management System – FEMA 517/November 2007) should also be consulted.

- Site/field PA emergency responders should engage in public release of initial information – whether by issuing news releases or conducting verbal interviews with electronic and print media as soon as possible in an emergency.
- During the initial response, coordination with HQ PA must be a priority, although it is not necessary to wait for headquarters approval for the first news release or release of pre-approved fact sheets.
- Follow-on news releases, as well as a strategy for follow-on interviews and scheduled media conferences, however, should be planned with advance guidance from PA. Continuous collaboration by the sites with HQ PA during an emergency will ensure that necessary notifications will be made about the event.
- If other local, state or federal agencies are not involved in the emergency response, a site-based media center should conduct the public information response in coordination with the site Emergency Operations Center (EOC).
- If an emergency event requires the responses of multiple agencies and if a Joint Information Center (JIC) is activated, DOE will operate under the National Incident Management System's Unified Command procedures. DOE federal and contractor public affairs representatives in the Unified Command's JIC and at the site EOC should, however, continue to share information as much as possible with DOE HQ EMT Emergency Manager and HQ PA.

**Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)**

- The Director, Office of Resource Manager, for Office of Public Affairs, serving as the OPA Authorizing/Denying Official and under guidance of General Counsel (GC), has custody and jurisdiction over the documents subject to a FOIA request. The OPA Authorizing/Denying Official certifies that 1) documents may be released in their entirety, 2) documents may be released in part, 3) documents or information is exempt from the FOIA, or 4) no documents exist that are responsive to a request.
- Requests for documents from members of Congress, their staffs or Congressional committee staffs are not FOIA requests and they should not be routed through the FOIA process. Such Congressional requests should be responded to in a timely manner and coordinated with the DOE Headquarters Director of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs.

## **Appendix B: National Incident Management System (NIMS)**

The National Incident Management System (NIMS), approved by the Department of Homeland Security in 2004, establishes standardized incident management processes, controls and procedures that all federal, state, tribal and local responders must use to coordinate and conduct response actions during incidents that affect the general public. It establishes a common response language as well as procedures for incidents that require the involvement of multiple levels of government.

Among the key features of NIMS is an Incident Command System that establishes a Unified Command process to coordinate the efforts of multiple jurisdictions and to ensure joint decisions on objectives, strategies, plans, priorities and public communications.

The NIMS also mandates a Joint Information Center (JIC) that brings incident communicators together in a unified public information coordination role. DOE responders to incidents that impact the general public will join the JIC as equal partners with other agency representatives. DOE or another responding agency may be designated to manage the JIC depending on the location and scope of the emergency. Media releases will be reviewed and approved by the Unified Command, although that does not preclude on-going communication with DOE headquarters.

**Appendix C: Checklist**

HQ EMT DOE PA Representative

**EMT PA representative is responsible for the following:**

- Serves as the principal PA point of contact on the Emergency Management Team (EMT) for emergency event-related information and for coordination with the onsite public affairs official and between other departmental or field elements.
- Directs and coordinates HQ Operations Center (OC) emergency public information activities. Advises and counsels HQ EMT Emergency Manager and other DOE management.
- Reviews HQ and field press releases with the HQ EMT Emergency Manager and HQ EMT Program Office Team Leader for technical accuracy.
- Coordinates the release of information to the media and public.
- Ensures the site media center/Joint Information Center (JIC) is provided all approved news releases.
- Coordinates public information activities between the site EOC and the media center/JIC.
- Establishes and maintains communications with site public affairs, PA, and the JIC Manager, if a JIC is activated.

**INITIAL ACTIONS**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Sign in on HQ EMT access roster upon entering the HQ OC.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Ensure the HQ EMT Emergency Manager and the Director of Public Affairs are aware of your arrival at the HQ OC.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Obtain an initial status/turn-over briefing from the HQ EMT PA Representative on the preceding shift and review the HQ EMT PA Team log.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Review initial notification report and information on the status boards to include:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Incident status
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Significant events
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Actions taken by HQ
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Establish contact with counterparts at the facility/site command center/EOC and at the site/facility media center/JIC.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Inform HQ EMT Primary Advisor as soon as site/facility contact is established.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Determine status of any emergency public information efforts by:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Contacting the Director of Public Affairs, or
- \_\_\_\_\_ Requesting that copies of all field press releases be faxed to the HQ OC.

### Continuing Actions

- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Ensure that the HQ EMT Emergency Manager is informed about press releases received from the site/facility media center/JIC or Public Affairs Officer (PAO), by providing hard copies.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. If applicable, ensure the HQ EMT Emergency Manager is informed about HQ press releases.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Ensure technical accuracy and consistency of information release.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Coordinate press release and other briefing information with HQ EMT Program Office Team Leader for technical accuracy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Record in HQ EMT logs regarding any significant position actions, telephone contacts, or decisions not documented on the status boards.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Process critical emergency information without delay.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Identify incoming critical information using the criteria listed below:
  - Any change in emergency classification
  - Event is determined to be security-related
  - Site/facility request for HQ assistance
  - Projected or actual offsite consequences
  - Projected or actual contamination of public primary water sources or crops, dairy products, soil, grasses, and livestock
  - Reentry plan information
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. When receiving critical emergency information
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Verify information and source
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Provide the information to the HQ EMT Primary Advisor and to the HQ EMT Emergency Manager immediately
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Ensure the information is added to the status boards
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. Report on public information activities during briefings, as requested by the HQ EMT Briefing Team Leader, including
  - \_\_\_\_\_ HQ press releases
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Field press releases
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Press conferences
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Level of media, Congressional and intergovernmental interest
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. Ensure that all potentially classified or sensitive information created while on the HQ EMT is reviewed by the Authorized Derivative Classifier (usually the HQ EMT Security Operations Advisor) **prior** to release.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. If leaving the HQ OC, inform HQ EMT Emergency Manager and HQ EMT Primary Advisor of your absence and where you may be reached.

**Shift change actions**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. Provide relief personnel with status of PA activities
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. Provide relief personnel with status of pending actions

**TERMINATION ACTIONS**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. Determine and report the status of any open tasking issues to the HQ Emergency Manager. Inform the Director of Public Affairs, and request assistance if needed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. Ensure points of contact external to the HQ EMT are notified of the termination of the HQ EMT.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. Ensure all significant information has been captured and hard copy documents are attached to the DOE HQ EMT PA Team Log.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. Ensure that any reference materials borrowed from HQ OC reference room have been returned.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 25. Determine if there will be an immediate verbal debriefing of HQ EMT members to capture staff impressions and lessons learned from the response.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 26. Determine required input to the HQ EMT After Action Report (AAR).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 27. Provide all written documentation to the Director of Public Affairs for submittal to the HQ EMT Administrative Assistant to include in the historical archive.

**Appendix D: Personnel Contact Information**

**The following phone numbers should be used to contact an HQ Emergency Public Affairs official, or a designee:**

<b>DOE Public Affairs:</b>	<b>202-586-4940</b>
<b>EOC:</b>	<b>202-586-8100</b>