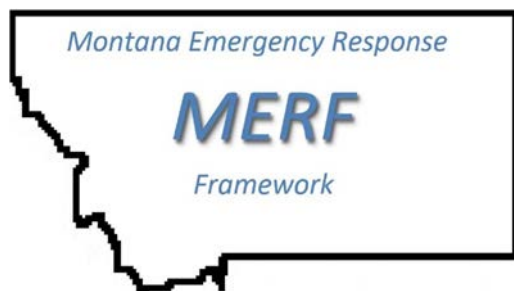


Emergency  
Support  
Function

2016

Annex # 15  
External Affairs



Authorization & Concurrence:

This Annex serves as a guide for rendering assistance for the **Montana Emergency Response Framework** (MERF). It supersedes all previous editions.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dan Villa, Office of the Governor

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



Record of Concurrence

When assistance is requested by the Montana Office of Governor, the following agencies have concurred to provide the role of supporting the Office of Governor in rendering assistance to state, local, and tribal jurisdictions within the State of Montana during an emergency, disaster, or incident whenever ESF #15 is activated:

<b>Support Agencies</b>	<b>Authorized Representative</b>	<b>Date of Concurrence</b>

## Table of Contents

Authorization & Concurrence:.....	1
Record of Changes .....	2
Record of Concurrence.....	3
Section I: Agencies .....	5
Section II: Purpose & Scope .....	5
Purpose:.....	5
Scope: .....	5
Section III: Assumptions & Relationships .....	5
Situation.....	6
Individuals/Community Organizations .....	6
Local, Tribal, & State Government .....	6
Private Sector/Nongovernmental Organizations .....	7
Section IV: Core Capabilities .....	7
Section V: Operational Functions .....	10

## Section I: Agencies

**Coordinating Agency:**  
Montana Disaster & Emergency  
Services

**Support Agencies:**  
All ESF Partners

**Primary Agency:**  
Montana Office of Governor

## Section II: Purpose & Scope

### **Purpose:**

Emergency Support Function #15 External Affairs/Emergency Public Information (ESF#15) Plan is written as a provisional planning document to meet the emergency response requirements assigned by the State through the Montana Emergency Response Framework (MERF), maintained by the Montana Disaster Emergency Services (DES). This plan is supported by other standard operating procedures (SOP), guides, and other planning elements.

The purpose of this document is to establish a comprehensive, whole of government, emergency external affairs communications plan ensuring accurate, coordinated, and timely information to affected audiences, including governments, media, the private sector, and citizens.

### **Scope:**

This document provides guidance to state agencies and ESF partners to ensure there is a coordinated release of all public information during a declared emergency event. This authority may be delegated by the Governor's Office to a state agency.

The development of this plan is governed by the principle of all-hazards planning and is not limited by the nature of any particular emergency or disaster event. This approach allows the flexibility to respond with equal effectiveness to all events, hazards, emergencies, and disasters or other events that affect public and the recovery of essential services in Montana.

## Section III: Assumptions & Relationships

### **Assumptions**

This annex outlines the following assumptions.

- Media interest will be very high at the local/regional level, and national level media interest will be dependent on the specific event.
- Information accuracy is critical to maintain the confidence of Montana's citizens in the leadership trusted to plan and manage the operations of emergency response.

- The Joint Command Team (JCT) and public affairs professionals will work in coordination with private, public and governmental agencies to ensure common language and accurate facts are presented to the public.
- Private organizations and companies directly affected by an emergency may choose to communicate directly with the public and media resources in order to share their messages without coordination with the JCT.
- Local governments have first level response at the impacted jurisdiction. Small to moderate events should be handled by the local public information officer in coordination with the Governors Communication Director.

## **Relationships**

This section describes how ESF #15 relates to other elements of the whole community. Basic concepts that apply to all members of the whole community include:

### **Situation**

Montana is vulnerable to several hazards that could result in the need for state government agencies to provide coordinated public information messaging in order to provide the best assistance to local and tribal government responders. These hazards include, but are not limited to, wildfires, earthquakes, floods, HazMat incidents, communicable disease outbreak or other public health events, and severe weather. The MERF outlines the breadth of vulnerability to hazards endemic to Montana.

### **Individuals/Community Organizations**

The public, both individuals and community organizations, have an important role in assisting with rapid dissemination of information, identifying unmet needs, and mutual support.

### **Local, Tribal, & State Government**

Local, state, and tribal area authorities retain the primary responsibility for communicating health and safety instructions for their population. Nothing in this annex limits the authority of these authorities to release information regarding an incident under their jurisdiction, particularly if it involves immediate health and safety issues.

In the unlikely event that local, state, and tribal, territorial area governments are unable to perform these responsibilities, ESF #15 may provide vital operational health and safety information to the affected population. Nothing in this document should be construed as diminishing or usurping those responsibilities.

### Private Sector/Nongovernmental Organizations

The private sector is a component of external affairs. Coordinated communication and collaboration with the private sector supports effective incident response by integrating private sector capabilities and information into response operations.

Information must be coordinated across various levels of government to identify needs, convey resources available for business recovery, and facilitate collaborative support for economic recovery. Information must be disseminated about response and other important information to the private sector through public outreach and education methods, such as media campaigns, workshops, roundtables, and trainings.

## Section IV: Core Capabilities

The following table lists the Response core capability that ESF #15 most directly supports, along with the particular ESF #15 actions related to that core capability. Though not listed in the table, all ESFs support the core capabilities of Planning and Operational Coordination.

Core Capability	ESF #15 – External Affairs
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Public Information &amp; Warning</b></p>	<p><b>External &amp; Public Affairs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides accurate, coordinated, and timely information to affected audiences during incidents requiring a coordinated State response.</li><li>• Provides communications support and advice to the leaders during an incident.</li><li>• Conducts communications planning.</li><li>• Conducts outreach and education.</li><li>• Promotes operational integration with the impacted private sector entity to support local economic response and recovery.</li><li>• Supports situational awareness by engaging the private sector in information sharing efforts.</li><li>• Coordinates messages with local, state, and tribal governments<sup>[LR1]</sup>.</li><li>• Gathers information on the incident.</li><li>• Provides incident-related information through the media and other sources in accessible formats and multiple languages to individuals, households, businesses, and industries directly or indirectly affected by the incident, including those with disabilities and other access and functional needs.</li><li>• Monitors news coverage to ensure that accurate information is disseminated.</li><li>• Disseminates incident information through multiple media channels (official Web sites, social networking platforms) to ensure wide delivery of life saving information.</li><li>• Maximizes the use of video and digital imagery to communicate during incidents.</li></ul>



Core Capability	ESF #15 – External Affairs
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Public Information &amp; Warning (continued)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handles appropriate special projects such as news conferences, press operations, and incident area tours by government officials and dignitaries.</li> <li>• Ensures basic services, such as communications and supplies, to assist the news media in disseminating information to the public.</li> <li>• Oversees media relations.</li> <li>• Ensures effective communication of incident information to individuals with disabilities and other access and functional needs through the use of appropriate auxiliary aids and services, such as sign language and other interpreters; captioning of audio and visual materials; and accessible Web site communications.</li> </ul> <p><b>Community Relations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducts outreach to the whole community, including limited English proficiency populations and those with disabilities and other access and functional needs. Disseminates critical information to survivors and affected communities on available disaster assistance programs and other relevant recovery information.</li> <li>• Coordinates closely with the affected jurisdiction(s) to identify community leaders (e.g., grassroots, political, religious, educational, business, labor, ethnic, and racial) and neighborhood advocacy groups to assist in the rapid dissemination of information, identify unmet needs, establish an ongoing dialogue and information exchange, and facilitate collaborative local, state, and tribal planning and mutual support for disaster response. Prepares an initial action plan to support Unified Coordination Group with incident-specific guidance and objectives. Develops and disseminates reports to key decision makers to provide situational awareness and share critical, actionable information gathered from the field.</li> <li>• Serves as the primary external and public affairs liaison between the State response operations and the community. Engages with community through appropriate outreach, public meetings, and other external affairs activities.</li> <li>• Conducts, assesses, inform, and report (AIR) activities to improve situational awareness.</li> </ul> <p><b>Joint Information Center</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serves as a central point for coordination of incident information, public affairs activities, and media access to information regarding the latest developments. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Incident JIC:</b> Is the physical location where all public affairs professionals involved in the response work together to provide critical emergency information, media response, and public affairs functions.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Core Capability	ESF #15 – External Affairs
<p><b>Public Information &amp; Warning (continued)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Virtual JIC:</b> Links all participants through technological means (secure or non-secure) when geographical restrictions, incident management requirements, and other limitations preclude physical attendance by public affairs leadership at a central location.</li> <li>○ <b>Satellite JIC:</b> Is a forward-deployed component of an incident JIC.</li> <li>○ <b>Area JIC:</b> Multiple JICs may be used when there are multiple Joint Field Offices (JFOs) to support the area command Unified Coordination structure and whenever multiple JICs are operating in support of the same or related incidents and jurisdictions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Message Development &amp; Dissemination</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educates the public in the aftermath of an incident requiring a coordinated State response through news advisories, press releases, prepared materials, fliers, and talking points.</li> <li>• Creates and updates media products for public release, such as blog posts, messages for social media, update messages, video, and digital imagery.</li> </ul> <p><b>Legislative Affairs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishes contact with legislative offices representing affected areas to provide information on the incident.</li> <li>• Coordinates with all State agencies involved in the response to ensure consistency and transparency in communicating with members of legislation.</li> <li>• Organizes legislative briefings.</li> <li>• Responds to legislative inquiries.</li> <li>• Assists in the development of written materials for presentations and making legislative notifications.</li> </ul> <p><b>Local &amp; Tribal Governmental Affairs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotes State interaction and implements information sharing with local and Tribal governments.</li> <li>• Informs local and Tribal elected and appointed officials on response efforts and recovery programs.</li> <li>• Disseminates information with the assistance of state, county, and Tribal governments.</li> <li>• Promotes State interaction between local and Tribal governments on all aspects of incident response operations.</li> <li>• Ensures inclusion of local and Tribal government in all aspects of incidents requiring a coordinated State response that affect local jurisdiction and Tribes and incident response operations.</li> </ul>

## Section V: Operational Functions

The Governors appointed Joint Command Team (JCT) will serve as the central organization to lead the planning, coordinating and operational execution of emergency response and public affairs related activities within the state. Primary audience is Montana citizens, local and tribal governments, followed by local, regional, and national media. The JCT is the release authority for public comments made by state employees.

All Executive Branch Agencies are passive participants and will respond to inquiries at the direction of the Joint Command Team. Depending on the type emergency, agencies will be shifted to active participation.

Some events may be limited to a single responding ESF or agency. In such events, the responding ESF or agency is generally responsible for the state level public information, or assisting local or tribal jurisdictions upon request. In a complex, or multiagency response, ESF #15 may coordinate public including the use of a Joint Information Center.

The following table lists the response operational functions that ESF #15 primary agency and support entities most directly supports:

Primary Agency	Operational Functions:
<b>Montana Office of Governor</b>	<p><b>Emergency Public Information and Protective Action Guidance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Routine media inquiries not relevant to Montana’s emergency response efforts will be forwarded to the relevant local, state or federal agencies.</li> <li>• Prior to message dissemination, each public spokesperson must have positive release authority granted by the JCT PIO and a detailed understanding of the current status of emergency response efforts and the time table for upcoming events.</li> <li>• At all times, the health and safety of Montana’s citizens, their families and the general public are our highest priority.</li> </ul> <p><b>Media and Community Relations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media contacts can be found in <b>Appendix A</b>.</li> <li>• A draft notification press release is attached as <b>Appendix B</b> which should be distributed to impacted community media representatives as soon as possible designating the primary point of contact for media inquiries</li> </ul> <p><b>Congressional and International Affairs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Congressional delegation:</li> <li>• Congressional delegation points of contacts can be found in Appendix A</li> </ul> <p><b>Tribal Affairs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Office of Indian Affairs:</li> <li>• Office of Indian Affairs point of contact can be found in Appendix A.</li> </ul>

Primary Agency	Operational Functions:
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Montana Office of Governor (continued)</b></p>	<p><b>Joint Command Team:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upon request from DES, provide a primary point of contact for media relations.</li> <li>• Notify the Montana congressional delegation when the State of Montana is requesting a federal presidential disaster declaration and federal aid.</li> <li>• Coordinate international response with appropriate federal agencies</li> <li>• Coordinate tribal government notification and participation through the Office of the Director of Indian Affairs.</li> <li>• Public Information Officer</li> <li>• The lead Public Information Officer (PIO) will continue their position as PIO during an incident, or a designee can be appointed by the PIO or the Joint Command Team (JCT). The PIO has the authority and responsibility to conduct risk communications within the purpose and scope of this plan. Preparation for an emergency includes developing processes, selecting and training personnel, and conducting and participating in exercises. The PIO is responsible for:</li> <li>• Establishing an underlying culture of transparency of information and gaining public trust and confidence</li> <li>• Fostering media relationships</li> <li>• Establish a Joint Information Center capable hosting all coordinating state agencies and interested media outlets</li> <li>• Supporting the information needs of the response and the JCT</li> <li>• Representing and advising the JCT and administrative authorities on all public information matters</li> <li>• Coordinating and developing talking points for JCT team members</li> <li>• Drafting press releases for the JCT</li> <li>• Coordinating and approving the release of subordinate government agency press releases</li> <li>• Organizing, coordinating and conducting press conferences on an initial and ongoing basis</li> <li>• Responding to all relevant media inquiries and coordinating the release of information to the public on behalf of the JCT</li> <li>• Coordinating with other department PIOs through the Montana Disaster and Emergency Services (DES) State Emergency Coordination Center (SECC), the Governor’s Communication Director, or a joint information center (JIC) if one is established</li> <li>• General preparation for media events such as coaching SMEs , developing supporting documents (e.g., factsheets, talking points), and interview logistics</li> </ul>

Supporting Entities	Operational Functions:
<p><b>Montana Disaster &amp; Emergency Services</b></p>	<p>Montana Disaster and Emergency Services (DES) is the lead state agency for coordinating state resources and support to local, state, and non-governmental organizations. DES will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide situational reports and information to the Governor’s Office and JCT. Situation updates will ensure each public spokesperson has a detailed understanding of the current status of emergency response efforts and the time table for upcoming events. This may include the impact a disaster has on the population, critical infrastructure, and environment.</li> <li>• Ensure county and tribal coordinators are notified of emergencies in their community.</li> <li>• Notify the appropriate agencies as necessary</li> </ul>
<p><b>All ESF Partners</b></p>	<p>ESF agencies will provide updates relevant to their associated ESF response to DES. ESF partners may be asked to participate in developing messages to ensure consistency.</p>