

EMERGENCY SUPPORT FUNCTION #14

PUBLIC INFORMATION



2019

Emergency Support Function (ESF) 14 PUBLIC INFORMATION

- Primary Agency:** Santa Rosa County Public Information Officer
- Support Agencies:** Santa Rosa County Board of County Commissioners
Santa Rosa County Administrator
Santa Rosa County Division of Emergency Management
Santa Rosa County Computer Department
E-911 Coordinator
Governor's Press Office
Law Enforcement Officials
Santa Rosa County Amateur Radio Emergency Service
Florida Department of Children and Families
Florida Department of Elders Affairs (Santa Rosa Aging Services)
Florida Department of Transportation
Florida Department of Insurance
Chambers of Commerce
Public Service Commission
Florida Association of Broadcasters
Emergency Alert system

I. Purpose

The purpose of ESF 14 is to disseminate information on emergencies to county officials, emergency services staff, media outlets, municipal officials and the public through the news media. Additionally, ESF 14 will maintain liaison with municipalities, special districts, contiguous political jurisdictions and state and federal level authorities.

The following assumptions will guide the dissemination of public information in Santa Rosa County:

- Extensive destruction of media communications facilities and loss of electrical power may severely disrupt the normal flow and dispersal of information in the disaster area.
- The demand for public information outside the disaster area may exceed the capabilities of the Public Information Officer.
- The demand for public information within the disaster area may exceed the capability of county government to provide service. Additional support may be requested from other local agencies or the state.
- After a disaster, information can be erroneous, vague, difficult to confirm and contradictory.
- After a disaster, there will be significant demand for information on volunteer resources that are needed.
- A significant natural disaster, emergency condition or other incident may be of such magnitude that the means of dispersing public information in the disaster area may be severely affected or cease to function.

I. Concept of Operations

A. GENERAL

1. ESF 14 is organized consistent with the State Emergency Operations Center and the requirements of the National Response Plan, the National Incident Management System, and the Incident Command System to provide incident assessment, planning, procurement, deployment, coordination and support operations to the Santa Rosa County Emergency Response Team, Area Operations and State Emergency Response Team officials to assure a timely and appropriate response to an emergency/disaster event.
2. In a large event requiring local and state mutual aid assistance, ESF 14 will coordinate with support agency counterparts to seek and procure, plan, coordinate and direct the use of any required assets.
3. The Santa Rosa County Public Information Officer will act as the lead agency for ESF 14. Depending on the severity of the situation, other local public information officers and County staff will assist with media advisories and releases. Lead or support agency public information staff will operate from the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) on a 24-hour schedule to help maintain the flow of public information.
4. The Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Department and other state and local law enforcement agencies will assist ESF 14 because much of the protective actions taken during disasters involve the use of law enforcement resources. When the EOC is activated, law enforcement representatives will notify the public information office of impending operations. Depending on the severity of the disaster, Division of Emergency Management may activate a 24-hour citizen information center to handle citizens' inquiries.
5. In a catastrophic disaster, ESF 14 and ESF 15 (volunteers and donations) will work together to release information regarding volunteers and donations that need to be sent to the disaster area, and where volunteers and donors may go to deliver such goods or services. All ESFs will routinely provide information to ESF 14 to keep government officials and citizens aware of current events.
6. The Santa Rosa County EOC has a Citizen Information Center that will be activated during major and catastrophic disaster events in Santa Rosa County. The CIC will remain in operation during the recovery phase of the disaster event to provide citizens with information regarding location of disaster recovery centers, distribution sites, individual and other assistance programs that are available. The Citizen Information Center is staffed with employees of the County that have been trained to support the EOC and assist the citizens who call.
7. Access to the Santa Rosa County EOC by the media will be restricted and normally limited to the PIO Office/ESF-14 area. Should the number of medias requesting this access be in excess of the room's capability, a pool representative from each media type will be selected for this access. All reasonable efforts to accommodate media will be addressed.

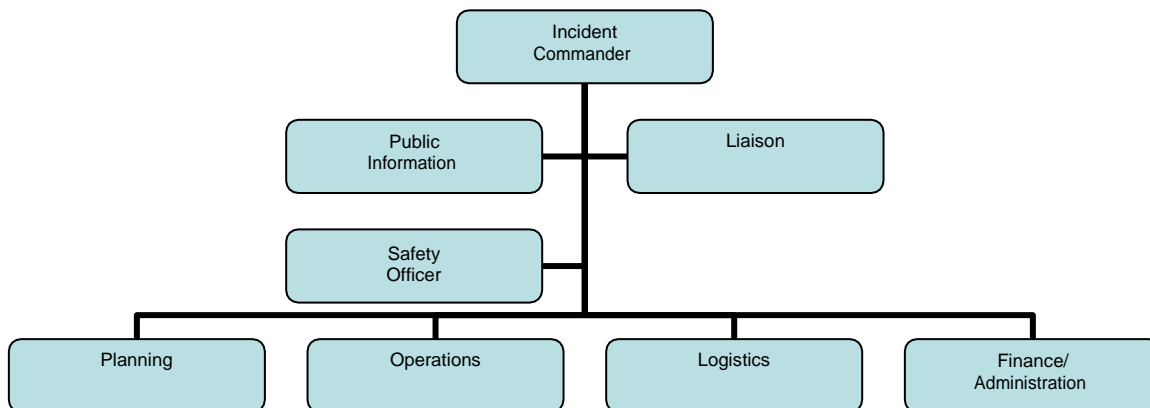


Figure: Incident Command System Structure: ESF 14 – Public Information

B. ORGANIZATION

1. COUNTY

- a. The Public Information function will be a part of the Command Staff. The Public Information Officer is responsible for interfacing with the public and media and/or agencies with incident-related information requirements.
 - b. During a disaster, the County EOC will act as the central coordinating facility for receiving and disseminating public information.
 - c. Information flow to the EOC will occur directly from ESF emergent information and sitreps as well as from news media reports and citizen information center phone calls.
 - d. Information will flow from the EOC in the form of media briefings, news releases and situation reports. Information will also flow from ESF 14 to the State EOC. These radio and TV stations have or plan to originate live from the EOC: WCOA-AM, WEAR-TV, WKRG-TV, WUWF-FM, WXBM-FM, and Cat Country 98.7-FM.
 - e. Print media will also assist in the dissemination of information, including the Pensacola News Journal and the NWF Daily News. The Gulf Breeze News, Navarre Press and the Santa Rosa Press Gazette will embed for PIO assistance.
- c. The Santa Rosa County Public Information Officer is responsible for the coordination of all public information activities during an actual or pending emergency. This individual and support staff will:
- Disseminate information concerning specific disasters, their associated threats and protective actions to the news media and general public.
 - Ensure that no media information is released prior to appropriate coordination.
 - Maintain the Public Information Office/ESF 14 in the Emergency Operations Center facility access and disseminate information concerning protective actions taken by the county.
 - Actively solicit information from all ESF and municipal liaisons to ensure current and complete information is being disseminated.

- Coordinate informational flow with the State EOC.
- Release public information concerning all facets of the emergency, e.g. needed volunteers and donations, evacuation, reentry and other recovery issues. This will be performed twice daily at 11:00 AM and 5:00 PM CST.
- Develop a Joint Information Center should the situation warrant.
- Ensure media (both print and electronic) are monitored for correct and consistent informational releases.
- Conduct daily press conferences as directed by higher authority.

2. AREA

- a. The Division of Emergency Management serves as the lead agency for public information coordination and support and will designate a liaison to the EOC from the Regional Office and/or the Regional Domestic Security Task Force (RDSTF). The liaisons have been trained to carry out ESF 14 responsibilities and will function as coordinators, assessors, and operational personnel in support of EOC or field activities.

3. STATE

- a. During an activation of the State Emergency Operations Center, the Division of Emergency Management is the designated lead for Public Information and will provide a liaison to facilitate requests for State PIO resources to local Emergency Operations Centers.
- b. The Division of Emergency Management develops and maintains the overall Emergency Support Function 14 Emergency Operations Plan and accompanying Appendices, Annexes and Standard Operating Guidelines that govern response actions related to emergencies. However, support agencies may develop and maintain their own similar documents for internal use, which must be compatible with and in support of the overall Emergency Operations Plan. All such documents will be in compliance with the National Response Plan, the National Incident Management System, the Incident Command System and the County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.
- c. The Florida DEM will activate the Florida Emergency Information Line and coordinating volunteer staffing, and in determining the best times to turn on and turn off this service.
- d. The primary and supporting agencies working for the State ESF 14 will report directly to the State Emergency Response Team (SERT).

C. ALERTS/NOTIFICATIONS

1. Santa Rosa County Emergency Management Division will notify the County Warning Point when information comes becomes known indicating that an emergency or disaster situation is developing. This report will include all relevant information that is known at the time. Additional information should be reported as it becomes available.
2. The County Warning Point will notify the “on call” Emergency Duty Officer and/or Emergency Coordinating Officer (ECO) for ESF 14 when the County or an area of the County has been threatened or impacted by an emergency or disaster event as provided in the County Warning Point procedure.

D. ACTIONS

Actions carried out by ESF 14 are grouped into phases of emergency management: prevention, preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation. Each phase requires specific skills and knowledge to accomplish and requires significant cooperation and collaboration between all supporting agencies and the intended recipients of service.

1. PREPAREDNESS ACTIONS

- a. Actions and activities that develop Public Information capabilities may include planning, training, orientation sessions, and exercises for ESF 14 personnel (i.e., County, State, Regional, and Federal) and other emergency support functions that will respond with ESF 14. This involves the active participation on inter-agency preparedness organizations, which collaborate in such activities on a regular basis.
- b. Coordinate with local media on public information procedures, content of information, information dissemination strategies, and roles and responsibilities of the Santa Rosa County Public Information Officer under the Incident Command System.
- c. Assist in the dissemination of written and graphic disaster preparedness materials such as brochures and publications, public presentations, news releases, and media events. The information is to encourage preparedness activities, awareness and encourage personal responsibility to minimize the loss of life and property during a disaster. This information also identifies vulnerable areas for each hazard as described in the Hazards Vulnerability Analysis.
- d. Train Public Information Officers in the role of the PIO under NIMS and the Incident Command System, including legal issues, risk communication, communication in emergencies, and the role of the Joint Information System.
- e. Train and prepare ESF 14 staff in the use of disaster intelligence from ESF 5, including how the intelligence can be effectively used in communications with news media on potential consequences of hazards on people, buildings and infrastructure.
- f. Coordinate with the Florida DEM, and specifically the application of multimedia public information strategies, techniques, and monitoring efforts.

2. RESPONSE ACTIONS

- a. Notify the media of disaster impacts, protective measures, and other topics that will facilitate and expedite response and recovery and address public information needs.
- b. Activate the Citizen Information Center to handle phone calls from individuals attempting to contact the Division of Emergency Management for information. Santa Rosa County's 9-1-1 system is TTY compatible. The ATT Language Line handles inquiries from callers who do not speak English.
- c. Provide updates to the news media about disaster conditions and actions taken in response to those conditions, primarily information and instructions directed toward the survival, health and safety of the citizens in the impacted area. Prioritization of informational releases will be prepared, with the following of principal importance:
 - Lifesaving, including information essential to survival, health and safety.
 - Recovery, including instructions concerning disaster recovery, relief, programs and services.
 - Other, including non-emergency notices released by participating government and volunteer agencies.

- d. Regularly disseminate information from summary reports and briefings to the news media.
- e. Provide continuing trained public information staff in support roles to assist local response and recovery efforts.
- f. Continue to coordinate with ESF 15 to provide public information concerning what types of volunteer service are required.
- g. Participate in EOC briefings, Incident Action Plans, Situation Reports and meetings.
- h. Special efforts in Santa Rosa County are required to acquaint the elderly and handicapped as well as the mobile home communities of their particular vulnerability and efforts taken on their behalf. If evacuation is ordered, local fire departments are notified and firefighters go to each mobile home and notify residents, also the Citizen Information Center volunteers under direction of the Special Needs Coordinator will telephone each Mobile Home Park.
- i. During times of emergency, Santa Rosa County Emergency Management may override the franchised cable provider (Mediacom) on its local origination channel (Gulf Coast Network, Channel 27).
 - This override most likely will occur upon the entrance of a tropical storm or hurricane into the Gulf of Mexico with the percentages favoring impact in our region. However, this override may also be used in times of emergent disasters, terrorist attacks, tornadoes, hazardous materials spills, train wrecks, etc.
 - The Santa Rosa County Public Information Officer or qualified assistant is responsible for the dissemination of information during override operations and will coordinate all press releases for approval with the EO Manager. Appropriate Emergency Support Functions (ESF) within the Emergency Operations Center will provide ESF 14 (Public Information) real time information through ESF 5 (Planning) to ensure all necessary information is disseminated as rapidly and accurately as possible.
 - Only authorized, qualified and designated personnel within Santa Rosa County Emergency Management may operate the controls which activate the override.
 - Only the Santa Rosa County Administrator, Public Safety Director, Operations Chief, or EO Manager may authorize activation.
 - If Citizen Information Lines (983-INFO) are activated and manned, any voice-mail will contain information reminding cable-subscribers to monitor Channel 27 for emergency information.

3. RECOVERY ACTIONS

- a. Coordinate closely with ESF 5 in assessing disaster recovery issues, priorities, problems, and other factors that need to be shared with the news media. This includes questions on damage assessment findings, statistics, disaster response performance, and other potentially sensitive issues.
- b. Coordinate with ESF 6 to announce closing of shelters, location of mass feeding, and

comfort stations.

- c. Work in conjunction with Volunteer and Donations (ESF-15) coordinator in relations to volunteers and/or donations.
- d. Support establishment of a Joint Information Center, if required. Provide staffing.
- e. Maintain records of all releases for documentation after the event.
- f. Coordinate with State EOC for dissemination of information on location of recovery centers.
- g. Informational releases will include disaster assistance information, descriptions of recovery efforts, actions being taken to alleviate problems, and inform the public of assistance programs available.

4. MITIGATION ACTIONS

Coordinate with Local Mitigation Strategy Steering Committee members and other mitigation officials in developing and disseminating messages to the media on the role of mitigation in reducing future disaster losses, mitigation success stories in Santa Rosa County, LMS priorities, and other mitigation issues. Additionally, the PIO will assist in the preparation of the annual EM Disaster Preparedness Guide.

DIRECTION AND CONTROL

- 1. ESF 14 complies with the National Response Plan, the National Incident Management System and uses the Incident Command System (composed of Planning, Operations, Logistics and Finance/Administration Sections with their standardized Units, Teams, positions, forms and terminology) to manage its emergency/disaster responsibilities. Key to this system is the Division of Emergency Management, which functions as the official disaster prevention, protection, response, preparedness, recovery, and mitigation organization within Santa Rosa County. The Division of Emergency Management also serves as the focal point for ESF 14 activities. It is responsible for ensuring that all appropriate program departments, support agencies, other Emergency Support Functions and other private voluntary agencies have knowledge about the system and ESF 14 expectations, as well as coordinate and cooperate efficiently during an event.
- 2. The Emergency Support Function 14 system operates in two arenas; 1) The County Emergency Operations Center; 2) field locations.

E. RESPONSIBILITIES

1. PRIMARY AGENCY – EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION

Santa Rosa County PIO disseminates emergency information to the general public during disasters. The PIO provides information to the news media in briefings, situation reports, news releases, or emergency alert announcements. The PIO's daily schedule during activations includes:

- a. Disseminate information concerning specific disasters, their associated threats, and protective actions to the news media and general public. Media interviews as well as scripted and recorded public service announcements are part of this effort.
- b. All news releases will be approved by the EO Manager or Higher Authority.

- c. Acts as spokesperson for the County
- d. Determines appropriate vehicle/format for all communications; releases, advisory bulletins, and interviews.
- e. Corrects misinformation being disseminated by media.
- f. Responsible for website press releases and approves emergency information for publication on the Santa Rosa County website.
- g. Provide a central point allowing the news media and general public access to information concerning protective actions taken by the county. Media representatives visiting the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) during a disaster will be housed in the media center or other specified locations. Media access to the EOC itself will be limited and temporary.
- h. Establish a format for managing and staffing public information telephone lines before, during and after a disaster.
- i. Release public information concerning needed volunteer goods and services.
- j. Coordinate closely with support agencies in the preparation of consistent and accurate messages, and the dissemination of messages through daily briefings and news conferences.
- k. The PIO is also responsible for the overall conduct of the Public Information Program, taking into account the needs of residents as well as visitors to the County, to know or be able to know immediately the means of obtaining emergency services, as well as warning characteristics and action to be taken when warned of an emergency. The program will stress developing public awareness about the County Emergency Management program.
- l. Maintain contact list of media and ESF 14 staff in the media room
- m. ESF 14 staff should be present for conference calls
- n. May be responsible for creating bulletins and handouts for the public
- o. Shift changes should overlap to ensure proper passing of assignments, priorities, and actions.
- p. Bring clothing, medications, toiletries, and bedding to sustain self for 3 days during activation
- q. Maintain a log of events for historical/lessons learned purposes
- r. Answer the phone, "Santa Rosa County Public Information Office, this is (name)".

News Conferences: Provide an opportunity for the media to get consolidated information and ask questions at a predetermined time and inform them of upcoming meetings and announcements.

- As soon as possible after full EOC activation, set times for daily news conferences. Ideally news conferences should be held at 1100 and 1700 daily.
- Post schedule in front lobby and media room
- Line up subject matter experts for news conferences

Media Tours: Provide an opportunity to escort media to tour areas that are inaccessible to the public due to damage or other hazards, for the purpose of providing information to the public.

- Arrange for transportation –vans, school buses, law enforcement etc.
- Offer full participation, but in the event of limited access, have media select a camera/reporter group to share information with others upon return
- Coordinate one tour per day for duration of event if possible

Commissioner Briefing Package: Compile and provide detailed information to the BOCC in a consolidated format.

- Compile all news releases, announcements for delivery to the BOCC at least once per day, prior to news conferences.
- Identify a runner to deliver packages

Coordinate Dignitary visits: Coordinate the County's role, responsibility and assistance to dignitaries and elected officials.

- During a major incident, state and federal dignitaries will visit the EOC to meet local officials
- Work with VIP staffs to organize schedule
- Determine VIP needs, i.e., meeting room, tours, media availability, parking etc.
- Coordinate media notification if necessary
- Ensure BOCC is notified

Media Check in: A staff person will be in the media room to facilitate media needs and track requests.

- Have a daily log for media check in
- Have a booklet for information
- Have schedule of events
- Coordinate use of data ports, desks, telephones for media
- Assist with media needs

Organizing spokespersons: Spokespersons should be coordinated to arrive on time for media interviews and cable override briefings.

- If an interview request is made by the media, contact the appropriate subject matter expert (SME), schedule the interview, and work with the SME to develop appropriate talking points, or use pre-drafted talking points
- Escort SME to interview several minutes early and remain throughout interview.
- Work with staff members to coordinate cable override briefings and assist with scheduling.

Develop Talking Points: This function is of vital importance in preparation for the emergency incident and during the incident's early hours.

- Attend policy meetings or meet with SME to learn latest information
- Draft talking points using bullets and review with spokesperson. Edit as needed to accommodate spokesperson.
- Ensure spokesperson has most current status of services and advisories
- Rehearse with spokesperson if time permits

Cable override: A staff person will provide briefings over MediaComm, channel 27, from the EOC media room.

- As soon as possible after full EOC activation begin process of cable override for public briefings at a time to be determined.
- Each briefing should not last longer than 10 minutes
- Post tentative schedule for briefings in media room

Writing and distributing news releases: Responsible for writing news releases. Accepts and evaluates all requests for news releases. Responsible for creating and distributing all incident related public information.

- Determine appropriate timing and content for release
- Check facts and accuracy
- Spell check and proof manually
- Insert date/time of release on each release
- Print hard copies for information booklet, on site media, ESF's, Policy group and BOCC
- Email the news release to the media mail group
- All releases should be numbered

2. SUPPORT AGENCIES

(NOTE: Each Support Agency should review its own roles and responsibilities and revise in conjunction with the Emergency Management Division)

The Public Information Officer, Emergency Management Division, will work closely with Public Information Officers from support agencies to ensure consistency and accuracy in the development and delivery of messages on disaster impacts, actions taken, protective measures for the public, and other issues. ESF 14 will coordinate with the media representatives or PIOs from the following agencies:

- Santa Rosa County Board of County Commissioners
- Santa Rosa County Administrator
- Santa Rosa County Division of Emergency Management
- Santa Rosa County Computer Department
- E-911 Coordinator
- Governor's Press Office
- Law Enforcement Officials
- Santa Rosa County Amateur Radio Emergency Service
- Florida Department of Children and Families
- Florida Department of Elders Affairs (Santa Rosa Aging Services)
- Florida Department of Transportation
- Florida Department of Insurance
- Chambers of Commerce
- Public Service Commission
- Florida Association of Broadcasters
- Emergency Alert system

F. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Emergency Support Function 14 is responsible for managing financial matters related to resources that are procured and used during an event.