



Public Information
ESF – 15 – External Affairs Annex
As defined in the National Response Framework
ESF Coordinator – US Department of Homeland
Security
Federal Emergency Management Agency



Note: This section of the plan contains no specific tactical information and simply outlines the procedures that could potentially be followed during a disaster or critical incident. All actions outlined in this plan may not necessarily be followed in every situation.

VANCE COUNTY EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN

Updated: April 4, 2019

I. PURPOSE

This section describes the process for staffing, operating and maintaining a public information system in the event of an emergency.

II. SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS

A. Situation

1. The broadcast and print media will be relied upon to assist in the dissemination of public information to the general public.
2. The Vance County Office of Emergency Operations may also choose to utilize the Code Red countywide alert and notification system to issue critical time sensitive information to the public.
3. The Vance County Manager and Emergency Operations Director have the capability to utilize the Emergency Alerting System to deliver information to the public.
4. Vance County may receive extensive out of county media coverage during emergency and disaster situations.

B. Assumptions

1. The County Information Officer (IO) will likely be a designee of the City/County Manager or the Emergency Operations Director.
2. Demands for information may be very heavy; therefore, sufficient numbers of trained staff will be provided to respond to questions from the public.
3. Special interest groups in the county may disagree with official public information.
4. The public may accept rumors, hearsay and half-truths as valid information, which may cause fear and confusion.
5. Local print and broadcast media will cooperate in printing and broadcasting detailed disaster related instructions to the public.

6. Emergencies and disasters, which impact the County or its Municipalities, may be of interest to media sources beyond the County and the State.
7. Social Media will be utilized to get relevant information to the public in a timely manner

III. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

1. The Vance County Sheriff and Chief of the City of Henderson Police Department will release public information for law enforcement emergencies with assistance from the City and County Manager as necessary. The Vance County Office of Emergency Operations shall be made aware of all such information during times of disaster or during a State of Emergency prior to said information being released. Whenever possible, informational releases that take place during such instances shall be of a joint nature.
2. Ongoing public education programs will be conducted to increase public awareness in the following:
 - a. Potential hazards of the county
 - b. Family Preparedness
 - c. Shelter locations
 - d. Flood prone areas
 - e. Evacuation routes
 - f. Necessary action to be taken by the public
 - g. Emergency Management function
3. The County Manager and / or the Emergency Operations Director must authorize the use of the Emergency Alerting System (EAS).
4. The National Weather Service will issue weather watches or warnings directly to Vance County Communications and to the media for public release.
5. During emergencies or disasters, Policy/Administration Group decisions and general information advisories are prepared on a timely basis and released to the media.
6. Action will be taken to correct identified errors in information released by the media, or rumors about the emergency situation.
7. Hard copy news releases are disseminated to the media and appropriate County and/or Municipal officials. Follow up telephone calls or briefings will be conducted as necessary. The North Carolina State EOC will be faxed news releases as appropriate.
8. Vance County will practice a progressive approach for the dissemination of information to isolated and non-English speaking populations during and following emergency events.
9. The magnitude of the disaster may require innovative means of communications to inform the public. For example: message boards, billboards, etc.
10. Content of all news releases will be cleared through the City/County Manager before released to the media and the public.