

## Annex C – Public Information & Warning

### Purpose

This annex describes the warning systems in place within Houston County, and it establishes policies for the effective development, coordination, and dissemination of information in the event of a disaster. This annex also describes the means, organization, and process by which a jurisdiction provides information and instructions to the population during an emergency and will address the:

- Establishment of Joint Information System and Joint Information Center (including location)
- Information the public will need to know about the specific hazard
- Means that will be used to convey information and warnings to the public
- Organization and/or individuals responsible for public inquiries and rumor control regarding an emergency situation.
- Pre-incident and post-incident public awareness, education, and communications plans and protocols
- Training and testing of emergency notification and warning equipment

The overall responsible party for implementing and amending this annex is the Sheriff's Office and Emergency Management Director.

### STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

- a. [\[17,58\]](#) The county PSAP, Sheriff, Chief Deputy, Dispatch Center Supervisors, and the Emergency Management Director are all in charge of public notifications. They are also the parties authorized to activate all mass notification systems, including CodeRED (Onsolve) and IPAWS. Cities and county designees are responsible for activating the sirens when necessary.
- b. Activation of the public warning systems will occur through the dispatch center or through the mobile app designed to do as such through Onsolve. Activation will occur when severe weather is imminent, there is a public emergency, or in any related scenario. Sirens will be activated in the event of a tornado warning alerted by the National Weather Service or storm spotters.
- c. Training of the activation process will occur annually or as necessary in order for all parties who are able to activate the system to understand how to perform the tasks assigned to them regarding warning.
- d. Testing:
  - a. The sirens are currently tested on a monthly basis on the first Wednesday of every month at approximately 1 pm. Municipalities are responsible for maintaining their respective sirens, and the county will supply information from the two-way sirens whether maintenance is needed. Further testing may be done outside of the normal monthly test.

- b. Testing of CodeRED is currently not performed on a scheduled basis but may be performed in the future.
- c. The IPAWS system is tested monthly.
- e. Coordination between local and regional/state entities will take place as needed to make sure all parties involved are up to date on possible warning situations.
- f. The full county activation procedures of the CodeRED system through Onsolve is in Attachment 5 of this Annex.

## SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS

### SITUATION

There are a multitude of possible hazards which may require warning the general public and emergency response groups in an expeditious manner. When the public is threatened by an immediate or potential emergency situation, it is essential that timely alerting and warning be accomplished to protect the public. The alerting process draws the public's attention to a threat or imminent danger. The warning process provides accurate information and instructions to guide public response in taking appropriate protective action. Existing media resources, if used effectively, will cooperate and facilitate dissemination of emergency information keeping the public informed of events as they unfold, and how the public may best respond to them.

Outdoor warning sirens and commercial radio announcements are the primary methods that are available to alert the citizens of the county; however, public warning can be accomplished through a variety of means depending on the time and threat including the following:

- NOAA Weather Radios
- Mass media, i.e. radio/television, public announcements, Emergency Alert System (EAS)
- CodeRED and IPAWS
- Cable TV Systems
- Loudspeaker - Equipped Vehicles
- Church Bells
- Door-to-Door Canvassing
- Word-of-Mouth by friends, relatives and/or neighbors
- Written warnings will be used to warn the hearing-impaired or non-English speaking persons
- Telephone fan-out calls to schools, major employers, hospitals, nursing homes, day-care centers, etc.
- Pagers/cell phones carried by key emergency response personnel

Effective public response relies on public education measures taken prior to an emergency.

### Assumptions

- An emergency situation may strike without warning and the public information system may not respond rapidly enough to properly alert and inform the public of the hazard.

- During tourist season, there are a varying number of people in the county that do not know the area and may be unfamiliar with hazards.
- Prior to an emergency occurring, every reasonable action is taken to ensure that the public is informed of potential hazards and have taken protective measures as appropriate.
- During an emergency situation, rumors may develop, potentially causing unnecessary fear, confusion, and undesired public reactions. An information process must be in place to verify incoming information, to include a system of dispelling rumors.
- Accurate information provided to the general public in a timely manner, will minimize fear, curtail rumors, and provide a constructive means for dealing with the situation.
- Communications outages may hamper the collection and dissemination of accurate emergency situation information.
- Some people who are directly threatened by a hazard may ignore, not hear, or not understand warnings that have been issued.
- Access and functional needs groups require special attention to ensure a workable warning system is established.
- The time available for warning may vary, from ample to none.
- Emergency response organizations such as the fire and police may be called upon to help warn the public.
- Where available, EAS radio/TV/cable stations will be used to help disseminate warning information.
- Radio/TV stations which are not members of the EAS station network may be willing to issue warning announcements.
- Where available, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio stations will disseminate watches and warnings issued by the NWS; NOAA tone alert radios are automatically activated when such watches and warnings are issued. The general public should be encouraged to own these radios.

## Concept of Operations

### [\[16\] Notification](#)

Emergency notification and warning of a threat to Houston County will normally originate from one or more of the following:

1. National Warning System (NAWAS): a nationwide private telephone communications system funded by FEMA, which originates at the National Warning Center at Colorado Springs CO (NORAD). The system has “drops” (telephone instruments with loudspeakers) located at strategic locations within each state. Each state, in turn, controls a system connecting the state with warning points in each County. Minnesota state patrol acts as net control for the National NAWAS within the state for the dissemination of national and local emergency information and warnings.

2. Emergency Alert System (EAS): composed of AM, FM and TV broadcast stations and non-government industry utilities operating on a voluntary, organized basis during emergencies at national, state or local levels. It provides for the alerting of participating stations, dissemination of standardized emergency information, and/or termination of non-emergency station activities until the emergency subsides. **The EAS can be activated by any level of government.**
3. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
4. National Weather Service (NWS), La Crosse, WI
5. MN State Warning Point (State EOC): The State Warning Point that is maintained and operated by the Division of MN Emergency Management will normally issue a notification or warning directly to the County Warning Point of a major outside hazard that may threaten the County.
6. MN State Patrol
7. Houston County Storm Spotters
8. Local first responders
9. Local media
10. 911 call from a concerned citizen

#### Dissemination of Warning

Notification to the general public of an imminent or actual emergency is an essential function of government, and this capability must be maintained.

The Houston County dispatch center, as the County Warning Point, will initiate watch or warning notification of appropriate personnel, as required, using established notification procedures. The dispatch center supervisor on duty will notify the Emergency Management Director of a notification or warning that may go beyond a normal first response.

The radio system will be the primary source to notify emergency response organizations concerning warnings about to be issued.

#### NATURAL HAZARDS

Normally, warning of the threat of severe weather such as tornadoes, severe thunderstorms, flash flooding etc. will be provided by the National Weather Service. They are disseminated by EAS, radio, TV, and Weather Service teletype.

Upon receipt of notification of approaching severe weather from the National Weather Service, storm watch personnel, other official sources, or the sheriff/police dispatcher will immediately notify the county Emergency Management Director. The dispatcher will sound the warning devices, if required.

#### MAN-MADE HAZARDS

Warnings will be made for hazardous material incidents/accidents such as oil, chemical, or radiological material spills when the incident presents a hazard to the public. This warning will be announced on radio/TV and cable TV when override is available, and will be disseminated

out through IPAWS as necessary. Depending on the severity, local first responders may need to go door to door to warn the public.

Acts of terrorism or active threats are a possibility within Houston County. The process of warning the public in these include IPAWS to alert those within a specific radius of how to respond, and local television/radio station alerts to keep people informed. Depending on the severity, local first responders may need to go door to door to warn the public.

#### *NATIONAL SECURITY*

Attack on this nation is a possibility at any time and could be in any form, including nuclear, biochemical, or conventional devices. It is likely that an attack would be preceded by a period of international tension that would provide ample time to inform the public. However, should a surprise attack be launched, warning time could be only fifteen minutes. The possibility of an accidental missile launch also exists, in which case warning time could approximate that of a surprise attack. NAWAS is the primary attack warning system used to provide initial warning down to the county level of government.

Upon receiving an alert/warning at the County Warning Point from NAWAS, or alternate Warning Point in Minnesota, the Sheriff or the Emergency Management Director will immediately notify each community police department and will activate other warning systems as necessary (IPAWS, CodeRED, television/radio station alerts).

The EM director upon notification of an attack warning will notify the Commissioners and other county/city officials. The Emergency Management Director, or an Incident Commander can make the decision on whether to activate the EOC during the emergency.

#### *WARNING SIRENS*

**The following cities in Houston County have warning sirens:**

Brownsville: 1  
 Caledonia: 4  
 Eitzen: 1  
 Hokah: 1  
 Houston: 2  
 La Crescent: 2  
 Spring Grove: 2

Siren coverage is limited to the above cities with some limited effect to area's surrounding these cities. The sirens only operate during a severe weather warning (tornado warning) and will include a 3 to 5 minute steady signal or until the weather incident is over.

#### *Alternative Warning Option*

When the primary warning devices are inoperable or the situation is critical enough that additional methods are needed, the dissemination of alerts and warnings to the general public can be accomplished in the following ways:

- Media: community newspapers are effective in providing detailed self-help information in slow-developing emergency situations (i.e. inclement weather, drought, etc.). The electronic media can be helpful in issuing bulletins to inform the public of emergency conditions with or without formal activation of the EAS. Commercial radio station broadcasts can be requested to make emergency announcements. This information can be found in the resource manual. Communities with cable TV over-ride systems can also activate them to alert their residents to an actual disaster or impending emergency.
  - There is a list of local newspapers companies and cable companies within Houston County located in the resource manual.
- Emergency service vehicle PA systems: some emergency service vehicles have sirens with a build-in PA system that can be used to broadcast emergency information. In most cases, the public should be instructed to tune in to local television or radio for emergency information.
- Door-to-door notification: in some emergencies, the most effective method of warning may be door to door contact. If time and emergency conditions allow, emergency services workers and volunteers can go door to door advising people of emergency instructions. This system would be effective only in those types of emergencies affecting limited areas and populations. **Care must be given to keep unprotected workers from entering hazardous areas to disseminate warnings.**

Warning for special locations such as schools, hospital, nursing homes, recreational facilities, child and adult daycare facilities, public assembly areas, and major industrial sites will be accomplished by NOAA weather warning radios, radio/television broadcasts, and sirens. Groups working with access and functional needs populations may assist in the dissemination of emergency information. Schools, hospitals and nursing homes have emergency plans adequate in slow developing emergencies. In immediate, life-threatening emergencies, such facilities (including parks and campgrounds) should be contacted at the direction of the Incident Commander or other responsible key officials.

The county Public Information Officer/spokesperson will provide any follow-up notification and warning to the general public that is needed through all available communication means.

#### INTER-JURISDICTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Both cities and the county have the authority to activate the warning sirens, notify the National Weather Service to activate weather warning radios, and notify commercial radio and TV stations to broadcast warnings. Cities should utilize this Annex as a guideline and work with local public safety agencies or the Sheriff's Office by agreement in developing, maintaining and implementing warning procedures for their jurisdiction.

Industrial complexes and transportation services that use, produce, store or transport hazardous materials should have their own warning plan to notify employees and others nearby. This plan should include immediately notifying 911 or the EOC when an emergency

situation involving hazardous material occurs. Any warning, if necessary, will be instituted by the County Warning Point or the EOC.

#### EAS ACTIVATION PROCEDURES

The Emergency Alert System (EAS) is a national public warning system that requires all involved to provide the communications capability to the President to address the American public during a national emergency. The system may also be used by state and local authorities to deliver important emergency information such as AMBER alerts and weather information targeted to a specific area.

For the county, EAS may be activated by the Incident Commander, Emergency Management Director, or any county elected or appointed public official. Each city will designate EAS activation officials and provide this list to the Emergency Management Director, who will pass this information on to the dispatch center and the La Crosse NWS. When activating EAS, the following procedures will be followed:

- Write emergency message to be broadcasted and prepare to read the message for tape recording by station operator. Emergency messages should be brief (less than 2 minutes “air time”), yet clearly outline the 1) nature of the event, 2) the affected area (BE SPECIFIC), 3) actions being taken by public safety personnel, and 4) immediate protective actions to be taken by the public.

***Example Message: “This is Julia Smith of Houston County Emergency Management. Due to a chemical leak at a truck accident on US 52 at County 17, residents within a mile of the intersection are requested to stay indoors and keep windows and doors closed. Motorists are requested to avoid this area (REPEAT ACTIONS FOR CITIZENS AND LOCATION). Please stay tuned to this station for more information.”***

- For verification purposes, contact the Sheriff’s dispatch, identify yourself, advise that you need to activate the EAS and request their assistance in verifying the activation request with EAS in La Crosse or Rochester. Briefly outline contents of emergency message.
- Activating official and station operator determine broadcast method (i.e. live or recorded, immediate or delayed release, etc.). Officials will provide all pertinent information.

#### Increased Readiness

Following are actions that may be taken with more than a day's notice. The list is not all-inclusive.

- Coordinate with the Commissioners, Evacuation Coordinator, Mass Care Coordinator, and Warning Coordinator to determine status of plans and timing of actions.
- Establish and maintain contact with media. Provide preparedness information and any instructions, as cleared by Commissioners.

- Arrange for copying of EPI material (e.g., evacuation instructions/maps and Family Protection Program leaflets), if needed.
- Ensure distribution of printed material to broadcast media, to pre-selected locations (e.g., grocery stores), and/or via newspaper.
- Augment public inquiry and/or media relations staffs, if needed. Set up any additional facilities for EPI operations (e.g., separate telephone bank or media center) with support from the Communications Coordinator.
- Monitor media including local and regional radio and television stations.

#### MESSAGE CONTENT

There are 6 key message elements to remember when creating a CodeRED message. They are:

1. “This is a Code Red message”
2. Authorized by the Houston County Sheriff’s Office
3. Date and time of emergency/situation
4. Clearly state the emergency/situation
5. Where the emergency/situation is
6. What required action the notified party should take
7. Contact information for the authorized party OR ALTERNATELY, a “do not use up phone lines until cleared” message

#### Example 1:

This is a Code Red message authorized by the Houston County Sheriff’s Office. At 5:30 pm on June 20<sup>th</sup>, a hazardous materials spill occurred on State Highway 76/44 by the intersection of Main Street in Caledonia. Please evacuate the area or shelter in an interior room on the highest level of your building immediately. Contact the Houston County Sheriff’s Office at 507-725-3379 for more information.

#### Example 2:

This is a Code Red message authorized by Houston County Emergency Management. At 9:08 pm on July 25<sup>th</sup>, the National Weather Service issued a tornado warning for a Doppler-indicated tornado, with a path extending from Mabel to western Caledonia following State Highway 44. Areas included in this warning are Spring Grove and Caledonia. Take immediate shelter in a basement or lowest level interior room. Authorized by Houston County Emergency Management.

#### After Impact

Following are actions that may be taken after the impact of an emergency. The list is not exhaustive.

- Establish and maintain contact with media. Provide information and any instructions, as cleared by Commissioners or his/her designee.
- Monitor media reports and telephone inquiries for accuracy and respond as appropriate to correct rumors.

- Augment public inquiry and/or media relations staffs, if needed. Set up any additional facilities for EPI operations (e.g., separate telephone bank or media center) with support from the Communications Coordinator.
- Arrange for printing of camera-ready EPI material (e.g., Family Protection Program leaflets and health and safety instructions), if needed.
- Ensure distribution of printed material to broadcast media, to pre-selected locations (e.g., grocery stores), to volunteer groups or other response and recovery personnel that may go into residential areas, and/or via newspaper.
- Compile chronology of events.

#### *MESSAGE CONTENT*

- Current situation assessment.
- Current government actions.
- Survival instructions (for those affected or still potentially affected).
- How/where to get what help (for those affected).
- Health hazards information.
- How/where to get help for companion and farm animals.
- Restricted areas (for those not affected).
- Telephone number for inquiries regarding survivors.
- What to do and whom to contact in order to offer help.
- Telephone number for donations offers and inquiries, accompanied by donations policy (send money and make check payable to..., critical needs include X but please don't send Y..., package donations such and such way).
- How and how often government will be in touch with public during the emergency.
- Instructions for evacuees to return home.

<sup>[19]</sup>County Emergency Public Information efforts will normally focus on collecting, verifying, collating, and disseminating specific, emergency related information through official media releases. Information will be instructional or advisory in nature, focusing on such things as warning, progress of the event, evacuation, shelter, protective actions, and recovery. The county PIO may develop and maintain sample pre-scripted documents covering potential major hazards that could affect the county that will immediately be published and disseminated to the general public, when necessary.

Procedures for rumor control will be implemented as according to policies developed by the PIO and Emergency Management Director, and the facts will be reported as accurately and quickly as possible. All available means to disseminate information to the general public will be used as necessary including EAS, broadcast television, radio, local cable TV, newspaper, printed materials, TDD/TTY, hotlines including state hotline and 211, and county/city websites. In addition to these resources, back-up means can also be utilized including a vehicle-mounted

public address system and door-to-door notifications. To effectively and efficiently convey information, maps and graphic products may be provided to the media and the general public.

When the EOC is activated, the PIO may need to activate a Citizens' Phone Bank and publish a Citizen Hotline number to field questions from the general public on the current emergency situation. The hotline will be staffed by available county employees and volunteers in order to answer questions concerning the current emergency situation that can be phoned in on a citizens' hotline by the general public. At least one bilingual English/Spanish person should be on duty in the Citizens Phone Bank whenever possible, and should also be available to support the Joint Information Center, when required. The county internet website or an email distribution list may also be used to disseminate emergency protective actions and other information before and following a major hazard or other emergency.

If required to manage dissemination, the County PIO may establish and operate a Joint Information Center.

[\[18\] Joint Information Center \(JIC\)](#)

The JIC is comprised of county, municipality, military and other public information representatives as appropriate to the emergency situation. The JIC will be a media focal point, central repository of all public information in the county during the emergency situation, and a clearinghouse for official media releases and dissemination of emergency information for all organizations that are supporting emergency operations in the county. The JIC will operate on an as-needed basis either near the Incident Command during a small event or in the county Justice Center during a large, coordinated event. The JIC will serve as the point of dissemination of information to the public through media outlets. The JIC will normally operate in the Justice Center located at 306 S. Marshall St, Caledonia MN. The Commissioner's Boardroom is an alternate location designated at the time of the emergency, located at 304 S. Marshall St, Caledonia MN.

The sections should list the jurisdiction's non-English speaking groups in excess of some planning threshold (e.g., five percent of population) and note the foreign language media that could be used to communicate with these groups. It should also note other factors that affect people's ability to receive, act on, or understand emergency public information. These might include sight or hearing impairments, being in custodial institutions (e.g., schools, nursing homes, hospitals, etc.), or being unfamiliar with the area and its hazards (as is the case with tourists) and note the foreign language media that could be used to communicate with these groups. It also should note other factors that affect people's ability to receive, act on, or understand information. These might include sight or hearing impairments, being in custodial institutions (e.g., schools, nursing homes, hospitals, etc.), or being unfamiliar with the area and its hazards (as is the case with tourists).

## Organization and Assignment of Responsibilities

### General Organization

The Sheriff is in charge of setting up a procedure to ensure that all warnings relayed to the county's warning point are disseminated to all who may be affected by the quickest and most efficient means available. The Emergency Management Director will support this effort.

### Responsibilities

All organizations that support this annex in the county are responsible for coordinating with the Sheriff and other organizations from which they require local support. The use of letters of understanding or mutual aid agreements is highly recommended.

All organizations responsible for passing along warnings in the County will coordinate their warning plans the Sheriff and Emergency Management Director.

### Specific Key Position Responsibilities

#### *Chair of the Board of Commissioners/City Mayor will:*

- Specify who has authority to order activation of warning systems to include EAS.
- Provide funding to ensure that warning systems are maintained and upgraded as needed.
- Designate public service agencies, personnel, equipment, and facilities that can augment the jurisdiction's warning capabilities.
- Serve as alternate county PIO for matters relating to emergency operations and homeland security.

#### *PSAP will:*

- Develop and implement procedures to warn the general public in the county.
- Implement call-down rosters to alert emergency responders or provide situation updates.
- Activate public warning systems to include EAS.
- Coordinate County weather spotters.
- Report to the EOC when activated.
- Implement contingency plans to provide warnings if established warning system fails to work.
- Coordinate warning frequencies and procedures with EOCs at higher levels of government and with adjacent communities.
- Work with the PIO to ensure pertinent warning information is provided to the print media for distribution to the public.

#### *Public Information Officer (PIO) will:*

- Report to EOC when activated.
- Work with Warning Coordinator to provide follow-up emergency information to the public and the media.
- Disseminate emergency information to the general public.

- Issues cancellation of warning notice or otherwise ensures emergency responders and the public are aware of the fact that the emergency situation is terminated.
- Establish a call center if required.
- Establish and maintain an effective working relationship with the local and regional media; and maintain a current list of media outlets and points of contact for use of dissemination of EPI during an emergency situation.
- Coordinate with the County EMD to establish a rumor control process in the County.
- Clear emergency operations and homeland security information with the County EMD, and/or responsible organization before releasing to the media or the public.
- Organize, staff, and train the Joint Information Center (JIC), as required.
- Prepare and maintain a current internal notification/ recall roster for staffing the County EOC Citizens' Phone Bank, the Joint Information Center (JIC), and other PIO emergency activities.
- Assist in handling inquiries of missing or lost persons.

The Sheriff is currently the assigned PIO for Houston County's small events. During large events, the Sheriff will be the spokesperson along with any other necessary agency representatives, and the PIO position will fall to another designated person.

*Emergency Management Director will:*

- Assist the Warning Coordinator in the development and maintenance of plans and procedures to ensure an effective county-wide warning process and that annual exercises are conducted
- Activate public warning systems to include EAS
- Activate the EOC and call those persons designated to staff it
- Establish and maintain a working relationship with the local media
- Develop damage assessment reporting procedures to maintain situational awareness of the hazard, its impact, and emergency operations during an emergency situation
- Ensure that appropriate reports are generated and forwarded to the County EOC, as required
- Keep County Departments, the surrounding municipalities, and the State EOC informed on the emergency situation
- Ensure that long range planning is conducted during emergency situations to identify capability and resource needs for future emergency operations (72 hours out and beyond)
- Notify the commissioners and any municipal officials involved in the incident area of impending alerts and warnings.

*Other County Departments will:*

- Develop and maintain a Continuity of Operations Plan and identify lines of succession for critical personnel.

- Develop and disseminate procedures for notification and recall of such personnel.
- Develop policy and procedures, in conjunction with the EMD, for the diversion or release of workers not critical to departmental emergency operations to assure the most effective use of County personnel. A decision will be made as soon as practical, by the Chair of the Board of Commissioners and in conjunction with the Emergency Management Director for emergency assignment or release of employees not critical to departmental emergency operations if departments are not able to conduct routine business. **Such “non-critical” employees shall be notified as soon as possible of their need to report to work as normal or of an emergency assignment or release until further notice.** The notification may be done by an EAS announcement if telephone service is not available.

*City Chief Elected Officials will:*

- Utilize this Annex as a guideline and work with the Sheriff’s Office or other local public safety agencies by agreement in developing, maintaining and implementing warning procedures for their jurisdiction.

*Incident Commander will:*

- Provide emergency information for warning to public through Warning Coordinator.
- Decides when to cancel a warning notice or terminate the emergency situation. This information is passed to the PIO for dissemination.

*Continuity of Government*

Line of Succession – PSAP

- Dispatch/Jail Administrator
- Sheriff
- Emergency Manager

Lines of succession for other organizations that support this ESF are in accordance with the organization's established policy.

## ADMINISTRATION AND LOGISTICS

### *Administration*

The Sheriff will maintain standard operating procedures supporting warning.

Reporting forms will be maintained by the Emergency Management Director, and will be made available for distribution when necessary.

### *Logistics*

The siren warning system will be tested at least monthly.

The Emergency Management Director will negotiate an agreement for use of private service agencies, personnel, equipment, and facilities to augment the jurisdiction's warning capabilities.

Contact information for media will be kept on record with the Emergency Management Director for the dissemination of emergency public information.

### Plan Development and Maintenance

The Emergency Management Director, County Sheriff, and Warning Coordinator will have the responsibility for the development and maintenance of this annex. Support agencies will assist in the development and maintenance of the annex.

Periodic review based on the EOP Basic Plan maintenance cycle will occur to revise this annex. This will include incorporation of changes based on periodic tests, drills, and exercises.

The Houston County Warning Coordinator will review this plan in accordance with the schedule promulgated by the EMD in accordance with the EOP Basic Plan. He/She will also develop an exercise plan for this annex and will coordinate this with the EMD.

### Authorities and References

HSPD – 3: Homeland Security Advisory System

HSPD – 5: Management of Domestic Incidents

CFR TITLE 47—Telecommunication, CHAPTER I--FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION, SUBCHAPTER A—GENERAL, [PART 11--EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEM \(EAS\)](#)

47 CFR, Part 73, Subpart G, Emergency Alert System, as amended

## Attachment 1

### Tips for Media Interviews

#### Before the Interview:

- Track all media inquiries and note the reporter's name, organization, date, and purpose.
- If possible, review the scope of the interview with the reporter before the interview so that you can anticipate what might be asked.
- Provide background information that helps the reporter understand the issues.
- Identify the points that you want to communicate during the interview and make sure these facts come to mind easily.
- Identify a message that you can incorporate into your first and last remark. For example, if the reporter opens the interview by saying, "Thanks for talking with us today," you may respond, "I'm proud to speak on behalf of the community's unified response effort," or "Thank you for this opportunity to promote flood insurance."
- Dress appropriately.

#### During the Interview:

- Listen to the entire question before answering.
- Avoid speculation.
- Beware of false assumptions and erroneous conclusions.
- Avoid hypothetical questions.
- Be alert to multiple questions and address them individually.
- Be confident and concentrate on delivering your message.
- Keep your answers simple and direct.
- Speak in "sound bites" (i.e., concise, memorable, short statements).
- Never repeat inaccurate or damaging information spoken within a reporter's question. Instead, restate the information in a positive manner in your answer.
- Do not refer to the reporter by name, as the reporter may not be included when the interview is aired.
- Treat all questions seriously.
- NEVER speak "off the record."
- While answering questions, be attuned to opportunities to promote your message.
- If you are being recorded or taped and botch an answer, simply begin the answer again. If taped, the exchange will most likely be edited.
- Be aware of your appearance:
  - Avoid nervous gestures; do not overuse hand gestures.
  - Display good posture.
  - Maintain eye contact.
  - Ensure that your glasses (if you wear them) are not slipping downward.
  - Remove dark glasses.

- Avoid wearing stripes, “busy” patterns, and red.
- If seated, ensure that your jacket does not ride up behind your neck by sitting on the coattails.
- Leave all equipment concerns to the reporter or sound technician.

After the Interview:

- Obtain and provide any information you promised to supply.
- Provide written background information, and be available to the reporter for follow-up questions.
- If the story is publicized with inaccuracies, call the reporter and politely point out the errors.

## Attachment 2

### Preparing an Oral Presentation

Determine the occasion and the goal of the presentation.

Learn about the audience so that you can tailor your message accordingly:

- Age range
- Gender ratio
- Size of the group
- Common interests
- Hot issues

Investigate the logistics:

- Room size
- Available equipment
- Number of other speakers

Be succinct. Plan to speak briefly and clearly.

Decide the type of speech that is appropriate:

- Informational
- Motivational
- A combination of both types

Determine the audience's special needs:

- Cultural
- Language
- Physical characteristics

Outline the presentation:

- Introduce the topic.
- Clarify your opinion.
- Identify key messages.
- Establish a logical sequence.

Identify the information or research required to support key points from:

- Colleagues
- Libraries
- Files

### Write the Presentation

#### Introduction

- The beginning of the speech establishes your relationship with the audience and lets them know what to expect. This is the time and place in which you would:
- Introduce yourself and establish credibility.
- Express a single, topic sentence that captures the essence of your message.

- Get your audience’s attention through:
- Relevant humor.
- Provocative statements.
- Startling facts.
- Rhetorical questions.
- Make your personal stance clear.

#### Discussion

This section should illustrate or prove your viewpoint. Here you should:

- Present your main points.
- Use statistics.
- Provide details.
- Draw analogies.
- Stir emotion in the audience.
- Personalize your message through anecdotes or examples.
- Let your enthusiasm and sincerity show.
- Use vivid language.

#### Conclusion

The end of a speech should be as carefully orchestrated as the other sections. Do not end a speech abruptly. Follow these steps:

- Tell the audience that you are about to bring your remarks to a close.
- Summarize your main points briefly.
- Make a parting statement that is memorable.

## Attachment 3

### Delivering an Oral Presentation

#### Develop a Delivery Strategy

- How do you wish to appear?
- What tone is appropriate for the subject matter and audience?
- How can you use body language effectively?
- Should you anticipate speech anxiety?
- How long should you speak?

#### Practice

- Practice repeatedly until you are completely familiar with the content. Rehearse the opening of your speech until you have it memorized. (This strategy will help you to relax.)
- Become comfortable with the pronunciation and enunciation of your material.
- Present your speech in front of a mirror with a watch to check your pacing and ensure that your message fits the allotted time.
- Ask an observer to provide feedback to refine your posture, eye contact, and gestures.
- Stand upright and relaxed.
- Make eye contact with people in various parts of the room.
- Try to gesture an average of twice in each sentence.
- Turn your torso to face various parts of the audience.
- Use volume, pitch, and emphasis to maximize your message.
- If possible, videotape your practice session. Otherwise, tape record yourself.
- Use pauses for impact before you begin and during speech transitions.

## Attachment 4

### Sample Information Sheet

#### What to Do After a Flood or Flash Flood

- **Seek necessary medical care at the nearest hospital or clinic.** Contaminated flood waters lead to a greater possibility of infection. Severe injuries will require medical attention.
- **Help a neighbor who may require special assistance--infants, elderly people, and people with disabilities.** Elderly people and people with disabilities may require additional assistance. People who care for them or who have large families may need additional assistance in emergency situations.
- **Avoid disaster areas.** Your presence might hamper rescue and other emergency operations, and put you at further risk from the residual effects of floods, such as contaminated waters, crumbled roads, landslides, mudflows, and other hazards.
- **Continue to listen to a NOAA Weather Radio or local radio or television stations and return home only when authorities indicate it is safe to do so.** Flood dangers do not end when the water begins to recede; there may be flood-related hazards within your community, which you could hear about from local broadcasts.
- **Stay out of any building if flood waters remain around the building.** Flood waters often undermine foundations, causing sinking, floors can crack or break and buildings can collapse.
- **Avoid entering ANY building (home, business, or other) before local officials have said it is safe to do so.** Buildings may have hidden damage that makes them unsafe. Gas leaks or electric or waterline damage can create additional problems.
- **Report broken utility lines to the appropriate authorities.** Reporting potential hazards will get the utilities turned off as quickly as possible, preventing further hazard and injury. Check with your utility company now about where broken lines should be reported.
- **Avoid smoking inside buildings.** Smoking in confined areas can cause fires.
- **When entering buildings, use extreme caution.** Building damage may have occurred where you least expect it. Watch carefully every step you take.
  - **Wear sturdy shoes.** The most common injury following a disaster is cut feet.
  - **Use battery-powered lanterns or flashlights when examining buildings.** Battery-powered lighting is the safest and easiest, preventing fire hazard for the user, occupants, and building.
  - **Examine walls, floors, doors, staircases, and windows to make sure that the building is not in danger of collapsing.**
  - **Inspect foundations for cracks or other damage.** Cracks and damage to a foundation can render a building uninhabitable.

- **Look for fire hazards.** There may be broken or leaking gas lines, flooded electrical circuits, or submerged furnaces or electrical appliances. Flammable or explosive materials may travel from upstream. Fire is the most frequent hazard following floods.
- **Check for gas leaks.** If you smell gas or hear a blowing or hissing noise, open a window and quickly leave the building. Turn off the gas at the outside main valve if you can and call the gas company from a neighbor's home. If you turn off the gas for any reason, it must be turned back on by a professional.
- **Look for electrical system damage.** If you see sparks or broken or frayed wires, or if you smell burning insulation, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker. If you have to step in water to get to the fuse box or circuit breaker, call an electrician first for advice. Electrical equipment should be checked and dried before being returned to service.
- **Check for sewage and waterline damage.** If you suspect sewage lines are damaged, avoid using the toilets and call a plumber. If water pipes are damaged, contact the water company and avoid using water from the tap. You can obtain safe water from undamaged water heaters or by melting ice cubes.
- **Watch out for animals, especially poisonous snakes that may have come into buildings with the flood waters. Use a stick to poke through debris.** Flood waters flush snakes and many animals out of their homes.
- **Watch for loose plaster, drywall, and ceilings that could fall.**
- **Take pictures of the damage, both of the building and its contents, for insurance claims.**
- After returning home:
  - **Throw away food that has come in contact with flood waters.** Some canned foods may be salvageable. If the cans are dented or damaged, throw them away. Food contaminated by flood waters can cause severe infections.
  - **If water is of questionable purity, boil or add bleach, and distill drinking water before using.** (See information on water treatment under the "[Disaster Supplies Kit](#)" section.) Wells inundated by flood waters should be pumped out and the water tested for purity before drinking. If in doubt, call your local public health authority. Ill health effects often occur when people drink water contaminated with bacteria and germs.
  - **Pump out flooded basements gradually (about one-third of the water per day) to avoid structural damage.** If the water is pumped completely in a short period of time, pressure from water-saturated soil on the outside could cause basement walls to collapse.
  - **Service damaged septic tanks, cesspools, pits, and leaching systems as soon as possible.** Damaged sewage systems are health hazards.

Produced by the National Disaster Education Coalition: American Red Cross, FEMA, IAEM, IBHS, NFPA, NWS, USDA/CSREES, and USGS

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## Attachment 5

### Houston County CodeRED Activation Guidelines

June 2018

#### Purpose

These guidelines is to identify who is authorized to use and activate the CodeRED launch system, and what information and training is required in order to activate the CodeRED launch system. Knowing when to activate CodeRED and when an authorization is required will help streamline the process and alert the community in an efficient, effective manner.

#### Authorization

Houston County currently has four accounts that are authorized to activate the CodeRED system. These accounts belong to the county Sheriff, county Chief Deputy, county PSAP, and county Emergency Management Director. Houston County Dispatch will use the county PSAP account when activating CodeRED. Dispatch must have the verbal authorization of one of the four account holders or the dispatch supervisor before (or shortly after, based on time constraints) sending out a CodeRED notification.

#### Types of CodeRED calls

- Tornado warnings
  - o During a tornado warning, the notifying party should send out the notification to the affected areas. A separate notification should be sent out to all campgrounds and marinas in any severe weather situation. For more information about campgrounds and marinas, read the appropriate named section below.
- HazMat spills
  - o Houston County is not immune to the threat of hazardous materials spills. These can happen by way of train derailment, commercial truck accidents, or stationary site leaks to name a few. If this happens, the notifying party should send out notification to the **affected areas, including a predetermined buffer based on wind trajectory and population**. This information can be determined by local fire departments, the agency involved with the spill, and the National Weather Service.
- *Active threats*
  - o *There are a variety of active threats that have the ability to affect daily life within Houston County. Some of these include an active shooter, high-speed chases, and bomb threats. If one of these events or a similar event occurs, the notifying party should send out a notification to the **affected areas and an appropriate buffer around the area that may be in danger**. This may include the size of an entire town's population. (IPAWS?)*
- Missing People

- CodeRED has been used in the past to alert of missing children within Houston County, but can also be used in the event of any missing person, including vulnerable, elderly, and more. In the event of a missing person, the notifying party will send out a notification to the **entire area (up to the size of the entire county) as appropriately deemed by the situation.**
- General (public service announcements, road closures, bridge closures)
  - There are many non-emergency situations where a CodeRED notification may help inform Houston County of things that are happening. The most common way to use general notifications would be when a road or a bridge is closed due to emergency situations. This will alert the population to stay away from the area until the road is cleared. This is not a required use of the CodeRED notification system, but is highly recommended by the Emergency Management Director. If this happens, it is recommended that the notifying party notify the surrounding area near the affected area of the general announcement when enough information is supplied to negate the need for multiple notifications. For instance, when a road is closed, the notifying party may wait to hear the status of other roads in the area before sending out the notification that the road is closed. This way, less notifications need to be sent out.

### Notification

The notification of the need for the activation of CodeRED may come from multiple sources. Some common examples include city first responders, fire chiefs, police chiefs, or from one of the four authorized accounts on the CodeRED system. Prior to sending a CodeRED launch, confirm the information gathered and what actions the notified area should take so as to ensure a timely and accurate response by the community.

CodeRED notifications will go out through Primary Voice, Mobile App, and optionally, text. Primary Voice allows the user to type in a message and have it play back with an automated voice. Mobile app will update the app on cell phones that have it, and will also update the app widget located at [http://co.houston.mn.us/Code\\_red.aspx](http://co.houston.mn.us/Code_red.aspx). Text will send a 160 or less character message to mobile phone accounts that have signed up for the texting service.

### Notification of Campgrounds & Marinas

During a severe weather incident, Dispatch may notify county campgrounds and marinas through the CodeRED system, which will call and alert of impending severe weather. Campgrounds and marinas will be notified when a severe thunderstorm warning or tornado warning is issued in the county. The list of contact information for the campgrounds and marinas is located in CodeRED under the scenario builder section “Scenario Audience.” The contact information will be checked on and updated at least annually by the Emergency Management Director and alternately by those who have access to it and are aware of necessary changes.

## Training

Those participating in the CodeRED system launch application shall complete training on an annual basis, either by attending a CodeRED webinar provided by OnSolve, or through a training provided by the county Emergency Management Director. Only the supervisors/leads within the Dispatch office are required to take the CodeRED training.

All account holders in Houston County should participate in annual webinar training to stay knowledgeable in CodeRED procedures and note any new additions or changes to the software program.

## Information Format

There are 6 key message elements to remember when creating a CodeRED message. They are:

8. “This is a Code Red message”
9. Authorized by the Houston County Sheriff’s Office
10. Date and time of emergency/situation
11. Clearly state the emergency/situation
12. Where the emergency/situation is
13. What required action the notified party should take
14. Contact information for the authorized party OR ALTERNATELY, a “do not use up phone lines until cleared” message

### Example 1:

This is a Code Red message authorized by the Houston County Sheriff’s Office. At 5:30 pm on June 20<sup>th</sup>, a hazardous materials spill occurred on State Highway 76/44 by the intersection of Main Street in Caledonia. Please evacuate the area or shelter in an interior room on the highest level of your building immediately. Contact the Houston County Sheriff’s Office at 507-725-3379 for more information.

### Example 2:

This is a Code Red message authorized by Houston County Emergency Management. At 9:08 pm on July 25<sup>th</sup>, the National Weather Service issued a tornado warning for a Doppler-indicated tornado, with a path extending from Mabel to western Caledonia following State Highway 44. Areas included in this warning are Spring Grove and Caledonia. Take immediate shelter in a basement or lowest level interior room. Authorized by Houston County Emergency Management.

## Additional Information

When sending out a notification in Primary Voice, leave CodeRED as two separate words (Code Red) so the automated voice recognizes the words. Previewing the message before launch can catch spelling mistakes or sentences that aren’t very clear. If using Internet Explorer when sending out a CodeRED message, preview may not work right away. If this happens, continue through to the launch screen, and then go back to the message creator page and preview the message. This problem does not happen with other browsers.

**Emergency versus General scenario:** An emergency scenario is a scenario that requires immediate action by those being informed, such as a HazMat spill, a tornado warning, or a child abduction. A general scenario is a scenario that is designed to inform the public of a general situation outside emergency parameters. Scenarios may include informing about closed roads or bridges, other detours throughout the county, and other such non-emergency situations. NOTE: It's important to know which should be selected before creating a message for a CodeRED message launch. Account holders in the county have the option of opting out of general messages, so if it's an emergency, there needs to be an emergency notification.

When preparing for a CodeRED launch, follow the instructions in the Launch Procedures. These are located in the dispatch office in the CodeRED binder, and additional physical copies will be given to each of the account holders.