



KENTON COUNTY EOP - SUPPORT PLAN JOINT INFORMATION SYSTEM PLAN

KENTON COUNTY JOINT INFORMATION SYSTEM PLAN

PURPOSE

This plan is a supporting document to the Kenton County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and has been created to provide structure and guidance to the public safety agencies of Kenton County, Kentucky. This plan specifically addresses procedures for the activation and operation of a Kenton County Joint Information System (JIS) during emergency responses and other situations in which multiple organizations need to collaborate to provide timely, accurate and useful information to the public and other stakeholders.

Some information that is included in the EOP Basic Plan may not be repeated in here. Refer to the EOP and ESF 15 – Public Information plan for additional information.

SITUATION

Protection of the public in the event of a major emergency or disaster requires many local, state, federal, and private organizations to provide accurate and timely information to the public. Gathering and disseminating emergency public information in a multi-jurisdictional response requires a well-organized and coordinated process. Effectively and rapidly communicating what happened, what is being done in response, and what the public needs to do to protect itself is the primary task of any agency involved in the incident response.

Public Information Officer (PIO's) from all agencies and jurisdictions must coordinate with each other to provide the media and the public with a single information source. This is accomplished by establishing a Joint Information System (JIS) in accordance with the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and National Response Plan (NRP).

Upon notification of an existing or potential emergency, a decision may be made to activate the Kenton County Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The EOC, through ESF 15 – Public Information, will ensure centralized coordination and dissemination of factual public information with input from all response agencies.

During a significant incident there may be a large number of media representatives seeking information about the situation and about response actions. It is the intent of Kenton County and it's cities to cooperate fully with the media in all phases of emergency management.

If state and/or Federal assets are involved in the incident, then the JIS will cooperate and coordinate with their PIO staff and JIS's.



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A significant incident that attracts local, regional and national media representatives will necessitate the establishment of a JIS. The JIS may operate out of the Kenton County EOC if the event does not involve substantial personnel or equipment, but it will typically require the establishment of a Joint Information Center (JIC) facility which may be set up at another location.

ASSUMPTIONS

The public expects fundamental, easily understood, and timely communications in an emergency situation regarding the nature of the emergency, response actions, and instructions on protective actions they should take.

All agencies involved in emergency response and recovery have a vested interest in disseminating public information related to their own operations.

Both traditional broadcast media (television and radio) and modern social media will perform essential roles in the provision of current information and emergency instructions to the public.

Depending on the severity of the emergency, or the media/public perception of the severity, regional and national media will cover the incident which will place additional obligations on the JIS.

JIS planning must consider the projected duration of the deployment as well as the expected level of activity. The capability of the JIS to provide information will be overwhelmed if sufficient staff are not available to accommodate media and public needs.

When activated, the JIS becomes the primary mechanism for facilitating the release of information and will respond to all media contacts and requests for information.

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

A Joint Information System (JIS) provides the mechanism to organize, integrate, and coordinate information to ensure timely, accurate, accessible, and consistent messaging across multiple jurisdictions and / or disciplines. It includes the plans, protocols, procedures, and structures used to gather and provide information to:

- General public
- Disaster victims
- Affected jurisdictions
- Elected officials
- Community leaders
- Private sector
- Media
- Non-Governmental Organizations (e.g., American Red Cross)



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- Response and recovery organizations (e.g., urban search and rescue, utilities)
- Volunteer groups (e.g., CERT, VOAD)
- International interests (e.g., international media and donations)
- Other impacted groups

Federal, State, tribal, local, and voluntary agencies, private sector PIO's, and established JIC's are critical supporting elements of the JIS. Key elements include the following:

- Gathering, verifying, coordinating, and disseminating consistent messages
- Protection of information that is sensitive, confidential, for official use only, or legally protected from release
- Interagency coordination and integration
- Support for decision-makers
- Flexibility, modularity, and adaptability

The JIS is a group of representatives from all jurisdictions, organizations, and agencies involved in an incident that should be co-located in a centralized facility (JIC). Each agency representative or PIO will represent his or her own jurisdiction or agency, but shall participate in a coordinated public information system in accordance with the Kenton County EOP and this plan. Agencies will still issue their own releases related to their policies, procedures, programs, and capabilities unless it is not authorized by the EOC or IC's.

The Kenton County EOC, with input from the ESF-15 Coordinator, shall determine if a JIS needs to be established for the incident. They will also appoint a Lead PIO to serve as the JIS Manager, decide on the organizational structure for the JIS, and the physical location of the Joint Information Center (JIC). The organizational structure is designed to be flexible, expandable / contractible, and work well for large or small situations depending on the size and complexity of the incident.

Throughout the emergency, the Lead PIO will provide internal briefings, reconcile conflicts, and provide a forum to discuss issues relating to the JIS process.

The Lead PIO, in consultation with agency PIO's and EOC staff, will determine the JIS and JIC hours of operation. The JIS may need to operate 24-hours a day, seven days a week, depending on the size, impact, and complexity of the incident. Hours of scheduled shifts will normally be 12 hours and coordinated with the EOC staffing schedule.

All involved agencies unable to locate within the JIC must still coordinate any information they wish to release through the JIS. **No individual jurisdiction, agency, department or person should release any information to the media or the public without prior authorization from the Lead PIO and EOC.** The JIS provides one voice for all information to be released and shall be the only source for public information.

Statements that include reporting on actions by other agencies, departments or jurisdictions will be coordinated and reviewed within the JIS and with all appropriate organizations prior to release.



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JIS staff will assist the EOC and all agencies in responding to inquiries and requests for information concerning the incident. Inquiries may come from media, businesses, citizens, or response agencies. Only information that has been authorized for release by the EOC and / or IC's will be disseminated.

The Lead PIO will facilitate overall policy guidance and operations for the JIS and JIC, and will coordinate as needed with the EOC Manager.

The JIS staff may be called upon to warn the public about evacuations and other emergency protective actions. Emergency instructions and information will be disseminated to the public in the following order of priority:

1. Life-saving / health preservation instructions
2. Emergency and / or urgent status information
3. Other useful information, originated by the government or in response to media inquires

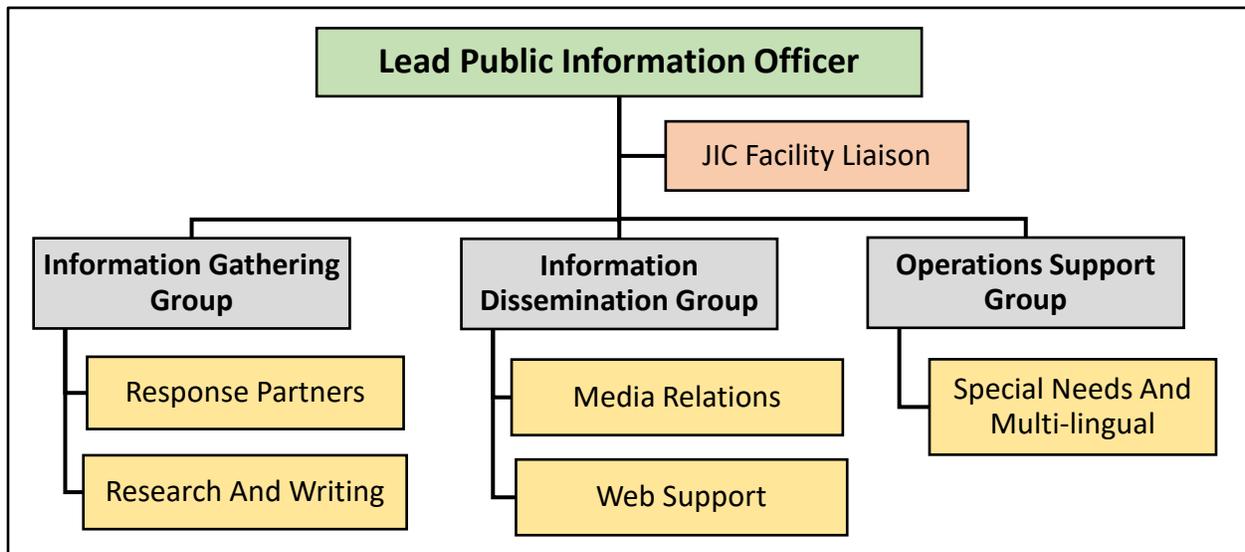
The JIS will operate under the supervision of the ESF-15 Coordinator, and will coordinate with and supplement activities of on-scene PIO's.

The JIS may need to establish a media briefing center depending on the nature of the hazard and the size and characteristics of the incident. The media briefing center may be co-located at the JIC or be at another location.

ORGANIZATION

The following organizational charts describe the JIS roles for initial (small), expanding (medium), and large size incidents. Descriptions for each position follows the charts.

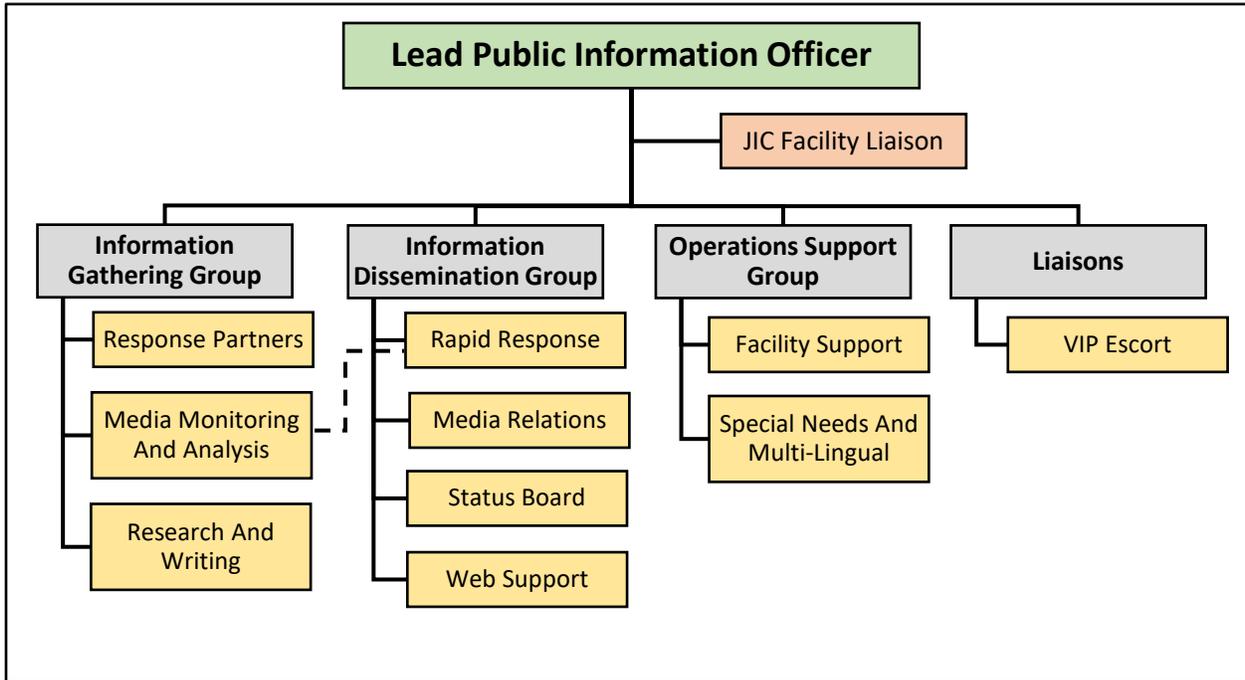
INITIAL (SMALL) INCIDENT



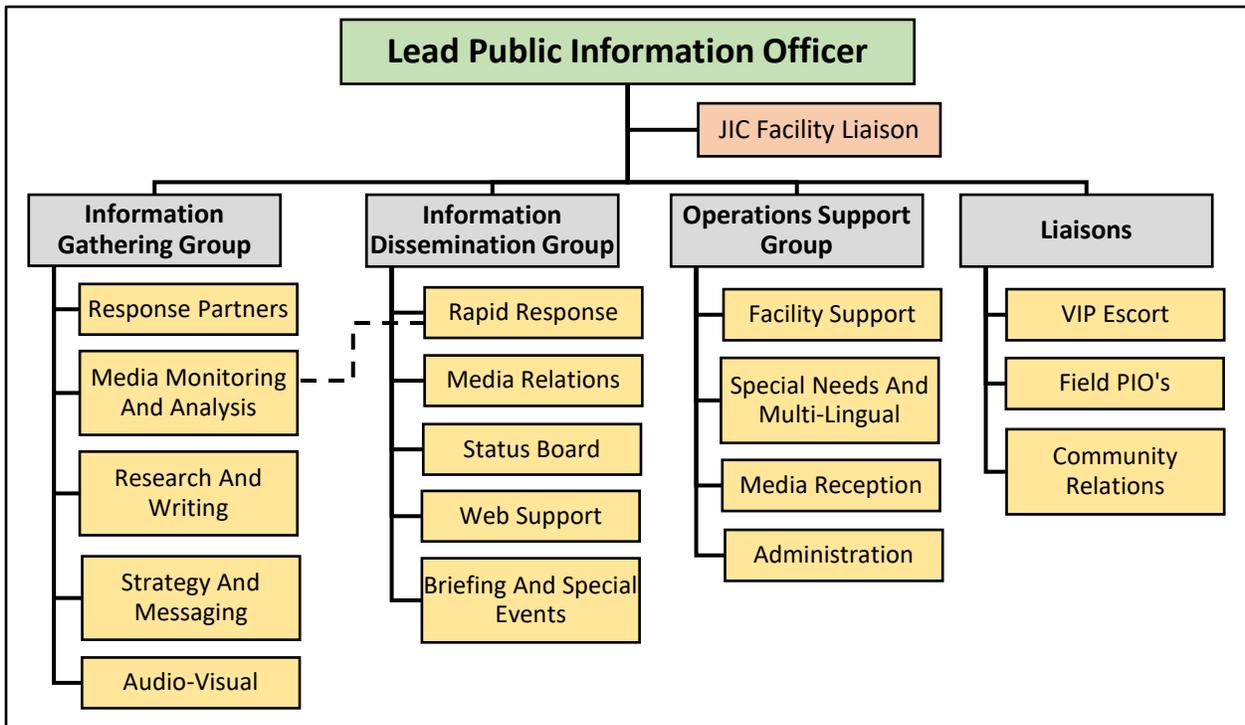


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ESCALATING (MEDIUM) INCIDENT



LARGE SCALE INCIDENT





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DESCRIPTION OF COMMON ROLES AND FUNCTIONS

The following roles and functions are common components of a JIS.

Lead PIO:

Serves as the JIS Manager and responsibilities include the following:

- Serve as an advisor to the EOC, ESF-15, and IC's/UC's
- Provide overall communication policy direction
- Recommend and develop strategy for messages, briefings, and news releases
- Obtain approval from those in authority before releases are made
- Conduct JIS briefings (live or virtual) to update staff regarding EOC and/or incident activities
- Establish and manage a JIC when necessary

JIC Facility Liaison – Works with the Lead PIO to coordinate operations with the management of the facility where the JIC is located.

Information Gathering Group:

Response Partners – Coordinate with supporting response agencies and their PIO's at the EOC, Incident Command Posts, and other locations to gather information on the incident.

Media Monitoring And Analysis – Review media reports and social media sources for accuracy and content; Works closely with the Rapid Response Unit (Information Dissemination Group) to develop possible responses when needed for rumor control. **NOTE:** *This effort may require the establishment of a Virtual Operations Support Team (VOST) to maintain ongoing social media monitoring and possibly post or respond if approved by the lead PIO.*

Research and Writing – Produce written materials (media releases, fact sheets, flyers, newsletters, etc.) and supporting graphics (layouts, PowerPoint presentations, etc.).

Strategy and Messaging – NEED DESCRIPTION OF THIS FUNCTION

Audio-Visual – Develop video documentation, special productions, remote live interview feeds, logistical support of public meetings and presentations; Provide still photography documentation to support print and internet media needs; Provide video documentation to support broadcast media needs. This includes collecting materials for agency archives.

Information Dissemination Group:

Media Relations – Operate a “News Desk” that serves as the primary point of contact for the media; Provide one or more “Spokesperson(s)” that prepare and conduct regular news briefings and press conferences.



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Rapid Response – Works in conjunction with the Media Monitoring And Analysis Unit (Information Gathering Group) to develop possible responses to inaccurate and/or misleading media reports.

Web Support – Use social media, networking sites, blogs, etc. to disseminate information about the incident for use by the public and the media.

Status Board – Produce and update Status Boards in the ICP and JIC.

Public Inquiries – Entails responding to questions from citizens, making referrals and developing a log of telephone calls, e-mails, etc., containing names, addresses, the type of calls, and any necessary follow up actions.

Briefing / Special Events – Conduct news conferences, media briefings, VIP visits, and tours for senior officials of affected areas.

Operations Support Group:

Special Needs / Multilingual – Provide language translation and other services to ensure appropriate and timely information reaches those in the affected areas with special needs.

Facility Support – Coordinates with the JIC Facility Liaison to maintain and support the JIC operations regarding the use of the facility and resources.

Media Reception – Establish and operate an area for the media to gather and work near the JIC, and verify credentials of media personnel.

Administration – Assist with scheduling, supply and inventory matters, documentation requirements, and other administrative tasks within the JIC.

Liaisons:

VIP Escort – Provides a coordinated two-way communication link with key program areas and other entities involved in the response and recovery operation (e.g., elected officials, community leaders, VIPs, and other governmental and NGO support agencies).

Field PIO's – **NEED DESCRIPTION OF THIS FUNCTION**

Community Relations – **NEED DESCRIPTION OF THIS FUNCTION**

RESPONSE ACTIONS

The effort to inform the public during an incident is an ongoing cycle that involves five steps:

Step 1: Gather Information

Information is collected from the EOC and IC's in the field, both of which are a source of ongoing, official information on the response effort. Additional information may be gathered from other sources such as:

- Responding departments and agencies



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- Other non-responding departments and agencies
- Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's), Non-Profit Organizations (NPO's), and other private sector agencies (American Red Cross, Salvation Army, etc.)
- Media monitoring (broadcast, web, blog, print)
- Calls from public and elected officials
- Subject-Matter Experts (Structural Engineer during a building collapse, etc.)
- State or Federal agencies as appropriate (KyEM, FEMA, FBI, National Weather Service, etc.)
- Emergency response guides, published textbooks, and other appropriate literature.

Step 2: Verify Information

It is important to ensure that the information collected is consistent, accurate, and current. Verify the accuracy of the information collected by consulting with EOC sources and technical specialists. Compare notes with the Lead PIO, as well as other PIOs who are detailed to the JIS from response / recovery partners or various assistance programs to verify the accuracy of information.

Step 3: Coordinate Information (Internal)

Collected and verified information must be coordinated with other information involving the incident to find overlaps, discrepancies, and inconsistencies. The information must also be vetted to ensure that it is not private, confidential, or legally protected from disclosure to the public. Coordination should involve IC's in the field, the EOC staff, and other appropriate departments and agencies involved in the response.

Information that needs to be shared with the public includes:

- A summary of the event
- Impact of the event
- Actions the public should take
- Actions the response departments are taking
- Actions schools, businesses, industries, and public assembly buildings should take
- Overall steps to be taken by the government and by citizens to return to normal after the event

In addition to the public and media, information needs to be shared with the Command Staff, response community, other relevant agencies, elected and appointed officials, other community leaders, and other PIOs. Sharing information regarding response and recovery actions and objectives is critical to building and maintaining situational awareness.

Step 4: Obtain Approval

Approval must be obtained from the EOC (from either the ESF 15 Coordinator or the EOC Manager) before information is disseminated to the public. **No agency involved**



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in the incident response shall release any information to the public and / or media until approval is obtained.

Step 5: Disseminate Information (External)

Once approval has been obtained, information should be disseminated to the target persons or groups via the best method or multiple methods (press release, press conference, social media posting, etc.) as determined by the Lead PIO or their designee. Some of the possible target groups include:

- Disaster victims
- Affected government jurisdictions
- General public
- Community leaders
- Private sector
- Media
- NGO's
- Response and recovery organizations
- Volunteer groups
- Other impacted groups

JOINT INFORMATION CENTER OPERATIONS

To ensure coordination of public information during incidents that involve multiple agencies and / or jurisdictions, and to support operation of the JIS, a Joint Information Center (JIC) may need to be established.

Establishment Of A JIC

In the early stages of response, the Lead PIO shall consult with the EOC regarding the opening of a JIC. The EOC shall retain authority to order the opening of a JIC, although the lead PIO may recommend when it is appropriate. JIC's are established:

- At the direction of the EOC at various levels of government
- At pre-determined or incident-specific sites
- As components of Federal, State, tribal, or local Multiagency Coordination Systems (MACS)

The JIC should be located close to the best sources of information, such as an EOC, without compromising safety or security of the personnel staffing the facility.

A single JIC location is preferable, but the system is flexible and adaptable enough to accommodate virtual or multiple JIC locations, as required. Each additional JIC that is set up adds significant responsibility to communicate and coordinate their activities and information sharing. Potential Kenton County JIC Locations include:



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1. Kenton County Fire Training Center
2. Erlanger Fire Station 1
3. Kenton County Detention Center Training Auditorium

Staffing

A plan for staffing the JIC must consider the projected duration of the deployment as well as the expected level of activity. The capability of the JIC to provide information will be overwhelmed if sufficient staff are not available to accommodate media and public needs.

PIO's operating at the JIC may require additional staffing support, such as county and city clerical staff, IT staff, etc. Intrastate and interstate mutual aid agreements such as EMAC (which could be a supplemental resource for bringing trained personnel together to support a JIC) can also be used to provide support staffing.

Logistical Needs

Logistical needs should be planned for (equipment location, credentialing, power, parking, etc.) based on the anticipated size of the JIC staff.

Kenton County will attempt to equip the JIC with enough communication resources to ensure the timely and accurate gathering and dissemination of information. The JIC will attempt to accommodate the work space and operational needs of each jurisdiction and responding agency contributing PIO's and personnel. However, a very large incident may overwhelm the capabilities to provide adequate equipment. Therefore, various agency PIO's should be prepared to provide their own equipment (such as laptop computers and printers) in case there are not enough available at the JIC.

Documentation requirements must be included in the planning for establishing a JIC (logs, time cards, press release forms, etc.). Electronic tracking and forms are preferred but not always readily available. The use of WebEOC may help with the reduction of paper documentation.

The JIC should establish a media briefing center to conduct briefings and announcements. The media briefing center may be co-located at the JIC or be at another location depending on the nature of the hazard, the size of the facilities, and characteristics of the incident.

DEMOBILIZATION

JIS and JIC operations will be down-sized or demobilized at the discretion of the ESF 15 Coordinator in consultation with the EOC Director and Lead PIO. Once the decision to down-size or demobilize has been reached, a plan shall be developed that includes the following actions:

- Provide down-sizing or demobilization information to EOC staff and all involved response departments and agencies.



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- Preparation of a media release announcing the changes, including contact information for future notifications once demobilization occurs.
- Assign (or re-assign) long-term communications responsibilities to appropriate personnel.
- Provide updated status reports to all PIO's who will be taking over communications activities on behalf of their respective departments.
- Coordinate the physical closing of the JIC with Emergency Management to include staff release, equipment inventory and return.

Upon deactivation, the Lead PIO will direct JIS and JIC staff to ensure that all equipment and personnel are returned to pre-emergency condition. All generated information must be given to the Lead PIO or designated person for documentation

AFTER-ACTION REPORT

Within 72 hours of deactivation, all involved agencies, representatives, and staff will participate in a critique of JIS operations. The Lead PIO will coordinate the critique of response actions and ensure the following items are addressed:

- Inoperable equipment
- Procedural inadequacies
- Clarity of policies
- Notification difficulties
- Other lessons learned

If any staff are unable to attend a critique in person, they should submit comments to the Lead PIO for inclusion in the critique and after-action reports.

In analyzing performance of the JIC, the following questions may be helpful:

- How quickly/smoothly did you activate the JIC?
- Did people get the right information?
- Was the information that was disseminated accurate?
- Was it easy to understand?
- Was it timely?
- Did the right people get the information?
- Were there any miscommunications / confusion?
- Did you work effectively with the news media?

In analyzing the internal operations of the JIC, the following questions may be helpful:

- Did you have the equipment and resources you needed?
- What were you lacking?



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- Did you have the information you needed?
- Did the approval process work?
- Did you feel your skills were utilized?

JIC participants will likely want to take time to review the JIC's work products and other documentation such as: media contact logs, news clips, videos, news releases, talking points, news conference agendas, flyers, etc.