

# MISSISSIPPI COMPREHENSIVE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN (CEMP)

## ESF #15 External Affairs Annex

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### **Coordinating Agency**

Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA)

### **Primary Agencies**

Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT)

Mississippi Insurance Department (MID)

Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA)

Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS)

Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH)

Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks (MDWF&P)

Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services (MDRS)

Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ)

Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC)

Mississippi Department of Public Safety (MDPS)

Mississippi Office of Homeland Security (MOHS)

Mississippi Military Department (MMD)

Mississippi National Guard (MSNG)

Mississippi Public Broadcasting (MPB)

### **Support Agencies**

Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services (ITS)

Mississippi Wireless Communications Commission (WCC)

Mississippi Public Service Commission (MPSC)

Mississippi Board of Animal Health (MBAH)

Mississippi Public Utilities Staff (MPUS)

All other state agencies

### **Federal Coordinating and Primary Agency**

Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

### **Federal Support Agencies**

All federal agencies

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# MISSISSIPPI COMPREHENSIVE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN (CEMP)

## ESF #15 External Affairs Annex

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**1. INTRODUCTION.** This Annex provides structures for implementing state-level policy and operational coordination. It can be partially or fully implemented, anticipating a significant event or response to an incident. The selective implementation allows for a scaled response, delivery of the needed resources, and coordination appropriate to the incident. It is also used when Mississippi's capabilities are exceeded and a federal government response is requested.

**a. Purpose.** Emergency Support Function (ESF) #15 provides accurate, coordinated, timely, and accessible information to affected audiences, including governments, media, the private sector, and the local populace, including children and seniors; those with disabilities, and others with access and functional needs; and individuals with limited English language proficiency.

(1) During a crisis or emergency, ESF #15 will produce and disseminate information to the public and the news media during natural, technological, health-related, or man-made emergencies.

(2) During non-crisis times, ESF #15 will disseminate information on all aspects of emergency management, including preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation.

The success of this effort requires the coordination, pooling, and networking of available and obtainable external affairs/public messaging resources provided by state agencies, local government entities, voluntary organizations, or other providers.

The term "obtainable" means other necessary resources that must be acquired through contract, lease, purchase, mutual aid agreements, or otherwise from outside the inventory or control of participating agencies. These resources may include facilities, personnel, equipment, promotional and advertising materials, supplies, consulting services, technical assistance, or others.

**b. Scope.** The basis of the ESF #15 mission is to communicate effectively around the four tenets of emergency management: preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation.

(1) **Preparedness.** The Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) Public Information Officers (PIOs) and other state agencies or non-profit organization's PIOs support will implement a public information program. This includes planning and directing public preparedness campaigns for severe weather, earthquakes, hurricanes, flooding, radiological emergencies, and tornadoes. The MEMA PIO will update and monitor the agency's website and social media platforms and provide a link to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) website to read the most up-to-date information on preparedness activities in English, Spanish, and any other languages necessary. The MEMA Chief Communications Officer will

teach the FEMA Basic PIO Class to emergency management officials statewide. The MEMA External Affairs (EA) staff will also host tours of the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) and participate as guest speakers to promote preparedness for a disaster or emergency.

The MEMA PIO also activates the State Joint Information Center (JIC) within the SEOC.

**(2) Response.** ESF #15 will publicize response activities that directly assist affected communities. Such activities include shelter and feeding locations, road closure information, boil water notices, school closings, public health, mental health, environmental hazards, and other information necessary to assist citizens during an emergency. MEMA PIOs also assist the State Warning Point (SWP) in writing and disseminating messaging for the Emergency Alert Systems (EAS) and Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) systems.

**(3) Recovery.** ESF #15 will respond to inquiries for damage assessment information and publicize disaster declarations. ESF #15 will support recovery operations, as needed, through the SEOC, local Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs), and FEMA Joint Field Office (JFO). ESF #15 will provide talking points to Recovery staff who work in a call center. ESF #15 will produce frequently asked questions and publish that information on the MEMA website (msema.org).

**(4) Mitigation.** ESF #15 will utilize integrated marketing strategies to publicize MEMA's projects and accomplishments in mitigation.

If local government external affairs/public messaging capabilities or resources become overwhelmed and unable to meet emergency or major disaster needs, ESF #15 will be activated to support those affected. This support will be provided in accordance with the State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) and the National Response Framework (NRF).

If federal ESF #15 is activated to assist local, tribal, and state governments, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)/FEMA is the primary agency for coordinating federal resources.

**2. RELATIONSHIP TO THE WHOLE COMMUNITY.** This section describes how ESF #15 relates to other elements of the whole community.

**a. Individuals/Community Organizations.** The public, individuals and community organizations, have an essential role in rapidly disseminating information, identifying unmet needs, and mutual support.

**b. Local, Tribal, and State Governments.** Local, tribal, and state authorities are primarily responsible for communicating health and safety instructions to their population. This Annex does not supersede the communication responsibilities of the local, tribal, and state

authorities/governments if it involves immediate health and safety concerns. However, if local or tribal governments cannot perform these responsibilities, the state may provide vital operational health and safety information to the affected population. Nothing in this document should be construed as diminishing or usurping those responsibilities.

**c. Private Sector/Non-Governmental Organizations.** The private sector coordinates communication and collaboration with the private sector. MEMA’s Business Emergency Operations Center (BEOC) integrates private sector capabilities and information into response operations. Information must be coordinated across various levels of government to identify needs, convey resources available for business recovery, and facilitate collaborative support for economic recovery.

**3. CORE CAPABILITIES AND ACTIONS.** This section outlines the ESF roles aligned to core capabilities. The following table lists the response core capability that ESF #15 most directly supports and the related ESF #15 action. Though not listed in the table, all ESFs, including ESF #15, support the Core Capabilities of Planning, Operational Coordination, and Public Information and Warning:

Core Capability	ESF #15 – External Affairs
<p><b>Public Information and Warning</b></p>	<p><b>External Affairs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides accurate, coordinated, and timely information to affected audiences before, during, and after incidents requiring a coordinated state response.</li> <li>• Provides communications support and advice to the leaders during an incident.</li> <li>• Conducts communications planning.</li> <li>• Coordinates messages with local, state, tribal, and federal governments from a JIC.</li> <li>• Gathers information on the incident.</li> <li>• Provides incident-related information through the media and other sources in accessible formats and multiple languages to individuals, households, businesses, and industries directly or indirectly affected by the incident, including those with disabilities and others with access and functional needs.</li> <li>• Monitors news coverage to ensure that accurate information is disseminated.</li> <li>• Disseminates incident information using integrated media strategies to include digital and traditional media outlets to ensure the most expansive delivery of life-saving information.</li> </ul>

Core Capability	ESF #15 – External Affairs
<p><b>Public Information and Warning cont.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximizes the use of video and digital imagery to communicate during incidents.</li> <li>• Oversees appropriate special projects, such as news conferences and press operations, for government officials, dignitaries, and news media incident area tours.</li> <li>• Oversees media relations.</li> <li>• Build communication strategies to reach the access and function needs population to include but are not limited to sign language and other interpreters, captioning of audio and visual materials, and accessible website communications.</li> <li>• Establishes contact with congressional offices representing affected areas to provide information on the incident.</li> <li>• Responds to congressional inquiries.</li> <li>• Disseminate information with the assistance of state municipal leagues, county associations, and tribal governments.</li> <li>• Ensures the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians’ (MBCI) inclusion in all incidents requiring a coordinated state response that affects MBCI and incident response operations.</li> <li>• Educates the public in the aftermath of an incident requiring a coordinated State response through news advisories, press releases, prepared materials, fliers, and talking points.</li> <li>• Develops news media products for dissemination, such as blog posts, social media messages, updates, videos, and digital imagery.</li> <li>• Provides strategic counsel and guidance to response leadership in actual or potential incidents.</li> <li>• Conducts outreach and education through preparedness campaigns, preparedness booklets, and guides, conducting tours of the SEOC, and participating in speaking engagements.</li> <li>• Coordinates messaging for private-sector stakeholders through the MEMA BEOC.</li> <li>• Maintains updated email distribution lists of media, legislative leadership, and other stakeholders needing pertinent incident information.</li> </ul> <p><b>Joint Information System (JIS)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serves as a central point for coordinating incident information, public affairs activities, and media access to information regarding the latest developments.</li> </ul>



Core Capability	ESF #15 – External Affairs
<p><b>Public Information and Warning cont.</b></p>	<p><b>Incident Joint Information Center (JIC)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a physical location where all public affairs professionals involved in the response work together to provide critical emergency information, media response, and public affairs functions.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ To provide information to the media and the public.</li> <li>○ The JIC is located at the SEOC.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Virtual Joint Information Center (VJIC)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Link all participants through technological means (secure or non-secure) when geographical restrictions, incident management requirements, and other limitations preclude physical attendance by public affairs leadership at a central location.</li> </ul>

**4. POLICIES.**

**a.** Through the SEOC, MEMA will maintain overall direction, control, and coordination of the response and recovery efforts through coordination with all participating agencies, including federal agencies tasked by FEMA.

**b.** All state agencies/departments will appoint a PIO to work with MEMA/ESF #15, other state agencies, and federal agencies in an emergency external affairs/public messaging capacity at the SEOC JIC or virtually, incident-dependent.

**c.** The ESF #15 primary ECO (MEMA’s Chief Communications Officer) will coordinate with all appropriate agencies/departments and organizations to ensure operational readiness in times of emergency.

**d.** If state emergency external affairs/public messaging resources either have been exhausted or are expected to be exhausted before meeting the demand, the ECO for ESF #15 will recommend that assistance be requested from other states through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) or from FEMA.

**e.** State PIOs will coordinate from the SEOC/JIC or virtually, incident-dependent. However, a catastrophic event may require establishing an additional forward coordination element at a facility near the impacted area.

f. State external affairs/public messaging planning considers local, state, and tribal external affairs policies, procedures, and plans used in public messaging.

## **5. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS.**

### **a. Assumptions.**

(1) Existing state telecommunications infrastructure will provide the primary means for state government communications.

(2) All state agencies will perform tasks under their authority, as applicable, in addition to missions received under the authority of MEMA.

(3) Most emergencies and disasters involve damage to property to some extent. Roads, bridges, public utility systems, public and private buildings, homes, and other facilities must be inspected, cleared for use, reinforced, quarantined, or demolished to ensure safety.

(4) Before requesting EMAC or federal assets, all available local, private, semi-private, and state resources will be deployed through the State Mutual Aid Compact (SMAC) to the maximum extent possible.

(5) State or federal assistance may be required to identify and deploy resources outside the affected area to ensure a timely, efficient, and effective response and recovery.

(6) Numerous governmental and non-governmental volunteering entities may mobilize personnel, supplies, and equipment to affected areas without coordination or communication with the SEOC or deployed elements.

### **b. General Concepts.**

(1) MEMA will inform all responsible agencies of impending conditions (incident developments, weather, hazardous materials, or other events) that would cause them to assume a readiness posture for activating the SEOC and possible deployment to a forward area operation or other activity.

(2) When ESF #15 is activated, ESF #5 and other appropriate support ESFs will be activated to support the event. ESF #15 will continually assess and develop action plans for ESF #5 to ensure all supporting agencies function appropriately and in a coordinated manner.

(3) ESF #15 will disseminate information through the JIC in the SEOC in Pearl. Primary and support state agency PIOs will staff the JIC. A Virtual JIC will be utilized if colocation is not feasible.

(4) The scope of information that must be provided could exceed the resources of a single state agency. Support from state agency communicators is critical, and all information must be disseminated from a central source, the JIC at the SEOC.

(5) ESF #15 will coordinate with local counterparts when disseminating information about state activities and seek assistance from local public information officers to confirm reports about local actions.

(6) In the event of a Grand Gulf Nuclear Station (GGNS) or River Bend Nuclear Station (RBS) incident, nuclear company officials will staff the JIC at the SEOC and be a part of emergency messaging. Detailed descriptions of the PIO roles and responsibilities during a nuclear incident are outlined in the GGNS and RBS Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), which are on file at MEMA.

(7) If state agencies PIOs are working in a JIC, it will be a combined effort in determining which messages are released to the public and the media. MEMA will take the lead coordinating role in such specifics as message mapping, news releases, media interviews, and all printed promotional material to ensure that Mississippians receive the most timely information regarding recovering from a disaster or emergency.

(8) Copies of the MEMA External Affairs SOP and the JIC Operations Plan are on file at MEMA.

(9) Local officials and managers should route their requests for assistance through their county EOCs.

(10) Local officials must conduct initial damage assessments to determine the severity and magnitude of property damage, including quantity, community impact, and dollar amount. These results will be reported to the SEOC, where appropriate response actions will be initiated. Such communication should be routed through the jurisdiction's county EOC where possible.

(11) MEMA will provide public information to evacuees through the SEOC/JIC, Mississippi Public Broadcasting (MPB), and commercial broadcast media and, if deemed necessary by the MEMA Executive Director and Chief Communications Officer, through the Integrated Public Alert and Warning Systems (IPAWS).

(12) Working in coordination with the SEOC and SWP, the JIC will release special weather statements and warnings provided by the National Weather Service (NWS) to emergency workers and the general population. These releases will be made through the normal ESF #15 release networks, SWP AtHoc mass notifications, and additionally provided to emergency work sites, staging areas, and other incident support sites as needed.

(13) MEMA coordinates EMAC with other states to augment resources.

**c. Notification.**

(1) The SWP will notify the ESF #15 primary ECO and/or designee of incidents requiring the SEOC to become activated. The ESF #15 ECO will inform key state agency PIOs of the potential incident through appropriate means.

(2) When the SEOC is activated, the ECO will notify all state agency PIOs and alert them of impending public information operations.

(3) The ECO or assigned designee will request that each agency's designated PIO report to the SEOC, as needed, to staff the JIC or virtual JIC in coordination with the MEMA Lead PIO. The JIC will not be activated without the MEMA Lead PIO's, MEMA Executive Director's, or Governor's approval.

**d. Special Needs Public Affairs Support.** It is the mission of ESF #15 to ensure that all Mississippians, regardless of their language, culture, or disability, receive disaster preparedness and response information. During crisis and non-crisis events, ESF #15 will make all efforts possible to reach special and diversified populations within the state. Such efforts will include but are not limited to the following:

(1) Providing disaster preparedness information in multiple languages through the MEMA and FEMA websites.

(2) Utilizing sign-language interpreters at emergency news conferences.

(3) Maintaining contact with non-English publications and broadcast stations to ensure their information needs are met and providing links on the MEMA website that visually impaired individuals can access.

(4) Contracting with individuals to ensure that news releases are correctly translated from English or that other special-needs populations receive the most up-to-date information possible.

(5) Working with MEMA's Disability Integration Advisor (DIA) to ensure MEMA's messaging is 508 (Digital Accessibility) compliant.

## 6. ORGANIZATION.

**a. State Emergency Operations Center.** In an incident or a major declared state emergency, the ESF #15 ECO or the ESF #15 emergency coordination staff will support the SEOC virtually or take up positions at the SEOC/JIC, situationally dependent. A current list of agency emergency notifications is maintained at this facility.

ESF #15 is not assigned to a SEOC Branch and usually works directly with the Operations, Planning, Logistics, Finance and Administration sections, Command and General Staff (C&GS), Executive, and Governor's Office.

**b. SEOC Emergency Point of Contact.** The MEMA State Warning Point (SWP) within the SEOC operates 24/7/365. The SWP is staffed by Operations Officers and an Operations Section Watch Officer. Emergency contact info is as follows:

### (1) SWP Operations Officer(s):

(a) **Phone:** (601) 933-6876, 6877, 6878 or (800) 222-6362

(b) **E-mail:** [commo1@mema.ms.gov](mailto:commo1@mema.ms.gov), [commo2@mema.ms.gov](mailto:commo2@mema.ms.gov), or [commo3@mema.ms.gov](mailto:commo3@mema.ms.gov)

### (2) Operations Section Watch Officer:

(a) **Phone:** (601) 933-6671 or (800) 222-6362

(b) **E-mail:** [watchdesk@mema.ms.gov](mailto:watchdesk@mema.ms.gov)

**c. SEOC Sections.** The SEOC maintains the standard four ICS sections.

**(1) Operations Section.** The Operations Section establishes strategy (approach methodology, etc.) and specific tactics/actions to accomplish the goals and objectives set by the Command. Operations coordinates and executes strategy and tactics to achieve response objectives.

**(2) Planning Section.** The Planning Section coordinates support activities for incident planning and contingency, long-range, and demobilization planning. Planning supports Command

and Operations in processing incident information and coordinates information activities across the response system.

**(3) Logistics Section.** The Logistics Section supports Command and Operations using personnel, supplies, and equipment. Performs technical activities required to maintain the function of operational facilities and processes.

**(4) Finance and Administration Section.** The Finance and Administration Section supports Command and Operations with administrative issues and tracks and processes incident expenses. This includes such issues as licensure requirements, regulatory compliance, and financial accounting.

See the SEOC Operations Section Chief (OSC) or an SEOC Branch Director for a roster of assigned Section Chiefs.

**d. SEOC Branch Directors.** The SEOC maintains three branches within the Operations Section, Infrastructure, Emergency Services, and Human Services, each led by a Branch Director. The Branch Director positions are staffed full-time by MEMA Emergency Management Specialists. The Branch Directors coordinate the activities of all sixteen ESFs and support entities and are the first line of support for assigned ECOs. The Branch Directors monitor and oversee branch administrative and incident activities, WebEOC actions, SITRoom updates, branch adherence to timelines and requirements, support ECOs with incident coordination, and conduct SEOC staff briefings as needed.

**(1) Infrastructure Branch Director** desk contact information: Phone (601) 933-6737, e-mail: [infrastructure@mema.ms.gov](mailto:infrastructure@mema.ms.gov).

**(2) Emergency Services Branch Director** contact information: Phone (601) 933-6753, e-mail: [emergencyservices@mema.ms.gov](mailto:emergencyservices@mema.ms.gov).

**(3) Human Services Branch Director** contact information: Phone (601) 933-6764, e-mail: [humanservices@mema.ms.gov](mailto:humanservices@mema.ms.gov).

**e. Primary ESF #15 ECO.** MEMA's Chief Communications Officer will serve as the primary ECO for ESF #15 and will oversee the information flow to the media/public by coordinating all PIO activity. MEMA's Deputy PIO will serve as the Deputy ECO and assume duties as assigned.

**f. SEOC Situation Rooms.** MEMA developed the Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN) Situation Rooms (SITRooms) to provide stakeholders with a virtual EOC platform to

utilize during normal operations or incidents. The SITRooms provide excellent situational awareness for both SEOC and non-SEOC participants. The SITRooms have individual pods with attendee lists, chat capability, incident priorities and objectives, operational schedule and meeting times (battle rhythm), downloadable documents and maps, useful links, and video capability.

The event SITRooms utilized by the SEOC for a given event will use one of the following URLs:

<https://share.dhs.gov/msema> (Daily SITRoom: Level IV Normal Operations)

<https://share.dhs.gov/mema-incident> (General Incident SITRoom)

<https://share.dhs.gov/mema-incident1> (Severe Weather/Flooding SITRoom)

<https://share.dhs.gov/mema-incident2> (Hurricane/Tropical Storm SITRoom)

<https://share.dhs.gov/mema-incident3> (Other Emergency/Earthquake SITRoom)

<https://share.dhs.gov/mema-uas> (Unmanned Aerial Systems [UAS] SITRoom)

<https://share.dhs.gov/mrp> (Radiological SITRoom)

<https://share.dhs.gov/jicroom> (JIC SITRoom)

<https://share.dhs.gov/ms-emac> (EMAC SITRoom)

<https://share.dhs.gov/msbeoc/> (MSBEOC SITRoom)

Many of the above-listed SITRoom may not be active during “blue-sky” or non-event periods. The active SITRooms will be published via mass notification before or during an event/incident.

**g. Administrative and Logistical Support.** All participating ESF #15 agencies are expected to:

(1) Coordinate their support with the ESF #15 ECO.

(2) ESF #15 ECO will coordinate efforts with the SEOC Section Chiefs.

(3) Locate, identify, and set up operational work areas and maintain logistical support for emergency support staff.

(4) Maintain active accounts and have a working knowledge of WebEOC, the SEOC HSIN SITRoom, and Crisis Track.

(5) Attend and support briefings and other coordination meetings at the SEOC via telecommunications (HSIN SIT Room, ZOOM, or Microsoft Teams) or elsewhere.

(6) Maintain operational logs, messages, requests, and other appropriate documentation for future reference.

(7) Maintain maps, displays, status reports, and other information not included in the ESF #5 operations.

(8) Update the SEOC OSC on ESF #15 ECO/PIO Roster changes.

## **7. RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACTIONS.**

**a. Coordinating and Primary Agencies.** As the Coordinating Agency for ESF #15, MEMA is responsible for ESF #15 overall. However, all ESF #15 primary agencies are also responsible for, but not limited to, the following:

### **(1) Preparedness.**

(a) Provide a list of ECOs and PIOs that will carry out the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) virtually or at the SEOC/JIC.

(b) Develop and maintain a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for this ESF #15 External Affairs Annex.

(c) Maintain access to all SEOC personnel, systems, and documentation, including but not limited to WebEOC, HSIN SITRooms, CEMP and associated Annexes and Appendices, the MEMA Response Framework, and all SEOC policies and procedures.

(d) Ensure all agencies with ESF #15 responsibility have SOPs in place to perform appropriate levels of mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery related to the event. Agencies will have completed mitigation and preparedness activities before the initiating event.

(e) Ensure ESF #15 elements are familiar with and operate according to the Incident Command System (ICS).

(f) Train and exercise ESF #15 personnel.



(g) Designate an ECO, alternate ECO, Public Information Officer (PIO), and an ESF #15 liaison to report to the SEOC or support virtually.

**(2) Pre-Incident.**

(a) MEMA External Affairs will develop and maintain alert and notification procedures for key PIO officials supporting ESF #15.

(b) Provide an ECO (and alternate if 24-hour coverage is necessary) and ESF #15 liaison to the SEOC.

(c) Notify support agency and partners on activation as needed and minimal staffing requirements.

(d) Conduct preliminary staff meetings with the complete ESF #15 team assigned to establish strategies for approaching incident(s).

**(3) Incident.**

(a) Upon activation of ESF #15, ECO will communicate pertinent information to all ESF #15 members. Such information will be a complete orientation of the ESF #15 mission, purpose, and scope of work.

(b) Maintain information on private, public, and supplementary external affairs and public information resources outside the state.

(c) Ensure efficient communications are established and maintained.

(d) Obtain an initial situation and damage assessment through established intelligence procedures.

(e) Oversee the critical function of media relations.

(f) Coordinate messages and news releases with local, state, tribal, and federal governments.

(g) Gather information on the incident.

(h) Use a broad range of resources to disseminate information.

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- (i) Monitor news coverage to ensure that accurate information is disseminated;
- (j) Schedule news conferences & update state agency websites and social media;
- (k) Contact state and congressional offices representing affected areas to provide information on the incident.
- (l) Arrange for an incident site or SEOC visit for governmental leaders and their staff upon request.
- (m) Respond to legislative/congressional inquiries.
- (n) Answer questions from members of the public who call in on the emergency public information line.
- (o) Should a rumor be identified, the appropriate answer will be provided by SEOC staff and then shared with all JIC members.
- (p) Be conscious of rumor patterns. More than three calls on the same general subject should be brought to the attention of the ESF #15 ECO.
- (q) Coordinate the distribution of assets as needed.
- (r) Maintain a complete log of actions, resource orders, records, and reports.
- (s) Provide Situation Report (SITREP) and Incident Action Plan (IAP) input via WebEOC and appropriate ICS Forms, according to the established operational timeline, event-specific.
- (t) Coordinate the efforts through a liaison to ESF #5.
- (u) Assist in gathering and providing information to ESF #5 for establishing priorities.
- (v) Assist in compiling and providing information to ESF #15/JIC for press releases.
- (w) Participate in post-incident assessments with leadership and plan potential press conferences in the field.
- (x) ESF #15 may be asked to provide the Joint Field Office (JFO) personnel to work closely with their federal counterparts at the established JFO(s) and in the field.

### **(4) Post-Incident.**

(a) Prepare an After-Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP). The AAR/IP identifies key problems, indicates how they will be/were solved, and makes recommendations for improving ESF response operations.

(b) All ESF #15 organizations assist in preparing the AAR/IP.

(c) Submit AAR/IP to [planning@mema.ms.gov](mailto:planning@mema.ms.gov).

(d) Review and recommend revision to plans and procedures as determined necessary.

(e) Copy, catalog, and properly file all records and documents on the incident.

(f) Compare ESF #3 staff records with the MEMA network tasking and tracking system to ensure accuracy.

**b. Supporting Agencies.** All designated support agencies shall provide an individual to serve in the JIC in a capacity as assigned by the ESF #15 ECO. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

(1) Maintain access to all SEOC personnel, systems, and documentation, including but not limited to the Infrastructure Branch Director, WebEOC, HSIN SITRooms, Crisis Track, CEMP and associated Annexes and Appendices, the MEMA Response Framework, and all SEOC policies and procedures.

(2) Ensure lead agency/department administrative, supervisory, and technical personnel remain aware of the agency's role with MEMA and ESF #15.

(3) Locate, identify, and set up their operational work areas and maintain logistical support.

(4) Attend and support briefings and other coordination meetings, whether virtually, at the SEOC, JIC, or elsewhere.

(5) Participate in training and exercises when scheduled.

(6) Support the development and maintenance of SOPs to enable them to perform appropriate levels of mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery related to public works and engineering.

(7) Assist with media/public inquiries.

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(8) Prepare for news conferences.

(9) Write talking points and news releases;

(10) Provide information to congressional, legislative, or local elected officials.

(11) Coordinate releases and messaging with local, state, or tribal PIOs and gather information from the SEOC.

(12) Maintain operational logs, messages, requests, and other appropriate documentation for future reference.

(13) Maintain their maps, displays, status reports, and other information not included in the ESF #5 operations.

(14) Provide SITREP and IAP input via WebEOC and appropriate ICS Forms, according to the established operational timeline, event-specific.

The chart on the next page shows the responsibilities of select individual ESF #15 primary and support agencies. The list contains, but is not limited to, the core functions required:

Agency	Functions
<b>Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide emergency public information through mediums available at the state’s Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) and with the Joint Information Center.</li> </ul>
<b>Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate information between the JIC and the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) regarding the condition of historic properties.</li> </ul>
<b>Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide information to the JIC about cancellation of visitation schedule at local and/or state prison facilities.</li> <li>• Provide information concerning the evacuation of prisoners to alternate facilities only after the evacuation mission is completed due to security concerns.</li> <li>• Provide information on alternate parole check-in locations if normal offices are in the disaster area.</li> </ul>

Agency	Functions
<b>MDOC cont.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide information to Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC) employees.</li> <li>• May operate an information phone line for inmate family members' transportation to report to work.</li> </ul>
<b>Mississippi Department of Education (MDE)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep SEOC and JIC apprised of all school closings, delays, reopenings, and damage to public school buildings and facilities.</li> <li>• Support JIC Operations.</li> </ul>
<b>Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide information to the JIC regarding state programs for employment opportunities and unemployment insurance benefits.</li> <li>• Provide information to the JIC regarding Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) benefits and job-training opportunities in disaster-stricken areas. Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) is the primary contact agency for the U.S. Department of Labor.</li> <li>• Support JIC Operations.</li> </ul>
<b>Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide information on environmental degradation resulting from the disaster/emergency, possible destruction of ecologically sensitive areas, and other related issues to the JIC.</li> <li>• Provide public health and safety inquiries on hazardous materials released into the environment or other environmental questions following the disaster.</li> <li>• Support JIC Operations.</li> </ul>
<b>Mississippi Department of Finance and Administration (DFA)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide administrative and finance support to the JIC manager relative to the fiscal, clerical, and logistical needs of JIC and staff members.</li> <li>• Provide information on the delay of state employee paychecks due to a disaster.</li> <li>• Support JIC Operations.</li> </ul>
<b>Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide information on any public health statements or precautions to the JIC.</li> </ul>

Agency	Functions
<b>MSDH cont.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In a radiological emergency, provide a technical spokesperson to Entergy Emergency News Media Center (ENMC) and other support, as required.</li> <li>• Support JIC operations.</li> </ul>
<b>Mississippi Department of Public Safety (MDPS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide information on efforts to locate and identify missing or endangered persons.</li> <li>• Provide information on efforts to maintain law and order.</li> <li>• Support JIC operations.</li> </ul>
<b>Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services (MDRS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide sign language interpreting services.</li> <li>• Provide information to the JIC regarding programs, assistance, or services available to the access and functional needs population.</li> <li>• Support JIC Operations.</li> </ul>
<b>Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During an evacuation, a traffic control hotline will be operated at the JIC or the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) headquarters.</li> <li>• Provide information on evacuations and the status of state transportation and infrastructure public information.</li> <li>• Support JIC Operations.</li> </ul>
<b>Mississippi Development Authority (MDA)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate information with the JIC regarding the need for financial assistance, energy-related shortfalls, and other economic issues in disaster-stricken communities.</li> </ul>
<b>Mississippi Forestry Commission (MFC)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide limited transportation missions for search, rescue, and tactical support.</li> <li>• Assist in aerial damage assessment as needed.</li> <li>• Provide relevant information to the JIC.</li> </ul>
<b>Mississippi Gaming Commission (MGC)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advise public information staff of casino closings for issuance to the public.</li> <li>• Coordinate information with casinos that could be affected by the disaster or emergency.</li> <li>• Coordinate information with MEMA’s Business Emergency Operations Center.</li> </ul>

Agency	Functions
<b>Mississippi Insurance Department (MID)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During a disaster, the Mississippi Insurance Department (MID) preps staff for questions from consumers about losses and applicable coverages. In addition, the MID will speak with the insurers and/or the agents regarding claims.</li> <li>• After the disaster, the MID will conduct data calls with insurance carriers to determine the scope of the disaster.</li> <li>• The MID will aid insurance carriers in establishing insurance villages. These villages play a critical role by allowing consumers a one-stop visit to find their carrier and assistance with filing a claim.</li> <li>• Support JIC Operations.</li> <li>• Provide support staff at Disaster Recovery Centers for federally declared disasters.</li> </ul>
<b>Mississippi Military Department (MMD)/Mississippi National Guard (MSNG)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide personnel for ESF #15.</li> <li>• Staff a military JIC at the Forward EOC, if used.</li> <li>• Develop news releases about the Mississippi National Guard (MSNG) response as MEMA requires.</li> <li>• Develop daily talking points for The Adjutant General (TAG) for the State of Mississippi, the National Guard Bureau (NGB), MEMA, and additional public affairs officers in the forward area(s) of operation (AO).</li> <li>• Provide daily media escorts.</li> <li>• Embed news media with military operations, both ground and air operations.</li> <li>• Ensure leadership is present at daily news briefings from local/state EOC.</li> <li>• Document with photos and video of military response to any natural or man-made disaster.</li> <li>• Support the President of the United States (POTUS), Congressional Delegation (CODEL), and/or state legislative visits to forward AO.</li> </ul>
<b>Office of the State Auditor (OSA)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide communications support to facilitate the dissemination of information to the public.</li> </ul>
<b>Office of the Governor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate information between the Governor’s Office and the JIC.</li> <li>• Respond to questions concerning the Governor’s responses to the disaster/emergency and expected activities.</li> </ul>

Agency	Functions
<b>Office of the Governor cont.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate participation of the Governor in scheduled news conferences.</li> </ul>
<b>Secretary of State’s Office (SOS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the JIC and disseminate office-specific information.</li> </ul>
<b>Mississippi Public Broadcasting (MPB)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide technical broadcast and production support to JIC operations.</li> <li>• Provide communications support to facilitate the dissemination of information to the public.</li> <li>• Will broadcast evacuation information from the JIC when local governments issue evacuation notices.</li> <li>• Provide technicians to staff production control room.</li> <li>• Broadcast all news conferences statewide and provide access to the broadcast to out-of-state and national media outlets.</li> </ul>
<b>Mississippi Commission on Volunteer Services (MCVS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide all volunteer information to the JIC to ensure efficient efforts.</li> <li>• Support JIC Operations.</li> </ul>

**8. AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES.** The procedures in this ESF #15 External Affairs Annex are built on the core coordinating structures of the CEMP and references listed below. The specific responsibilities of each department and agency are described in the respective ESF, Support, and Incident Annexes, internal agency plans, policies, and procedures. See the CEMP Base Plan or the ESF #15 ECO for a comprehensive list of Authorities and References.

- a. Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act; amended the Disaster Relief Act of 1974, PL 93-288.  
[https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-03/stafford-act\\_2019.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-03/stafford-act_2019.pdf)
- b. MS Code, Ann. Â§ 33-15(1972): Mississippi Emergency Management Act of 1995, Title 33-15, et al. [Successor to Mississippi Emergency Management Law of 1980]  
[MS Code 33-15](#)
- c. National Preparedness Goal, Second Edition, September 2015  
<https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/25959>



- d. National Incident Management System, Third Edition, October 2017  
<https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/148019>
- e. National Response Framework, Fourth Edition, October 2019  
[https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-04/NRF\\_FINALApproved\\_2011028.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-04/NRF_FINALApproved_2011028.pdf)
- f. FEMA National Incident Support Manual, Change 1, January 2013  
[https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-04/FEMA\\_National\\_Incident\\_Support\\_Manual-change1.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-04/FEMA_National_Incident_Support_Manual-change1.pdf)
- g. FEMA Incident Action Planning Guide, July 2015  
[https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-07/Incident\\_Action\\_Planning\\_Guide\\_Revision1\\_august2015.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-07/Incident_Action_Planning_Guide_Revision1_august2015.pdf)
- h. FEMA Developing and Maintaining Emergency Operations Plan, Comprehensive Preparedness Guide (CPG) 101, Version 3.0, September 2021  
[https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema\\_cpg-101-v3-developing-maintaining-eops.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_cpg-101-v3-developing-maintaining-eops.pdf)
- i. State of Mississippi Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, January 2022  
[MEMA Downloads/CEMP](#)
- j. MEMA Response Framework, March 2021  
[MEMA Downloads/MEMA Publications](#)

For JIC SOPs, see the MEMA PIO or External Affairs Office.

The MEMA reference repository, containing the CEMP base plan, associated annexes, appendices, and other supporting documents, can be found at [MEMA Downloads](#).

Most Mississippi emergency management stakeholders have access to the MEMA Downloads site. However, non-registered stakeholders may access the repository by submitting an e-mail request to [preparedness@mema.ms.gov](mailto:preparedness@mema.ms.gov).

**9. REVIEW AND MAINTENANCE.** This Annex will be continuously reviewed and exercised on an annual basis to evaluate the ability of the state and its political subdivisions to respond to support local emergency management agencies. Exercises will be coordinated with local and federal governments to the extent possible. Directors of primary state agencies are responsible for maintaining Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs), SOPs, checklists, internal plans, and resource data to ensure a prompt and effective response to a disaster supporting this plan.

## ESF #15 External Affairs Annex to MS CEMP

At a minimum, the ESF #15 External Affairs Annex Coordinating Agencies will conduct an annual review of this Annex with all support agencies. Additional assessments may be performed if the experience with an incident or regulatory changes indicates a need. Recommended changes will be submitted to MEMA for approval and distribution. Submit recommendations via e-mail to [preparedness@mema.ms.gov](mailto:preparedness@mema.ms.gov).

This Annex will be updated every two years, or as necessary, to incorporate new presidential or state directives, legislative changes, and procedural changes based on lessons learned from exercises and actual incidents. A re-write of this Annex will be completed every four (4) years.

This Annex applies to all state agencies, state boards, state commissions, and state departments assigned emergency responsibilities and to all elements of local government in accordance with current law and Executive Orders (EOs).