

## ANNEX 15 (ESF-15)

### PUBLIC INFORMATION

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**PRIMARY:** Office of The Adjutant General (OTAG), SCEMD

**SUPPORT:** As directed within the SCEOP, each supporting agency or organization will respond to coordinate the emergency activities of its department with a declared earthquake disaster.

#### I. INTRODUCTION

- A. After a major earthquake, it can be assumed that media communications will be disrupted due to power outage. Major newspapers may not be capable of publishing and/or distribution for several days. At the same time, public and media demands for information will be tremendous.
- B. ESF-15 will prepare for disaster response using the Operational Area Concept and worst case loss estimation data in Attachment C to the Basic Plan.

#### II. MISSION

Provide effective public information through coordination with appropriate federal, State, and local agencies and organizations to minimize loss of life and property before, during, and after an earthquake disaster.

#### III. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

- A. Response operations will use an Earthquake Checklist that will be executed following a strong earthquake. Activities in the Earthquake Checklist do not replace required activities normally assigned to ESF in the SCEOP and supporting ESF SOP. The Checklist activities are to ensure that critical actions are completed or continuing at the appropriate time during an earthquake response. See Attachment A to this Annex for Checklist.
- B. The South Carolina EAS will be activated appropriately according to established area, state, and national EAS procedures.
- C. Earthquake public information will be disseminated in accordance with public information provisions in the SCEOP. To prevent or minimize earthquake-related loss of life, damage to property, and harm to the environment in South Carolina, government on all levels will provide consistent, coordinated, accurate, and timely information to the at-risk public. The information flow will intensify when the earthquake occurs, and it will continue in the earthquake's aftermath.

- D. Prior to an earthquake, and at least annually in a statewide education campaign, the public will be made aware of potential ill effects and of actions recommended to safeguard lives and property. Information regarding prudent protective actions will be conveyed to the public.
- E. State agencies key to the successful coordination and conveyance of accurate information to the public during a catastrophic earthquake are the South Carolina Governor's Office, SCEMD, SLED, SCDPS, SCDOT, SCDNR, SCNG, SC Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism (SCPRT), SC Department of Commerce (SCDOC), SCDHEC, SC Department of Insurance (SCDOI), SCDS, SCDMH, SCETV, and, if an earthquake occurs when public schools are in session, the SCDOE. Also key are county emergency management offices and statewide and local volunteer organizations, including the ARC. All aforementioned agencies and organizations will provide mutual copies of all news releases issued during occurrence of and recovery from an earthquake.
- F. Upon declaration of a State of Emergency by the Governor, ESF-15 will be the primary coordinating element in the dissemination of public information following an earthquake, with the advice and consent of the Governor's Press Secretary. The SEOC will request state-level activation of the EAS when appropriate.
- G. State government information of greatest public interest during and immediately following a catastrophic earthquake will include, but is not limited to, transportation issues, including road closures; medical care issues, including listing of available functional hospitals and healthcare facilities; traffic management; law enforcement; shelter locations; water quality and water-borne disease; nursing home issues; bridge closures; pet and livestock care issues; US&R issues; state office closings, state park closures; insurance issues; power outages; telephone service; and motel availability.
- H. In general, state government news releases will be issued to the news media statewide and to national and international media as appropriate, with priority consideration given to the media most able to effectively communicate with the at-risk population. Samples of new releases and EAS messages that may be issued can be found in Attachment B to this Annex.

#### IV. ESF ACTIONS

- A. Preparedness
  - 1. Develop the best available methods to distribute and broadcast public information following an earthquake.

2. Prepare pre-scripted EAS messages and press releases to disseminate following the earthquake.
3. Develop procedures to determine if media outlets are functioning in the Operational Areas. This intelligence should include the type of facility, location, coverage area, and the ability to relay information.
4. Analyze the Loss Estimation Reports prepared by SCEMD to identify communication stations located in the Operational Areas.
5. Develop operating checklists to ensure that all essential state information is provided to local government if normal means of communications is disrupted.
6. Coordinate with local jurisdictions to provide public information officers (PIO) to ICP in the Operational Areas to support local governments.
7. Conduct workshops with State PIOs to familiarize them with the Operational Area Concept.
8. Identify resource shortfalls (personnel), and develop corresponding plans to obtain resources.
9. Establish post-earthquake reporting requirements for PIOs.

B. Response

1. Implement ESF-15, Earthquake Checklist, Attachment A to this Annex.
2. Validate and implement operating procedures to contact media outlets to determine which ones are operational.
3. Edit and issue pre-scripted EAS messages through the best available communications.
4. Validate and implement operating procedures to provide information to the public.
5. Determine requirements for state support to the emergency public information function at county levels.

6. Determine overall staffing requirements (including support to local jurisdictions), and request additional support as required from state and federal resources.

C. Recovery

See Recovery Section, Annex 15, (ESF-15) to the SCEOP.

D. Mitigation

See Mitigation Section Annex 15, (ESF-15) to the SCEOP.

V. **RESPONSIBILITIES**

OTAG, SCEMD

A. Develop the best available methods to distribute and broadcast public information following an earthquake.

B. Prepare pre-scripted EAS messages and press releases to disseminate after the earthquake.

C. Develop procedures to determine if media outlets are functioning in the Operational Areas. This intelligence should include the type of facility, location, coverage area, and the ability to relay information.

D. Develop operating checklists to ensure that all essential state information is provided to local government if normal means of communications is disrupted.

E. Coordinate with local jurisdictions to provide PIOs in the Operational Areas to support local governments.

F. Conduct workshops/exercises with State PIOs to familiarize them with the Operational Area concept.

G. Identify resource shortfalls (personnel), and develop corresponding plans to obtain resources.

H. Establish post-earthquake reporting requirements for PIOs.

I. Review and update ESF-15 Earthquake Checklist.

**VI. FEDERAL INTERFACE**

- A. The National Response Framework (NRF) ESF-15, Public Information and External Communications, supports this Annex.
- B. Federal ESF-15 consists of the following functional components: Community Relations, Congressional Affairs, International Affairs, Public Affairs, State and Local Coordination, and Tribal Affairs.

**VII. ATTACHMENT**

- Attachment A      ESF-15 Earthquake Checklist
- Attachment B      Sample Public Information Statements

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**ESF-15 (Public Information)**

Date/Time Complete

1. \* \_\_\_\_\_ Validate and implement operating procedures to contact media outlets to determine which ones are operational.
2. \* \_\_\_\_\_ Validate and implement operating procedures to provide information to the public.
3. \* \_\_\_\_\_ Edit and issue pre-scripted EAS messages through the best available communications.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Determine requirements for State support to the emergency public information function at county levels.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Determine overall staffing requirements (including support to local jurisdictions), and request additional support as required from State and federal resources.

**\*NOTE:** All Checklist activities listed are essential, and should be completed. However, Checklist activities denoted with an asterisk are critical, and should be completed first. Other action items can be executed simultaneously to expedite response actions.

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**SAMPLE PUBLIC INFORMATION STATEMENTS****A. NEWS RELEASE: Things You Can Do After the Earthquake**

**Columbia, S.C. (Date/Time)**--Seismologists have confirmed there has been a strong earthquake in the area of **(Location)**, and the danger may not be over. The South Carolina Emergency Management Division indicates there may be aftershocks causing more shaking. If the earthquake has damaged your neighborhood, here are some things you should remember to do:

- Try to remain calm and in touch with the people around you.
- Stay off the telephone unless you are contacting emergency services.
- Put on sturdy shoes or boots to protect your feet from debris and provide ankle support.
- Store water in a bathtub or large container and sterilize water that wasn't bottled before using it.
- If you smell gas or hear a blowing or hissing noise, open a window and quickly leave the building. Turn off the gas, using the outside main valve if you can, and call the gas company. If you turn off the gas for any reason, a professional must turn it back on.
- Clean up broken glass, medicines, and flammable liquids.
- Take a few moments to rest every hour or so, and consider what you're going to do next.

Stay tuned to your local broadcast station for additional information from the South Carolina Emergency Management Division.

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**B. NEWS RELEASE: Things NOT To Do After the Earthquake**

**Columbia, S.C. (Date/Time)**--Seismologists have confirmed there has been a strong earthquake in the area of **(Location)**, and the danger may not be over; there may be aftershocks causing more shaking. If the earthquake has damaged your neighborhood, here are some things official sources warn you **not** to do:

- (Listed in above release as something you SHOULD do?) Do not use matches, lighters, or candles until you are sure there are no gas leaks.
- Do not use the telephone unless you are calling emergency services.
- Do not waste water.
- Do not go sightseeing; you could risk injury or interfere with emergency workers.
- Do not forget that strong aftershocks are possible at any time.

**Attachment B to Annex 15 (ESF-15)**  
**Sample Public Information Statements** 

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Stay tuned to your local broadcast station for additional information from the South Carolina Emergency Management Division.

--END--

C. NEWS RELEASE: First Steps at Home

**Columbia, S.C. (Date/Time)**--A strong earthquake has hit (**Location**). Officials from the South Carolina Emergency Management Division suggest you do the following if you are at home:

- ❑ Check on your family members. Make sure you know where each member is and their condition. Apply any needed first aid you can until help arrives.
- ❑ Use a fire extinguisher to put out small fires. Don't use water on electrical or gas fires. If you can't put the fire out quickly, get everyone out of the area right away.
- ❑ If you smell gas or hear a blowing or hissing noise, open a window and quickly leave the building. Turn off the gas, using the outside main valve if you can, and call the gas company. If you turn off the gas for any reason, a professional must turn it back on.
- ❑ Inspect your home's foundation, walls, and chimneys. Look and listen for any signs of possible collapse.

Stay tuned to your local broadcast station for additional information from the South Carolina Emergency Management Division.

--END--

D. NEWS RELEASE: More Steps at Home

**Columbia, S.C. (Date/Time)**--Seismologists have confirmed there has been a strong earthquake in the area of (**Location**), and the danger may not be over. There may be aftershocks causing more shaking. The South Carolina Emergency Management Division is offering the following advice to people in the affected area:

- ❑ If you are safe where you are, your best bet is to stay there.
- ❑ Discuss any first aid and safety tips you know of with others.
- ❑ Offer help to the people around you, your family, neighbors and coworkers.
- ❑ Isolate flammable liquids and other hazardous materials as much as possible without risking yourself.

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**Sample Public Information Statements**

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- ❑ Check your surroundings for fire, and remove any materials that may cause them to spread.
- ❑ If you must move from where you are now, leave a note on the front door to tell family and emergency workers know where you have gone.

Stay tuned to your local broadcast station for additional information from the South Carolina Emergency Management Division.

--END--

E. NEWS RELEASE: Next Steps at Home

**Columbia, S.C. (Date/Time)**--A strong earthquake has hit **(Location)**. Officials from the South Carolina Emergency Management Division suggest you should do the following if you are at home:

- ❑ If you're in a safe place right now, stay there if you can. The earthquake danger may not be over yet...there could be strong aftershocks.
- ❑ If you're at home and there's no immediate sign of collapse, fire, or gas leaks, it's time to take a closer look at your utility connections.
- ❑ Turn off any appliance that was on when the earthquake, hit and check it for damage.
- ❑ Check your water heater. If it fell over in the earthquake, it may have broken a gas, electric, or water line.

Stay tuned to your local broadcast station for additional information from the South Carolina Emergency Management Division.

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F. NEWS RELEASE: Stay Clear of Unstable Structures

**Columbia, S.C. (Date/Time)**--Seismologists have confirmed there has been a strong earthquake in the area of **(Location)**, and the danger may not be over. There may be aftershocks causing more shaking, and the South Carolina Emergency Management Division is advising people to stay clear of unstable structures.

- ❑ If it is safe where you are right now, you are encouraged to remain there. Do not go outside unless the building you are in is unstable.

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**Sample Public Information Statements** 

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- If the shaking starts again, take cover under a sturdy piece of furniture or by an inside wall away from windows and top-heavy objects. You should keep your head and neck covered with your arms until the shaking stops.
- If you're outdoors when an aftershock begins, stay in the open away from buildings, signs, and overhead wires.
- Officials are assessing the situation to determine the extent of damage, and if the danger has passed. Residents are encouraged to remain calm and offer assistance to neighbors until help arrives.

Stay tuned to your local broadcast station for additional information from the South Carolina Emergency Management Division.

--END--

G. NEWS RELEASE: Flashlights Save Lives

**Columbia, S.C. (Date/Time)**--A strong earthquake has hit (**Location**). Officials at the South Carolina Emergency Management Division have consulted with seismologists, who indicate the initial threat from the earthquake apparently has passed. Now is the time to survey your surroundings to determine damage, especially to utilities.

- If you smell or hear leaking gas, open your windows and get everyone out of the building right away. If you smell smoke, or the structure is in flames, get everyone out of the area immediately.
- If you think there might be a gas leak, do not switch lights on or off. **If you need more light, use flashlights instead of matches, lighters, or candles.** A spark or open flame could start a fire or cause an explosion.

Stay tuned to your local broadcast station for additional information from the South Carolina Emergency Management Division.

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H. NEWS RELEASE: On The Road

**Columbia, S.C. (Date/Time)**--A strong earthquake has hit (**Location**). Officials from the South Carolina Emergency Management Division have been advised that aftershocks could follow the earthquake. The Division is advising people who must travel to take the following precautions:

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**Sample Public Information Statements**

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- ❑ It is best to stay off the roads right now, but if you must drive and the shaking starts again, pull over and stop in the first safe place you can find away from overpasses, power lines, and overhanging signs.
- ❑ Once you stop, stay inside your car.
- ❑ If you're on a bridge or an overpass, keep moving - carefully - until you're off the bridge, then look for a safe place to stop until the shaking is over.

Stay tuned to your local broadcast station for additional information from the South Carolina Emergency Management Division.

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I. NEWS RELEASE: Restrict Telephone Usage

**Columbia, S.C. (Date/Time)**--A strong earthquake has hit (**Location**). Officials from the South Carolina Emergency Management Division have been advised that aftershocks could follow the earthquake. The Division is asking the public to use telephones only for critical communication.

- ❑ The police and fire departments know about the earthquake and are responding to the most serious problems first. Please try not to use the telephone, including your cell phone, unless you are reporting a life-threatening injury or a fire.
- ❑ Unnecessary calls to report the earthquake or to report minor damage could keep life-saving calls from getting through. It is important to locate your friends and family members, but it may be best to wait until the initial confusion has passed.

Stay tuned to your local broadcast station for additional information from the South Carolina Emergency Management Division.

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J. NEWS RELEASE: Food

**Columbia, S.C. (Date/Time)**--Seismologists have confirmed here has been a strong earthquake in the area of (**Location**). The South Carolina Emergency Management Division is advising the public that although there may be aftershocks causing more shaking, it is not dangerous to consume food at this

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**Sample Public Information Statements** 

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time. Nevertheless, because of the potential for aftershocks, the public should plan meals carefully.

- ❑ If your power is out, eat the perishable foods and other food in your refrigerator first, then the food from your freezer. You should consider keeping canned goods and nonperishable foods until other stocks are consumed.
- ❑ Unless you're sure your gas and electric connections are safe, cooking outside on a propane grill, a charcoal grill, or a camping stove is advised. Remember that those are only for use outdoors.

Stay tuned to your local broadcast station for additional information from the South Carolina Emergency Management Division.

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K. NEWS RELEASE: Water Storage

**Columbia, S.C. (Date/Time)**--Seismologists have confirmed there has been a strong earthquake in the area of **(Location)**, and the danger may not be over. The South Carolina Emergency Management Division has been advised that aftershocks could follow the earthquake causing more shaking. The SC Emergency Management Division is advising people to store water.

If your area has suffered earthquake damage, now is the time to store water for later use. Water and sewer services may be interrupted for some time, and it is important you make the best use of the water available.

- ❑ Fill your bathtub and any other large clean containers you have on hand.
- ❑ If your water heater is undamaged, the water inside it will be useful for drinking and cooking.
- ❑ If the water in the storage tank of your toilet is clear, you may be able to use that, as well, but you should not use water from the bowl.
- ❑ Plan on sterilizing any water that isn't already bottled. You can sterilize water by boiling it for five minutes, or by adding three or four drops of liquid chlorine laundry bleach per quart, and letting the mixture stand for half an hour.

Stay tuned to your local broadcast station for additional information from the South Carolina Emergency Management Division.

--END--

L. NEWS RELEASE: How You Can Help

**Columbia, S.C. (Date/Time)**--Seismologists have confirmed there has been a strong earthquake in the area of **(Location)**, and the danger may not be over. The South Carolina Emergency Management Division has been advised that aftershocks could follow the earthquake causing more shaking. Nevertheless, people in the affected areas can help.

- Police, firefighters, and medics are dealing with the worst of the earthquake problems. If your area has damage, check in with your family, neighbors, or co-workers. Offer what first aid and assistance you can until emergency workers arrive.
  
- You should remember that small children, individuals with special needs, and the elderly might require special attention and reassurance, even if they seem uninjured. Offer any encouragement you can, and assure them that authorities are aware of the situation and will be in the area soon.

Stay tuned to your local broadcast station for additional information from the South Carolina Emergency Management Division.

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