

**EMERGENCY SUPPORT FUNCTION ANNEX 15  
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

**Primary Agency**

Georgia Emergency Management Agency  
Office of the Governor

**Support Agencies**

AGENCY	RESOURCE
American Red Cross	Information Assistance
Association County Commissioners of Georgia	Notification
Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia	Equipment, Facilities, Personnel
Criminal Justice Coordination Council	Personnel
Department of Administrative Services	Information, Vehicles
Department of Agriculture	Information
Department of Community Affairs	Personnel
Department of Corrections	Personnel
Department of Defense	Aircraft, Equipment, Personnel, Vehicles
Department of Education	Personnel
Department of Human Resources	Information, Personnel
Department of Economic Development	Personnel
Department of Labor	Personnel
Department of Natural Resources	Information, Personnel, Technical Assistance
Department of Public Safety	Aircraft, Information, Personnel, Vehicles
Department of Technical and Adult Education	Facilities, Personnel
Department of Transportation	Aircraft, Information, Personnel
Georgia Bureau of Investigation	Information
Georgia Forestry Commission	Information
Georgia Municipal Association	Notification
Georgia Public Broadcasting	Equipment, Facilities, Personnel
Georgia Public Safety Training Center	Equipment, Personnel
Peace Officers Standards and Training Council	Personnel
Public Service Commission	Information

**I. Introduction**

**A. Purpose**

This Emergency Support Function (ESF) supports National Response Plan (NRP) ESF 15 (External Affairs). This ESF involves collection and dissemination of information by the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA). All primary

state agencies or organizations with Emergency Support Functions will provide information to assist with this function during an emergency or disaster.

Before, during and after an emergency or disaster, the public will be apprised through reports to the news media, the GEMA Web site and the Emergency Alert System (EAS). State services and assistance shall include the delineation of emergency responsibilities and actions to provide the public with essential information and documentation by written, verbal or photographic means.

The function includes a provision for providing information in a clear, concise and accurate manner on actions to be taken by local and state governments and actions to be taken by the public. Every effort shall be made to prevent and counter rumors and inaccurate information. Likewise, the appropriate local, state and Congressional elected officials will be notified on the status of response and recovery activities and assisted with constituent inquiries directed to their offices. The Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) assumes primary responsibility for these functions.

#### B. Scope

To provide a coordinated approach for collecting, analyzing and disseminating information during an emergency or disaster to keep the public, elected officials and media informed on appropriate actions to take and response and recovery activities prior to, during and following an emergency or disaster.

## II. Policies

#### A. Direction and Control

The agency with primary responsibility shall provide an Emergency Coordinator and Alternate to fulfill the responsibilities of the agency. The designee(s) shall represent the agency in an emergency or disaster and provide operational support in the State Operations Center when requested.

#### B. Federal Response

1. In a Presidential Declaration, FEMA will provide information and planning support to the state.
2. FEMA will collect, analyze and disseminate information from respective federal agencies with ESF responsibilities.
3. FEMA - Public and Intergovernmental Affairs is responsible for initiating actions required to implement federal activities in response operations.

#### C. Notifications

1. Local

Local agencies should coordinate with their local emergency management agencies. This will ensure that reimbursements are available if the event is declared as a state or federal disaster.

All requests for state assistance shall be routed through Georgia's State Operations Center using the 1-800-TRY-GEMA telephone number. GEMA personnel will notify the primary agencies. The primary agencies will notify support agencies as needed.

2. State

All requests for federal assistance will be coordinated by GEMA. All public notifications will be addressed in External Affairs (ESF 15).

3. Federal

All notifications of federal agencies will be provided for in the National Response Plan.

### **III. Concept of Operations**

#### **A. Information and Planning**

1. Strategy

- a. GEMA will coordinate overall information and planning activities for state agencies and organizations.
- b. GEMA will coordinate with appropriate agencies to ensure operational readiness of the Intel Function for the State Operations Center (SOC).

2. Actions

- a. Mitigation/Preparedness

- i. Develop a briefing and reporting system to include an SOC briefing, situation report, public information and federal request format for the SOC Intel Function;
- ii. Share Intel formats with agencies and organizations that have primary functional responsibilities;
- iii. Update the information and planning system as required; and

iv. Participate in and/or conduct exercises.

b. Response/Recovery

- i. Begin Intel Function upon activation of the SOC;
- ii. Collect and process information from state agencies and organizations with primary Emergency Support Function responsibilities;
- iii. Prepare SOC briefings, situation reports and geographic data for mapping to keep state and federal agencies and organizations, officials, local governments and local Emergency Management Agencies (EMAs) abreast of the severity and magnitude and provide updates to Public Affairs for media release;
- iv. Provide technical assistance information and analysis to the GEMA Director and SOC Chief, upon request;
- v. Track and record data necessary for federal declaration;
- vi. Maintain financial records on personnel, supplies and other resources utilized and report expenditures upon request;
- vii. Prepare information for after-action reports; and
- viii. Resume day-to-day operations.

B. Public Information

1. Strategy

- a. Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) will coordinate with appropriate agencies and organizations to ensure emergency operational readiness. GEMA will develop and maintain Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).
- b. The GEMA Director or designee(s), through Public Affairs, is responsible for informing the public of emergency and disaster information in the state. Assistance will be provided by public information offices of other state agencies or organizations. GEMA will inform the Governor's Press Secretary of events on a continuing and timely basis.
- c. GEMA will request qualified personnel from other state agencies to:
  - (i) Staff the PIO function in the State Operations Center (SOC) or at the primary or alternate State Joint Information Center (SJIC);
  - (ii) Escort media representatives either at the emergency/disaster site or at the SOC;
  - (iii) Assist with the Intel function;
  - (iv) Assist with constituent, congressional, legislative and/or local elected official services;
  - (v) Supplement efforts of the local emergency management agencies (EMAs) that do not have emergency public information capability;
  - (vi) Provide technical assistance information and analysis to the GEMA Director and SOC Chief;

- (vii) Maintain financial records; and
- (viii) Prepare information for after-action reports.

Georgia EAS will be used in cooperation with the Federal Communications Commission, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), GEMA, National Weather Service (NWS), broadcast industry and EAS operational areas. The Georgia EAS Plan will be considered part of the National EAS Plan and activated according to established area, state and federal procedures.

- d. A coordinated effort to report and document the emergency or disaster will be conducted at the State Operations Center (SOC) and scene.
- e. Situation briefings, press conferences, taped messages, photography, news accounts, injury and fatality statistics and other information will be provided to the news media.
- f. GEMA will provide information and briefings for state and federal agencies and will coordinate state and local information and news releases.
- g. GEMA will post disaster related information on the agency's Web site: [www.gema.state.ga.us](http://www.gema.state.ga.us).
- h. GEMA will post links to disaster related information on the Georgia911.org Web site: [www.georgia911.org](http://www.georgia911.org)

## 2. Actions

### a. Mitigation/Preparedness

- i. Build public confidence and goodwill in emergency preparedness;
- ii. Educate the public as to the mental and physical stress that may accompany an emergency or disaster;
- iii. Develop plans to coordinate with major state level news media for emergency operations before, during and after an emergency or disaster;
- iv. Coordinate with all state agency public information offices and develop a coordinated state news policy;
- v. Inform the news media that GEMA – Public Affairs is the information center for any emergency or disaster; and
- vi. Participate in and/or conduct exercises and tests.

### b. Response/Recovery

- i. Promote the welfare of residents by disseminating emergency information to news media that will foster efficient and positive actions, help prevent public unrest and build morale;
- ii. Supplement efforts of the local emergency management agencies (EMAs) that do not have emergency public information capability;
- iii. Establish and staff an Joint Information Center;

- iv. Continue dissemination of accurate/timely information to counteract misinformation and public unrest;
- v. Coordinate public information and provide updates for Public Information;
- vi. Maintain financial records on personnel, supplies and other resources used and report expenditures to GEMA upon request; and
- vii. Resume day-to-day operations.

#### **IV. References**

None