City of Portland
Emergency Public Information Plan

Prepared by the City Public Information Officer Group

October 2017

I.   Introduction

A. Purpose – This plan provides guidelines for public information officers (PIOs) comprising the City of Portland's joint information system (JIS), and protocols for the operation of the City's joint information center (JIC). The plan will be used to conduct and coordinate crisis communications during emergency response and other situations in which multiple City bureaus need to collaborate to provide timely, useful, and accurate information to the public and other stakeholders.

B. Scope – This plan supports the City's Basic Emergency Operations Plan, is consistent with the City's Alert and Warning Annex, and applies to all City bureaus.

C. Objectives – This plan seeks to establish and maintain an understanding of how City PIOs will work together to communicate to the public and each other in response to an emergency incident as part of the City's JIS. Additionally, this plan establishes procedures for the activation of the City's JIC, and how the City's JIS/JIC connects to a larger regional joint information system. In some situations, the City's JIC could serve as a regional JIC.

II.   Situation and Assumptions

A. Situation –

1. PIOs from all City bureaus will collaborate as part of a JIS to address emergency public information preparedness, response, and recovery planning and operational issues.

2. The City's JIS is typically led by the PIO from the lead response bureau or by any PIO appointed by the Incident Commander (IC) with the active support of PIOs from other City bureaus.

3. The City – through PBEM – is a lead signatory and participant in the *Portland Metropolitan Region Emergency Public Information Concept of Operations Plan*. This plan governs the regional JIS and promotes collaboration between Portland and Clackamas, Clark, Columbia, Multnomah and Washington counties, and other levels of government, non-governmental organizations, and private sector partners with a presence in the region.

4. Portland is subject to a number of natural and human-caused hazards that can threaten public health and safety and create a need to communicate emergency information to the public.

5. During an emergency, residents and the media need timely, accurate information about the situation and protective actions they can take to minimize injuries, loss of life, and damage to property and the environment.

6. Language, disability, cultural, and other factors affecting the ability of residents to receive and understand emergency messages require information to be provided in multiple formats and through a variety of means.

7. Emergencies may develop slowly (e.g. a severe winter storm or flood) allowing sufficient time to effectively disseminate information to the public. Other emergencies may occur suddenly (e.g. an earthquake or active shooter incident) hindering the timely delivery of information to the public.

8. The Portland region shares a single broadcast media market.

9. A majority of the public will turn to television, radio, and social media, particularly through mobile devices, for emergency information.

10. Depending on the size of the emergency, local, national and international media may place heavy demands on City PIOs.

11. The City's JIS may require the use of coordination tools, including – but not limited to – GroupMe, Skype for Business, a Virtual Operations Support Team (VOST), WebEOC, and a JIC.

12. Disasters occurring outside the city limits may impact Portland (e.g. a tsunami on the Oregon Coast resulting in a large number of evacuees or a national emergency) and generate media activity within the media market.

13. Incidents within the Pacific Northwest, but outside the city limits (e.g. major wildfires or a significant law enforcement incident), may result in the mobilization of PIOs from the City's JIS or the regional JIS to provide support.

14. During some emergencies, such as a pandemic event, social distancing (measures to decrease the frequency of contact among people in order to decrease the risk of spreading communicable diseases) may limit the number of PIOs able to effectively respond to the situation.

B. <u>Assumptions</u> –

1. Effective coordination of public information among City bureaus will increase public trust in local authorities and increase cooperation and compliance with issued guidance and directives.

2. Sufficient communications capability will be available in most, but not all, instances to allow information collection and dissemination.

3. Information dissemination resources (including media, social media, and local government) will be available in most, but not all, instances to facilitate the timely delivery of information to the public.

4. All City bureaus will support this plan by participating in the City's JIS, by contributing PIO resources when possible to staff the JIC at the City's Emergency Coordination Center (if activated) in accordance with the phased response described in this plan.

5. In seeking to achieve City public information objectives, City bureaus operating during an emergency without coordinating through the City's JIS will be at risk of disseminating conflicting information about situation status, protective actions, or other incident-related guidance.

6. PIOs will be responsible for developing good working relationships with other PIOs within their bureau, other bureaus, and around the region.

7. The unique demands of each incident will result in PIOs from various City bureaus working together at all levels of the response, from the incident-level to coordinating center-level and upward, including county, state, and federal partners.

8. PIOs in the City's JIS will participate in routine tests, drills, and exercises in order to improve coordination and be more effective during an incident.

III. Concept of Operations

A. <u>General</u> –

1. During an incident, public information resources will be activated and deployed by the lead response bureau. The bureau with functional responsibility for the primary hazard will serve as the lead bureau (per the *Basic Emergency Operations Plan*). Should the response require the coordination of multiple bureaus, the Incident Commander will make a determination to transition to a Unified Command. Some incidents may involve more than one hazard, but the one considered primary is the hazard with the potential for causing the greatest harm.

Hazard	Lead Bureau(s)
Civil disturbance	PPB
Communications outage	OMF-BTS
Cyberattack	Unified Command: OMF-BTS, PPB
Dam failure	Unified Command: Water, PBOT
Earthquake	Unified Command: PPB, PF&R, PBOT, Water
Evacuation (occurs with another incident)	Unified Command: PF&R, PPB, PBOT
Fire	PF&R
Flood	PBOT
Hazardous materials – spill	PF&R
Landslide	PBOT
Levee failure	Unified Command: PBOT, Multnomah County Drainage District (MCDD)
Pandemic	OMF-BIBS

Severe heat (no precipitation)	Joint Office of Homeless Services
Severe cold (no precipitation)	Multnomah County Public Health
Terrorism	Unified Command: PF&R, PPB
Volcanic eruption	PBOT
Water contamination	Water
Wildland interface fire	PF&R
Wind or snow storm	PBOT

2. Upon recognition of one or more of the following triggers, the PIO from the lead response bureau may engage the City JIS by sending an email, convening a conference call, organizing a strategy meeting, sending a text message, or communicating through other means. The PIO from the lead response bureau may request the PBEM PIO or a PIO from another bureau to activate the City JIS, mobilize PIO resources to provide public information support, and identify a JIS Manager to oversee coordination efforts. These triggers may include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following:

   a. The incident involves, or is likely to involve, multiple bureaus or partner agencies (e.g. significant landslide on private property into the public right-of-way).

   b. The public information or media demands of the incident exceed, or are likely to exceed, the ability of the lead response bureau to handle alone without assistance (e.g. high-profile active shooter incident with national media attention).

   c. There is a need to standardize messaging on a City or regional level.

   d. The lead response bureau sends out a public safety warning by activating the Emergency Alert System (EAS), Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA), Community Emergency Notification System (CENS), and/or other communications tools.

   e. An incident outside the city limits triggers an activation of the regional JIS (e.g. statewide public health emergency).

   f. An incident of national significance occurs outside the region (e.g. major terrorist incident).

   g. The incident commander requests the increased coordination of public information through the City JIS.

3. Per a response to one of the above triggers, the City JIS is activated and PIOs begin coordinating through a JIS Manager to:

   a. Provide a common operating picture among City PIOs.

b. Assess current public information response efforts and the need to enhance the City JIS.

c. Determine whether or not to alert PIOs outside the City and engage the regional JIS.

d. If appropriate or necessary, determine who will take the role of lead City PIO.

e. Propose initial public information objectives or plan supporting a coordinated response to the incident.

f. Select one, or a combination, of the following modes of operation outlined in the next section (*III.B. Modes of Operation*) as an action step for moving forward and enhancing City JIS operations.

B. <u>Modes of Operation</u> –

1. Maintain status quo

a. No action is needed other than continuing routine operations.

b. Communicate with the other members of the City JIS if the situation changes and additional PIO support is required.

c. If appropriate, a time will be set for a follow-up conference call or strategy meeting.

2. Enhanced coordination

a. If appropriate, the PBEM PIO or designee will deploy to support the public information needs of the lead response bureau PIO.

b. A regular conference call or strategy meeting schedule is stablished.

c. Coordination tools are used, including, but not limited to, GroupMe, a webpage on Portlandoregon.gov, PublicAlerts.org, WebEOC, and others as appropriate.

d. If the incident is of regional significance, the PBEM PIO or another designated City PIO will communicate with the lead PIOs of the regional JIS on behalf of the City in coordination with the lead response bureau PIO.

3. Mutual aid/incident JIC

a. The lead response bureau PIO will request assistance from other City PIOs and identify the type and kind of resources needed.

b. City PIOs able to provide assistance will coordinate with their bureau leadership/emergency managers/bureau emergency operations center (if activated) and support the lead response bureau.

c. City PIOs providing mutual aid support will deploy to a location determined by the lead response bureau PIO or JIS Manager for use as an incident JIC.

d. If necessary, social media monitoring resources, including other City PIOs or the Oregon Virtual Operations Support Team (VOST) through the Oregon Office of Emergency Management, will be activated.

4. Activate the City JIC/regional JIC

a. If the Portland Emergency Coordination Center is activated and a City JIC is deemed necessary, the incident commander will appoint and/or request a lead PIO for each operational period.

b. A request will be made by the JIS Manager for City PIOs to deploy to the City JIC at the Portland Emergency Coordination Center or another location.

c. PIOs responding to the City JIC should notify their bureau Emergency Management Steering Committee (EMSC) contact.

IV. Organization and Responsibilities

A. City PIO Group (citypiogroup@portlandoregon.gov) –

1. Meet regularly to discuss PIO issues and maintain relationships comprising the City JIS.

2. Update and provide feedback on the City of Portland Emergency Public Information Plan, Alert & Warning Annex, and other emergency plans.

3. Provide public information support to the lead response bureau through the City JIS as requested.

4. Participate in City PIO trainings, exercises, and drills, as appropriate.

B. Mayor's Office –

1. Provide general oversight of the City JIS.

2. Communicate the Mayor's public information priorities for the City in a declared emergency.

3. During normal operations, communicate the public information priorities of bureaus in the Mayor's portfolio.

C. <u>Commissioners' Offices</u> –

1. During normal operations, communicate the public information priorities of the commissioner-in-charge regarding the bureaus in their respective portfolio.

D. <u>Portland Bureau of Development Services</u> –

1. Coordinate with PF&R during incidents involving structural collapses.

2. Coordinate with PBOT during incidents involving landslides on private property that spill into the public right-of-way.

E. <u>Portland Bureau of Emergency Communications</u> –

1. Coordinate with OMF during incidents involving an outage of the 9-1-1 system in Portland.

2. Share alerts with the City JIS received through the National Warning System (NAWAS).

F. <u>Portland Bureau of Emergency Management</u> –

1. Provide leadership to the City JIS and support the lead response bureau PIO.

2. Serve as the City liaison to the regional JIS.

3. Administer the website PublicAlerts.org.

4. Oversee the biennial update of this plan.

5. Curate public information training opportunities for City PIOs.

G. <u>Portland Bureau of Environmental Services</u> –

1. Serve as lead PIO for the release of hazardous materials at a wastewater treatment plan, the release of sewage to ground or water that threatens public health, and extended disruptions of wastewater treatment services.

H. <u>Portland Fire & Rescue</u> –

1. Serve as lead PIO for incidents involving CBRNE, fire, wildland urban interface, hazardous materials, railroad derailments, structural collapses.

2. Serve as lead PIO as part of unified command for earthquakes, evacuations, terrorism.

I. <u>Portland House Bureau/Joint Office of Homeless Services</u> –

1. Serve as lead PIO for severe weather incidents involving extreme cold and the opening of warming centers.

J. <u>Portland Police Bureau</u> –

1. Serve as lead PIO on civil disturbances, mass casualty incidents, and other incidents involving law enforcement activity.

2. Serve as lead PIO as part of unified command for earthquakes, evacuations, cyberattacks, terrorism.

K. <u>Portland Bureau of Transportation</u> –

1. Serve as lead PIO for wind or winter weather (snow/ice), floods, volcanic eruptions, and landslides (in the public right-of-way).

2. Serve as lead PIO as part of unified command for dam failures, earthquakes, evacuations, and levee failures.

L. <u>Portland Office of Management & Finance</u> –

1. Serve as lead PIO for technology failures – including communications outages – and the City's response to pandemics.

2. Serve as lead PIO as part of unified command for cyberattacks.

M. <u>Portland Water Bureau</u> –

1. Serve as lead PIO for water contamination incidents

2. Serve as lead PIO as part of incident command for dam failures and earthquakes.

N. <u>All other bureaus</u> –

1. Provide support to the City JIS, as appropriate.

V. Plan Development and Maintenance

A. <u>Plan Administration</u> – PBEM will maintain this plan with the active participation and cooperation of the other members of the City PIO Group.

B. <u>Record of Plan Changes</u> – The plan will be reviewed by the City PIO Group on a biennial basis and updates will be incorporated on an as-needed basis. Included in the biennial review will be an evaluation of communication tools and methods

in use to determine if changes need to be made to the plan based on new technology or changing practices.

C. <u>Plan Distribution</u> – Primary distribution of this plan will be done electronically using the Adobe Portable Document Format (.PDF). The plan will be posted on the www.portlandoregon.gov/pbem website and shared via email with the members of the City PIO Group.

VI.   Authorities and References

A. <u>Plans and Procedures –</u>

1. Portland Basic Emergency Operations Plan (BEOP) – https://www.portlandoregon.gov/pbem/article/135813.

2. Portland Annex C – Alert and Warning - https://www.portlandoregon.gov/pbem/article/352777.

3. Portland Metropolitan Region Emergency Public Information Concept of Operations Plan - https://www.portlandoregon.gov/rdpo/article/561118.