



## **I. Purpose**

This annex provides guidance for the Kenai Peninsula Borough's (KPB) public information call center/hot line function. It addresses concepts for emergency management actions during the warning, response, and recovery phases. General in application, flexible during response and recovery, it provides the overall structure needed for operational planning and execution. This Annex must be used in conjunction with community and State plans and Standard Operating Guidelines. This Annex may be placed into operation whenever a local or KPB emergency or disaster occurs, regardless of type or cause. This Annex supplements the KPB Emergency Operations Plan ("EOP") which provides the overall guidance for emergency response activities in the borough.

## **II. Authority**

The KPB is authorized by AS 26.23.060 and KPB Code of Ordinances Section 2.45.010, to plan for and respond to public emergencies and disasters affecting the KPB. The KPB mayor or designee must declare a local emergency or disaster to allow full activation of this plan. The Public Information Officer ("PIO") works for and reports directly to the Incident Commander ("IC") or designee.

## **III. Situation and Assumptions**

### **Situation**

Multiple incidents that occur, both small and large scale, generate significant public interest. The demand for public information begins as soon as the incident starts and will continue throughout all phases of response and recovery.

- A. All KPB residents are vulnerable to the effects of a disaster emergency.
- B. The area or amount of population affected by an emergency may not correspond to the amount of public interest in the situation or dictate the amount of information requests received.
- C. An incident that damages commercial communications may hamper the ability to answer incoming calls and call out volunteers to staff the center.

### **Planning Assumptions**

- A. Response to an emergency will likely be required immediately and may provide little or no notice.



- B. Increased call volume to the Soldotna Public Safety Communications Center, Office of Emergency Management (“OEM”) administrative office, and city dispatch centers will occur almost immediately after an incident is reported on traditional or social media sources.
- C. A minimum number of trained volunteers or KPB employees will be available to staff a call center within thirty minutes of a call.

#### **IV. Concept of Operations**

When faced with responding to a local emergency or disaster affecting the KPB local community, KPB officials will establish priorities. Priority issues of immediate concern may include, but will not be limited to:

- Securing the disaster area, ensuring public safety and establishing communications with responders and communities;
- Assessing the unmet needs of those impacted by the disaster and taking steps to meet these needs;
- Identifying and mitigating hazards to public health, damage assessments, debris removal; and
- Repairing damages to essential public facilities and services and taking steps to restore functions.

The call center protocol will occur in four phases

- Preparedness
- Initial Activation
- Response or Recovery by Operational Period
- Demobilization

The activities in these four phases can be expected to overlap and occur simultaneously. Integration of the planning, operations, and logistic efforts for each of these activities is key to successful response.

#### **Preparedness**

Planning and preparedness programs provide the foundation for effective response during a disaster/emergency. The preparedness phase will consist of periodic training and exercise prior to the activation. Providing training prior to an emergency incident is the key to having a diverse roster of knowledgeable volunteers to draw from. Given the short notice required in the initial activation phases, conducting as much basic training as possible will shorten time needed for the center to be functional following an incident.



Exercise can consist of setting up the center and ensuring that the phone system is working properly by generating test or simulated calls.

### **Initial Activation**

The PIO will manage initial activation of the call center once ordered by the IC. Initial activation includes the physical set up of the space, coordinated with logistics. Public Information is responsible for calling out operators for report, preparing briefings and Just in Time training for the incident, and establishing operator schedules. OEM staff will complete the initial set up during regular business hours during “standby mode.”

### **Response or Recovery by Operational Period**

This phase occurs during the response and recovery phases of the incident and is scaled A based on volume and incident needs. Ongoing updates of information will be distributed to operators as the situation dictates. Scheduling and staffing are dependent on incident needs, and the use of resources can change based on needs assessment and IC approval.

### **Demobilization**

When it is determined that the call center can terminate its function, demobilization will be authorized by the IC. During demobilization, the physical equipment is removed and expended supplies are re-ordered. Additionally, all documentation is completed and submitted to the planning section.

## **V. Organization and Assignment of Responsibilities**

The call center is under the direct management of the PIO and overseen by the IC and/or the Emergency Management Director. The call center can be ordered as a resource for other jurisdictions and deployed with approval of the OEM.

For incidents that require coordination between two or more local jurisdictions; the KPBOEM will be responsible for managing and coordinating those activities.

The KPBOEM is responsible for:

1. Assigning a lead PIO to the incident.
2. Approving resource requests specific to the call center.



3. Providing logistical support for the call center either through an activated logistics section or OEM administrative staff.
4. Maintaining documentation through the Planning Section.

## **VI. Direction, Control, and Coordination**

The KPB OEM is primarily responsible for activating the call center for incidents that it is managing, or multi-agency incidents in which the KPB has a legal responsibility or role. The primary objective of the call center is to ensure that normal KPB emergency services, primarily its 911 center, remain in normal operations and are not compromised due to incident specific traffic.

The decision to activate the call center is made by the IC, and overseen by the lead PIO. The lead PIO may assign any number of additional PIOs to manage call center operations for the duration of the incident, or in appropriate shifts. A qualified PIO will manage the center. In order to provide necessary supervision and oversight, the managing PIO will be present, in-person, or within close proximity to call center workers to provide supervision and oversight.

The call center can be ordered as a resource by other jurisdictions and agencies. After the OEM director or IC approves mobilization for that use, a lead PIO will be assigned for supervision and management of the center. In contrast to a KPB incident, that PIO will not be responsible for information releases for the incident, but will solely disseminate information provided by the jurisdiction PIO.

## **VII. Communication**

Communication systems, procedures and resources are defined in the Region E Tactical Interoperable Communication Plan ("TICP"). Some communications systems may be affected by damage done during an emergency KPB incident and workarounds will need to be coordinated with the Communication Unit Leader(s) assigned to the KPB Incident Management Team ("IMT") and the on-scene incident command. Other communications, Command and Control Systems Incident Action Plan (Web IAP), Homeland Security Information Network ("HSIN") and the KPB mobile Emergency Operations Center ("EOC") unit are also available for coordinating warning, response, and recovery efforts during response and recovery.

Public information is to be issued through the KPB PIO; if multiple agencies are involved in response activities, public information will be issued through a Joint Information Center/Joint Information System ("JIC/JIS"). Approval of messages must be obtained from the IC.



The communications equipment that runs the call center itself is based off the KPB phone system, and consists of Voice Over Internet Protocol phones that are pre-programmed for use. The center is typically located in the OEM office, but can be deployed to other locations. These locations require the proper connectivity and equipment to the KPB data network. Before deploying the call center in another location, logistics must consult with KPB IT to determine any technical requirements. Not all KPB owned or leased facilities may be able to support the call center.

### **VIII. Administration, Finance, and Logistics**

The KPB is responsible for appropriate costs associated with emergency response actions and directives issued by the KPB.

- A. All logistical needs associated with a KPB response to an emergency incident must be processed through the KPB OEM or EOC on a resource order form. Resources will deploy in a phased, prioritized schedule in coordination with the affected local jurisdiction(s) and the Incident Command Structure.
- B. Any agency initiating an event response or expending funds without approval of the KPB will not be reimbursed by KPB. Agencies needing to conduct immediate response actions due to life safety concerns shall contact KPB as soon as possible to coordinate response activities.