



I. Purpose

This annex provides guidance for the Kenai Peninsula Borough's (KPB) joint information system as coordinated through multiple agencies and disciplines. It addresses concepts for shared, public communications or the collaborative distribution of individual agency messaging during the warning, response and recovery phases.

General in application and flexible enough for emergency response and recovery, as well as for non-emergency events, this annex provides the overall structure needed for operational planning and execution. This annex should be used in conjunction with the Call Center Operations Annex 10. 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, including the coordination of disaster management between the borough, the State of Alaska, and other municipalities and response and recovery organizations. The KPB Office of Emergency Management (OEM) may activate a joint information center (JIC) or OEM may assist the primary agency to activate a JIC upon request.

Any primary agency asking for JIC activation, should cite this annex when defining a Delegation of Authority (DoA) and/or Letter of Expectation (LoE). The DoA/LoE will describe the coordination expected between an incoming incident management team (if applicable) and the activated JIC, as well as the JIC manager's authorization and expectations as related to the incident.

III. Situation and Assumptions

Initial activation

While the JIS is always "in effect," the collaboration of a virtual or collocated JIC may begin when any of the following occur:

- A. the anticipation of a known event, or in response to an escalating incident;
- B. multiple agencies are involved regardless of timeframe or expected duration of incident type/kind;
- C. the demand for information surpasses, or is expected to surpass, the capability of the affected organization; or
- D. there is a significant impact on public safety.



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Any Member Agency may set up an initial call, teleconference, or online meeting inviting agency public information officers or representatives to discuss the potential need to activate the JIC. This teleconference does not officially launch the JIC, nor does it have to be initiated by the primary agency. The initial communication may serve as situational awareness and agency preparedness in the event that the member agencies are asked to participate in the JIC.

The primary agency may launch the JIC or request that OEM launch the JIC. The OEM will assign a JIC manager based upon an approved list of resources. The JIC manager will collaborate with the participating agencies to determine the public information plan, oversee JIC operations and staffing needs.

The primary agency may request that the JIC be collocated at OEM, near the incident location, or remain virtual. The OEM call center will always be operated in conjunction with some level of JIS operations (see Annex 10).

Borough facilities identified as secondary locations, the OEM mobile command vehicle or the Donald E. Gilman River Center, will have the needed equipment and technical capacity (or be able to obtain it within 2-4 hours) when requested. Member agencies should have an inventory of other places that can serve as primary and secondary locations.

Should a secondary JIC location be used, practices must be established to keep the call center up to date.

Training

Planning and preparedness provide the foundation for an effective JIS. Training and exercise opportunities should be shared by member agencies. These agencies are referred to as participating members when they work together during multi-agency response, i.e. local municipalities, state and federal government agencies as well as non-government agencies that include but are not limited to first responders, foresters, health and social services, utilities, Tribal entities, etc.

The KPB OEM will invite JIS members to review JIS/JIC protocols and lessons learned through an annual meeting. New agency members will be provided an orientation to JIC operations at the annual meeting, by the OEM or by any Member Agency who already participates in the JIS.



VI. Communications

Communications and connectivity needs, wherever the JIC is established, are a priority. Hard/cellular lines, hard/software needs, radio, or network functionality must be determined prior to deploying the JIC. Not all borough-owned or leased facilities may be able to support JIC communications needs.

V. Concept of Operations

The JIS allows for a collocated and/or virtual JIC that is scalable to increase or decrease operations based upon incident needs, impacts to the community, and remaining threats to public safety. Participating agencies will operate collocated and/or virtually as a Joint Information Center (JIC) to ensure the distribution of accurate information, to minimize duplication and to maximize resources. Participating agencies will assign staff, giving them authority to represent or speak for their agency. The JIC will function by way of the established Joint Information System (JIS). (See JIS Manager Activation Checklist and JIC Equipment and Supplies Checklist.)

During virtual JIC operations, processes need to be in place for information-sharing meetings. These can occur through use of phone calls or virtual type meetings. The coordination and facilitation of these meetings will be the responsibility of the JIC Manager.

VI. Organization and Assignment of Responsibilities

The JIC is under the direct management of a designated JIC manager overseen by the primary agencies. The JIC manager should be chosen based upon his/her expertise, experience, qualifications, and ability to manage a JIC and selected for the position based upon experience specific to the type of incident. (See addendum "JIC Manager Role & Checklist.")

The JIS shall encourage flexibility, allowing the JIC manager to work with participating agencies to determine the JIC structure and workflow. JIC operations will include the use of standardized ICS forms; the Daily Unit Log (ICS-214) and the General Message (ICS 213) forms will be used at a minimum.

The JIC manager will ensure JIC functionality during the incident response and recovery phases. The manager will create the scheduling and staffing needs for the JIC with agency representatives and subject matter experts as needed.



VII. Direction, Control and Coordination

The JIC manager will coordinate the JIS functionality based upon Member Agency participation and the involvement of subject matter experts (SMEs).

- Participating agencies have the authority to invite private entities into the JIC as incident needs escalate or change. OEM can also approve SME recommendations.
- The JIC manager and staff will evaluate SME expectations and determine level of involvement.
- In the event that a Participating Agency invited SME becomes an unproductive member of the JIC, the JIC Manager, with consensus from the inviting Member Agency(ies), has the authority to remove them from the JIC. Prior to removal, all efforts will be made to address any issues or concerns.

The JIC manager can be changed as long as any one of these assumptions is true:

1. There is a deputy JIC manager; or
2. There can be a 24-hour transitional overlap between the outgoing and the incoming managers; or
3. Someone with prior experience is available.

Participating agencies may also replace the JIC manager, if necessary, with consensus of the primary agencies.

The JIC Manager is responsible for resolving issues with collaborative JIC products that may be conflicting; in turn, the Participating Agency, or designee, will proof the daily summary prior to release. NOTE: The JIS operational functions do not preclude individual agencies from sending their own communications. The JIC manager/staff are not responsible for developing an individual agency's messaging or representing the Participating Agency(ies).

Each Participating Agency will be responsible for designating a representative and alternate(s) staff to ensure constant agency representation during JIC operations.

Every Member Agency will provide OEM with the name of at least a primary person, with contact information, who can serve in the JIC. If possible, the Member Agency will provide two additional names to serve in the absence of the primary member. Quarterly, OEM will email member agencies to confirm the list remains current or requests changes or additions. (Location of this in Annex TBD)



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The JIC staff will be managed by the JIC manager using the established JIS functions as approved by member agencies. JIC staff will be responsible for bringing additional equipment beyond the basics that will support them for at least 48 hours. (See PIO Go Pack Checklist.)

The JIC staff will be assigned duties such as developing shared key messages, talking points, daily summaries, or incident-related stories for public distribution.

Duties include, but are not limited to:

- Update incoming JIS staff using the “Just-in-Time” methodology.
- Develop or update key messages.
- Develop the daily JIC summary that includes abridged details of operations, road closures, weather/air quality, public health notifications, etc. Each Participating Agency will be expected to contribute to the daily summary and to distribute the daily summary by predetermined deadlines, as well as proofread other messaging.
- Maintain the blog, manage any added blog tabs and monitor social media.
- Correspond with, and gather information, from participating agencies as needed.
- During an incident where an incident management team **is assigned** and daily briefings are being held, a representative associated with the team will attend these briefings and report back to the JIC. Ensure that the DOA/LoE supports coordination between the incident management team and the JIC.
- During an incident where an incident management team **is not** assigned, the JIC Manager will assign a representative from the primary agency to attend these daily briefings and report back to the JIC.
- Answer public inquiries via the call center, email or social media platforms.
- Questions specific to an agency or team will be answered by that member.
- Distribute JIC products using individual agency distribution protocols, ensuring maximum distribution of information. JIS participating agencies will be responsible for maintaining their agency’s key contact lists and emailing any JIC products to those lists.
- Provide written feedback prior to leaving the JIC. The JIC manager will present staff feedback during the after-action review process (AAR).
- At a minimum, all JIC staff will use basic PIO communication protocols. Member Agencies or SMEs that have not had formal PIO training should reference the KPB Emergency Operations Center Guide, pg 8-10.¹ The use of these minimum protocols enhances internal and external communication as well as ICS expectations.



Social Media Protocols

Social media products are an important part of the Borough's joint information system.

When participating agencies collocate in a JIC, or participate virtually, protocols will be established by the JIC manager to ensure consistency and accuracy. The JIS includes the use of JIC social media by participating agencies or authorized subject matter experts (SME) posting official messaging, via a participating member, during response. Participating agencies are responsible for monitoring any information that they, or their SME's, post.

The JIC manager and staff should use inclusive, joint identification platforms from social media to documentation to include:

- JIC letterhead
- Blog post formatting - naming and timestamp conventions.
- Tracking of public and media correspondence via phone or email will be logged.
- Archiving of all correspondence and activity on OEM social media.

Participating agencies may choose to post updates onto the OEM blog during ramp up and prior to the JIC activation. The JIS blog is a high-functioning resource, which supports the JIS from the initial JIC set-up to demobilization. The following social media protocols complement a JIC:

- Incorporating the interagency blog is a standard operational procedure.
- During an active incident, all Member Agencies agree to withhold other posts not specific to the ongoing incident when posting to the OEM blog. For example, do not post non-emergency announcements such as community events.
- Additional tabs may be created to represent multiple incidents simultaneously.
- Participating agencies will receive access to and have authorization to post official messaging onto the blog. Member Agencies will be listed alphabetically on the blog.
- Agencies may use their own logo/letterhead when posting their information releases posted onto the blog.
- Member Agencies are encouraged to post onto their own agency's social media and shared social media platforms, hence leveraging information being released.
- Any Member Agency may post verified information from outside sources.
- The use of integrated social media tools supersedes individual agency limitations on posting information.
- All Member Agencies will be asked to include the JIS blog link onto their agency website and on any official releases. Individual agency promotion of JIC operations is encouraged, but not required.



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Agency social media tools provide an excellent additional platform to distribute post response and recovery messaging, as well as provide year-round educational awareness of the borough-wide, JIS collaboration outside of an incident. Proactive messaging by individual agencies may emphasize topics such as:

- Safety or prevention messaging, i.e., burn restrictions, flood awareness or expected utility outages.
- Promotion and periodic reminders of an agency's involvement as a Member Agency and how it benefits the public during area-wide response.

Recommendations:

- Incident anniversary information will be initially approved and distributed by the most affected or primary agency. The release of anniversary information should be coordinated among participating members that supported the response or recovery phases.
- An explanation should be provided when the blog or individual SM tools are dormant. The OEM-shared blog dormant notification states: *"This blog is maintained as an effort to coordinate and collocate responding agencies' information for easier public access during events on the Kenai Peninsula. The information here is written and provided by the contributing agencies. NOTE: The blog will be updated as the need arises and may be dormant at times."*

VIII. Administration, Logistics and Finance

This annex recognizes that emergency response is dynamic and changes rapidly, however, it's important to establish administrative practices as soon as possible to enhance consistency. As the Kenai Peninsula Borough is responsible for appropriate costs associated with emergency response actions and directives issued by the Kenai Peninsula Borough:

- KPB personnel will track time and effort on timesheets with an assigned finance code issued by the finance section.
- All logistical needs associated with a KPB response must be processed through the KPB OEM on a resource order form.
- Any agency initiating an event response or expending funds without approval of the KPB will not be reimbursed by KPB.
- Agencies participating in the JIC operations will be responsible for all costs associated with their agency representatives or staff involvement. The tracking of time and effort specific to said involvement is highly recommended in the event that response or recovery costs may be eligible for reimbursement through state or federal disaster declarations.
- A primary agency does not need approval to activate a JIC. However, KPB must



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approve any OEM-supported activation of a JIC or expenditures, when the JIC is at OEM. When a DoA or LoE is executed, participation in the JIC financial commitment as it relates to incident needs, will be defined. This annex does not preclude any DoA or LoE expectations, guidelines or restrictions and should be considered an addendum to any verbiage relating to the information function.

Demobilization

The JIC manager and staff will make a collaborative decision when considering the reduction of information needs, the glide path for demobilization and the transition to blog operations only. The JIC Manager, primary agency or the DoA/LoE signers will have final approval to terminate the JIC.

During demobilization, the physical equipment is removed, and expended supplies are reordered. The transition plan and closure announcements are scheduled for public release.

After Action Review Protocol

The JIC manager is required to coordinate and conduct an AAR of JIC operations as well as the JIS functionality. The JIC/JIS AAR Checklist includes a review of JIC staff participation and feedback from individual agencies. The final JIC/JIS AAR will be distributed to all member agencies. One copy will remain with OEM as part of the incident documentation package. (See JIC After Action Review Checklist).

Recommended AAR actions:

- All participating agencies, including OEM, are present for the final AAR within thirty days after incident.
- Non-participating member agencies may attend by invitation only.
- Lessons learned will be shared electronically and maintained as a separate document at the OEM.
- The JIS Annex may be revised based on lessons learned at the next annual meeting.