

CHAPTER 5 – PUBLIC INFORMATION and INFORMATION FLOW

I. General

This Chapter provides how information will be shared during a wildfire event during the activation of the State Emergency Operations Center. Emergency Support Function 14 (Public Information) has the responsibility to establish a mechanism that efficiently provides and disseminates information to the public. The State Coordinating Officer will appoint a lead Public Information Officer who will facilitate the logistical support and orientation for all public information officers working in the State Emergency Operations Center.

II. Unified Public Information

When the State Emergency Operations Center is activated (Level 2 or 1), State, local and federal agencies will provide experienced Public Information Officers to Emergency Support Function 14 or provide access to public information officers to respond to information requests of that particular agency. In the initial stages of a Unified Public Information flow, a plan will be developed. During a level 2 activation, the Public Information Officers represented in Unified Command for Emergency Support Function 14 may include:

- The Florida Division of Emergency Management;
- The Florida Department of Agriculture, Division of Forestry; and,
- The United States Department of Agriculture-Forest Service.

During Level 1 activation, staffing may increase based on the needs of the response and may include the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Florida National Guard, and others as warranted. Each agency will become part of the Unified Public Information.

III. Information Flow

A. Fire Activity

1. The Division of Forestry State Officer in Charge will notify the State Warning Point of any significant fires that develop.
2. The State Warning Point will contact the Division of Forestry State Officer in Charge of any significant fires that are reported to the State outside of those reported by the Division of Forestry.
3. The criteria for significant fires includes:
 - a. Wildfires that threaten structures, or where structures are lost.
 - b. That forces or has the potential to force evacuations of citizens.

- c. Wildfires that cause the injury or death of state or local responders.
- d. Wildfires that create significant smoke problems that may cause road closures to major thoroughfares.
- e. Large significant wildfires that require movement of out of district forestry resources.

B. Situation Report Information

1. The Division of Forestry will continue to produce a daily wildfire summary, which is available at their website. The Forest Protection Bureau can be contacted for any clarifications that may be required from the raw data on the summary.
2. The Division of Emergency Management will extract pertinent information from that site for its situation reports, which will be completed as deemed appropriate for the event.