

DOE 5500.4A
6-8-92

THIS PAGE MUST BE KEPT WITH DOE 5500.4A, PUBLIC AFFAIRS POLICY AND PLANNING REQUIREMENTS FOR EMERGENCIES.

DOE 5500.4A, PUBLIC AFFAIRS POLICY AND PLANNING REQUIREMENTS FOR EMERGENCIES, HAS REVISED DOE 5500.4 TO REFLECT ORGANIZATIONAL TITLE, ROUTING SYMBOL, AND OTHER EDITORIAL REVISIONS REQUIRED BY SEN-6. NO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES HAVE BEEN MADE. DUE TO THE NUMBER OF PAGES AFFECTED BY THE REVISIONS, THE ORDER HAS BEEN ISSUED AS A REVISION.

U.S. Department of Energy

Washington, D.C.

ORDER

DOE 5500.4A

6-8-92

SUBJECT: PUBLIC AFFAIRS POLICY AND PLANNING REQUIREMENTS
FOR EMERGENCIES

1. PURPOSE. To establish requirements for Department of Energy (DOE) public affairs actions for emergency situations, and to provide guidelines for each Departmental organization or facility to develop a public information plan that will ensure that necessary public affairs actions are planned, coordinated, and taken as an integral part of the total emergency response effort.
2. CANCELLATION. DOE 5500.4, PUBLIC AFFAIRS POLICY AND PLANNING REQUIREMENTS FOR EMERGENCIES, of 8-13-81.
3. GENERAL. This Order covers emergency situations involving an actual, potential, or perceived threat to onsite personnel, public health and safety, and/or to the environment. These emergencies can range from natural disasters (tornados, floods, earthquakes, fires) to man-caused incidents (explosions, fires, releases of toxic or radioactive materials). Emergencies affecting the supply of energy resources are covered by separate Order. The handling of the public affairs aspects associated with accidents or incidents involving nuclear weapons, related materials, or components, within DOE, or where DOE acts in a support role to the Department of Defense, requires additional guidance as provided in Attachment 2.
4. APPLICABILITY. This Order is applicable:
 - a. To the Department of Energy, including the power administrations, petroleum reserves, Government-owned contractor operated facilities and other facilities in which the Department has responsibility for the protection of public health and safety and the environment.
 - b. In instances where the Department is obligated by law, Executive order, or interagency agreement to provide assistance in accidents or other emergencies in or to DOE or non-DOE facilities. This includes, but is not limited to, assistance provided by the Federal Radiological Monitoring and Assessment Plan (formerly Interagency Radiological Assistance Program, IRAP); the Aerial Measurement System (AMS); the Nuclear Emergency Search Team (NEST) and the Accident Response Group (ARG); transportation accidents involving nuclear and other hazardous materials; and natural disasters or industrial accidents.

DISTRIBUTION:
All Departmental Elements

INITIATED BY:
Office of Public Affairs

- c. In cases where DOE provides technical support and assistance to another Government agency or private organization.
5. **POLICY.** It is the policy of DOE to provide accurate and timely information to the public by the most expeditious means whenever possible in all situations involving the Department's response to any emergency that may affect onsite personnel, public health and safety, and the environment. DOE operates under an open information policy in the release of accident or other emergency information in conformance with established DOE information policies, the Freedom of Information Act and the Privacy Act, except for the release of information classified for national security purposes or otherwise legally prohibited from release. DOE is responsible for public affairs actions taken in emergencies at DOE facilities. Such actions shall be coordinated with other agencies when appropriate.
 6. **RESPONSIBILITIES AND AUTHORITIES.**
 - a. **Director of Public Affairs (PA-1).**
 - (1) Develops and administers DOE public affairs policy and planning requirements for emergencies in accordance with this Order.
 - (2) Ensures that appropriate manpower, facilities, and equipment are provided to facilitate carrying out emergency public affairs responsibilities at Headquarters.
 - (3) Coordinates DOE public affairs activities in response to emergencies occurring in DOE facilities or otherwise involving DOE personnel and resources.
 - (4) Reviews and appraises annually the operation of emergency public affairs programs throughout DOE to ensure consistency with this Order. These appraisals should be coordinated, to the extent possible, with the emergency preparedness appraisals conducted by the Director of Emergency Planning and Operations.
 - (5) Determines public affairs requirements and takes necessary independent action when prior consultation with the Office of the Secretary (S-1) is not possible.
 - (6) Reviews for concurrence with the field element public affairs plans for emergencies.
 - (7) In the event of losses, seizures, or thefts of nuclear weapons, components, or materials by terrorists or other dissident groups, release of information shall be approved

in advance by PA-1, IN-1, SA-1 and DP-1, through the Emergency Action and Coordination Team (EACT), and shall be handled by PA-1 or higher authority. (See Attachment 2.)

- (8) Inform the DOE Field Office Manager and the On-Scene Commander, through the EACT, at the site of an accident/incident, of any decisions or press releases at the national level related to the emergency.

b. Deputy Assistant Secretary for Naval Reactors (NE-60).

- (1) Develops and administers public affairs planning requirements for emergencies dealing with the Naval Nuclear Propulsion program activities including Pittsburgh Naval Reactors Office, Schenectady Naval Reactors Office together with field offices located at Naval Reactors Prototypes and will inform PA-1 of these planning requirements.
- (2) For the Naval Reactors (NR) program, will fulfill the responsibilities of paragraph 6a(4) for appraisals and overviews of emergency public affairs programs developed for the NR program.
- (3) Requests assistance from PA-1 for those events requiring actions when NE-60 determines assistance is required.

c. Heads of Field Elements.

- (1) Develop and maintain public affairs plans for emergencies for the facilities, operations, and projects under their jurisdiction, appropriate to implement the requirements of this Order. Submit these plans to PA-1 for concurrence and a controlled copy to Headquarters Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Such plans should require that public announcements be reviewed for classification prior to their release, where appropriate.
- (2) Determine local public affairs requirements and take necessary actions when prior consultation with Headquarters is not practical. In such cases provide the Headquarters EOC with the text of any statements issued.
- (3) Provide the personnel, facilities, and equipment sufficient to implement the emergency public-affairs plan for the site(s) under their jurisdiction.
- (4) Assure that emergency planning information is periodically disseminated to State and local planning offices. This shall include educational background information on specific

hazards, availability of additional information, and protective measures. The degree of implementation of this responsibility should be consistent with the degree of hazard potential.

- (5) Assure that meetings are held at least annually with State and local emergency planning public affairs officials to cover public affairs planning requirements for emergencies.

7. MOBILIZATION AND IMPLEMENTATION.

- a. The public affairs plans for emergencies shall go into effect upon notification from the affected organization. DOE has adopted four emergency response levels:

- (1) Unusual Event. An unusual event in progress or having occurred which normally would not constitute an emergency but which indicates a potential reduction of safety of the facility. No potential exists for significant offsite release of radioactive or other toxic material. Activation of offsite response organizations is not expected. Emergency response actions are limited to onsite areas.
- (2) Alert. An event in progress or having occurred which involves an actual or potential substantial reduction of the level of safety of the facility. Limited offsite releases of radioactive materials may occur. For other toxic materials, offsite releases are not expected to exceed applicable, permissible limits. The purpose of an Alert level is to assure that onsite and offsite emergency response personnel are properly advised and available for activation if the situation becomes more serious, to initiate and perform confirmatory monitoring as required, and to assure appropriate notification of emergency conditions to the responsible organizations within DOE. Declaration of an alert level may require the activation of the public affairs plan.
- (3) Site Emergency. An event in progress or having occurred which involves actual or likely major failures of facility functions which are needed for the protection of onsite personnel, the public health and safety, and the environment. Releases offsite of radioactive material not exceeding PRR's are likely or are occurring. For other toxic materials, offsite releases have the potential to exceed applicable permissible limits. The purpose of the site emergency level is to assure that emergency control centers are manned, appropriate monitoring teams are dispatched, personnel required for determining onsite protective measures are at duty stations, predetermined protective measures for onsite personnel are initiated, and

to provide current information to DOE and consultation with offsite officials and organizations. Declaration of a site emergency calls for activation of a public affairs plan.

- (4) General Emergency. An event in progress or having occurred which involves actual or imminent substantial reduction of facility safety systems. Releases offsite of radioactive materials are occurring or expected to occur and exceed PRR's. Offsite releases of other toxic materials are expected to exceed applicable permissible limits. The purpose of the general emergency level is to initiate predetermined protective measures for onsite personnel, the public health and safety, and the environment, and to provide continuous assessment of emergency conditions and exchange of information both onsite and offsite. Declaration of a general emergency will initiate major activation of DOE-wide resources required to effectively mitigate the consequences of emergency conditions and assure the protection of onsite personnel, the public health and safety, and the environment to the extent possible. Declaration of a general emergency requires activation of a public affairs plan.

- b. In addition to the above mentioned emergency levels which are primarily related to facilities or operational sites, this plan also becomes effective when DOE or contractor emergency response teams such as the Nuclear Emergency Search Team (NEST), Accident Response Group (ARG), Radiation Assistance Team, mine rescue team, or other specialized teams are dispatched to an offsite location as required by an interagency agreement or upon request.
- c. A DOE or contractor public information officer will be assigned to the response team involved in any major offsite response deployment by the Department or its contractors. The public information officer assigned should be familiar with the technical area of the emergency or have the assistance of a designated technical expert to expedite the dissemination of technical information to the public. This is of special importance where security and classified information are major concerns.
- d. The Headquarters EOC will be informed of all public affairs emergency actions. This notification should be made in advance of public affairs actions, if possible. However, if the senior DOE official on scene determines that immediate public affairs actions are necessary, the actions will be taken and the EOC will be provided with the text of the formal news release or statement as soon as possible.

- e. All communications among Headquarters, the field element, and on-scene locations concerning the emergency should utilize established reporting channels. If a change in these channels is necessary, all parties should be informed of the communications procedure.
- f. The Headquarters Office of Public Affairs, PA-1, upon notification of an emergency or other incident that has the potential for extensive media interest, will immediately assign a Headquarters individual or team to organize and provide support to affected Program Offices and to the field elements, and to coordinate information activities in Washington, D.C., and respond to national news media upon inquiry. At the request of the DOE Field Office Manager, or when the emergency event falls outside the cognizance of any field element, PA-1 will assure that a proper public affairs response is activated both near the scene of the event and at Headquarters if necessary.
- g. Appropriate coordination will be made by the Headquarters Office of Public Affairs, PA-1, with the Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs (CP-1) and with the public affairs offices of other agencies involved in the response to the emergency.

8. SITE SPECIFIC PUBLIC AFFAIRS PLANS FOR EMERGENCIES.

- a. PA-1 and each DOE field element shall prepare a detailed specific public affairs plan for emergencies including, if appropriate, a section or separate plan for offsite response.
- b. Public affairs plans for emergencies should recognize that the level of public and news media interest may vary greatly and involve occurrences at any of the four emergency response levels. Public affairs staffs must be prepared to deal with extensive news media and/or public interest in even a relatively minor unusual event. While emergency plans should be geared to the four levels for planning purposes, they should reflect the flexibility and capability of meeting extensive news media and public demands for information at any time in the course of an event, regardless of the actual severity of the situation. Such plans should require that public announcements be reviewed for classification prior to their release where appropriate.

- c. One DOE site plan can cover multiple facilities if they are on a contiguous site. Each DOE field element may require operating contractors to prepare facility specific public affairs plans for emergencies that are compatible with the site specific plan.
- d. These site and facility specific plans should conform with the criteria included in Attachment 1.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF ENERGY:



DONALD W. PEARMAN, JR.
Acting Director
Administration and Human
Resource Management

PUBLIC AFFAIRS PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION.

- a. Purpose. The purpose of this Attachment is to establish the requirements for the development of site specific public affairs plans and procedures for emergencies occurring at DOE facilities to assure the effective exchange of information concerning the emergency among DOE, Federal, State, and local agencies, and the public.
- b. Planning Basis. The basis of this plan is the need for an effective system to provide accurate and timely information to the affected public. Personnel and resources to accomplish the mission shall be provided for in the plan.
- c. Funding and Technical Assistance. Funding for onsite emergency preparedness public affairs support shall be included in the overall emergency preparedness funding requests.
- d. Public Affairs Response. DOE is responsible for emergency public affairs plans for its own facilities to include advanced planning and appropriate agreements with State and local governments and other organizations for special cooperation and coordination during emergencies.
- e. Form and Content of Plans DOE does not specify a single format for plans for emergencies: Plans should provide a brief, clear, and concise description of the public affairs emergency organization, designation of responsibilities, and descriptions of procedures and facilities involved in the public affairs aspects of an emergency.

2. PLANNING AND PREPAREDNESS REQUIREMENTS. The following requirements shall be included in written public affairs plans for response to emergencies.

a. Organization and Assignment of Responsibilities.

(1) Planning Objective. Assure that an effective organization is established and responsibilities assigned to implement DOE emergency public affairs functions.

(2) Planning Requirements.

(a) An emergency public affairs organization, comprised of DOE and contractor personnel, where appropriate, shall be identified in the plan together with the responsibilities assigned for the direction and control of the emergency public affairs functions.

- (b) Authority for preparation, review, and release of public information statements and announcements shall be defined and provided in the plan.
- (c) Technical support personnel and/or resource organizations shall be identified in the plan as required by the potential emergency occurrences and unique aspects of the processes, facilities, and operations under the jurisdiction of the field organization for which the plan applies.
- (d) Emergency assignments should correspond as closely as possible to normal duties.

b. Emergency Operations and Response Concepts.

- (1) Planning Objective. Assure that the implementation of emergency public affairs functions are compatible with the general site emergency operations response concepts, and facilitate the exchange of information between organizations both onsite and offsite.
- (2) Planning Requirements.
 - (a) The emergency public affairs functions prescribed in the plan shall be an integral part of the site emergency operations, and shall be incorporated as an essential element of response.
 - (b) The plan must assure that response activation of the emergency public affairs staff and resources is adequate and appropriate to the actual needs created by, or as a result of, an emergency.
 - (c) The plan must assure that an assessment of the emergency is made to provide appropriate response to the media and other inquiries, e.g., public announcements, responses to inquiries, telephone and written updates, and individual interviews.

c. Preparation and Dissemination of News Statements and Releases.

- (1) Planning Objective. Assure that a systematic approach is provided for preparation, approval, coordination, and dissemination of news statements and releases concerning DOE emergencies.

(2) Planning Requirements.

- (a) Procedures shall be developed to facilitate the preparation of news statements and other information materials, assure technical accuracy, and obtain approval and/or coordination for dissemination to the media. News statements and releases shall be reviewed for classification prior to their release where appropriate.
- (b) Procedures shall be developed to assure coordination with Federal, State and local officials concerning news statements and releases regarding DOE onsite emergencies, and DOE technical support and assistance for offsite operations in support of other Federal agencies, State and local government, and private industry.

d. Designation/Use of Facilities.

(1) Planning Objective. Assure that facilities are available to effectively carry out the emergency public information function.

(2) Planning Requirements.

- (a) The plan shall assure that sufficient space, operational aids, equipment and supporting telecommunications services are provided to carry out the assigned emergency public information functions during initial phases of response and to meet the staffing requirements throughout the remaining emergency period.
- (b) The plan shall assure that a facility or facilities are designated, and can be equipped as media briefing centers.
- (c) The plan shall assure that a facility or facilities are designated and can be equipped as media briefing centers for continued public affairs functions during major emergency situations.
- (d) Procedures shall be developed to assure activation of facilities as required.

- e. Exercises.
 - (1) Planning Objective. Assure that DOE and contractor organizations participate in exercises to develop and maintain key skills, and that deficiencies identified as a result of these exercises are corrected.
 - (2) Planning Requirements.
 - (a) The public affairs plan for emergencies shall be exercised as a key element in field element exercises.
 - (b) Critiques and evaluations of exercises for emergencies shall be documented, and appropriate changes shall be made to emergency plans and procedures to correct any identified deficiencies.
- 3. GENERAL CHECKLIST.
 - a. Facilities.
 - (1) Preselcted briefing area.
 - (2) Preselcted emergency press center.
 - b. Communications.
 - (1) Duty officer available 24 hours.
 - (2) Telephone lines.
 - (3) Recording equipment.
 - (4) Facsimile transmission equipment.
 - c. Administrative.
 - (1) Procedures for activation of facilities.
 - (2) Briefing materials, visual aids, and reference materials.
 - (3) Media call lists.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS POLICY FOR
NUCLEAR WEAPONS ACCIDENTS/INCIDENTS

1. INTRODUCTION.

- a. Purpose. To define responsibilities and procedures for a prompt and credible public information response in the event of a nuclear accident or incident involving nuclear weapons, components, and related materials; and radiological emergencies requiring specialized Office of Emergency Planning and Operations and Defense Programs emergency team response.
- b. Definitions.
 - (1) Accident Response Group (ARG): A team of scientists, engineers, and technicians that is trained, organized, and equipped to respond to a nuclear weapons accident/incident.
 - (2) DOE Team Leader: That individual designated by the Director of the Emergency Action and Coordination Team (EACT) to manage the DOE field activities in response to a non-DOE nuclear weapons accident/incident. If the Department of Defense (DOD) or other Federal agency has the primary responsibility for responding to the emergency, the DOE Team Leader would act as a member of the staff of the DOD On-Scene Commander, or other Federal lead official.
 - (3) Emergency Action and Coordination Team (EACT): A DOE team designated to coordinate responses to emergencies involving DOE or requiring DOE assistance.
 - (4) Headquarters Emergency Operations Center (EOC): The Department of Energy center located in Germantown which acts as the point of contact in all emergencies, both receiving and transmitting information pertinent to the emergency. The center operates 24 hours a day and the telephone number is commercial and FTS 301-903-5555.
 - (5) National Security Area (NSA): An area established on non-Federal lands located within the United States, its possessions, or territories, for the purpose of safeguarding classified and/or Restricted Data information, or protecting DOE equipment and/or material. Establishment of a NSA temporarily places such non-Federal lands under the effective control of the DOE and results only from an emergency event. The senior DOE representative having custody of the material at the scene will define the boundary, mark it with a physical barrier, and post warning signs. The landowner's consent and cooperation will be

obtained whenever possible; however, operational necessity will dictate the final decision regarding location, shape, and size of the NSA. (The equivalent within the DOD is a National Defense Area.)

- (6) Nuclear Emergency Search Team (NEST): A team of scientists, engineers, and technicians that is trained and organized to respond rapidly with technical assistance in locating nuclear weapons or materials.
- (7) Nuclear Weapon Accident: An unexpected event involving nuclear weapons or radiological nuclear weapon components that results in any of the following:
 - (a) Accidental or unauthorized launching, firing, or use by U.S. forces or U.S.-supported allied forces of a nuclear-capable weapons system that could create the risk of an outbreak of war.
 - (b) Nuclear detonation.
 - (c) Nonnuclear detonation or burning of a nuclear weapon or radiological nuclear weapon component.
 - (d) Radioactive contamination.
 - (e) Seizure, theft, loss, or destruction of a nuclear weapon or radiological nuclear weapon component, including jettisoning.
 - (f) Public hazard, actual or implied.
- (8) Nuclear Weapon Significant Incident: An unexpected event involving nuclear weapons or radiological nuclear weapon components that does not fall in the nuclear weapon accident category but that:
 - (a) Results in evident damage to a nuclear weapon or radiological nuclear weapon component to the extent that major rework, complete replacement, or examination or recertification by the Department of Energy is required.
 - (b) Requires immediate action in the interest of safety or nuclear weapons security.
 - (c) May result in adverse public reaction (national or international) or premature release of classified information.

(d) Could lead to a nuclear weapon accident and warrants that high officials or agencies be informed or take action.

(9) (On-Scene Commander (OSC)): That senior DOE individual who is at the scene of a DOE related accident/incident at the time of the occurrence, or who subsequently is designated by the Director of EACT to manage the field activities of a DOE accident/incident.

2. PROCEDURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

- a. In instances where DOE has the primary responsibility for emergency response, DOE On-Scene Commander has the authority to acknowledge the presence of nuclear weapons or other potential hazards to the public without prior Headquarters concurrence as a means for reducing or preventing widespread public alarm or when dictated by concern for public safety, but where practicable should first notify PA-1 and the Director of EACT through the EOC.
- b. Where DOE does not have primary responsibility for emergency response, the DOE personnel will neither confirm nor deny the presence of nuclear weapons or DOE involvement without prior coordination with the lead agency or the EACT. Whenever this policy seems impractical or indicates a lack of credibility, the DOE official should contact the EACT for further guidance.
- c. The DOE team leader will neither confirm nor deny the present or anticipated use of the Nuclear Emergency Search Team without prior coordination with the EACT when used in a weapons-related or search mission.
- d. In the event-of theft of nuclear weapons, related materials, or components by terrorists or dissident groups, release of information shall be approved in advance through the EACT (with the approval of PA-1, DP-1, IN-1, and SA-1), until the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) becomes the lead agency. At that time, all press releases must be coordinated with the FBI prior to release.
- e. If the DOE On-Scene Commander designates an area a National Security Area, the news media shall be supported in the same manner as at a DOE facility as established in Attachment 1.
- f. Any weapons-related emergency involving DOE, DOD, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will require the establishment of a joint information center. When established, coordination of all press releases is required with the public affairs representative from the lead organization in the center.

- g. The assistance of contractor Public Affairs Officers (PAO) may be required in case of an incident. However, at no time will a contractor PAO act as a spokesman for the Department of Energy unless specifically authorized.