

PUBLIC INFORMATION ANNEX

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this annex is to establish policies and procedures to ensure a capability to disseminate accurate timely, and useful information to the public on emergency situations.

II. SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS

A. Situation

1. Effingham County has the potential to experience a major emergency or disaster.
2. The public needs information regarding actions to be taken to minimize the loss of life and property.
3. The media would provide a means of disseminating emergency information to the public.
4. Government officials will provide accurate and complete information and cooperate with the media to the extent possible.
5. Tornadoes, hazardous material spills, and other localized and wide-spread disasters may occur which would necessitate warning the public and informing them of actions that they must take.
6. The principal means by which the public would be informed of potential threats to their health and safety would be disseminated by television, radio, cable outlets, also newspaper, vehicle-mounted public address systems and door-to-door notification.
7. The area covered by local commercial broadcast stations is the entire county. Warning sirens cover approximately a mile and one-half diameter.
8. The vulnerability of the local radio stations is great in that both are located within close proximity to rail yards, the principal threat for hazardous material spills. The local radio stations can be contacted by telephone, personal contact, and via NOAA Weather Warning Radios.
9. Due to the small population size of the county and the self-reliance of the people of the county, the vast majority of the public has been made aware that in the event of an emergency, tuning to local radio stations is their best source of information.

B. Assumptions

1. During an emergency the public will want information on proper survival/ response actions to take.
2. The media will demand information about the situation.
3. The number of media personnel responding to the emergency will depend on the magnitude.
4. The local media will usually cooperate with officials in disseminating information to the public.
5. The general public will turn to local and area media as sources of information and guidance.
6. There may be times when disaster strikes without warning and the Public Information System cannot react rapidly enough.
7. Rumors can be expected during any emergency.
8. The county has a high level of preparedness, although public awareness campaigns cannot be 100% effective due to many tourists and transients.

III. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

- A. The Effingham County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) Director will initiate an awareness program to inform the public of potential hazards and appropriate actions to take.
- B. During the response and recovery phases of a major emergency/disaster situation, a Public Information Officer (PIO), designated by Incident Command/Unified Command, will see that information is disseminated to the public by any means necessary (radio, TV, print, etc.). The PIO will work out of a designated information office which will serve as the official point of contact for the media during the emergency.
- C. Response organizations will coordinate information with the PIO and clear all press releases with Incident Command/Unified Command before releasing information to the media for public consumption. The PIO shall also arrange to obtain information from the private sector and voluntary organizations engaged in response and recovery efforts. Information of a technical nature shall be obtained from the appropriate local, state, or federal government or private sector agency.
- D. The above mentioned procedures are intended to provide for the complete and accurate dissemination of information.

E. The PIO shall supervise the information office and communicate with the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to advise decision makers and coordinate public information efforts. News conferences should be scheduled as appropriate to inform the media of developments.

F. Information regarding the status of injured or missing persons, location of damaged/restricted areas, and emergency welfare services, shall be coordinated with the appropriate response agency. Information concerning the deceased shall be released by the Effingham County Coroner or the hospital.

G. The PIO shall arrange a schedule for the activation and release of Public Information personnel to provide for a continuous 24-hour manning capability of Public Information jobs during emergency operations. Should additional Public Information assistance be needed, the Public Information Office shall notify the Effingham County EMA Director, who will notify IEMA and request related assistance from nearby jurisdictions, the state or federal government.

H. Currently there are no agreements with the media for the dissemination of emergency public information, but the local media has cooperated in the past.

I. The PIO will as soon as possible start the dissemination of information to the public, and also receive public inquiry through the public information office. The PIO will monitor the news media, maintain a working relationship, and also immediately act on any rumors.

J. The establishment of a public information center will be given top priority so citizens and the news media can obtain immediate information on the incident.

K. Forecasted Events

1. Coordinate with Chief Elected Official (CEO), Evacuation Coordinator, Mass Care Coordinator, and Warning Coordinator to determine status of plans and timing of actions.
2. Establish and maintain contact with media. Provide preparedness information and any instructions, as cleared by the CEO.
3. Arrange for accelerated printing of camera-ready emergency public information (EPI) material (e.g., evacuation instructions/maps and Family Protection Program leaflets), if needed to supplement/restock existing print material.
4. Ensure distribution of printed material to broadcast media, to preselected locations (e.g. grocery stores), and/or via newspaper.
5. Monitor media.

6. Augment public inquiry and/or media relations staffs, if needed. Set up any additional facilities for EPI operations (e.g., separate telephone bank or media center) with support from the Communications Coordinator.

7. Message Content: the following is a suggested, but not limited to, general content for a forecasted event.

- a) Hazard.
- b) Estimated area and time of impact.
- c) Property protection measures (e.g., sandbagging, taping windows).
- d) Disaster supply kit for surviving 72 hours.
- e) Evacuation instructions (departure time, routes, mass care facility ` locations, etc.), if feasible to evacuate.
- f) Instructions on how to protect and care for young children, pregnant women, and senior citizens.
- g) Instructions on how to protect and care for companion and farm animals (location of animal shelters, provisions and requirements— e.g., use of leashes or cages—for transport of companion animals, etc.)
- h) Other “do’s and don’ts” if not feasible to evacuate, such as stay indoors, close all doors and windows, etc.
- i) How (and how often) government will be in touch with the public during the emergency.
- j) Telephone numbers for specific kinds of inquiry (if staffed).

L. Limited Warning

- 1. Coordinate with CEO and Evacuation Coordinator to determine what protective action will be taken, (limited) evacuation or in-place shelter.
- 2. Complete “standby” EPI instructions with particulars of the event. Coordinate with Warning Coordinator to ensure warning system (e.g., route alerting, door-to-door canvassing) is activated and ensure EPI is being disseminated.
- 3. Contact media to repeat and update initial warning and provide EPI contact name(s) and telephone number(s).
- 4. Monitor media.

5. Message Content: the following is a suggested, but not limited to, general content for a limited warning event.

- a) Hazard; kind of risk posed to people and property.
- b) Area at risk and predicted time of impact.
- c) Protective action instructions. These may address specific groups (e.g., parents with school children in the area) as well as the general public.
- d) Reference to any useful information at hand (e.g., in telephone book).
- e) What government is doing or will do.
- f) How (and how often) government will be in touch with the public during the emergency.

M. After Impact: the following are, but not limited to, EPI actions that may be taken after the emergency.

1. Establish and maintain contact with media. Provide information and any instructions, as cleared by the CEO or his/her designee.
2. Monitor media reports and telephone inquiries for accuracy and respond as appropriate to correct rumors.
3. Augment public inquiry and/or media relations staffs, if needed. Set up any additional facilities for EPI operations (e.g., separate telephone bank or media center) with support from the Communications Coordinator.
4. Arrange for printing of camera-ready EPI material (e.g., Family Protection Program leaflets and health and safety instructions), if needed.
5. Ensure distribution of printed material to broadcast media, to preselected locations (e.g., grocery stores) to volunteer groups or other response and recovery personnel that may go into residential areas, and/or via newspaper.
6. Compile chronology of events.
7. Message Content: the following is a suggested, but not limited to, general content for a limited warning event.
 - a) Current situation assessment.
 - b) Current government actions.

- c) Survival instructions (for those affected or still potentially affected).
- d) How/where to get what help (for those affected).
- e) Health hazards information.
- f) How/where to get help for companion and farm animals.
- g) Restricted areas (for those not affected).
- h) Telephone number for inquiries regarding survivors.
- i) What to do and whom to contact in order to offer help.
- j) Telephone number for donations offers and inquiries, accompanied by donations policy (*send money and make check payable to..., critical needs include X but please don't send Y..., package donations such and such way.*)
- k) How and how often government will be in touch with public during the emergency.
- l) Instructions for evacuees to return home.

N. Internal Coordination/Control

1. The PIO and designated alternate will be appointed by the CEO, EMA Director, or IC/UC.
2. No government employee, elected official, or emergency response group member will talk to the media unless given specific authority to do so by the PIO, CEO, EMA Director, or IC/UC.
3. The EOC will designate the primary locations for press briefings and PIO office/JIC. Other locations may be used as deemed necessary.
4. Briefings by IC/UC to the PIO should begin immediately at the onset of the event. Prior to media interviews, PIO shall be briefed by IC/UC, the CEO, and EMA.
5. Information received by the PIO shall be considered factual if received over public service radio. Any information received over telephone or word-of-mouth should be verified or substantiated before acceptance.
6. General guidelines for media convergence:

- a) Law enforcement will not allow the media to interfere with emergency response group duties.
- b) The PIO will designate an area reserved for media vehicles and equipment.
- c) All media personnel must wear photo IDs unless they are locally recognized media representatives.
- d) Media personnel must obtain permission from the IC/UC before entering an incident area.

7. Press secretaries may augment PIO duties.

O. Interjurisdictional Coordination

- 1. Local/Local — Village or city PIOs will relinquish their duties to county-assigned PIOs.
- 2. Local/State — State law and plans define the framework for local and state coordination on EPI.
- 3. Local/State/Federal — The Federal Response Plan (FRP) calls for maximum coordination of agencies' information releases through a Joint Information Center (JIC) to ensure consistency and accuracy. There will be a single location for media access to the JIC. If a single local/state/ federal JIC is not a viable option, public affairs personnel, decision-makers, and news centers are to be connected by e-mail, fax, and telephone in a "Joint Information System" (JIS).

IV. ORGANIZATION AND ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Chief Elected Official (CEO)

- 1. Serves as primary spokesperson before media, or delegates function to PIO.
- 2. Gives final approval to release of emergency instructions and information, or delegates function to PIO.
- 3. In cases where IC/UC has been established, provides policy guidance on the transfer of authority to release information from the ICP to the EOC should the incident exceed a predetermined level.
- 4. Designates location for media briefings (e.g., EOC conference room).
- 5. Approves implementation of any special provisions for media convergence.

B. Public Information Officer

1. Assigned by CEO or IC/UC.
2. Shall assign a representative to report to the EOC when activated.
3. Assumes EPI functions delegated by CEO.
4. Ensures timely preparation of EPI materials and their dissemination.
5. Ensures that public is able to obtain additional information and provide feedback (e.g., with hotline for public inquiries).
 - a) May establish center for disaster welfare information, and cooperate with any Disaster Welfare Information (DWI) services provided by the American Red Cross (ARC).
 - b) Coordinates with appropriate officials (Mass Care Coordinator, Health and Medical Coordinator, etc.) to obtain necessary information.
6. Ensures gathering of necessary information and timely preparation of news releases.
7. Briefs public affairs officers who go to the incident site.
8. Schedules news conferences, interviews, and other media access (subject to any special media convergence provisions).
9. Supervises the media center.
10. Assigns print and broadcast monitors to review all media reports for accuracy.
11. Coordinates rumor control activity.
12. At the request of the Resource Manager, obtains media assistance in disseminating information to potential donors on unmet needs, items that are not needed and should not be donated, cash donations policy, and other donations-related matters.
13. Maintains a chronological record of disaster events.

C. Emergency Manager

1. Advises CEO on when to disseminate emergency instructions to the public.

2. Assists the PIO with news releases and rumor control.
3. Prepares and distributes to the PIO, materials that describe the health risks associated with each hazard, the appropriate self-help or first aid actions, and other appropriate survival measures.
4. Prepares and distributes to the PIO, instructions that identify centrally located staging areas and pickup points for evacuees without private vehicles or other means of transportation.
5. Establishes and maintains a working relationship with the local media.

D. Commercial Broadcast Stations

1. Store “canned” EPI messages (other than warnings) and disseminate this information at the PIO’s request.
2. Disseminate information when requested to do so by CEO or his/her designee.

E. Local Media Organizations

1. Store/maintain advance emergency packets for release at the PIO’s request.
2. Verify field reports of emergency’s development with PIO.
3. Cooperate in public education efforts.

F. Chief School Official

1. Disseminates emergency information to school population as appropriate.

G. Resource Manager

1. Provides PIO with unmet needs requests from Donations Team to be solicited from businesses and the public, as well as other donations-related information.

H. Voluntary Organizations

1. Provide support to public inquiry telephone lines, as requested by PIO.
2. Provide support in disseminating printed EPI material, as requested by PIO.

I. All Tasked Organizations

1. Provide information as requested by PIO.

2. Clear all emergency-related news releases with the jurisdiction's PIO.
3. Provide public affairs officers to support EPI activities, as requested by PIO.
4. Refer media inquiries to PIO.

V. ADMINISTRATION AND LOGISTICS

A. Administration

1. All ICs/UC and emergency response groups should inform the PIO of any significant event in a timely manner.
2. Information which may cause distress, panic or may fuel rumors should be relayed to the PIO with telephone (**not** cell phones or cordless phones), written messages or personal contact.
3. The PIO should give hourly reports to all ICs/UC.
4. The PIO should submit press coverage summaries, public reactions and concerns twice daily to the CEO.
5. The PIO will submit a chronology of events to the CEO, EMA office, and IC/UC at the end of the incident.

B. Logistics

1. The PIO staff is to be augmented by EMA volunteers or designated volunteers by the PIO. Standard office and communication skills are recommended for PIO volunteers.
2. The PIO office can be located at the EOC where conference rooms, media centers, telephone banks are located. In the event the EOC is not available, PIO will obtain facilities with EMA augmenting equipment needs for the secondary PIO office. Equipment needs available includes PA system, podium, overhead projectors and audio-visual equipment which are presently at the EOC.
3. EMA has an open account at Midwest Office Supply to obtain general office supplies.

VI. DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION ANNEX

- A. The responsibility for revisions, keeping attachments current, and developing necessary documents for the annex belongs to EMA.

B. The responsibility for revisions and maintaining SOGs belongs to the emergency response groups.

VII. AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES

A. The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended 42 U.S.C. 5121 *et seq.*

B. The Illinois Emergency Management Act (20 ILCS 3305).

C. County Ordinance relating to Emergency Management as adopted by the Effingham County Board on January 18, 2005.

D. 47 CFR, Part 73, Subpart G, Emergency Alert System.

E. *Guide for All-Hazard Emergency Operations Planning: State and Local Guide (101)*; FEMA April 2001.

VIII. APPENDICES

A. Pre-emergency Operations Checklist.

B. Response Operations Checklist.

C. Recovery Operation Checklist.

D. Local Media Outlets.

E. Components of an EPI Organization

F. Media Code of Ethics

▪ **APPENDIX A. PRE-EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CHECKLIST**

1. Designate a Public Information Officer.
2. Develop a disaster preparedness program.
3. Develop the local EAS.
4. Train Public Information staff and volunteer augmentees to perform Public Information emergency functions.
5. Establish a procedure for acknowledging and authenticating information reports.
6. Prepare emergency information packets for release during emergencies and distribute pertinent materials to the media.
7. Negotiate, coordinate, and prepare mutual aid agreements, if necessary.
8. Prepare materials for the visually impaired and non-English speaking groups, if necessary.
9. Update Public Information annex as necessary.

▪ **APPENDIX B. RESPONSE OPERATIONS CHECKLIST**

1. Continue to train assigned Public Information staff and volunteer augmentees to perform Public Information emergency functions.
2. Activate EAS if necessary.
3. Distribute press releases and emergency information packets.
4. Coordinate rumor control.
5. Schedule news conferences.
6. Authenticate all sources of information being released and verify for accuracy.
7. Provide evacuees with appropriate information regarding evacuation routes, reception areas, etc. Coordinate with EMA Director.
8. Collect information for EOC staff.
9. Coordinate inquiries and inform families of the status of individuals injured or missing due to the disaster.

- **APPENDIX C. RECOVERY OPERATIONS CHECKLIST**

1. Support cleanup and recovery operations during disaster events.
2. Continue Public Information programs.
3. Compile a chronological record of events.
4. Assess effectiveness of information and education programs.

▪ **APPENDIX D. LOCAL MEDIA OUTLETS**

RADIO:

WXEF - WKJT
206 S. Willow 208
Effingham IL 62401
(217) 347-5518
fax (217) 347-5519

WCRA – WCRC - WHQQ
405 S. Banker – Suite 201
Effingham IL 62401
(217) 342-4141
fax (217) 342-4143
Marv Phillips, Manager
Cell: (217) 821-4961
Res. Terre Haute: (812)-299-1673
(Weekends Only)
Res: Effingham (217) 347-0417

NEWSPAPER:

Effingham Daily News
201 N. Banker
Effingham IL 62401
(217) 347-7151
fax (217) 342-9315

Teutopolis Press
107 E. Main
Teutopolis IL 62467
(217) 857-3116
fax (217) 857-3623

Altamont News Banner
118 N. Main
Altamont IL 62411
(618) 483-6176
fax (618) 483-5177

Beecher City Journal
R.R. 2
Beecher City IL 62414
(618) 487-5634
fax (618) 487-5180

TELEVISION:

WCIA - TV
Box 20
Champaign IL 61821
(217) 356-8333

WTHI-TV 10
P.O. Box 1486
918 Ohio Street
Terre Haute IN 47808
(812) 232-9481

WICS-TV 20
2680 E. Cook St.
Springfield IL 62703

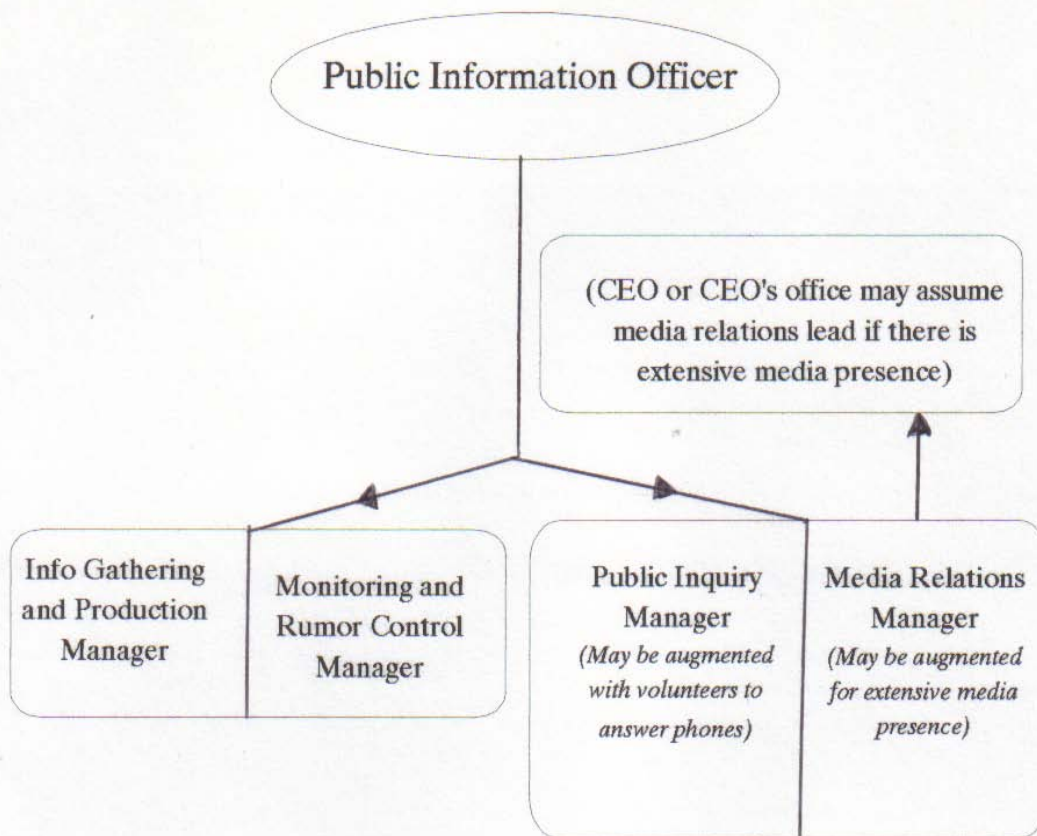
WEIU-TV 51
1521 Buzzard Hall
600 Lincoln Ave
Charleston IL 61920
(217) 581-2911

WTWO-TV 2
P.O. Box 299
Terre Haute IN 47808
(812) 696-2121

WAND-TV
904 Southside Drive
Decatur IL 62561
(217) 425-6397

Mediacom
4290 Blue Stem Road
Charleston IL 61920
(217) 345-7071

▪ APPENDIX E. COMPONENTS OF AN EPI ORGANIZATION



Note: Other organizational schemes are possible; the chart suggests functions that should be addressed.

▪ APPENDIX F. MEDIA CODE OF ETHICS

SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS CODE OF ETHICS

Sigma Delta Chi's first Code of Ethics was borrowed from the American Society of Newspapers Editors in 1926. In 1973, Sigma Delta Chi wrote its own code, which was revised in 1984 and 1987. The present version of the Society of Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics was adopted in September 1996.

Preamble

Members of the Society of Professional Journalists believe that public enlightenment is the forerunner of justice and the foundations of democracy. The duty of the journalist is to further those ends by seeking truth and providing a fair and comprehensive account of events and issues. Conscientious journalists from all media and specialties strive to serve the public with thoroughness and honesty. Professional integrity is the cornerstone of a journalist's credibility.

Members of the Society share a dedication to ethical behavior and adopt this code to declare the Society's principles and standards of practice.

Seek Truth and Report It

Journalists should be honest, fair and courageous in gathering, reporting and interpreting information.

Journalists should:

- ▶ Test the accuracy of information from all sources and exercise care to avoid inadvertent error. Deliberate distortion is never permissible.
- ▶ Diligently seek out subjects of news stories to give them the opportunity to respond to allegations of wrongdoing.
- ▶ Identify sources whenever feasible. The public is entitled to as much information as possible on sources' reliability.
- ▶ Always question sources' motives before promising anonymity. Clarify conditions attached to any promise made in exchange for information. Keep promises.
- ▶ Make certain that headlines, news teases and promotional material, photos, video, audio, graphics, sound bites and quotations do not misrepresent. They should not oversimplify or highlight incidents out of context.
- ▶ Never distort the content of news photos or video. Image enhancement for technical clarity is always permissible. Label montages and photo illustrations.
- ▶ Avoid misleading re-enactments or staged news events. If re-enactment is necessary to tell a story, label it.
- ▶ Avoid undercover or other surreptitious methods of gathering information except when traditional open methods will not yield information vital to the public. Use of such methods should be explained as part of the story.
- ▶ Never plagiarize.

- ▶ Tell the story of the diversity and magnitude of the human experience boldly, even when it is unpopular to do so.
- ▶ Examine their own cultural values and avoid imposing those values on others.
- ▶ Avoid stereotyping by race, gender, age, religion, ethnicity, geography, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance or social status.
- ▶ Support the open exchange of views, even views they find repugnant.
- ▶ Give voice to the voiceless; official and unofficial sources of information can be equally valid.
- ▶ Distinguish between advocacy and new reporting. Analysis and commentary should be labeled and not misrepresent fact or context.
- ▶ Distinguish news from advertising and shun hybrids that blur the lines between the two.
- ▶ Recognize a special obligation to ensure that the public's business is conducted in the open and that government records are open to inspection.

Minimize Harm

Ethical journalists treat sources, subjects and colleagues as human beings deserving of respect.

Journalists should:

- ▶ Show compassion for those who may be affected adversely by news coverage. Use special sensitivity when dealing with children and inexperienced sources or subjects.
- ▶ Be sensitive when seeking or using interviews or photographs of those affected by tragedy or grief.
- ▶ Recognize that gathering and reporting information may cause harm or discomfort. Pursuit of the news is not a license for arrogance.
- ▶ Recognize that private people have a greater right to control information about themselves than do public officials and others who seek power, influence or attention. Only an overriding public need can justify intrusion into anyone's privacy.
- ▶ Show good taste. Avoid pandering to lurid curiosity.
- ▶ Be cautious about identifying juvenile suspects or victims of sex crimes.
- ▶ Be judicious about naming criminal suspects before the formal filing of charges.
- ▶ Balance a criminal suspect's fair trial rights with the public's right to be informed.

Act Independently

Journalists should be free of obligation to any interest other than the public's right to know.

Journalists should:

- ▶ Avoid conflicts of interest, real or perceived.
- ▶ Remain free of associations and activities that may compromise integrity or damage credibility.
- ▶ Refuse gifts, favors, fees, free travel and special treatment, and shun secondary employment, political involvement, public office and service in community organizations if they compromise journalistic integrity.
- ▶ Disclose unavoidable conflicts.

- ▶ Be vigilant and courageous about holding those with power accountable.
- ▶ Deny favored treatment to advertisers and special interests and resist their pressure to influence news coverage.
- ▶ Be wary of sources offering information for favors or money; avoid bidding for news.

Be Accountable

Journalists are accountable to their readers, listeners, viewers and each other.

Journalists should:

- ▶ Clarify and explain news coverage and invite dialogue with the public over journalistic conduct.
- ▶ Encourage the public to voice grievances against the news media.
- ▶ Admit mistakes and correct them promptly.
- ▶ Expose unethical practices of journalists and the news media.
- ▶ Abide by the same high standards to which they hold others.