
APPENDIX P: ACTION PLANS & COMMUNICATIONS FOR AN EMERGENCY INCIDENT

The following document outlines incidents and responses to emergency incidents that could occur during the rodent eradication operations on Desecheo National Wildlife Refuge.

1. Managing an Emergency Incident within the ICS

Because of the complexity of eradication work and the multi-agency participation, operational staff will work under an Incident Command System (ICS) organizational structure. For the purposes of this project, normal aerial baiting operations will be considered an “*Incident*” and any emergency that might occur during the operation will be considered an “*Emergency Incident*”.

2. Role Activation in an Emergency Incident

In the event of a significant *Emergency Incident*, **roles within the existing ICS structure will be reassigned to activate new roles**. Staff positions are activated only as needed. **The Incident Commander is responsible for activating *Emergency Incident* roles**; roles will be activated depending on the incident complexity, experience, training and the judgment of the incident – not all roles may be activated in an incident and not all roles may be activated at the same time. Positions not activated remain the responsibility of the *Incident Commander*.

Figure 1 shows the ICS structure to be implemented during an *Emergency Incident*. The most effective redistribution of *Emergency Incident* roles is for Operational Supervisors and Leaders to become *Emergency Incident Section Chiefs*. Operational Staff (Air Ops, Baiting, and Monitoring) will be reassigned to tasks as needed by the *Planning Section Chief* in order to respond to the *Emergency Incident*.

3. Incident Command Group

Any *Emergency Incident* will be managed by the *Incident Commander* with support from the *Incident Command Group*. The *Incident Commander* will use the *Incident Command Group* to initiate an appropriate response to an *Emergency Incident*. The *Incident Command Group* comprises of:

- Incident Commander
- Liaison Officer
- Safety Officers
- Information Officers
- Section Chiefs

Purpose

The main purpose and activities of the *Incident Command Group* is listed below; these responsibilities reinforce, or are additional to, the responsibilities detailed above for each group member:

- To delegate authority and provide a separate organizational level within the ICS structure with the sole responsibility for tactical direction and control of resources
- To provide logistical support to the incident organization
- To promptly and effectively interact with the media, the public, and cooperating agencies
- To provide a safe operating environment

- To ensure that assisting and cooperating agencies needs are met and used in an effective manner.

Activities

- Receives comments, questions, and concerns from project personnel through the Incident Command Structure or during daily debriefs.
- Manages an Emergency Incident through the Incident Action and Communication Plan.

Incident Commander

The ICG is led by the *Incident Commander*, whose role is to manage the organization (not the incident), by delegating authority, and monitoring the organization and its effectiveness.

Major Responsibilities:

- Approves and implements the Action and Communications Plan for an Emergency Incident
- Establishes an Incident Command Centre
- Coordinates activities of Command Officers and General Staff
- Approves requests for additional resources and for release of resources
- Authorizes release of information to the media, partners and the public
- Ensures incident after-action reports are completed
- Chairs the *Incident Command Group*

Information Officers

The role of the *Information Officers* is to support the *Incident Commander* by managing information to the media and the public, and to manage communications with partner agencies and stakeholders; both information officers would be activated in the event of a significant incident

Major Responsibilities:

- Communicate and manage news releases to the media and general public, including briefings, tours, and interviews.
- Manages communications with cooperating agencies and donors.
- Monitor and forward media information that might be useful to the operation.

Liaison Officer

The Liaison Officer is the Point of Contact for Agency Representatives assigned to the Emergency Incident by assisting or cooperating agencies (e.g. DNER, U.S. Coastguard, police). The Liaison Officer role is assigned to the Safety Officer but only activated in the event of an Emergency Incident.

Major Responsibilities

- Acts as a POC for Agency Representatives
- Maintains a list of assisting and cooperating agencies and Agency Representatives
- Assists in setting up and coordinating interagency contacts
- Monitors incident operations to identify current or potential inter-organizational problems
- Participates in incident planning meetings providing current resource status and resource limitations.
- Provides agency-specific demobilization information and requirements.

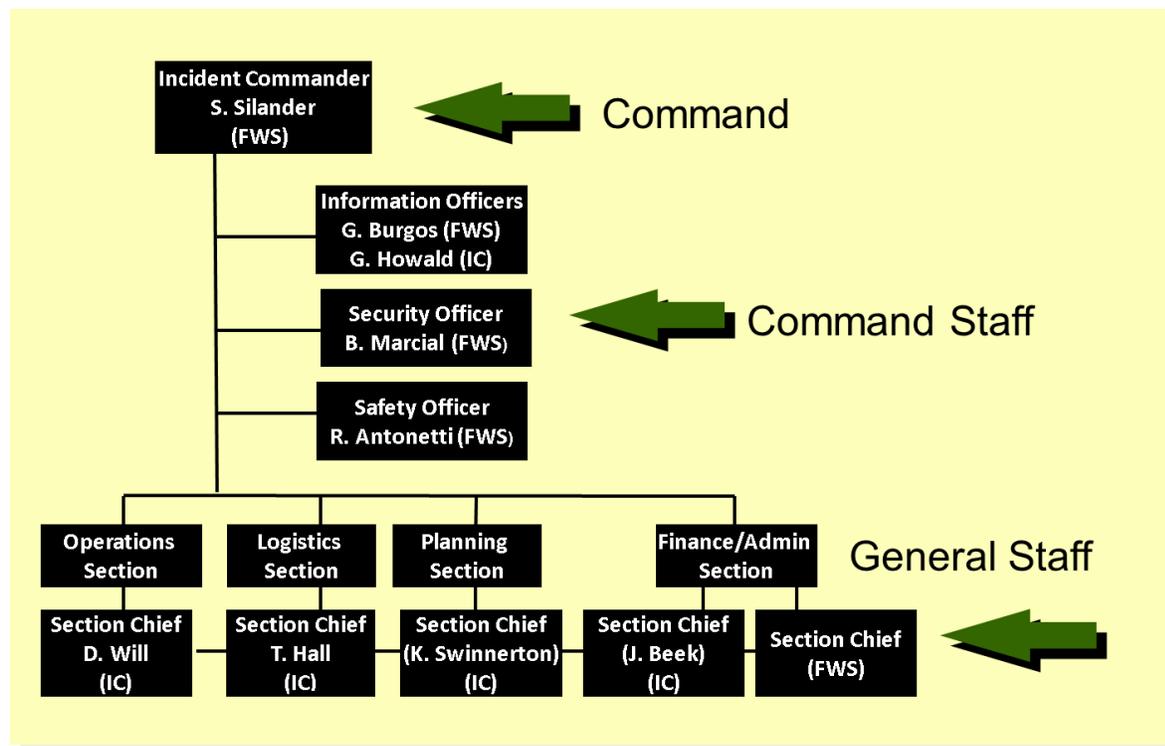
Safety Officer

The role of the *Safety Officer* in an Emergency Incident is to work with the *Operations Section Chief* to ensure safe practices during emergency response procedures. After the incident has been resolved, the *Safety Officer* will initiate preliminary investigation of accidents.

Major Responsibilities

- Identify hazardous situations associated with the incident, and resolve safety issues.
- Review the Action and Communications Plan for an Emergency Incident.
- Exercise emergency authority to stop and prevent unsafe acts.
- Initiate preliminary investigation of accidents.
- Ensure safety messages and briefings are made as needed.

Figure 1. Staff roles activated in the event of an *Emergency Incident*. Note: *Logistics Section Chief*, *Planning Section Chief*, and *Finance/Admin Section Chief* are not part of the normal operational structure, but are activated only in an Emergency Incident.



4. Section Chiefs

Section Chiefs will allocate emergency response tasks to staff; each Section Chief reports directly to the *Incident Commander*. Communication between Section Chiefs

Operations Section Chief

This role remains the same as for baiting operations but tasks are directed towards managing the Emergency Incident through Incident Action Plans.

Major Responsibilities

- Manages tactical operations

- Supervises implementation of the operations portion of the Incident Action Plan
- Ensures safe tactical operations
- Requests additional resources to support tactical operations
- Approves release of resources from active assignments
- Makes or approves expedient changes to the operations portion of the Incident Action Plan
- Maintains close communication with the Incident Commander

Logistics Section Chief

The Logistics Section Chief provides all Emergency Incident logistical support needs. The LSC is responsible for facilities, transportation, communications, supplies, equipment maintenance, food and medical services (for responders).

Major Responsibilities

- Manages all Emergency Incident logistics
- Provides logistical input to the Incident Commander for use in implementing the IAP
- Provides information to the ICG and Section Chiefs on logistics as needed
- Identify anticipated and known incident service and support requirements (e.g. U.S. Coastguard)
- Request additional resources as needed
- Oversees demobilization of the Logistics Section.

Planning Section Chief

The Planning Section Chief is responsible for providing planning and status services for the incident. Under the direction of the PSC, the Planning Section collects, evaluates, and processes situation and resources status information for use in implementation of Incident Action Plans. Dissemination of information can be through the IAP, formal briefings or status board displays.

Major Responsibilities

- Collects and manages all incident-related operational data
- Provides input to the Incident Commander and OSC for use in implanting the IAP
- Reassigns personnel already on site to ICS organizational positions as needed and appropriate
- Assembles and disassembles task teams not assigned to Operations.
- Establishes information requirements and reporting schedules for Planning Section units
- Determines the need for specialized resources to support the Emergency Incident
- Establish specialized data collection systems as necessary (e.g. weather, sea conditions)
- Assembles information on alternative strategies and contingency plans
- Reports any significant changes in Emergency Incident status
- Compile and displays incident status information, including helicopter operations, medical, communications, and personnel transport details
- Oversees demobilization of the Planning Section

Finance/Admin Section Chief

The Section Chief for Finances and Administration manages all financial aspects of an Emergency Incident. Not all Emergency Incidences will require a Finance/Admin Section; *only when agencies have a specific need for financial services with the Section be activated*. The FSC provides cost analysis and financial information as requested, and manages claims and ensures compensation related to the incident. Because two major partners are involved in the Desecheo Operation, each partner (Island

Conservation and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) will each assign their own Finance/Admin Section Chief.

Major Responsibilities

- Manages all financial aspects of an Emergency Incident
- Provides financial and cost analysis information as requested
- Ensures compensation and claims functions are addressed relative to the Emergency Incident
- Gathers pertinent information from briefings with relevant agencies
- Develops an operating plan for the Finance/Admin Section; fills Section supply and support needs
- Meets with partner and cooperating agency representatives as needed
- Maintains daily contact with agencies administrative offices on finance matters
- Provides financial input for demobilization planning
- Ensures all obligation documents initiated at the incident are properly prepared and completed
- Briefs agency administrative personnel on all incident-related financial issues needing follow-up

5. Operational Responses to an Emergency Incident

In the event of an *Emergency Incident*, all activities should be temporarily suspended (stopped) until the incident is fully understood.

Several options are available for suspending operations:

1. Continue as Normal

If the incident does not drastically impact or impede the continuation of the operation:

- *Incident Commander* will assign specific tasks to *Section Chiefs* as needed.

2. Slow Down

Operation may need to be slowed down, e.g. due to temporary loss of machinery which slows bait loading or application, re-assignment of personnel to non-serious emergency, etc.

- Implemented when some or all aspects of implementation need to be slowed down but can continue while other actions are being carried out.

3. Time Delay

A time delay can be implemented for the amount of time needed, e.g. to complete minor repairs, weather changes, etc.

- Implemented when the time delay can be specified (in minutes/hours).

4. Indefinite Time Delay

A delay may be needed for an unspecified amount of time, for repairs, weather, etc. Personnel should remain ready and standing by.

- Implemented when an accurate time requirement cannot be established.

5. Postpone

If operation is unable to continue and cannot resume the same day, e.g. a forecasted storm system, serious mechanical failure, legal issues, etc.

- Implemented when operation can resume in a specified number of days.

6. Full Stop

A full stop should be implemented for any incident with a high or potentially high level of seriousness:

- when life threatening situations arise
- when the situation becomes completely uncontrollable and dangerous.
- when the nature of the situation requires it
- when the situation requires a safe and thorough assessment.
- when an emergency response requires activities to temporarily cease

6. Evaluating the Appropriate Incident Response

A general approach to an emergency situation should proceed as follows:

- 1) Report the incident to the appropriate Line Manager
- 2) Line Manager notifies Incident Commander
- 3) Incident Commander decides on course of action (Full stop or Delay)
- 4) Response to situation should be developed based on response protocols available
- 5) Appropriate actions should be taken in a safe and timely manner
- 6) When incident is resolved, Incident Commander consults with the Operations Advisory Group to enable operations to proceed

Slow-down Emergency Incidents

Examples of *Emergency Incidents* that may not require immediate **Full-Stop** (time delay options 1 – 5 above) are:

Personnel Injury

- Non-life threatening injury at staging site or bait loading site caused by heavy machinery, lifting heavy equipment, etc.
- Non-life threatening injury or illness such as heat exhaustion, dehydration, fainting, or allergic insect sting, etc.
- Non-life threatening injury on Desecheo such joint or muscle injury, fractured or broken limb, falling, burns etc.
- Non-life threatening injury or illness from HazMat use (rodent bait, ant bait, fuel)
- Minor illness (asthma, headaches, cold, flu, digestive problems)

Equipment Failure

- Forklift mechanical failure or breakdown
- Helicopter mechanical failure or breakdown
- Spreader bucket malfunction
- Equipment malfunction or breakage (e.g. GIS)

Bait or Fuel Spill

- Incidental bait spill at staging site or bait loading site
- Incidental fuel spill at staging site or bait loading site

Operational Issues

- Over-baiting
- Insufficient bait available

Full-Stop Emergency Incidents

Examples of Emergency Incidents that require an immediate **Full-Stop** are:

- Helicopter set-down
- Helicopter crash
- Overdue aircraft
- Boat crash
- Overdue boat
- Personnel evacuation
- Bait bucket (empty or with bait) dropped into sea / onto land
- External cargo load dropped into sea / onto land
- Earthquake/Tsunami alert
- Life threatening injury

Provided below is a communications pathway for possible **Full-Stop Emergency Incidents** for the Desecheo baiting operations, in order to decide upon and implement additional actions needed to respond sufficiently to the incident. When a Full-Stop emergency has been resolved, the *Incident Command Group* will meet with the *Operations Advisory Group* to decide on the actions needed to resume the baiting operation.

Each checklist should be used together with the relevant Safety Plan or Emergency Response Plan for the particular incident, as follows:

- Appendix L: Helicopter Safety
- Pathfinder Aviation Helicopter Safety Plan
- Appendix M: Injured Persons Action Plan: On-island
- Appendix N: Injured Persons Action Plan: Rincon Operations Base
- Appendix O: Desecheo Emergency Contacts
- Appendix S: Bait Spill Protocols
- Appendix T: Fuel Spill Protocols

Helicopter Crash

Operations will come to a FULL-STOP until further notice

- A. Helicopter crash over water
- B. Helicopter crash over land
- C. Helicopter pilot suffers injury or illness causing crash

Response

- 1. Air Ops Supervisor notifies Incident Commander immediately
- 2. Incident Commander notified USCG, request Search and Rescue
- 3. Incident Commander notifies all personnel to STOP and standby
- 4. Air Ops Supervisor notifies Pathfinder Management:
(907) 226-2800 or (907) 350-3355 or (907) 617-9896
or (907) 373-8444
 - a. Pathfinder Management notifies NTSB Communications Center at
202-314-6290
- 5. Incident Commander meets with Section Chiefs to determine response action
- 6. Section Chiefs delegate response tasks to staff
- 7. If personnel are injured, Injured Persons Action Plan is implemented

Helicopter Set Down

Operations will come to a FULL-STOP until further notice

- A. Helicopter mechanical failure requiring immediate set down
- B. Helicopter pilot suffers injury or illness requiring immediate set down
- C. Helicopter on low fuel requiring immediate set down
- D. Helicopter bird strike requiring immediate set down

Response

- 1. Air Ops Supervisor notifies Incident Commander immediately
- 2. Incident Commander notifies all personnel to STOP and standby
- 3. Incident Commander meets with Section Chiefs to determine response action
- 4. Section Chiefs delegate response tasks to staff
- 5. If personnel are injured, Injured Persons Action Plan is implemented

Overdue Aircraft

Operations will come to a FULL-STOP until further notice

- A. Helicopter exceeds ETA by fifteen minutes.

Response

1. Air Ops Supervisor attempts radio contact with pilot on all channels.
2. Air Ops Supervisor contacts Marine Compliance Supervisor and Off-island Support for helicopter visual/radio contact
3. If no helicopter contact, Air Ops Supervisor notifies Incident Commander
4. Incident Commander notifies USCG, requests Search & Rescue
5. Air Ops Supervisor notifies Pathfinder Management:
(907) 226-2800 or (907) 350-3355 or (907) 617-9896
or (907) 373-8444
 - a. Pathfinder management notifies NTSB Communications Center at 202-314-6290
6. Incident Commander meets with Section Chiefs to determine response action
7. Section Chiefs delegate response tasks to staff

Boat Crash

Operations will come to a FULL-STOP until further notice

- A. Boat crash in water

Response

1. Marine Compliance Supervisor notifies Incident Commander immediately
2. Incident Commander notifies USCG, requests Search & Rescue
3. Incident Commander meets with Section Chiefs to determine response action
4. Incident Commander notifies all personnel to STOP and standby
5. Section Chiefs delegate response tasks to staff
6. If personnel are injured, Injured Persons Action Plan is implemented

Overdue Boat

Operations will come to a FULL-STOP until further notice

- A. Boat exceeds ETA by 30 minutes

Response

1. Marine Compliance Supervisor attempts radio contact with boat
2. Marine Compliance Supervisor contacts Air Ops Supervisor for helicopter visual/radio contact
3. If no boat contact, Marine Compliance Supervisor notifies Incident Commander
4. Incident Commander notifies USCG, requests Search & Rescue
5. Incident Commander notifies all personnel to STOP and standby
6. Incident Commander meets with Section Chiefs to determine response action
7. Section Chiefs delegate response tasks to staff

Injured Personnel Evacuation

Operations will come to a FULL-STOP until further notice

- A. Injured Personnel on Desecheo requires evacuation
- B. Injured personnel at Rincon requires evacuation

Response

1. First Aid Officer notifies Operations Section Chief of evacuation need
2. Operations Section Chief notifies Incident Commander of evacuation need
3. IC notifies all personnel to STOP and standby
4. First Aid Officer on-site implements Injured Persons Action Plan

Bait bucket dropped from helicopter

Operations will come to a FULL-STOP until further notice

- A. Bait bucket containing bait dropped into sea / onto land
- B. Empty bait bucket dropped into sea / onto land

Response

- 1. Air Ops Supervisor notifies Incident Commander immediately
- 2. Incident Commander notifies all personnel to STOP and standby
- 3. Incident Commander meets with Section Chiefs to determine next action
- 4. Section Chiefs implement Bait Spill Protocols

External cargo dropped from helicopter

Operations will come to a FULL-STOP until further notice

- A. External cargo load dropped into sea / onto land

Response

1. Air Ops Supervisor notifies Incident Commander immediately
2. Incident Commander notifies all personnel to STOP and standby
3. Incident Commander notifies USCG
4. Incident Commander meets with Section Chiefs to determine next action

Earthquake/Tsunami Alert

Operations will come to a FULL-STOP until further notice

- A. Personnel experience earthquake tremors on Desecheo/Rincon
- B. Earthquake/Tsunami warning received from Emergency Services

Response

1. Monitoring Leader (Desecheo) / Operations Section Chief (Rincon) notifies Incident Commander
2. Incident Commander notifies all personnel to STOP and standby
3. Safety Officer contacts emergency services to determine risk level
4. Safety Officer notifies Incident Commander of risk level
5. Incident Commander meets with Section Chiefs to decide appropriate action.

7. Communications for an Emergency Incident

The following plan is a framework for communicating about an Emergency Incident among partners. It is not a plan for managing an emergency incident, but a framework for communicating about it. The plan is implemented by the Emergency Incident Communications Team (EICT) to manage internal and external information sharing.

Communications Goal

- To proactively and reactively manage communications to ensure the successful completion of the project while maintaining personnel safety and security.

Communications Objectives

- Help stakeholders, public and media focus on known facts and positive responses.
- Demonstrate that partners are responsible, professional organizations committed to nature and people.
- Demonstrate that partners are doing everything possible to protect people and nature.
- Maintain support and confidence of stakeholders, community groups and the public.

7.1. Possible Scenarios requiring Communications Team Response

Operational Emergency Incidents

Significant *Emergency Incidents* assigned Incident Action Plans (see Section 2) that require a **Full-Stop Action** to operations and a Communications Team Response are:

- Helicopter set-down
- Helicopter crash
- Overdue aircraft
- Boat crash
- Overdue boat
- Personnel evacuation
- Bait bucket (empty or with bait) dropped into sea / onto land
- External cargo load dropped into sea / onto land
- Earthquake/Tsunami alert

Situational Emergency Incidents

Other incidents which may require a Communications Team Response, and which could also result in a complete stop of operations, are:

- Outrage protests
- Negative media coverage of project
- Persistent campaigning against project and/or partners
- Law suit filed
- Release of information (intentionally/accidentally) that could lead to negative media coverage
- Illegal activities during Operations

7.2. Communications Team

The Communications Team will comprise of representatives from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Project Lead) and Island Conservation.

For each organization, a Point of Contact and a Spokesperson will be assigned. Each organization may assign additional roles to internal staff to assist with information gathering and production of media materials.

Spokesperson: the role of the Spokesperson is to act as the primary representative of his or her organization in media interviews, press briefings, press conferences, etc. He or she will speak on behalf of the organization and represent the organization's interests and participation in the Desecheo Island Restoration Project. The Spokesperson must be prepared to speak on behalf of the organization and commit to being available for media interviews. Situations involving serious injuries, fatalities or significant property loss almost always call for a senior management Spokesperson.

Point of Contact: the role of the Point of Contact is to act, for each organization, as an off-site resource to the project and an off-site advisor. The Point of Contact may assist by providing or obtaining outside expert advice for operational questions or assist with facilitating external response to an emergency incident, as needed. The Point of Contact also briefs other members of his or her organization about the progress of the project and any emergency incident.

Table 1. The Communications Team: roles, responsibilities, and contact details

Name	Organizational & Operational Position	Agency	Roles and Responsibilities	Cell	Office	Home	Email
Susan Silander	Project Lead Incident Commander Spokesperson Agency Point of	USFWS	Manages Emergency Incident Leads Incident Command Group Manages Emergency Services Agencies (USCG, NTSB) Conducts media briefings Approves materials for media release Primary contact for USFWS (Atlanta/Washington DC) Informs USFWS on Emergency Incidents Obtains expert advice for ICG & OAG Briefs agency on progress and Emergencies	(787) 504-5938	(787) 643-6491 (787) 851-7258 ext. 301		Susan_Silander@fws.gov [underscore]
Gregg Howald	Conservation Spokesperson Agency Point of	Island Conservation	Conducts media briefings Approves materials for media release Informs Island Conservation on Emergency Incidents Off-site resource Obtains expert advice for ICG & OAG Can assist with Emergency Incident Response Briefs agency on progress and Emergencies	(250) 420-7116	(831) 420-7115		Gregg.howald@islandconservation.org
Gisella Burgos	Visitor Services Specialist Information Officer	USFWS	Agency representative for information requests Provides critical information to Spokespeople Assists with writing media articles & statements Assembles photographic and video media Monitors and archives media information Manages media releases in Puerto Rico Arranges interviews Coordinates briefings/media releases	(787) 946-6230	(787) 851-7258 ext. 311		Gisella_Burgos@fws.gov [underscore]

Media Releases

Media statements and articles to represent an *Emergency Incident* should be produced prior to the beginning of Baiting Operations (March 13, 2012).

Statements and articles should be collaboratively written and agreed upon before release. In the event of an *Emergency Incident*, ONE press release from partners will be released.

For media statements released in reaction to an *Emergency Incident*, a list of newspapers, websites, and targeted media to which to release information is as follows:

Information Sharing within the Partnership

Each Spokesperson is responsible for disseminating information within their own agency. However, release of that information should be coordinated between agencies so that each agency has the same information simultaneously.

- *The USFWS* will want to disseminate information within the Caribbean Islands NWR Office, the Southeast Regional Office (Atlanta), the Washington, DC Office and maybe others.
- *Island Conservation* will want to disseminate information within the organization to the Management Team, Board members, and donors.

Information Sharing Outside of the Partnership

Response to an *Operational Emergency Incident* may require information sharing with Emergency Rescue Services in order to implement an emergency response, such as the U.S. Coastguard and National Transportation Security Board. In these scenarios, information dissemination will be managed by the Operational *Safety Officer* within the *Incident Command Group*.

Prior to operations, FWS Law Enforcement Officers will notify the following Emergency Services about the operational activities on Desecheo:

- U.S. Coastguard
- Police Air Unit (FURA)
- State Police
- 911
- Fire Department
- Civil Defense (Puerto Rico Emergency Management Agency)

Response to a *Situational Emergency Incident* may require information sharing with other Federal and Puerto Rico agencies, such as EPA, USDA, Department of Agriculture, Department of Natural Resources and the Environment. In these scenarios, information dissemination will be managed by the Agency Spokespeople, Susan Silander and Brad Keitt.

Unintentional Release of Information

During an Emergency Incident, every effort will be made to ensure that any intentional information release adheres to the Chain-of-Command presented in the Incident Command System structure that

guides the Operations. Each agency will brief their personnel on the correct procedures for releasing information using email, photos and video via mobile phones, social networks such as Twitter and Facebook, and verbally. Each agency should recognize the sensitivity of some information during an Emergency Incident, especially if personnel are involved, and manage staff and information release appropriately.

Figure 2. Information flow during an Emergency Incident

