



Appendix D-1: Joint Information Center (JIC) and Joint Information System Guidelines

JIS and JIC Intent and Purpose

The intent and purpose of organizing a Joint Information Center (JIC) is to support impacted communities *to help protect citizens by providing information to them so they can make informed decisions and avoid risks*. The RDSTF guidelines provide an organizational process and structure that pre-identifies trained and qualified PIOs from jurisdictions and disciplines throughout the State. These PIOs may be deployed to support local jurisdictions in their efforts to coordinate press and public information during an emergency.

Definition of the Joint Information JIS and JIC

The Public Information Joint Information System (JIS) is the organizational model and process for providing pre- and post-event emergency communications support for impacted communities. The system is designed to promote consolidated public information through inter-agency cooperation. In Florida, the system is governed by the Florida Comprehensive Emergency Plan (CEMP). It is comprised of local government, local and state EOCs, the RDSTFs, and federal agency representatives. The JIS is responsible for handling all public information needs that accompany large-scale incidents.

The Joint Information Center (JIC) is the designated physical location from which public information is coordinated and released. The JIC may be established at any location determined by the local jurisdiction(s) involved, but should always work closely with the local EOC. The JIC functions best when all components are co-located in a single location. The location of the JIC should be pre-determined, if possible, and the site should be evaluated to ensure that it is large enough accommodate sufficient staff, telecommunications equipment and computer support. If circumstances prohibit co-location, the JIC components can operate from different physical locations as long as the organizational integrity is maintained and operational support is available.

The JIC is responsible for interfacing with the public and media and/or with other agencies with incident-related information requirements. The JIC develops accurate and complete information on the incident's cause, size, and current situation; resources committed; and other matters of general interest for both internal and external communication. The JIC may also perform a key public information-monitoring role.

Whether the organizational structure is a *single command* or a *unified command*, there should only be one lead PIO. Assistants may be assigned from other agencies or departments involved. The Lead JIC PIO, or designee, must approve the release of all incident-related information in coordination with the Incident Commander. MAC¹ PIOs, if deployed, will provide coordination and staff support to the Local JIC PIO and coordinate messages on behalf of the MAC Group Coordinator.

The JIC provides an organized, integrated, and coordinated mechanism to ensure the delivery of understandable, timely, accurate, and consistent information to the public in a crisis. It includes the plans, protocols, and a structure used to provide information to the public during incident operations. It encompasses all public information operations related to an incident, including all Federal, State, local, tribal and private organization PIOs, staff, and JICs established to support an incident.

¹ Multi-Agency Coordination (MAC) Group



Key elements include the following:

- Inter-agency coordination and integration;
- Developing and delivering coordinated messages;
- Support for decision-makers; and
- Flexibility, modularity, and adaptability.

It is important for the JIC to have the most current and accurate information regarding incident management activities. The JIC provides the organizational structure for coordinating and disseminating official information. JICs may be established at each level of incident management, as required. Note the following:

- The JIC must include representatives from each jurisdiction, agency, private sector, and nongovernmental organization involved in incident management activities.
- A single JIC location is preferable, but the system should be flexible and adaptable enough to accommodate multiple JIC locations when the circumstances of an incident require. Multiple JICs may be needed for a complex incident spanning a wide geographic area or multiple jurisdictions.

Each JIC must have procedures and protocols to communicate and coordinate effectively with other JICs, as well as with other appropriate components of the ICS organization.

JIC Organization Structure (Figures 1, 2, 3)

The JIC organizational structure defined below is recommended for use by local jurisdictions and RDSTF Public Information Officers to manage large-scale events or catastrophic incidents. The structure is scalable and flexible, which means that the functional components contained within the JIC can be established, as needed, and expanded or contracted to match the information needs of the event or incident.

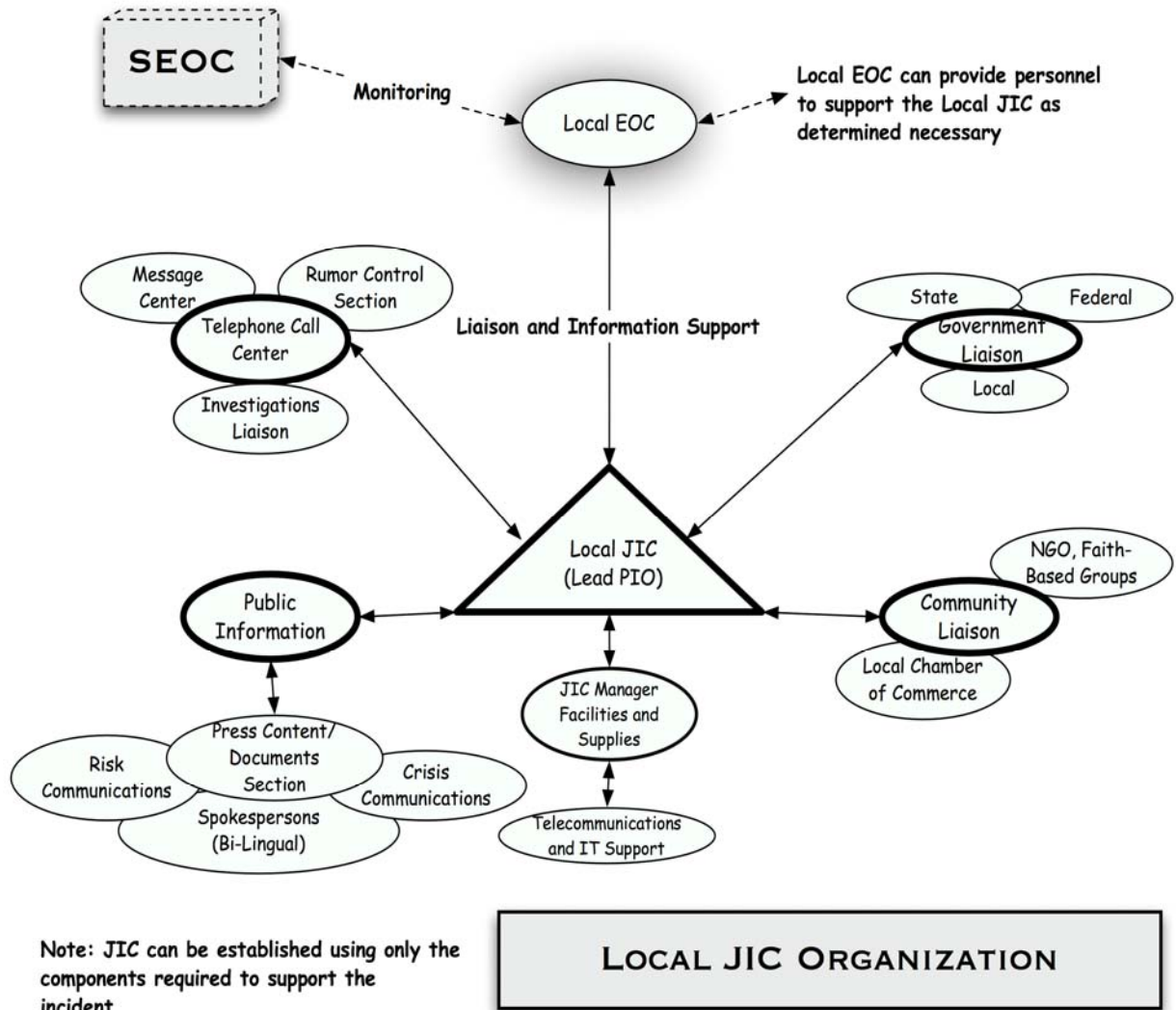
The JIC structure works equally well for a local PIO, EOC, MAC, or any other coordination entity. Accordingly, the three organization charts depict JIC structures at various levels of operation within the Florida EOC activation system.

Local jurisdictions that do not possess a sufficient number of trained personnel to staff a full function JIC may use resources from other local jurisdictions or request JIC staff support from the local EOC or RDSTF.

NOTE: Some local jurisdictions will not be able to staff and operate a JIC within its available resources. The JIC can be staffed and supported by local agencies, local EOCs, the RDSTF MAC, or any other established and recognized support organization. Catastrophic incidents will require regional response, support and coordination.



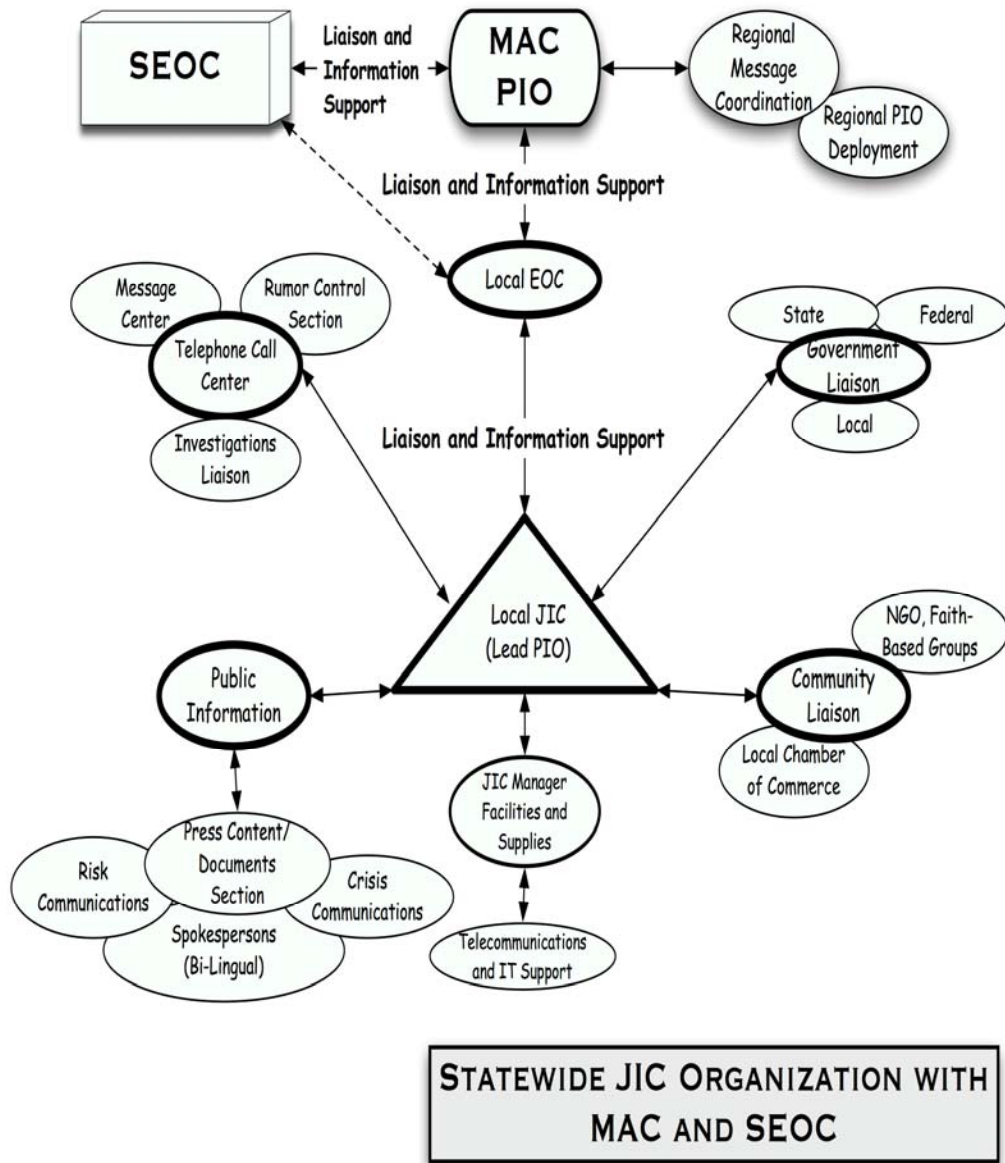
Local JIC Organization (Figure 1)



SINGLE COMMAND IC. When an incident occurs within a single jurisdiction and there is no jurisdictional or functional agency overlap, a single IC should be designated with overall incident management responsibility by the appropriate jurisdictional authority. The designated IC will develop the incident objectives on which subsequent incident action planning will be based. The IC will approve the Incident Action Plan (IAP) and all requests pertaining to the ordering and releasing of incident resources and public information.

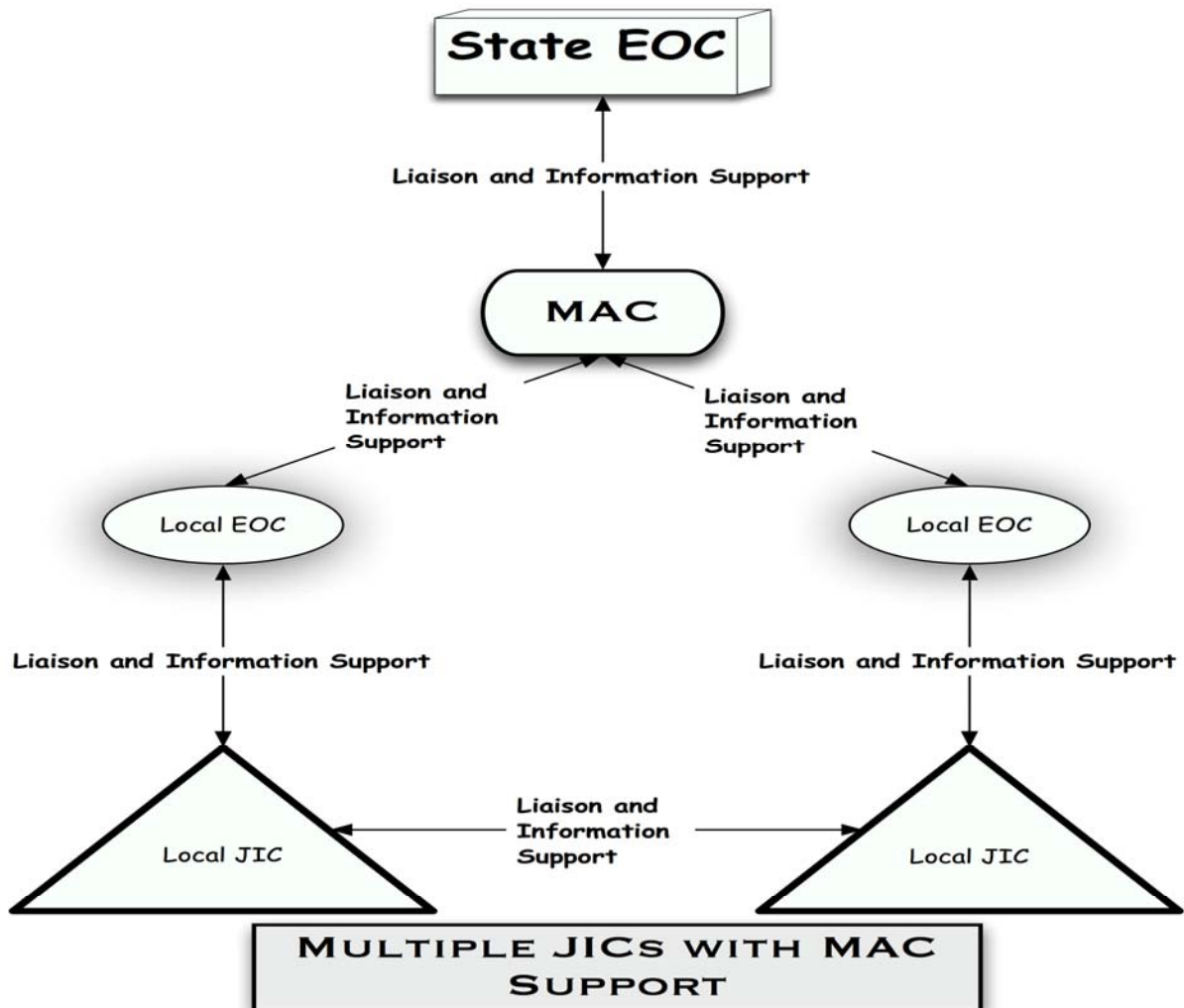


Statewide JIC Organization With MAC and SEOC (Figure 2)





Multiple JICs with MAC Support (Figure 3)



MAC GROUP COORDINATION. Coordination is an important element in multi-jurisdictional or multi-agency incident management. The Incident Command System (ICS) provides guidelines to enable agencies with different legal, geographic, and functional responsibilities to coordinate, plan, and interact effectively. Agencies with jurisdictional authority or functional responsibility for any or all aspects of an incident and those able to provide specific resource support participate in the Unified Command structure and contribute to the process of determining overall incident strategies; selecting objectives; ensuring that joint planning for tactical activities is accomplished in accordance with approved incident objectives; ensuring the integration of tactical operations; and approving, committing, and making optimum use of all assigned resources.



RDSTF JIC Minimum Staffing

Each JIC will consist of representatives from the primary agencies affected by the incident, members of the task force, and other members as warranted depending on the nature of the incident or event. Each JIC will have a designated JIC Manager to support the Lead PIO. Pre-designated individuals will be trained to fill key positions from local jurisdictions and each RDSTF. The following positions are recommended:

- Public Information Officer (Lead PIO for the JIC)
- MAC Public Information Officer (RDSTF Liaison to the JIC)
- JIC Manager
- Telephone Manager
- Rumor Control Officer
- Community Liaison Officer, and
- Government Liaison Officers
- Content Experts Coordinator (Natural Hazards (Hurricanes, flooding, etc.), Chemical, Biological, Public Health, Hazardous Devices, etc.)

For descriptions of positions, see Appendix D-4.