

E/L/K0105 Public Information Basics

Student Manual

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FEMA

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Unit 1: Introduction to Public Information

Visual 1: Unit 1: Introduction to Public Information Basics



E/L/K0105: Public Information Basics

Visual 2: Administrative Information

- Emergency exits
- Restrooms
- Cell phones/ electronic devices
- Other logistics



Note

- Please observe safety practices and use emergency exits if needed.
- Professional classroom behavior is required.
- Be prompt.
- Silence all cell phones/electronic devices.
- Refrain from e-mail (multi-tasking) during class.

Visual 3: Activity 1.1 Introduction "Interviews"

Get to Know One Another

Pair Up

Ask your Partner:

- Name
- Years of experience
- Job
- Goal/expectations for this training
- Something unique about them



Refer to the instructions on the visual, pair up with another student and "interview" one another. Then you will introduce your partner to the class. Keep your introductions of one another to one to two minutes.

Note

Visual 4: Our Expectations

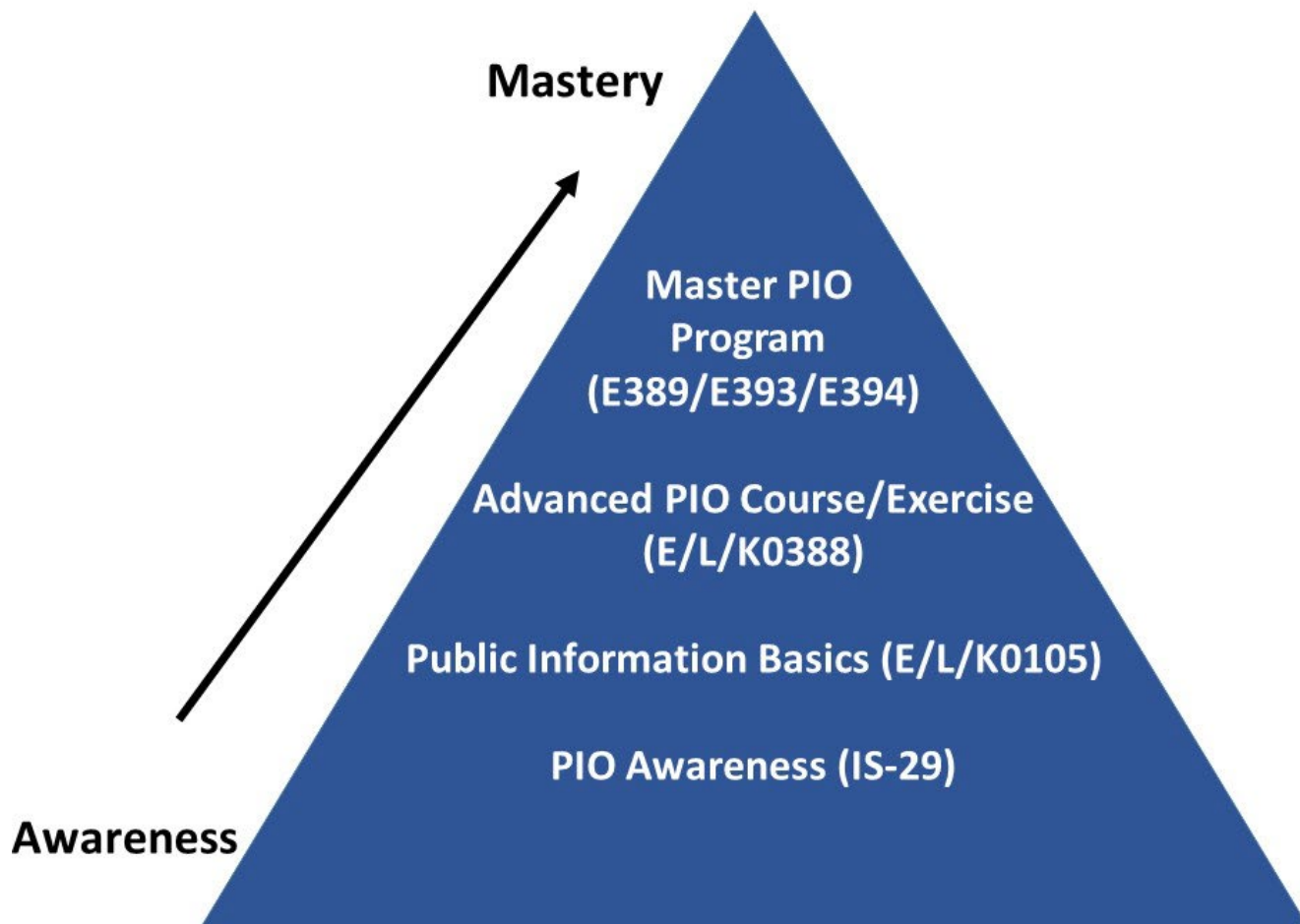
- Punctuality
- Participation
- Positive attitude
- Professionalism
- Flexibility
- Commitment



Key Points

Review the ground rules for class participation.

Visual 5: Training Courses Pyramid



Note:

A theme that begins in this course and is carried throughout the Public Information Training Series is the “95/5” concept that takes its origin from two sources: management consultant D. Edward Deming and Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto.

Deming said that 95% of an organization’s performance is attributable to its systems and only 5% is due to the people. Pareto originally proposed the 80/20 formula, which has been applied to many aspects of both business and personal life (e.g., 20% of employees create 80% of an organization’s success; 20% of your interpersonal activities create 80% of your sense of connection with others). Pareto suggested the 80/20 rule in 1906, a time before technology and other cultural changes contributed to speeding up both our work and personal lives. Many management experts today have recalculated Pareto’s rule to 95/5 to reflect these societal changes.

This 95/5 theory may be related to public information in many ways, but the greatest significance may be related to non-emergency and emergency situations. Most relevant to this training, 95% of a Public Information Officer's (PIO) work is in non-emergency times, with only 5% directly related to incident response or recovery. Another application might be that 95% of your organization's image may be affected — for good or for bad — by the 5% of time spent responding to an incident. So, the activities a PIO chooses in non-emergency times (95%) has a significant impact on how successful he or she will be in the 5% spent in emergency response and recovery. Use the discussion questions below to engage the participants and to emphasize the importance of being proactive at all times in order to be effective during emergency situations (the 5% of the job).

This course is the first of four courses in the Public Information Training Series. It is part of a tiered training approach in that it provides the foundation for more advanced training that takes participants from the awareness level to the mastery level in their public information careers.

This course is a prerequisite for the Advanced PIO Course, which is followed by the Master PIO course.

This course is grounded in the National Incident Management System (NIMS), the Incident Command System (ICS), and the National Response Framework (NRF).

This course is one of five courses that comprise the National Emergency Management Basic Academy.

Visual 6: Course Purpose

To equip participants with the skills needed to be full or part-time PIOs, including oral and written communications; understanding and working with the media; and basic tools and techniques to perform effectively as a PIO, both in the proactive/advocacy times and crisis/ emergency response.



Note

Review the course purpose:

- PIOs in public safety and emergency management organizations are responsible for ensuring that the affected public receives accurate and timely information during an emergency. Armed with useful information, people are able to make good decisions that contribute to the overall response goal of saving lives and protecting property.
- After this training, you may decide you need further development on one or more of the topics addressed. Your instructors and fellow class members may have recommendations for courses or reference materials that can help you. Please use this opportunity to think about your continued development in the field of public information and ask for help and advice as needed.

Visual 7: Unit Objectives

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Complete a pre-course assessment
- Explain why emergency public information managing crisis communications are both important during an incident
- Identify and recognize the needs and challenges posed by different audiences

Visual 8: Course Agenda

Day 1

- Unit 1: Introduction to Public Information
- Unit 2: Strategic Communications Planning
- Unit 3: PIO Roles and Responsibilities
- Unit 4: Writing Skills Workshop

Day 2:

- Unit 5: Interview Skills
- Unit 6: Crisis/Emergency Communications
- Unit 7: Media Relations at the Scene

Day 3:

- Unit 8: Information Coordination
- Unit 9: Wrap-up Exercise
- Unit 10: Course Summary

Visual 9: Course Objective (1 of 3)

After this course, you will be able to:

- Using the strategic communications planning model, develop a public awareness campaign (95%)
- Using the strategic communications planning model, develop an incident communications strategy (5%)
- Indicate the purpose of a public awareness campaign
- Identify the steps in developing a public awareness campaign
- Develop a strategy for an awareness campaign on a selected topic
- Change the method of developing a plan to follow the 8-step StratCom process
- Demonstrate the role and function of the PIO in both day-to-day emergency environments
- Compare actions PIOs can take to work with the news media during day-to-day and emergency situation



Note

Review all of the objectives of the course with the participants:

- Using the strategic communications planning model, develop a public awareness campaign (95%)
- Using the strategic communications planning model, develop an incident communications strategy (5%)
- Indicate the purpose of a public awareness campaign
- Identify the steps in developing a public awareness campaign
- Develop a strategy for an awareness campaign on a selected topic
- Change the method of developing a plan to follow the 8-step StratCom process
- Demonstrate the role and function of the PIO in both day-to-day emergency environments
- Compare actions PIOs can take to work with the news media during day-to-day and emergency situations

Visual 10: Course Objectives (2 of 3)

Course objectives, continued:

- Describe different public information written products
- Apply effective news release writing guidance
- Adapt or repurpose written media products for social media
- Describe what types of impressions specific body language might convey during an interview
- Identify elements of an interview the PIO should consider ahead of time
- Identify steps a PIO needs to take to prepare for and conduct a news interview
- Demonstrate effective techniques for on-camera interviews



Note

Course objectives, continued:

- Describe different public information written products
- Apply effective news release writing guidance
- Adapt or repurpose written media products for social media
- Describe what types of impressions specific body language might convey during an interview
- Identify elements of an interview the PIO should consider ahead of time
- Identify steps a PIO needs to take to prepare for and conduct a news interview
- Demonstrate effective techniques for on-camera interviews

Visual 11: Course Objectives (3 of 3)

Course objectives, continued:

- Outline media needs at the scene
- Explain the news conference cycle
- Apply news conference logistics
- Differentiate between JIS and JIC
- Describe triggers for JIC activation
- Describe the preparedness activities for establishing and maintaining a JIC
- Describe flexible and scalable structures for organizing a JIC based on incident needs
- Given an emergency scenario, apply public information skills



Note

Course objectives, continued:

- Outline media needs at the scene
- Explain the news conference cycle
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- Given an emergency scenario, apply public information skills

Visual 12: Course Resources

- Student Manual:
 - Visuals
 - Major content points
 - Room to take notes
- Resource Guide
- Instructors
- Your collective experience and expertise



Note

The **Student Manual** includes the visuals you will see in class and major content points, as well as room to take notes.

The **Public Information Training Series Resource Guide** includes activities, tips, templates and general information useful before, during and after an emergency or disaster. It may provide some ideas of programs and processes to implement in your organization.

The instructors are available to answer questions during class and at breaks.

The collective experience and expertise of the group is an important resource for this training. Please participate fully and share your ideas.

Visual 13: Pre-Course Assessment

- This is an individual effort
- It is used to measure the effectiveness of the course
- You have 20 minutes to complete the assessment

Visual 14: Activity 1.2 Why Is It Important?

What does getting the right information to the right people at the right time mean to you?



Purpose: To identify the importance of public information. Estimated Time: 15 minutes

Note

Visual 15: A Fundamental Principle

The whole community has a right to know and the need to know. The role of public information is to empower people to make the right decision at the right time.

Key Points

The whole community has a fundamental right to know about the risks they face, and they have a need to know. Such knowledge enables them to make informed choices that affect their health and well-being.

This fundamental principle is the basis for public information in this country. The role of public information is to empower people to make the right decision at the right time.

Visual 16: Lessons Learned

The Three Mile Island nuclear power crisis in 1979:

- Underscored the public's right to information affecting their health and well-being
- Made clear the serious consequences of having no organized system for providing that information
- Led to the creation of better systems for keeping the public informed

Key Points

In 1979, a relief valve in a nuclear reactor coolant system at the Three Mile Island (TMI) nuclear powerplant in Pennsylvania failed, leading to offsite releases of radioactivity in the areas surrounding the plant and an emergency that spanned 5 days.

The incident is often cited as a case study in the mismanagement of public information during an emergency situation. This mismanagement concerned both the sources of information at Metropolitan Edison (Met Ed) and at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), on the one hand, and media coverage of the accident on the other. Studies of the TMI accident have concluded that neither the utility nor the NRC's handling of the public relations aspect of the crisis served the interests of the general public, especially the resident population close to the TMI facilities. The following are examples of information problems that occurred:

- Neither Met Ed nor the NRC had a "disaster" public information plan.
- Met Ed and the NRC spoke with different voices, often giving conflicting statements.
- The public in turn was left in a state of confusion and uncertainty.
- Public acknowledgment of the seriousness of the situation was slow in coming, and Met Ed consistently downplayed the seriousness of the accident.
- The media and the local population were perplexed, and both came to suspect that the confused and vague explanations from Met Ed indicated a withholding of information on the seriousness of the reactor's problems. This suspicion destroyed the credibility of Met Ed as a source of reliable information.
- The sheer number of reporters that swarmed to the scene overwhelmed the utility's efforts to communicate with them.
- There was a problem with terminology. Engineers at the facility used highly technical language in explaining the situation, and the utility did not provide sufficient information or technical briefings to help journalists interpret what they were being told.

The Three Mile Island incident shined the spotlight on the public's right to know the facts about situations that affect their well-being.

In the wake of the incident, the Federal Government was criticized for having no organized system to ensure that the public received the information that they had the right to know.

To correct the problem, FEMA created a mechanism for coordinating the flow of information from all Federal agencies during disasters—the Joint Information Center (JIC), which you will learn about in a later unit.

3 Mile Island Video Transcript

Ross: “Everything is under control; there is no danger to public health and safety.” Those reassuring words came from Lieutenant Governor William Scranton, at a hastily called news conference on Harrisburg’s Capitol Hill dealing with the emergency at Three-Mile Island. Scranton, who monitors energy matters for the Commonwealth, said all safety systems function properly, and that the nuclear reactor plant was shut down as it was designed to do when the turbine tripped. This occurred at 4am and only a skeleton crew of essential workers was on hand at the time. No one was reported exposed to any the radiation that leaked in the cooling system. William Dornsife, a nuclear engineer for the Department of Environmental Resources, explained what happened.

Dornsife: The plant was operating at 100-percent power and some, some fault in a in the non-safety system, the turbine plant, or, or in the electrical system, caused the valves going to turbine to shut. This is a normal anticipated transient, fact the plan to go through this type of transient during start-up proceduring, its start-up program. It's immediately after the the turbine valves closed, there was a buildup of pressure and temperature in primary system and, as designed, the the primary relief valves lifted, releasing radioactivity to the primary containment, which is also a safeguard system that's designed to contain that activity with minimal leakage.

Ross: He said some radioactive iodine was found on the ground to the plant, but the levels that would not cause any inhalation problems. Metropolitan Edison has been and is continuing to monitor the air in the vicinity of the plant. So far, they have found no increase of any radiation levels. One questions still unanswered tonight, is why the 3-hour delay until the Commonwealth was notified, which was at 7am. Der says it wasn't privy to what the situation was at the plant during the interim the emergency was declared. But Scranton said that there would be a thorough probe on that point.

Scranton: If there is a situation where there was a perception of an emergency, and the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency Council were not notified, we intend to find out. That would be extremely disturbing. We will make a thorough investigation into that.

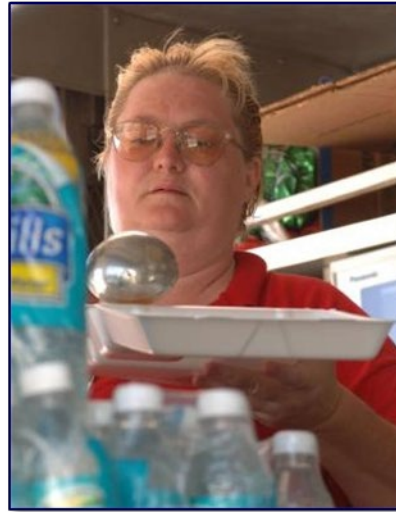
Ross: A team from the Federal Government's Nuclear Regulatory Commission is already on the site and is conducting its own investigation. Indications are at this hour that the minimal contamination would appear in the milk cows that graze in the area within a week. But, as one expert said, there's nothing to worry about, and no evacuation of anyone in the plant area is anticipated.

This is the first time an incident or accident like this has happened in Pennsylvania, which has five nuclear reactor units involving three power companies, which, of course, includes Three-Mile Island. There was no possibility of an explosion, period, said officials because of the low enrichment of the fuel. Mike Ross, TV 27 News, at the Capitol

Visual 17: Importance of Information



Information



Food & Water



Why might information be as important to disaster survivors as food and water?

Discussion
Question

Visual 18: What is Public Information?

Public information is:

- Provided before, during, and after incidents.
- Focused on communicating life- and health-saving information, including:
 - Severity of the situation
 - Action steps that individuals and communities should take
- PIO **still** has a vital role in the recovery phase after the initial response of an incident or major disaster

Key Points

Public information is information that is collected, assembled, or maintained by an organization in connection with the transaction of official business and is made available for dissemination to the public.

Emergency public information is developed and disseminated in anticipation of, during, or after an incident to provide specific life- and health-saving information, including the severity of the situation and any action steps that individuals and communities should take to minimize risk.

PIO still has an active role after the initial response as communities begin to recover.

The responsive dissemination of public information plays a critical role in the recovery process, and it begins the moment a crisis occurs. Regular communication about recovery efforts, even though response efforts may not be over, reassures the public that government agencies are working together to resolve the situation and to bring assistance to those who need it.

Communications among PIOs and the impacted audience should occur as often as necessary and continue until recovery is complete. This coordination may be accomplished through JIC (which may still be active during the recovery phase). This information should be updated regularly and may include the following:

- Actions the public should take
- A summary of the incident or planned event
- The impact of the incident or planned event
- Actions the response agencies are taking
- Actions the public, businesses, and industries may take to gain access to recovery programs and information on how these programs work
- Information on how to repair or restore damaged property
- Debris removal information
- Overall steps to be taken by the government and citizens to return to normal
- Any other crisis-specific recovery information.

PIOs should:

- Emphasize, as soon as appropriate, when the danger has passed, or the situation has transitioned from response to recovery
- Be prepared to direct questions concerning volunteers and financial contributions to the appropriate organizations

- Inform local businesses about special programs designed to assist them through the news media, appropriate business channels, and community outreach efforts
- Communicate information on service animals, pets, and livestock
- Coordinate with their PIO counterparts at appropriate agencies concerning environmental, ecological, and agricultural impacts.

Recovery Evaluation

To help determine the effectiveness of recovery communication during an incident or planned event, PIOs should closely monitor media reports and assess public inquiries to determine if information is received and understood by its intended audiences. Following an incident or planned event, PIOs should create a comprehensive report of media coverage, media inquiries, and public inquiries to determine the effectiveness of the recovery communications efforts. This report, or conclusions of the report, can be forwarded to the ICS planning section for inclusion in the After Action Report (AAR). The PIO should also participate in AAR reviews.

Typically, AARs contain the following components:

- Incident Overview
- Analysis of Capabilities
- Major Strengths
- Areas of Improvement
- Lessons Learned

Visual 19: Functions of Public Information

- Save lives and reduce injury
- Protect property and the environment
- Facilitate the tactical response by calming fears and managing expectations
- Educate, inform, and change behavior or attitudes
- Seek the public's cooperation
- Provide information to help families reunite
- Instill public confidence in your ability to manage the incident and protect citizens



Key Points

Emergency public information serves many important functions. It can:

- **Save lives and reduce injury.** Knowing the proper protective actions to take enables people to reduce their risk.
- **Protect property and the environment.** Understanding how to mitigate risk to property and the environment may lessen the damage inflicted by disasters.
- **Facilitate the tactical response by calming fears and managing expectations.** People who know what to expect are more likely to follow instructions and allow responders to do their jobs.
- **Educate and inform the public and change behavior or attitudes.** An educated public is more likely to prepare for emergencies and be ready when they occur.
- **Seek the public's cooperation and call people to action.** Whether the need is for volunteers to help with sandbagging, citizens to cooperate with investigators, or residents to evacuate their homes, public information is an instrument that can help make it happen.
- **Provide information to help families reunite.** After a disaster, few things are more distressing than being separated from loved ones. Public information about shelter message boards, hot lines, survivor registries, and other linkages can help reunite families and enable them to move forward with their recovery.
- **Instill public confidence in the jurisdiction's ability to manage an incident and protect citizens.** Providing timely, accurate, and understandable information builds confidence in emergency management's competence.

Introduce the primary PIO goal "**Getting the right information to the right people at exactly the right time**".

Visual 20: Public Information Discussion



Discussion Question

Why is it important to instill confidence in the whole community's ability to manage an incident?

Discussion
Question

Visual 21: Functions of Warnings

- To reach, in a timely fashion, every person at risk, no matter what they are doing, or where they are located
- To allow people to take actions that save lives, reduce damage, reduce human suffering, and speed recovery



Key Points

Warnings are intended to allow people to take actions that save lives, reduce damage, reduce human suffering, and speed recovery.

To fulfill this purpose, warnings must reach every person who is at risk, no matter what they are doing or where they are located and must do so in a timely fashion.

Visual 22: Flow of Emergency Communications



Key Points

The flow of emergency communications extends from the pre-incident phase, through the incident, and into the post-incident phase.

Before an incident, public information activities can include:

- **Outreach** to the news media to educate reporters unfamiliar with your organization or program, outreach campaigns, and build relationships. Examples include:
 - Regular contact through phone calls or news releases (as long as there is a newsworthy reason behind the call or news release); and
 - Facility tours or ride-alongs (especially for reporters new to your beat).
- **Public awareness campaigns**, which can address such topics as:
 - Smoke detector campaigns (get smoke detectors, replace batteries, etc.).
 - Home preparedness plans.
 - Weather-related messages (hurricane, tornado, and earthquake preparedness, etc.).
 - Home swimming pool safety.
 - Food safety.
 - Health-related issues (e.g., cold and flu prevention, child immunization).

During any type of crisis, the public needs information in order to make informed and rational decisions. This information must be accurate, easy to understand, and delivered in a rapid fashion to:

- Save lives and reduce injuries
- Protect property

- Calm fears

After an incident, you must analyze how the communication process went. Good information can lead to good outcomes, but bad information can lead to very bad outcomes!

Media monitoring / Analysis takes place throughout the cycle and is used to continually evaluate and adjust public information efforts.

Visual 23: Unit Summary

In this unit, we discussed:

- The content and structure of this course
- The importance of public information
- Communicating with people in an emergency or crisis
- Identifying and understanding audience challenges in your community

Your Notes:

Unit 2: Strategic Communications Planning

Visual 1: Strategic Communication Planning



Visual 2: Unit Objectives

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Using the strategic communications planning model, develop public awareness campaign key messages (95%)
- Using the strategic communications planning model, develop an incident communications strategy (5%)
- Indicate the purpose of a public awareness campaign.
- Identify the steps in developing a public awareness campaign.
- Develop a strategy for an awareness campaign on a selected topic.

Visual 3: Strategic Communications Plan

- Supports the Incident Action Plan (IAP)
- Provides guidance for activating, establishing, and operating the external affairs operation
- Brings unity of effort to all strategic communications planning and product development



Note

The strategic communications plan:

- Supports the IAP
- Provides guidance for activating, establishing and operating the external affairs operation
- Brings unity of effort to all strategic communications planning and product development

Incident Action Plan (IAP): Is a plan that The NIMS glossary defines incident as is central to managing the response to an incident using “an occurrence, natural or manmade, that ICS. The team that is managing an incident develops and requires a response to protect life or IAP each operational period, the time scheduled for property.” For the purposes of this guide, executing a given set of actions as specified in the IAP, the term incident is used to refer to using the standard ICS incident action planning process. incidents in which FEMA is involved, generally in support of and in partnership The IAP itself communicates the incident objectives and with State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial the tactics that will be used to manage the incident during (SLTT) governments. the operational period that the plan covers.

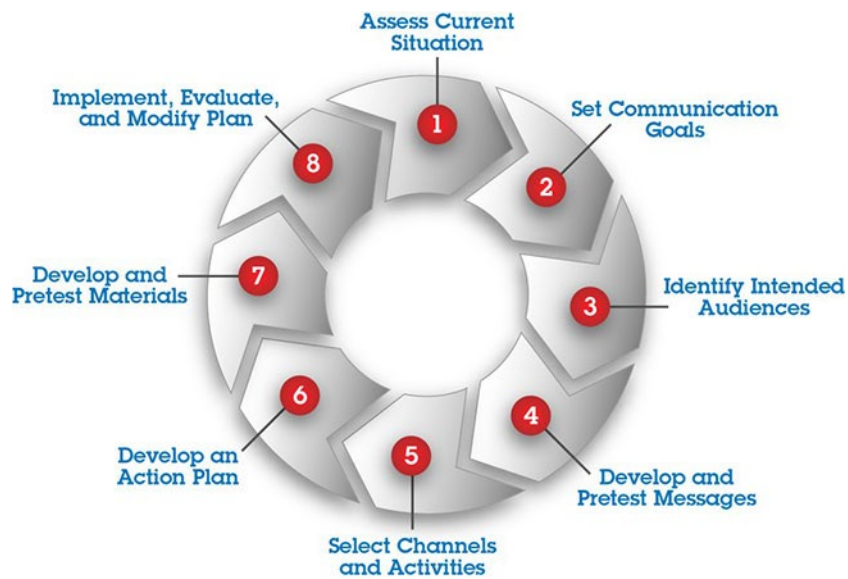
The incident action planning process provides a tool to synchronize operations at the incident level and ensure that incident operations are conducted in support of incident objectives. A disciplined system of planning phases and meetings fosters collaboration and partnerships and focuses incident operations.

Visual 4: Purpose of Public Awareness Campaigns

The primary goal for awareness campaigns is to persuade the public that preparedness actions:

- Are necessary
- Are supported by community leaders
- Do not require extraordinary effort or expense

Visual 5: 8-Step Communication Model



Note

The 8-step communications model outlines the communication between the sender of the message and the receiver. The visual displays that model for carrying out a strategic communications process based on the social marketing approach. The overview of this model was covered in IS29.

We will now discuss each step in more detail.

Visual 6: Step 1: Assess Current Situation

Assess the current situation by answering these questions:

What is the incident/event/issue at hand?

What is the communication need you want to address?

Who are the people most affected by this problem?

What actions could your audience take to address this problem?

What are the audience's feelings and perceptions on the subject?

What information would cause them to change their behavior?



Note

Using the 8-step model, as a first step you will need to collect information to help you make strategic planning decisions. This step sets the stage for the entire communication process.

Many communicators try to shortcut this step and proceed with developing products, but that can mean major mistakes in their assumptions about what their audience needs and wants. Remember, we said that the social marketing approach is based on understanding your audience.

You must begin by acquiring a thorough understanding of the problem, the audience, and the action you want the audience to take.

You obtain this understanding by asking yourself the following questions:

- What is the incident/event/issue at hand?
- What is the communication need you want to address?
- Who are the people that are most affected by this problem?
- What actions could your audience take to address this problem?
- What are your target audience's feelings/behavior on this issue?
- What information would cause them to change their behavior?

Public Awareness Campaign

To start developing an awareness campaign, first you need to determine what the concerns and issues are in your community.

To determine the issues, ask:

- What are the threats and hazards in your community?
- Who is at risk?
- What are people concerned about?
- What is their current level of preparedness?

Visual 7: Step 2: Set Communication Goals

Assess the current situation by answering these questions:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Realistic
- Timely



When setting your communication goal(s) you need to also develop objectives for implementing those goals. The objectives should be SMART objectives. That is, they should be:

Note

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Realistic
- Timely

Without clear and specific outcome measures, communication can lack direction and effect. Goals can be broad statements that describe the purpose and meaning of the task. Objectives are those things that lead to the accomplishment of your goals.

Examples of SMART objectives:

- Increase awareness of our website by 10% by June 20XX.
- Increase unique visitors to our website by 5% by June 20XX.
- Increase completion of Online Family Emergency Plans by 5% by June 20XX.

Visual 8: Examples of SMART Objectives

Increase awareness of our website by 10% by June 20XX

Increase unique visitors to our website by 5% by June 20XX

Increase completion of Online Family Emergency Plans by 5% by June 20XX



Note

Examples of SMART objectives:

- Increase awareness of our website by 10% by June 20XX
- Increase unique visitors to our website by 5% by June 20XX
- Increase completion of Online Family Emergency Plans by 5% by June 20XX

Visual 9: Step 3: Identify Intended Audiences

Describe audience by:

- Demographic
- Including age, gender, marital status, family size, income, etc
- Psychographics
 - Audience's attitudes, beliefs, emotions, and values
- Behavior
 - Helps you understand why someone purchases one product or service over another



Compile your results



Note

Once you identify your audiences, go one step further and analyze the audiences. You have determined what segments of the population that you will be targeting. Now you will enhance your analysis by focusing your analysis to be more comprehensive.

When we segment down to a very specific audience, we learn what makes that particular group tick. And we can use that information to create messages that will align with the needs, beliefs, values, and priorities of our audiences.

While some of your messages may apply to everyone, you may want to communicate differently to one or more segments.

A potentially endless number of audience segments could exist. Making judgments based on which would provide the biggest “bang” for the effort invested in communication is essential. Describe your audience:

- **Demographics:** Demographic characteristics include age, gender, marital status, family size, income, education level, occupation, race, and religion. Demographic information can often be found online as a compilation of different reports the federal government runs. Check the Census Bureau and Commerce Department websites.
- **Psychographics:** Psychographic information tells you about your audience's attitudes, beliefs, emotions and values. It includes your target market's family stage, hobbies and interests, type of entertainment they engage in, and lifestyle. Psychographic information is often found through surveys or focus groups. Though you can set these up yourself, it would be beneficial to hire a marketing research firm to help you structure the surveys, word questions carefully, and engage with focus groups in an effective way.
- **Behaviors:** Behavior information helps you understand why someone purchases one product or service over another. It includes how often your

target audience would use the service or buy the product, how much or how many they would use, if there was a specific occasion for using it, and how long it took them to decide to use or buy that product.

Relate this concept to the public awareness campaign you selected. For example, if you selected preparing a family emergency plan you might point out that “families with pets” are a segment of the larger audience. Your message to this group and how you disseminate the message might be different.

Public Awareness Campaign

- Who is your audience?
- What are their communications needs and preferences?
- Where do they live?
- What types of media do they use?
- Where? What types of messages will be most effective?
- Who can deliver the message most effectively?

Visual 10: The Basics

Objective

Why are you communicating?

- Educate?
- Persuade?
- Call to action?

Audience

Who are you trying to reach?

- What do they already know?
- What is their perception?

Message

What will you say? How will you say it?

- What words and medium?



Note

The concepts discussed are relevant whether you are preparing to be interviewed yourself or whether you are preparing someone else—for example, the Police Chief—to be interviewed.

Preparation starts by asking yourself some basic questions:

- Why are you communicating? Is your objective to: Educate? (e.g., explain that a new flu virus is going around)
 - Persuade? (e.g., encourage people to support a clothing drive for the homeless)
 - Call to action? (e.g., get people to evacuate before a hurricane strikes)
 - Damage control—to get in front of misinformation or rumors—is also a reason for communicating.
- Who are you trying to reach? Is your audience:
 - Already knowledgeable on the topic?
 - Biased (or holding preconceived notions) on the topic?
- Given your objective and your audience, what is your message? In other words:
 - What will you say? How will you say it?

Visual 11: Message Mapping

- 3 main points
- 3 sub points per main point
 - Primacy/Recency
 - Address the most important point first
 - the second most important last

Review the “Principles of Message Mapping” from the EPA in your student manual



Note

Nine Principles of Message Mapping

- 1) Limiting the number of key messages to a maximum of three using no more than 9 seconds or 27 words to express the necessary information.
- 2) Constructing messages that can be easily understood by an adult with a 6th to 8th grade education. This can be tested using the “readability” utility contained in a number of word-processing programs.
- 3) Adhering to the “primacy/recency” or “first/last” principle. This principle states that the most important messages should occupy the first and last position in a list.
- 4) Citing third parties or sources that would be perceived as credible by the receiving audience.
- 5) Providing a preamble to the message map that indicates genuine empathy, listening, caring and compassion – crucial factors in establishing trust in high-concern, high-stress situations.
- 6) Using graphics, visual aids, analogies, and narratives (such as personal stories) can increase an individual’s ability to hear, understand and recall a message by more than 50%.
- 7) Constructing messages while recognizing the dominant role of negative thinking in high-concern situations. Examples include avoiding unnecessary, indefensible, or non-productive uses of absolutes, and of the words “no”, “not”, “never”, “nothing” and “none”; balancing or countering a negative key message with positive, constructive or solution-oriented key messages; and providing three or more positive points to counter a single negative point or bad news.
- 8) Presenting the full message map using the repetitive structure found in the “Tell me, Tell me more, Tell me again model” (the “Triple T Model”): Tell people the information in summary form (i.e., the three key messages; Tell them more (i.e., the supporting information); and Tell people again what was told in summary form (i.e., repeat the three key messages).
- 9) Developing key messages and supporting information that address important risk perception, outrage, and fear factors such as trust, benefits, control, voluntariness, dread, fairness, reversibility, catastrophic potential, effects on children, morality, origin and familiarity.

Source: United States Environmental Protection Agency
(https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2015-09/documents/thurs_georgia_9_10_915_covello_4.pdf)

Visual 12: Step 4: Develop and Pretest Messages

- Provide supporting points for each key message
- Prioritize audiences
- Focus on common ground
- Outline key behaviors
- Test key messages by using them



Note

If you do not understand the audience, your message will get lost. That is why before we put pen to paper, you had to go through Step 3, so that you know the audience you are addressing.

Messages can be:

- **Informative:** providing information without necessarily trying to change attitudes, beliefs, or values
- **Persuasive:** trying to create and/or request change or giving a call to action
- Or a combination of both

Effective messages:

- Don't use jargon (including most acronyms)
- Make it easy for your audience to understand
- Are direct and concise
- Communicate the benefits to your audience

Develop and pre-test messages:

- Provide supporting points for each key message
- Define and prioritize the audiences who will receive the messages
- Focus on the common ground between them
- Outline the key behaviors and expectations for each audience receiving the messages.
 - You need to be able to use your messages to drive action
 - To get there, you need to articulate those messages in a clear way that outlines the specific actions expected of each audience
- Test key messages

Public Awareness Campaign

- What is the goal of your campaign?
- What is the message?

- When should it be delivered?
- What partnerships will help you succeed?
- What are your constraints?
- What medium suits the audience and the message?

Key Points:

- When developing and implementing the campaign, you need to:
- Keep your goal in mind and develop a message to meet that goal.
- Look at the cost of your campaign and your budget to make other determinations about media, timing, frequency, etc.
- Identify partnerships in the community that can help you get your message out.
- Identify your time constraints. (For example, when do you need to get your preparedness message out for hurricane season?)
- Identify occasions during the year that might relate to a message you want to convey. **Note: On the next page are examples of monthly remembrances, events, and milestones to which awareness campaigns can be linked.**
- Identify the medium that would be best to get your message to the audience: print, television, radio, Internet, or other new media.
 - You may want to consider using several different ways and places to get your message out, because this may increase the effectiveness and impact of your campaign.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, 54% of U.S. adults 16-74 years old - about 130 million people - lack proficiency in literacy, reading below the equivalent of a sixth-grade level (<https://www.forbes.com/sites/michaelnietzel/2020/09/09/low-literacy-levels-among-us-adults-could-be-costing-the-economy-22-trillion-a-year/?sh=402b34dc4c90>)

Examples of Monthly Events and Milestones to Which Awareness Campaigns Can Be Linked

January: National Volunteer Blood Donor Month, Haiti earthquake anniversary, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service

February: Earthquake Awareness Month, National Burn Awareness Week, Chile earthquake anniversary

March: American Red Cross Month, Flood Safety Awareness Week, National Hurricane Conference

April: National 9-1-1 Education Month, National Volunteer Week, Earth Day, National Severe Weather Preparedness Week

May: Mental Health Month, National Older Americans Month, Public Service Recognition Week, National Police Week, National Public Works Week, National EMS Week, National Hurricane Awareness Week, Memorial Day (usually preceded by grilling safety fire awareness news release)

June: National Safety Month, National Congress of the American Indian mid-year conference, Lightning Awareness Week, American Radio Relay League Field Day

July: Independence Day (usually preceded by fireworks safety news release), National Governor's Association Annual Conference, Anniversary of the Signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act

August: Annual National Night Out, NOAA Updated Hurricane Outlook, Hurricane Katrina anniversary

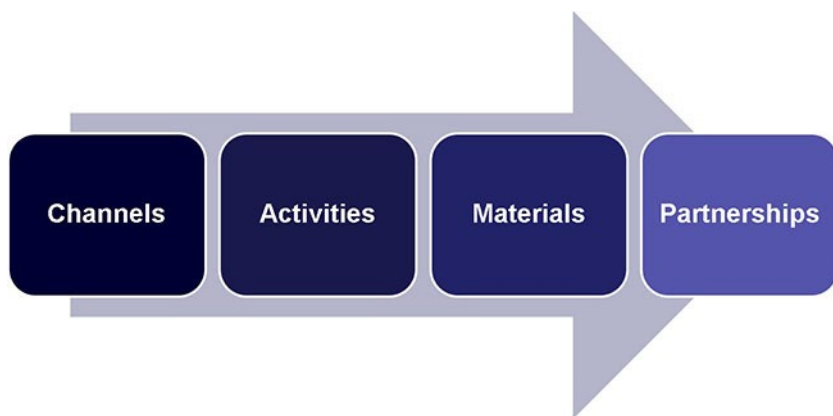
September: National Preparedness Month, Labor Day, National Assisted Living Week, Child Passenger Safety Awareness Week; Patriot's Day (911 remembrance)

October: Crime Prevention Month, Celebrate Safe Communities, Fire Prevention Month, America's Safe Schools Week, Make a Difference Day

November: National American Indian Heritage Month, end of daylight-saving time (check smoke detectors), Veterans' Day, seasonal interest—holiday/cooking fire safety, end of Atlantic Hurricane Season

December: Winter Storm Awareness, International Day of Persons with Disabilities

Visual 13: Step 5: Select Channels and Activities



Note

This step involves analyzing the different channels and activities to determine the best ones to use for the current situation. A comprehensive way of doing this is to conduct a communications channel audit. Here you will research which communication channels are the most effective to reach your target audience. This can be accomplished through quantitative or qualitative research.

Quantitative

- Electronic surveys—through tools such as survey monkey, snap survey, and others sent directly to your target audience. The benefit is that this a low cost option, the detraction is that the response rate will most likely be low.
- Ad hoc surveys—if you don't have the budget or capability of conducting a survey directly to your audience, you can pay for a few questions to be put on a survey that a research firm is already doing with your target audience and they will give the results of your questions.
- Questionnaires—which can be handed out in person at different venues where your target audience is and then collected to gain the insight into your target audience.

Qualitative

- Focus groups—gathering a group of people that are representative of your target audience to participate in a guided discussion about a particular product or service.
- Interviews—individual, face-to-face discussions with your target audience on what channels or activities they use the most
- Observational studies—going to where your target audience is and observing what communication channels they use and which activities they prefer

CHANNELS

Step 5 is important because it helps you identify the best avenues for delivering your messages.

Communication channels carry your messages to the intended audiences. Channels take many forms: from websites, to social media, and to people themselves.

You start by considering your audiences:

- What sources of information do your audiences trust?
- Who or what might compel your audiences to take the desired action on your behalf?
- How do your audiences prefer to receive information?
- How and where do your audiences spend their time?

ACTIVITIES

You may want to consider the options and issues on this visual to determine formats for presenting your messages.

There are many new alternatives that might vastly improve your communication results:

Phone apps are growing in popularity, especially among young people.

Fun runs, contests, meetings, and town halls—these events may work better than print materials to inform, educate, and motivate certain audiences.

MATERIALS

When considering materials, think about your audience:

- Can they read? Do they like to read?
- Are they literate in the English language? In their native language?
- Would a video be more effective? Would they be more receptive to hearing the message from a trusted community member?

Determine where they are likely to find your message:

- On the Web?
- At a community center?
- In the newspaper or on a television news program?
- On social media platforms
- From word of mouth

PARTNERSHIPS

A stakeholder partner, as defined on this visual, is a person or group that could have an interest in or benefit from the work you do.

Partnerships with key stakeholders are valuable elements in your ability to communicate with your audiences.

- Partners can use their communication channels to communicate your messages.
- Partners can put links to you on their Web sites.

- Partners can write newsletter articles about your programs.

Optional Discussion Questions: What are some examples of national membership organizations? Who would the potential partners be for our public awareness campaign?

Visual 14: Step 6: Develop an Action Plan

- Have alternates to support team members who may get overloaded
- Conduct risk management analysis
- Have a contingency plan



Note

An action plan is a document that lists what steps must be taken in order to achieve a specific goal. The purpose of an action plan is to clarify what resources are required to reach the goal, formulate a timeline for when specific tasks need to be completed and determine what resources are required.

Action plan tips include:

- Have backup staff set up as alternates to make sure all elements of the plan are completed, as some team members may become overloaded, be moved to another disaster, or through other means may become unavailable for the project. If there is someone who knows the process and is up to speed on what is happening on the project, then they can more easily step in and make sure that this particular task is completed.
- Conduct a risk management analysis early in the project and keep revisiting it to create a list of potential risks that could get the communication project off-course or could affect the communications. It is recommended that you involve multiple team members in this analysis. Then you can prepare for these risks.
- Have a contingency plan in case these risks do materialize.

Visual 15: Step 7: Develop and Pretest Materials

Types of communications testing:

- Concept/positioning testing
- Materials testing
- Readability testing
- Professional review
- Test market
- Media analysis



Note

Types of communications testing include:

Concept/positioning testing: The objectives of positioning or concept testing are to determine the level of interest in the service or product, determine what the concept statement communicates to the audience, and whether the audience feels it is relevant. This can be done through focus groups or in-depth interviews.

Materials testing: Using the information obtained from the concept testing, materials are created, and then tested using pre-finished executions. These materials should be evaluated in terms of memorability, impact, communication, comprehension, believability, acceptability, image, persuasion and other key attributes. Focus groups are a great way to conduct materials testing.

Readability testing: With printed materials, the readability of the text is crucial, particularly for those who have lower reading levels than the general population. The readability of printed text is assessed, either by hand or using a computer program, using standard formulas that analyze sentence length and number of polysyllabic words. Longer sentences and more syllables mean that a higher reading level is needed by the intended audience in order to fully understand the material. Readability testing is generally recommended for materials that have a lot of text, such as longer print ads, brochures, or information kits.

Professional review: In addition to testing the materials with the target audience, it is often helpful to have communication peers and representatives of similar organizations review them as well. The professional reviewers evaluate the pre-finished materials, and comment on appropriateness, clarity,

design, and comprehensiveness. This may be done over the phone or through a written questionnaire.

Test market: The best way to gauge potential success of the social marketing program is the test market. By bringing together all of the elements of the marketing mix in a real situation, the test market provides a "dress rehearsal" before launching the program everywhere. A key to the accuracy of the results is the selection of the location for the test market. The findings may be different, based upon variables such as ethnicity and size of the area, and this must be accounted for. Using an experimental design, with one or more control markets, may help to reduce some of these uncertainties.

Media analysis: A comprehensive media analysis is an important step, which incorporates both Step 1 (situational awareness) and Step 8 (evaluate and modify the plan). A true media analysis will examine traditional media sources (broadcast, print, etc.), social media (all platforms), and emerging media (vloggers, bloggers, citizen journalists, etc.). The analysis should examine who is reporting on the issue, who is NOT reporting on the issue, how often is it being reported, what is the context of the message as reported, how extensive is the coverage (local, regional, statewide, national, international), is there a bias to the reporting? This is not an exhaustive list. Refer to the attached Resource Guide. Suggest students subscribing to mediabiaschart.com for ongoing updates.

Visual 16: Step 8: Implement, Evaluate, and Modify Plan

Types of communications testing:

- Identify the changes needed
- Make the revisions
- Implement new plan



Note

To implement, evaluate and modify your plan:

- Review the action plan periodically to ensure that it still meets your needs.
- Remember to incorporate a comprehensive media analysis in your evaluation.
- Identify the changes needed. It is recommended that you use a cross-functional team to identify both necessary changes and potential upgrades to the action plan. Using this team should help to identify issues with the existing document, while ensuring that proposed new actions are appropriate and achievable. These actions should be aligned to broader business strategies and external influences, be resilient to change, and lead to measurable outcomes.
- Make the revisions and then have senior management review and approve the revised action plan. Make sure that actions and target audiences are linked, and that objectives, milestones and schedules are all measurable and achievable.
- Then implement the new plan.

Public Awareness Campaign

Once you have implemented your awareness campaign, you need to start evaluating it.

- Did the message reach the targeted audience?
- Did the message call people to action?
- Was the action significant?
- How did you measure the action?
- What will you change in future campaigns? (What can you change in this campaign to address any issues?)

Visual 17: Activity 2.1: Public Awareness Campaign

Instructions: Develop 3 key messages for your organization, then develop 3 supporting points for each key message.

Purpose: To apply Steps 1-4 of the strategic communication model to planning a public awareness campaign.

Estimated Time: 30 minutes



Activity

Total Time for Activity: 40 minutes (30 minutes individual work, 10 minutes debrief)

Purpose of Activity: The purpose of this activity is to provide participants with the tools and skills to plan a public awareness campaign. Participants will work individually to plan a public awareness campaign using steps 1-4 of the 8-step communication model.

Instructions:

- You have 30 minutes to complete the activity.
- This is an individual activity, but you may consult with members of your table group.
- Read the scenario. Refer back to steps 1-4 of the strategic communications model. (Visuals 2.6-2.9).
- Using the worksheet in your Student Manual, fill out steps one through four of the strategic communications plan.
- At the end we will have volunteers report out to the class (10 minutes).



Note

Scenario:

Columbia State University (CSU) is a campus of 15,000 undergraduate and graduate students seeking degrees from the university's 19 different departments. CSU's main campus is located in Central City. Roughly one-third of the students live on campus in 13 dormitories and 15 Greek letter houses. The rest of the students are commuters who live in the Liberty County/Central City area. The university has a marine biology research station on the Columbia Bay (Gish Island).

CSU is a member of National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division 1-A. The CSU Warhawks field teams in nine men's and women's sports. This year CSU will be hosting the NCAA basketball championship game against their perennial rival, the Wilmington State University Bulldogs. The field house will seat 20,000 and, in the past, has been sold out for championship games, especially against the WSU Bulldogs.

Law enforcement intelligence suggests that student organizers are threatening to demonstrate to protest the use of animals for research in the biology department that is located in Young Hall. Recent protests have

drawn crowds estimated at greater than 5,000 and it has been rumored that this protest may be held in the parking lot in front of the Phillips Field House prior to the game.

CSU is anticipating a capacity crowd of 20,000 fans for this championship game and wants to make certain that the crowd is managed safely and that there are no security issues that may endanger the fans or reflect poorly on the University. The mayor of Central City has asked all city departments to cooperate in planning for this event.

Task:

You are the Central City PIO. You have been tasked with developing a public awareness/public information campaign about the upcoming basketball game, aiming to avoid security issues leading up to, during, and after the game. Use the 8-step communication model to start planning your campaign. For this activity, you are only filling out steps one through four.

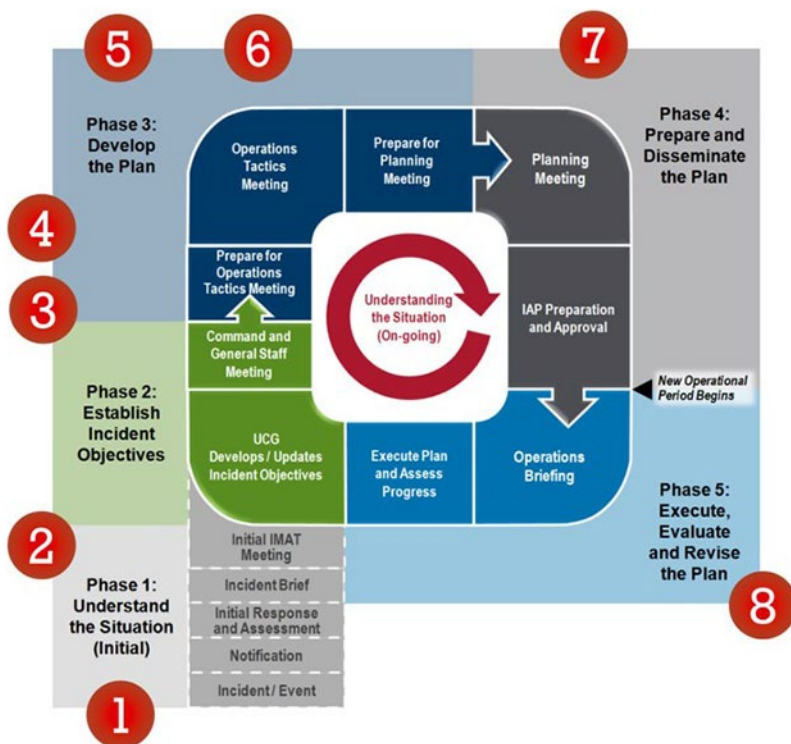
Activity 2.1: Worksheet

MESSAGE MAP

SCENARIO:
STAKEHOLDER:
CONCERN:

KEY MESSAGE 1	KEY MESSAGE 2	KEY MESSAGE 3
↓	↓	↓
Support Point 1.1	Support Point 2.1	Support Point 3.1
Support Point 1.2	Support Point 2.2	Support Point 3.2
Support Point 1.3	Support Point 2.3	Support Point 3.3

Visual 18: Incident Planning and the 8-Step Model



The Incident Action Plan (IAP) and the 8-step Strategic Communications model are part of the overall incident planning process and they reflect broader goals as well as specific objectives.

Note

The 8-step model presents some broad concepts (e.g., social marketing) and the model is particularly well-suited to specific projects that may be undertaken in support of objectives from a functional plan or the overall strategic communications plan.

The concepts presented in the 8-step model (marketing mindset, SMART objectives, audience segmentation, partnership relationships etc.) are all valid techniques for developing a strategic communications plan in line with the incident commander’s priorities.

Visual 19: Activity 2.2: Incident Communication Strategy

Instructions: Work in table groups to complete the incident communication strategy. You may assign different portions of the strategy to different team members to complete the activity.

Purpose: To provide participants with the tools and skills to prepare an Incident Communication Strategy.

Estimated Time: 30 minutes



Note

Total Time for Activity: 30 minutes

Purpose of Activity: The purpose of this activity is to provide participants with the tools and skills to prepare an Incident Communication Strategy. Participants will work in groups to develop a high-level strategy and will then report out to the class.

Instructions:

- Working in your table group, develop an Incident Communication Strategy based on the scenario update on the next page. You may consult the main scenario from Activity 2.1.
- Make sure to fully develop Step 4.
- Complete Steps 5, 6, 7 and 8 only after fully developing Steps 1-4.
- You have 30 minutes to complete this activity.

Scenario Update:

Approximately 20,000 fans are expected to attend the championship game. The traditional rivalry between the Columbia State University Warhawks and the Wilmington State University Bulldogs has resulted in physical conflicts between the opposing fans in past games. Inclement weather including heavy snowfall and cold weather prior to the game will increase the difficulty for Central City DPW to clear the parking lots and streets in preparation for the big game. The possibility of a student protest prior to the game may reflect poorly on the university. Law enforcement intelligence does not indicate any serious threats of violence; however, student protests of a similar nature in other states have resulted in damage to buildings along with threats to researchers.

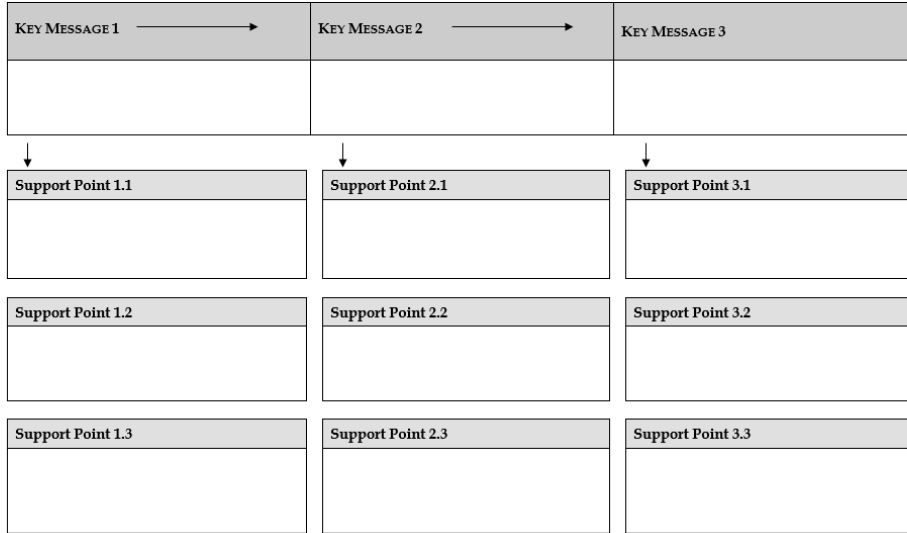
Task:

You are the Central City PIO. You have been tasked with developing an incident communications strategy in the event of fan unrest and potential violence among protestors. Use Worksheet 2.2 to plan the strategy. Refer back to the 8-step process for information on each step.

Activity 2.2: Worksheet

MESSAGE MAP

SCENARIO:
STAKEHOLDER:
CONCERN:



Visual 20: Unit Summary

In this unit, we discussed:

- Strategic Communications Planning
- Relationship between strategic communications planning and incident action planning
- Developing public awareness campaigns and incident communication strategy using the 8-step model
- Awareness campaigns are used to inform the community of threats and hazards and preparedness efforts for those threats/hazards
- To successfully develop an awareness campaign, you need to know your community threats/hazards, target audience, and media choices
- It is important to evaluate the effectiveness of your awareness campaign to improve future efforts

Unit 3: PIO Roles and Responsibilities

Visual 1: PIO Roles and Responsibilities



This unit will look at the PIO's roles and responsibilities during non-emergency times (95 percent) and during incidents (5 percent).

Note

Visual 2: Unit Objectives

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Demonstrate the role and function of the PIO in both day-to-day (95%) and emergency (5%) environments
- Compare actions PIOs can take to work with the news media during non-emergency and emergency situations

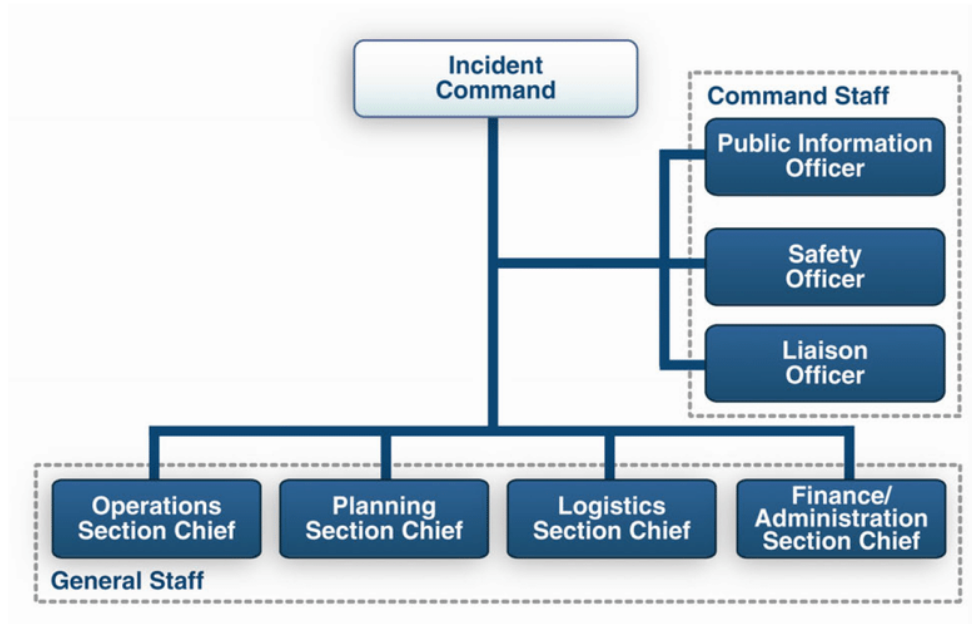


Note

The visual displays the learning objectives for this unit.

Please note that some emergency management organizations refer to day-to-day, non-emergency activities as steady-state activities. During this course we refer to these day-to-day activities as the 95 percent.

Visual 3: Public Information Officer - A Command Staff Position



Key Points

Visual 4: PIO Adds Value

The days of just working with the media or asking what we should do during an incident are over. The PIO adds value to any response and have a seat at the decision-making table by providing relevant input, situational and media analysis, and an information action plan.



Key Points

This unit provides you with an overview of the need for, nature of, and importance of public information in support of emergency management. Proactive decision-making is important. Earn the respect of the Incident Commander as part of the command staff - you have a seat at the table.

Visual 5: PIO Has Changed

No position in the ICS System has changed more than that of Public Information

- Direct access to Incident Commander
- Can gather information quicker (social media)
- Delivery of messages quicker with technology changes
- Training PIOs



Key Points

This unit provides you with an overview of the need for, nature of, and importance of public information in support of emergency management.

Visual 6: Day-to-Day vs. Incident Tasks

Day-to-Day (95%)	Emergency (5%)
Plan and execute a hurricane preparedness campaign	Issue hurricane evacuation instructions
Invite media to EOC opening and tour	Set-up, staff and activate media briefing room
Plan and accompany agency director to community events	Prepare director to conduct news briefing on hurricane preparations
Update media list to include social media handles	Tweet hurricane shelter location information; monitor reporters' Twitter handles



Review the comparison between a PIO's day-to-day and incident tasks. The next few slides will cover the core tasks a PIO is responsible for.

Note

Visual 7: Manage Information (1 of 2)

Get the right information to the right people at the right time so they can make the right decision:

- Plan –
 - Use The 8-Step Strategic Communications Model
- Be prepared
 - Have pre-written messages at the ready
- Maximize message exposure –
 - Take advantage of social media, traditional and non-traditional channels
 - Establish an approval process.



Note

As defined in NIMS, public information consists of the processes, procedures, and systems for communicating timely, accurate and accessible incident information. Public information, education strategies and communications plans help ensure that numerous audiences receive timely, consistent messages about lifesaving measures, evacuation routes, threat and alert system notices and other public safety information.

The process of getting information to the public during an incident is an ongoing cycle that involves four steps:

- Gathering information
- Verifying information
- Coordinating information
- Disseminating information

Plan – Start by using the 8-step strategic communications model. As a reminder ask participants to outline the 8 steps. Add to the discussion if needed. The 8 steps are:

- Assess the current situation
- Set measurable communication goals
- Define your intended/“target” audiences
- Develop and pretest your messages
- Select the best ways to deliver those messages
- Create an action plan
- Develop and pretest materials
- Implement and evaluate the plan

Be prepared – Develop your key messages ahead of time and have them ready. Make sure that everyone on your team knows the key messages and supporting messages and has practiced using them. It is often easy to get off topic and practicing these messages and having them written in front of you to remind you will help you use them most effectively.

Maximize message exposure – Take advantage of social media. Use Twitter, Facebook and other social media to get your message out. You should have already established accounts, or if you do not, work with

someone who does to ensure the information gets out in a timely fashion. Build a cadre of followers as these people will help get your message out during a disaster. Also remember when using social media in a disaster to use the following tips:

- Take some precautions and turn off automatic feeds so inappropriate items don't go out.
- Craft your messages carefully to get the important information out and so that it can be easily distributed.
- Establish locations that people can get additional information and time frames of when new information will be available.

Visual 8: Manage Information (2 of 2)

- Consider your audience
 - Remember you are communicating with people in crisis who may not have access to electricity or the Internet
- Do not forget the messenger
 - The messenger is just as important as the message
- Information in a crisis is often extremely time sensitive
 - Get it right and get it out



Note

Consider your audience – Remember you are communicating with people in crisis. Be careful to communicate with those affected and family members first. Realize that these people will be under stress. Be aware of how you phrase things and the impact this can have on those in the crisis. Do not talk about the opportunity for few survivors with the media with the families standing there. Be situationally aware of who is around you, who could be listening and how quickly information can travel in the day of instant news through social media.

Do not forget the messenger – The messenger is just as important as the message. Make sure that you have reliable and respected spokespersons to deliver your message. Find those people in the community that have strong networks to help get your message across. If you don't know who those people are, you can establish who those networkers are by conducting interviews with your target audience and asking them who they turn to for information, who they trust, and who do they know with a strong network in the community.

Visual 9: Getting Information to the Public

NIMS describes an ongoing cycle that involves four steps:

1. Gathering
2. Verifying
3. Coordinating
4. Disseminating



GATHERING INFORMATION

Gathering information is the first step in the process of getting information to the public and additional stakeholders. Information is collected from:

Note

- **On-Scene Command:** A source of ongoing, official information on the response effort.
- **On-Scene Public Information Officers:** Report to the JIC what they are observing at the incident from the news media, elected officials and their staff, and the public.
- **Media Monitoring:** Used to assess the accuracy and content of news media reports. It also helps to identify trends and breaking issues.
- **News Media:** A valuable source of developing information and current issues.
- **Public and Elected/Appointed Officials:** Inquiries from elected/appointed officials, community leaders, and the general public point to the specific concerns of those in the affected areas.

VERIFYING INFORMATION

The next step in the process is to verify the accuracy of the information that has been collected, by consulting the following sources:

- **Other Public Information Officers in the JIC:** Comparing notes—especially with the lead Public Information Officer and Public Information Officers who are liaisons to the various assistance programs or response/recovery partners—is one way to verify information accuracy.
- **EOC Sources:** Including program leads, who should be asked to confirm information.
- **On-Scene Public Information Officers:** A valuable source for checking the accuracy of information reported to the EOC with reports from the news media, the offices of elected officials, and people on the scene.

COORDINATING INFORMATION

The next step in the process is to coordinate with other Public Information Officers who are part of the JIS. These Public Information Officers include both those represented in the JIC and those working from another location who are part of the JIS. Coordinating information involves:

- **Establishing Key Message(s):** After gathering information from all sources', unified messages are crafted that address all informational needs and are prioritized according to the overall Federal, State, tribal, and local response/recovery strategy. The mission includes getting accurate, consistent information to the right people at the right time so they can make informed decisions.
- **Obtaining Approval/Clearance from Those With Authority:** Ensuring that the information is consistent, accurate, and accessible. The approval process should be streamlined, however, to ensure that the information is released in a timely manner.

DISSEMINATING INFORMATION

The next step in the process is to disseminate information to the public and additional stakeholders. This step involves:

- **Using Multiple Methods:** In an emergency, there may not be many options. Phone calls and interviews might be the primary means of getting information to the news media. Personal visits or town meetings may be the most effective avenue for the public, elected/appointed officials, or other stakeholders. These outreach efforts can be supported by providing talking points and fliers to on-scene Public Information Officers.
- **Monitoring the Media:** Media monitoring is invaluable for ensuring that the message is understood by the news media and reported accurately and completely. Important inaccuracies should be addressed before they are reported incorrectly a second time.

Visual 10: Whole Community Needs

Goal: To ensure information reaches the whole community, including those with limited English proficiency.

What are the demographics of your community?

How will you reach these audiences?



Note

People with disabilities must be able to access and benefit from emergency programs, services, and activities equal to the general population.

Equal access applies to emergency preparedness, notification of emergencies, evacuation, transportation, shelter, distribution of supplies, food, first aid, medical care, housing, application for and distribution of benefits and communications.

People with disabilities must be given information that is comparable in content and detail to that given to the general public. It must also be accessible, understandable, and timely. The Joint information center must keep this in mind when disseminating information to the public. It is important to know the community, and to have systems in place to reach the whole community when providing emergency public information.

Auxiliary aids and services may be needed to ensure effective communication. These resources may include sign language interpreters through on-site or video (for example, during press conferences); and interpretation aids for people who are deaf, deaf-blind, hard of hearing or have speech impairments. People who are blind, deaf-blind, have low vision, or have cognitive disabilities may need large print information or people to assist with reading and filling out forms.

Visual 11: Conduct Interviews

On-camera interview skills:

- Use sound bites and talking points
- Make eye contact with the reporter
- Use non-distracting gestures
- Know how to answer difficult questions

Public speaking skills:

- Use your voice effectively
- Engage the audience
- Know your subject
- Project confidence



Note

Brush up on interview techniques. Consider the following dos and don'ts for on-camera performance:

DO:

- Know what you want to say. It is the best way to control the interview and accomplish your objectives.
- Know your main point and stick to it. Too many messages will be confusing to the reporter and the public.
- Be positive, yet realistic. Turn a negative question around and answer it in the positive. If asked, "Why didn't the police department use search dogs immediately?" Instead of saying, "We didn't use search dogs earlier because . . .," say: "We have used a full range of search strategies, including search dogs."
- Show compassion and empathy.
- Know when to stop. Stop talking when you've made your point. Don't speculate and don't feel that you have to fill empty air space.
- Whenever possible, summarize your key points at the end of the interview.

DON'T:

- Don't speculate. If you don't know the answer to something, say so. Don't offer your opinion.
- Don't answer hypothetical questions. Hypothetical questions often begin: "What if . . ." Don't answer questions that require you to make assumptions.
- Don't comment on other organizations, unless to thank them for their efforts.
- Don't comment on what others have said, particularly if you haven't heard or read it yourself. It may cause you to verify something that might not be true. Don't lose your temper. You can stand your ground without losing it.

- Never lie. NEVER!
- Don't say anything to a reporter you don't want to see online, in print or on TV. Always assume that microphones are turned on.
- Don't use "off the record." Even if you have a long-standing relationship with a reporter. Consider this: if the information gets out from a source other than you, other reporters may run with the information while the reporter you trusted misses out on the story by respecting your request to keep the information off the record.
- Don't say "no comment" There is always an alternative, such as admitting you don't have an answer, but promising to get one.

Visual 12: Coach Speakers

Prepare principals, subject matter experts, policy makers and managers for media interviews

- Create message maps
- Write talking points
- Provide background information
- Anticipate difficult questions

In your Student Manual or journal, write down one coaching task you will plan when you return to your job



An important part of a PIO's job is to make sure spokespersons are trained and ready to speak to the media at a moment's notice.

During steady state (95%):

Note

- Plan to hold group training and practice sessions with potential spokespersons in your organization. Spokespersons should know the basic techniques for handling print, radio and television interviews.
- Once or twice a month, schedule one-on-one practice sessions with potential spokespersons within your organization. Practice ideas include:
 - Simulate a radio interview by making an audio recording of the spokesperson answering four or five questions within their area of expertise. Keep the questions simple. Play back the audio file and discuss strong points and areas for improvement. –
 - Practice sound bites. Again, keep it simple. Depending on their level of expertise, you can record them answering questions about what they had for breakfast (emphasizing speaking in sound bites), or more complex program questions if the person is ready. –

During an incident (5%):

- Brief spokespersons on key messages, background information, incident-specific hot-button issues, and any other pertinent information.
- Remember that the message is as important as the messenger. Choose wisely.

Visual 13: Work with the Media

Understand the following concepts:

- Build relationships with the news media
 - "During a hurricane, it's not a good time to start building a house."
- The media wants and needs access
- Types of news media and their needs i.e., deadlines, staging, access, pools, etc.
- Impact of changing technology

How do you define media?



Working with the news media

Note

- Understand the things you can do to build relationships with the news media: –
 - Be accessible and return calls and e-mails promptly. Even if you don't have all the information immediately, being accessible and responsive builds your credibility. –
 - Coordinate access to the scene and to policymakers, responders, and survivors. –
 - Treat all media fairly—meaning you don't play favorites with media or reporters. –
 - If you have breaking news, share it with everyone.
- Understand that the media wants and needs access: –
 - The First Amendment provides for freedom of the press. –
 - At the Federal level, the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) defines agency records subject to disclosure and outlines mandatory disclosure procedures. –
 - Local sunshine laws also ensure that the news media have access to information.
- Understand the types of news media and their needs:
 - All print media, especially newspapers:
 - For longer stories, may need more detailed information.
 - Stories can vary from brief to highly detailed. For example, a newspaper will run personnel items such as appointments and promotions when other media may not.
 - For longer stories, print media may need help in collecting long-term statistics, biographies, etc.

- Need information several hours before going to press, BUT . . . online editions of print media change this limitation as deadlines are reduced or eliminated.
- **Magazines:**
 - Are issued on a less frequent basis and require more advance planning.
 - Can be a good option for some in-depth feature stories.
 - May be more targeted to a particular audience you want to reach. –
- **Television:**
 - Seeks stories with drama or dramatic visual content. One producer described his evening news as “the was and the fuzz,” because it focused on deaths and law enforcement.
 - Is less likely to want an in-depth feature, although it can happen.
 - May want a staging area for live broadcasts from the scene of a story.
 - May accept your video clips (this is market-dependent; know your market!). –
- **Radio:**
 - May or may not have a field reporter, so is more likely to rely on you to contact them. Nationally, it is becoming more and more common for local radio stations to have no news staff or even live announcers.
 - Review your contact list to make sure you have an electronic contact to send them sound bites or short interview sound clips.
 - Wants you to pay attention to the station’s theme or strong focus, such as news, farm, or youth orientation. –
- **Social Media:**
 - Can add news items very quickly but may edit its Web site at only certain hours of the day. Be aware of the site’s operating procedures.
 - Often tied to print or television outlet and prefers to pick up news from that outlet.
 - In terms of news releases and content, should be treated like a newspaper.
- Understand the impact of changing technology: –
 - Local media of all formats use Web sites and want breaking news fast. They want to be the first with the headline, Tweet, or RSS feed and often seek a quick rundown as the incident breaks. And

they post “breaking” news to their Web site long before their newscast takes place. –

- They may not wait for validation of information, which means that media monitoring is essential. Fact checking is ongoing; information is published/broadcast first, then “updated” later.

Visual 14: Activity 3.1: Difficult Situations

Purpose: To think through difficult situations and devise strategies to deal with them

Instructions:

- Read the scenario and work through the discussion questions
- Assign a spokesperson to present scenario and findings to the class
- You have 15 minutes for the activity
- Keep the report to two minutes

Purpose: To think through difficult situations and devise strategies to address them.

Instructions: Read the scenario assigned to your table group and work through the discussion questions. Assign a spokesperson to recap your group's scenario before presenting findings to the class. When reporting your findings, provide a very brief synopsis (three to four sentences) of your scenario and explain key strategies your group came up with using the 8-Step Strategic Communication Model. Keep the report to two minutes. The scenarios are:



Activity

- Scenario 1: Pool Party
- Scenario 2: Loaded Question
- Scenario 3: News Conference Gone Wrong
- Scenario 4: Social Media Bites Back (#Fail)
- Scenario 5: The Misquote

Time: 10 minutes for the table group discussion; 10 minutes for reports and debrief.



Note

Scenario 1 – “Pool Party”

The wildfire had burned for seven days, fueled by high temperatures, windy conditions and dry terrain. Hundreds of fire fighters had responded, and hundreds of acres had gone up in flames, including at least one neighborhood of high-priced homes. Roadblocks have kept reporters away from the devastation and the active firefight, although they've had access to a staging area and been able to interview firefighters. The fire is now 90 percent contained and you are willing to take a pool into the devastated neighborhood. You've selected one network-affiliated TV reporter, one AP photographer and a reporter from the large daily paper in your state. However, the other reporters are very vocal about their displeasure with the size of the pool and the press members you've selected. Most want a larger pool, or a second pool, but a few are demanding complete access to the site.

Discussion questions: How do you respond? What do you do to prevent such a situation from happening again? What is the best way to “pick” pool members?

Scenario 2 – Loaded Question

Your agency director is taking questions at a news conference. It is the first anniversary of a particularly high-profile issue (lack of adequate and geographically accessible shelters) that affected primarily an economically depressed neighborhood. Your agency has done a good job putting in place new policies and protocols to address the issue, and you have fully briefed your agency director on the accomplishments to date. A reporter stands up to ask a question. He begins by recapping the issue and citing a number of “facts.” He states that your agency continues to ignore the needs of the community, as there are no designated shelters to date. Then the reporter asks: Don't you think this is clear evidence of extremely discriminatory practices?

Discussion questions: How do you handle this situation while it is happening? What could you have done to reduce the consequences?

Scenario 3 – News Conference Gone Wrong

You are holding a news conference updating reporters on the status of a school shooting. The shooter – a student armed with his father's hunting rifle -- has been killed; seven other students and two teachers have been wounded and taken to local hospitals. They are expected to survive. You start by reading a statement recounting the facts and then open the floor for questions. The first questions are appropriate – how many officers responded, where did the shootings occur, what was the motive. Then a reporter begins to ask questions about the shooter's parents, their gun history and the state's gun control laws. Other reporters jump on the gun control angle and begin asking for your opinion on the National Rifle Association, the Second Amendment and the ability of people to buy unregistered guns at gun shows.

Discussion questions: How do you handle the situation while it is happening or right after? What would you do next time to reduce the chance of this happening again?

Scenario 4 – Social Media Bites Back

Your agency had been slow to accept social media and has just started a Twitter feed. Although you already have 2,500 followers, you'd like to see that number grow 10-fold. To create some excitement and energy, you send out a tweet: We're here to support you. Tweet photos of your interactions with our officers and use the hashtag #goodnewsaboutus. Unfortunately, the photos coming thick and fast are not images of happy interactions. They show a variety of negative encounters – including one that appears to show an officer shooting a dog.

Discussion questions: How do you handle this onslaught of negative images on social media? How do you handle the resulting news story about the campaign? What social media policy do you put in place to help prevent this from happening again?

Scenario 5 – The Misquote

Your agency director has granted an interview to a newspaper reporter from your city. You have developed a good rapport with the reporter and feel it is a good time to go “on the record” about the issue. The issue at hand is fairly complicated – and controversial – but your director does a good job fully explaining the situation, and why your agency has taken the action it did. You feel the interview went well and are optimistic about the upcoming story. However, when the story runs a week later, above the fold on the front page, you’re not sure you were sitting in the same interview as the reporter. The facts are incomplete, the quotes are taken out of context and there are places where it’s clear the reporter failed to understand the intricacies of the situation. The headline, particularly, is a nightmare.

Discussion questions: What options do you have to push back against the story? What could you have done differently? What will you do differently in the future?

Visual 15: Personal Readiness



Note

A go-kit is a mobile response kit that allows PIOs to function in the event that they are working outside of their normal place of operation. When using a go kit during a disaster, consider having a second phone or phone number in case reporters all call one phone number.

Complete the checklist on the next few pages. Check off the things you would plan to include in your go kit and add other items as you see fit.

To enhance your answers to the checklist, frame your decisions along the following scenario:

- Through a mutual aid agreement, you are deployed to a nearby community to help out the local emergency management public information officer responding to a deadly mudslide. You are deployed on day two of the incident. There are no hotel rooms available, but logistics is setting up short-term lodging camps for responders. You are told to bring all the essentials you need, as the camp will only have the bare necessities available especially in the first few days. Cell and internet connectivity may be spotty.
- Considering this scenario, complete the checklist below.

PIO Go-Kit Checklist -



Note

PIO Go-Kit Checklist

Equipment

- Computer(s) with wireless capability
- Mobile devices with chargers and spare batteries; additional phone; portable chargers
- Digital camera (most people use their mobile devices, but carry one as a backup)

Information

- Elements of the crisis communication plan in electronic and print format (including PIO team contact lists and information materials). Note that print copies are important in case there is no electricity. Include information in various electronic formats (external memory, bookmarked resource websites, etc.)
- Updated media contact list, including outlet website addresses and reporters' social media handles
- Manuals and background information necessary to provide needed information to the public and media
- Topic-specific fact sheets, backgrounders, talking points, and news release templates (hard copy and electronic)
- Other: Paper, pens, markers, flagging tape, stapler for message boards, etc.

Other Resources

- Business cards with 24/7 contact information
- Funding mechanism (i.e., credit card, etc.) that can be used to purchase operational resources as needed
- Paper forms, in case there is no electronic access (i.e., no Internet access, power outage, etc.). Incident notebook to document your actions and observations.

Personal Care and Comfort Items

- Glasses/contacts (spares)
- Prescription medications; basic first-aid supplies
- Weather-appropriate gear (e.g., rain poncho, umbrella, gloves, sunscreen)
- Hand sanitizer, wipes, paper towels
- Energy bars, nuts, water
- Emergency contact information in case your family cannot get through your cell phone

Visual 16: Unit Summary

What should you be doing now?

- Assess your readiness
- Know your organization
- Establish internal relationships
- Conduct regular media outreach

What can you do now to continue developing the skills required for success as a PIO?

Unit 4: Writing Skills Workshop

Visual 1: Writing Skills Workshop



Visual 2: Unit Objectives

- Describe different public information written products
- Apply effective news release writing guidance
- Adapt or repurpose written media products for social media

Visual 3: Types of Written Products

- External Products – Materials produced for media and public consumption
- Internal Products – Materials produced for internal use only

You do not need to reinvent the wheel for every new written product.



Note

Review the two types of written products:

- External Products
- Internal Products

You do not need to reinvent the wheel for every new written product. You can repurpose written products: For example, information from a press release can be repurposed for social media posts, talking points, etc.

Remember: Internal documents could be discoverable through sunshine laws. Know the laws in your area regarding discoverability for internal documents.

Visual 4: External Products

- Statements
- News releases
- Fact sheets
- Media advisories
- Web and social media products
- Public Service Announcements
- Newsletter articles
- Brochures, fliers, and other handouts



Note

There are a number of external products used by the PIO, including:

- **Statement:** Used in lieu of a news release. Issued in print, less detailed than a press release. Good to use when you've received multiple media calls on the same topic.
- **News release:** Used when there is a factual report of an activity or incident of news value.
- **Fact sheet:** Used when you need to provide more detail than possible in a news release.
- **Media advisory:** Used to invite the media to an event or news conference. Provides basic information (what, where, when, and why); provides directions.
- **Talking points:** Used to prepare yourself or someone else for a telephone or broadcast interview. Written as sound bites—concise, simple to understand. For internal use only—not for distribution to the news media.
- **Web and social Media products:** An increasingly important avenue; includes Web pages, Blogs, and Tweets. Emphasize that you do NOT have to reinvent the wheel for every written item. You can repurpose much of the material from a press release for social posts, talking points, etc.
- **Public service announcements (PSAs):** Used when you want to enlist the cooperation of the electronic media in promoting an important message.
- **Newsletter articles:** Used to communicate within the organization or may be a feature in a newsletter that reaches another audience.
- **Brochures, fliers, and other handouts:** Used to provide background information to supplement a news release, provide photos or graphics, etc. Remember not to overwhelm the reporter with too much or extraneous information. Sometimes “less is more.”

Each of these products has value in a public information program.

Visual 5: Internal Products

- Key messages
- Talking points
- Other written products not meant for public consumption
 - Position papers
 - Operational/tactical backgrounders
 - “Back-pocket” information
- Written Testimony as a bullet point for times when we provide testimony for our supervisors when they appear before the legislature or Congress.

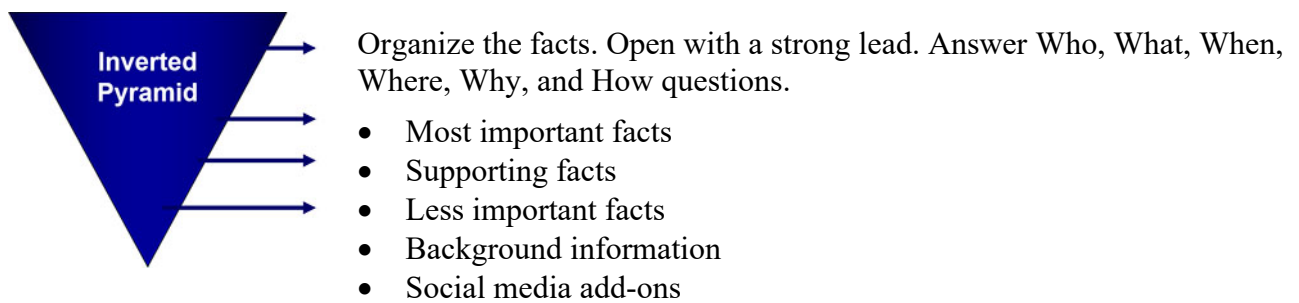


Note

Internal products are those drafted for internal use only, and include:

- **Key messages** are the core messages you want your target audience to hear and remember. They create meaning and headline the issues you want to discuss
- **Talking points** are used to prepare yourself or someone else for a telephone or broadcast interview. Written as sound bites-concise, simple to understand. For internal use only - not for distribution to the news media.
- **Position papers, operational or tactical backgrounders, and back-pocket information.** The purpose of a position paper is to generate support on an issue. It describes a position on an issue and the rationale for that position. The position paper is based on facts that provide a solid foundation for your argument. Backgrounders are written in chronological order or narrative fashion and are used to provide important ‘background information’ to contextualize an event, person, or issue. Back-pocket information refers to additional information available verbally only if someone asks for it.
- **Written Testimony** as a bullet point for times when we provide testimony for our supervisors when they appear before the legislature or Congress.

Visual 6: News Releases



Visual 7: Talking Points

- Short, easy to understand statements
- Reinforce key messages
- Brief, memorable statements
- Quotable: Written for the ear
- Consider: Past, present, future



Note

- Short, easy to understand statements that reinforce your key message
- Brief, one- or two-sentence answers to basic questions that might be asked
- Memorable statements that make your audience visualize your main point
- Quotable
- Written for the ear, not for the eye
- Consider three bullets for each key message: past, present, future

Visual 8: Activity 4.1: Writing an External Product

Instructions: Read news release assigned to your table and discuss the following:

- Delete any information that does not belong
- Reorder the information and edit as needed
- Rewrite in the appropriate style

Purpose: To apply basic news release writing guidance to sample products

Estimated Time: 30 minutes

Total Time for the Activity: 30 minutes

Purpose of the Activity: To apply basic news release writing guidance to written products.

Instructions:

Use resource materials available (i.e., dictionary, thesaurus, AP Stylebook).

Work in your table groups to edit a written product so that it fits its purpose and reflects good journalistic style.



Activity

- Turn to the sample written products in their Student Manual. Each table group will be assigned one written product.
- Work in your table groups to edit your assigned product by:
 - Deleting any information that does not belong in the written product
 - Reordering the information, as needed
 - Rewriting in the appropriate style
- Be prepared to report out in 15 minutes. In your report, include: –
 - Which written product you edited
 - What information you deleted (if any)
 - How you rewrote the document (e.g., read aloud rewritten portions)

Written Product #1

Contact: J. R. Jordan Department of Emergency Mgmt. (800) 555-0321

NR #3 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE October 2, 2009

State Notified of Alert at Nuclear Power Station

CAPITAL CITY – The Columbia Department of Emergency Management has been notified by Municipal Power that an Alert was declared at a Nuclear Power Station today. The Alert notification ensures that emergency response personnel are available and on standby should the situation worsen.

As designated in the Columbia Radiological Emergency Response Plan, Annex Q, sections 15.a to 15.j (rev) and pursuant to State law, the Columbia Emergency Operations Center is being augmented with additional personnel trained in emergency response and local governments surrounding the plant have been notified and are on standby.

The affected power station—named Norton Station after the renowned physicist, Karl Norton—is located in the Smythson County.

Should the situation worsen, the Emergency Alert System (EAS) will be activated and people residing or working in Protective Action Zone 1 will be advised to stay indoors, with all doors and windows closed and air conditioners and fans turned off until otherwise notified. Information to help citizens determine the Protective Action Zone in which they reside, or work can be found in the yellow pages section of area telephone directories.

At this time, there is no danger or cause for concern for people living near the nuclear facility or in other areas of the County, according to state officials.

###

Written Product #2

Contact: Pat Kelly

#31 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE July 21, 2009

Homestead Police Announce Holiday Program

The Homestead Police Department’s mission is to protect and serve the people of Homestead. To that end, this year the department is reaching out to those in need to make the holidays a little brighter. This includes working with Project Head Start to bring Santa to the classroom and the popular “Shop-With-A-Cop” program.

Shop-With-A-Cop pairs police personnel with Head Start students for a holiday shopping trip. Merchants provide a selection of discounted gifts, which are paid for through the Police Community Association (PCA). Each child gets to pick up to five gifts for their friends and family members.

Members of the news media can take advantage of photo opportunities by calling 800-555-9887.

###

Written Product #3

Contact: CDEM Public Affairs (800) 555-6793

Saturday, December 12, 2009

Stay safe from chemical spills and terrorist attacks

CAPITAL CITY – The Columbia Department of Emergency Management (CDEM) urges citizens to stay away from exit 9b on the cross-state Turnpike to avoid injury or death from a potentially dangerous chemical spill. Chemical agents can include poisonous gases, liquids, or solids that have toxic and lethal effects on victims. Do not attempt to rescue a victim of a chemical attack—you may become a victim yourself, say experts. \

If you are **at home** when officials indicate **evacuation** is necessary:

- Gather emergency supplies of food, clothing and water.
- If you are instructed to do so by local authorities, turn off all utilities at the main switch and close the main gas valve.
- Secure your dwelling by closing and locking windows and doors.
- Make arrangements for your pets. Public shelters may not allow pets.
- As soon as you are ordered to evacuate, do so promptly.
- Tell someone outside of the area where you are going.
- Follow recommended evacuation routes—shortcuts may be blocked.

If you are **at work** when officials indicate **evacuation** is necessary:

- Listen to your radio for guidance on protective actions.
- Follow your employer’s instructions to shelter in place or evacuate.

Written Product #4

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Dana Jordan (800) 555-0321 October 9, 2009

Dinwoody Police Officers Discover Marijuana

Dinwoody Police Officers looking for a lost child in the ten-mile area surrounding Wood Lake discovered marijuana plants growing in the St. John Botanical Gardens.

The plants were well disguised by thick plantings of bamboo and other Asian plants. The child had been separated from its parents who were visiting the Botanical Gardens. They were reunited at the visitor center.

The Officers and agents from DEA eradicated over 200 marijuana plants with an estimated street value of \$65,000. The discovery is one of the largest seizures of live marijuana plants in the State this year.

The parents of the lost child were not available for comment.

-30-

Written Product #5

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Contact: Jay Moore, PIO, NPEM

News Release #5-2009 24/7: 800-555-9966

Volunteer Sandbaggers Needed

NORTH PLAINVIEW, Columbia—Volunteers have started a sandbagging operation in North Plainview in an attempt to seal off the water from flowing under the railroad tracks that run parallel along Highway 97 between Main and Cherry Streets in North Plainview. Emergency Management needs about 2,000 sandbags for the levees in Plainview County should the water begin to overflow.

Due to mudslides, several roads have been closed in Plainview and traffic is being diverted. The City of North Plainview experienced extremely heavy rains over the past 5 days, resulting in flash flooding on the East side of town.

Currently, we are asking for volunteers to fill sandbags in anticipation of the rising Columbia River.

###

Written Product #6

Contact: Jan Morrison (800) 555-1234

NR #18 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE August 19, 2009

Media Advisory

(Not for Publication)

MEDIA BRIEFING SCHEDULED

GREENVILLE, Columbia – State Coordinator Casey Morton will hold a news conference at 6 p.m., Sunday, September 24, at the Greenville Emergency Operations Center to brief the media on the latest developments in the ongoing response to Hurricane Horatio. CDOT, CDH, and ARC will also attend the briefing.

The Columbia Department of Emergency Management (CDEM) has opened the Joint Information Center to provide people with updates on the hurricane response and information on disaster assistance. The phone number is (800) 555-1234.

CDEM requests that media representatives present identification at the entrance to the briefing.

Future briefings will be announced on a timely basis and as conditions warrant.

###

Visual 9: Approval Process

The purpose of the news release approval process:

- To ensure the information going out is accurate, up to date, and complete
- To facilitate coordination with other response agencies
- To document and track what has gone out
- To have the approving authority's trust in the product



Note

Approval processes for news releases will vary depending upon the organization and the incident, but the purposes remain the same:

- To ensure the information going out is accurate, up to date, and complete
- To facilitate coordination with other response agencies
- To document and track what has gone out
- To have the approving authority's trust in the product

Visual 10: Dissemination Process

Identifying the channels based on audience:

- Target media—creating and maintaining the list
- Social media handles

Creating the system:

- High-tech and low-tech
- Backup systems
- Updates



Note

The next process is dissemination—getting the message out—and the first step is identifying the channels you will use.

Never miss an update if you mentioned there will be one in previous briefings

In place of mentioning an update at a specific time; use "updates will occur when we receive additional information"

Visual 11: Tracking Process

What is coming in?

- Information (including media monitoring and analysis)
- Requests (internal and external audiences)
- Rumor mill

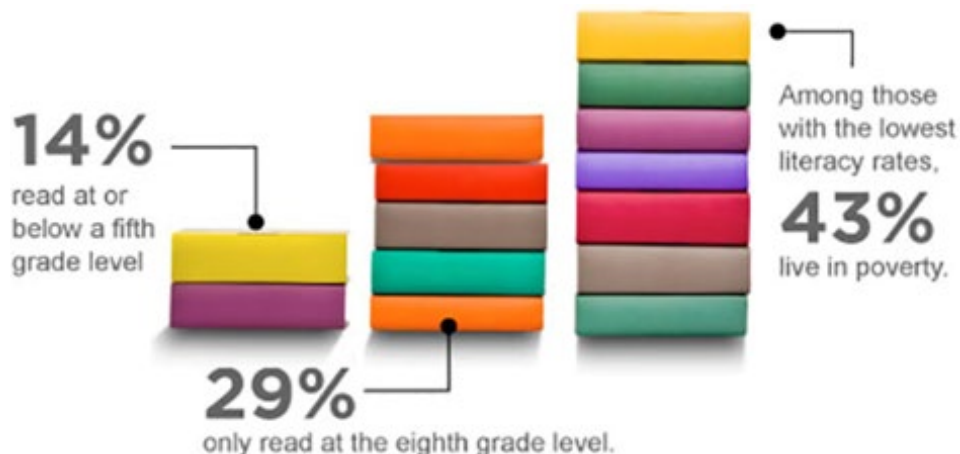
What is going out?

- News releases
- Briefings and interviews

How do you track efficiently?

What records do you keep?

Visual 12: U.S. Facts: Adults Over 16



U.S. Facts: Adults Over 16

U.S. Facts: Adults Over 16 Illiteracy by the Numbers (<http://literacyprojectfoundation.org/>)

- **Adult Literacy Facts** (<http://www.proliteracy.org/the-crisis/adult-literacy-facts#sthash.lepUzIWg.dpf>) Currently, 45 million Americans are functionally illiterate and cannot read above a fifth grade level 50% of adults cannot read a book written at an eighth-grade level

14% Below 5th Grade us HUGE

Ranking	City	Population	#Adults at or below 5th Grade Level	EM Homepage Readability Grade Level	Gap EM to Intended Audience < 5th Grade
1	New York	8,405,837	1,176,817	15.9	10.9
2	Los Angeles	3,884,307	543,802	15.4	10.4
3	Chicago	2,718,782	380,629	22.3	17.3
4	Houston	2,195,914	307,427	11.7	6.7

Ranking	City	Population	#Adults at or below 5th Grade Level	EM Homepage Readability Grade Level	Gap EM to Intended Audience < 5th Grade
5	Philadelphia	1,553,165	217,443	10.2	5.2
6	Phoenix	1,513,367	211,871	13.5	8.5

Grade Level Scores

Reading Ease Score	School Level
90 to 100	5th grade
80-90	6th grade
70 to 80	7th grade
60 to 70	8th and 9th grade
50 to 60	10th to 12th grade
30 to 50	college
0 to 30	college graduates

Commonly Read Materials

Publication	Reading Ease	Grade Level
Time	52	10th to 12th
Newsweek	50	10th to 12th
Wall Street Journal	43	College

Publication	Reading Ease	Grade Level
Harvard Business Review	43	College
New York Times	39	College
New York Review of Books	35	College
Harvard Law Review	32	College
Standard auto insurance Policy	10	College Graduate
Internal Review Code	minus 6	Your Accountant/Lawyer

Visual 13: How People Read on the Web

- Readers are impatient; you have 3 seconds to hook them
- 79% scanned, only 16% read
- Screen reading is up to 25% slower
- Numerals stop the wandering eye
- People scan in an “F” pattern
- People like chunks of information



Note

According to Web usability studies:

- Some 79 percent of users always scanned any new page they came across; only 16 percent read word-by-word
- Reading on a screen takes longer than a printed page; some studies have shown that reading on a monitor is up to 25% slower than reading on a page
- Numerals often stop the wandering eye and attract fixations, even when they're embedded within a mass of words that users otherwise ignore
- People scan Web pages in an “F” pattern: two horizontal stripes followed by a vertical stripe
- Readers are impatient. You have three seconds or less to encourage people to read more
- People like chunks of information—stand-alone blocks of text of about 100 words or less
- We do not like to scroll. We are getting more accepting of it, but we don't really like it

Headlines, page titles, and subject lines are often displayed out of context as part of a list of articles or search engine results.

Reading on a computer screen is hard; reading on a small handheld device is even harder. As a result, people don't really *read* on a screen – they *scan*.

The vast majority of us have been trained to read on the printed page. We hold it in our hand, adjust the page to maximize our comfort when reading, and mostly scan across pages from left to right following the text. As a new generation gets exposed to technology much earlier in life, this behavior is also changing.

People read printed materials in a linear fashion and rely on “**hypotaxis**”—a linear grammatical linking of one idea to another—to create meaning for us.

When people read on a screen it's often in a behavior of **hunting for information** where they scan the screen for what they want. Our **eyes jump** from section to section, and we rely on “**parataxis**”—short, simple sentences or ideas that stand alone—to find the information.

Visual 14: Writing for the Web

- Websites
- Social networks
- Blogs
- Micro-blogs
- Short-format video scripts



Note

Websites: Web readers actually scan the web for information, and do not have the patience to read long sentences or long paragraphs. Chunk information so readers find what they need quickly. Also, keep your website up to date. Users will stop visiting websites that contain outdated information. Include a quick turn-around update procedure in your planning. Having agreements in place with your web master before an incident will help you in keeping reporters and the public informed with the latest information available. Additional information on writing for the Web is included later in this unit.

Blogs: Blogs must sound informal, like a real person talking directly to acquaintances, not like a government bureaucrat. If they sound official, they lose credibility. You do not talk like that in a personal conversation—and that's what a blog is.

Microblogs: A microblog differs from a traditional blog in that its content is typically smaller in both actual and aggregated file size. Twitter is an example of a microblog. It is a way for reporters to keep track of your breaking news without having to be on a computer reading their email. Make it less than 280 characters. That leaves room for others to pass them along with their own comment added.

Social network updates: Write updates that are direct, informative, and will make your audience want to know more. Make sure you have links back to your website.

Visual 15: Strategies for Web Writing

- Highlight keywords
- Create subheadings
- Bulleted lists
- Use 1, 2, or 3 digits
- One idea per paragraph
- Inverted pyramid still applies
- Cut word count by half



Note

Web readers actually scan (instead of reading) the Web for information, and do not have the patience to read long sentences or long paragraphs. All through our lifetime, we have been instructed on how to write a story. And while many principles still apply (clarity) others are not effective when writing for the Web.

When writing for the web, create “scannable” content that makes finding key information easy for the reader:

- Highlight keywords (hypertext links, typeface variations, different color).
- Create meaningful sub-headings.
- Use bulleted lists (a bulleted list becomes a chunk).
- Include numbers where appropriate—digits enhance the “scan ability” of content—but spell out numbers that don’t represent facts.
- Use one idea per paragraph (if the first few words don’t grab the reader’s attention, they will skip it).
- Write content in the inverted pyramid style, starting with the conclusion.
- Cut your word count to half (or less) than conventional writing.

Cut extraneous information out of your copy.

Web expert Jakob Nielsen coined the term “blah-blah text” for a block of words that Web users typically skip when they arrive at a page. People’s eyes go directly to more actionable content, such as services, bulleted lists, or links.

- Brevity is best.
- Space is at a premium.
- Make every word count:
 - Place most useful info at top
 - Break up text into chunks
 - Keep sentences and paragraphs short
 - Create narrow, bulleted lists
 - Eliminate white space

The bottom line is to keep it simple, concise, and focus on answering two questions:

- **What?** (What will the reader find on this page—i.e., what's its function?)
- **Why?** (Why should they care—i.e., what's in it for them?)

Visual 16: Growth of Social Media

“You are what you share.”

— Charles W. Leadbeater, *We Think: The Power of Mass Creativity*

“These days, social media waits for no one. If you’re LATE for the party, you’ll probably be covered by all the noise and you might not be able to get your voice across. It could only mean that if you want to be heard by the crowd, you have to be fast; and on social media, that means you have to be REALLY fast.”

— Aaron Lee, @askaaronlee

Visual 17: What's Next?



This is a small representation of how social media looks today. Social media will continue to evolve, but the basic crisis communication premises of clarity, brevity and timeliness will not.

Note

Visual 18: Social Media in EM

- Decentralized and non-hierarchical
- Usually immediate and available globally
- Multi-channel
- Multiple sources



Note

Social media is different in that it changes media communication for emergency management in some keyways:

- **It is decentralized and non-hierarchical.** Not controlled by one or more entities. Anyone with access (any Web enabled device, e.g., basic computer, phone) and minimal skills can post and view.
- **It is usually immediate and available globally.** What is publicly posted can be viewed immediately and by all, including those throughout the world.
- **Multi-channel (two or more ways), multivariate and multimodal.** Multi-channel (two-way or more) posts can go out to several different services at one time. Posting on Twitter, Facebook, and to a blogpost all at once is not unusual. Media are multivariate as the way and the volume of the content posted may differ depending on the medium. A Facebook and Twitter post differ by the number of characters, the way they are displayed, and how the recipient receives them. Also, they may differ in the number of people who receive the message and the number of times it may be repeated, through “re-tweets,” linking, and reposts. Multimodal media can consist of text, pictures, video, or a combination thereof, and can be edited and reformulated with little control over how it might be presented.
- **The public obtains its news from multiple sources and contributes to the media discourse.** The public now obtains its news and information from multiple sources (TV, radio, and the Web) and chooses what, when, and how it wants it. In some ways, this can be viewed not as broadcasting, but as micro-channels.

Changes in media and public information.

Traditional Media

- One way communication
- Press release
- Passive audience

Social Media

- 24-hour news cycle
- Media access everywhere
- Active audience

Traditional media was predominantly one-way communication born from radio and TV, the model of broadcast mass media. The press release was the main medium for emergency managers to release critical information. The target audience for media was passive and the news cycle was much slower paced allowing for careful coding of the outgoing message to the media, public, and coordinating and cooperating agencies. Strongly based on command-and-control models, it worked well in controlling message content and timing as long as the news cycle maintained a consistent pace.

With the advent of the Internet and World Wide Web, the news media moved to a 24-hour cycle and access to media at the site of a disaster event became more accessible and immediate. Now social media sites allow average citizens to post text, pictures, video, and links that disperse content quickly and widely. This new medium has outstripped the pace and volume of the standard press release and of mainstream and local media as well.

One resources for social media trends is the [Social Media Fact Sheet from the Pew Research Center](https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/social-media/) (https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/social-media/)

Visual 19: Social Media Training Resources

- FEMA Independent Study Courses
- Check your state and local training resources for additional social media training



Note

Independent Study course:

Go to the [EMI Independent Study courses](http://training.fema.gov/is/) (<http://training.fema.gov/is/>)

- Search for IS-42, Social Media in Emergency Management-
- <https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-42.a>
- Take the free, online training course at your own pace

Resident course:

- PER-304 Social Media for Natural Disaster Response and Recovery. Information available through your state emergency management training office or enter the search term PER-304 social media on your favorite search engine.

Check your state and local training offices for additional resources.

Visual 20: Social Media Emergency Management Guidance Tool



Note

LEVERAGING SOCIAL MEDIA DURING EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OPERATIONS

Social media is changing the way the public safety community prepares for, responds to, manages, and recovers from emergencies. Social media use and organizational adoption spans a broad spectrum across public safety organizations. As a result, some communities experience a divide between the public's expectations of government social media use and the government's delivery capabilities. To address this gap, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) coordinated with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and public safety practitioners from the public safety community to develop the Social Media Emergency Management (SMEM) Guidance Tool for emergency managers (EMs) and public information officers (PIOs).

WHAT IS THE SMEM GUIDANCE TOOL?

The SMEM Guidance Tool is a free, online tool that provides users with a simple, step-by-step line of questioning to create plans to improve their organization's SMEM operations. The SMEM Guidance Tool is automated, web accessible, and mobile to enhance usability for practitioners who often have limited time to dedicate to SMEM planning and operations efforts. DHS S&T launched the Beta SMEM Guidance Tool online in coordination with FEMA to supplement current social media course offerings and resources. This initiative promotes public safety's more effective use of social media, improves situational awareness, and enhances decision making. [The Beta Tool is publicly available at https://smemguidancetool.org/about](https://smemguidancetool.org/about)

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The existing SMEM Guidance Tool provides a robust and user-friendly experience for the [Social Media Business Case Guide](https://www.dhs.gov/publication/st-social-media-business-case-guide) (<https://www.dhs.gov/publication/st-social-media-business-case-guide>) and [Digital Volunteer Program Guide](https://www.dhs.gov/publication/st-digital-volunteer-program-guide) (<https://www.dhs.gov/publication/st-digital-volunteer-program-guide>)

The SMEM Guidance Tool includes a resources page with links to other existing online guidance within the SMEM community.

Users can:

- Answer a series of fill in the blank and yes/no question prompts
- Skip prompts they feel are irrelevant to their organization
- Populate Microsoft Word document templates and charts
- Modify output documents to meet their agency or jurisdiction's specific needs

After completing the prompts of the SMEM Guidance Tool, agencies will have a strong business case to share with their organization's decision makers to support increased SMEM adoption, in addition to improved digital volunteer processes and plans for immediate implementation. In 2020, the SMEM Guidance Tool will provide users the ability to create a comprehensive social media plan for their organization.

TESTING THE SMEM GUIDANCE TOOL WITH POTENTIAL USERS

The public safety community was the primary driver for the development of the SMEM Guidance Tool. Over the last year, DHS S&T strategically engaged a diverse group of SMEM practitioners and experts representing local, state, and federal government perspectives to ensure all SMEM Guidance Tool requirements were practitioner driven. These partnership communities reviewed the tool throughout all stages of development and provided input on:

- User interface (UI)
- User experience (UX)
- Content
- Usage
- Adoption

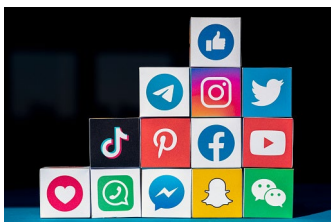
Over the next year, DHS S&T will coordinate with FEMA to further refine the SMEM Guidance Tool and ensure it continues to meet the public safety community's expectations.



Instructor
Note

Have participants review the [Social Media Emergency Management Guidance Tool Fact Sheet](https://www.dhs.gov/publication/st-social-media-emergency-management-guidance-tool) located via the internet (<https://www.dhs.gov/publication/st-social-media-emergency-management-guidance-tool>).

Visual 21: Activity 4.2: Make it Social



In your table group, review the news release you completed in Activity 4.1 and write:

- 1 Tweet
- 1 Facebook entry
- 1 idea for YouTube

Purpose: To adapt or repurpose traditional media products into Social Media entries

Activity 4.2: Make it Social

Instructions: In your table group, review the news release you completed in Activity 4.1 and write:

- 1 Tweet
- 1 Facebook entry
- 1 idea for YouTube

Purpose: To adapt or repurpose traditional media products into Social Media entries

Estimated Time: 15 minutes

Total Time for the Activity: 15 minutes

Purpose of the Activity: To adapt or repurpose traditional media products into Social Media entries.

Instructions:



Activity

- You will work in table groups for this activity. Review the news release you completed in Activity 4.1 and write one each of the following:
 - 1 Tweet
 - 1 Facebook entry
 - 1 idea for YouTube
- You have 15 minutes for this activity.
- If you are short on time, you can divide this work amongst the table, then get together to review it before reporting your work.

Visual 22: Basics Concepts Do Not Change

Traditional or social media, the questions remain the same:

- Why are you communicating?
- Who are you trying to reach?
- What will you say?
- How will you say it?



Note

- Basic concepts in information management do not change with the inclusion of social media tools. You still need to answer the basic questions: –
 - Why are you communicating? (Your objective)
 - Who are you trying to reach? (Your audience)
 - What will you say and how will you say it? (Your medium)
- Ultimately, new communication technology is all about speed. There is an expectation from the public that their government agencies will not only be transparent and responsive, but that the response must be customized to the incident and as rapid as the flow of electrons.
- People have an expectation of being engaged and involved and they don't want to wait for it. By establishing a presence in the Web 2.0 world and knowing how to use the tools to communicate official information from your agency, you can help to shape the perception of the event along with possibly providing important life-saving information to those who need it.
- Remember: It's all about getting the right information to the right people at the right time so they can make the right decisions.

Visual 23: Bottom Line: Communicate!

- In a crisis, getting the right information to the right people at the right time is more important than catching a dangling participle
- Create simple, easy-to-use systems to get information products approved and out the door

Visual 24: Unit Summary

In this unit, we discussed:

- Internal and external written products
- News release writing, approval, and dissemination process
- Writing for the web
- Social media in emergency management

Unit 5: Interview Skills

Visual 1: Unit 5 Interview Skills



Visual 2: Unit Objectives

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Describe what types of impressions specific body language might convey during an interview
- Identify elements of an interview the PIO should consider ahead of time
- Identify steps a PIO needs to take to prepare for and conduct a news interview
- Demonstrate effective techniques for on-camera interviews

Visual 3: Determining the Objective

When a reporter asks for an interview, who determines the objective?

Visual 4: Understanding the Audience

Before you reach your target audience, you first need to reach the news media.

Does the reporter:

- Understand your department or program?
- Have a track record (good or bad)?
- Have a positive or negative bias or “agenda”?

Does the target audience:

- Have an opinion of your department?
- Understand the topic?
- Have perceptions to address?
- Have a bias or “agenda”?

Visual 5: Developing the Message

Given the audience, what will you say to achieve your objective?

Given the medium, how will you convey the message?



Note

There are two questions that should be considered when developing the message.

- Given the audience, what will you say to achieve your objective?
- Given the medium, how will you convey the message?

Visual 6: Preparing for the Interview

1. Understand the request and anticipate questions
2. Develop talking points that convey your message
3. Practice or prep the spokesperson
4. Update your facts



Note

Now that you've taken care of the basics—objective, audience, and message, you are ready to prepare for the interview using the following steps:

STEP 1: Understand the request and anticipate questions.

- This may seem obvious, but sometimes a request is slightly off-target, or the reporter doesn't have enough data to know what to ask for. The better you understand his or her interest, the better the interview for you and the reporter. If you are unsure, ask for clarification.
- There is a difference between asking "What are you going to ask me?" and "Tell me what your interest is so I can have the right person participate in the interview." Do not ask the former; do ask the latter.
- Also, think about what questions you should expect and be prepared to answer them.

STEP 2: Develop talking points that convey your message.

- Once you know what you want to say, how can you express it in a sound bite that is clear, concise, and memorable?
- Get in the habit of writing down the sound bite; practice saying it out loud.
- Keep it simple. Write down a few ways of emphasizing the main message without sounding like you are repeating.

STEP 3: Practice, or, if you are not the person who is going to speak for the organization, prep the spokesperson.

- Even a few minutes of practice can make a big difference in how well you do in an interview.
- **When you practice, make sure you are thinking and talking in 9- to 12-second sound bites.**
- If you are not the spokesperson, prep the spokesperson by providing talking points and perhaps playing the role of the reporter in a practice interview.

STEP 4: Last, but not least: Update your facts. Make sure you have the latest information.

Visual 7: In the Real World . . .

- Time after time, after-action reports have pointed to lack of “size-up” as a reason for a tragedy on an emergency scene
- Lack of a size-up before an interview can have nearly as tragic a result

Visual 8: “Your Actions Speak So Loudly . . .

. . . I cannot hear what you are saying.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson



Note

When preparing for an interview, or just when working with the public, it is important to understand how body language is interpreted by others.

Demonstrate by saying: “I am so excited to be instructing this course today,” but show boredom or something else.

Then ask for volunteers and have each volunteer read one of their talking points, or the unit objectives, to demonstrate a behavior using only body language, (not using any words); or better yet, have them all give the same statement, but have each person demonstrate one of the following:

- Nervousness
- Deceitfulness
- Callousness/arrogance
- Boredom
- Lying
- Lack of knowledge

Visual 9: Nonverbal Communication Tips

Pay attention to:

- Eye contact
- Voice
- Expression
- Body position
- Gestures
- Movement
- Attire/Dress
- Digital
- Hi Definition
- Web/Video Conferencing



Note

Any interview can be improved by paying attention to nonverbal communication:

- **Eye contact:** ALWAYS look at the reporter, not the camera. Avoid looking down. Avoid rolling your eyes or looking up to the sky.
- **Voice:** Speak clearly and modulate your voice by varying tone and volume. Slow down for emphasis when making important points. Pause to gather your thoughts rather than use fillers like “er,” “um,” or “you know.”
- **Expression:** Appear attentive. Show emotion as appropriate (sincerity). Assume that the camera is always on. Even if your words are not being taped, your facial expression will be conveying a message. Make sure it is the message you want to convey.
- **Body position:** Stand straight and align your body with the interviewer. In some instances, the camera operator may -position you for the shot. Be aware of what’s being photographed in the background. Always be aware of scene safety for both you and the reporter.
- **Gestures:** Use natural, but not “big” gestures. Keep your hands away from your face Don’t cross your arms, raise your eyebrows, or shrug your shoulders. Avoid jerky movements.
- **Movement:** If standing, do not lock your knees, but don’t sway or bounce either. Don’t jingle jewelry or change in pockets. If sitting, don’t jiggle legs or spin or rock in the chair. Sit on your coat tail to keep your jacket from riding up.
- **Attire/Dress:** Consider your audience, market, and communication channel when dressing for an interview. In general, you don’t want your appearance to be “louder” than your message.
 - Wear your uniform or neat, conservative attire if non-uniformed.
 - Avoid bright whites, stripes, plaids, and complicated patterns.
 - Remove dark glasses/sunglasses.

- Know your agency's policy on showing your badge in public; some agencies discourage it to minimize fraudulent duplication.
 - Remove hat to avoid shadows on your face.
 - Remove distracting, overly shiny, or noisy jewelry (includes body piercings).
 - Consider covering tattoos and minimizing body piercing jewelry.
 - If something in your appearance significantly detracts from your message, get rid of it or fix it
- **Digital high definition (HD)**
 - Digital and HD television is high quality and not only shows imperfections in clothing, but also has problems with certain colors (e.g., bright colors may cause problems with color balance and/or appear too vivid on some broadcasts). DOT ANSI (American National Standard for High Visibility) vests are not good for digital TV. Some badges and collar pins can also glare.
- **Web/Video Conferencing**
 - During the COVID-19 pandemic, video conferencing services like Zoom, WebEx, and GoToMeeting became normal ways to conduct interviews
 - Pay attention to your profile image, background or filter, and mic quality when conducting these interviews

Visual 10: “Owning” the Interview

Techniques that help the PIO better manage the interview interaction include:

- Bridging
- Paraphrasing
- Alternatives to “No Comment”
- Reversing a negative
- Be passionate when appropriate

Visual 11: Transitional Phrases or “Bridging”

- “What is most important is ...”
- “What we should focus on is ...”
- “What the public should know is ...”
- “The point (or goal) is ...”
- “What I can tell you is...”



Note

- In some interviews you may find that you are not provided with the right question to present your message. You can bring the focus back by building a bridge between the question and your message.
- Transitional phrases are tools that help you build such a bridge, and put the interview back on track to your talking points and main message.

Visual 12: Paraphrasing

Question:

“What is your goal with this new initiative?”

Answers:

“Our goal with this new initiative is...”

“What we want to accomplish with this new initiative is...”

Visual 13: Alternatives to “No Comment”

- “The matter is under investigation and that information is not available at this time.”
- “We will provide updates as more information becomes available.”
- “Let me put you in contact with someone who is better able to answer that question.”
- “Those details are covered by the Privacy laws, and I cannot discuss them, but I can give you this general information . . .”



Note

When you can't answer a question, make sure the response you give is suited to the situation, is truthful, and is as forthcoming as possible.

The visual displays some options to “no comment.”

- The first two options are suitable when you are dealing with an unfolding situation. Do not promise updates, however, unless you plan to provide them.
- If you cannot answer a question but someone else can, the third response is appropriate. Make sure you follow up and connect the reporter with the appropriate spokesperson or say that you are unable to do so.
- The fourth response is a good option when you are restricted from providing some information, but you can offer general information that conveys your key message.
- Have several planned responses. “What I can share is....” Or “What we do know is...”
- How would "you" address a "no comment"?

Visual 14: Reversing a Negative

Question: “Your efforts to reduce our crime rate have been ineffective; how can you say we are a safer community today?”

WRONG Answer:

“Our efforts are not ineffective because...”

BETTER Answers:

- “We are a safer community today because...”
- “Our efforts have been very successful in this way...”



Note

Reversing a negative:

- Never start an answer by repeating a reporter’s negative question. If you do, they will have you on tape reinforcing the statement, even if you clarify your message immediately afterwards (they may edit your clarification out of the final piece and show only the negative statement).
- Remember, if you don’t say it, they do not have it on tape.
- Try to stay positive in your response. You have a message. Use it.
- How do "you" address a "no comment"?

Visual 15: Hostile Interviews

Hostile interviewers are those who:

- Interrupt your answers
- Shoot rapid-fire questions
- Demand an answer
- Put words in your mouth
- Try to create the answer they want by misquoting you



Note

No matter how hostile the interview turns, you should never lose your cool.

If a reporter:

- Interrupts you: Be polite but assertive; you may also finish your point in the next question by bridging.
- Misquotes you or puts words in your mouth: Restate your answer or message and correct the mistakes.
- Shoots rapid-fire questions: Pick one or two questions you feel comfortable with, answer them, and ignore the rest. Emphasize your message.
- Demands an answer to something you don't know: Stick to your response. For example: "That information is not available at this time." or "Let me get back to you with more information."
- Put words in your mouth or try to create the answer they want by misquoting you: Prepare talking points for the good, bad, and ugly interview questions, preferably 3-5 of each.

Visual 16: Mental Checklist

- Know what you want to say
- Know what you **DO NOT** want to talk about
- Think about the audience and the medium
- Gather your information (quick issue update)
- Practice sound bites and quotes
- Take a deep breath and relax
- What is the hardest question they can ask me?

Visual 17: What Can You Do Now?

The following items prepare you for the on-camera interview:

- Body language that can convey good or bad impressions during an interview
- Techniques to improve on-camera interviews
- Use the inverted pyramid - bad news first
- Find ways to connect with your audience

Visual 18: Activity 5.1: On-Camera Interviews

Purpose: To practice on-camera performance

- Write talking points on a subject you are familiar with, or use the information in your Student Manual
- Practice delivery with a partner
- Be ready to give a television interview
- Your instructor will act as the reporter and will provide feedback on your performance

Total Time: 2 hours

Materials

- At least two video cameras or mobile recording devices on a tripod. Set up each camera in separate break-out rooms. If you don't have tripods, ask students or other staff available to act as videographers by holding the camera during the interviews.
- At least two instructors to act as reporters.

Instructions

- Select a topic you are familiar with and write talking points for your interview. Most participants choose a public awareness campaign they are familiar with, an event they want to promote or a recent emergency or incident operation they participated in.
- If you cannot think of any topics, you may use the news release included in the Student Manual and draft your own talking points from the release for your interview.
- Practice your delivery. If you have time, ask a fellow participant to record you while you practice delivering the talking points, watch the recording and adjust your delivery as needed.
- The interview will follow this format: –
 - The reporter will ask you to say and spell your name and title. –
 - Then the reporter will ask you a basic question about your topic. This is your cue to start delivering your message. –
 - The reporter may ask you a series of follow-up questions. Be ready to answer both easy and tough questions. –
 - Demonstrate the interview techniques covered in the unit if needed. –
 - For the purposes of the activity, you can assume the interview you are giving is being taped for later broadcast; it is not live, unless you prefer it to be live. –
 - Your instructor will review the recording and give you feedback after your interview.



Activity

HEAR THE BEEP WHERE YOU SLEEP. EVERY BEDROOM NEEDS A WORKING SMOKE ALARM!

Location matters when it comes to your smoke alarm. That’s the message behind this year’s Fire Prevention Week campaign, “Hear the Beep Where You Sleep. Every Bedroom Needs a Working Smoke Alarm!”

Along with firefighters and safety advocates nationwide, (Your Fire Department) is joining forces with the nonprofit National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) during Fire Prevention Week, October 4-10, to remind local residents about the importance of having working smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each sleeping area, and on every level of the home, including the basement.

“In a fire, seconds count,” said (Your name, title). “Half of home fire deaths result from fires reported at night between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. when most people are asleep. Home smoke alarms can alert people to a fire before it spreads, giving everyone enough time to get out.”

According to the latest NFPA research, working smoke alarms cut the chance of dying in a fire in half. Meanwhile, three out of five fire deaths resulted from fires in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms.

This year’s Fire Prevention Week campaign includes the following smoke alarm messages:

- Install smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each separate sleeping area and on every level of the home, including the basement.
- Interconnect all smoke alarms throughout the home. This way, when one sounds, they all do.
- Test alarms at least monthly by pushing the test button.
- Replace all smoke alarms when they are 10 years old or sooner if they don’t respond properly.
- Make sure everyone in the home knows the sound of the smoke alarm and understands what to do when they hear it.
- If the smoke alarm sounds, get outside and stay outside. Go to your outside meeting place.
- Call the fire department from outside the home.

The (Your Town/City) Fire Department will be hosting activities (list specific events) during Fire Prevention Week to promote “Hear the Beep Where You Sleep. Every Bedroom Needs a Working Smoke Alarm!” Through these educational, family-oriented activities, residents can learn more about the importance of having a working smoke alarm in every bedroom.

To find out more about Fire Prevention Week programs and activities in (Your Town/City), please contact the (Your Town/City) Fire Department at (provide your phone number or appropriate contact information). [To learn more about smoke alarms and “Hear the Beep Where You Sleep. Every Bedroom Needs a Working Smoke Alarm!”](#) visit <https://www.nfpa.org/fpw> and <https://sparkyschoolhouse.org/#prevention-section>.

Visual 19: Unit Summary

In this unit, we discussed:

- Preparing for an on-camera interview during an incident
- The impression that different body language makes
- Elements of an interview the PIO should consider ahead of time

Unit 6: Crisis/Emergency Communications

Visual 1: Crisis Communications



Visual 2: Crisis Communications Intro Activity Part 1

PURPOSE: Review a situation from the perspective of government, the media, and the public

Working in your table groups:

- Review the scenario in the resource guide
- List concerns, thoughts, emotions and needs for each of these groups
 - Government
 - Media
 - Public
- Write your thoughts on the designated easel charts.

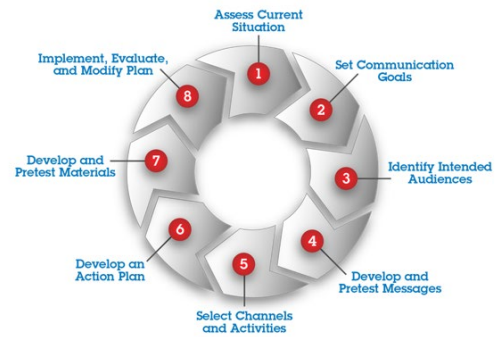
You have 30 minutes to complete this activity.



Visual 3: Unit Objectives

At the end of this unit participants will:

- Apply current crisis communications methodologies to community audiences during an incident
- Describe factors that influence public response to warning messages
- Discuss the myths associated with public response to warning messages
- Describe the intent of the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS)
- Identify the components of effective alert and warning messages
- Write a clear and accessible warning message for a given simulated situation
- Characteristics of effective alert and warning messages



Visual 4: External Affairs Officer/Public Information Officer 95% vs 5%

95% Activity	5% Activity
Risk Communication	Department/Agency SOPs
Community Education Programs	Crisis Communication
Working with the Whole Community	Incident Command System (PIOs)
Program Releases	JIC/JIS (External Affairs)
Social Media	NIMS (JIC/JIS)
Meeting with Community Groups	National Response Framework (ESF#15)
Customer Service	Working with Survivors
Communication Planning	
Communication Training	
Agency Visits	
Speeches	
Media	

Visual 5: Risk vs Crisis

RISK: It HAS NOT happened

CRISIS: It HAS happened

RISK vs. CRISIS



Visual 6: Crisis Can Originate from...

Various Threats To....

- Integrity
- Reputation
- An internal problem exposed
- Employee behavior in public
- Community emergencies

Visual 7: Examples of Community Emergencies

- School violence
- Active shooters
- Arson by a firefighter
- Officer shootings
- COVID-19
- Ebola/Zika/disease
- Social media attacks
- Staff bad behavior
- Theft of funds
- Sexual harassment and affairs
- Employee DUI and drug usage
- Cyber security attacks

Visual 8: Multiple Organization Crisis



Visual 9: EAO/PIO Primary Goal

Getting the right information to the right people at exactly the right time so everyone is empowered to make the right decisions

Visual 10: Four Headed “Crisis” Media Opportunities

- Traditional:
 - TV, radio, and print
- Social:
 - Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc.
- Your own:
 - Websites, blogs, social media
- Stalker:
 - Unknown persons that attack

Visual 11: Organization Desires During a Crisis

- Honesty
- Credibility
- Knowledge of what happened
- Knowledge of what-to-do
- Positive image
- Media to tell our story
- Official information as part of the story

Visual 12: Crisis Communications

- Anticipate:
 - History and what could happen
- Coordinate:
 - Include all local and area PIOs (before, during, and after the crisis)
- Cooperate:
 - Check your ego at the door
- Communicate:
 - Use every tool available

Visual 13: Plan for the Worst...

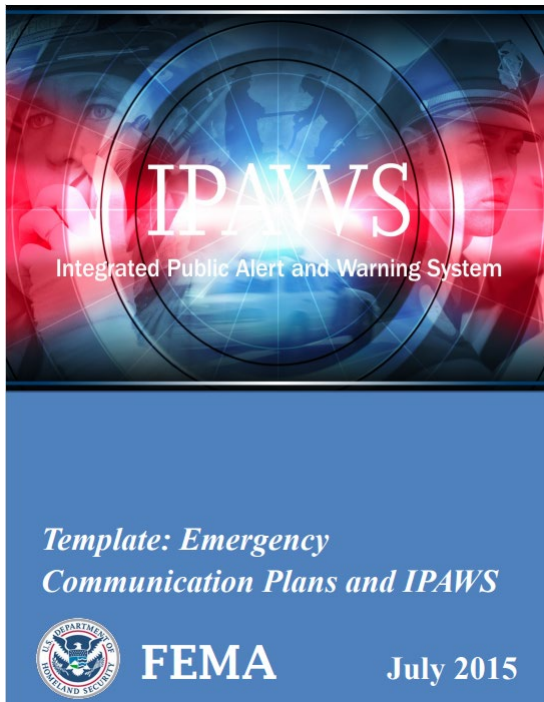
...And hope for the best.

TELL it **ALL** and

tell it **FAST**, and above all else,

TELL THE TRUTH.

Visual 14: Crisis Communications Preparedness



- Do you have a crisis communication plan?
- How up to date is your crisis communications plan?
- Do you have leadership buy-in?
- What is the strength of your relationships?

Visual 15: The Golden Hour

You have **one hour** from the onset of a crisis to implement your communications plan.



The Golden Hour



Student
Manual

- Implement your “golden hour” crisis communications plan
- Conduct an organizational crisis communications audit
- Names & contact info (Including stakeholders)
- Identify trained spokespersons in advance
- Crisis triage tools
- Alert/notification procedures
- Determine location of personnel & tools needed
- Media/blogger/journalist contact info
- Templates if so desired (written and PSAs)
- Pre-determined statements for immediate release
- Test your plan regularly
- First critical statement
- Prewritten & pre-approved statements/news releases
- Think of your spokesperson selection process the way sports teams operate; you have stars and strong people on the bench, ready to step in as needed
- Your policy is to quickly release only the information you know to shape your initial message

Visual 16: The 3 "C's" of Crisis Media Relations

Control

Always stay in control when working with the media. Never lose your cool.

Competence

Stay in your lane. Only talk about what you know and own! Never talk about things you do not know.

Concern

Show it in your face and words!

Visual 17: Maximum Disclosure with Minimal Delay

To control your crisis messaging, your policy should be to release only verified information you know within the shortest period as possible.

Releasing verified information within 3 minutes is the goal!

Visual 18: Holding Statements

- Past
- Present
- Future

Visual 19: 5 x 5 x 5 Preparation

- 5 good questions and 5 responses
- 5 bad questions and 5 responses
- 5 ugly questions and 5 responses

This is for the prep to the media interviews. At least 15 questions and 15 responses.

Visual 20: 27-9-3 “Hip Pocket” Tool

- 27 words for 3 organizational messages
- 9-12 seconds for each sound bite organizational message
- 3 main messages and 3 supporting messages for each organizational message

Example: Meningitis Outbreak on Campus

We're closely monitoring this situation and have plans in place to respond.

- Continuing our surveillance on campus and investigating reported cases.
- We've had a total of four confirmed cases
- Our health department is working with state/local health departments, infection control experts and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

We're communicating with state (local) health officers.

- Provide periodic updates and answer questions.
- We are testing students who have symptoms/quarantine in dorms.
- Since March 1st, we have tested 23 students and have four confirmed cases.
- We have ample vaccine supply for students.

We recommend students get vaccinated if they haven't already.

- Vaccine schedule per CDC guidelines:
 - A booster dose is recommended at age 16 years.
 - Teens and young adults (16 through 23 years old) also may be vaccinated with a serogroup B meningococcal vaccine.
- Contact your health care provider or local public health department with questions or to be immunized.
- We have ample vaccine supply for students - students who are not sure about their vaccine history and are concerned about being exposed to meningitis should be vaccinated.



Student
Manual

Visual 21: Some Common Barriers Experienced in Crisis

- Legal
- IT
- Fatigue
- Personal preparedness
- External influences
- Private sector events
- Approval process



Visual 22: Adaptability

It is not the strongest that survives, nor the most intelligent. It's the one that is the most adaptable to change.

Leon C. Megginson, reflecting on Charles Darwin's on the Origin of the Species.

Visual 23: Crisis Communications Activity Part 2

PURPOSE: Review a situation from the perspective of government, the media, and the public.

Working in your table groups:

1. Review the updated scenario in the resource guide
2. List concerns, thoughts, emotions and needs for each of these groups:
 - Government
 - Media
 - Public
3. Write your thoughts on the designated easel charts.



Visual 24: Terminology

- Alert vs. Warning
- Watch vs. Warning
- Emergency message vs. Warning message

Key Points

Terminology related to warnings can be confusing. Let's begin with some basic distinctions.

Alert vs. Warning: Alerts and warnings are products or messages intended to get the attention of the public and to prompt some type of action—whether protective actions or a continued state of alertness. In practical usage, there is little distinction between the two. In this course, “alert” and “warning” are used interchangeably when referring to messages issued to the public.

Watch vs. Warning: The National Weather Service distinguishes between these two types of messages based on degree of certainty:

- **Watch**—A watch is used when the risk of a hazardous event has increased significantly, but its occurrence, location, and/or timing is still uncertain. It is intended to provide enough lead time so that those who need to set their plans in motion can do so. From the listener's perspective, a watch lets you know that weather conditions are favorable for a hazard to occur. It literally means “be on guard!” During a weather watch, gather awareness of the specific threat and prepare for action
- **Warning**—A warning is issued when a hazardous event that poses a threat to life or property is occurring, is imminent, or has a very high probability of occurring. During a weather warning, it is important to take action: grab the emergency kit and head to safety immediately. Both watches and warnings are important, but warnings are more urgent.

Emergency Message vs. Warning Message: The message encoding protocol used to trigger alerts over the Emergency Alert System (EAS) designates these message types based on the significance and directness of the threat. We'll return to this distinction later in this unit.

Visual 25: Warning Systems

What types of warning systems are currently used in your communities?



Visual 26: Types of Warning Systems

Sirens	Outdoor alert
Emergency Alert System (EAS)	Radio/TV real-time alerts
NOAA All Hazards Radio	24-hour broadcasting
FEMA App	Electronic device alerts
Public signage	Similar to AMBER alerts
Telephone systems	Recorded messages, manual or automatic
Personal mobile devices	Short text messages
Email	Messages to local email lists
Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA)	



Ask students if they can you think of other warning systems?

Instructor
Note

Visual 27: Factors Affecting Public Response



- Interpretation of message
- Previous experiences
- Observations
- Perception of risk/proximity
- Type of community
- Level of community interaction
- Family composition

Key Points

A number of factors affect how the public responds to alerts and warnings. For example:

- **Interpretation of message:** When different people listen to the same message, there may be a variation in what they hear, leading to different interpretation and response.
- **Previous experiences:** Often people will rely on their previous experiences with the hazard to determine what actions they initially take (or don't take).
- **Observations:** Individual responses to warnings vary, but most people will seek some form of confirmation. For example, some people will look for more information through environmental cues, while others will seek to contact other trusted sources. Optimism bias (thinking that "disasters happen to other people") is overcome with confirmation.
- **Perception of risk/proximity:** People tend to make a rapid assessment of the relative safety of their location, producing an emergent perception of risk. If their perception of personal risk is high, people will act quickly. When the perception is low, they will delay acting.
- **Type of community:** Residents of rural communities may have more difficulty receiving warnings than those living in urban areas.
- **Level of community interaction:** People who have more contacts in the community will receive more warnings and are more likely to act; also, they are more likely to trust officials.
- **Family composition:** Families, more than individuals, tend to heed evacuation warnings. Research indicates that people tend to confer with family, extended family, and friends prior to making a

decision. They do this to ensure that their loved ones are safe and to determine whether they may need to provide protection for their loved ones. Their decisions are based on the following factors related to family composition:

- **Family network:** People are more likely to act if they have relatives nearby who may warn them and offer them short-term shelter.
- **Presence of children:** Concern for children's safety will elicit quicker response from parents.
- **Presence of pets:** People often view their pets as they would their children and will take action to protect them. However, whereas families with children usually act more quickly to take precautions, in emergencies requiring evacuation, people with pets may endanger their own lives by refusing to evacuate, because many public shelters do not allow pets.

Visual 28: Additional Factors Affecting Public Response



- Age
- Language
- Length of residency
- Individual access and functional needs
- Level of individual preparedness

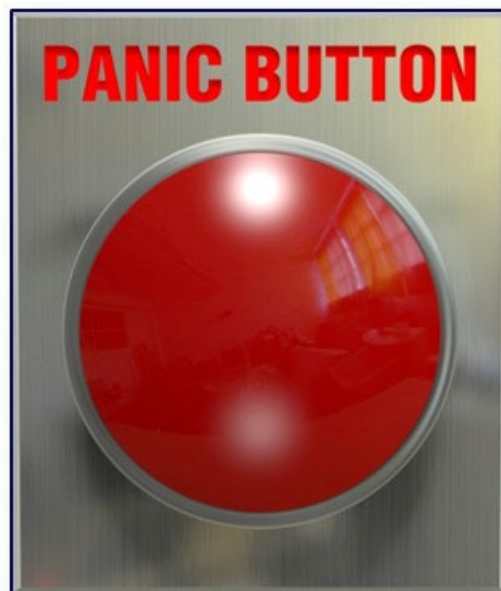
Key Points

The following additional social factors also influence the extent to which alerts, and warnings are received, comprehended, and heeded:

- **Age:** The very young and older adults may not be able to receive and/or respond appropriately to alerts and warnings. Many in this group may also need assistance.
- **Language:** Non-English-speaking persons may not understand warnings that are provided in English. Communities with high percentages of non-English-speaking people should issue warnings in the primary language(s) of the population as well as in English.
- **Length of residency:** Transients, tourists, and newcomers to the area lack knowledge of local hazards and the history of local disasters, so they may react differently.
- **Access and functional needs:** Individuals with access and functional needs may need alerts in accessible formats and additional time and assistance for evacuating. Accessibility of alert and warning messages refers to whether individuals hear and understand them. Alternative alert and warning methods are needed for individuals with access and functional needs such as people who are blind, people with low vision, and people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Both audio and equivalent text messages should be available.
- **Level of individual preparedness:** People who have taken the time to prepare for hazards (i.e., they have a plan and disaster supply kit, and have exercised the plan) are more likely to heed warning and act appropriately. Getting the preparedness buy-in is often the challenge.

Visual 29: Myths Associated with Warnings

- Myth #1: People usually panic in response to warnings
- Myth #2: If you false alarm or “cry wolf” with your warnings, the public will tune you out
- Myth #3: An effective warning message is a simple one, with as little detail as possible
- Myth #4: People usually understand what the various siren signals mean



Key Points

Below are several popular myths associated with public response to warning messages, along with the related facts:

Myth: People usually panic in response to warnings. **Fact:** People DO NOT panic in response to warnings. People do not go running wildly through the streets when they hear a warning. Rather, they seek additional information to make a response decision.

According to Erik Auf der Heide, in “Common Misconceptions about Disasters: Panic, the ‘Disaster Syndrome,’ and Looting”:

The problem with the panic misconception is that the public, the media, and even emergency planners and public officials believe it. Because of this, officials may hesitate to issue warnings because they are convinced that the resulting panic will cause more damage than the disaster itself. This belief has led to recommendations to avoid panic by (1) providing minimal information to occupants in the event of a building fire and (2) carrying on normal activities until the last possible moment. In places of entertainment, it has been suggested that the band should continue to play if there is a fire and that panic can be avoided by having telephones located in areas where people cannot overhear calls to the fire department.

A more relevant concern for these public officials should be how to create warning messages that the public will heed.

Myth: If you false alarm or “cry wolf” with your warnings, the public will tune you out. **Fact:** While there is a limit to the public’s trust, the “cry wolf” syndrome is NOT a problem IF “false alarms” are well

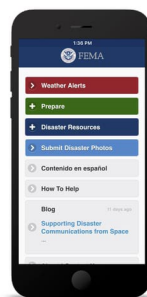
explained and understood. People do take into account that officials are making difficult decisions to protect them from harm.

Myth: An effective warning message is a simple one, with as little detail as possible. **Fact:** The “less is more” principle does not apply to public warnings. Research has shown that people need sufficient information to validate their risk and spur them to take appropriate action.

Myth: People usually understand what the various siren signals mean. **Fact:** People DO NOT always understand what the various siren signals mean. The best use of outdoor warning sirens is to alert people to immediately seek additional information about an imminent threat.

Visual 30: Factors That Enhance Warning Compliance

- Message clarity and specificity
- Warning issued by credible source
- Repeated warnings
- Similar warnings from multiple sources
- Provisions for assuring safety of livestock and pets
- Assurances about looting
- Ability to account for safety of family members
- Shelter invitations from family and friends



WEATHER THE STORM
DOWNLOAD THE FEMA APP

⚡ ALERTS ✓ SAFETY TIPS

+ SHELTERS 📷 PHOTOS

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App Store

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Google Play

Key Points

Research has identified a number of factors that enhance the likelihood of people complying with alerts and warnings.

- Recipients need to know more than just the fact that there is a threat. The **clearer and more specific** the message, the greater the likelihood of compliance. Effective warnings are those that state, in terms clear to the recipient, the urgency of the situation, likelihood of impact, and exact localities at risk. For example, saying that the river will crest five feet above flood stage may convey less meaning than either saying it will cover the courthouse stairs or showing a map of the exact streets that will be flooded.
- Warning messages are more likely to be believed if they are issued by a credible source, such as police or fire officials, emergency management or disaster officials, or elected officials, such as the mayor or governor.
- Several other factors can enhance compliance with warnings, such as repeated warnings and similar warnings from multiple sources, provisions for assuring the safety of livestock and pets, the ability to account for the safety of family members, and assurances that there will be no looting. In addition, invitations from friends or relatives to shelter with them are likely to increase the rates of evacuation.

(Source: Erik Auf der Heide, “Common Misconceptions about Disasters: Panic, the ‘Disaster Syndrome,’ and Looting”)

Visual 31: Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS)

- Status: Ongoing development by FEMA, FCC, and NOAA.
- Vision: Build and maintain an effective, reliable, integrated, flexible, and comprehensive alert and warning system



Key Points

The Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) is a public alert and warning system that is under joint development by FEMA, The Federal Communications Commission (FCC), and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Planned capabilities for IPAWS include:

- Allowing the President to address the public during emergencies
- Enabling emergency officials to access multiple communication paths
- Diversifying and modernizing the Emergency Alert System (EAS)
- Enabling seamless integration of message transmission through national networks
- Creating an interoperability framework
- Enabling communication with those with access and functional needs

Visual 32: IPAWS Video

IPAWS Video Transcript

When disasters strike, whether they are natural, accidental, or manmade, it has always been vital that they be reported accurately and in a timely fashion to those who may be in danger. It is the policy of the United States to have an effective, reliable, integrated, flexible, and comprehensive system to alert and warn the American people. The Integrated Public Alert and Warning System, or IPAWS, is the solution for effective public alerts and warnings.

IPAWS allows alerting authorities to write their own message using open standards. The message is then authenticated by the IPAWS Open Platform for Emergency Networks—or OPEN—to be delivered simultaneously through multiple pathways, reaching as many people as possible to save lives and protect property.

IPAWS must ensure the President can reach the American people, but it recognizes that most alerts and warnings are issued at a State and local level. IPAWS alerts and warnings are location specific and therefore more relevant to those receiving the alert, and through the use of open standards such as Common Alert Protocol, IPAWS allows for growth and integration with future consumer technologies.

How do alerting authorities send an alert or warning to IPAWS OPEN? In addition to the President, alerting authorities include State, local, territorial, and tribal public safety officials who are designated within their level of government as an authority responsible for communicating emergency alerts and warnings to the public. After completing FEMA-sponsored training, alerting authorities will be authenticated for access to IPAWS. They will then be able to use Common Alerting Protocol compliant emergency and incident management tools to create location-specific alerts that are scaled to cover areas as big as their entire jurisdiction or a much smaller area within their jurisdiction. Once created, the alert will then be sent to IPAWS OPEN.

How is an alert routed by IPAWS OPEN? Once the alert is received from the alerting authorities, IPAWS OPEN authenticates the source and validates that the alert input conforms to the Common Alerting Protocol standard and IPAWS profile. This provides a standard for everyone across all levels of government as well as the private sector.

While older systems relied on audio and text-only systems, IPAWS OPEN makes picture and video feeds possible and allows for the seamless incorporation of emerging technologies. Once the alert message has been authenticated by IPAWS OPEN, the message is simultaneously delivered to all IPAWS-compliant public alerting systems.

Emergency alerts will be delivered across multiple pathways to the American people.

- Alerts will be delivered by the Emergency Alert System, using AM, FM, and satellite radio as well as broadcast, cable, and satellite TV.
- The Commercial Mobile Alert System will send alerts to cell phones and other commercial mobile network devices, based on their location, even if cellular networks are overloaded and can no longer support calls, text, and emails.

- The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration will deliver alerts through the National Weather Service all hazards radio.
- Alerts will be available on the Internet through Web-based applications, such as email, Instant Messaging, and RSS feeds in any Web browser.
- State, local, territorial, and tribal alerting systems such as emergency telephone networks, giant voice sirens, and digital road signs may also receive alerts from IPAWS OPEN, and future alerting technologies and systems can easily be integrated into IPAWS.

When disaster strikes, IPAWS allows emergency managers and alerting authorities at all levels to send one message across multiple pathways, to save lives and protect property. No matter where you are—at home, at school, at work, or even on vacation—you can get life-saving alerts. IPAWS.....Emergency Alerts at the Speed of Life. Get alerts...stay alive.



Note

A job aid summarizing key aspects of the IPAWS system is provided in the Resource Manual.

More information about [Integrated Public Alert & Warning System](https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/practitioners/integrated-public-alert-warning-system) is available online at: <https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/practitioners/integrated-public-alert-warning-system>

Training:

IS-247.B: Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) for Alert Originators <https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-247.b>

IS-248: Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) for the American Public <https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-248>

Visual 33: Warning Message Components



Key Points

Deciding whether to issue a public warning can be a difficult decision. Ultimately it will be a matter of local judgment; however, it will be helpful to have an outline of decision criteria to assist you with the process.

Check that your local emergency plan has clear criteria and procedures for issuing warnings. Your State or local EAS plan or other emergency plans may provide criteria for issuing public alerts, including activating the Emergency Alert System, and if so, should be incorporated into your local procedures.

- The following are examples of criteria that are used in the IPAWS:
- Does the situation require the public to take immediate action?
- Does the situation pose a serious threat to life or property?
- Is there a high degree of probability the situation will occur?

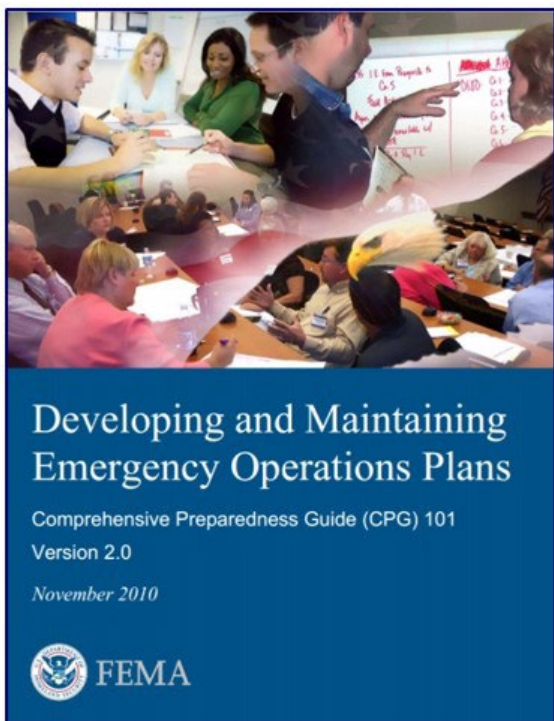
The alert authoring software provides fields that correspond to these questions, each with a list of values to select from. In order to be routed to the Commercial Mobile Alert System, the values for these fields must reflect “Imminent Threat”: Urgency (Immediate or Expected), Severity (Extreme or Severe), and Certainty (Observed or Likely).

Effective warnings are those that result in members of the public taking recommended actions to protect themselves. To help ensure that warning messages are effective, they must be issued in a timely manner and should include the following components:

- **Specific hazard:** What is/are the hazards that are threatening? What are the potential risks for the community?

- Location: Where will the impacts occur? Is the location described so those without local knowledge can understand their risk?
- Timeframes: When will it arrive at various locations? How long will the impacts last?
- Source of warning: Who is issuing the warning? Is it an official source with public credibility?
- Magnitude: A description of the expected impact. How bad is it likely to get?
- Likelihood: The probability of occurrence of the impact.
- Protective behavior: What protective actions should people take and when? If evacuation is called for, where should people go and what should they take with them?

Visual 34: EOP and Warning



The jurisdiction's EOP should specify:

- Initiation and dissemination actions.
- Emergency condition levels in the public notification process
- Actions for alerting individuals with sensory or cognitive disabilities and others with access and functional needs in the workplace, in public venues, and in their homes
- Pre-scripted EAS messages for identified threats and hazards

Key Points

The jurisdiction's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) should:

- Identify and describe the actions that will be taken to initiate/disseminate the initial notification that a disaster or threat is imminent or has occurred (e.g., EAS activation, door-to-door warnings, sirens, cable/TV messages).
- Describe the use of emergency condition levels in the public notification process (e.g., snow emergencies, HAZMAT incidents, nuclear powerplant incidents).
- Identify and describe the actions that will be taken to alert individuals with sensory or cognitive disabilities and others with access and functional needs in the workplace, public venues, and in their homes.
- Include pre-scripted EAS messages for identified threats and hazards.



Note

You can find examples of how different jurisdictions handle Alert and Warning in their emergency operations plans by conducting a Web search for "EOP Alert and Warning."

The Communication Plan and Emergency Operation Plan (EOP) work together.

Visual 35: Warning and Emergency Messages

- Warning messages are issued for those events that alone pose a significant threat to public safety and/or property, probability of occurrence and location is high, and onset time is relatively short.
- Emergency messages are issued for those events that by themselves would not kill or injure or do property damage but indirectly may cause other things to happen that result in a hazard.

Key Points

Assuming you are starting from an occurring or impending potentially hazardous event, the first question is whether the event meets the definitions for warning or emergency.

The NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards (NWR) Specific Area Message Encoding (SAME) protocol is used to activate the EAS and to activate specific SAME-capable NWR receivers. This protocol distinguishes between warning messages and emergency messages based on significance and directness of the threat:

- **Warning messages:** These messages are issued for those events that alone pose a significant threat to public safety and/or property, probability of occurrence and location is high, and the onset time is relatively short.
- **Emergency messages:** These messages are issued for those events that by themselves would not kill or injure or do property damage but indirectly may cause other things to happen that result in a hazard.

Visual 36: Warning Message Example

“A dangerous wildfire is moving toward North Haverbrook and is expected to reach the north edge of town by 2 p.m. All persons remaining within the hazard area must evacuate now to a safe location to the west or east. A shelter is now open at Waverly Hills High School gym. Pets are permitted.”



Key Points

The use of templates, tailored to those threats and hazards likely in your warning area, can help prevent errors or omissions that can occur in moments of urgency. Using a template that incorporates pre-approved language can reduce delays in issuing alerts and warnings. Another advantage is that, if you need to use a language in addition to English, your templates can be translated in advance.

Your alert authoring software may provide the capability to create and reuse templates. If not, you can use word processing software to store your template and create your message to copy and paste into your alerting software.

It is recommended that if you do use templates, they should be customized for the types of threats and hazardous events that may occur in your area.



Provide an example of a warning message template that can be customized for your jurisdiction.

Note

Visual 37: Reaching the Whole Community

How will you ensure that everyone who needs the information is informed?



Key Points

The combination of warning systems and strategies should be designed to reach the whole community, including:

- Persons with access and functional needs, such as those who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or who have low vision
- People with limited English proficiency
- People in offices, schools, hospitals, nursing homes, college campuses, or other group settings

Visual 38: Accessible Alert & Warning Messages

- Clear and simple language
- Care with text-to-speech conversion
- Consistent audio
- Ample text and audio to explain images/maps




Key Points

To ensure that alert and warning messages are accessible to all audiences:

- Use clear and simple language
- Take care with text-to-speech conversion. Avoid nonstandard language formats and terminology when using conversion and translation technologies
- Be sure the audio is consistent with the text
- Provide ample text and audio to explain images and maps

Visual 39: Activity 6.3: Warning Message

 <p>Activity</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Activity 6.3: Warning Message</p> <p>Instructions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read the assigned scenario in Worksheet 6.3. 2. Develop a warning message for the community. Note: You may add additional facts and details not contained in the scenario. 3. Identify the strategies for delivering the message. 4. Be prepared to present your warning and strategies
---	--

Key Points

Purpose: The purpose of this activity is to develop a warning message based on a provided scenario.

Instructions: Develop a warning message and identify delivery strategies as described in Worksheet 6.3.

Worksheet 6.3

Instructions: Each team will be assigned one of the scenarios below.

<p>1. Indicate your assigned scenario:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scenario 1: Multiple EF4 tornadoes are forecasted to strike the central business districts of Central City (pop. 149,000, located in Liberty County) and Capital City (pop. 265,000, located in Grand County) during peak occupation at 2 p.m. on a Wednesday. It is now 1:00 p.m. • Scenario 2: It is raining heavily. A major power-generating dam is showing stress. Concern is rising that a dam failure may occur, resulting in the downstream flooding of three towns. The dam failure would eliminate the power for the surrounding towns, potable water supply, and fire suppression capability. Currently, the engineers are unsure of the probability or timing of potential failure. • Scenario 3: Three local chemical distributors have reported the theft of corrosive and other hazardous materials. There is a need to warn the community of the potential for the use of these chemicals at public gatherings and to elicit the community's assistance in apprehending the suspects. • Scenario 4: It is a particularly bad cold and flu season. The jurisdiction is contemplating closing nonessential public services and schools to stop the threat. There is a need to communicate the plan to the community and elicit their assistance in stopping the spread of the flu. • Scenario 5: A hazardous materials accident has just occurred, shutting a major roadway. Evacuations are being ordered for the homes within a 1-mile radius of Highway 1. A shelter at the high school is opening that allows pets.
--

Worksheet 6.3

Develop a warning message for the community. You may add additional facts and details not contained in the scenario.

Identify strategies for delivering the message:

Visual 40: Unit 6 Summary

Key Points

This unit presented the following key points:

- Apply current crisis communications methodologies to community audiences during an incident
- Describe factors that influence public response to warning messages
- Discuss the myths associated with public response to warning messages
- Describe the intent of the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS)
- Identify the components of effective alert and warning messages
- Write a clear and accessible warning message for a given simulated situation

Unit 7: Media Relations at the Scene

Visual 1: Medial Relation at the Scene



Visual 2: Unit Objectives

- Outline media needs at the scene
- Explain the news conference cycle
- Apply news conference logistics

Visual 3: Why Coordination at the Scene Matters

- The bigger the event, the more media will arrive
- All media can now tell the story from where it is happening
- Local outlets can easily link with national and international counterparts; stories can go global within seconds



Note

Advances in technology and growing competition between news outlets are pushing reporters to try and cover any incident from “the scene”—or as close to the scene as they can get.

Lead a discussion around the following information:

The media WILL arrive at the scene:

- To get the most current information.
- To capture any images, they can use in telling the story.
- To add a sense of excitement and immediacy to the story.

All media now have the ability to tell the story from where it is happening.

- Remote broadcast equipment makes “live updates” possible from almost anywhere.
- Access to freeway cameras, weather cameras, etc., provides additional on-scene information.
- Many television stations have helicopters.
- Print/Web/wire service reporters can digitally transmit stories and photographs and video instantly.

Media outlets can link with their national and international counterparts to transmit a story globally within seconds.

With technology, often no more than an iPhone/camera PIOs can provide info to media outlets directly in lieu of reporters actually being on scene

Visual 4: To Make It More Interesting . . .

Anyone with a mobile device can be a field reporter

What can you do to help ensure good media relations at the scene?



Note

Amateur/citizen journalists are everywhere. The images, sound, and information they capture can be used by more traditional news organizations and broadcast globally.

Provide the same information to an amateur journalist that you would a news organization.

Visual 5: Initial Actions That Can Make It Work

- Get there quickly
- Have a go-kit
- Know the basic facts of the incident - Who, What, Where, When, How
- Make contact with the on-scene commander
- Take responsibility of the PIO expectations
- NIMS - revisit the Incident Command Structure
- Keep your cool
- Make contact with your supervisor



Note

Actions by PIOs that contribute to on-scene successes:

- Most importantly, get to the scene as quickly as possible (and bring additional PIOs if the situation warrants).
- Be prepared—have a go-kit filled with the tools you will need to succeed (phone, digital recorder, business cards, etc.). Have plans, contact information, and other vital documents with you at all times (these can be stored digitally in a data phone, notebook computer, etc.—make sure you have battery power or a way to recharge in the field).
- Be educated ahead of time—know who does what job, whom to talk to about what issues, what the law is concerning access, sunshine laws, etc.
- Make contact with the on-scene commander to gather information—prior to making any statement to the media.
- Take responsibility of the PIO Expectations—don't let the media call the shots.
- Always keep your cool. A crisis can be a stressful situation and can lead people to sometimes act before they think. Remember, if you lose your temper on camera you become the story.
- If the event is large enough, begin considering where to stage the media.
- Don't be afraid to make the media wait for ACCURATE information (but not too long). Social Media tools allow you to compartmentalize information and release verified information in chunks instead of waiting for the whole to be verified. Use this technique when necessary.
- Establish contact with your leadership—let them know what the media are doing, what they are asking, what they might be reporting, and any issues they should be aware of. Establish yourself as a trusted advisor but remember to keep the information at a high level for the organizational leadership.

Visual 6: Know the Law Ahead of Time!

- Federal Laws
- State laws
- Local laws
- Territorial laws
- Tribal laws
- HIPAA



Note

- Media access is an important issue. If you do not have a media relations/access policy, you should involve your agency leadership, legal counsel, and local media in the development of a policy beneficial to all.
- For agencies whose work involves Federal highways, be aware that news media who are working within the boundaries of a highway must wear high visibility safety vests when covering incidents on public highways (see 23 C.F.R. §634).
- Other Federal laws involving media at the scene include temporary flight restrictions (TFRs). (Refer the participants to the information on TFRs in their Student Manuals.)
- HIPAA - Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, a US law designed to provide privacy standards to protect patients' medical records and other health information provided to first responders including medics and firefighters, health plans, doctors, hospitals, and other health care providers. Any identifying information of a patient cannot be released and is protected by this law. This includes name, address, images, medical condition, age, hospital location, etc.

Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFRs)

The Federal Aviation Administration can temporarily close down airspace at the request of specific entities, including military commands; federal security/intelligence agencies; regional directors of the Office of Emergency Planning, Civil Defense State Directors; civil authorities directing or coordinating organized relief air operations (e.g., Office of Emergency Planning; law enforcement agencies, etc.); State Governors; FAA Flight Standards District Office, aviation event organizers, or sporting event officials.

TFR list of reasons (per https://www.faa.gov/documentLibrary/media/Advisory_Circular/AC_91-63D.pdf)

A TFR may be issued for the following reasons:

- (1) Temporary Flight Restrictions in the Vicinity of Disaster/Hazard Areas (Section 91.137).
- (2) Temporary Flight Restrictions in National Disaster Areas in the State of Hawaii (Section 91.138);

- (3) Emergency Air Traffic Rules (Section 91.139);
- (4) Flight Restrictions in the Proximity of the Presidential and Other Parties (Section 91.141);
- (5) Flight Limitation in the Proximity of Space Flight Operations (Section 91.143); 2 12/09/2015 AC No: 91-63D;
- (6) Management of Aircraft Operations in the Vicinity of Aerial Demonstrations and Major Sporting Events (Section 91.145); and
- (7) Special Security Instructions (Section 99.7).

Exemptions to a TFR may exist depending on the reason for the restriction. Those exemptions will be listed in the official NOTAM (Notice to Airmen) issued by the FAA.

For example, FAA Section 91.137(a)(3) includes the following:

Exemption to a TFR may be granted to aircraft carrying “properly accredited news representatives” if a flight plan is filed and the aircraft flies above the altitude used by disaster relief aircraft. This exemption can be removed at the discretion of the official in charge of on-scene emergency response activities (the on-scene commander). Permanent flight restrictions are in place over many military installations. For more information see FAA AC #91-63C.

Visual 7: The PIO-Media Partnership

What the PIO wants:

- A conduit to the public/media
- Respect for incident perimeter (safety consideration - no interference with response operations)
- Accurate and timely

What the media want:

- Access
- Prompt answers to queries
- Fair treatment
- Respect for deadlines
- Timely updates and corrections to information in evolving incidents



Note

The PIO and the media both have jobs to do, and they need each other to do those jobs. They also have specific needs at the scene of an incident:

Review the basic needs of the PIO and the media.

The PIO wants:

- A conduit to the public.
- Respect for incident perimeter (no interference with response operations).
- Accurate and fair reporting.

The media want:

- Access.
- Prompt answers to queries.
- Fair treatment.
- Respect for deadlines.
- Timely updates and corrections to information in evolving incidents.

Visual 8: Media Needs at the Scene

Access to:

- You
- The scene
- Newsmakers

Basics:

- Explanation of the big picture
- Respect for deadlines
- Updates as quickly as possible in evolving situations

Logistics:

- Where they can set up
- Location of nearest food, lodging, gas stations



Note

Use the following points to discuss needs at the scene:

- The media's most basic needs at the scene are access to information and images. If you anticipate what they will want, you will have a better chance to control the scene and help guide the story.
- The media will want:
 - Access to the scene (for reporters and photographers or video journalists)
 - Access to YOU (where you are located and how can they get in contact with you)
 - Access to newsmakers or persons in charge of the scene or centrally involved in the story
 - An explanation of the big picture
 - Respect for deadlines
 - Updates as quick as possible in evolving situations
- Continue to review media needs at the scene:
 - Where they can park and set up microwave or live satellite trucks (Satellite trucks need unrestricted southern skyward view for satellite uplink)
 - Location of nearest food, lodging and gas stations

Visual 9: PIO Needs at the Scene

- Access to workers, leadership, legal staff
- Involvement in all management briefings
- Trust of coworkers and management



Note

-
-
- What PIOs need at the scene is complete access. –
 - PIOs need to be able to talk to workers, leadership, and legal staff
 - PIOs should be involved in all management briefings so they can answer questions and anticipate potential issues involving the media
 - PIOs need the trust of their coworkers and administration. PIOs work for their agency, not for the media

Visual 10: Media Staging Areas

Ask yourself:

- Does it infringe at the scene (crime scene)?
- Does media presence interfere with work being done?
- Are they in danger? Will they endanger others?
- Is it convenient for you and policymakers?



Note

Staging areas are set up at incident sites to facilitate the flow of information between the PIO and the media (see Resource Guide). There are several factors to consider prior to establishing the location for this staging area:

Does it infringe at the scene (crime scene)?

- Many times, the site of a crisis or disaster may be considered a crime scene and may need to be processed by forensic units. In order to keep the “integrity” of the scene and enhance the possibility for a successful investigation and subsequent prosecution, the scene must be kept clear of all nonessential personnel.

Does media presence interfere with work being done?

- The ultimate goal of all public safety endeavors is to save lives, protect property, and preserve the environment—and almost all reporters would agree that their needs will come after these important tasks. Members of the media do not want to interfere with these important tasks, but if they can get close enough to observe/photograph they will be happy.

Are they in danger? Will they endanger others?

- In their zeal to “get the story” reporters may not always recognize the potential for danger to themselves. Work to keep them out of danger as you would any member of the public. Also, it may be necessary to explain to them the danger, and how if they fail to heed the warnings and become injured, they may endanger others who would have to then go in to rescue them (e.g., passing into the plume of a Hazmat area, traveling over an unsafe structure that may collapse, or moving into the line of fire of an armed suspect).

Is it convenient for you and policymakers?

- In order to keep a consistent two-way flow of information with the media at the scene, it is important to make it relatively easy to communicate with them face to face.

Visual 11: Media Staging Areas (Additional Information)

Ask yourself:

- Are they too close to sensitive information?
- Do they have a clear line of sight to satellite or microwave towers?
- Can they get the images they want?
- Are there “convenience” facilities available?
- How can you keep them at the staging area?



Note

Review considerations for a media staging area:

Are they too close to sensitive information?

- Zoom lenses, parabolic microphones, and observant reporters may be able to discover sensitive or protected information from your incident command post (e.g., zoom shots of maps, recorded conversations, etc.). Make sure the staging area is far enough away or your workspaces are shielded from prying cameras, microphones, and eyes.

Do they have a clear line of sight to satellite or microwave towers?

- Depending on where the staging area is, the media will need to be able to connect with their microwave towers or uplink with a satellite. Check with them to see if the location selected for a staging area will allow them to accomplish this.

Can they get the images they want?

- The media will want to get as close as possible to get pictures/audio/interviews.
- If there is a reason that the media cannot be allowed access to the scene, consider using a media pool to restrict access while allowing them to get the images and interviews they desire.
- If a media pool is not an option, consider providing professional quality images to the media in the form of video and stills.

Are there “convenience” facilities available?

- While it is not the responsibility of the PIO to provide food or facilities for the media, a little kindness in this area can go far in building a positive relationship with the media—especially if the incident occurs in a remote area where few if any comfort facilities exist (e.g., if the incident is in a remote field, a porta-john will go a long way in making friends!).

How can you keep them at the staging area?

- You can’t—and don’t expect them to stay there all of the time. They will go other places to get other information (local citizen reactions, sidebar stories, etc.).

- You can entice them to stay by giving them regular “official” updates and letting them know that if they are absent, they may miss something important or interesting.

Visual 12: Media Pools

- A media pool is one representative from each type of media
- Media pools allow you to provide access under a more controlled system
- Do not overuse the media pool



Note

Occasionally it is necessary to restrict access to an area from the multitude of members of the media, but you still want to provide access under a more controlled system. When this occurs, you have the option of using a “media pool.”

- A media pool is simply one representative from each of the types of media (television, radio, print, Web) who will be allowed access to a restricted area. These representatives are allowed access with the understanding that any video, audio or interviews they acquire will be shared with all of the rest of the media.
- The media will work within a pool because it’s always better to get something rather than nothing. They may not always be happy about it but given a choice between getting information/images via a pool or getting nothing they will always choose the pool.
- Sometimes they need to bring more than one person from each media type (e.g., a television station might need to bring a reporter and photographer, or a newspaper might also want to bring a reporter and photographer). This is a normal occurrence and should be allowed.
- How do you ensure that what the media pool gets will be shared? This is an internal issue with the media. They will police themselves in this area. And finally, don’t use a pool simply to make your job easier. Make sure there is a valid reason (such as safety concerns or integrity of a crime scene) if you are going to use a media pool.

Visual 13: News Conference Responsibilities

- The PIO organizes and manages the news conference
- The Incident Commander or official from the lead agency serves as the primary spokesperson



Note

News conference responsibilities:

- The PIO is responsible for organizing and managing a news conference. Others should assist the PIO in facilitating the conference.
- The Incident Commander and/or most senior official of the lead organization should be the primary spokesperson. If multiple agencies/organizations are involved under unified command, the official from the agency with primary responsibility in the event should be the primary speaker. All speakers should be briefed on anticipated questions, relevant issues, and stagecraft immediately prior to the start of the news conference.
- Elected officials can often act in a calming capacity, assuring the public that everything is being done to resolve the situation and get things back to normal. Other participants should only talk about their agencies and their areas of expertise and responsibility.
- Try not to have a long parade of speakers with long statements. This only detracts from what your key messages are and often leads media covering the news conference live to cut back to regularly scheduled programming. Better to have these individuals on hand to answer questions if they arise. Two to three primary speakers should suffice for most incidents.

Visual 14: Location, Location, Location

Key considerations for location are:

- Minimizing distractions
- Providing unobstructed access for satellite or “live” trucks
- Controlling environment (weather, backdrop)
- Providing access and egress for speakers
- Minimizing background noise
- Providing optimal camera line of sight
- Managing security



Note

You may not have many choices when it comes to the location for a news conference, but when you do you should consider the following:

- Will it be covered “live”?
 - Satellite or “live” trucks will need an unobstructed area to park in. Satellite trucks need a clear southern exposure to access their satellite. Live trucks will need to access their station reporter. Find out where it is and try to plan for where the trucks may park.
- What can you control in the environment?
- Rain, snow, wind, and other environmental conditions can detract from what the speaker is saying
 - An indoor, controlled environment is usually the best option.
 - Pick a place with a clean backdrop
 - Keep the area behind the briefing free from distractions (e.g., people milling about, vehicles moving, smoke or flames, etc.).
 - Make sure cameras cannot move behind the speakers for a “reverse shot” of the news conference.
 - Provide speakers clear access and egress without having to pass through reporters. (If speakers do not have a clear exit, the media will continue to ask questions.)
- Think about potential “sound” issues
 - Try to minimize background noise so speakers can be heard clearly. If at all possible, select a place for your news conferences where external noise can be reduced or eliminated. Sounds from heavy machinery, airplanes, trains, or other sources can be distracting to the public who may need to hear the information you are sending out
 - Occasionally these noises can be so loud as to drown out what is being said by the speaker entirely
 - If you are inside a building, consider the “echo” factor

- Have an audio “mult box / press box.” This box allows just one microphone to be placed in front of the speaker, eliminating a microphone “tree” and providing clearer audio.
- Make sure you get your own recording of the news conference for transcription and possible legal issues.
- What do you need to do to facilitate the cameras?
 - Make sure that the cameras have a clear line of sight to the speakers.
 - Try to set up in an area where the cameras will be at the same level as the speakers.
 - When the camera is shooting down from a position of higher elevation, the image tends to diminish the speaker and the message being presented.
 - When the camera is shooting up from a position of lower elevation, the image tends to place the speaker in a position of greater authority—which is not recommended.
- What do you need in terms of security?
 - A location filled with cameras and various officials about to make a statement can be an opportunity for someone who may want to cause a disturbance or promote an “alternative” viewpoint. Also, media satellite/live trucks contain a considerable amount of high-value equipment. Security should be provided both for members of the media and for the news conference participants.
 - Security staffing should be visible but not intrusive and can be stationed near where the news conference will take place or possibly out by the news media satellite/live trucks. –
 - Often local law enforcement may offer to assist in providing security.

Have a backup plan in case weather or other events make their briefing location impractical!

Visual 15: News Conference Cycle

Preparing

- Determine location and time
- Announce
- Prepare participants

Opening

- Greet media
- Provide introductions and overview
- Manage Q&A



Note

Think of news conference activities as a cycle that includes:

- Preparing
- Opening
- Closing
- Following Up

The PIO's role in preparing includes:

- Determining location and time, which we have already discussed.
- Announcing the news conference to internal and external entities.
 - If a Joint Information Center (JIC) is active, make sure all members of the JIC team are aware of the news conference and know what their responsibilities will be in relation to it.
 - Invite all media outlets, including:
 - Local, regional, and national TV, radio, and print outlets
 - Non-English news outlets
 - Certified sign language interpreters
 - Wire services

Visual 16: News Conference Cycle (Additional Information)

Closing

- Summarize; reiterate key messages
- Announce time of next briefing
- Allow speakers to leave

Following Up

- Document what was said and questions
- Monitor media coverage, address errors
- Debrief participants; use “lessons learned”
- Provide any promised items



Note

The PIO's role in closing the news conference includes:

- Summarizing, reiterating key points
- Acknowledging action, you now will take
- Advising time of next news conference
- Closing and leaving
- Using your PIO/moderator as a facilitator
- Ask if there is further information they would like

Following the briefing, the PIO needs to:

- Document what was said and media questions
- Monitor media coverage
- Actively correct any media inaccuracies
- Debrief all participants afterward
- Identify additional personnel you may like

Visual 17: Summary

In this unit, we discussed:

- Media relations at the scene, including the needs of both the news media and the PIO
- The use of staging areas and media pools
- Where, when, and how to conduct news conferences at the scene

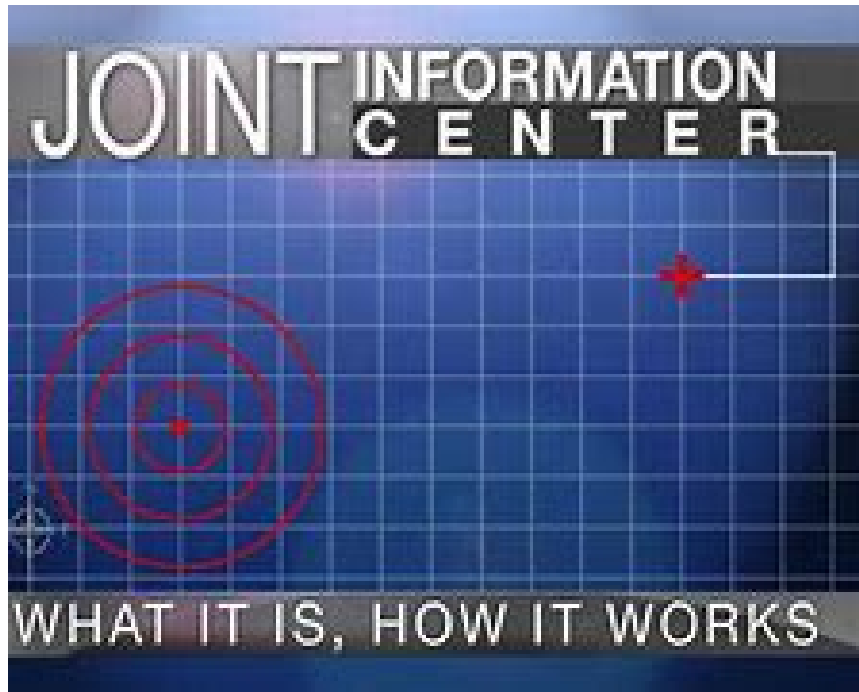


Student
Manual

Preview Activity 7.1, so you know what to expect during the on-camera interviews in Unit 7.

Unit 8: Organizing and Leading a Local JIC

Visual 1: Unit 8: Organizing and Leading a Local JIC



Visual 2: Unit Objectives

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Differentiate between JIS and JIC
- Describe triggers for JIC activation
- Describe the preparedness activities for establishing and maintaining a JIC
- Describe flexible and scalable structures for organizing a JIC based on incident needs

Visual 3: Activity 8.1: (Table Group)

- Review the scenario in the student manual, Activity 8.1
- With your table groups, answer the 5 questions
- Select a spokesperson and be prepared to report out in 10 minutes



Note

Activity Time:

- Table group discussion: 10 minutes
- Debriefing: 5 minutes

Participants will meet in their table groups and discuss the following questions:

- Who are the PIOs involved with this incident?
- What are you thinking about?
- What are the barriers to communications with several PIOs present?
- What are the strategic communications needs?
- Who is in charge of the message?

Scenario:

- At 10:30 a.m., the fire department responded to a fire at Palumbo Plastics, 3601 Y Street, Central City, Columbia
 - This has been declared a working fire
 - There are reports of people trapped
 - Injuries being reported by first responders
 - The surrounding streets are being closed to make room for additional fire apparatus
- At 10:35 a.m.
 - There has been a report of a chemical release
 - The Incident Commander has ordered a shelter-in-place be instituted in a one-mile radius of the fire
- At 11:00 a.m.
 - There is a sheen on the water
 - The Central City Water Department has issued an order to stop using tap water
 - Residents within a three-block area of the fire have started reporting to Central City and Faith Hospitals with complaints of respiratory distress
 - The mayor has signed a state of emergency for Central City and on recommendation of the Incident Commander ordered an evacuation in a radius between one and three miles from the fire

- There has been a report of a chemicals released into the local water supply
- The Central City EOC is activated, triggering full multiagency coordination

Visual 4: Activity 8.1: (Report Outs)

Working in your table groups, answer the following questions:

- Who are the PIOs involved with this incident?
- What are you thinking about?
- What are the barriers to communications with several PIOs present?
- What are the strategic communications needs?
- Who is in charge of the message?



Note

Activity Time:

- Table group discussion: 10 minutes
- Debriefing: 5 minutes

Participants will meet in their table groups and discuss the following questions:

- Who are the new PIOs now involved with this incident?
- What are you thinking about?
- What are the new barriers to communications now that there are more PIOs present?
- What are the new strategic communications needs?

Visual 5: What Is JIS? What Is JIC?

- Joint Information System (JIS) is the **method** of operating during an incident
- Joint Information Center (JIC) is a central **location** to facilitate JIS

The JIC supports the JIS.

Visual 6: Benefits of JIS

The JIS:

- Facilitates coordination
- Ensures timely, accurate, accessible, and consistent messaging
- Allows participating organizations to retain individual autonomy and responsibilities



Note

It is common for Public Information Officers (PIOs) from different jurisdictions and departments to interact on a regular basis to share information and ideas. When an event occurs that prompts activation of Incident Command, however, JIS will be activated, and these working relationships become formalized and structured. JIS supports the NIMS principles of public information systems: JIS is the method of operating during an incident that allows multiple PIOs to coordinate information and integrate messages to avoid confusing the public

Public information functions must be coordinated and integrated across jurisdictions and across functional agencies; among Federal, state, local, and tribal partners; and with private-sector and nongovernmental organizations. Organizations participating in incident management retain their autonomy.

The PIO is responsible for knowing when and how to activate the JIS.

Visual 7: Benefits of a JIC

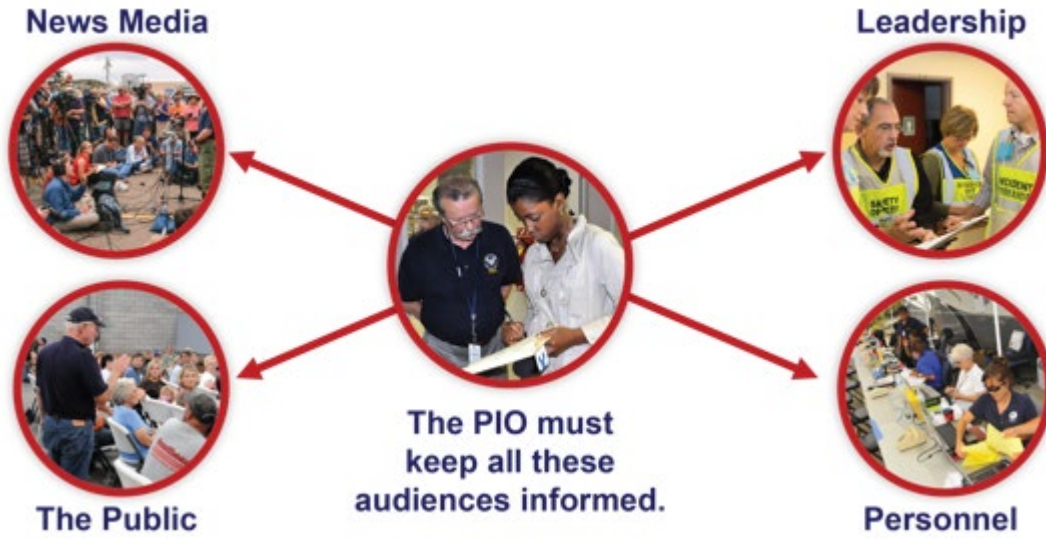
The JIC:

- Provides a central location to facilitate operations during and after an incident
- Enhances information coordination; reduces misinformation; and maximizes resources

Visual 8: Barriers to Getting Information Out

- Disruption of communication systems
- Inability of public to absorb information
- Not enough information; information not timely
- Uncoordinated communication from multiple sources
- Approval process can be lengthy

Visual 9: Challenge of Multiple Audiences



Visual 10: How a JIS Meets These Challenges

A JIS facilitates the coordination and integration of public information:

- Across organizations and jurisdictions
- Among all levels of government and nongovernment entities
- In Coordination with the JIC

Visual 11: Triggers for JIC Activation

- Impact of the incident
- Potential level of media attention
- Duration of the incident, response, and recovery
- Activation of Emergency Operations Center (EOC)
- Upon recommendation from PIO to leadership



Note

The concept of using a JIC to facilitate the dissemination of emergency public information is not new. The idea initially emerged in the late 1970s after unsuccessful attempts to communicate crisis information to the media and public during the Three Mile Island Nuclear Power Plant incident.

It is important to remember that the JIC is simply a tool to facilitate the JIS. The JIS is the key to any crisis communication effort.

Through the co-location of public information professionals, the JIC speeds information release time, enhances information coordination and analysis, reduces misinformation, maximizes resources, and helps build public confidence in response efforts.

Visual 12: What Does a JIC Look Like?

- Different sizes and structures
- Dependent upon emergency plans/resources available
- Gather, verify, coordinate, and disseminate
- Scalable, flexible, and functional system

Visual 13: Types of JICs

- Incident: single location, typical JIC
- Virtual: when physical collocation not feasible
- Satellite: smaller, supports incident JIC
- Area: supports multiple-incident, widespread event
- Support: supplements several incident JICs
- National: for incidents requiring Federal coordination of long duration



Note

- **Incident JIC.** Typically, an incident-specific JIC is established at a single, on-scene location in coordination with Federal, State, tribal, and local agencies, or at the national level, if the situation warrants. An incident JIC provides easy media access, which is paramount to success. An incident JIC is the typical JIC.
- **Virtual JIC.** A virtual JIC is established when a physical co-location is not feasible. It connects PIOs through e-mail, cell/landline phones, faxes, video teleconferencing, Web-based information systems, etc. For a pandemic incident where PIOs at different locations coordinate information electronically, it may be appropriate to establish a virtual JIC.
- **Satellite JIC.** A satellite JIC is smaller in scale than other JICs. It is established primarily to support the incident JIC and to operate under its direction; a satellite JIC is not independent of the incident JIC. A satellite JIC is typically located closer to the scene.
- **Area JIC.** An area JIC supports multiple-incident ICS structures that are spread over a wide geographic area. It is typically located near the largest media market and can be established on a local, State, or multistate basis. Multiple States experiencing storm damage may participate in an area JIC.
- **Support JIC.** A support JIC is established to supplement the efforts of several incident JICs in multiple States. It offers additional staff and resources outside of the disaster area.
- **National JIC.** A national JIC is established when an incident requires Federal coordination and is expected to be of long duration (weeks or months) or when the incident affects a large area of the country. A national JIC is staffed by numerous Federal departments and/or agencies, as well as state agencies and nongovernmental organizations.

Pre-identified incident communications protocols are established and ready for use during large scale incidents and incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response.

- **National Incident Communications Conference Line (NICCL)** -The NICCL was created to be a single source of coordination for DHS with all other Federal agencies. It can work as a call-in conference or as an open line that can be monitored 24

hours a day for the exchange of information and updates. It is primarily for Federal-to-Federal information sharing but can also include communicators from the primarily impacted State and local community.

- **State Incident Communications Conference Line (SICCL) -** The SICCL was created primarily to bring States together to share information and discuss issues that have an effect on all of them following an incident. This line is typically used during a multiple State disaster such as a hurricane where impacted States may request support from other States. The SICCL is not a 24/7 line. Instead, it is a scheduled conference call, which would be set up as needed to address issues.

Visual 14: JIC Location

JIC location must be arranged, and a memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed with the site operator. Requirements include:

- Sufficient size and appropriate space
- Sufficient power/communication
- Sufficient parking
- Security

Visual 15: How to Make this Happen in a JIC

NIMS describes an ongoing cycle that involves four steps:

- Gathering
- Verifying
- Coordinating
- Disseminating



Note

GATHERING INFORMATION

Gathering information is the first step in the process of getting information to the public and additional stakeholders. Information is collected from:

- **On-Scene Command:** A source of ongoing, official information on the response effort.
- **On-Scene Public Information Officers:** Report to the JIC what they are observing at the incident from the news media, elected officials and their staff, and the public.
- **Media Monitoring:** Used to assess the accuracy and content of news media reports. It also helps to identify trends and breaking issues.
- **News Media:** A valuable source of developing information and current issues.
- **Public and Elected/Appointed Officials:** Inquiries from elected/appointed officials, community leaders, and the general public point to the specific concerns of those in the affected areas.

VERIFYING INFORMATION

The next step in the process is to verify the accuracy of the information that has been collected, by consulting the following sources:

- **Other Public Information Officers in the JIC:** Comparing notes—especially with the lead Public Information Officer and Public Information Officers who are liaisons to the various assistance programs or response/recovery partners—is one way to verify information accuracy.
- **EOC Sources:** Including program leads, who should be asked to confirm information.
- **On-Scene Public Information Officers:** A valuable source for checking the accuracy of information reported to the EOC with reports from the news media, the offices of elected officials, and people on the scene.

COORDINATING INFORMATION

The next step in the process is to coordinate with other Public Information Officers who are part of the JIS. These Public Information Officers include both those represented in the JIC and those working from another location who are part of the JIS. Coordinating information involves:

- **Establishing Key Message(s):** After gathering information from all sources, unified messages are crafted that address all informational needs and are prioritized according to the overall Federal, State, tribal, and local response/recovery strategy. The mission includes getting accurate, consistent information to the right people at the right time so they can make informed decisions.
- **Obtaining Approval/Clearance From Those With Authority:** Ensuring that the information is consistent, accurate, and accessible. The approval process should be streamlined, however, to ensure that the information is released in a timely manner.

DISSEMINATING INFORMATION

The next step in the process is to disseminate information to the public and additional stakeholders. This step involves:

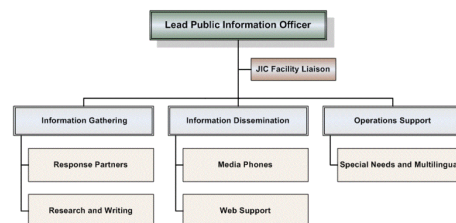
- **Using Multiple Methods:** In an emergency, there may not be many options. Phone calls and interviews might be the primary means of getting information to the news media. Personal visits or town meetings may be the most effective avenue for the public, elected/appointed officials, or other stakeholders. These outreach efforts can be supported by providing talking points and fliers to on-scene Public Information Officers.
- **Monitoring the Media:** Media monitoring is invaluable for ensuring that the message is understood by the news media and reported accurately and completely. Important inaccuracies should be addressed before they are reported incorrectly a second time.

Visual 16: JIC Functions

- Media Relations
- Media Analysis
- Research and Writing
- Field Operations
- Social Media
- Special Events/Projects
- Broadcast, Photo, Video
- Administration

Visual 17: A "Lead" PIO

- Accountable for the JIC
- Reports to and advises Incident Commander
- Provides overall direction
- Recommends and develops strategy
- Obtains approval for releases
- Conducts JIS/JIC briefings



Note

- The Lead Public Information Officer (PIO) comes from the agency that has the lead in handling the crisis. This individual reports to the Incident Commander/Unified Command and acts as an advisor on all issues relating to public information.
- The Lead PIO is a management function and should provide overall direction and policy rather than getting involved in “hands-on” details. Unlike other functions, there can be only one Lead PIO.
- PIOs from other agencies do not report to the Lead PIO. They represent their own agency but work with the Lead PIO to provide support.
- The Lead PIO provides overall guidance and direction to the Group Supervisors of the various functional areas in the JIC.
- He/she acts as a liaison between the function and other sections in the organization. The Lead PIO reports directly to the EOC Director or Incident Commander.
- If at all possible, the Lead PIO should NOT be the on-camera spokesperson or the Logistics Liaison. He/she will not have the time to both lead the JIC and perform these functions.
- The Lead PIO must make the big decisions needed, such as overall strategy, wording in critical releases, staffing, and resolving conflicts.

If leading a team, don’t micromanage—delegate and support!

Visual 18: Logistics

- Coordinates opening, setup, and closing of JIC
- Ensures adequate equipment and supplies
- Coordinates JIC security and other services
- Manages JIC support services
- Manages communication

Visual 19: Liaisons

- Tribal
- Private Sector
- Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)



Note

The Liaison function provides a coordinated, two-way communication link with key program areas and other entities involved in the response and recovery operation (e.g., elected officials, community leaders, VIPs, and other governmental and nongovernmental support agencies). This is different than the liaison officer in the command staff. Note that the liaison officer in the command staff is responsible for establishing and coordinating interagency contacts, while this PIO function is to provide two-way communication with key program areas.

The liaisons are the “human face” of the crisis response. The power of the liaison is in face-to-face contact with the people (and the media) in the affected area.

The liaisons report back to the JIC information they observe or receive while out in the affected area. This includes community concerns, media issues, or direct observations such as crowded highways, unruly crowds, or problems in shelters.

In addition to Field Liaisons (Field PIOs), a JIC may have VIP Liaisons who:

- Work closely with VIPs (e.g., high-level political or other visitors) in the field.
- Provide VIPs with the latest information.
- Send information back to the JIC—issues, activities, and concerns.
- Help brief and prepare VIPs prior to interviews.
- Coordinate with VIPs’ staffs at all times.
- Liaisons will also work with PIOs from other agencies who may be in the field but not represented at the JIC (and at the scene of major interest) to coordinate information and provide a unified front for media stories.

Visual 20: Other JIC Positions

- Resource Manager
- Reports Specialists
- Strategic Communication Specialist
- Special Events/Project/VIP
- Limited English Proficiency Specialist
- Assistant Safety Officer

Visual 21: Multiple roles

- In a JIC, many have responsibilities to their agency as well as the JIC
- Time management is critical
- Preparedness



Note

In a JIC, PIOs have responsibilities to their agencies as well as the JIC. Many PIOs at the tribal, state and local levels perform a function within the JIC while maintaining communications and responsibilities to their agencies. Time management is critical when working in a high-stress environment.

Visual 22: Dealing With Stress

Be aware of the signs of stress in yourself and others.

- Cognitive
- Emotional
- Physical
- Behavioral

Visual 23: Unit Summary

In this unit, we discussed:

- Difference between JIS and JIC
- Triggers for JIC activation
- NIMS information cycle: gather, verify, coordinate, and disseminate information
- JIC functions, roles and positions
- Dealing with stress

Unit 9: Wrap-Up Exercise

Visual 1: Unit 9: Wrap-Up Exercise



This unit will give you the opportunity to apply the public information concepts covered in this course.

Note

Visual 2: Unit Objective

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Given an emergency scenario, apply public information skills
- Demonstrate effective communication skills during the news conference exercise

Visual 3: Activity 9.1: News Conference Activity

This is a group activity. Based on a scenario:

- Analyze the chosen scenario/problem to determine the steps necessary to conduct an effective news conference.
- Select and use current communications techniques as presented in the news conference lecture.
- Identify and perform appropriate speaker and support roles.
- Deliver the news conference
- Participate in a Debriefing

Purpose: Students are to demonstrate effective communication skills during the news conference exercise.

Estimated Time: 60 minutes



Note

Purpose of the Activity: To give participants an opportunity to gain practical experience by participating in a simulated news conference.

Instructions:

Each team will pick a minimum of three presenters (Can add more)

Presenters will be;

- Lead PIO (setting ground rules)
- Mayor or City Manager
- City Department Executive to be represented at the news conference based upon the scenario chosen by the team.

First news conference will begin 30 minutes after the start of the activity. Each press conference will be 10 minutes long total including questions from the press and will be followed by a 10 min critique.

News conferences will be timed. Team will be signaled at five- and one-minute intervals before the end of conference.

Teams should approach each presentation seriously as though they are getting their message across in an emergency situation as per the scenario chosen.

Equipment will be set up during the team design session.

Staff will set up camera for team to see live video feed.

Teams will be evaluated on.....

- Professionalism of the news conference
 - Start/end on time.
 - Clear ground-rules
 - Demeanor of the presenters
- The delivery of the speakers.
 - Key Messages
 - Articulate

- Statements content
- The handling of the media corps during the news conference.
 - Responses
 - Selection of questions
 - Managing noise

Ending the news conference

Scenario #1: Explosion at Fusse Stadium at a Collegiate Final Football Game

Without warning, there was an explosion inside the Buford T. Fusse Stadium at SLUDMAR State University. The explosion occurred during the fourth quarter of an evening football game between the SLUDMAR University team and its rival for the division title. The stadium was filled with fans.

A possible chemical agent is suspected as people are choking, coughing and losing consciousness. Several people are reportedly injured or dead. It is unknown if suspects are inside the stadium. People are running for the exits in panic.

Scenario #2: Air Crash Scenario

A big jet with 224 passengers and crew of 12 was flying from Los Angeles to Oakland. A small jet carrying six people and crew of three was also flying to Oakland. The jets collided over the City of SLUDMAR.

The small jet crashed immediately east of Wilton Place and East First Avenue. There are no survivors from the small jet but there are numerous injuries on the ground as well as structure fires.

The big jet sustained significant damage and declared an in-flight emergency. The collision caused one engine of the big jet to fall off and land in a field at the south end of President's Canyon at the County boarder with SLUDMAR. A small brushfire erupted. The big jet crashed within minutes of its radio transmission on East Sixth Avenue between "F" Street and "H" Street.

The debris field from the big jet extended west and north from East Sixth Street and "F" Street. There are no survivors from the big jet, but numerous people are injured on the ground and there are structure fires.

Scenario #3: Proposed Public Safety Ballot Measure

You are members of a public information team for the Santa Luisa del Mar Police Department. The department is seeking a special sales tax increase of ½ cent in the city. The increase is to provide additional funding for public safety in SLUDMAR. The funding will support additional personnel, equipment and needed improvement in aging police facilities. It is several months prior to election. The measure has been placed on the ballot with the support of the City Manager, the other department heads, the Mayor and the City Council. The passage of the measure is not a sure thing. The City of SLUDMAR has recently attempted to increase sales tax for other seemingly worthy purposes but the measures failed.

Scenario #4; SLUDMAR Earthquake

On todays date at 1215 hours, a 7.1 Richter magnitude earthquake struck SLUDMAR. The epicenter was approximately 8 miles northwest of SLUDMAR on the Eminem. Several incidents were reported.

The top several floors of the SLUDMAR Bank Bldg. have collapsed. Fatalities and numerous injuries are reported. There is also a building collapse at Lakeview Jr. High. Multiple buildings have collapsed in 1800 block of R St. The southbound off ramp on I-9 at Kilometro Calle is damaged and unusable. There is a major traffic accident at Shoreline Dr. & Bayshore Blvd, and a gas tanker is leaking there. Traffic signals out throughout the city. A structure fire is reported at the Cal-Agra-Hydra Chemical facility at

East 2nd and I St. (possible hazmat). There are four single structure fires in city. There is also a fire in CSUSL Biological Sciences building. There is a strong smell (possible haz mat incident) at industrial building near Cannery Park. There is a gas main leak at M St. & East 21st Ave. The school district has reported two students are critically injured at Santa Luisa High School. The cause is still unknown. The EOC was activated at 1300 hours and is on 12 hour shifts at full staffing. All city resources are committed at this time. Mutual Aid has been requested but the estimated time of arrival is unknown. Situation Assessment is on-going for a more complete picture on the total damage to the city.

Scenario #5: Mall Explosion

On today's date the Santa Luis Mall was holding its annual mall-wide sale. The prices in mall stores are drastically reduced and the sale attracts thousands of shoppers. At 12:30 pm two explosions occurred simultaneously at the mall. The first blast occurred inside the mall near the entrance to Muldowney's Department Store. The second explosion occurred at the mall entrance to Santa Luisa luggage store. The blasts caused significant structural collapses and fires to adjacent businesses in the mall. Some parked cars outside, near the luggage store and the mall entrance near the department store are damaged and on fire. There are many injuries and fatalities. Structures adjacent to the mall sustained broken windows. Flying glass injured pedestrians who were nearby when the explosion occurred. The fire engulfed spaces on the second floor.

The fire department is on-scene and established a command post in the mall parking lot. The police department is on scene and co-located their command post with the fire department. Police units are attempting to control traffic and evacuate shoppers and employees from the mall. Traffic in the mall parking lot and on streets around the mall is congested.

Scenario #6: HAZMAT

On Today's date and time, a traffic accident occurred involving a large panel truck and three passenger vehicles. The accident occurred in downtown SLUDMAR at Washington Avenue and Kilometro Calle. The unmarked panel truck struck the three cars while going through a red-light and overturned. The truck was carrying ten 50 gallon drums in the back. The drums fell into the street and began leaking a yellow fluid.

The lone passengers in each of two of the vehicles were killed instantly. The third vehicle swerved onto the side walk crashing into a bus stop. A passenger in the vehicle was ejected and died at the scene. The driver was trapped in inside. Several bystanders at the bus-stop were injured.

The driver and a passenger from the panel truck were seen climbing out of the vehicle and running away. A witness reported that one of the occupants brandished weapon. An examination of the interior of the truck produced the several interior and exterior photographs of the SLUDMAR city hall.

Both fire and police are on scene and are beginning to organize their response.

Scenario #7: Protest Demonstrations/Civil Unrest

On today's date at 1700 hours approximately 500 people gathered in Central Park in SLUDMAR to protest the verdict in a police use of force case announced at the nearby courthouse. The protesters are carrying signs showing their anger over the verdict. The crowd that gathered was initially peaceful and had previously conveyed their peaceful intentions to city authorities.

They planned to march to the court house and stage a showing of their discontent in front the building. After dark, as the protesters walked the streets to the court house, they began to block traffic and became increasingly agitated.

Upon arriving at the courthouse, the crowd had grown and the marchers had broken several windows, overturned cars and set buildings on fire on the way to the courthouse.

Scenario #8 Flooding

After a very dry couple of years and a few wild-land fires, the hills in northern SLUDMAR have been left barren of trees. Lack of rainfall has also been an issue in that it has caused a drought in the city.

The weather is turning, however, and rain is on the way. On today's date and time, a much-needed winter rainstorm has arrived. The needed water is showing up in a torrent coming down in President's Canyon in the county. Floodwaters have risen up the canyon walls chasing out hikers and at the mouth of the canyon in the south flooding are spreading in the neighborhoods both in the county and in the city. The main of flood damage is along the river coming out of the canyon and overflowing into streets and homes. Guadalupe Park, Guadalupe Elementary School and Memorial Hospital are all experiencing severe flooding.

The storm is anticipated to last another four to five hours with a break and another serious storm following in 24 hours.

Scenario #9: Wildland-Urban Interface Fire

A two year drought has left SLUDMAR extremely dry. The hills in President's Canyon and in the Tucker National Forrest are ripe for a conflagration.

On today's date, about five hours ago, a brushfire broke out in Tucker National Forrest. It is spreading fast in the dry timber and winds. It has spread to where fire authorities and local government officials are fearful it may reach SLUDMAR home lying in its path within hours.

Scenario #10: SLUDMAR City Scandal

The SLUDMAR City Manager has become aware of potential wrongdoing alleged against members of the City Council and the Mayor related to possible illegal and unethical procurement practices of city equipment and services for the fire and public works departments. The City Manager learned of the problems from a "whistle-blower" who is a non-sworn employee of the police department.

The allegations include contracts being awarded to contractors who are friends and relatives, the procurement of sub-standard fire and police equipment, violating the city bidding processes and in some instances sexual favors being granted in return for city business. The city manager has asked the police department to investigate these allegations. The public is starting to become aware of what is happening.

Scenario #11: Mardi Gras

The City's annual Mardi Gras festival is fast approaching. The event involves a parade through the downtown area ending at City Hall with speeches and a street fair lasting into the evening. For the past years unruly crowds have resulted in numerous injuries to police and fire personnel as well as participants in the festival. Numerous arrests have been made for public drunkenness, disturbing the peace and vandalism. The violence has marred the celebration.

Reluctantly city leaders agreed to allow the Mardi Gras festival to take place with some additional precautions and restrictions in place.

Visual 4: Exercise Tasks

- What did you learn in this course that you were able to use in the activity?
- What was the most challenging part of the activity?
- Based on this exercise, do you feel that as a PIO you are ready to handle a situation of a similar magnitude in your community? Do you have all the resources you need? What areas for improvement did the exercise expose?

Visual 5: Unit Summary

In this unit, we discussed:

- How the tools and techniques discussed in this course apply to emergency public information activities
- Demonstrate effective communication skills during the news conference exercise

Unit 10: Course Summary

Visual 1: Course Summary



Visual 2: Objectives

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Recall course key points
- Complete a course post-assessment

Visual 3: Did We Meet Our Course Goal to...?

- Equip participants with the basic skills to be full- or part-time PIOs by:
 - Applying oral and written communications skills
 - Understanding and working with the media
 - Applying a strategic communications model
 - Exploring social media tools in emergency management
- Prepare participants for training to further develop their public information skills

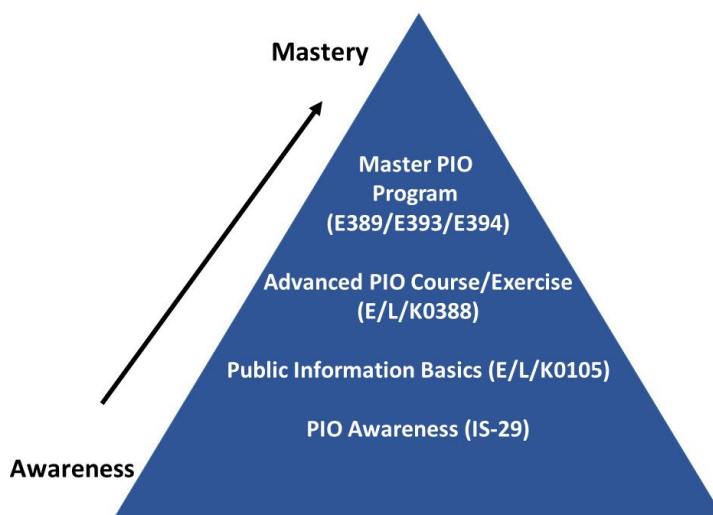
Visual 4: Assessment

- Complete the post-course assessment
- You have 30 minutes



Visual 5: Continuing Your Development

What will you do to continue your professional development?



You can continue your professional development by progressing through the *Public Information Training Series* curriculum, including:

- IS-29: PIO Awareness
- E/L/K0105: Public Information Basics
- E/L/K0388: Advanced PIO
- E0389/393/394: Master Public Information Officer Program

For additional training opportunities, check out the [Emergency Management Institute Public Information Officer page](https://training.fema.gov/programs/pio/) - (<https://training.fema.gov/programs/pio/>)

You can also expand your knowledge of public information and emergency management by completing [FEMA Independent Study \(IS\) courses](http://www.training.fema.gov/is) (www.training.fema.gov/is). IS courses are free. Here is a sample list of the courses available:

- IS-100: Introduction to Incident Command System (or ICS course for specific specialty: healthcare, public works, etc.)
- IS-702: NIMS Public Information Systems
- IS-909: Community Preparedness: Implementing Simple Activities for Everyone
- IS-42 Social Media in Emergency Management
- IS-100 Introduction to Incident Command System (ICS) (or ICS course for specific specialty: healthcare, public works, etc.)
- IS-200 ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents (or discipline specific course)
- IS-201 Forms Used for the Development of the Incident Action Plan (Waived if ICS-300 completed)
- IS-251 Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) for Alerting Authorities
- IS-700 National Incident Management System (NIMS), an Introduction
- IS-702 NIMS Public Information Systems
- IS-800 National Response Framework, An Introduction

Visual 6: Feedback

- Please complete the course evaluation form



Use the course evaluation form to provide feedback on this training.
Thanks for your participation!

Note

Resource Guide

Purpose of the Resource Guide

The purpose of this guide is to provide tools, processes, templates, guidance, resources and activities to students taking the E/L 0105 Public Information Concepts and Skills (PIO) course. This resource guide was created for PIO Training Series students in partnership with the Emergency Management Institute and the National Fire Academy to assist students in finding PIO resources within the guide itself and within other available resources. Course participants will use the resources in this guide during course activities and as a reference or resource after the courses have been completed.

Course managers: If you are offering more than one course back-to-back, only one resource guide is needed per person, regardless of which courses are offered.

Community Analysis

Using (<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>) gather the following information for your jurisdiction.

Age Characteristics

Most Recent Census total Population:

Most recent population estimate:

Percentage of people under 5 years old:

Percentage of people 5-19 years old:

Percentage of people 65 years and over:

Percentage of men:

Percentage of women:

Racial Characteristics

Percentage of the population who are:

White:

Black/African American:

American Indian/Alaska Native:

Asian

Asian Indian

Chinese

Filipino

Japanese

Korean

Vietnamese

Other Asian

Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander

Native Hawaiian

Guamanian or Chamorro

Samoa

Other Pacific Islander

Some other race

Two or more races

Hispanic or Latino:

Mexican

Puerto Rican

Cuban

Other

Household Characteristics

Percentage of population who:

Family households:

With own children under 18 years:

Husband/Wife Family:

With own children under 18 years:
 Male householder (head of home), no wife present:
 With own children under 18 years:
 Female householder (head of home), no wife present:
 With own children under 18 years:
 Nonfamily households:
 Householder living alone:
 Male:
 65 years or over:
 Female:
 65 years or over:

Households with individuals under 18:
 Households with individuals 65 years and over:
 Average household size:
 Average family size:

Housing

Total housing units (number, not percentage):
 Occupied:
 Vacant:

Occupied housing units:
 Owner-occupied:
 Renter-occupied:

Employment/Income

Unemployment rate (percentage):
 Mean travel time to work (minutes):
 Median household income:
 Mean household income:
 Public assistance or Food Stamp/SNAP benefits (percentage):
 No health insurance coverage (percentage):

Education – from the American Fact Finder most recent estimates

High school graduate/GED or higher, age 25+:
 Bachelor's degree or higher, age 25+:
 Graduate/Professional degree or higher, age 25+:

Other Information

Total number of veterans (actual number):
 Unemployment rate (percentage):
 Income in the past 12 months below poverty level (percentage):
 Number of people in poverty status with a disability:
 Foreign born population (percentage):
 Speak a language other than English (percentage):
 Total number of languages spoken (get information from other sources, such as local school district if

necessary):

Top 5 languages spoken (get information from other sources, such as local school district if necessary):

Land area in square miles:

Population per square mile:

FEMA Courses:

- IS 20: Diversity Awareness
- IS 21: Civil Rights Awareness
- IS 366: Planning for the Needs of Children in Disaster

Activity 1.1 Introduction "Interviews"

Get to Know One Another

Pair Up

Ask your Partner:

- Name
- Years of experience
- Job
- Goal/expectations for this training
- Something unique about them



Refer to the instructions on the visual, pair up with another student and "interview" one another. Then you will introduce your partner to the class. Keep your introductions of one another to one to two minutes.

Note

Activity 1.2 Why Is It Important?

What does getting the right information to the right people at the right time mean to you?



Purpose: To identify the importance of public information. Estimated Time: 15 minutes

Note

Activity 2.1: Public Awareness Campaign

Instructions: Develop 3 key messages for your organization, then develop 3 supporting points for each key message.

Purpose: To apply the 8-step strategic communication model to planning a public awareness campaign.

Estimated Time: 30 minutes



Activity

Total Time for Activity: 40 minutes

Purpose of Activity: The purpose of this activity is to provide participants with the tools and skills to plan a public awareness campaign. Participants will work individually to plan a public awareness campaign through Step 4 of the 8-step communication model.

Instructions:

- You have 30 minutes to complete the activity.
- This is an individual activity, but you may consult with members of your table group.
- Read the scenario. Refer back to steps one through four of the strategic communications model (Visuals 3.5-3.8).
- Using the worksheet in your Student Manual, fill out steps one through four of the strategic communications plan.
- At the end we will have volunteers report out to the class (10 minutes).



Note

Scenario:

Columbia State University (CSU) is a campus of 15,000 undergraduate and graduate students seeking degrees from the university's 19 different departments. CSU's main campus is located in Central City. Roughly one-third of the students live on campus in 13 dormitories and 15 Greek letter houses. The rest of the students are commuters who live in the Liberty County/Central City area. The university has a marine biology research station on the Columbia Bay (Gish Island).

CSU is a member of National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division 1-A. The CSU Warhawks field teams in nine men's and women's sports. This year CSU will be hosting the NCAA basketball championship game against their perennial rival, the Wilmington State University Bulldogs. The field house will seat 20,000 and in the past has been sold out for championship games, especially against the WSU Bulldogs.

Law enforcement intelligence suggests that student organizers are threatening to demonstrate to protest the use of animals for research in the biology department that is located in Young Hall. Recent protests have drawn crowds estimated at greater than 5,000 and it has been rumored that

this protest may be held in the parking lot in front of the Phillips Field House prior to the game.

CSU is anticipating a capacity crowd of 20,000 fans for this championship game and wants to make certain that the crowd is managed safely and that there are no security issues that may endanger the fans, or reflect poorly on the University. The mayor of Central City has asked all city departments to cooperate in planning for this event.

Task:

You are the Central City PIO. You have been tasked with developing a public awareness/public information campaign about the upcoming basketball game, aiming to avoid security issues leading up to, during, and after the game. Use the 8-step communication model to start planning your campaign. For this activity, you are only filling out steps one through four.

Activity 2.1: Worksheet

MESSAGE MAP

SCENARIO:
STAKEHOLDER:
CONCERN:

KEY MESSAGE 1 →	KEY MESSAGE 2 →	KEY MESSAGE 3
↓	↓	↓
Support Point 1.1	Support Point 2.1	Support Point 3.1
Support Point 1.2	Support Point 2.2	Support Point 3.2
Support Point 1.3	Support Point 2.3	Support Point 3.3

Activity 2.2: Incident Communication Strategy

Instructions: Work in table groups to complete the incident communication strategy. You may assign different portions of the strategy to different team members to complete the activity.

Purpose: To provide participants with the tools and skills to prepare an Incident Communication Strategy.

Estimated Time: 30 minutes



Note

Total Time for Activity: 45 minutes

Purpose of Activity: The purpose of this activity is to provide participants with the tools and skills to prepare an Incident Communication Strategy. Participants will work in groups to develop a high level strategy and will then report out to the class.

Instructions:

- Working in your table group, develop an Incident Communication Strategy based on the scenario update on the next page. You may consult the main scenario from Activity 2.1.
- Make sure to fully develop Step 4.
- Complete Steps 5, 6, 7 and 8 only after fully developing Steps 1-4.
- You have 30 minutes to complete this activity.

Scenario Update:

Approximately 20,000 fans are expected to attend the championship game. The traditional rivalry between the Columbia State University Warhawks and the Washington State University Bulldogs has resulted in physical conflicts between the opposing fans in past games. Inclement weather including heavy snowfall and cold weather prior to the game will increase the difficulty for Central City DPW to clear the parking lots and streets in preparation for the big game. The possibility of a student protest prior to the game may reflect poorly on the university. Law enforcement intelligence does not indicate any serious threats of violence; however, student protests of a similar nature in other states have resulted in damage to buildings along with threats to researchers.

Task:

You are the Central City PIO. You have been tasked with developing an incident communications strategy in the event of fan unrest and potential violence among protestors. Use Worksheet 2.2 to plan the strategy. Refer back to the 8-step process for information on each step.

Activity 2.2: Worksheet

MESSAGE MAP

SCENARIO:
STAKEHOLDER:
CONCERN:

KEY MESSAGE 1 →	KEY MESSAGE 2 →	KEY MESSAGE 3
↓	↓	↓
Support Point 1.1	Support Point 2.1	Support Point 3.1
Support Point 1.2	Support Point 2.2	Support Point 3.2
Support Point 1.3	Support Point 2.3	Support Point 3.3

Activity 3.1: Difficult Situations

Purpose: To think through difficult situations and devise strategies to deal with them

Instructions:

- Read the scenario and work through the discussion questions
- Assign a spokesperson to present scenario and findings to the class
- You have 10 minutes for the activity
- Keep the report to two minutes



Activity

Purpose: To think through difficult situations and devise strategies to address them.

Instructions: Read the scenario assigned to your table group and work through the discussion questions. Assign a spokesperson to recap your group’s scenario before presenting findings to the class. When reporting your findings, provide a very brief synopsis (three to four sentences) of your scenario and explain key strategies your group came up with using the 8-Step Strategic Communication Model. Keep the report to two minutes. The scenarios are:

- Scenario 1: Pool Party
- Scenario 2: Loaded Question
- Scenario 3: News Conference Gone Wrong
- Scenario 4: Social Media Bites Back (#Fail)
- Scenario 5: The Misquote

Time: 10 minutes for the table group discussion; 10 minutes for reports and debrief.



Note

Scenario 1 – “Pool Party”

The wild fire had burned for seven days, fueled by high temperatures, windy conditions and dry terrain. Hundreds of fire fighters had responded and hundreds of acres had gone up in flames, including at least one neighborhood of high-priced homes. Road blocks have kept reporters away from the devastation and the active firefight, although they’ve had access to a staging area and been able to interview firefighters. The fire is now 90 percent contained and you are willing to take a pool into the devastated neighborhood. You’ve selected one network-affiliated TV reporter, one AP photographer and a reporter from the large daily paper in your state. However, the other reporters are very vocal about their displeasure with the size of the pool and the press members you’ve selected. Most want a larger pool, or a second pool, but a few are demanding complete access to the site.

Discussion questions: How do you respond? What do you do to prevent such a situation from happening again? What is the best way to “pick” pool members?

Scenario 2 – Loaded Question

Your agency director is taking questions at a news conference. It is the first anniversary of a particularly high-profile issue (lack of adequate and geographically accessible shelters) that affected primarily an economically depressed neighborhood. Your agency has done a good job putting in place new policies and protocols to address the issue, and you have fully briefed your agency director on the accomplishments to date. A reporter stands up to ask a question. He begins by recapping the issue and citing a number of “facts.” He states that your agency continues to ignore the needs of the community, as there are no designated shelters to date. Then the reporter asks: Don't you think this is clear evidence of extremely discriminatory practices?

Discussion questions: How do you handle this situation while it is happening? What could you have done to reduce the consequences?

Scenario 3 – News Conference Gone Wrong

You are holding a news conference updating reporters on the status of a school shooting. The shooter – a student armed with his father's hunting rifle -- has been killed; seven other students and two teachers have been wounded and taken to local hospitals. They are expected to survive. You start by reading a statement recounting the facts and then open the floor for questions. The first questions are appropriate – how many officers responded, where did the shootings occur, what was the motive. Then a reporter begins to ask questions about the shooter's parents, their gun history and the state's gun control laws. Other reporters jump on the gun control angle and begin asking for your opinion on the National Rifle Association, the Second Amendment and the ability of people to buy unregistered guns at gun shows.

Discussion questions: How do you handle the situation while it is happening or right after? What would you do next time to reduce the chance of this happening again?

Scenario 4 – Social Media Bites Back

Your agency had been slow to accept social media and has just started a Twitter feed. Although you already have 2,500 followers, you'd like to see that number grow 10-fold. To create some excitement and energy, you send out a tweet: We're here to support you. Tweet photos of your interactions with our officers and use the hashtag #goodnewsaboutus. Unfortunately, the photos coming thick and fast are not images of happy interactions. They show a variety of negative encounters – including one that appears to show an officer shooting a dog.

Discussion questions: How do you handle this onslaught of negative images on social media? How do you handle the resulting news story about the campaign? What social media policy do you put in place to help prevent this from happening again?

Scenario 5 – The Misquote

Your agency director has granted an interview to a newspaper reporter from your city. You have developed a good rapport with the reporter and feel it is a good time to go “on the record” about the issue. The issue at hand is fairly complicated – and controversial – but your director does a good job fully explaining the situation, and why your agency has taken the action it did. You feel the interview went well and are optimistic about the upcoming story. However, when the story runs a week later, above the fold on the front page, you’re not sure you were sitting in the same interview as the reporter. The facts are incomplete, the quotes are taken out of context and there are places where it’s clear the reporter failed to understand the intricacies of the situation. The headline, particularly, is a nightmare.

Discussion questions: What options do you have to push back against the story? What could you have done differently? What will you do differently in the future?

Activity 4.1: Writing an External Product

Instructions: Read news release assigned to your table and discuss the following:

- Delete any information that does not belong
- Reorder the information and edit as needed
- Rewrite in the appropriate style

Purpose: To apply basic news release writing guidance to sample products

Estimated Time: 30 minutes

Total Time for the Activity: 30 minutes

Purpose of the Activity: To apply basic news release writing guidance to written products.

Instructions:

Use resource materials available (i.e., dictionary, thesaurus, AP Stylebook).

Work in your table groups to edit a written product so that it fits its purpose and reflects good journalistic style.



Activity

- Turn to the sample written products in their Student Manual. Each table group will be assigned one written product.
- Work in your table groups to edit your assigned product by: –
 - Deleting any information that does not belong in the written product; –
 - Reordering the information, as needed; and –
 - Rewriting in the appropriate style.
- Be prepared to report out in 15 minutes. In your report, include: –
 - Which written product you edited; –
 - What information you deleted (if any); and –
 - How you rewrote the document (e.g., read aloud rewritten portions).

Written Product #1

Contact: J. R. Jordan Department of Emergency Mgmt. (800) 555-0321

NR #3 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE October 2, 2009

State Notified of Alert at Nuclear Power Station

CAPITAL CITY – The Columbia Department of Emergency Management has been notified by Municipal Power that an Alert was declared at a Nuclear Power Station today. The Alert notification ensures that emergency response personnel are available and on standby should the situation worsen.

As designated in the Columbia Radiological Emergency Response Plan, Annex Q, sections 15.a to 15.j (rev) and pursuant to State law, the Columbia Emergency Operations Center is being augmented with additional personnel trained in emergency response and local governments surrounding the plant have been notified and are on standby.

The affected power station—named Norton Station after the renowned physicist, Karl Norton—is located in the Smythson County.

Should the situation worsen, the Emergency Alert System (EAS) will be activated and people residing or working in Protective Action Zone 1 will be advised to stay indoors, with all doors and windows closed and air conditioners and fans turned off until otherwise notified. Information to help citizens determine the Protective Action Zone in which they reside or work can be found in the yellow pages section of area telephone directories.

At this time, there is no danger or cause for concern for people living near the nuclear facility or in other areas of the County, according to state officials.

###

Written Product #2

Contact: Pat Kelly

#31 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE July 21, 2009

Homestead Police Announce Holiday Program

The Homestead Police Department’s mission is to protect and serve the people of Homestead. To that end, this year the department is reaching out to those in need to make the holidays a little brighter. This includes working with Project Head Start to bring Santa to the classroom and the popular “Shop-With-A-Cop” program.

Shop-With-A-Cop pairs police personnel with Head Start students for a holiday shopping trip. Merchants provide a selection of discounted gifts, which are paid for through the Police Community Association (PCA). Each child gets to pick up to five gifts for their friends and family members.

Members of the news media can take advantage of photo opportunities by calling 800-555-9887.

###

Written Product #3

Contact: CDEM Public Affairs (800) 555-6793

Saturday, December 12, 2009

Stay safe from chemical spills and terrorist attacks

CAPITAL CITY – The Columbia Department of Emergency Management (CDEM) urges citizens to stay away from exit 9b on the cross-state Turnpike to avoid injury or death from a potentially dangerous chemical spill. Chemical agents can include poisonous gases, liquids, or solids that have toxic and lethal effects on victims. Do not attempt to rescue a victim of a chemical attack—you may become a victim yourself, say experts. \

If you are **at home** when officials indicate **evacuation** is necessary:

- Gather emergency supplies of food, clothing and water.
- If you are instructed to do so by local authorities, turn off all utilities at the main switch and close the main gas valve.
- Secure your dwelling by closing and locking windows and doors.
- Make arrangements for your pets. Public shelters may not allow pets.
- As soon as you are ordered to evacuate, do so promptly.
- Tell someone outside of the area where you are going.
- Follow recommended evacuation routes—shortcuts may be blocked.

If you are **at work** when officials indicate **evacuation** is necessary:

- Listen to your radio for guidance on protective actions.
- Follow your employer's instructions to shelter in place or evacuate.

Written Product #4

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Dana Jordan (800) 555-0321 October 9, 2009

Dinwoody Police Officers Discover Marijuana

Dinwoody Police Officers looking for a lost child in the ten-mile area surrounding Wood Lake discovered marijuana plants growing in the St. John Botanical Gardens.

The plants were well disguised by thick plantings of bamboo and other Asian plants. The child had been separated from its parents who were visiting the Botanical Gardens. They were reunited at the visitor center.

The Officers and agents from DEA eradicated over 200 marijuana plants with an estimated street value of \$65,000. The discovery is one of the largest seizures of live marijuana plants in the State this year.

The parents of the lost child were not available for comment.

-30-

Written Product #5

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Contact: Jay Moore, PIO, NPEM

News Release #5-2009 24/7: 800-555-9966

Volunteer Sandbaggers Needed

NORTH PLAINVIEW, Columbia—Volunteers have started a sandbagging operation in North Plainview in an attempt to seal off the water from flowing under the railroad tracks that run parallel along Highway 97 between Main and Cherry Streets in North Plainview. Emergency Management needs about 2,000 sandbags for the levees in Plainview County should the water begin to overflow.

Due to mudslides, several roads have been closed in Plainview and traffic is being diverted. The City of North Plainview experienced extremely heavy rains over the past 5 days, resulting in flash flooding on the East side of town.

Currently, we are asking for volunteers to fill sandbags in anticipation of the rising Columbia River.

###

Written Product #6

Contact: Jan Morrison (800) 555-1234

NR #18 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE August 19, 2009

Media Advisory

(Not for Publication)

MEDIA BRIEFING SCHEDULED

GREENVILLE, Columbia – State Coordinator Casey Morton will hold a news conference at 6 p.m., Sunday, September 24, at the Greenville Emergency Operations Center to brief the media on the latest developments in the ongoing response to Hurricane Horatio. CDOT, CDH, and ARC will also attend the briefing.

The Columbia Department of Emergency Management (CDEM) has opened the Joint Information Center to provide people with updates on the hurricane response and information on disaster assistance. The phone number is (800) 555-1234.

CDEM requests that media representatives present identification at the entrance to the briefing.

Future briefings will be announced on a timely basis and as conditions warrant.

###

Activity 4.2: Make it Social

Instructions: In your table group, review the news release assigned to your table and write:

- 1 Tweet
- 1 Facebook entry
- 1 idea for YouTube

Purpose: To adapt or repurpose traditional media products into Social Media entries

Estimated Time: 15 minutes

Total Time for the Activity: 30 minutes

Purpose of the Activity: To adapt or repurpose traditional media products into Social Media entries.

Instructions:



Activity

- You will work in table groups for this activity. Review a news release and write one each of the following: –
 - 1 Tweet –
 - 1 Facebook entry –
 - 1 idea for YouTube
- You have 15 minutes for this activity.
- If you are short on time, you can divide this work amongst the table, then get together to review it before reporting your work.

Activity 5.1: On-Camera Interviews

Purpose: To practice on-camera performance Instructions:

- Write talking points on a subject you are familiar with, or use the information in your Student Manual
- Practice delivery with a partner
- Be ready to give a television interview
- Your instructor will act as the reporter and will provide feedback on your performance

Total Time: 2 hours

Materials

- At least two video cameras or mobile recording devices on a tripod. Set up each camera in separate break-out rooms. If you don't have tripods, ask students or other staff available to act as videographers by holding the camera during the interviews.
- At least two instructors to act as reporters.

Instructions

- Select a topic you are familiar with and write talking points for your interview. Most participants choose a public awareness campaign they are familiar with, an event they want to promote or a recent emergency or incident operation they participated in.
- If you cannot think of any topics, you may use the news release included in the Student Manual and draft your own talking points from the release for your interview.
- Practice your delivery. If you have time, ask a fellow participant to record you while you practice delivering the talking points, watch the recording and adjust your delivery as needed.
- The interview will follow this format: –
 - The reporter will ask you to say and spell your name and title. –
 - Then the reporter will ask you a basic question about your topic. This is your cue to start delivering your message. –
 - The reporter may ask you a series of follow-up questions. Be ready to answer both easy and tough questions. –
 - Demonstrate the interview techniques covered in the unit if needed. –
 - For the purposes of the activity, you can assume the interview you are giving is being taped for later broadcast; it is not live, unless you prefer it to be live. –
 - Your instructor will review the recording and give you feedback after your interview.



Activity

HEAR THE BEEP WHERE YOU SLEEP. EVERY BEDROOM NEEDS A WORKING SMOKE ALARM!

Location matters when it comes to your smoke alarm. That's the message behind this year's Fire Prevention Week campaign, "Hear the Beep Where You Sleep. Every Bedroom Needs a Working Smoke Alarm!"

Along with firefighters and safety advocates nationwide, (Your Fire Department) is joining forces with the nonprofit National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) during Fire Prevention Week, October 4-10, to remind local residents about the importance of having working smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each sleeping area, and on every level of the home, including the basement.

"In a fire, seconds count," said (Your name, title). "Half of home fire deaths result from fires reported at night between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. when most people are asleep. Home smoke alarms can alert people to a fire before it spreads, giving everyone enough time to get out."

According to the latest NFPA research, working smoke alarms cut the chance of dying in a fire in half. Meanwhile, three out of five fire deaths resulted from fires in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms.

This year's Fire Prevention Week campaign includes the following smoke alarm messages:

- Install smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each separate sleeping area and on every level of the home, including the basement.
- Interconnect all smoke alarms throughout the home. This way, when one sounds, they all do.
- Test alarms at least monthly by pushing the test button.
- Replace all smoke alarms when they are 10 years old or sooner if they don't respond properly.
- Make sure everyone in the home knows the sound of the smoke alarm and understands what to do when they hear it.
- If the smoke alarm sounds, get outside and stay outside. Go to your outside meeting place.
- Call the fire department from outside the home.

The (Your Town/City) Fire Department will be hosting activities (list specific events) during Fire Prevention Week to promote "Hear the Beep Where You Sleep. Every Bedroom Needs a Working Smoke Alarm!" Through these educational, family-oriented activities, residents can learn more about the importance of having a working smoke alarm in every bedroom.

To find out more about Fire Prevention Week programs and activities in (Your Town/City), please contact the (Your Town/City) Fire Department at (provide your phone number or appropriate contact information). To learn more about smoke alarms and "Hear the Beep Where You Sleep. Every Bedroom Needs a Working Smoke Alarm!" visit [NFPA's](https://www.nfpa.org/fpw) (https://www.nfpa.org/fpw) and [Sparky's FPW Fire Safety for kids](https://sparkyschoolhouse.org/) (https://sparkyschoolhouse.org/).

Crisis Communications Activity Part 1

PURPOSE: Review a situation from the perspective of government, the media and the public

Working in your table groups:

- Review the scenario.
- List concerns, thoughts, emotions and needs for each of these groups.
 - Government
 - Media
 - Public
- Write your thoughts on the designated easel charts.

You have 30 minutes to complete this activity.



Crisis Communication Part 1 Scenario

Over the past 18 months, all Central City Police, Fire and EMS have been under tremendous scrutiny for slowed response times and troubled services. In response, both the fire and police chief have also been critical of 911 dispatch personnel, blaming them for the delays. Unions for all three divisions agree there are problems with 911 Center personnel, but also blame current administrative and city leadership as causes, have fueled this criticism. Currently there exists a long period of finger pointing and blaming. Recently the Police, Fire and EMS Chiefs have raised concerns about EMS field personnel "hiding out" at hospitals, taking themselves out of service for extended periods or claiming unsubstantiated communication problems, with both radio and mobile data terminals.

A month ago, Carlos Alejandro called 911 and police, fire and EMS were dispatched to his Central City home. The initial call was for an "ill infant." Mr. Alejandro is a nationally known Civil Rights and Immigration expert. He has served in the past as an advisor to several Presidents, a University Professor and is the recipient of numerous national and international awards and recognitions. Recently, Carlos has been very outspoken regarding the diversity of local first response and Central City governmental agencies and their agency hiring practices.

The initial response to the Alejandro home took more than 18 minutes for the first CC Police Officer to arrive. Fire and EMS units arrived several minutes later. After an evaluation of the child, EMS paramedics suggested a cold bath for the child's high fever and for the family to call their family physician. All units then left the Alejandro home. Within thirty minutes of leaving the Alejandro home, units were called back to an infant in cardiac arrest. Sadly, the child died.

News of the death moved quickly through the community and has at times reached a boiling point. The EMS Chief has had no explanation other than to say the first ambulance dispatched for the second call caught fire while enroute and a second ambulance was needed to be sent from a greater distance away. Police to date have taken a hands-off stance as have fire leadership. They simply are insisting they have

no comment. It has also come to light since that no less than three ambulances have caught fire, two of which were totally destroyed by these fires in weeks leading up to the Alejandre request.

The Alejandre family has retained legal representation and here is what legal inquiries have discovered. This has also been shared with the community and local media since the death of their child:

- A number of ambulances have caught on fire prior to and since the Alejandre call.
- The training and certification records of the fire and EMS personnel records do not exist anywhere in system. No records.
- The initial Alejandre call to the 911 Center was identified at the "Alpha" level, indicating low priority. (So was the second call reporting a Pulseless None-Breathing Infant.)
- Police were wondering around the house while EMS and Fire were with patient and family. Alejandre's claim they were searching the house illegally.
- There was another Central City ambulance even closer (only two blocks away) when Alejandre call 911 a second time. The crew appears to have remained silent, failing to indicate their proximity to the Alejandre home.
- According to the Alejandre family, when paramedics arrived the second time, they came in without equipment, having to return several times to the ambulance to get things they needed. It also appeared as though the EKG equipment was not working either.
- Carlos Alejandre's anger was further escalated when police began to interview him and his wife. He claims to have been treated like a guilty individual, even as paramedics worked on his child.
- Communications equipment failures have dogged all departments and problems have been well known and lasted for years prior to the Alejandre call. Recently the public learned that the Central City' new computerized dispatch system was also failing. The system sends ambulances and fire trucks to the wrong location or even to locations outside their assigned areas, has failed to dispatch the nearest vehicle, or has sent emergency vehicles in the wrong order. Occasionally, the system attempted to dispatch a vehicle already assigned to other emergencies while ignoring available vehicles. Front-line staff have complained they have received no training prior to the system's activation. Fire Chief Kendal Bravery's tenure has generally been considered to be very troubled, with controversies over hiring and promotions, training, and even firefighter grooming, as well as multi-million dollar equipment failures.
- The recent appointment of Scott Werth as EMS Director has led to a number of investigations. Werth's tenure has been plagued by repeated scandals, including several involving his very own hiring. Other controversies during his tenure include several expensive uniform changes, higher overtime pay, new communication policies, charges of lying over how to count EMS runs in the city, and retaliation against numerous department employees. Controversial changes and ambulance staffing have never been implemented. Even today, active controversies exist over costly fire engine and ambulance repairs, the availability of vehicles for emergencies, and the location of vehicles.

Background Information:

The troubled CC EMS division has continued to have problems for a couple of years. Former Kingston EMS Director Scotty Werth was named CC Chief of EMS, even though he personally...as well as... the Kingston EMS Division as a whole were being sued by the family of James Elvord, who died of gunshot wounds while being treated by Kingston EMS paramedics. Elvord's family argued that Director Werth ordered responders to stop treating the victim in the mistaken belief that Elvord had a gunshot wound to the head and was already dead.

Ten African American firefighters and paramedics filed a racial discrimination suit accusing Central City of tolerating a racist work environment within its first responder employees. The suit names about ten white male firefighters who were accused or convicted of crimes — including assault (sometimes with knives), sexual harassment (emailing images of their genitals to female colleagues), illegal possession of a firearm, public nudity in the firehouse, and stalking — but never disciplined. However, the city always punished or terminated black firefighters accused or convicted of similar crimes. The lawsuit also alleged that the department purposefully allowed a current promotions list (which had many black candidates on it) to expire.

Crisis Communications Activity Part 2

PURPOSE: Review a situation from the perspective of government, the media and the public.

Working in your table groups:

1. Review the updated scenario
2. List concerns, thoughts, emotions and needs for each of these groups:
 - Government
 - Media
 - Public
 - Policy (if needed)
3. Write your thoughts on the designated easel charts.

You have 30 minutes to complete this activity



Crisis Communication Part 2 Scenario

Two weeks ago, an incident described by the Liberty County Sheriff in his own words as a "botched SWAT operation," an officer sustained a significant lower leg gunshot wound. While SWAT officers approached 1720 B Street, the individual being sought emerged from 1723 B Street and opened fire on officers. Following a brief exchange with officers, it was discovered that K-9 Sgt. Robert Luther, an 18-year veteran of the Liberty County Sheriff's Department, had sustained a significant leg wound. While ballistics are still being examined, it would appear that Sgt. Luther's wound were a result of "friendly fire." An immediate request for EMS was made to 911. The shooter was "wasted" quickly according to the Sheriff.

Initially, in all of the confusing radio traffic, 911 dispatchers were of the belief that only the deceased was shot. So instead of EMS being dispatched, the Liberty County Medical Examiner was summoned, not EMS. Approximately 10 minutes later, as Sgt. Luther lay bleeding on the ground, officers made inquiry about the EMS they requested. It was then the mistake was discovered by 911 dispatchers and Central City EMS dispatched. After waiting another five minutes and while watching Sgt. Luther's condition rapidly deteriorate, officers applied a makeshift tourniquet to his leg just below the knee. It took EMS another 13 minutes to arrive, as the original EMS unit dispatched could not be started while in the Fire Station #4. The EMS Unit from CC Fire Station #6 was able to respond from a greater distance away. Since this incident, the Sheriff has been incensed at Central City Fire and Central City EMS leadership regarding equipment condition and trustworthiness to respond. He blames CC Fire and CC EMS for the suffering by his officer. The Liberty County Law Enforcement Officers Association, and joined by the State Law Enforcement Officers Association blame the Sheriff for not including EMS in operational training and operational response. Association leadership has long requested EMS and medical treatment be available during these operations. The Sheriff has consistently declined to include EMS, claiming it "there is no reason to exposed untrained firefighters and EMS to dangerous situations."

Because of delays and the improper tourniquet, Sgt. Luther still struggles in Central City Hospital with his recovery and resulting infections. Medical professionals, concerned about the potential for blood clots and possible pulmonary emboli, made the decision to amputate the officer's leg at the knee. This will require long-term recovery. However, the community has taken a great interest in his recovery, seeing numerous photos in social media of the officer in the hospital being visited by "Candy" his 3-year-old partner German Shepard. Candy has been popular and frequent visitor to all county schools and loved by many children.


In addition, a 77-year-old man lost his life this past weekend outside a Central City Fire Station at approximately 1pm in the afternoon. Mr. David Couch, an African American resident and neighborhood activist, while taking in the Liberty County Celebration of Arts and Music activities, collapsed in a parking lot next to CC Fire Station #9. Couch's family, seeing their father and grandfather collapse immediately ran to his aid. Several family members ran around to the front of Station 9 and rang the doorbell a number of times. After a short time, new recruit firefighter Bill Tobias answered the door and when told of the cardio vascular emergency replied....."Sorry, but we cannot leave the station without a 911 call".....and simply closed the door on the family.

Several minutes later, a CC police officer on patrol rolled up on the parking lot commotion. Then seeing a passing ambulance, the officer stopped the paramedics who then administered aid to Mr. Couch, now pulseless. At some point a 911 call was placed and two of the four station personnel came to the parking lot without any equipment.

Although this event occurred just 3 days ago, here are the facts the media and public now know from the family and interviews.

- Firefighter Tobias closed the door on the family after telling them to "call 911," without offering a phone for such a call, or any other assistance.
- Firefighter Tobias (fearing repercussions) did not report the emergency to his supervisor. His Fire Captain had retired to her bedroom after finishing a large lunch with the harsh instructions...she was "not to be disturbed unless this fire station was actually on fire."
- A third firefighter assigned to Engine 9 was also fast asleep in front of a television in the Station #9 day room. *Days of our Lives* was playing on the television at the time.
- The fourth firefighter and the Engine Apparatus Operator was in the Station 9 library studying for an upcoming promotional exam and was unaware of the parking lot emergency, thinking the doorbell was most likely a visitor.
- The fire department did not respond immediately and was no help to family. Family now believes, as does the community, this was a racially centered decision by Firefighter Tobias (white male) and the members (all white) of Station 9. An attorney has already been hired.
- The Mayor has declined to comment.

Activity 6.3: Warning Message

 Activity	<p style="text-align: center;">Warning Message</p> <p>Instructions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read the assigned scenario in Worksheet 6.1. 2. Develop a warning message for the community. Note: You may add additional facts and details not contained in the scenario. 3. Identify the strategies for delivering the message. 4. Be prepared to present your warning and strategies in 15 minutes.
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Key Points

Purpose: The purpose of this activity is to develop a warning message based on a provided scenario.

Instructions: Develop a warning message and identify delivery strategies as described in Worksheet 3.1.

Worksheet 6.1

Instructions: Each team will be assigned one of the scenarios below.

<p>1. Indicate your assigned scenario:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scenario 1: Multiple EF4 tornadoes are forecasted to strike the central business districts of Central City (pop. 149,000, located in Liberty County) and Capital City (pop. 265,000, located in Grand County) during peak occupation at 2 p.m. on a Wednesday. It is now 1:00 p.m. • Scenario 2: It is has been raining heavily. A major power-generating dam is showing stress. Concern is rising that a dam failure may occur, resulting in the downstream flooding of three towns. The dam failure would eliminate the power for the surrounding towns, potable water supply, and fire suppression capability. Currently, the engineers are unsure of the probability or timing of potential failure. • Scenario 3: Three local chemical distributors have reported the theft of corrosive and other hazardous materials. There is a need to warn the community of the potential for the use of these chemicals at public gatherings and to elicit the community's assistance in apprehending the suspects. • Scenario 4: It is a particularly bad cold and flu season. The jurisdiction is contemplating closing nonessential public services and schools to stop the threat. There is a need to communicate the plan to the community and elicit their assistance in stopping the spread of the flu. • Scenario 5: A hazardous materials accident has just occurred, shutting a major roadway. Evacuations are being ordered for the homes within a 1-mile radius of Highway 1. A shelter at the high school is opening that allows pets.

1. **Develop a warning message for the community.** You may add additional facts and details not contained in the scenario.

Worksheet 6.1 (Continued)

1. **Identify strategies for delivering the message:**

Activity 7.1: New Conference Activity

Instructions: This is a group activity. Based on a scenario:

- Analyze the chosen scenario/problem to determine the steps necessary to conduct an effective news conference.
- Select and use current communications techniques as presented in the news conference lecture.
- Identify and perform appropriate speaker and support roles.
- Deliver the news conference
- Participate in a Debriefing

Purpose: Students are to demonstrate effective communication skills during the news conference exercise.

Estimated Time: 60 minutes



Activity

Purpose of the Activity: To give participants an opportunity to gain practical experience by participating in a simulated news conference.

Instructions:

Each team will pick a minimum of three presenters (Can add more)

Presenters will be;

- Lead PIO (setting ground rules)
- Mayor or City Manager
- City Department Executive to be represented at the news conference based upon the scenario chosen by the team.

First news conference will begin 30 minutes after the start of the activity.

Each press conference will be 10 minutes long total including questions from the press and will be followed by a 10 min critique.

News conferences will be timed. Team will be signaled at five and one minute intervals before the end of conference.

Teams should approach each presentation seriously as though they are getting their message across in an emergency situation as per the scenario chosen.

Equipment will be set up during the team design session.

Staff will set up camera for team to see live video feed.

Teams will be evaluated on.....

- Professionalism of the news conference
 - Start/end on time.
 - Clear ground-rules
 - Demeanor of the presenters
- The delivery of the speakers.
 - Key Messages

- Articulate
- Statements content
- The handling of the media corps during the news conference.
 - Responses
 - Selection of questions
 - Managing noise
 - Ending the news conference

Scenario #1: Explosion at Fusse Stadium at a Collegiate Final Football Game

Without warning, there was an explosion inside the Buford T. Fusse Stadium at SLUDMAR State University. The explosion occurred during the fourth quarter of an evening football game between the SLUDMAR University team and its rival for the division title. The stadium was filled with fans. A possible chemical agent is suspected as people are choking, coughing and losing consciousness. Several people are reportedly injured or dead. It is unknown if suspects are inside the stadium. People are running for the exits in panic.

Scenario #2: Air Crash Scenario

A big jet with 224 passengers and crew of 12 was flying from Los Angeles to Oakland. A small jet carrying six people and crew of three was also flying to Oakland. The jets collided over the City of SLUDMAR.

The small jet crashed immediately east of Wilton Place and East First Avenue. There are no survivors from the small jet but there are numerous injuries on the ground as well as structure fires.

The big jet sustained significant damage and declared an in-flight emergency. The collision caused one engine of the big jet to fall off and land in a field at the south end of President's Canyon at the County boarder with SLUDMAR. A small brushfire erupted. The big jet crashed within minutes of its radio transmission on East Sixth Avenue between "F" Street and "H" Street.

The debris field from the big jet extended west and north from East Sixth Street and "F" Street. There are no survivors from the big jet, but numerous people are injured on the ground and there are structure fires.

Scenario #3: Proposed Public Safety Ballot Measure

You are members of a public information team for the Santa Luisa del Mar Police Department. The department is seeking a special sales tax increase of ½ cent in the city. The increase is to provide additional funding for public safety in SLUDMAR. The funding will support additional personnel, equipment and needed improvement in aging police facilities. It is several months prior to election. The measure has been placed on the ballot with the support of the City Manager, the other department heads, the Mayor and the City Council. The passage of the measure is not a sure thing. The City of SLUDMAR has recently attempted to increase sales tax for other seemingly worthy purposes but the measures failed.

Scenario #4; SLUDMAR Earthquake

On todays date at 1215 hours, a 7.1 Richter magnitude earthquake struck SLUDMAR. The epicenter was approximately 8 miles northwest of SLUDMAR on the Eminem. Several incidents were reported.

The top several floors of the SLUDMAR Bank Bldg. have collapsed. Fatalities and numerous injuries are reported. There is also a building collapse at Lakeview Jr. High. Multiple buildings have collapsed in

1800 block of R St. The southbound off ramp on I-9 at Kilometro Calle is damaged and unusable. There is a major traffic accident at Shoreline Dr. & Bayshore Blvd and a gas tanker is leaking there. Traffic signals out throughout the city. A structure fire is reported at the Cal-Agra-Hydra Chemical facility at East 2nd and I St. (possible hazmat). There are four single structure fires in city. There is also a fire in CSUSL Biological Sciences building. There is a strong smell (possible haz mat incident) at industrial building near Cannery Park. There is a gas main leak at M St. & East 21st Ave. The school district has reported two students are critically injured at Santa Luisa High School. The cause is still unknown. The EOC was activated at 1300 hours and is on 12 hour shifts at full staffing. All city resources are committed at this time. Mutual Aid has been requested but the estimated time of arrival is unknown. Situation Assessment is on-going for a more complete picture on the total damage to the city.

Scenario #5: Mall Explosion

On today's date the Santa Luis Mall was holding its annual mall-wide sale. The prices in mall stores are drastically reduced and the sale attracts thousands of shoppers. At 12:30 pm two explosions occurred simultaneously at the mall. The first blast occurred inside the mall near the entrance to Muldowney's Department Store. The second explosion occurred at the mall entrance to Santa Luisa luggage store. The blasts caused significant structural collapses and fires to adjacent businesses in the mall. Some parked cars outside, near the luggage store and the mall entrance near the department store are damaged and on fire. There are many injuries and fatalities. Structures adjacent to the mall sustained broken windows. Flying glass injured pedestrians who were nearby when the explosion occurred. The fire engulfed spaces on the second floor.

The fire department is on-scene and established a command post in the mall parking lot. The police department is on scene and co-located their command post with the fire department. Police units are attempting to control traffic and evacuate shoppers and employees from the mall. Traffic in the mall parking lot and on streets around the mall is congested.

Scenario #6: HAZMAT

On Today's date and time, a traffic accident occurred involving a large panel truck and three passenger vehicles. The accident occurred in downtown SLUDMAR at Washington Avenue and Kilometro Calle. The unmarked panel truck struck the three cars while going through a red-light and overturned. The truck was carrying ten 50 gallon drums in the back. The drums fell into the street and began leaking a yellow fluid.

The lone passengers in each of two of the vehicles were killed instantly. The third vehicle swerved onto the side walk crashing into a bus stop. A passenger in the vehicle was ejected and died at the scene. The driver was trapped in inside. Several bystanders at the bus-stop were injured.

The driver and a passenger from the panel truck were seen climbing out of the vehicle and running away. A witness reported that one of the occupants brandished weapon. An examination of the interior of the truck produced the several interior and exterior photographs of the SLUDMAR city hall. Both fire and police are on scene and are beginning to organize their response.

Scenario #7: Protest Demonstrations/Civil Unrest

On today's date at 1700 hours approximately 500 people gathered in Central Park in SLUDMAR to protest the verdict in a police use or force case announced at the nearby courthouse. The protesters are carrying signs showing their anger over the verdict. The crowd that gathered was initially peaceful and had previously conveyed their peaceful intentions to city authorities.

They planned to march to the court house and stage a showing of their discontent in front the building.

After dark, as the protesters walked the streets to the court house, they began to block traffic and became increasingly agitated.

Upon arriving at the courthouse, the crowd had grown and the marchers had broken several windows, overturned cars and set buildings on fire on the way to the courthouse.

Scenario #8 Flooding

After a very dry couple of years and a few wild-land fires, the hills in northern SLUDMAR have been left barren of trees. Lack of rainfall has also been an issue in that it has caused a drought in the city.

The weather is turning, however, and rain is on the way. On today's date and time, a much needed winter rainstorm has arrived. The needed water is showing up in a torrent coming down in President's Canyon in the county. Floodwaters have risen up the canyon walls chasing out hikers and at the mouth of the canyon in the south flooding are spreading in the neighborhoods both in the county and in the city. The main of flood damage is along the river coming out of the canyon and overflowing into streets and homes. Guadalupe Park, Guadalupe Elementary School and Memorial Hospital are all experiencing severe flooding.

The storm is anticipated to last another four to five hours with a break and another serious storm following in 24 hours.

Scenario #9: Wildland-Urban Interface Fire

A two year drought has left SLUDMAR extremely dry. The hills in President's Canyon and in the Tucker National Forrest are ripe for a conflagration.

On today's date, about five hours ago, a brushfire broke out in Tucker National Forrest. It is spreading fast in the dry timber and winds. It has spread to where fire authorities and local government officials are fearful it may reach SLUDMAR home lying in its path within hours.

Scenario #10: SLUDMAR City Scandal

The SLUDMAR City Manager has become aware of potential wrongdoing alleged against members of the City Council and the Mayor related to possible illegal and unethical procurement practices of city equipment and services for the fire and public works departments. The City Manager learned of the problems from a "whistle-blower" who is a non-sworn employee of the police department.

The allegations include contracts being awarded to contractors who are friends and relatives, the procurement of sub-standard fire and police equipment, violating the city bidding processes and in some instances sexual favors being granted in return for city business. The city manager has asked the police department to investigate these allegations. The public is starting to become aware of what is happening.

Scenario #11: Mardi Gras

The City's annual Mardi Gras festival is fast approaching. The event involves a parade through the downtown area ending at City Hall with speeches and a street fair lasting into the evening. For the past years unruly crowds have resulted in numerous injuries to police and fire personnel as well as participants in the festival. Numerous arrests have been made for public drunkenness, disturbing the peace and vandalism. The violence has marred the celebration.

Reluctantly city leaders agreed to allow the Mardi Gras festival to take place with some additional precautions and restrictions in place.

Activity (Table Group Discussion)

Working in your table groups, answer the following questions:

- Who are the new PIO(s) now involved with this incident?
- What are you now thinking about?
- What are the new barriers to communications now that there are more PIOs present?
- What are the new strategic communication needs?



Note

Activity Time:

- Table group discussion: 10 minutes
- Debriefing: 5 minutes

Participants will meet in their table groups and discuss the following questions:

- Who are the new PIOs now involved with this incident?
- What are you thinking about?
- What are the new barriers to communications now that there are more PIOs present?
- What are the new strategic communications needs?

Activity (Plenary Discussion)

Based on what you know now, who is in charge of the message?