



Public Information Basics

ELK0105

Student Manual

December 2025

Version 2.0



FEMA



**NATIONAL DISASTER &
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
UNIVERSITY**



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Course Introduction

Course Goal

The goal of this course is to provide participants with information to understand the role of the Public Information Officer and the skills needed to be full- or part-time PIOs.

Course Objectives

Evaluate importance of emergency public information to agencies, individuals.

Understand the basic function of public information within the whole community.

Identify the steps of the strategic communications plan and develop products.

Explains the roles and function of the PIO.

Describe and apply proper writing to build written public information products.

Identify and use proper interview techniques.

Apply crisis communication methodologies to include warning messages during an incident.

Outline and explain media needs at a disaster.

Differentiate between a Joint Information Center (JIC) and Joint Information System (JIS).

Understand the basic public information and warning tools that are available.

Given an emergency scenario, apply public information skills.

Course Design/Methodology

This course is designed for delivery in the classroom. A combination of lecture, discussion, activities, presentations, and constructive feedback enables participants to learn, practice, and demonstrate their knowledge and skills.



Course Time Plan

Complete the Table.

Unit	Time	In Person Day	Virtual Day
Module 1: Course Administration	1 hour	1	1
Module 2: Introduction to Public Information	1 hour	1	1
Module 3: 8-Step Strategic Communication	2 hours	1	1
Module 4: PIO Roles and Responsibilities	1 hour, 30 minutes	1	1/2
Module 5: PIO Content Skills Workshop	1 hour	1	2
Module 6: Interview Skills	4 hours	2	2/3
Module 7: Crisis/Emergency Communications	1 hour, 30 minutes	2	3
Module 8: Media Relations at the Scene	2 hours; 30 minutes	2	3/4
Module 9: Leading a Joint Information Center	1 hour; 30 minutes	3	4
Module 10: Public Alert and Warning	1 hour; 30 minutes	3	4
Module 11: Wrap-Up Exercise	4 hours; 30 minutes	3	4/5
Module 12: Course Summary	1 hour; 30 minutes	3	5

Evaluation Plan

This course uses Kirkpatrick’s Level I, II, and III evaluation tools.

Level I: The EMI Course Evaluation Form OMB No. 1660-0130 will be used to document participant feedback at the end of the course on overall quality of content, instruction, and facilities. The evaluation sheet uses a 1 – 5 rating system, with 5 being the highest. At the conclusion of the course, collect the evaluations and return them to the course manager.

Level II: This evaluation involves measuring and assessing learning that has taken place. Participants will demonstrate their proficiency in applying knowledge and/or skills learned. Multiple choice test has been chosen as assessment tool for this course. Minimum passing grade for this course is 75%. Instructor will provide feedback to participants following the test.



Level III: The EMI Follow-up Evaluation Survey OMB No. 1660-0130 will be used to document participant feedback after the course has been completed and the participant has returned to their normal work duties. EMI will send out this survey to students 3 months after the completion of the course and collect the responses from the survey. The evaluation uses a 1 – 4 rating system, with 1 being the highest.

Student Prerequisites

IS0029: Public Information Officer Awareness.



Icon Map



Animated Slide: Denotes a slide with animation requiring instructor interaction



Definition: Key term that is often field-specific and may be unfamiliar



Discussion: Instructor-facilitated, large-group discussion



Handout: Additional information provided to facilitate the scenario-based activity



Instructor Hint: Instructor note that aids in administration and the flow of instruction



Key Point: Essential learning concept and discussion



Poll: Indicates where a polling activity will take place; used for both in-person classes (such as Turning Point) and online classes (such as Zoom)



Break: Built in break time.



Video: Video clip that reinforces the course content or facilitates the scenario's progression



Activity: Indicates an activity will be conducted



Workbook: Indicates that participants should turn to the referenced page in the Participant Workbook to complete an activity



Module

1

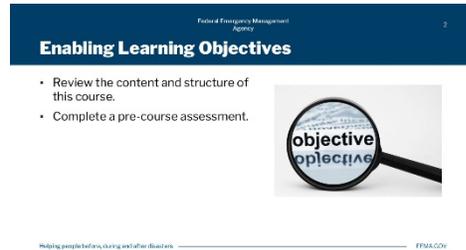
Course Administration



Administration



Slide 1-1, Module 1: Course Administration.



Slide 1-2, Enabling Learning Objective.

Duration

1 hour

Terminal Learning Objective (TLO)

By the end of this module, participants will be able to understand the course administrative areas.

Enabling Learning Objectives (ELOs)

By the end of this module, participants will be able to...

1. Review the content and structure of this course.
2. Complete a pre-course assessment.



Administrative Information

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Administrative Information

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



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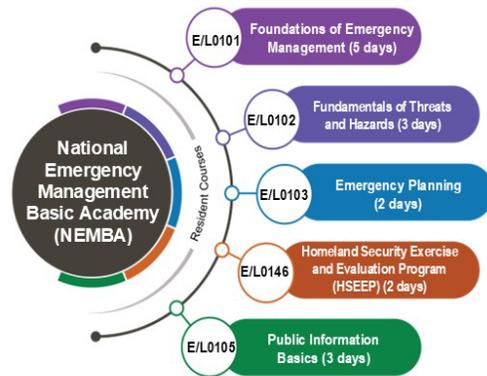
Slide 1-3, Administrative Information.

- 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.



NEMBA Resident Courses

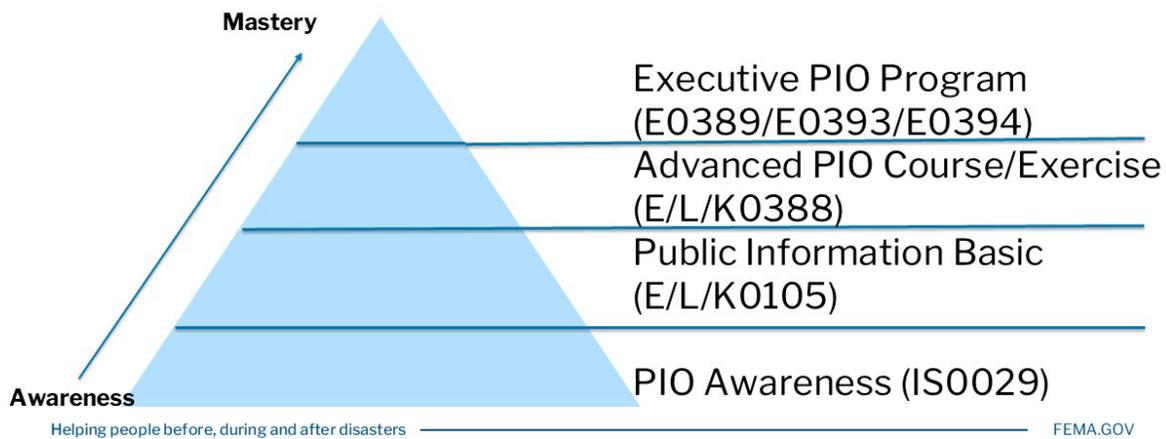
National Emergency Management Basic Academy (NEMBA) Resident Courses



Slide 1-4, NEMBA Resident Courses.



Training Course Pyramid



Slide 1-5, Training Course Pyramid.

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 Executive 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.



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



Slide 1-6, Activity 1.1 Introduction “Interviews”.

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.



Course Agenda E/L

Day 1

- Module 1: Course Administration
- Module 2: Introduction to Public Information
- Module 3: Strategic Communications Planning
- Module 4: PIO Roles and Responsibilities
- Module 5: Writing Skills Workshop

Day 2

- Module 6: Interview Skills Workshop
- Module 7: Crisis/Emergency Communications
- Module 8: Media Relations at the Scene

Day 3

- Module 9: Leading a Joint Information Center
- Module 10: Public Alert and Warning
- Module 11: Wrap-up Exercise
- Module 12: Course Summary

Slide 1-7, Course Agenda E/L.



Course Agenda - Virtual (K)

Day 1 - 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 pm

- Module 1: Course Administration
- Module 2: Introduction to Public Information
- Module 3: 8-step Communications

Day 2 - 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

- Module 4: Public Information Roles and Responsibilities
- Module 5: PIO Skills Content Workshop
- Module 6: Interview Skills

Slide 1-8, Course Agenda Virtual (K).



Course Agenda - Virtual (K) (continued)

Day 3 - 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 pm

- Module 6: Interview Skills (continued)
- Module 7: Crisis/Emergency Communications
- Module 8: Media Relations at the Scene

Day 4 - 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

- Module 8: Media Relations at the Scene (continued)
- Module 9: Joint Information System/Joint Information Center
- Module 10: Public Alert and Warnings

Day 5 - 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 pm

- Module 11: Wrap-up Exercise
- Module 12: Course Summary and Final Test

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Slide 1-9, Course Agenda Virtual (K) (continued).



Our Expectations

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



Slide 1-10, Our Expectations.

Review the ground rules for class participation.



Course Purpose

To provide participants with information to understand the role of the Public Information Officer and the skills needed to be full- or part-time PIOs. Participants will develop oral and written communication skills, describe strategies for developing and maintaining relationships with media partners, and apply the basic strategies and techniques necessary to perform all aspects of risk and crisis communication.

Slide 1-11, Course Purpose.

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 can 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.



Course Objectives (1 of 3)

- Using the 8-Step Strategic Communications Planning Model, develop a public awareness campaign (95%).
- Using the 8-Step 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.
- Compare actions PIOs can take to work with the news media during day-to-day and emergency situations.
- Describe different public information products.
- Apply effective writing guidance for information subsidies.

Slide 1-12, Course Objectives (1 of 3).



Course Objectives (2 of 3)

- Practice writing for owned and shared media.
- Identify pre-interview elements.
- Identify the steps the PIO should take to prepare for an interview.
- Describe physical characteristics for a successful interview.
- Demonstrate techniques for on-camera, in-studio, and remote interviews.
- Define risk vs. a crisis.
- List key PIO activities during a crisis
- Describe crisis communication objectives and methodologies during an incident.
- Discuss factors that influence public response to crisis communication

Slide 1-13, Course objective (2 of 3).



Course Objectives (3 of 3)

- Outline media needs at the scene.
- Explain the news conference cycle.
- Identify functions of Joint Information System (JIS) and Joint Information Center (JIC).
- Describe the preparedness activities for establishing and maintaining a JIC.
- List criteria for JIC activation.
- Describe different types of warning systems.
- Identify the warning message components.
- Identify the types of IPAWS emergency messages.
- Improve compliance and accessible messaging.

Slide 1-14, Course Objectives (3 of 3).



Course Resources

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



Slide 1-15, Course Resources.

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.



Complete a Pre-Course Assessment

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Assessment and Evaluation Process

- Pre-Assessment (no grade)
- Post-Assessment
 - 75% or better passing grade
- Participation:
 - Daily attendance, participation, and interactions
 - Completion of Activity Worksheets

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Slide 1-16, Assessment and Evaluation Process.



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.





Module Summary

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Module Summary

In this module, we discussed:

- The content and structure of this course
- Pre-Assessment



Slide 1-18, Module Summary.



Module
2

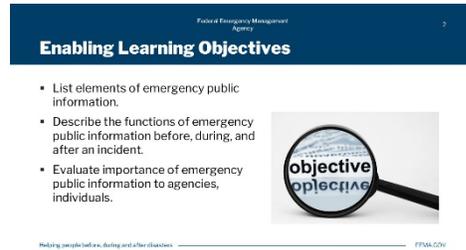
Introduction to Public Information



Administration



Slide 2-1, Module 2: Introduction to Public Information.



Slide 2-2, Enabling Learning Objectives.

Duration

1 hour

Terminal Learning Objective (TLO)

By the end of this module, participants will be able to understand the basic function of public information within the whole community.

Enabling Learning Objectives (ELOs)

By the end of this module, participants will be able to...

1. List elements of emergency public information.
2. Describe the functions of emergency public information before, during, and after an incident.
3. Evaluate importance of emergency public information to agencies, individuals.



Explain Why Emergency Public Information and Managing Crisis Communications are Both Important During an Incident

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3

Discussion Question

What does getting the right information to the right people at the right time look like?



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Slide 2-3, Discussion Question.

Purpose: To identify the importance of public information.



Information: 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.



Slide 2-4, Information: A Fundamental Principle.

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.



Information Coordination: Three Mile Island

The Three Mile Island nuclear power crisis in 1979 was the first incident to use a JIC & JIS. The incident:

- 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 (PIO/JIS/JIC).



Slide 2-5, Information Coordination: Three Mile Island.

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. 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 procedure, 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.



Information Coordination: Eaton & Palisades

The Eaton & Palisades fires in January 2025 burned 37,000 acres, destroyed 16,000 structures and claimed 31 lives.

Communications recommendations in the aftermath of the fires included:

- Establish a JIC early to better coordinate info
- Regularly educate about risk, including evacuation zones and expectations
- Support individual readiness.

Question: Why is it important to establish a JIC early?



Slide 2-6, Information Coordination: Eaton & Palisades.

Incident summary

2025 Palisades/Eaton Fires, Los Angeles County, CA

Six major fires ignited across Los Angeles County between January 7 and 9, 2025. Known as the Eaton and Palisades Fires, these blazes became the most destructive in county history, burning 37,000 acres, destroying 16,000+ structures, and killing 31 people.

Extreme winds of up to 100 mph contributed to fire spread and created challenging fire behavior. The Palisades Fire spread to 200 acres almost immediately; the Eaton Fire changed direction overnight on Jan.8. Spot fires from embers and downed powerlines contributed to fire expansion.

Unpredictable conditions outpaced public warning systems. Some residents reported receiving late, unclear, or no evacuation alerts. Authorities struggled to balance under-warning (delayed evacuations) with over-warning (causing panic and road congestion). Loss of power and damaged infrastructure further complicated public communication and alert dissemination.

A major challenge during the Eaton and Palisades fires was the delay in establishing a Joint Information Center (JIC). Communication across multiple jurisdictions was fragmented, which resulted in public confusion and limited coordination among agencies. Although the County shared frequent updates on its social media and websites, the lack of an early JIC meant missed opportunities for consistent, unified messaging at the onset of the disaster.



Another challenge was public understanding of evacuation alerts and protocols. Many residents did not grasp the meaning or urgency of alerts, especially “Particularly Dangerous Situation” warnings. Many residents didn’t understand where evacuation zones were or what actions they were expected to take and when. Power shutoffs, damaged cell towers and limited, inconsistent outreach on a variety of communication methods further complicated outreach. As a result, some residents received little or no warning to evacuate while others delayed evacuating, putting themselves and first responders at greater risk.

Finally, prior to the fire, the County missed opportunities to partner with elected officials and find ways to strengthen community preparedness. Leveraging trusted voices at the community, grassroots level to reinforce official information and encourage personal responsibility for preparedness could have elevated community understanding of risks and protective actions related to wildfires. Many residents lacked basic emergency plans, resources, or awareness of community programs. Strengthening partnerships, fostering neighborhood-level preparedness, and building trust before crises occur are crucial steps PIOs should take to ensure that their communication is clear, timely, and effective.

[After Action Review of Alert Notification Systems and Evacuation Policies for the Eaton and Palisades Fires.](https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/207915.pdf) (https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/207915.pdf)



Identify and Recognize the Needs and Challenges Posted by Different Audiences

Federal Emergency Management Agency

7

What is Public Information?

Public information is timely, relevant, understandable information provided before, during, and after an incident;

- Before - Focused on communicating risks and preparedness actions;
- During - Focused on communicating severity of current situation, recommended protective actions for individuals/communities;
- After - Focused on communicating status of recovery efforts, info about how to access or provide assistance to impacted residents/communities

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Slide 2-7, What is Public Information.

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.

Public information created and disseminated prior to an incident may include communication about community risks, such as flooding, preparedness actions that individuals and communities can take to protect or mitigate against impacts from those risks, and guidance regarding where to find additional resources and information.

During an incident, emergency public information is regularly developed, verified, and disseminated to the affected community. It primarily communicates about the severity and timing of the current situation and the recommended protected actions, such as evacuation or sheltering in place.

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

- Evaluating efforts - Throughout the response to and recovery from an incident, it's important for PIOs to monitor the reach and effectiveness of communications efforts. Media monitoring, questions from the public, and posts on social media are all methods to assess whether communication efforts are reaching the intended audiences and having the intended impact. Information gathered from this evaluation can be included in post-incident debriefings, such as Hotwashes or After-Action Reports.



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.



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Slide 2-8, Functions of Public Information.

When done effectively before, during, and after an incident, public information fulfills 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.



Flow of Emergency Communications



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- **Before:** Outreach and education campaigns
- **During:** Timely, accurate public information dissemination, media briefings
- **After:** Analysis and modifications

Slide 2-9, Flow of Emergency Communications.

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.



Discussion Questions

What role does public information play in building and maintaining agency credibility?

How does credibility affect a community's response before, during, and after an incident?



Slide 2-10, Discussion Questions.



Module Summary

Federal Emergency Management
Agency

11

Module Summary

In this module, we discussed:

- The importance of public information.
- Communicating with people before, during and after a crisis
- The role of public information as it relates to organizational credibility and public trust



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Slide 2-11, Module Summary.



Reference List

[Emergency Management Professional Program \(EMPP\)](https://training.fema.gov/programs/empp/)

(<https://training.fema.gov/programs/empp/>).

[Public Information Officer Program](https://training.fema.gov/programs/empp/pio/) (<https://training.fema.gov/programs/empp/pio/>).

[3 Mile Island Video](https://youtu.be/eHjTqjKYflk) (<https://youtu.be/eHjTqjKYflk>)

[National Incident Management System \(NIMS\)](https://training.fema.gov/nims/) (<https://training.fema.gov/nims/>).

[National Response Framework](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/NRF_FINALApproved_2011028.pdf)

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Module

3

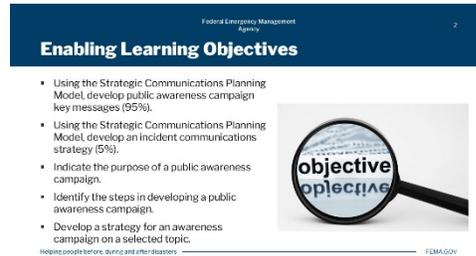
8-Step Strategic Communications



Administration



Slide 3-1, Module 3: 8-Step Strategic Communication.



Slide 3-2, Enabling Learning Objectives.

Duration

2 hours

Terminal Learning Objective (TLO)

By the end of this module, participants will be able to identify the steps of the strategic communications plan and develop products.

Enabling Learning Objectives (ELOs)

By the end of this module, participants will be able to...

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

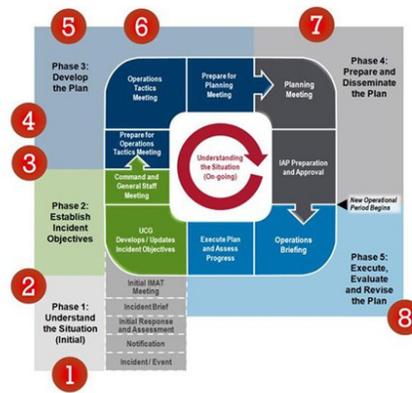


Using the Strategic Communications Planning Model, Develop Public Awareness Campaign Key Messages (95%)

Federal Emergency Management Agency Strategic Communications Plan

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION PLAN

- Supports the Incident Action Plan (IAP).
- Provides guidance for assessment, establishing objectives, selecting channels, and identifying intended audiences.
- Brings unity of effort to all (crisis and blue sky) strategic communications planning and product development.



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Slide 3-3, Strategic Communications Plan.

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 on incident operations.



8-Step Strategic Communications Model



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Slide 3-4, 8-Step Strategic Communications Model.

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: Public Information Officer.



Activity 3.1: 8-Step Model Application

Instructions: Working individually complete the 8-Step Strategic Communications Model to plan a public awareness campaign based on the 95% model as we move through each step.

In Step 4, use the “message map” to develop three key messages for your organization; then develop three supporting points for each key message.

Selected students will report out after each step/activity is completed.

Purpose: To apply Steps 1–8 of the Strategic Communications Model to planning a public awareness campaign.

Time: Steps 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7 - 1 to 5 minutes. Step 4 - 15 minutes

Slide 3-5, Activity 3.1: 8-Step Model Application.

Instructions: Working individually, you will complete the 8-Step Strategic Communications Model to plan a public awareness campaign based on the 95% model as we move through each step.

Students will use an instructor-provided scenario from the Resource Guide. The instructor will walk the class through each step of the Strategic Communications Wheel (Steps 1–8). After the review of each step, students will complete the corresponding section of their activity worksheet, applying the scenario to develop a public awareness campaign.

Use the STRATCOM Wheel Worksheet in your resource guide to complete this activity.

The activity progresses sequentially through all eight steps. Students will be given approximately 3–5 minutes to complete each step on their worksheet. After each step, the instructor will invite a limited number of students to briefly report out on their work.

In Step 4, use the “message map” to develop three key messages for your organization; then develop three supporting points for each key message.

Step Four will require additional time, as students will also complete a Message Map as part of the activity.



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?



Slide 3-6, Step 1: Assess Current Situation.

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?



Step 1: Assess Current Situation Activity

Assess the current situation by answering these questions:

- What is the event at hand?

Smoke Alarm Awareness Campaign



Slide 3-7, Asses Current Situation Activity.



Step 2: Set Communication Goals

Assess the current situation by answering these questions:

- **S**pecific
- **M**easurable
- **A**chievable
- **R**ealistic
- **T**imely



Slide 3-8, Set Communication Goals.

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

Specific

Specific goals have a desired outcome that is clearly understood. This might be a sales number or a product rollout goal. No matter what it is, the goal should be clearly articulated so that everyone is on the same page with the objective. Define what will be accomplished and the actions to be taken to accomplish the goal.

Measurable

These are the numbers used with the goal. You need to have a quantifiable objective so that you can track progress. Define what data will be used to measure the goal and set a method for collection.

Achievable

Goals need to be realistic to maintain the enthusiasm to try to achieve them. Setting lofty goals is good, but you may want to break them down into smaller, bite-sized chunks. If the goal is not doable, you may need to first ramp up resources to give yourself a shot at success. Ramping up resources would likely be its own S.M.A.R.T. goal.



Realistic

Goals should be aligned with the mission of the company. Don't set goals just as an exercise for something to do. One way to determine if the goal is relevant is to define the key benefit to the organization.

Timely

Goals should have a deadline. A goal without a deadline doesn't do much. How can you identify success or failure? This is why S.M.A.R.T. goals set a final date. This doesn't mean that all the work is done, but it means that you can evaluate the success of the endeavor and set new goals.

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.



Slide 3-9, Examples of SMART Objectives.

Professional Goal: “I’m going to increase sales”

Specific: “I am going to learn about social media marketing and invest in a social media management platform to start growing an online audience of potential customers.”

Measurable: “The goal is to increase sales by 30% within the next quarter.”

Achievable: “I can afford a subscription to Zoho Social, and I have a moderately successful business that can handle a large increase in customer demand.”

Relevant: “I want to grow my sales volume so that I can buy a new vehicle for my business.”

Time-bound: “I will subscribe to Zoho Social tomorrow and go through all of their instructional material to learn how the platform works. I will build a social media strategy and deploy it in two weeks.”

Personal Goal: “I’m going to get in shape.”

Specific: “I am going to get at least 30 minutes of exercise three days a week and cut my caloric intake by 25%.”

Measurable: “My goal is to lose 15 pounds within the next three months.”

Achievable: “I already have a rowing machine and can afford to buy fresh, nutritious food for myself and my family.”



Relevant: "I want to live a healthier lifestyle so that I feel better physically and mentally in my daily life"

Time-bound: "I will go to the grocery store tomorrow after work and buy healthy food for the week. I will use my rowing machine for 30 minutes before cooking dinner. I will use the rower three times per week."



SMART Objective Template

To (provide, distribute, etc.)
(type of information) (within
what timeframe or by what time)
to (whom) to (achieve what) by
(when).

"The person born with a talent they are meant to use will find their greatest happiness in using it"
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

SMART GOAL EXAMPLE

S SPECIFIC **M** MEASURABLE **A** ATTAINABLE **R** RELEVANT **T** TIMED

Specific?
"Wellbeing score" is specific. More specific would include the scale that will be used. An additional specification may be the start date as wellbeing scores could fluctuate based on time of year.

Measurable?
20% increase

Timed?
in one year

Relevant?
Is wellbeing especially important to the goal-setter? Is 20% a relevant increase to shoot for? Might it be more relevant for example to take an average score over time?

Attainable?
This would depend on multiple factors. Sometimes unexpected things can get in the way but it's still worth going for it.

To increase my wellbeing score by 20% in one year

© wisegoals.com

Slide 3-10, SMART Objective Template.



Step 2: Set Communication Goals Activity

By the end of this weekend, the PIO will use multiple channels to inform the community about free smoke alarm availability and installation to reach at achieve a 50% reduction of smoke alarm inventory.

Slide 3-11, Step 2: Set Communication Goals Activity.



Step 3: Identify Intended Audiences

Describe audience by:

Demographics

- 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



Slide 3-12, Step 3: Identify Intended Audience.

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 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?



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?

Slide 3-13, The Basics.

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?



Step 3: Identify Intended Audiences Activity

- Specific communities that have a high number of fire related injuries and deaths.
- Communities with high instances of fires.
- Multi-family communities.



Slide 3-14, Step 3: Identify Intended Audiences Activity.



Step 4: Develop and Pretest Messages

- Develop key messages.
- Provide three supporting messages for each key message.
- Be aware of readability.
- Outline key behaviors.
- Test key messages.
 - Ask co-workers, family, focus group
 - Use Artificial Intelligence (AI) for readability level



Slide 3-15, Step 4: Develop and Pretest Messages.

If you don't understand the audience, your message will get lost. That's 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 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.

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

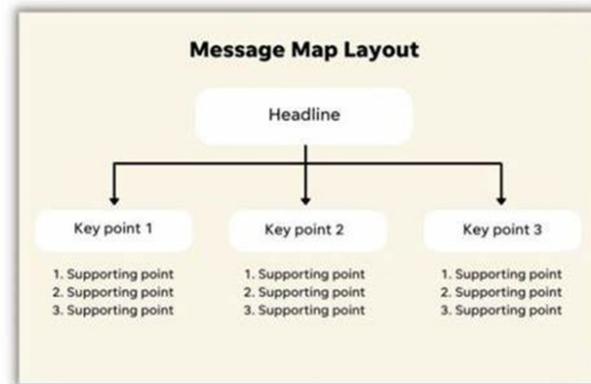


Message Mapping

- 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.

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Slide 3-16, Message Mapping.



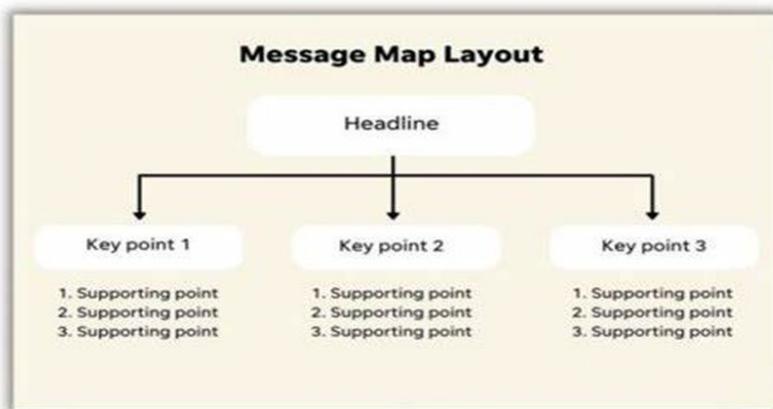
MESSAGE MAP

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



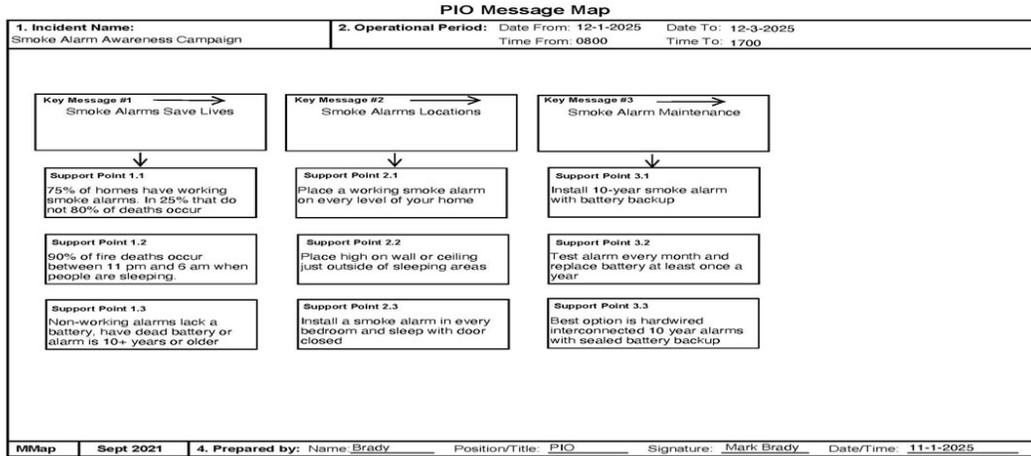
Message Mapping Activity



Slide 3-17, Message Mapping Activity.



Example of Message Mapping



Slide 3-18, Example of Message Mapping.



Step 4: Develop and Pretest Messages

“Smoke alarms save lives! This weekend, your fire department is giving out free 10-year smoke alarms and will install them in your home at no cost. To schedule your free smoke alarm and installation, call our non-emergency number at 800-555-1212 or visit YOURFIREDPARTMENT.com.”

(ChatGPT: Eighth grade readability level)

Slide 3-19, Step 4: Develop and Pretest Messages.



Using the Strategic Communications Planning Model, Develop an Incident Communications Strategy (5%)

Federal Emergency Management Agency

20

Step 5: Select Channels and Activities

- Social Media
- Commercial/Traditional Media
- Door-to-door
- Public Alert and Warnings
- Trap Lines

What are other channels and activities??

This step may use quantitative and qualitative research to determine which channel is best to use.



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Slide 3-20, Step 5: Select Channels and Activities.



Step 5: Select Channels and Activities Activity

- Social Media
- Commercial Media (TV, radio, print)
- Door-to-Door Community Outreach
- Community Partnerships
- Distribute flyers at schools
- Signage



Slide 3-21, Step 5: Select Channels and Activities Activity.



Step 6: Develop an Action Plan

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



Slide 3-22, Step 6: Develop an Action Plan.

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 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.
- Finally, you will want to have a contingency plan in case these risks do materialize.



Step 6: Develop an Action Plan Activity

- All hands on deck
- Invite other agencies
- Utilize community partnerships
- Beginning of day news conference
- Media ride-alongs
- Update website and social media



Slide 3-23, Step 6: Develop an Action Plan Activity.



Step 7: Develop and Pretest Materials

Types of communications testing:

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



Slide 3-24, Step 7: Develop and Pretest Materials.

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.



Step 7: Develop and Pretest Materials Activity

- Materials testing - flyers, door hangers
- Readability testing - AI tested to 8th grade
- Peer and family member review
- Talking Points/Message Mapping



Slide 3-25, Step 7: Develop and Pretest Materials Activity.



Step 8: Implement, Evaluate, and Modify Plan

Types of communications testing:

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



Slide 3-26, Step 8: Implement, Evaluate, and Modify Plan.

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? (And what can you change in this campaign to address any issues?)



Step 8: Implement, Evaluate, and Modify Plan

- Did we meet our SMART objective?
- Identify the changes needed.
- Make the revisions.
- Implement new plan.



Slide 3-27, Step 8: Implement, Evaluate, and Modify Plan.



Indicate the Purpose of a Public Awareness Campaign

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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



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Slide 3-28, Purpose of Public Awareness Campaigns.



Identify the Steps in Developing a Public Awareness Campaign

Federal Emergency Management Agency Public Awareness Campaigns and the 8-Step Strategic Communications Model

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Public Awareness Campaigns

- Help to build trust and credibility
- Increase visibility of your agency/dept.
- Improve public perception
- Opportunity to work with community



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Slide 3-29 Public Awareness Campaigns and the 8-Step Strategic Communications Model.



Module Summary

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Module Summary

In this module, we discussed:

- 8-step 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 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.



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Slide 3-30, Module Summary.



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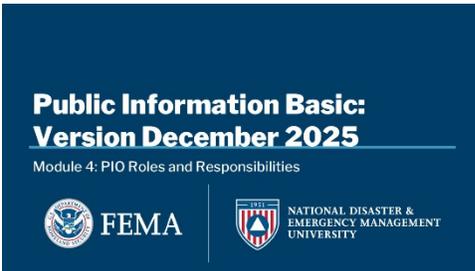
Module

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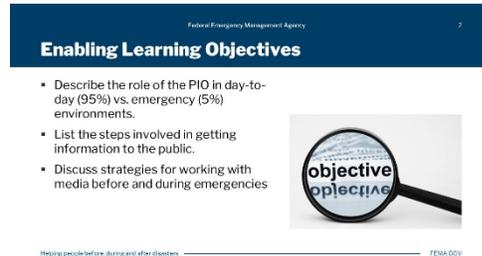
PIO Roles and Responsibilities



Administration



Slide 4-1, Module 4: PIO Roles and Responsibilities.



Slide 4-2, Enabling Learning Objectives.

Duration

1 hour; 30 minutes

Terminal Learning Objective (TLO)

By the end of this module, participants will be able to explain the roles and function of the PIO.

Enabling Learning Objectives (ELOs)

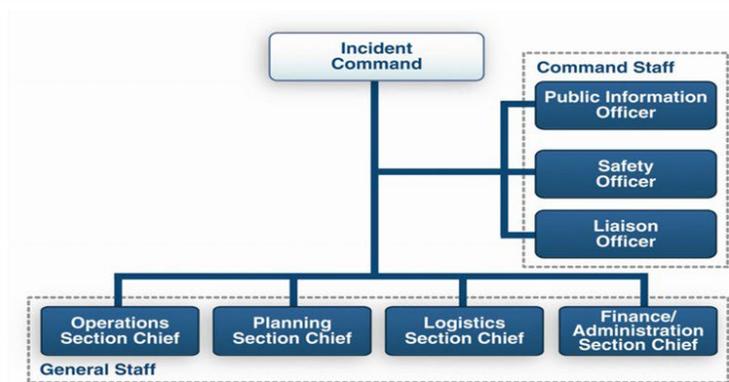
By the end of this module, participants will be able to...

1. Describe the role of the PIO in day-to-day (95%) vs. emergency (5%) environments.
2. List the steps involved in getting information to the public.
3. Discuss strategies for working with media before and during emergencies



Demonstrate the Role and Function of the PIO in Both Day-to-Day (95%) and Emergency (5%) Environment

Federal Emergency Management Agency 3 Public Information Officer – A Command Staff Position



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Slide 4-3, Public Information Officer: A Command Staff Position.



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 should have a seat at the decision-making table by providing relevant input, situational and media analysis, and a strategic communications plan.



Slide 4-4, PIO Adds Value.

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.



PIO Has Changed

- No position in the ICS System has changed more than that of Public Information.
- Direct contact to Incident Commander.
- Can gather information quicker (social media).
- Delivery of messages is quicker with technology changes.
- Training PIOs.



Slide 4-5, PIO Has Changed.



Day-to-Day vs. Emergency Tasks

Day-to-Day (95%)	Emergency (5%)
Plan and execute a flood preparedness campaign.	Issue flood evacuation instructions.
Invite media to newly remodeled 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 flood preparedness.
Post preparedness information to agency social media accounts.	Share shelter information on social media; monitor reporter social media

Slide 4-6, Day-to-Day vs Emergency Tasks.



Manage Information (1 of 2)

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

- Plan – Use the 8-Step Strategic Communications Model.
- Be prepared – Have pre-written content and graphics
- Maximize message exposure – Take advantage of social media, commercial traditional and non-traditional channels.
- Establish an approval process before crisis occurs.

Slide 4-7, Manage Information (1 of 2).

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.

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 prewritten content and graphics that support your agency’s incident response and reflect information in key messages related to the incident, such as flooding.



Prewritten content refers to messages, templates, or graphic materials that are created and approved before an incident occurs. This can include social media posts or website content with placeholders for time, location, severity of incident, and where to go for more information.

Maximize message exposure – Take advantage of social media. Use X (formally known as Twitter), Facebook, YouTube, and other social media to get your message out. You should have already established accounts, or if you don't, 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.

Approval processes – It's important to understand how emergency messages are approved. Before the incident occurs, PIOs should know who approves their content - for example, the incident commander or EOC manager.



Manage Information (2 of 2)

- Consider your audience – Remember you are communicating with people in crisis who may not have use of electricity or the internet.
- Don't 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.

Slide 4-8, Manage Information (2 of 2).

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. Don't 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.

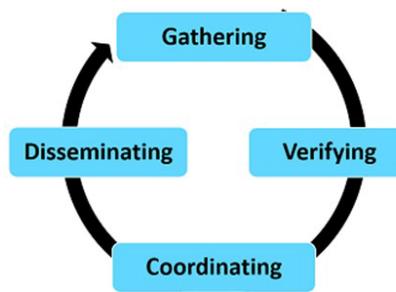
Don't forget the messenger – The messenger is just as important as the message. Make sure that you have reliable and respected spokespersons to deliver your message. Find those people in the community that have strong networks to help get your message across. If you don't know who those people are, you 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.



Getting Information to the Public

NIMS describes an ongoing cycle that involves four steps:

- Gathering
- Verifying
- Coordinating
- Disseminating



Slide 4-9, Getting Information to the Public.

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



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?

Whole Community Approach



Slide 4-10, Whole Community Needs.



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.

Slide 4-11, Conduct Interviews.

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 must 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.

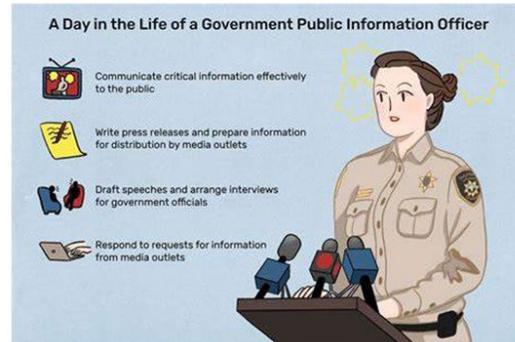


Coach Speakers

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.



Slide 4-12, Coach Speaker.

An important part of a PIO’s job is to make sure spokespeople and subject-matter experts are prepared to speak to the media at a moment’s notice. During day-to-day operations, PIOs should offer training and practice sessions with spokespeople and subject-matter experts. Practice ideas include...”

During steady state:

- 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:

- 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.



Compare Actions PIOs Can Take to Work with the News Media During Non-Emergency and Emergency Situations

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Work with the Media

Know media partners in advance

- Know media news cycles

Maintain relationships with media.

Media & PIO both have jobs to do

The media wants and needs access to the PIO, scene, and newsmakers.



How do you define the media?

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Slide 4-13, Work with the Media.

Working with the news media

- Understand the things you can do to build relationships with the news media:
 - Be accessible and return calls, texts 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.



Personal Readiness



Slide 4-14, Personal Readiness.

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.

Example checklist:

Equipment

- Tablet/laptop with backup charger
- Wifi hotspot
- Mobile devices with backup chargers
- Digital camera (if needed)
- Backup power source/charging pack
- Extra charging cables
- Extra USB/thumb drives
- Pens, highlighters, notebooks, printer paper
- Stapler, paper clips, post-it notes



Information

- Printed copy of agency crisis comms plans, checklists, contact information, and other job aids
- Digital and printed copy of media contact list (email, phone number, social media, etc)
- Background information about agency: Fact sheets, talking points, etc.
- Business cards

Personal items

- Glasses/contacts/contact solution/contact case
- Prescription medications
- Basic first-aid kit (band-aids, pain relievers, indigestion tablets)
- Hand sanitizer, wet wipes, napkins/paper towels
- Deodorant
- Hairbrush
- Makeup
- Jacket, umbrella, boots, change of clothes
- Water, snacks
- Emergency contact information

Make the checklist an ACTUAL checklist not a bulleted list.



Activity 4.1: 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 2 minutes.

Slide 4-15, Activity 4.1: Difficult Situations.

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 Contest Controversy
- Scenario 5: Food for Thought

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

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 several "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 Contest Controversy

Your agency's Instagram account has been slow to gain traction with community members. You have 2,000 followers in a city of 70,000 and you - and your supervisor - would like that number to grow. To encourage new followers, you launch a contest: "Follow Central City Parks on Instagram and tag us in photos of your favorite city park! We'll pick one winner each week in April to receive a \$10 Amazon



gift card!” Unfortunately, in the first week of the contest, you’re tagged in photos that feature dog poop, discarded drug paraphernalia, vandalism, and individuals engaging in inappropriate behavior.

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 – Food for Thought

Public Health Director has an interview with your local daily newspaper regarding complaints made about the city’s new food inspection process. You’ve developed a good rapport with the reporter and are comfortable with the Director speaking about the issue. The new process has been controversial, with several restaurants claiming a food inspector shut them down due to sinks and water heaters that were too small, but the director does a good job explaining how the inspection program changed and why those actions were taken. You feel the interview went well. But when the story runs a week later, above the fold on the front page, the headline is a nightmare: “Inspection or intimidation? City’s food rules designed to put mom-and-pop restaurants out of business” 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.

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?



Module Summary

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Module 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?



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Slide 4-16, Module Summary.



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[The PIO Go Kit:](https://basicpio.com/f/the-pio-go-kit) https://basicpio.com/f/the-pio-go-kit

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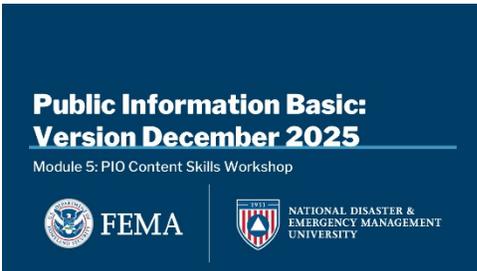
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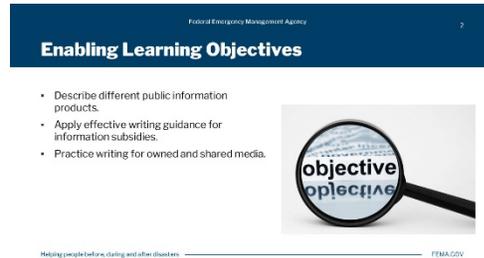
PIO Content Skills Workshop



Administration



Slide 5-1, Module 5: PIO Content Skills Workshop.



Slide 5-2, Enabling Learning Objectives.

Duration

2 hours.

Terminal Learning Objective (TLO)

Describe and apply proper writing to build written public information products.

Enabling Learning Objectives (ELOs)

By the end of this module, participants will be able to...

1. Describe different public information products.
2. Apply effective writing guidance for information subsidies.
3. Practice writing for owned and shared media.



Describe Different Public Information Written and Visual Products.

Federal Emergency Management Agency

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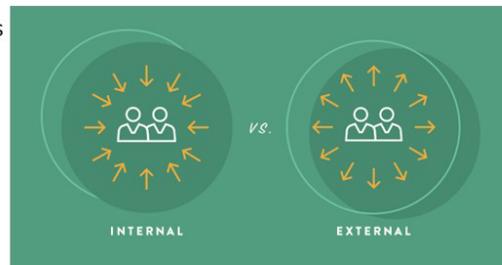
Types of Written Products

External Products

Materials created for **media and public distribution** — these are outward-facing and represent the organization’s message to external audiences.

Internal Products

Materials produced for **internal use only** — these guide coordination, consistency, and strategy within the response team or agency.



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Slide 5-3, Types of Written Products.

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.



External Products

- **Holding Statements**
- **News Releases**
- **Media Advisories**
- Fact Sheets
- Status Reports
- **Social Media Posts**
- Website/Blog Posts
- Readouts/Transcripts
- Newsletters
- Campaign/event information
- Speeches
- **Emergency Messages (WEA/EAS)**
- Flyers and Handouts
- Reports
- Presentations
- Public service announcements

Slide 5-4, External Products.

External products – such as press releases, media advisories, or campaign materials—should provide news value, offering timely, relevant, and interesting information that helps journalists identify why the story matters to their audiences.

There are several external products used by the PIO, including:

- **Holding 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.”
- Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA): Short emergency messages from authorized federal, state, local, tribal and territorial public alerting authorities that can be broadcast from cell towers to any WEA-enabled mobile device in a locally targeted area.
- Emergency Alert System (EAS) messages: Formerly known until 2022 as an Emergency Action Notification, is the national activation of the Emergency Alert System (EAS) used to alert the residents of the United States of a national or global emergency such as a nuclear war or any other mass casualty situation.

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



Internal Products

- Key messages and internal talking points
- Stakeholder briefings and coordination notes
- Position papers and decision memos
- Operational and tactical plans
- Fatality reports (prior to next-of-kin notification)
- Staff directories (phone numbers, email addresses)
- System logins, passwords, and access credentials

Slide 5-5, Internal Products.

Key messages and talking points are considered internal products because they are tools used within the organization to ensure consistency and alignment in what external audiences ultimately hear; the documents themselves are not public-facing.

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 is 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.



Holding Statements

What Is a Holding Statement?

A **pre-approved message** used immediately after an incident occurs, before all details are confirmed. It allows the organization to **acknowledge the situation quickly** while maintaining credibility and accuracy.

Purpose

- Show responsiveness and transparency
- Prevent speculation or misinformation
- Buy time while facts are verified
- Establish the organization as a trusted source of information

Slide 5-6, Holding Statements.

Below is an ad-lib holding statement that you can use and get preapproved for immediate use.

Ad-lib Holding Statement:

[Organization name] is aware of the **[incident type]** that occurred **[time/day]** at **[location]**.

Our team is **[action being taken – e.g., responding, assessing, coordinating with partners]** to determine the facts and ensure everyone’s safety.

We can confirm **[verified fact(s) only – e.g., road closure, power outage, or confirmed injuries if cleared to release]**. We are working closely with **[partner agencies or response teams]** and will provide more information as soon as it’s confirmed.

We ask the public to **[desired action – e.g., avoid the area, follow official updates, check our website, etc.]**. Our priority is the safety and well-being of **[affected group – e.g., residents, employees, travelers, students]**.

For updates, please follow **[official communication channel]** or contact **[PIO name, phone, email]**.



Key Components of a Holding Statement

1. Acknowledgement the situation
2. Commit to action
3. Prioritize safety and well-being
4. Provide facts, transparency and accountability
5. Maintain message control including a clear point of contact or expected time for update.

Slide 5-7, Key Components of a Holding Statement.

Key Components of a Holding Statement

- Acknowledgment of the Situation
 - Show awareness that an incident has occurred without speculating or assigning blame. Example: “We are aware of the situation and are gathering information.”
- Commitment to Action
 - Reassure the public that steps are being taken to manage or investigate the situation. Example: “We are working closely with law enforcement and cybersecurity partners.”
- Prioritization of Safety or Well-being
 - Emphasize care for those affected — people come first. Example: “Our top priority is protecting residents’ privacy and security.”
- Transparency and Accountability
 - Express a commitment to share accurate, verified updates as soon as possible. Example: “We will provide additional information as it becomes available.”



- Maintain Message Control including a clear point of contact and time for expected update
 - Maintain authority over communication channels and provide a way for inquiries to reach the right place. Example: “For verified updates, visit our website or contact the Public Information Office.”



Holding Statement Example

The Department of Public Services has identified a potential cybersecurity incident involving unauthorized access to an internal database. Upon discovery, we immediately secured the affected systems and began an investigation in coordination with state and federal cybersecurity partners.

At this time, there is no evidence that sensitive financial or personal information has been misused, but the investigation is ongoing. Protecting the data and privacy of our residents is a top priority, and we are taking every precaution to ensure the integrity of our systems.

We will provide verified updates as additional information becomes available. In the meantime, residents with questions or concerns may contact our Public Information Office at 919-555-5500.

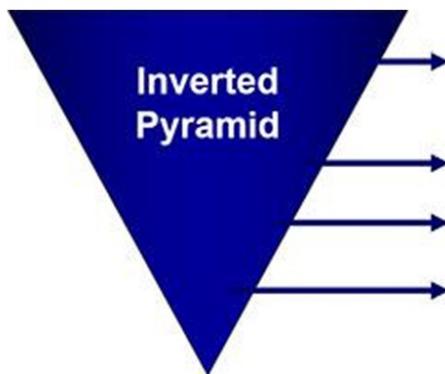
Slide 5-8, Holding Statement Example.



Apply Effective Writing Guidance for New Releases and Advisories

Federal Emergency Management Agency 9

News Releases



Structure of a News Release (Inverted Pyramid)

- **Lead Paragraph:**
Most critical facts — *who, what, when, where, why, and how.*
- **Supporting Details:**
Clarifying information, data, or context that deepen understanding.
 - **Quotes:**
Typically appear in the **second or third paragraph** to add credibility and a human voice.
- **Background Information:**
Relevant history, organizational context, or resources for follow-up.
- **Contact Information:**
Always include **accurate, reachable PIO contact details.**

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Slide 5-9, News Releases.

Remember: Public Information Officers are news deliverers — not good news deliverers. If it's bad news, say it early, clearly, and honestly. The public deserves facts, not spin.

When delivering bad news, clarity beats comfort.

- Your credibility is built on honesty, not optimism.
- Frame facts with transparency and empathy, not spin.

A note on quotes:

The inverted pyramid ensures readers (and journalists) get the essential information first, critical in emergencies or fast-moving news cycles.

Quotes bring humanity and credibility to the release.

- They should sound spoken, not written.
- Avoid robotic or overly polished statements.



- The best quotes convey insight, empathy, or leadership. Something only that person could authentically say.

Example:

Bad: “Safety is our top priority, and we are working to resolve the issue.” (Generic – could come from anyone.)

Better: “When you see smoke rise over this city, you can be sure our crews are already there, doing everything possible to protect our neighbors.” – Firefighter John Phelan

(Distinct voice, evokes action and reassurance.)

PIOs often draft quotes on behalf of spokespeople (chiefs, directors, mayors):

Align with key messages and organizational tone.

- Submit for review and approval before publication.
- Aim for quotes that add value, not filler.



Talking Points

Purpose of Talking Points

- Internal tools that guide **consistent communication** across spokespeople and channels.
- Keep the organization **“on message”** under pressure — especially during interviews.
- Ensure **accuracy, alignment, and clarity** even when questions are unpredictable.

Good Talking Points Are:

- **Concise** – Easy to remember and repeat naturally.
- **Prioritized** – Emphasize 2-3 core messages that reflect organizational goals.
- **Plainspoken** – Use clear, accessible language instead of jargon.
- **Flexible** – Adaptable to different audiences and delivery styles.



Slide 5-10, Talking Points.

Talking points are internal tools — they’re written for the ear, not the eye.

- Anyone with the talking point document should be able to speak clearly, confidently, and consistently on behalf of the organization.
- Good talking points sound conversational, not scripted or overly formal.
- Revisit your Message Map (Module 3) to make sure your talking points align with the organization’s main themes, priorities, and the specific issue at hand.
- Aim for clarity and authenticity — the audience should feel informed, not managed.

Tip: If your talking points read naturally out loud, they will sound natural to your audience.



Approval Process

Purpose of Message Approval Process

- Ensure all information is **accurate, current, and complete** before release.
- **Coordinate** messaging with other responding agencies and partners.
- **Document and track** all outgoing materials for accountability and recordkeeping.
- Build and maintain the **approving authority's confidence** in the final product.



Slide 5-11, Approval Process.

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

- Ensure all information is accurate, current, and complete before release.
- Coordinate messaging with other responding agencies and partners.
- Document and track all outgoing materials for accountability and recordkeeping.
- Build and maintain the approving authority's confidence in the final product.



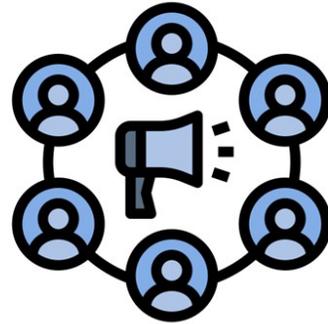
Dissemination Process

Identifying Channels Based on Audience

- **Community Audiences:** Radio, TV, social media, community partners
- **Media:** Email, text alerts, social media, press briefings
- **Stakeholders:** Direct emails, conference calls, situation reports, briefing notes

Creating the System

- Include **both high-tech and low-tech options**
- Establish **backup systems** for redundancy
- Plan for **regular updates** to keep information current and coordinated



Slide 5-12, Dissemination Process.

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."



Tracking Process

Inbound Responses

Monitor and gather information coming *into* the Joint Information System (JIS):

- Media coverage and inquiries
- 9-1-1 / 3-1-1 call reports and public inquiries
- Social media, blogs, and official website activity
- Alternative online channels (e.g., Reddit, 4chan, 8chan, community forums)

Outbound Communications

Manage and distribute verified information *out* to the public and partners:

- News releases and media briefings
- Website and social media updates
- Rumor control messages and corrections
- Record keeping and documentation of all outgoing content

Slide 5-13, Tracking Process.



Develop Effective Websites, Blog, and Social Media Posts

Federal Emergency Management Agency

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Public Information in a Digital World

- Information moves in seconds — speed and reach shape expectations.
- PIOs must master digital platforms, analytics, and content strategy.
- Online audiences expect dialogue, not one-way updates.
- Lead with visuals — photos, video, and mobile-first stories grab attention.
- Use digital tools for real-time listening and rumor control.
- Credibility now hinges on your speed, accuracy, and tone.
- If you're not part of the conversation, it happens without you.



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Slide 5-14, Public Information in a Digital World.

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.



Writing For Websites

Techniques for Effective Web Writing

- **Lead with clarity:** Put the most important information first (inverted pyramid).
- **Use clear, direct headlines** that summarize what readers will learn or do.
- **Chunk your content:** Short paragraphs (chunks), bullets, and subheads improve readability.
- **Use plain language:** Avoid jargon and agency acronyms.
- **Optimize for search:** Include keywords your audience might use.
- **Link strategically** to credible sources and related updates.
- **Keep pages current:** Outdated information erodes credibility.



Slide 5-15, Writing For Websites.

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 “scanability” 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?)



Writing For Social

Best Practices for Social Platforms

- **Lead with the action:** Share the key update or takeaway first.
- **Sound human:** Write conversationally, not bureaucratically.
- **Use purposeful visuals:** Photos, graphics, or videos should enhance understanding. Not just take up space.
- **Tag smartly:** Credit partners; use hashtags sparingly and strategically.
- **Include a call to action:** Tell audiences what to do (“Avoid the area,” “Check updates here”).
- **Engage:** Monitor, respond, and keep the dialogue professional.
- **Post responsibly:** Accuracy and empathy build trust faster than speed



Slide 5-16, Writing for Social.

- 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.



Activity 5.1: Writing an External Products

Read the information subsidies provided in activity 5.1 and execute the following:

1. Identify and edit information
2. Draft a holding statement
3. Create key messages
4. Design a social product

Slide 5-17, Activity 5.1: Writing an External Product.

Total Time for the Activity: 30 minutes

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

Instructions:

Read the information subsidies provided in activity 5.1 and execute the following:

1. Identify & Edit Information
 - a. Spot missing details and revise for public clarity.
 - b. Anticipate public questions and request needed info from the IC.
2. Draft a Holding Statement
 - a. Prepare a short, accurate statement reflecting what is known and what actions are underway.
3. Create Key Messages
 - a. Develop three concise key messages.
 - b. Prioritize what the spokesperson and public need to know first.
4. Design a Social Product
 - a. Describe one social media post (content + platform).



- b. Share the most critical information clearly and effectively.

Written Product #1

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

NR #3 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE October 2, 2024

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.

Currently, 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, 2024

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, 2024

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, 2024

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.

Written Product #5

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Contact: Jay Moore, PIO, NPEM

News Release #5-2024 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, 2024

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.



Social Media Training Resources

FEMA IS0042a

- Social Media in Emergency Management

NDPTC

- PER-304 – Social Media for Disasters
- PER-343 – Social Media Engagement
- PER-344 – Social Media Tools & Techniques

Slide 5-18, Social Media Training Resources.

- Get the right information to the right people at the right time so they can make the right decisions.
- Be right, be quick, be done.
- Create simple, easy-to-use systems that get information products approved and disseminated.

Independent Study course:

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

- Search for IS-42, Social Media in Emergency Management.
- 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.



Module Summary

Federal Emergency Management Agency

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Module Summary

In this module, we discussed:

- Internal and External products
- News release writing, approval, and dissemination processes
- Creating web-based and social platform content creation



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Slide 5–19, Module Summary.



Reference List

IS-42.A: [Social Media in Emergency Management:](https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-42.a&lang=en)
(<https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-42.a&lang=en>).

PER-304-W: [Social Media Platforms in Disaster Management:](https://ndptc.hawaii.edu/training/catalog/23/#course-description)
(<https://ndptc.hawaii.edu/training/catalog/23/#course-description>).

PER 343: [Social Media Engagement Strategies:](https://ndptc.hawaii.edu/training/catalog/31/#course-description)
(<https://ndptc.hawaii.edu/training/catalog/31/#course-description>).

PER-344: [Social Media Tools and Techniques:](https://ndptc.hawaii.edu/training/catalog/32/#course-description)
(<https://ndptc.hawaii.edu/training/catalog/32/#course-description>).

Coombs, W. T. (2021). Ongoing crisis communication: Planning, managing, and responding (6th ed.). Sage Publications.

Landes, M. (2023, June 6). [Crucial parts of holding statements in crisis PR](https://www.prdaily.com/crucial-parts-of-holding-statements-in-crisis-pr/). PR Daily.
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Module

6

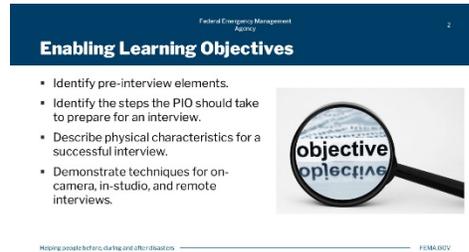
Interview Skills



Administration



Slide 6-1, Module 6: Interview Skills.



Slide 6-2, Enabling Learning Objectives.

Duration

4 hours

Terminal Learning Objective (TLO)

By the end of this module, participants will be able to identify and use proper interview techniques.

Enabling Learning Objectives (ELOs)

By the end of this module, participants will be able to...

1. Identify pre-interview elements.
2. Identify the steps the PIO should take to prepare for an interview.
3. Describe physical characteristics for a successful interview.
4. Demonstrate techniques for on-camera, in-studio, and remote interviews.



Identify Pre-Interview Elements

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3

Determining the Objective

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



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Slide 6-3, Determining the Objective.



Understanding the Medium and Delivery

<u>Medium</u>	<u>Audience Expectation</u>	<u>PIO Approach</u>
TV / Broadcast	Visual, emotional, concise	Use visuals, quotable lines
Radio / Audio / Podcasts	Conversational, descriptive	Use tone and imagery in words
Print / Online	Detailed, credible, facts, statistics	Provide full facts and background
Social Media	Fast, interactive	Be brief, authentic, responsive
Internal / Gov / Online meeting	Professional, procedural	Clear, consistent, factual
Live Events / Newsers	Real-time, emotional	Stay composed, factual, transparent

Slide 6-5, Understanding the Medium and Delivery.



Developing the Message

- Given the audience, what will you say to achieve your objective?
- Given the medium, how will you convey your message?
- Reference or create key messages and talking points.



Slide 6-6, Developing the Message.



Identify the Steps the PIO Should Take to Prepare for an Interview

Federal Emergency Management Agency

7

Preparing for the Interview

- Understand the request and anticipate questions.
- Develop talking points that convey your message.
- Practice or prep the spokesperson.
- Write out your opening/closing statement.
- Update your facts before the interview.



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Slide 6-7, Preparing for the Interview.

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 their 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.” Don’t ask the former; do ask the latter.
- Also, consider 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 will 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 think and talk in 9- to 12-second sound bites.
- If you are not the spokesperson, prep the spokesperson by providing talking points and perhaps playing the reporter role in a practice interview.

STEP 4: Consider writing out your opening statement or phrases. Consider writing out your closing statement. Write down your answer when the reporter or interviewer asks: "Is there anything else you'd like to add?"

STEP 5: Last, but not least: Update your facts. Make sure you have the latest information.



Size Up the Situation

- Who is in charge, and what's the latest information?
- What information can you release?
- What's the emotion of the group you're engaging?
- Do not talk to reporters until your size-up is complete or issue **holding statement**.

Slide 6-8, Size-up the Situation.



The Power of Nonverbal Communication

How audiences interpret your message:

- 7% – Words (Content)
- 38% – Tone of Voice (How you say it)
- 55% – Body Language & Appearance (What they see)



Slide 6-9, The Power of Nonverbal Communication.



Outward Perceptions of the PIO

- Nervousness
- Deceit or Lying
- Appearance of Hiding Something
- Arrogance
- Boredom
- Lack of Knowledge
- Overdressed/Underdressed/Make-up
- Jewelry/Sunglasses/Helmets/Hats



Slide 6-10, Outward Perception of the PIO.

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

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
- Appearance of hiding something
- Callousness/arrogance
- Boredom
- Jewelry, sunglasses, helmets, hats
- Lack of knowledge



Describe Physical Characteristics for a Successful Interview

Federal Emergency Management Agency

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Nonverbal Communication Tips

- Eye contact
- Movement
- Expression
- Body Position
- Gestures
- Attire/Dress/Eyeglasses
- Lighting
- Digital Hi-Def/Web



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Slide 6-11, Nonverbal Communication Tips.

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 mindful 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. Don't jiggle legs or spin or rock in the chair if sitting. 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. 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.
 - Be aware of lighting, especially bright backgrounds, and lack of light on your face and body.
 - 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 (including body piercings).
 - Consider covering tattoos and minimizing body piercing jewelry.
 - If something in your appearance significantly detracts from your message, eliminate, or fix it.
- **Digital, High-definition (HD) and Web:**
 - Digital and HD television is high quality and not only shows clothing imperfections, but also has problems with specific colors (e.g., bright colors may cause issues with color balance and appear too vivid on some broadcasts). DOT ANSI (American National Standard for High Visibility) vests are bad for digital TV. Some badges and collar pins can also glare.



Managing the Interview

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

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

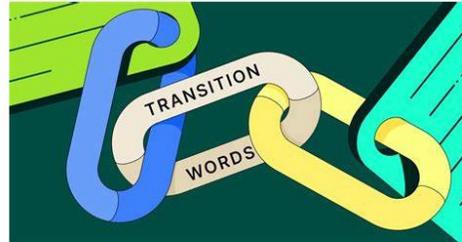


Slide 6-12, Managing the Interview.



Transitional Phrases or “Bridging”

- “What is most important is ...”
- “What we should focus on is ...”
- “The goal of our effort is ...”
- “What I can tell you is...”



Slide 6-13, Transitional Phrases or “Bridging”.

- 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 central message.



Demonstrate Techniques for On-Camera, In-Studio, and Remote Interviews

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Paraphrasing

Question:

- “What is your goal with this new initiative?”

Answers:

- “The goal of the new initiative is...”
- “What we want to accomplish with this new initiative is...”



Slide 6-14, Paraphrasing.



Alternatives to “No Comment”

- “The matter is under investigation. No other information is available at this time.”
- “We will provide updates as they become available.”
- “Let me put you in touch with someone who has more information.”
- “Due to Privacy Laws, that information is not available at this time . . .”
- “What I can share with you is . . .”



Slide 6-15, Alternatives to “No Comment”.

- When you can’t answer a question, make sure your response is suited to the situation, truthful, and as forthcoming as possible.
- The visual displays some options to “no comment.”
- The first two options are suitable when 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 cannot 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"?



Reversing a Negative Question

Question:

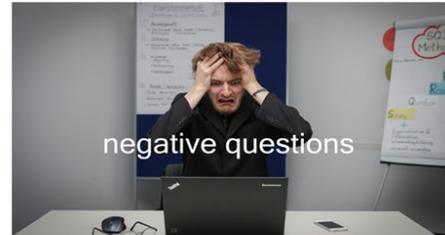
- “Your efforts to reduce our crime rate have been ineffective; how can you say we are a safer community today?”

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...”



Slide 6-16, Reversing a Negative Question

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 afterward (afterward they may edit your clarification out of the final piece and show only the negative statement).
- Remember, they don’t have it on tape if you don’t say it.
- Try to stay positive in your response. You have a message. Use it.
- How do you "you" address a "no comment"?



Hostile Reporter Interviews

- 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



Slide 6-17, Hostile Reporter Interviews.

You should never lose your cool no matter how hostile the interview turns.

If a reporter:

- Interrupts you: Be polite but assertive; you may 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.



Interview Types and Locations

- Recorded or Live
- Audio/Video or Audio Only
- Breaking News On Scene
- Your location – Office or Outdoors
- In-Studio
- Remote
- Audio Only



Slide 6-18, Interview Types and Locations.



Interview Environment

- Lighting
- Sound
- Environment
- Audio/Video Technical
- Noise and Distractions



Slide 6-19, Interview Environment.

Lighting: Are you positioned so that you are well-lit, and the background isn't brighter than your body and face?

Sound: Are you in a relatively quiet area so your voice is the primary sound source during the interview? If you're in a noisy environment, can you move somewhere less noisy?

Is the location or environment just too busy? Again, can you move to an area that has fewer distractions?

As best as possible, have you optimized the audio and video for your interview? This is especially important for "Zoom" or other remote interviews.

Have you minimized noise and distractions? If you're outdoors in a busy environment, do you need a spotter or security to keep people out of your background? If in the office, lock the door or put a sign on the outside of the door so you're not interrupted. If at home, minimize distractions as best as possible.



On-Scene “Breaking News” Interviews

- Size up interviews first!
- Media staging area
- Do not engage the media until YOU are ready
- Are YOU LIVE on-air?



Slide 6-20, On-Scene “Breaking News” Interviews.

Remember that television and cable news outlets no longer need a large satellite truck or remote van to broadcast live. A cell phone can broadcast your interview around the world. Most, but not all, news videographers use “backpack” video systems that can send high-quality audio and video back to the newsroom in real-time.

Always assume that a nearby microphone is LIVE and YOU'RE being recorded.



Your Location

- Scout interview locations
 - Inside and outside
- Agency logo or step & repeat background
- No internal information posted on walls
- External noise
- Interruptions
- Distractions



Slide 6-21, Your Location.



In-Studio Interviews

- Typically on a newscast set or interview area
- Lighting and audio
- High Definition
- Attire
- Distractions



Slide 6-22, In-Studio Interviews.

In-studio interviews will be handled by television station staff. Know that a microphone may be placed underneath a shirt or blouse. Keep your attire simple – avoid bright whites and yellows and tight patterns, such as herringbone. Avoid flashy bracelets, necklaces, and earrings.



Remote Interviews

- Lighting
- Sound
- Video
- Background
- Avoid earbuds, headphones, or headsets
- Noise
- Distractions



Slide 6-23, Remote Interviews.

The PIO is usually responsible for the technical operation of the remote or “Zoom” interview. This means that for the PIO to look their best, they need to ensure that the technology makes them look as good as possible.

- **Lighting:** Many PIOs will use a ring light or other small lights on either side of the computer or camera. Be careful not to be too close to the lights.
- **Sound:** Laptop microphones are notorious for producing “tinny” sound. Consider using the microphone in a standalone webcam.
- **Video:** Laptop cameras may not be high quality for broadcast interviews. Consider using a high-quality external webcam.
- Avoid earbuds, headphones, or headsets.
- As best as possible, avoid and eliminate noise and distractions in the background.



Pre-Interview Checklist

- Know what you want to say.
- Know what you DON'T want to say.
- Keep the audience in mind.
- Body language and appearance.
- What's the hardest question I can be asked?
- Practice opening statement, sound bites, and closing statement.



Slide 6-24, Pre-Interview Checklist.



Post-Interview

- Make sure you have the interviewer's contact information.
- Thank-you note.
- Monitor the interview/story/post.
- IF there are unanswered issues, research and respond.
- **DO NOT IGNORE FOLLOW-UPS.**



Slide 6-25, Post-Interview.



What Can You Do Now?

- Reminders for on-camera interviews.
- Body language can convey good or bad impressions.
- Techniques to improve on-camera interviews.
- Use inverted pyramid - Bad news first.
- Find ways to connect with your audience



Slide 6-26, What Can You Do Now?



Activity 6.1: On-Camera Interviews

Purpose: To practice on-camera performance

- Write key messages and talking points on a subject you're familiar with or use one of the scenarios in the Student Manual.
- Practice interview delivery with a partner.
- When you're ready, an instructor will conduct the interview and provide feedback on your performance.
- Use your own device to record interview.



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Slide 6-27, Activity 6.1: On-Camera Interviews.

Total Time: 2 hours

Instructions

- Select a topic you know 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 in the Student Manual and draft your own talking points 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 challenging questions.
 - Demonstrate the interview techniques covered in the unit if needed.



- For 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.

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 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—WHEREVER That May Be!”](#) mini-lesson plan, visit the NFPA website.

(<https://www.nfpa.org/downloadable-resources/lesson-plans/hear-the-beep-where-you-sleep-mini-lesson-plan>).



Activity 6.2: Real World On-Camera Interview

Instructions:

Students will watch a series of short, real-world video clips on YouTube that show PIOs or SMEs delivering prepared remarks and/or responding to media questions:

Student activity:

- Observe and take notes on the verbal and nonverbal communication techniques demonstrated by each speaker, using Module 6 course material as a reference.
 - Verbal: tone, pace, clarity, message structure, etc.
 - Nonverbal: posture, gestures, facial expressions, eye contact.
- Answer the following questions:
 - What specific verbal and nonverbal strategies were most effective? Why?
 - How did the speakers' body language affect your perception of their credibility or their message?
- Choose one of the speakers, identify an area for improvement (verbal or nonverbal), and briefly describe a strategy you would recommend the speaker use to improve.
 - Example: "John Jones seemed to have a hard time managing his facial expressions. I would recommend that John practice saying his key messages a few times in front of his PIO and focus on keeping a neutral expression."

Students should be prepared to share their observations during a whole-class discussion.

Slide 6-28, Activity 6.2: Real World On-Camera Interview

Students will watch a series of short, real-world video clips on YouTube that show PIOs or SMEs delivering prepared remarks and/or responding to media questions:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLRSMph5aQYkX_XrQBiAr4wJvgmxWoBOEO

As students watch the videos, students should complete the following tasks:

- Observe and take notes on the verbal and nonverbal communication techniques demonstrated by each speaker, using Module 6 course material as a reference.
 - Verbal: tone, pace, clarity, message structure, etc.
 - Nonverbal: posture, gestures, facial expressions, eye contact.
- Answer the following questions:
 - What specific verbal and nonverbal strategies were most effective? Why?
 - How did the speakers' body language affect your perception of their credibility or their message?
- Choose one of the speakers, identify an area for improvement (verbal or nonverbal), and briefly describe a strategy you would recommend the speaker use to improve.
 - Example: "John Jones seemed to have a hard time managing his facial expressions. I would recommend that John practice saying his key messages a few times in front of his PIO and focus on keeping a neutral expression."

Students should be prepared to share their observations during a whole-class discussion.



Module Summary

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Module Summary

In this module, we discussed:

- Preparing for an on-camera interview
- Body language and other factors that affect the interview's credibility
- Types of interviews
- Elements for the PIO to consider



Slide 6-29, Module Summary.



Reference List

None



Module 7

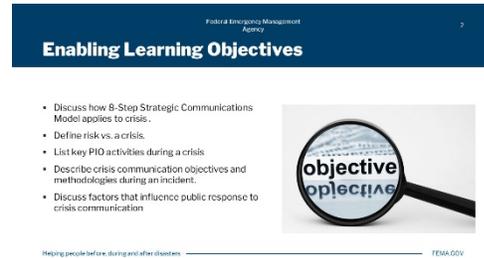
Crisis/Emergency Communications



Administration



Slide 7-1, Module 7: Crisis/Emergency Communications.



Slide 7-2, Enabling Learning Objectives.

Duration

1 hour; 30 minutes

Terminal Learning Objective (TLO)

By the end of this module, participants will be able to apply crisis communication methodologies to include warning messages during an incident.

Enabling Learning Objectives (ELOs)

By the end of this module, participants will be able to...

1. Discuss how 8-Step Strategic Communications Model applies to crisis.
2. Define risk vs. a crisis.
3. List key PIO activities during a crisis
4. Describe crisis communication objectives and methodologies during an incident.
5. Discuss factors that influence public response to crisis communication



Understand PIO Responsibilities in a Crisis

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Activity 7.1: Crisis Communications

PURPOSE: Understand incidents from a variety of perspectives.

Working in your table groups:

- Review the scenario in the Resource Guide.
- List concerns, thoughts, emotions, and needs for each of these groups.
 - Government Officials and Agencies
 - Media Outlets
 - General Public
 - Policy (if needed)
- Document your thoughts.



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Slide 7-3, Activity 7.1: Crisis Communications.

The Clifton Fire Scenario

The fire swept into Clifton with shocking speed, leaving residents scrambling to escape on foot and in cars. With only two roads leading out of the area, residents of this small town in the foothills of the Liberty mountains had limited options to reach safety.

Clifton residents said they weren't surprised by the wildfire itself – having survived a damaging wildfire in 2008 and narrowly escaping a fire the previous summer – but they were surprised by government inaction.

The Kane County Office of Emergency Management, which has the authority to issue alerts, did not send alerts until after the fire had already consumed much of the town. Many residents never got an emergency alert. Some said the only ones caught by surprise were the officials in charge of sending those alerts.

Now, 24 hours after the fire swept through town, surviving Clifton residents want answers.

- Impact: 85 dead, 12 injured, thousands of homes destroyed
- Scale: 20,000 acres burned in less than 14 hours



- Speed: At its peak, the fire grew 10,000 acres in 90 minutes — more than a football field every second

Clifton community profile:

- Rural town in eastern Kane County
- 17 square miles in size
- 26,000 full-time residents, 2,800 seasonal residents
- Average resident age: 55
- Town leaders include:
 - Clifton Mayor Tom Jones
 - Fire Chief John Williams, Kane County Rural Fire Protection District #4 headquartered in Clifton
- Kane County leaders include:
 - Kane County Sheriff Bob Lockett
 - Kane County Emergency Manager Doug VanHauten
 - Kane County Public Works Director Dan Jerenston
 - Kane County 911 Commissioner Karen Spenster

Community Voices

- “I never got an alert — I only knew when I saw the flames.” — Anonymous Clifton resident
- “I did get an alert, but by then my house was already burning.” — Resident Buzz Weldon
- “We paid all this tax money so the county could build a brand-new county emergency management building and now our town is gone. Something’s not right about that.” – Dane Cooper, comment posted on Kane County Facebook page

Officials Under Fire

Mayor Jones and Sheriff Lockett, both up for re-election, refused live interviews. Instead, they issued a controlled, virtual statement posted as a video on the Town of Clifton website and on the Kane County Facebook page:

- Sheriff Lockett insisted they used alerts and defended his long-standing policy of being the only one to authorize them.
- He argued that sending alerts too early could have caused roadblocks, stopping fire trucks from getting in.
- “We couldn’t keep ahead of this fire. It moved too fast,” said Lockett.



Mayor Jones added:

- “In 2008, we had three hours to evacuate. This time? Five minutes.”

Lingering Questions

- Why didn't alerts reach more people?
- Were officials protecting the public – or their own policies and image?
- Did delays in alerting contribute to the loss of life?



Discussion: Apply 8-Step Model in a Crisis

How would you apply the 8-step model to the Activity 7.1 scenario?

- What is the current situation? Goals?
- Who are the audience(s)?
- What are the messages?
- What are the channels?
- Who is included in the action plan?
- How do you implement/evaluate?
- Would you set develop/pretest materials?

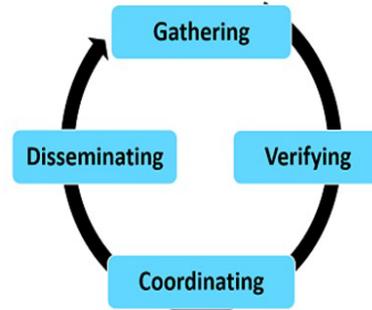


Slide 7-4, Discussion: Apply 8-Step Model In a Crisis.



Flow of Crisis Communication

- Continues through active response and recovery
- Cyclical: Process is always in one of these phases
- Leverages JIS partnerships



Slide 7-5, Flow of Crisis Communication.



Identify a Risk vs Crisis

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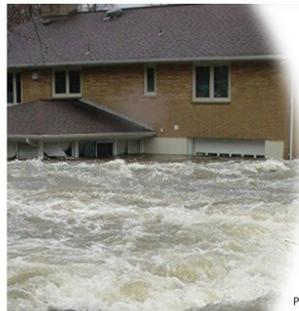
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Risk vs. Crisis

RISK: It HAS NOT happened



CRISIS: It HAS happened or IS HAPPENING NOW



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Slide 7-6, Risk vs. Crisis.



Crisis Can Originate from...

- Integrity or reputation issue
- Internal problem exposed
- Employee behavior in public
- Community Emergencies



Slide 7-7, Crisis Can Originate from...



Example: Single Organization Crisis

- Employee arrested
- Accusations of agency fraud
- Workplace accident
- Supervisor accused of harrassment
- Lawsuit filed against agency
- Death or injury due to delayed response



Slide 7-8, Example: Single Organization Crisis.

Can you think of other examples?



Multiple Organization Crisis

- Active shooter
- Wildfire
- Plane crash
- Fuel or chemical spill
- Disease outbreak
- Cyberattack
- Hurricane response



Slide 7-9, Multiple Organization Crisis.

Can you think of other examples?



PIO Primary Goal

Get the right information to the right people at the right time so everyone is empowered to make the right decisions.



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Slide 7-10, PIO Primary Goal.



Apply Crisis Communication Objectives and Methodologies During an Incident

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Crisis Communication Best Practices

- Be accurate and timely
- Be consistent and coordinated
- Use clear, non-technical language
- Say what you know, what you don't know
- Monitor and respond quickly to rumors

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Slide 7-11, Crisis Communication Best Practices.



Maximum Disclosure, Minimal Delay

- To control crisis messaging and reassure community, release verified information as soon as possible.
 - Share approved holding statement/initial information within 5 mins. of notification
 - 1 hour (or less) from onset of crisis to implement your communications plan.
- Do not speculate if information is not verified.



Slide 7-12, Maximum Disclosure, Minimal Delay.



Communication Methods

- Traditional Media
 - TV, radio and newspapers
- Social Media
 - Facebook, Instagram, etc.
- Your Channels
 - Website, blog, emails, text/alerts
- Aim for consistent messaging across all channels



Slide 7-13, Communication Methods.



Holding Statements at Start of Event

- Past: what happened?
- Present: what are we doing?
- Future: what do we expect next?



Slide 7-14, Holding Statement at Start of Event.

EXAMPLE:

There is an accident at the intersection of Elm Street and Oak Road. Police, fire, and EMS are on the scene. Please avoid this area. We will provide further updates as they become available.



Message Map

- Message maps help you share important information quickly
- 27 Words
- 9 Seconds
- Convey 3 main messages clearly and empathetically



Slide 7-15, Message Map.



News Conference & Interview Preparation

Prepare for questions before a news conference or media interview.

Ask:

- 5 good questions
- 5 bad questions
- 5 ugly questions

Develop at least 15 questions and 15 responses.

PRACTICE asking and answering questions



Slide 7-16, News Conference & Interview Preparation.



The Three “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!

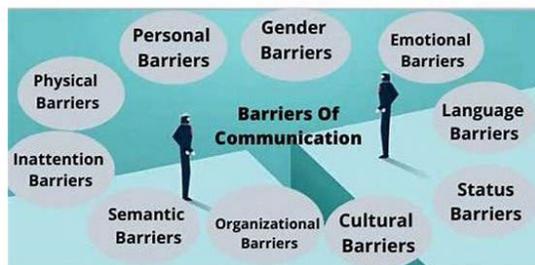


Slide 7-17, The 3 “C’s” of Crisis Media Relations.



Common Barriers to Releasing Information

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



Slide 7-18, Common Barriers to Releasing Information.



Discuss Factors that Influence Public Response to Warning Messages

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Factors Affecting Public Response

- Message interpretation
- Previous experiences
- Observations/conformation
- Perception of risk and proximity
- Rural vs. urban community
- Level of community engagement
- Family composition



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Slide 7-19, Factors Affecting Public Response.

KEY POINT: the clearer and more specific you can be, the higher the compliance.

- Interpretation: when different people listen to the same message, there may be a variation in what they hear, leading to different interpretations and responses.
- Experience: people often rely on their experiences with the hazard to determine what actions they'll initially take (or don't take)
- Observations: most people will seek some form of confirmation, such as environmental cues and other trusted sources. Optimism bias – disasters happen to other people – is overcome with confirmation.
- Perception of risk: people tend to make a rapid assessment of the relative safety of the location. If their risk perception is high, people will act quickly vs. when low, they will delay acting.
- Community: rural communities may have more difficulty receiving warnings than those living in urban areas.



- Community engagement: people who have more contacts in the community will receive more warnings, making them more likely to act and trust officials.
- Family composition: families tend to heed evacuation warnings more than individuals. Research indicates people tend to confer with family, extended family and friends prior to deciding to ensure loved ones are safe.
 - Family network: people are more likely to act if they have relatives nearby who may warn them and offer short-term shelter.
 - Children: concern for children's safety will elicit a quicker response from parents

Pets: people will take action to protect them and may endanger their own lives by refusing to evacuate if public shelters do not allow pets.



Reaching the Whole Community

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



Slide 7-20, Reaching the Whole Community.

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.



Crisis Communications Preparedness

- Do you have a Crisis Communications Plan?
- How current is it?
- Do you have leadership buy-in?
- What is the strength of your relationships?



Slide 7-21, Crisis Communications Preparedness.

At a basic level, your emergency communications plan should outline how your agency expects to communicate during an emergency. It should include specific roles and responsibilities, organizational charts, guidelines for how to conduct the initial communications response, strategies or locations for media briefings, etc. Plans may be agencywide or specific to one department.

It's important to know if leadership is aware of this crisis communication plan and supports all aspects of its implementation. If staff from other departments or divisions fill roles in the JIC, are all agency leaders aware of that fact? Make sure that leadership is aware of what's in the crisis communications plan and their role in supporting it.

Additionally, it's critical to build and maintain relationships between other PIOs in your agency and in the local area. These relationships form the backbone of your JIS. If these relationships are not strong enough or haven't been maintained, it can impact the implementation of your crisis communication plan.

Questions to ask about your crisis communications plan include:

- Is there an emergency or crisis communications plan?
- What department owns or updates that plan?
- When was it last updated?
- Are there specific responsibilities for you or your department/division? Do you need to put out specific emergency messaging?



- Do these plans call on you, your staff, or your department/division to fill a specific emergency communications function?
- How are these plans implemented?



Module Summary

Federal Emergency Management
Agency

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Module Summary

In this module, we discussed how to:

- Apply the 8-Step Strategic Communications Model applies to crisis.
- List key PIO activities during a crisis
- Define risk vs. a crisis.
- Describe crisis communication objectives and methodologies during an incident.
- Discuss factors that influence public response crisis communication



Slide 7-22, Module Summary.



Reference List

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Module

8

Media Relations at the Scene



Administration



Slide 8-1, Module 8: Media Relations at the Scene.



Slide 8-2, Enabling Learning Objectives.

Duration

2 hours; 30 minutes

Terminal Learning Objective (TLO)

By the end of this module, participants will be able to outline and explain media needs at a disaster.

Enabling Learning Objectives (ELOs)

By the end of this module, participants will be able to...

1. Outline media needs at the scene.
2. Apply news conference logistics.
3. Explain the news conference cycle.



Discussion Question

In one sentence, how would you explain what “media relations” means to someone outside of public communication—and why does it matter during a risk and crisis communication?

Slide 8-3, Discussion Question.



Outline Media Needs at the Scene

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Why Media Coordination 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.



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Slide 8-4, Why Media Coordination Matters.

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 being on scene.



Discussion Question

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

Slide 8-5, Discussion Question.

- Arrive calm and professional. Your demeanor sets the tone—be composed, approachable, and credible.
- Establish a designated media area. Provide a safe, clear, and accessible space for journalists.
- Identify yourself and your role. Wear visible credentials and introduce yourself as the Public Information Officer (PIO) or spokesperson.
- Be transparent and responsive. Acknowledge what you do know and commit to finding what you don't. Never say “no comment.”
- Provide timely, verified updates. Even if information is limited, regular updates build trust and reduce speculation.
- Support, don't control, the media. Your job is to facilitate accurate reporting, not to gatekeep information.
- Show respect for deadlines. Understand that journalists work under intense time pressure—help them meet it with accuracy.

Document media interactions. Keep a record of questions asked and responses given for accountability and consistency.



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.

Slide 8-6, Initial Actions that Can Make It Work.

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 always (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.
- Contact 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.



Know the Laws Ahead of Time!

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



Slide 8-7, Know the Law Ahead of Time!

- 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.



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:

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

Slide 8-8, The PIO-Media Partnership.

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.



Apply News Conference Logistics

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Media Pools

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



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Slide 8-9, Media Pools.

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 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.



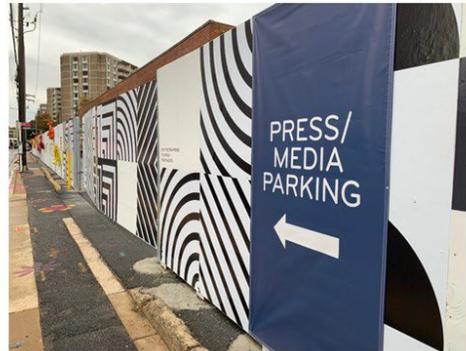
How do you ensure that what the media pool gets will be shared? This is an internal issue with the media. They will police themselves in this area. And finally, don't use a pool simply to make your job easier. Make sure there is a valid reason (such as safety concerns or integrity of a crime scene) if you are going to use a media pool.



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?



Slide 8-10, Media Staging Areas.

When setting up a media staging area, you're not just finding space — you're managing safety, logistics, and relationships. The goal is to create an environment where the media can do their jobs without interfering with response operations or revealing sensitive information.

Ask yourself:

Are they too close to sensitive information?

Protect operational security and privacy. Keep the media far enough away to avoid revealing victim identities, tactical movements, or classified details.

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

Make sure they can transmit footage or reports without interference. Accessibility for live coverage helps reduce frustration and prevents reporters from wandering.

Can they get the images they want?

They don't need access to danger zones, but they do need compelling visuals. A clear, safe vantage point keeps everyone satisfied and reduces pressure for access.

Are there "convenience" facilities available?

Think restrooms, water, and shelter. Providing basic comfort helps the media remain at the designated area longer and maintain professionalism.

How can you keep them at the staging area?



Regular updates, scheduled briefings, and accessibility to verified spokespeople encourage them to stay put rather than roam for information.

Key takeaway:

A well-planned media staging area builds trust, ensures safety, and helps control the flow of accurate information. It's not just a physical space — it's a communication strategy.



The News Conference

What is a News Conference?

- A planned event where officials provide information to multiple media outlets simultaneously.
- Allows for consistent messaging, efficient communication, and on-the-record Q&A.

When to Use It:

- When the incident is **significant, complex,** or **high-profile.**
- When information needs to reach **multiple outlets quickly and consistently.**
- When **public interest or concern is high,** and transparency is critical.

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Slide 8-11, The News Conference.

A news conference (also called a press briefing or media briefing) is a structured opportunity to share verified, coordinated information with the media.

It ensures that all outlets hear the same message at the same time – minimizing confusion or conflicting reports.

You should plan ahead: identify speakers, prepare key messages, and anticipate questions.

Not every incident requires a news conference – sometimes a written release or interview suffices.

Use when there is broad impact, high visibility, or potential for misinformation.

A news conference isn't the answer for all incidents: A news conference should be used strategically, not automatically. It's not appropriate for minor incidents, when information is still unverified, or when speaking publicly could compromise operations. In those cases, a written release, short briefing, or one-on-one interview may better serve your goal of informing the public accurately without unintentionally escalating the situation.



News Conference Responsibilities of the PIO

- Coordinates logistics, location, and timing with Incident Command.
- Prepares and distributes media advisories and releases.
- Selects and briefs speakers; develops key messages and talking points and media trains.
- Moderates the conference and manages the question period.
- Ensures consistent, accurate, and approved information is shared.



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Slide 8-12, News Conference Responsibilities of the PIO.

- A news conference runs smoothly only when roles are clear and rehearsed.
- The PIO is the organizer, gatekeeper, and moderator—responsible for both content and coordination.
- Spokespeople represent expertise, but they must defer to the PIO for timing and control.
- Support personnel ensure that logistics don't interfere with message delivery—everything from parking to sound systems matters.
- Think of a news conference like an incident operation: everyone has a defined function and chain of command.



Choosing a Location

Key considerations for location are:

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



Slide 8-13, Choosing a Location.

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 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.” 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!



Explain the News Conference Cycle

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Phases of a News Conference

Prepare → Open → Close → Follow-Up

Preparing

- Determine location and time
- Announce
- Prepare participants

Opening

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

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Slide 8-14, Phases of News Conference.

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



Phases of a News Conference (continued)

*Prepare → Open → **Close** → Follow-Up*

Close

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

Follow-Up

- Document
- Monitor media coverage; address errors.
- Debrief participants; use “lessons learned.”
- Provide any promised items.

Slide 8-15, Phases of a News Conference (continued).

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.



Module Summary

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Module Summary

In this module, we discussed:

- How to manage **media relations at the scene** by balancing the information needs of both the news media and the PIO.
- The importance of **establishing effective media staging areas and pools** to ensure safety, access, and consistent information flow.
- **When, where, and how to conduct a news conference** to deliver accurate, timely, and coordinated messages during an incident.



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Slide 8-16, Module Summary.



Reference List

None



Module

9

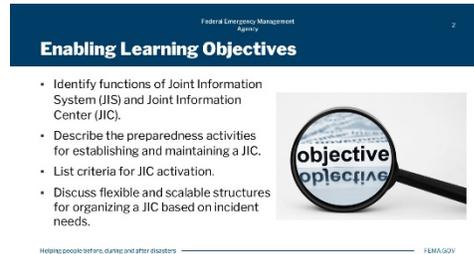
Leading a Joint Information Center



Administration



Slide 9-1, Module 9: Leading a Joint Information Center.



Slide 9-2, Enabling Learning Objectives.

Duration

1 hour; 30 minutes

Terminal Learning Objective (TLO)

By the end of this module, participants will be able to differentiate between a Joint Information Center (JIC) and Joint Information System (JIS).

Enabling Learning Objectives (ELOs)

By the end of this module, participants will be able to...

1. Identify functions of Joint Information System (JIS) and Joint Information Center (JIC).
2. Describe the preparedness activities for establishing and maintaining a JIC.
3. List criteria for JIC activation.
4. Discuss flexible and scalable structures for organizing a JIC based on incident needs.



Differentiate Between Joint Information System (JIS) and joint Information Center (JIC)

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Activity 9.1: (Table Group)

With your table groups, answer the questions in your Student Manual.

Select a spokesperson and be prepared to report out.

Consider

- Who is the lead agency?
- Who are the PIOs involved?
- What messages are most important?
- What are the challenges? Needs?

Review
scenario in
Activity 9.1 in
Student Manual

Be prepared
to report out

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Slide 9-3, Activity 9.1: (Table Group).

Activity 9.1 Scenario

10:30 a.m.

- The Central City Fire Department responded to a fire at the South Coast Recycling Yard, 2200 T. Street, Central City
- A compressed natural gas truck exploded, injuring the driver and nearby workers
- A large storage building is on fire
- Gusty winds are forecast to begin by 11 a.m.
- Surrounding roads are closed to make room for fire apparatus

10:45 a.m.

- South Coast staff are trying to move 4 more natural gas trucks parked near the fire
- Central City Utilities is pre-emptively de-energizing nearby power lines
- Central City Transit has paused light rail near the facility and is rerouting buses



- Heavy smoke is blowing to the northeast
- Incident command wants people in a 4-block radius of the facility to shelter in place

11:00 a.m.

- NWS Central City is calling for gusts of 40 mph for the next 3 hours
- Central City Air Quality and Environmental Monitoring are on scene, assessing potential environmental impact or runoff to Columbia Creek
- Additional fire and hazardous materials response teams have arrived on scene
- Central City mayor has signed a state of emergency
- Central City EOC is activated
- The Incident Commander has ordered an evacuation of all facilities within 4 blocks of the facility

Questions to answer:

At 10:30 a.m.

- Who is the lead agency for this incident?
- Which agency PIOs are involved in the incident?
- What messages are they prioritizing?

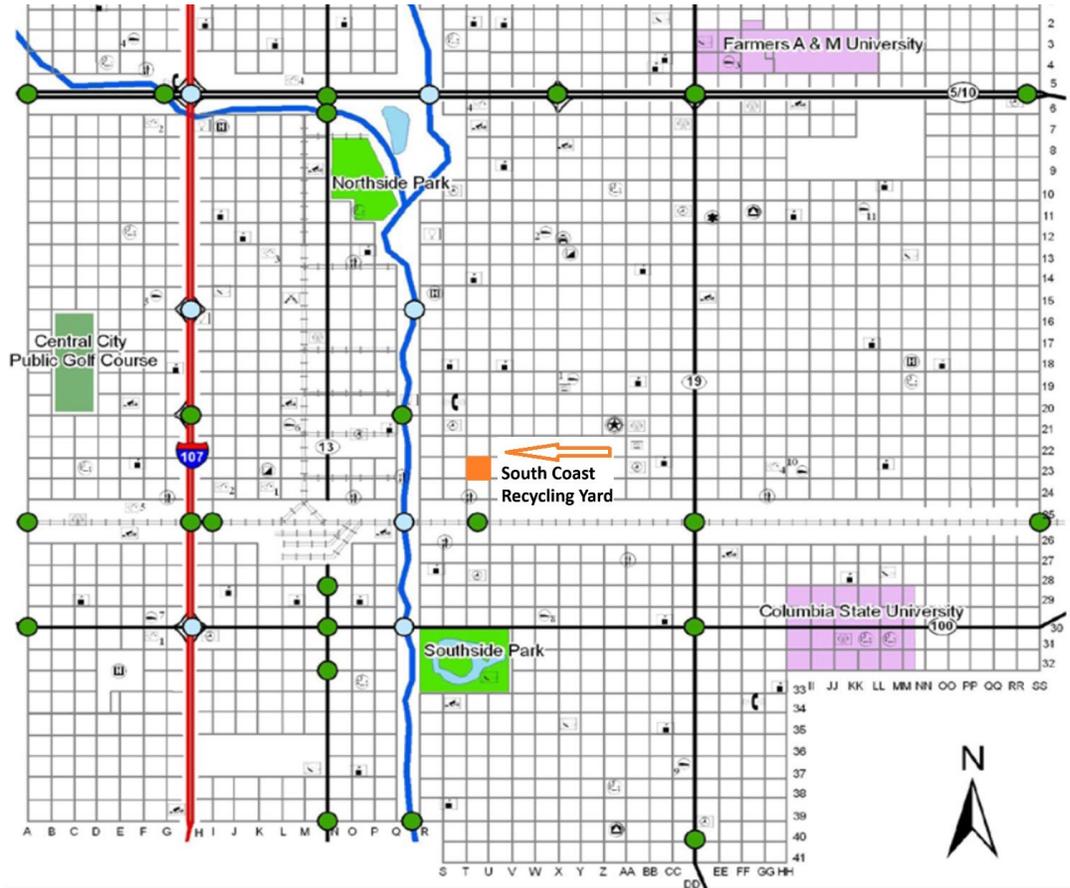
At 10:45 a.m.

- Who are the new PIOs involved in this incident?
- Who is the lead agency?
- What messages are the PIOs prioritizing now?
- What are the communication challenges with additional PIOs?

At 11 a.m.

- Who are the new PIOs involved in this incident?
- Is the lead agency the same? Different?
- What messages are PIOs prioritizing now?

What are the strategic communications needs?



Legend

Central City Police Station	Fire Stations (1-11)	Telephone Switchboards
Shelter Complex Headquarters	City Equipment Yard	Electric Power Stations
Relocation Centers	Heavy Equipment Areas	Reservoirs
National Guard Facilities	Fuel Storage Tanks (1-5)	Radio & TV Stations
Hospitals	City Transportation Centers	Schools
Food Storage Warehouses	Emergency Management Center	Non Earthquake-Proof Bridge
County Courthouse	City Hall	Earthquake-Proof Bridge
Interstates	State Routes	Railroads
Local Roads	River/Creek	

Scale: 10.5 Blocks = 1 mile



What is a JIS? What is a 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.



Slide 9-4, What is JIS? What is JIC?



Benefits of a JIS

The JIS:

- Provides a framework for coordination
- Facilitates timely, accurate, consistent messaging.
- Allows participation from and collaboration between all partners involved in emergency response.



Slide 9-5, Benefits of JIS.

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.



Benefits of a JIC

The JIC:

- Provides a physical, virtual, or hybrid location for PIOs to work together during and after an incident
- Is the central hub for gathering, verifying, coordinating, and disseminating incident information
- Maximizes resources
- Ensures unified voice for response



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Slide 9-6, Benefits of a JIC.

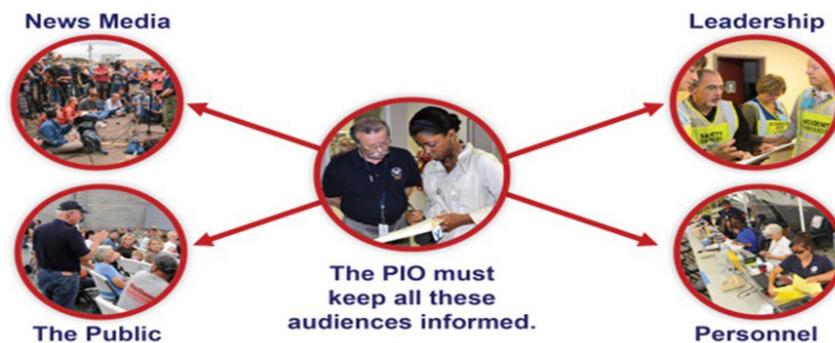


Describe the Preparedness Activities for Establishing and Maintaining a JIC

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Challenge of Multiple Audiences



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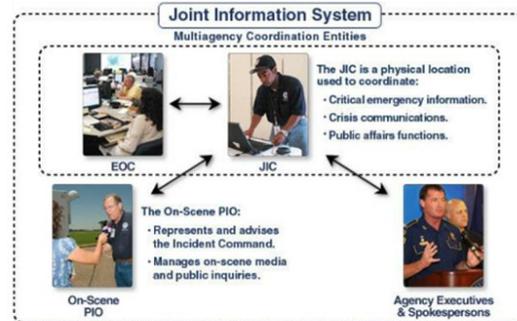
Slide 9-7, Challenge of Multiple Audiences.



JIS and JIC

The JIS incorporates PIOs from all responding agencies and jurisdictions

The JIC provides a common location to coordinate and disseminate information to multiple audiences.



Slide 9-8, JIS and JIC.



Illustrate Triggers for JIC Activation

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Criteria 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



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Slide 9-9, Criteria for JIC Activation.

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.



Understanding Flexible and Scalable Structures for Organizing a JIC Based on Incident Needs

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What Does a JIC Look Like?

- Dependent upon emergency plans/ type of incident
- Scalable, flexible, and functional system
- Goal: Gather, verify, coordinate, and disseminate information



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Slide 9-10, What Does a JIC Look Like.

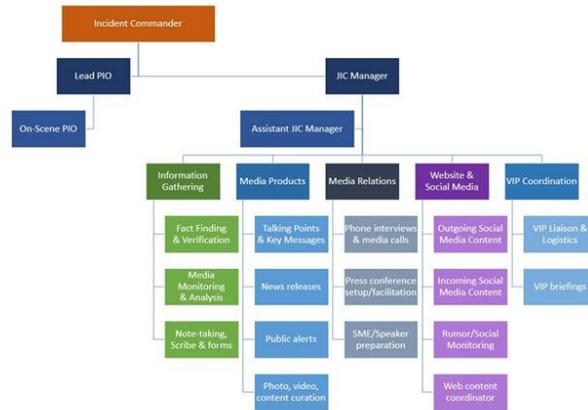
The Joint Information Center structure is not set in stone; it is intended to be a flexible structure that can expand, or contract as needed. Because incidents and the agencies responding to them will vary widely in scope, complexity, and available resources, the specific structure of a JIC will vary.

- Size of incident / number of agencies involved: When multiple jurisdictions or agencies are involved, a single physical JIC or even multiple coordinated JICs may be needed to manage messaging needs.
- Complexity of incident: For responses with many stakeholders, evolving hazards, or high public/media interest, the JIC will have more staff, more roles (e.g., rumor monitoring, community relations, multi-media operations) and more formal coordination procedures. For simpler incidents, a JIC might be minimal, and one person may manage multiple roles.
- Available resources: Agencies with more public information capacity (dedicated PIOs, larger communication teams, etc.) are often able to stand up larger, more robust JICs, even for smaller incidents. Agencies with fewer resources may not be able to fill all needed roles and may ask partner agencies for support. They may also use a scaled-down JIC that prioritizes only critical roles or leverage a virtual JIC to manages resources effectively.



What does a JIC look like?

- No two JICs will look the same
- Size, scale, complexity, duration can influence structure
- Availability of resources
- Type of JIC



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Slide 9-11, What does a JIC look like?



Types of JICs

- Incident: single location, typical JIC
- Virtual/Hybrid: 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



Slide 9-12, Types of JICs.

- 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/Hybrid JIC. A virtual JIC is established when meeting in a physical location is not feasible - for example, during COVID-19. A virtual JIC uses technology like video conferencing, shared online documents or information, WebEOC, phones, and email to connect PIOs. A hybrid JIC blends elements of an in-person and virtual JIC. Some participants are in the physical JIC while others participate remotely from their homes or agencies. PIOs coordinate in a hybrid JIC by using technology - like videoconferencing or shared online documents or information - and interacting in person.
- 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 influence 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.



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



Slide 9-13, JIC Location.



JIC Positions

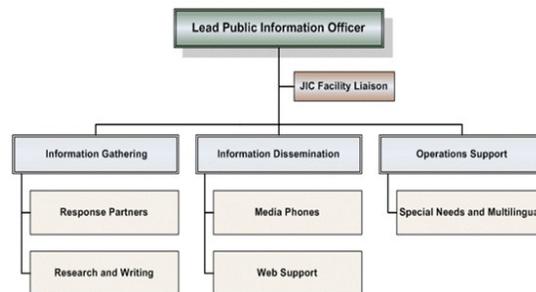
- Lead PIO
- Media Relations
- Media Analysis
- Research and Writing
- Field Operations
- Social/Multimedia
- Special Events/Projects
- Broadcast, Photo, Video
- Administration
- Logistics

Slide 9-14, JIC Positions.



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



Slide 9-15, A “Lead” PIO.

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

- 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.



JIC Position Descriptions

Information Gathering/Verification

Gather facts to display on status boards; monitor media; analyze & respond to media and social media; respond to rumors

External Communication

Produce products for external use (graphics, photos, news releases, etc) and get approval from JIC manager; manage incident information on website(s)

Media Relations

Identify key media outlets; document and track media inquiries; maintain media contact list; manage media calls; promote story ideas

Multimedia Team

Maintain & update social media; track and manage questions/comments; monitor incident info on partner websites/social

Slide 9-16, JIC Position Descriptions.

JIC organization will differ depending on the size and complexity of the incident. Typical positions and their responsibilities in a JIC include the following:

JIC Manager/Deputy JIC Manager

- Develop and release public information about the incident.
- Advise EOC supervisor on public information issues.
- Attend Command Staff briefings and share information with JIC staff.
- Oversee gathering, analysis of information
- Oversee media monitoring and trends
- Oversee identification and correction of false information or rumors
- Supervise JIC activities and staff.
- Develop and implement public information strategies and operating schedules.
- Coordinate internal JIC information flow.
- Train and assign JIC staff to roles.
- Manage JIC demobilization and ensure proper documentation.



Information Gathering and Verification Team

- Gather facts and display them on status boards.
- Monitor media and social media for reports and rumors.
- Identify and address rumors and misinformation.
- Analyze and respond to media/social media reports.
- Collect incident information from EOC, field responders
- Respond quickly to breaking news and gather information.

External Communications Team

- Develop written products (news releases, advisories, social media posts, etc.)
- Manage incident website and social media accounts.
- Take and disseminate photos and videos.
- Produce graphics and other content for the incident.

Media Relations Team

- Manage media inquiries and briefings.
- Maintain media lists and respond to inquiries.
- Disseminate approved materials to media.
- Promote story ideas and track inquiries.

Multi-Media Management

- Manage JIC social media activities and website updates.
- Monitor external websites, blogs, and chat rooms for misinformation.
- Address concerns and misinformation on official social platforms or websites.

Governmental Affairs/Executive/VIP Coordination Lead

- Coordinate business continuity calls and VIP tours.
- Execute proclamations and advise on employee messaging.
- Provide incident information to leadership and VIPs.
- Collaborate with VIP PIOs for news conference messaging.



JIC Logistics

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



Slide 9-17 JIC Logistics.



JIC Liaison

Shares incident information with local partners and serves as primary point of contact for questions or requests from:

- Tribal
- Private Sector
- Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)
- State/Federal partners
- Elected officials



Slide 9-18, JIC Liaisons.

The Liaison Officer:

Serves as the single point of contact (POC) for representatives of government departments and agencies—state, local, tribal and territorial (SLTT) and Federal—as well as for jurisdictions, Nongovernmental Organizations (NGO), private sector organizations, and other cooperating agencies and organizations

Speaks on behalf of the Incident Commander (IC) and Emergency Operations Center (EOC) leadership

Ensures that those who are not part of the command staff but who contribute to an incident’s prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery receive appropriate information and exchange communications with the Incident Management Team (IMT) or EOC staff.

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.



Other JIC Positions

- Resource Manager
- Reports Specialists
- Special Events/Project/VIP
- Translation/Interpretation Specialist



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Slide 9-19, Other JIC Positions.

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.



Dealing With Stress

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

- Cognitive
- Emotional
- Physical
- Behavioral



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Slide 9-20, Dealing with Stress.



Module Summary

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Agency

21

Module Summary

In this module, we discussed:

- Difference between JIS and JIC
- Criteria for JIC activation
- JIC functions, roles, and positions
- Dealing with stress



Slide 9-21, Module Summary.



Reference List

[Joint Information System Toolkit](https://preptoolkit.fema.gov/web/nims-toolkit/jis): <https://preptoolkit.fema.gov/web/nims-toolkit/jis>.

[Crisis Counseling Assistance & Training Program](https://www.fema.gov/fact-sheet/crisis-counseling-assistance-training-program): <https://www.fema.gov/fact-sheet/crisis-counseling-assistance-training-program>.



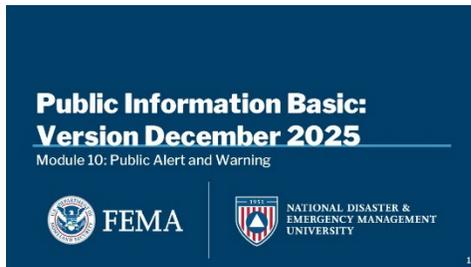
Module
10

Public Alert and Warning

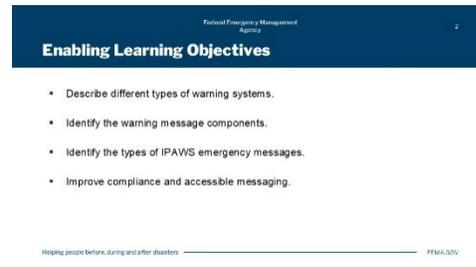


Administration

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Slide 10-1, Module 10: Public Alert and Warning.



Slide 10-2, Enabling Learning Objectives.

Duration

4 hours; 30 minutes.

Terminal Learning Objective (TLO)

By the end of this module, participants will be able to identify and apply warning messages during an incident.

Enabling Learning Objectives (ELOs)

By the end of this module, participants will be able to...

1. Describe different types of warning systems.
2. Identify the warning message components.
3. Identify the types of IPAWS emergency messages.
4. Improving compliance and accessible messaging.



Describe different types of warning systems.

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Types of Warning Systems

- **Outdoor warning sirens**
- **Emergency Alert System (EAS)** – 1,800-character messages sent to radio, television, satellite, and cable systems
- **Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA)** – 90- and 360-character messages sent to cell phones
- **NOAA Weather Radio** – 24/7 broadcast of emergency weather information
- **Local notification systems** – Email, text, phone, highway signs or subscription-based alerts
- **Social media and online tools** – Agency websites, X (Twitter), Facebook, etc.



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Slide 10-3, Types of Warning Systems.

- Personal mobile devices/short text messages
- Email/messages to local distribution lists
- Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA)
- Recorded messages (manual or automatic)



Warning Systems

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



Slide 10-4, Warning Systems.



Emergency Messages

Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA)

- 90- and 360-character messages to cell phones



Emergency Alert System (EAS)

- 1,800-character message to radio, television, satellite TV, and cable systems



Slide 10-5, Emergency Messages.

Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEAs) are short emergency messages from authorized Federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial public alerting authorities that can be broadcast from cell towers to any WEA-enabled mobile device in a locally targeted area. Wireless providers primarily use cell broadcast technology for WEA message delivery. WEA is a partnership among FEMA, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), and wireless providers to enhance public safety.

WEAs can be sent to your mobile device when you may be in harm's way, without the need to download an app or subscribe to a service. WEAs are messages that warn the public of an impending natural or human-made disaster. The messages are short and can provide immediate, life-saving information. WHAT IS THE SMEM GUIDANCE TOOL?

Types of Wireless Emergency Alerts

- National Alerts are a special class of alerts only sent during a national emergency.
- Imminent Threat Alerts include natural or human-made disasters, extreme weather, active shooters, and other threatening emergencies that are current or emerging.
- Public Safety Alerts contain information about a threat that may not be imminent or after an imminent threat has occurred. Public safety alerts are less severe than imminent threat alerts.
- America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response (AMBER) Alerts are urgent bulletins issued in child-abduction cases. Rapid and effective public alerts often play a crucial role in returning a missing child safely. An AMBER Alert instantly enables the entire community to assist in the search for and safe recovery of the child.
- Opt-in Test Messages assess the capability of state and local officials to send their WEAs. The message will state that this is TEST.



The Emergency Alert System (EAS) is a national public warning system commonly used by state and local authorities to deliver important emergency information, such as weather and AMBER alerts, to affected communities. EAS Participants—radio and television broadcasters, cable systems, satellite radio and television providers, and wireline video providers—deliver local alerts on a voluntary basis, but they are required to provide the capability for the President to address the public during a national emergency.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the FCC, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Weather Service (NWS) work collaboratively to maintain the EAS and Wireless Emergency Alerts, which are the two main components of the national public warning system and enable authorities at all levels of government to send urgent emergency information to the public.

FEMA is responsible for any national-level activation, tests, and exercises of the EAS.

The FCC's role includes establishing technical standards for EAS Participants, procedures for EAS Participants to follow in the event the system is activated, and testing protocols for EAS Participants.

Alerts are created by authorized Federal, state, and local authorities, typically through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Integrated Public Alert and Warning System. The FCC does not create or transmit EAS alerts.

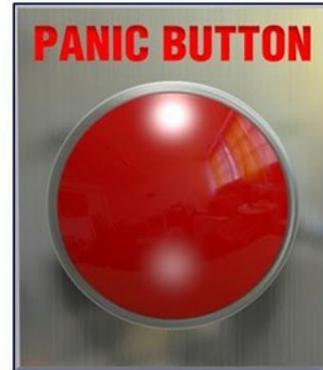
Most EAS alerts originate from the National Weather Service in response to severe weather events, but an increasing number of state, local, territorial, and tribal authorities also send alerts. In addition, the NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards network, the only federally sponsored radio transmission of warning information to the public, is part of the EAS.



Emergency Messages Guidance

When developing emergency alerts:

- **Be Specific** – Include who, what, where, and when.
- **Be Clear** – Use plain language; avoid jargon or acronyms.
- **Be Accessible** – Ensure messages reach those with disabilities or limited English proficiency.
- **Be Objective** – Stick to verifiable facts.
- **Be Complete** – Include all protective action instructions to avoid “milling” (delays due to uncertainty)



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Slide 10-6, Emergency Messages Guidance.



Message Anatomy – Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA)

1. Source
2. Hazard
3. Location – Personalized
4. Consequences
5. Protective Action Required
6. Protective Action Completion Time
7. How Protective Actions Reduce Effects
8. Message Expiration Time



Slide 10-7, Message Anatomy – Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA).

Roles of FEMA and Alerting Authorities

- The Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) is a FEMA communications system made available to Federal, state, local, tribal and territorial (FSLTT) officials for warning the public of an imminent threat and/or public safety incident and providing information on corresponding protective actions.
- FEMA's position on public Alert, Warning and Notification (AWN) is that emergencies are local and therefore it is the responsibility and discretion of elected local officials, or their designees, to provide timely notification to their jurisdiction(s). The decision to issue a Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) to the public is a matter of local emergency official communication plans, policies and procedures.
- FEMA does not provide nor place limitations or restrictions on criteria for authorized Alerting Authorities (AAs) to issue a WEA to the public. FEMA does not monitor, review, modify, approve, or disapprove the message text content of WEAs drafted and disseminated by AAs¹. Alert content, time of transmission, utilized event code, targeted area, duration, and the decision to update or cancel an AWN is the sole responsibility of an AA.

Compose Effective WEA Messages

- Effective WEA messages include sufficient information for the public to validate the incident and risk to guide and urge the public to take appropriate protective action.
- Effective WEA messages include and clearly communicate: the trusted source sender; description of event; location of incident; protective action to be taken; guidance/expiration time or duration of the incident; and a URL or phone number to direct people to more information.



- Many mobile phones in use today support WEA messages of up to 360 characters. FEMA encourages AAs to use the longer message space to provide more complete information, and to include a Web address if more detailed and/or visual information will assist the public to take appropriate action. A basic 90-character message requirement, in addition to the optional 360-character message, is in place for the foreseeable future as wireless carriers complete modernization of their networks.
- WEA supports English and Spanish languages. FEMA recommends including a Spanish language version of your WEA for a broader reach.

Establish Protocol to Assist Decision-Makers

- Proper protocol must be established and should be documented to assist decision-makers in determining whether to send a WEA. This includes reviewing criteria applicable to local threats and hazards in accordance with local emergency plans, policies, and procedures:
 - Does a situation require the public to take immediate action to avoid or mitigate damage to life and property?
 - Is there a high degree of probability a situation will occur, and you need to warn the public quickly?
 - Is there a missing and endangered person that the public should be aware of?
 - Does the public need to be notified of a public safety situation such as 911 outage, boil water advisory, or ongoing response or recovery resources?
 - Does the event demand immediate notification, regardless of time of day, or can it wait?
 - Will the distinctive audible tones that accompany a WEA disturb recipients or disrupt activities unnecessarily? Mobile phone behavior and the sound accompanying a WEA are intentionally disruptive to call attention to an urgent situation and may alarm an individual and the public.
 - Approximately half of mobile phones do not yet support WEA location-based “enhanced geo-targeting.” It is likely that many mobile phones that are 20+ miles away from a targeted alert area will receive a WEA intended for the public inside the alert target area.
- FEMA advises Alerting Authorities and Alerting Administrators to develop and implement robust policies and procedures, coupled with routine training and exercise(s), using the FEMA IPAWS Technical Support Services training and demonstration environment.
- The IPAWS Office within FEMA’s National Continuity Programs provides guidance on the effective use of IPAWS services. Upon request, the IPAWS Office can review Alerting Authorities’ plans and may recommend ways to eliminate gaps and improve internal safeguards.
- When issuing a WEA, AAs must review pertinent message fields before transmission. Rushed alerts with poor wording can be ineffective and further complicate an incident. To avoid errors, pre-script messages with as much information as possible before an event.
- The Alerting Authority should establish security procedures to prevent inadvertent or unauthorized alert transmission. All Alerting Authorities should have a plan to follow up and correct any alert sent in error.



Example WEA Message

City Police: Floodwaters are approaching Central City. The area along both sides of the Murky River from Main St to First Ave will flood. Forecast: 20 feet above flood stage. Move 6+ blocks away by 5 PM. Message expires 11 PM May 28. [URL]

Slide 10-8, Example WEA Message.

City Police: Floodwaters are approaching Central City. The area on both sides of the Murky River from Main St to First Ave will flood. Floodwater is forecast 20 feet above flood stage. Persons and cars near the river will be washed downstream. Move 6+ blocks away from the river by 5PM to avoid injury. This message expires at 11PM May 28, 2025. url



Identify the types of IPAWS emergency messages.

Federal Emergency Management Agency

Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS)

9

Developed by: FEMA in coordination with the FCC and NOAA

Purpose: Create a reliable, flexible, and integrated national alert and warning system.

Components:

- Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA)
- Emergency Alert System (EAS)
- NOAA Weather Radio
- Internet and digital pathways



Slide 10-9, Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS).

The Integrated Public Alert & Warning System (IPAWS) is the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) national system for local alerting that provides authenticated emergency and public safety information to the public through mobile phones using Wireless Emergency Alerts, to radio and television via the Emergency Alert System, and on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Weather Radio.



IPAWS VIDEO



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Slide 10-10, IPAWS Video.

[IPAWS Video Link](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZN-FABv9Z0) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZN-FABv9Z0)

FEMA IPAWS Video Transcript

For the past 70 years, the National Emergency Alert System has played a crucial role in keeping our community safe and informed.

If there's an emergency today, are you and your family prepared?

Do you know what's right around the corner?

IPAWS is continuing to evolve, keeping up with the latest advancements in technology so that we are always prepared for what comes our way.

Through devices like your TV, phone, and radio, you can be alerted no matter where you are, anywhere, anytime.

From local notices to national emergencies to regular testing, IPAWS is America's trusted system for local emergency alerts.

IPAWS has a variety of alerting pathways that are always ready to make sure that you get the information you need to act in emergencies.

Wireless Emergency Alerts or WEA send verified messages right to your mobile phone.

The Emergency Alert System or EAS for sure delivers important information from trusted officials right to your radio or television.



And NOAA Weather radios can deliver both weather and non-weather-related emergency messages via these special devices.

Through IPAWS, alerting authorities can send alerts to specific geographic areas, ensuring that you have the information you need to take action.

In an emergency, every second counts.

IPAWS is always ready to deliver simple and trusted alerts that you can rely on, delivering authenticated messages and lifesaving information.

No matter what devices are nearby, you can stay informed.

IPAWS, the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System, FEMA's national system for local alerting provides authenticated emergency and lifesaving information to the public.

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



IPAWS Messaging

IPAWS messages fall into three broad categories:

- **Emergency Alert System (EAS)**
- **Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA)**
- **Non-Weather Emergency Messages (NWEM)**

Slide 10-11, IPAWS Messaging.

The Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) messages are categorized into three broad categories to ensure effective communication and alerting of the public during emergencies:

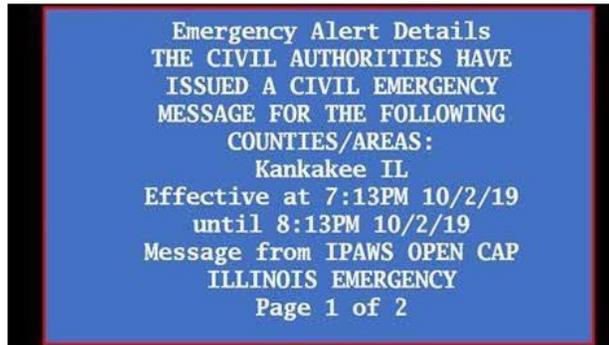
- **Emergency Alert System (EAS):** This category includes alerts that are broadcasted through radio and television to inform the public about significant emergencies, such as natural disasters or terrorist threats.
- **Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA):** WEA messages are sent to mobile phones and are designed to be brief and clear, providing critical information to the public in real-time.
- **Non-Weather Emergency Messages (NWEM):** NWEMs are used for non-weather-related emergencies, such as public health alerts or evacuation orders. These messages are also delivered through IPAWS and are tailored to the specific needs of the public.

These categories ensure that the public receives timely and relevant information to protect their safety and well-being during emergencies.



IPAWS EVENT CODES

- Civil Emergency Message
- Civil Danger Warning
- Emergency Action Notification
- Shelter in Place Warning
- Local Area Emergency
- Hazardous Materials Warning
- Nuclear Power Plant Warning
- Radiological Hazard Warning
- 911 Telephone Outage Emergency



Slide 10-12, IPAWS EVENT CODES.

WEA requires use of an event code. However, the event code is not displayed on cellular devices. IPAWS state signatories approve their respective AAs for specific event codes during the IPAWS application process. AAs should understand their event code permissions and select an event code based upon internal procedures and processes.

Selecting an Event Code

- Understand event code meaning and purpose (please see Annex 4).
- Be familiar with permitted event codes in case the alerting software does not restrict event code selection to certificate permissions.
- Include event code per incident and internal procedures/processes.
- Create a template for each event code or type of incident.
- Be aware that event codes do not display on cellular devices.



NOAA/NWS Messaging

- **Warning:** Hazardous weather or hydrologic event is occurring, imminent or likely. A warning means weather conditions pose a threat to life or property.
- **Advisory:** Hazardous weather or hydrologic event is occurring, imminent or likely. Advisories are for less serious conditions than warnings, that cause significant inconvenience and if caution is not exercised, could lead to situations that may threaten life or property.
- **Watch:** Hazardous weather or hydrologic event has increased significantly, but its occurrence, location or timing is still uncertain. People should have a plan of action in case a storm threatens and they should listen for later information and possible warnings especially when planning travel or outdoor activities.



Slide 10-13, NOAA/NWS Messaging.

- A warning is issued when a hazardous weather or hydrologic event is occurring, imminent or likely. A warning means weather conditions pose a threat to life or property. People in the path of the storm need to take protective action.
- An advisory is issued when a hazardous weather or hydrologic event is occurring, imminent or likely. Advisories are for less serious conditions than warnings, that cause significant inconvenience and if caution is not exercised, could lead to situations that may threaten life or property.
- A watch is used when the risk of a hazardous weather or hydrologic event has increased significantly, but its occurrence, location or timing is still uncertain. It is intended to provide enough lead time so those who need to set their plans in motion can do so. A watch means that hazardous weather is possible. People should have a plan of action in case a storm threatens and they should listen for later information and possible warnings especially when planning travel or outdoor activities.



State and Local Alert Messages

Most commonly used alerts with local variations:

- Amber Alert - Child Abduction requiring immediate public assistance.
- Silver Alert - Missing senior citizen or vulnerable adults.
- Blue Alert - Suspect information who have injured or killed a law enforcement officer.
- Purple Alert - Missing persons with developmental disabilities or mental health challenges.

Does your jurisdiction use any other alerts?

Slide 10-14, State and Local Alert Messages.

Public alert systems inform individuals about urgent situations that could affect their safety or well-being. These systems disseminate time-sensitive information across broad geographic areas, enabling the public to take appropriate action. Often, these alerts are identified by color-coded names, which helps in quick recognition and understanding of the specific nature of the emergency. The purpose of these systems is to enhance public safety and awareness.

Amber Alerts

- An Amber Alert is an emergency message issued to quickly disseminate information about abducted children. Its primary goal is to enlist public assistance in locating the child and apprehending the abductor. Law enforcement agencies issue these alerts when specific criteria are met.
- For an Amber Alert to be issued, law enforcement must have a reasonable belief that an abduction has occurred and that the child is in imminent danger of serious bodily injury or death. Sufficient descriptive information about the victim and the abduction, such as details about the suspect or a vehicle, must be available to aid in the child's recovery. The abducted child must be 17 years of age or younger, and their information, including a child abduction flag, must be entered into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) system.



Silver Alerts

- A Silver Alert quickly disseminates information about missing vulnerable adults, particularly those with cognitive impairments like Alzheimer's disease or dementia. The purpose of these alerts is to help locate and safely return individuals who may be disoriented or in danger due to their condition. Law enforcement agencies issue Silver Alerts.
- Criteria for issuing a Silver Alert include the missing person being an adult, aged 60 or older, or having a diagnosed cognitive impairment. Law enforcement must determine that the individual is in danger due to their age, health, disability, or environmental conditions, and that public dissemination of information could aid in their safe recovery.

Blue Alerts

- A Blue Alert is issued to quickly disseminate information when a law enforcement officer is seriously injured or killed in the line of duty, or when there is an imminent and credible threat to law enforcement personnel. This alert aids in the apprehension of dangerous suspects involved in such incidents.
- Criteria for a Blue Alert include confirmation that a law enforcement officer has been killed or seriously injured or is missing in connection with official duties. The investigating agency must determine that the suspect poses a serious risk or threat to the public or other law enforcement personnel. Sufficient descriptive information about the suspect, such as a physical description or vehicle details, must be available for public dissemination to assist in their apprehension.

Purple Alert

- A Purple Alert is a public notification system for finding missing adults. Activated when an individual 18 or older, not qualifying for a Silver Alert, disappears. It locates persons with diagnosed cognitive impairments, intellectual or developmental disabilities, brain injuries, or other physical, mental, or emotional disabilities not related to substance abuse or dementia. The system mobilizes public assistance when the missing person may be in danger or unable to return safely.
- Purple Alerts require specific criteria verified by law enforcement. The missing individual must be 18 or older and not qualify for a Silver Alert. They must have an intellectual or developmental disability, brain injury, or other physical, mental, or emotional disability not linked to substance abuse or Alzheimer's disease.
- Law enforcement must conclude the disappearance poses a credible threat of immediate danger or serious bodily harm. The individual must only be returnable to safety through law enforcement intervention. A detailed description, suitable for distribution, must be available, and their information entered into a state crime information center.



Identify the warning message components.

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Warning Message Components

Source – Who is issuing the message (must be credible).

Hazard – What is the threat or danger.

Location – Where it is happening or will happen.

Time Frame – When it will happen or how long it will last.

Guidance – What people should do.

Consequences – What will happen if they don't act.

Reassurance – What is being done / how the public will be helped.

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Slide 10-15, Warning Message Components.

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?



Warning Message Example

This is the Central City Fire Department. **(SOURCE)**

A hazardous materials release has occurred near 36th Avenue and Y Street. **(HAZARD) (LOCATION)**

This warning remains in effect until 4:30 p.m. today or until further notice. **(TIME FRAME)**

Residents within one mile of this area should shelter in place immediately — close all windows and doors and turn off air conditioning or heating systems. **(GUIDANCE)**

Exposure to these vapors could cause serious respiratory illness. **(CONSEQUENCES)**

Fire, EMS and HazMat teams are on scene working to contain the spill. **(REASSURANCE)**

Updates will be provided through local media, Alert Central City, and our official social media accounts.



Slide 10-16, Warning Message Example.

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.



Message Design Dashboard

MDD-Based IPAWS Message Templates (WEA/EAS)

- Standardized templates for **creating accurate, timely emergency messages**
- Reduces errors during **time-sensitive emergencies**
- Pre-filled fields for **hazard, location, timing, and recommended actions**
- Saves **critical time** and minimizes **conflicting messages**

[IPAWS Message Design Dashboard \(MDD\)](https://atp.aws.fema.gov/mdd/) (<https://atp.aws.fema.gov/mdd/>)

Slide 10-17, Message Design Dashboard.

The Message Design Dashboard (MDD) allows Alerting Authorities to more rapidly draft effective messages – that is, those that are complete, clear, certain and consistent, with the power to motivate action.

Alerting Authorities input pertinent information about their emergency into the MDD, which will automatically produce a draft 90- and 360-character alert based on cutting-edge best practices in crisis psychology and social science research. The MDD is informed by a database of content for more than 50 hazards across a range of domains and includes hazard impact statements and protective action guidance that has been vetted with subject matter experts and reviewed by communication scholars.

New for April 2025, MDD version 2.0 includes categories to facilitate messaging for missing and endangered persons as well as all-clear messages, plus improved functionality for both desktop and mobile users.

MDD: <https://atp.aws.fema.gov/>.



MDD Template Example - CURFEW ORDER

90-Character Message Template

[AGENCY NAME]: CURFEW in effect for [LOCATION] due to [HAZARD] until [TIME]. (76 characters)

360-Character Message Template

[AGENCY NAME]: A curfew is in effect for [LOCATION] due to [HAZARD]. It is effective from [START TIME] until [END TIME]. Stay indoors and avoid travel unless it's an emergency. Call [XXXXXX-XXXX] or visit [WEBSITE OR SOCIAL MEDIA] for updates. Stay informed via local news, radio or official channels. (303 characters)

Slide 10-18, MDD Template Example - CURFEW ORDER.



Improving compliance and accessible messaging.

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Improving Compliance

- Use **clear, consistent**, and **credible** messages.
- Repeat warnings from **trusted sources**.
- Include **specific instructions** and **locations**.
- Address **pets, livestock, and family safety**.
- Encourage **two-way communication** and follow-up updates.



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Slide 10-19, Improving Compliance.



Creating Accessible Messages

- Use **plain language** and avoid abbreviations.
- Ensure **audio matches text** for all platforms.
- Verify **text-to-speech compatibility**.
- Include captions, alternate text and descriptive audio when possible.



Slide 10-20, Creating Accessible Messages.



Public Response Myths: Fake or Fact

- Myth:** People panic during emergencies.
Fact: Most act rationally and seek additional information.
- Myth:** False alarms make people ignore future warnings.
Fact: People typically evaluate each new warning independently.
- Myth:** Short, simple warnings are most effective.
Fact: People need enough detail to understand what’s happening and what to do.
- Myth:** Everyone knows what sirens mean.
Fact: Few do—always explain signals in your messages.

Slide 10-21, Public Response Myths: Fake or Fact.

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 consider 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.



Activity 10.1: Warning Message

Instructions:

1. Review your assigned scenario in Worksheet 10.1.
2. Working with your table - develop a warning message.
3. Identify dissemination methods and delivery strategies.
4. Present your message to the class for discussion.

This exercise is scheduled for 15 minutes before report out.

Slide 10-22, Activity 10.1: Warning Message.

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 10.1 below.

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 p.m.

Scenario 2: It 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.



Module Summary

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Module Summary

In this module we discussed:

- Types of warning systems.
- Emergency Message Guidance.
- Types of IPAWS emergency messages
- Components of emergency messages.



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Slide 10-23, Module Summary.



Reference List

[FEMA's Developing and Maintaining Emergency Operations Plans – Comprehensive Preparedness Guide \(CPG\) 101](https://www.fema.gov/pdf/about/divisions/npd/CPG_101_V2.pdf) (https://www.fema.gov/pdf/about/divisions/npd/CPG_101_V2.pdf)

[Warnings Research](https://www.osti.gov/servlets/purl/6137387) (https://www.osti.gov/servlets/purl/6137387)

[Writing Accessible Alerts and Warning Messages: “Carl and Ruth Shapiro Family National Center for Accessible Media”](https://www.wgbh.org/foundation/services/ncam) (https://www.wgbh.org/foundation/services/ncam)

[IPAWS](https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/practitioners/integrated-public-alert-warning-system) (https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/practitioners/integrated-public-alert-warning-system)



Module

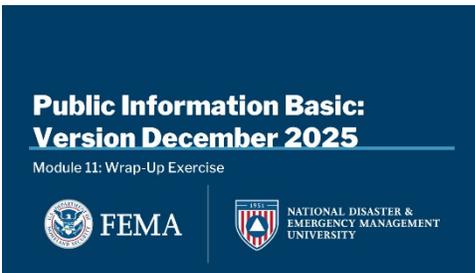
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Wrap-Up Exercise

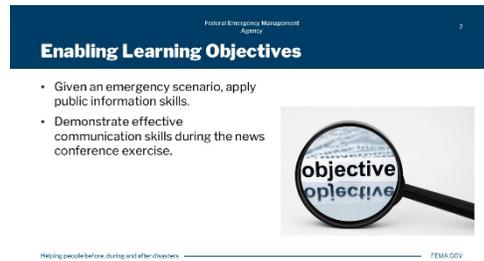


Administration

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Slide 11-1, Module 11: Wrap-Up Exercise.



Slide 11-2, Enabling Learning Objectives.

Duration

4 hours; 30 minutes.

Terminal Learning Objective (TLO)

By the end of this module, participants will be able to apply public information skills to an emergency scenario.

Enabling Learning Objectives (ELOs)

By the end of this module, participants will be able to...

1. Apply public information skills to an emergency scenario.
2. Demonstrate effective communication skills during the news conference exercise.



Demonstrate effective communication skills during the news conference exercise.

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Activity 11.1: News Conference Activity

This is your opportunity to demonstrate everything you've learned — **media relations, public speaking, message discipline, and teamwork** — under pressure.



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Slide 11-3, Activity 11.1: News Conference Activity.



Activity 11.1: News Conference Activity

Work in teams to plan and conduct a realistic news conference based on your assigned scenario.

1. Assign Roles

- One member serves as PIO to coordinate and manage the conference.
- Others represent key agencies or organizations.
- Decide who delivers the initial briefing and who joins the Q&A panel, even if not part of the opening statement.

2. Prepare Your Briefing

- Apply techniques from this module to craft clear, verified, and consistent messages.
- Rehearse timing, delivery, and speaker transitions.
- Anticipate media questions and plan responses.

3. Deliver Under Pressure

- Conduct your news conference within the time limit.
- Show professionalism, coordination, and message control throughout.

Slide 11-4, Activity 11.1: News Conference Activity.

This is your chance to apply everything you've learned—from media relations to message discipline to on-camera composure.

Treat it like the real thing: The goal is to inform, not perform. Accuracy, calmness, and teamwork matter more than perfection.

Stay in your lane: Speak only to what your role or agency represents. Defer questions outside your scope.

Coordinate and communicate: Work as a unified team—brief each other, plan your transitions, and stay consistent with your key messages.

Control the message: Stick to verified facts, correct misinformation, and maintain professionalism even under tough questioning.

Learn from the experience: Mistakes here are learning opportunities. Focus on growth, confidence, and clarity under pressure.

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.
- 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.

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.

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; SLUDMAR Earthquake

On today's 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 hazmat 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 #4: 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 #5: 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 sidewalk 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 #6: Protest turns deadly

A crowd of nearly 500 people gather at 5 p.m. outside Sludmar City Hall to protest a recent court decision that rolled back environmental protections for a 50-acre section of the Sludmar Community Forest. People carry signs, chant, and move through the park peacefully.

As evening falls, tension grows between a small group of protesters and two Sludmar police officers blocking traffic. Someone throws a bottle. Protesters start shouting at each other and at the officers. Shortly after 7 p.m., three gunshots ring out near the park. One police officer is grazed by a bullet and one person inside the park is critically wounded.

Some protesters flee the scene while others begin recording the unfolding scene on their phones. Officers call for backup and medical aid and the park is soon flooded by ambulances and additional police vehicles. Police secure a perimeter around the park as paramedics transport both the injured officer and wounded protester to a nearby hospital. Video of the incident soon appears on local social media pages prompting local media outlets to rush to the scene.

Scenario #7 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 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 #8: Wildland-Urban Fire

A lightning-strike-ignited wildfire in Tucker National Forest has burned more than 200 acres and high winds are driving the fire straight toward Sludmar. The fire is expected to reach President's Canyon by 3 p.m. - four hours from now. Heavy smoke is reducing visibility along Highway 42, the primary evacuation route, and air quality has reached unhealthy levels.

Sludmar has activated its Emergency Operations Center and issued evacuation orders for neighborhoods and farms closest to President's Canyon. Sludmar Unified School District has notified parents of its decision to dismiss President's Canyon Middle School students early, at 11:30 a.m. Fire crews are working to cut containment lines, but steep terrain and shifting winds make the blaze difficult to control.



Shelters have opened at Sludmar Elementary School and Sludmar High School; Sludmar Community Center is open as a pet-friendly shelter. Nearby Central City Fairgrounds has opened its facility for livestock and large animal evacuations.

Scenario #9: SLUDMAR City Scandal

A routine state financial audit of Sludmar revealed several instances of illegal and unethical procurement practices involving city equipment and services for the Fire and Public Works Departments. The allegations are serious and wide-ranging, including contracts awarded to friends and relatives of the Mayor, procurement of substandard fire and police equipment, and violations of the city's competitive bidding process. Some reports even suggest sexual favors were exchanged in return for promises of city contracts.

The state Auditor's office made the City Manager aware of the issue prior to publishing its findings on the state website. The City Manager, in turn, notified the City Attorney's Office and state ethics officials. However, details of the complaint were leaked to local media, and reporters are already seeking comment.

The situation is escalating rapidly. Phone calls and emails are flooding City Hall as residents demand accountability and call for resignations. Rumors are spreading across social media. City employees are on edge, unsure who might be implicated, and the Mayor's office has gone silent - refusing to respond to reporter calls or emails.

Scenario #10: Mardi Gras

The city's annual Mardi Gras Festival is just days away. The event features a parade through downtown, ending at City Hall with speeches and a street fair lasting into the evening.

In previous years, the celebration has been marred by unruly crowds resulting in multiple injuries to police, fire, and festival attendees. Arrests for public intoxication, vandalism, and assault have become common, prompting city leaders to implement new safety measures this year, including restricted alcohol zones, increased police presence, and earlier road closures.

Despite these precautions, law enforcement has received credible threats on social media suggesting organized disruptions and potential acts of violence during the parade. Several online posts have called for "retaliation" against city officials and police officers for what some describe as "heavy-handed crowd control" in past years.

City leadership has called for an urgent news conference to address these emerging threats, reassure the public, and outline new security and communication protocols to ensure public safety during the festival.



Exercise Brief-Out

- What went well during your news conference?
- What challenges did your team face while coordinating messages and roles?
- How effectively did you manage time, transitions, and media questions?
- What strategies helped you maintain professionalism and message control under pressure?
- How can you apply what you learned here to a real-world situation?

Slide 11-5, Exercise Brief-Out.



Module Summary

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Module Summary

In this module, we discussed:

- How the tools and techniques discussed in this course could be applied to emergency public information activities
- Demonstrated effective communication skills during the news conference exercise



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Slide 11-6, Module Summary.



Reference List

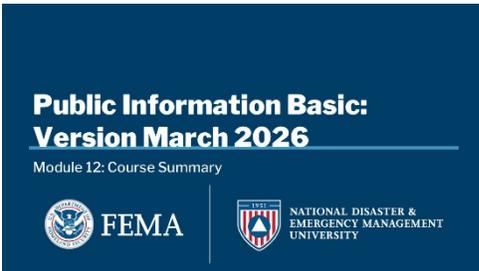
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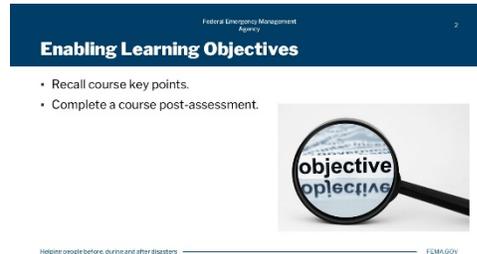
Module
12
Course Summary



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Slide 12-1, Module 12: Course Summary.



Slide 12-2, Enabling Learning Objectives.

Duration

1 hour; 30 minutes

Terminal Learning Objective (TLO)

By the end of this module, participants will be able to understand PIO roles and responsibilities and how they function before, during, and after an incident.

Enabling Learning Objectives (ELOs)

By the end of this module, participants will be able to...

1. Recall course key points.
2. Complete a course post-assessment.



Recall Course Key Points

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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.



Helping people before, during and after disasters

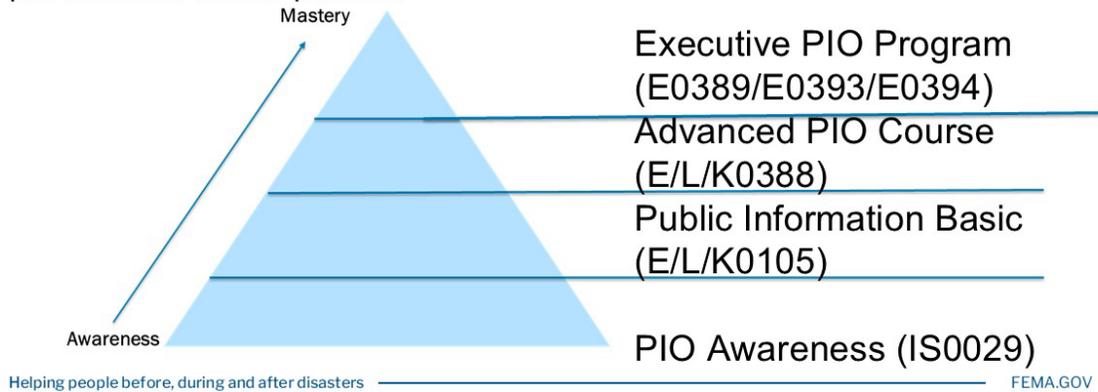
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Slide 12-3, Did We Meet Our Course Goal to...?



Continuing Your Development

What will you do to continue your professional development?



Slide 12-4, Continuing Your Development

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

- ELK0105: Public Information Basics
- E0388: Advanced PIO
- E0389/393/394: Master Public Information Officer Program

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

- IS-100.b: Introduction to Incident Command System (or ICS course for specific specialty: healthcare, public works, etc.)
- IS-702.a: NIMS Public Information Systems
- IS-909: Community Preparedness: Implementing Simple Activities for Everyone
- IS- 42 Social Media in Emergency Management
- IS-100.b Introduction to Incident Command System (ICS) (or ICS course for specific specialty: healthcare, public works, etc.)
- IS-200.b 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.a National Incident Management System (NIMS), an Introduction
- IS-702.a NIMS Public Information Systems
- IS-800.b National Response Framework, An Introduction



Complete a Post Course Assessment

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Assessment

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



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Slide 12-5, Assessment.

Purpose: To assess knowledge gained through this training

Estimated Time: 30 minutes.

Instructions:

- Take the post-course assessment. This is an individual effort.
- You have 30 minutes.



Feedback

Please complete the course evaluation form.



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Slide 12-6, Feedback.



Module Summary

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Module Summary

In this module, we:

- Discussed key points in each module.
- Completed a course post-assessment.



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Slide 12-7, Module Summary.



Reference List

[Emergency Management Professional Program \(EMPP\)](https://training.fema.gov/programs/empp/): <https://training.fema.gov/programs/empp/>.

[Public Information Office \(PIO\) Program](https://training.fema.gov/programs/empp/pio/): <https://training.fema.gov/programs/empp/pio/>.

[Independent Study Homepage](https://training.fema.gov/is/): <https://training.fema.gov/is/>

[National Domestic Preparedness Consortium](https://ndpc.us/): <https://ndpc.us/>.