E/L/K0105 Resource Guide

Resource Guide 3
Purpose of the Resource Guide 3
Glossary of General Terms 3
Acronyms 7
Glossary of Social Media Terms 8
Writing It Right 13
Arranging Information in Logical Order 13
Avoiding Grammar Pitfalls 15
Spotting Punctual Problems 16
Choosing the Right Word 17
Tackling Troublesome Words 18
Writing For the Web 19
Tips for Managing Media Staging Areas 21
How To Build Effective Relationships with the Media 22
Tips for Creating and Maintaining a Media List 25
Do's And Don'ts for Online Media Room 26
Go-Kit Checklist 27
Networking Contact Sheet 30
On-Camera Performance, News Conferences, and Site Logistics 32
Do's and Don'ts for On-camera Performance 32
Nonverbal Communication Tips 33
Managing Your Nervousness 34
Tips for Effective News Conferences 34
Tips for Managing Briefing Logistics 35
On-Scene Nightmares 36
Types of JICs 37
PIO and JIC Activities in Response to an Evolving Incident 38
JIC Readiness Assessment 40
The 8-Step Process 48
Strategic Communications 8-Step Process 49
Incident Action Planning 51
THE PLANNING "P": THE INCIDENT ACTION PLANNING PROCESS 53

Risk and Crisis Communication Resources 54
Message Planning Outline 55
Organizing Messages Using the Rule of Three 55
Activity Workbook 56
Activity 1.1: Introduction "Interviews" 56
Activity 2.1: Why Is It Important? 56
Activity 3.1: Public Awareness Campaign 56
Activity 4.1: Difficult Situations 60
Activity 5.1: Writing an External Product 63
Activity 5.2: Make it Social 67
Activity 6.1: On-Camera Interviews 69
Activity 7.1: Crisis Communications Part 1 71
Activity 7.2: Crisis Communications Part 2 73
Activity 7.3: Warning Message 75
Activity 9.1: Report-Outs 77
Activity 10.1: Warning Message 77
Activity 11.1: New Conference Activity 79
Exercise Brief-Out 82

Resource Guide

Purpose of the Resource Guide

The purpose of this Guide is to provide tools, processes, templates, guidance, resources, and activities to participants taking the E/L/K0105 Public Information Basic course. This Resource Guide was created for PIO Training Series participants in partnership with the National Disaster & Emergency Management University (NDEMU) and the National Fire Academy (NFA) to assist participants in finding PIO resources within the Guide itself and within other available resources. Course participants will use the resources in this Guide during course activities and as a reference or resource after the courses have been completed.

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

Glossary of General Terms

Term	Meaning
Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law	The stylebook used by most news media and schools of journalism (see Stylebook).
Crisis	A crisis is a major occurrence with a potentially negative outcome affecting an organization, company, or industry, as well as its audiences, products, services, and/or reputation. A crisis occurs unexpectedly, might not be in the organization's control, and, if left unaddressed, might threaten life, safety, or property, or cause irreparable harm to an organization's reputation or viability. A crisis lasts a finite period of time.
Crisis communication	Crisis communication is the dissemination of messages in response to a crisis that explain the severity of the situation and action steps that should be taken.
Emergency	An emergency is a subcategory of crisis that is characterized by an immediate threat to the health or safety of an individual, group, or community. An emergency requires those at risk to make the best possible decisions about their well-being within extreme time constraints, often with imperfect or incomplete information. In an emergency, the organization is usually not overtly judged as a possible participant in the creation of the event, although it may have an important role to play in mitigating its effects. The process of communicating about emergencies is addressed by emergency public information.

Term	Meaning
Emergency Public Information	Emergency public information is information developed and disseminated in anticipation of, during, or after an emergency to provide specific life- and health-saving information, including the severity of the situation and any action steps that individuals and communities should take.
Freedom of Information Act	The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) was signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson in 1966. This Act allows for the full or partial disclosure of information and documents of the U.S. Government, defines Federal agency records subject to disclosure, and outlines mandatory disclosure procedures. Information on the Freedom of Information Laws may be found at National Freedom of Information Coalition (https://www.nfoic.org/). Information on state Sunshine Laws may be found at National Freedom of Information Coalition State FOI (https://www.nfoic.org/map/).
Go-kit	A go-kit is what a PIO might need when functioning away from the normal place of operation (e.g., at the incident site) for an initial period of 12–24 hours. What is in a go-kit will vary from situation to situation and from person to person, but might include such items as a cell phone and charger, laptop computer, paper/pens/pencils, media, and agency contact lists, basic personal care items, etc.
Incident Command System	The Incident Command System (ICS) is a standardized, on-scene, all- hazard approach to incident management. It provides a common framework within which people can work together effectively, even when they are drawn from multiple agencies that do not routinely work together. ICS has been called a "first-on-scene" structure, where the first responder on the scene has charge of the scene until the incident has been declared resolved, a superior-ranking responder arrives on scene and seizes command, or the Incident Commander appoints another individual Incident Commander.
Joint Information Center	Joint Information Center (JIC) is a physical location with tools to enhance the flow of public information. By collocating PIOs, the JIC reduces the time needed for information release, enhances information coordination and analysis, reduces misinformation, maximizes resources, and helps build public confidence in response efforts.
Joint Information System	Joint Information System (JIS) is an information network of PIOs working together to deliver accurate and timely information to the public. The JIS provides a structure and system for developing and delivering coordinated interagency messages and for developing, recommending, and executing public information plans and strategies. The JIS can be as simple as two PIOs talking to each other on the phone about a news story that involves both of their agencies, or as complex as 150 PIOs working a major disaster.
Marketing	Marketing is identifying audience needs and communicating about/delivering products and services to meet those needs. Emphasis is on the sale of products or services (hence the term: market).

Term	Meaning
Media Pool	A media pool comprises one representative from each of the types of media (i.e., television, radio, print, Web) who will be allowed enter to a restricted area. These representatives are allowed enter with the understanding that any video, audio, or interviews they acquire will be shared with the rest of the media.
National Incident Management System	The National Incident Management System (NIMS) provides a systematic, proactive approach to guide departments and agencies at all levels of government, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector to work seamlessly to prevent, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of incidents—regardless of cause, size, location, or complexity—in order to reduce the loss of life and property and harm to the environment. NIMS works hand in hand with the National Response Framework (NRF). NIMS provides the template for managing incidents, while the NRF provides the structure and mechanisms for national-level policy for incident management.
National Response Framework	The National Response Framework (NRF) presents the guiding principles that enable all levels of domestic response partners to prepare for and provide a unified national response to disasters and emergencies. The NRF's coordinating structures are always in effect for implementation at any level and at any time for local, state, and national emergency or disaster response.
News Briefing	A news briefing is an exchange of information about a single topic that includes a question-and-answer session.
News Conference	A news conference is a gathering at which media representatives expect to be able to ask questions on a variety of topics.
Public Awareness Campaigns	Also called "public education," public awareness campaigns focus on informing the public about services that typically are not for sale. Public awareness campaigns are conducted by both government and nongovernmental organizations.
Public Information	Public information is information collected, assembled, or maintained by an organization in connection with the transaction of official business and available for dissemination to the public.
Public Relations	Public relations is managing the flow of information between an organization and its audiences, often to build rapport or positive public image.
Risk	A risk is the probability that a natural, technological, or civil threat to people, property, or the environment will occur.

Term	Meaning
Risk Communication	Risk communication is the design and delivery of information about a risk so that the public can take appropriate action. Risk communication is an opportunity when PIOs can deliver messages and establish credibility and trust.
Social Media	Social media is electronic communication (such as websites, X (formerly Twitter), or Facebook) that is used for social networking through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos).
Sound Bite	A short, striking, quotable statement that is well-suited to a television news program.
Stylebook	A stylebook (also called a style guide or style manual) is a set of standards prescribed for the designing and writing of documents for a specific publication, organization, or group. The AP Stylebook contains the guidelines for punctuation, capitalization, professional titles, etc., used by most news media.
Sunshine Laws	Most states have legislation—generally referred to as Sunshine Laws— that provides availability to state and local documents, much as the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) provides availability to Federal documents. Information on state Freedom of Information Laws may be found at National Freedom of Information Coalition (https://www.nfoic.org/). Information on state Sunshine Laws may be found at National Freedom of Information Coalition State FOI (https://www.nfoic.org/map/).
Talking Points	Talking points are used to prepare yourself or someone else for a telephone or broadcast interview. Written as sound bites, they should be concise, memorable, and easy to understand.

Acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
AP	Associated Press
ARC	American Red Cross
CBO	Community-Based Organization
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
EOP	Emergency Operations Plan
ESF	Emergency Support Function
FCO	Federal Coordinating Officer
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
GAR	Governor's Authorized Representative
HM	Hazard Mitigation
HMGP	Hazard Mitigation Grant Program
IA	Individual Assistance
IAFC	International Association of Fire Chiefs
IAFF	International Association of Fire Fighters
IAP	Incident Action Plan
ICS	Incident Command System
IHP	Individuals and Households Program
JFO	Joint Field Office
JIC	Joint Information Center
JIS	Joint Information System
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NEMA	National Emergency Management Association
NFIP	National Flood Insurance Program
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NIMS	National Incident Management System

Acronym	Meaning
NIOA	National Information Officers Association
NRCC	National Response Coordination Center
NRF	National Response Framework
NWS	National Weather Service
PA	Public Assistance
PDA	Preliminary Damage Assessment
PIO	Public Information Officer
PNP	Private Nonprofit
PSA	Public Service Announcement
RRCC	Regional Response Coordination Center
SCO	State Coordinating Officer
SITREP	Situation Report
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
VOAD	Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster
VOLAG	Voluntary Agency

Glossary of Social Media Terms

While not all-encompassing, this glossary offers definitions and examples of many components of digital media. The following content was compiled in October 2024. Due to the rapidly changing landscape of communication technology and trends, it is important to frequently review, update, and add information to maintain the value of this glossary.

Blog

A blog (a truncation of the expression weblog) is a website, usually maintained by an individual, with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Entries are commonly displayed in reverse-chronological order. “Blog” can also be used as a verb, meaning to maintain or add content to a blog. Many blogs provide commentary or news on a particular subject; others function more as personal online diaries. A typical blog combines text, images, and links to other blogs, Web pages, and other media related to its topic.

The ability for readers to leave comments in an interactive format is an important part of many blogs.

Citizen journalism

According to the seminal report We Media: How Audiences are Shaping the Future of News and Information, by Shayne Bowman and Chris Willis, citizen journalism is the act of nonprofessionals "playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing and disseminating news and information." The authors say, "The intent of this participation is to provide independent, reliable, accurate, wide-ranging and relevant information that a democracy requires."

According to Mark Glasser, a longtime freelance journalist who frequently writes on new media issues, "The idea behind citizen journalism is that people without professional journalism training can use the tools of modern technology and the global distribution of the Internet to create, augment or fact-check media on their own or in collaboration with others."

Emergency Alert System (EAS)

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.

Facebook (see Social Network Service)

Integrated Public Alert & Warning System (IPAWS)

IPAWS is FEMA's national system for local alerting that provides authenticated emergency and life-saving 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.

Mashup (Web application hybrid)

In Web development, a mashup is a Web application that combines data from one or more sources into a single, cohesive tool. The term Mashup implies easy, fast incorporation, frequently accomplished by entry to open data sources to produce results that were not the original goal of the data owners. An example of a mashup is the use of cartographic data from Google Maps to add location information to real estate data, thereby creating a new and distinct Web service that was not originally provided by either source.

Micro-blogging

Micro-blogging is a form of multimedia blogging that allows users to send brief (up to 140 characters) text updates or micromedia (such as photos or audio clips) and publish them, either to be viewed by anyone or by a restricted group that can be chosen by the user. These messages can be submitted by a variety of means, including text messaging, instant messaging, e-mail, digital audio, or the Web.

For example, X (formerly Twitter) is a free social networking and micro-blogging service that enables its users to send and read other users' updates known as tweets. Tweets are text-based posts of up to 280 characters that are displayed on the user's profile page and delivered to other

users who have subscribed to them (known as followers). Senders can restrict delivery to those in their circle of friends or, by default, allow anybody to use them.

Photo sharing

Photo sharing is the publishing or transferring of a user's digital photos online through both websites and applications that facilitate the upload and display of images. The term can also be loosely applied to the use of online photo galleries, including photoblogs, which are set up and managed by individual users.

Podcast

A podcast is a series of visual or sound files that are distributed over the computer by syndicated download, through Web feeds, to portable media players and personal computers. Though the same content may also be made available by direct download or streaming, a podcast is distinguished from most other digital media formats by its ability to be syndicated, subscribed to, and downloaded automatically when new content is added. Like the term broadcast, podcast can refer either to the series of content itself or to the method by which it is syndicated; the latter is also called podcasting. The host or author of a podcast is often called a podcaster.

Really Simple Syndication (RSS)

RSS (abbreviation for Really Simple Syndication) is a family of Web feed formats used to publish frequently updated works—such as blog entries, news headlines, audio, and video—in a standardized format. An RSS document (which is called a feed, Web feed, or channel) includes full or summarized text, plus metadata such as publishing dates and authorship. Web feeds benefit publishers by letting them syndicate content automatically. They benefit readers who want to subscribe to timely updates from favored websites or aggregate feeds from many websites into one place. The user subscribes to a feed by clicking an RSS icon in a browser that initiates the subscription process. The RSS reader checks the user's subscribed feeds regularly for new work, downloads any updates that it finds, and provides a user interface to monitor and read the feeds.

Short Message Service (SMS)

Short Message Service (SMS) is a communication service standardized in mobile communication systems that uses standardized communications protocols allowing the interchange of short text messages between mobile communication devices. SMS text messaging is the most widely used data application on the planet, with 2.4 billion active users, or 74 percent of all mobile phone subscribers, sending and receiving text messages on their phones. The SMS technology has facilitated the development and growth of text messaging. The connection between the phenomenon of text messaging and the underlying technology is so great that in parts of the world, the term "SMS" is used as a synonym for a text message or the act of sending a text message, even when a different protocol is being used.

Smartphone

A smartphone is a mobile phone offering advanced capabilities beyond a typical mobile phone, often with PC-like functionality. There is no industry standard definition of a smartphone. For some, a smartphone is a phone that runs complete operating system software that provides a standardized interface and platform for application developers. For others, a smartphone is simply a phone with advanced features like e-mail and Internet capabilities and/or a built-in, full keyboard or external USB keyboard and Video Graphics Array (VGA) connector.

Social media

Social media are primarily Internet- and mobile-based tools for sharing and discussing information. The term most often refers to activities that combine technology, telecommunications, and social interaction and the construction of words, pictures, videos, and audio. This interaction, and the manner in which information is presented, depends on the varied perspectives and "building" of shared meaning among communities as people share their stories and experiences. Businesses also refer to social media as User-Generated Content (UGC) or Consumer-Generated Media (CGM).

Social networking service

A social networking service focuses on building online communities of people who share interests and/or activities, or who are interested in exploring the interests and activities of others. Most social networking services are Web-based and provide a variety of ways for users to interact, such as through e-mail and instant messaging services.

The main types of social networking services are those that contain directories of some categories (such as former classmates), means to connect with friends (usually with self-description pages), and recommended systems linked to trust.

For example, Facebook is a free-entry social network service that is privately owned and operated by Facebook, Inc.

X (formerly Twitter) (see Micro-blogging)

User-generated content (UGC) (see social media)

Video blogging

Video blogging, sometimes shortened to vlogging or vidblogging, is a form of blogging for which the medium is video. Entries are made regularly and often combine embedded video or a video link with supporting text, images, and other metadata. Video logs (vlogs) also often take advantage of Web syndication to allow for the distribution of video over the Internet, using either the RSS or Atom syndication formats, for automatic aggregation and playback on mobile devices and personal computers.

Video hosting service

A video hosting service allows individuals to upload video clips to an Internet website. The video host will then store the video on its server and will show the eight different types of code to allow others to view this video. The website, mainly used as the video-hosting website, is usually called the video-sharing website.

For example, YouTube is a video-sharing website where users can upload, view, and share video clips. YouTube is a subsidiary of Google.

Web 2.0

The term Web 2.0 refers to a second generation of Web development and design that aims to facilitate communication, secure information sharing, interoperability, and collaboration on the World Wide Web. Although the term suggests a new version of the World Wide Web, it does not refer to an update to any technical specifications, but rather to changes in the ways software developers and end users utilize the Web.

Web 2.0 concepts have led to the development and evolution of Web-based communities, hosted services, and applications such as social networking sites, video-sharing sites, wikis, and blogs.

Webcast

A Webcast is a media file distributed over the Internet using streaming media technology. A Webcast may either be distributed live or on demand. Essentially, Webcasting is "broadcasting" over the Internet. A Webcast uses streaming media technology to take a single content source and distribute it to many simultaneous listeners/viewers. The largest "Webcasters" include existing radio and TV stations that "simulcast" their output, as well as a multitude of Internet-only "stations."

Web mapping

Web mapping is the process of designing, implementing, generating, and delivering maps on the World Wide Web. Although the terms Web GIS and Web mapping are used synonymously, they don't mean exactly the same thing. Web maps are often a presentation media in Web GIS, and Web maps are increasingly gaining analytical capabilities. A special case of Web maps are mobile maps, displayed on mobile computing devices, such as mobile phones, smart phones, Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), Global Positioning System (GPS) units, and other devices. If the maps on these devices are displayed by a mobile Web browser or Web user agent, they can be regarded as mobile Web maps. If the mobile Web maps also display context- and location-sensitive information, such as points of interest, the term location-based services is frequently used. Customizable Web maps are usually more complex Web mapping systems that offer Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) for reuse in other people's Web pages and products. Examples of such a system are Yahoo! Maps and Google Maps.

Wiki

A wiki is a page or collection of Web pages designed to enable anyone who uses it to contribute or modify content, using a simplified markup language. Wikis are often used to create collaborative websites and to power community websites. The collaborative encyclopedia Wikipedia is one of the best-known wikis.

A defining characteristic of wiki technology is the ease with which pages can be created and updated. Generally, there is no review before modifications are accepted. Many wikis are open to alteration by the general public without requiring them to register user accounts. Sometimes logging in for a session is recommended to create a "wiki-signature" cookie for signing edits automatically. Many edits, however, can be made in real time and appear almost instantly online. This can facilitate abuse of the system. Private wiki servers require user authentication to edit pages—and sometimes even to read them.

Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEAs)

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.

YouTube (see Video hosting service)

Writing It Right

Effective writing is an essential part of any job, but it is particularly important in emergency public information. Getting the right information to the right people at the right time is the goal of emergency public information, whether the message is conveyed through talking points, a news release, or a fact sheet. The following pages include tips for avoiding some common mistakes and for producing written material that is clear, simple, and concise for the public to understand.

Arranging Information in Logical Order

Written information is easier to understand and remember when it is arranged in logical order. Reviewing the methods for arranging information described below, use the method that is most compatible with the information you are trying to convey.

Relative Importance

Method	Details
▪ Most important first ▪ Inverted pyramid	When arranging information by relative importance, the most important data come first, followed by supporting information. This is sometimes referred to as an inverted pyramid because the base—the most significant information—is at the top. Journalists were taught to write this way so editors could literally trim the typeset pages from the bottom to get them to fit the space available without losing the most important parts of the story. Arranging information by relative importance is well-suited to reports and much of the other writing supervisors produce because they often have to convey key information in a limited number of lines.

Chronological

Method	Details
▪ What happened first ▪ What happened next ▪ … and so on	Information is often organized chronologically, or by time. Chronological order is a very comfortable way for most people to review and process information because it follows the natural order of life. It is also helpful because it can convey the relationship between prior and subsequent events.

Spatial

Method	Details
▪ Paints a picture: o Foreground and background o Near to far o Left to right ▪ Helps reader envision the scene	Some information is best presented spatially—which describes where things are or where they happened in proximity to one other. Spatial organization is helpful when it is important for the reader to envision a scene and there isn't the option to include photos or illustrations.

Alphabetical or Numerical

Method	Details
▪ Alpha: Useful when listing names or data ▪ Numeric: Can indicate sequence of steps or quantifiable relationship (i.e., big to small, most to least)	Alphabetical and numerical ordering has a place in many written documents. ▪ Alphabetical order is particularly helpful when including long lists of names or other data. ▪ Numeric lists can indicate the sequence of steps taken or the relationship among elements (e.g., biggest to smallest item, most to least important, most to least impact).

Avoiding Grammar Pitfalls

Some rules of grammar are more likely than others to trip us up from time to time. The following chart describes some of the more common problem areas by stating each grammatical rule and providing examples of the correct application of the rule.

Subject-Verb Agreement
Rule: Subjects and verbs must agree in number. ▪ Singular subject and verb = She is buying a car. ▪ Plural subject and verb = They are buying a car. ▪ Compound subject and plural verb = Meat and potatoes are the basic meal in the dining hall. ▪ Nouns of quantity, distance, and time take a singular verb = Five hundred dollars is a lot to pay for ring-side tickets, but 80 miles isn't too far to drive to see the fight. ▪ Collective nouns can be singular or plural, depending on their meaning = The jury were divided on the vote. (The jury as individuals were divided.) The jury has completed its deliberations. (The jury as a whole has come to a decision.)
Noun Pronoun Agreement
Rule: Nouns and pronouns must agree in number and names. ▪ Compound noun and plural <u>pronoun</u> = Bob and Sue presented <u>their</u> report to the Chief. ▪ Single noun and single <u>pronoun</u> = Carlos played <u>his</u> best game of golf for the tournament. (Pronoun is correct in both number and names.)
Fragments and Run-On Sentences
Fragments are incomplete thoughts. ▪ Subject or verb is missing = Heavier suspension, towing package, steel wheels, and over-sized tires all part of the special price. (The verb "are" missing.) ▪ A word indicates something is missing = Although Pete was late to work. ("Although" indicates something is missing. Either "Although Pete was late to work today, he is usually on time" or "Pete was late to work" would be correct.)
Run-on sentences are two complete thoughts improperly joined. ▪ We moved from New York we like San Diego. (WRONG) Punctuation or a connecting word can correct the sentence: ▪ We moved from New York. We like San Diego. (two sentences) ▪ We moved from New York; we like San Diego. (complete thoughts joined by semicolon) ▪ We moved from New York, and we like San Diego. (complete thoughts joined by a conjunction)

Spotting Punctual Problems

Just as with spelling errors, faulty punctuation can undermine your credibility and confuse the reader. There are entire courses taught on punctuation and numerous books devoted to the subject. Some of the more common problem areas appear below.

Apostrophes

Use apostrophes to indicate:

- Letters omitted
  - Don't (for "do not")
  - Let's (for "let us")
- Possession
  - Mary Brown's car (apostrophe + "s" with a singular noun)
  - The Browns' car (apostrophe after the "s" in plural nouns)
- "It" can be tricky! Consider the following:
  - It's going to rain. (indicating letter is omitted); but
  - The cat lost its tail. (no apostrophe used to show possession with "it")

Commas

Use commas to:

- Introduce
  - Stopping to smell the roses, Bob was stung by a bee.
- Separate
  - Bob needed tweezers, antiseptic, and a bandage. (separate items in a list)
  - Bob was on his way to work, and the bee's attack was unprovoked. (separate independent clauses joined by a conjunction)
  - Bob said, "I'll never again sniff a flower with my eyes closed." (separate a quotation from the rest of the sentence)

Quotation Marks

Use quotation marks to indicate:

- Titles of short, printed works
  - The magazine article, "Punctuation Tips for Writers," was a big help.
- Direct quotations
  - "I am leaving," said Sue.

Choosing the Right Word

Making your writing clear, concise, and easy-to-understand sounds simple, but it can be a challenge. Consider the following tips:

Use the fewest words that will effectively convey your message.
▪ **Instead of saying:** At the present time. **Say:** Now ▪ **Instead of saying:** Due to the fact. **Say:** Because ▪ **Instead of saying:** Has the ability to. **Say:** Can ▪ **Instead of saying:** In the event of. **Say:** If ▪ **Instead of saying:** Is a justification for. **Say:** Justifies ▪ **Instead of saying:** In the process of making plans. **Say:** Planning
Use parallel construction.
In other words, express parallel ideas in parallel grammatical forms. ▪ John enjoys boating, swimming, and to fish. (WRONG) ▪ John enjoys boating, swimming, and fishing. (RIGHT)
Use Active Voice.
Consider the following: ▪ The analyst wrote the report. (ACTIVE) ▪ The report was written by the analyst. (PASSIVE) ▪ Active voice is clear, direct, and concise. The subject is the doer of the action. ▪ Although active voice is preferred and is more interesting, passive voice may be appropriate when the doer is unknown or you want to focus on the receiver of the action. With passive voice, the subject is the receiver of the action.
Use easy-to-understand language.
▪ Write to express, not impress. ▪ Avoid acronyms. If you use an acronym, make sure your audience understands it. Write out the full term on first usage, as appropriate. ▪ Use examples and comparisons to help convey unfamiliar information, to paint a picture, or to help the reader relate to the information. (For example: The suspicious package was the size of a laptop computer.)

Tackling Troublesome Words

Two or more words that sound the same (or similar) but have different meanings can trip us all up. Do not let these words give you trouble:

Accept = verb: to receive or to agree **Except** = preposition meaning all but (EXAMPLE: Everyone went to lunch except for Bill.)
Advise = verb: to recommend **Advice** = noun: an opinion or recommendation
Affect = verb: to influence **Effect** = noun: consequence OR verb: to bring about change (EXAMPLE: Her research effected a modification of the policy to allow for inclement weather closings.)
Cite = verb: to quote **Site** = noun: place or setting **Sight** = noun: ability to see
Conscious = adjective: awake **Conscience** = noun: awareness of obligation to be good (EXAMPLE: He could not steal because his conscience would not let him.)
Its = possessive form of pronoun (EXAMPLE: The committee has served its purpose.) **It's** = contraction for "it is"
Lead = noun referring to metal **Led** = past tense of verb "to lead"
Than = compares things (i.e., "bigger than") **Then** = a time other than the present
Their = possessive pronoun **There** = a place other than here They're = contraction for "they are"
To = preposition or first part of the infinitive form of a verb (EXAMPLE: She scheduled time at the range to practice shooting.) **Too** = very, also **Two** = the number 2

Where = location **Were** = past tense of verb "to be" **We're** = contraction for "we are"
Your = possessive pronoun **You're** = contraction of "you are"

Writing For the Web

Throughout our lifetimes, we have been instructed on how to write a story. And while many principles still apply (e.g., clarity), others are not effective when writing for the Web. Basic concepts in information management do not change when writing for the Web. 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 not only that their government agencies will be transparent and responsive, but also 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, but they don't want to wait for information. By establishing a Web presence and knowing how to use the tools to communicate official information from your agency, you can help 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 that they can make the right decisions.

Here are a few pointers on writing techniques for Web-specific writing:

- **Websites**—Web readers scan the Web for information and do not have the patience to read long sentences or long paragraphs. Chunk information so readers find what they need quickly. Also, keep your Website up to date. Users will stop visiting Websites that contain outdated information. Include a quick turn-around update procedure in your planning. Have agreements with your Web master in place before an incident to help you keep reporters and the public informed with the latest information available.
- **Blogs**—Blogs must sound informal, like a real person talking directly to acquaintances, not like a government bureaucrat. If they sound official, they lose credibility. You don't talk like that in a personal conversation, which is what a blog is.
- **Micro-blogs**—X (formally Twitter) is an example of a micro-blog. Reporters keep track of your breaking news without having to be on a computer reading their email. Make tweets less than 280 characters; that leaves room for others to pass them along with their own comment added.

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

According to Web usability studies:

- Some 79 percent of users always scanned any new page they came across; only 16 percent read word-by-word.
- Reading from a screen takes longer than reading a printed page. Some studies have shown that reading from a monitor takes up to 25% longer than reading a printed page.
- Numerals often stop the wandering eye and attract fixations, even when they're embedded within a mass of words that users otherwise ignore.
- People scan web pages in an "F" pattern: two horizontal stripes followed by a vertical stripe.
- Readers are impatient. You have 3 seconds or less to encourage people to read more.
- People like chunks of information, i.e., stand-alone blocks of text of about 100 words or less.
- People don't like to scroll. Although we're getting more accepting of it, we don't really like it.

Scanning vs. Reading

Headlines, page titles, and subject lines are often displayed out of context as part of a list of articles or search engine results. In addition, reading from a computer screen is difficult, and reading from a small, handheld device is even more difficult. As a result, people don't really read on a screen—they scan. People read printed materials in a linear fashion and rely on ***hypotaxis***—a linear grammatical linking of one idea to another—to create meaning.

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

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 "scannability" 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) that used in 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 the most useful information at the top.
    - Break up text into chunks.
    - Keep sentences and paragraphs short.
    - Create narrow, bulleted lists.

The bottom line is to keep it simple and 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?)

Tips for Managing Media Staging Areas

At the scene of an incident, the news media's most basic needs are availability to information and images. If you anticipate what they will want, you will have a better chance to control the scene and help guide the story.

Many times, a staging area can be set up at the scene of an incident to facilitate the enhanced flow of information between the PIO and the media. Prior to establishing the location for this staging area, ask yourself the following questions:

Does the staging area infringe on the scene?

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

Does the news media presence interfere with the work being done (e.g., rescue, cleanup, investigation, etc.)?

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

Does the location of the staging area place the media in danger, or will they be in a position to endanger others?

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

Is the staging area convenient for you and policymakers?

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

Will the reporters be too close, able to use sensitive/protected information?

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

Will the staging area give reporters a clear line of sight to satellite or microwave towers?

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

Can the media get the images they want?

- The media will want to get as close as possible to get pictures/audio/interviews. If there is a reason that the media cannot be allowed entry to the scene, consider using a media pool to restrict entry while still allowing them to get the images and interviews they desire. (A media pool refers to a group of news-gathering organizations pooling their resources in the collection of news.) If a media pool is not an option, consider providing professional quality images to the media in the form of video and stills.

Are there "convenience" facilities (i.e., restrooms, food, electrical outlets, etc.) available for media?

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

How can you keep the media at the staging area?

- You can't—and don't expect them to stay there all the time. They will go other places to get other information (local citizen reactions, sidebar stories, etc.).
- You can entice them to stay by giving them regular, "official" updates and letting them know that, if they are absent, they may miss something important or interesting.

How To Build Effective Relationships with the Media

The media's role: The traditional news media paint the image of the incident response in the eyes of the public. They create the perception of the agency and their response to the incident, and perception is reality to the public. The news media is your organization's link to the public before, during, and after an incident requiring emergency response.

Why do we want to build relationships with the news media?

- The news media are the PIO's conduit to the public.
- Working better with the news media means developing relationships before an incident occurs.

How can we work better with the news media?

- Understand that the media wants and needs entry:
  - 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 entry to information.
  - Information on state Freedom of Information Laws may be found at National Freedom of Information Coalition (https://www.nfoic.org/foi-center/). More information on State freedom of information laws may be found at National Freedom of Information Coalition State FOI (https://www.nfoic.org/)
  - Understand the things you can do to build relationships with the news media:
- Be available and return calls and emails promptly. Even if you don't have all of the information immediately, being available and responsive builds your credibility.
- Coordinate entry to the scene and to policymakers, responders, and victims.
- Treat all media fairly meaning, don't play favorites with media or reporters.
- If the media have set up a pool, be prepared to monitor and mediate, if necessary.
- If you have breaking news, share it with everyone.
- Learn and respect deadlines.

Understand the types of news media and their needs:

- **All print media, especially newspapers:**
  - May need more detailed information for longer stories.
  - 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 advanced 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.
  - Usually likes telephone sound clips or telephone interviews.
  - Likes to receive recorded Public Service Announcements (PSAs) or likes to have a PIO record the announcement by phone or in the studio. A variety of voices is important to radio.
  - Wants you to pay attention to the station's theme or strong focus, such as news, farm, or youth orientation.
- **Internet:**
  - Can add news items very quickly but may edit its Website at only certain hours of the day. Be aware of the Website'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 now use Websites 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. They post "breaking" news to their Website long before their newscast takes place.
  - They may not wait for validation of information, which means that media monitoring is essential. Fact checking is now ongoing rather than required. Information is published/broadcast first, then "updated" later.

Tips for Creating and Maintaining a Media List

STEP 1: Create the List	▪ Your list should include reporters at the local newspaper, television and radio news outlets, and Internet news media. Include assignment editors, editorial page editors, news managers, producers, and reporters who may cover stories associated with your agency. It is also important to know the photographers from each news outlet because you may be working with them as much as the reporters. ▪ Include news services like the Associated Press, Scripps Howard, Reuters, and States News Service. News services also called "wire services" are news outlets that transmit their stories to subscriber news outlets nationwide (or worldwide). ▪ Also include national news outlets, including the major national newspapers and news magazines, broadcast news, CNN, and NPR. ▪ Ideally, you will be able to sort your list depending on the needs of the situation. For some messages, your distribution will be limited to local media only; for other messages, you will want broader distribution.
STEP 2: Verify and Refine the List	▪ Once you have your basic media list, you'll still want to make some phone calls to make sure the information is current and complete. You will want: o Names of assignment editors, editorial page editors, news managers, producers, and reporters who may cover stories associated with your agency. (Get correct spellings of first and last names.) o Phone numbers (office, cell, the best number to reach the newsroom 24/7). o Know how to get in contact with each news outlet during times when they are normally shut down (e.g., you may need to get evacuation or other emergency public information out after they have shut down for the night). o Fax number. o Email address. o Accurate mailing address (sometimes a post office box). o Deadlines. o Preferences for receiving news releases. Do they want releases emailed to them, and, if so, what document format do they prefer? (Do they want it cut and pasted into the body of an email or sent as an attachment? In what format—Word, PDF, or both?)

	▪ Asking these questions gives you good information and also helps to develop a positive working relationship with the news media.
STEP 3: Maintain the List	▪ Media outlets often have high turnover rates. The reporter who covered your last story may no longer be there or may be assigned to a different beat. ▪ If feasible, call each outlet before sending a news release to ensure your contact information is still accurate. (While you may not be able to do this during an emergency, you can do this before sending out nonemergency news releases.) ▪ Plan to update your list at least once a year. ▪ Try to schedule a visit to each local news outlet once a year to meet new news staff and get some "face time" with reporters and news management. This is also a good time to pitch story ideas.

Do's And Don'ts for Online Media Room

Online media rooms can be powerful tools if they are easy to use and are up to date. Consider the following advice when setting up or revamping your online resources for reporters:

Do	**Don't**
▪ Provide one-click entry—a direct link from your home page. ▪ Post an after-hours administrative number for reporters on deadline. ▪ Organize material in a logical manner. Provide bulleted, easy-to-understand fact sheets. ▪ Provide frequently asked questions and base them on actual questions, i.e., ones you hear repeatedly from reporters. ▪ Provide downloadable logos. ▪ Group news releases by year. ▪ Offer useful search functions. Reporters want to be able to search your news releases, not merely see a listing.	▪ Hide your online media room. Don't make reporters hunt through other sections. ▪ Make your media room a dumping ground for old material or too lengthy documents, post executive summaries instead. ▪ Post too many PDF documents. In some environments, reporters can't launch plug-ins (like Adobe Acrobat); reporters on deadline will move on if they can't easily use your information. ▪ Leave old releases up forever; archive them.

Do	Don't
▪ Offer print-friendly options so reporters don't have to print out unneeded pages. ▪ Keep it fresh; update your material regularly and have a way to highlight what is new. ▪ Provide link to your Website in news releases and other materials.	▪

Go-Kit Checklist

A go-kit is a mobile response kit that allows PIOs to function if they are working outside of their normal place of operation. Refer to the list below. Check off the things you plan to include in your go-kit and add other items as you see fit.

Equipment	Have This	Need This	N/A
Computer(s) with wireless capability			
Mobile devices with chargers and spare batteries; additional phone; portable chargers ("juice packs")			
Digital camera (optional; most people use their mobile devices but carry one as a backup)			
Supplies including pens, paper, self-stick note pads, etc.			
Other:			
Information	**Have This**	**Need This**	**N/A**
Elements of the Crisis Communications Plan in both electronic* and print** format (including PIO team contact lists and information materials) * Various electronic formats (external memory, bookmarked resource Websites, etc.) **Printed copies are important in case there is no electricity			

Updated media contact list, including outlet Website addresses and reporters' social media "handles"			
Manuals and background information necessary to provide needed information to the public and media			
Topic-specific fact sheets, backgrounders, talking points, and news release templates (both hard copy and electronic)			
Other:			
Other Resources	**Have This**	**Need This**	**N/A**
Business cards with 24/7 contact information			
Funding mechanism (i.e., credit card, etc.) that can be used to purchase operational resources as needed			
Paper forms, in case there is no electronic availability (i.e., no Internet, power outage, etc.). Incident notebook to document your actions and observations.			
Other:			
Personal Care and Comfort Items	**Have This**	**Need This**	**N/A**
Glasses/contacts (spares)			
Prescription medications; basic first-aid supplies			
Weather-appropriate gear (e.g., rain poncho, umbrella, gloves, sunscreen)			
Hand sanitizer, wipes, paper towels			
Energy bars, nuts, water			

Emergency contact information in case your family is not able to contact you through your cell phone			
Other:			

Networking Contact Sheet

Organization	Name	Title	Address	Phone	Email	Best time to contact	Beat or Preferences	Notes

On-Camera Performance, News Conferences, and Site Logistics

This section includes the following resources:

- Do's and don'ts for on-camera performance
- Non-verbal communication tips
- Managing your nervousness
- Tips for effective news conferences
- Tips for managing briefing logistics
- On-scene nightmares

Do's and Don'ts for On-camera Performance

The following do's and "don'ts" are helpful reminders of what works and what doesn't when you are in front of the camera.

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 you 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 appear that you verified something that might not be true.
- **Don't lose your temper.** You can stand your ground without losing it.

- **Never lie. EVER!**
- **Don't say anything to a reporter you don't want to see in print or on TV.** Always assume that microphones are turned on.
- **Don't use the phrase "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 a better alternative, such as admitting you don't have an answer but promising to get one.

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 using 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 convey a message. Make sure it is the message you want to convey.
- **Body position:** Stand straight and align your body with the interviewer. In some instances, the camera operator may position you for the shot. Be aware of what's being photographed in the background. Always be aware of scene safety for both you and the reporter.
- **Gestures:** Use natural—but not "big" —gestures. Keep your hands away from your face; don't cross your arms, raise your eyebrows, or shrug your shoulders. Avoid jerky movements.
- **Movement:** If standing, do not lock your knees, but don't sway or bounce either. Don't jingle jewelry or change in pockets. If sitting, don't jiggle legs or spin or rock in the chair. If you have a suit jacket on, sit on your coat tail to keep it from riding up.

Attire/Dress: Consider your audience when dressing for an interview. In general, you don't want your appearance to be "louder" than your message.

- Wear your uniform or, if non-uniformed, wear neat, conservative attire.
- Avoid bright whites, stripes, plaids, and complicated patterns.
- Remove dark glasses/sunglasses.
- Know your agency's policy on showing your badge in public; some agencies discourage it to minimize fraudulent duplication.
- Remove hat to avoid shadows on your face.

- Remove distracting, overly shiny or noisy jewelry (includes body piercings). Badges and pins may cause glare.
- Consider covering tattoos and minimizing body piercing jewelry. If something in your appearance significantly detracts from your message, get rid of it.
- Dress for the market and the medium. For example, bright colors may cause problems in HD television, but may be appropriate for Web broadcasts.

Managing Your Nervousness

Most people experience at least some nervousness in front of the camera, but there are things you can do to reduce those "butterflies."

Prepare. The more prepared you are, the less nervous you will feel.

Anticipate questions. Think like a reporter and anticipate the questions you might be asked. Reducing the "surprise" factor will reduce your nervousness.

Do something to relax yourself. Take a few deep breaths, stretch, or walk around. Find out what technique works best to help you relax.

Use your nervousness as positive energy. Nervousness is not all bad! A bit of nervousness can energize your performance on camera.

Realize that the reporter wants you to succeed. In most cases, the reporter is not out to get you and really doesn't want you to stumble over words or misspeak. If the interview is being taped, don't hesitate to say, "I'd like to try that again" if your answer to a question came out tongue-tied.

Know it is okay to pause to gather thoughts. A pause will always seem longer to you than the audience, so don't ramble or use fillers like "um" to take up dead air. Gather your thoughts and give your best answer.

Tips for Effective News Conferences

- News Conferences: Consider a news conference an "incident within an incident."
- Appoint a person to organize and coordinate.
- The Process:
    - Evaluate need.
    - Get approval.
    - Contact participants.
    - Select appropriate venue. Consider security, entry, check-in, ingress and egress, background, etc.
    - Notify the media of time and location.
    - Write an agenda—Not everyone must speak!

- Prepare background materials/handouts for media.
- Brief participants just prior to news conference. Explain Common Operating Picture.
- Conduct media brief off camera before the news conference.
- From the podium: display empathy, provide overview, then allow questions.
- Have a record of event statements.
- Follow up on remaining issues and unanswered questions.

Tips for Managing Briefing Logistics

When setting up a briefing, you may not have many choices of location or other logistical needs, but, for planning purposes, you should always consider the following questions:

Will it be covered live?

Most TV media carry from 500 to 1,000 feet of cable. Satellite or "live" trucks will need an unobstructed area to park in. Satellite trucks need a clear southern exposure to use their satellite. Live trucks will need to contact their station repeater; 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 all serve to detract from what the speaker is saying.
- An indoor, controlled environment is usually the best option if one large enough is available.
- Pick a place with a clean backdrop.
  - Is the area behind where the news conference is to be held 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.
- Make sure speakers have clear entry and egress without having to pass through reporters.
  - If speakers do not have a clear exit, the media will continue to ask questions, sometimes even trying to physically position themselves so that the speaker must stop.
- Think about sound issues.
  - Try to minimize background noise so speakers can be heard clearly. If at all possible, select a place for your news conference 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 entirely drown out what is being said by the speaker.
  - If you are inside a building, consider the "echo" factor.

- Have an audio "multi box". This 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 both 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 briefing participants.
- Security staffing should be visible but not intrusive; they can be stationed near where the news briefing will take place or possibly out by the news media satellite/live trucks.
- Often local law enforcement may offer to assist in providing security.

On-Scene Nightmares

At the scene of an incident, things can quickly turn against you and your organization if they are not properly handled.

Providing No Information

- This can lead to the media turning on you and your agency. They will not want to work with you and may begin to portray your agency as incapable of doing its job. If you don't have answers, the media will go elsewhere for a response.

Providing the Wrong Information

- You cannot "take back" statements made to the media. Make sure that what is said is correct if you want to develop and maintain credibility. As Warren Buffett said, "It takes 20 years to build a reputation and 5 minutes to ruin it."

Losing Your Cool

- Failure to remain calm and in control will make you the story. Not only will you look foolish, but you will lose credibility with your co-workers, the media, and the public.

Playing Favorites

- When the incident is large enough, national media will show up. Sometimes these are very famous people, and you may be tempted to "help" them more than other members of the media. Remember that these people leave as soon as the incident is over, but your local media will be there for a long time to come. Treat everyone the same but make sure that your local professional media are taken care of.

Calm vs. Chaos

- The role of the PIO is to help your organization by working with the news media. If someone is being difficult to work with or does not understand the importance of media relations, try to educate them calmly.

Deadlines vs. Safety

- The goal of all public safety endeavors is to save lives, protect property, and preserve the environment and almost all reporters would agree that their needs will come after these important tasks. Members of the media do not want to interfere with these important tasks, but they will always try to get the information or entry that they want if it is safe and does not interfere with work at the scene. One caution is that the increase in amateur "reporters" may lead to individuals with more camera gear than sense appearing at the scene. Make sure they know the same rules apply to them as to anyone else there.

Types of JICs

JIC Type	Description
Incident	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. It provides easy media availability, which is paramount to success. This is a typical JIC.
Virtual	A virtual JIC is established when a physical co-location is not feasible. It connects PIOs through email, cell/land-line phones, faxes, video teleconferencing, Web-based information systems, etc. For a pandemic incident where PIOs at different locations communicate and coordinate public information electronically, it may be appropriate to establish a virtual JIC.
Satellite	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. These are subordinate JICs, which are typically located closer to the scene.
Area	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.

JIC Type	Description
Support	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	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 Nongovernment Organizations (NGOs).

PIO and JIC Activities in Response to an Evolving Incident

Step	Initial Response: PIO Will...	Situation Expanded: EOC Activated: JIC Will...
STEP 1: Information Gathering	▪ Ask responders on scene, and call other sources as needed. ▪ Observe news media coverage for accuracy of reporting and rumors.	▪ Have entry to the scene (Field PIOs and Incident Command). ▪ Ask EOC staff. ▪ Ask Public Inquiry Center staff (if activated). ▪ Attend regular briefings. ▪ Use reports issued by communications and information management. ▪ Observe news media coverage for accuracy of reporting and rumors.

Step	Initial Response: PIO Will...	Situation Expanded: EOC Activated: JIC Will...
STEP 2: **Analysis and Verification**	▪ Consult with Incident Command.	▪ Consult with other PIOs in the JIC. ▪ Consult with other sources in the EOC. ▪ Consult with PIOs in the field. ▪ Consult with other PIOs in the JIS but not working out of the JIC.
STEP 3: **Message Development**	▪ Get critical (i.e., lifesaving and property-protecting) information out.	▪ Consult with other PIOs in the JIS to identify key messages. ▪ Coordinate message development. (PIOs retain authority and responsibility but work collectively so that each knows the other's messages.) ▪ Expand production options with more people and other resources.
STEP 4: **Approval**	▪ Get approval of Incident Command (verbal okay).	▪ Coordinate with other PIOs in the JIS. ▪ Use prescribed protocol; use additional review as needed and as time allows. ▪ Document the process.

Step	Initial Response: PIO Will...	Situation Expanded: EOC Activated: JIC Will...
STEP 5: **Dissemination Information**	▪ Primarily respond to reporters' questions and give interviews. ▪ Distribute pre-scripted information such as backgrounders or fact sheets, if possible.	▪ Schedule media briefings. ▪ Give interviews (face-to-face, phone). ▪ Arrange news conferences with multiple spokespersons. Issue news releases—based on templates and unique to the incident (distributed electronically and by other means). ▪ Use other technology as appropriate.
STEP 6: **Tracking and Documentation**	▪ Keep notes; keep copies of information released.	▪ Use prescribed SOP, which will likely include: o Media logs. o News release tracking list. o Other documentation required by ICS. ▪ Use other technology as appropriate.
STEP 7: Media Monitoring and Analysis	▪ Review print and electronic media. ▪ Advise leadership of issues as they arise; provide recommendations.	▪ Use prescribed SOP. ▪ Have additional staff who will offer greater flexibility and coverage potential. ▪ Formalize media reports to leadership, to some extent.

JIC Readiness Assessment

Instructions: Answering the questions on this checklist will help you determine your capacity for activating a JIC. The questions are arranged in three sections: (1) Plans, (2) People, and (3) Logistics.

PLANS

Assessment	Yes	No
Do you have systems and procedures for:	**Yes**	**No**
Developing an emergency response or crisis communications plan for public information and media relations?		

Assessment	Yes	No
Does your emergency response or crisis communications plan have systems and procedures for:	**Yes**	**No**
Designating and assigning line and staff responsibilities for the Public Information Team?		
Identifying and updating current contact numbers for PIO staff and other public information partners in your plan?		
Identifying and updating current contact numbers for regional and local news media (including after-hours news desks)?		
Establishing the JIC at the Emergency Operations Center (if activated)?		
Securing needed resources (space, equipment, people) to conduct the public information operation during an incident, 24 hours a day, using such mechanisms as Memorandums of Understanding, contracts, etc.?		
Creating messages for the news media and the public under severe time constraints, including methods to clear these messages within the emergency response operations of your organization (including multi-jurisdiction and/or agency cross-clearance)?		

Assessment	Yes	No
Disseminating information to news media, the public, and partners (e.g., Website capability 24/7, listservs, broadcast fax, printed news releases, door-to-door leaflets, etc.)?		
Verifying and clearing/approving information prior to its release to the news media and the public?		
Operating a public inquiry hotline with trained staff available to answer questions from the public and control rumors?		
Activating the Emergency Alert System, including the use of pre-scripted messages?		
Coordinating your public information systems planning activities with other response organizations?		
Coordinating your public information systems planning activities with other sections within the Emergency Operations Center?		
Testing the plan through drills and exercises with other Response Team partners?		
Updating the plan as a result of lessons learned through drills, exercises, and incidents?		

PEOPLE

Assessment	Yes	No
Do you have systems and procedures for:	**Yes**	**No**
Identifying staffing capabilities needed to maintain public information operations for 24 hours per day for at least several days? (Note: Staff may include regular full- and part-time staff as well as PIOs from other agencies or departments, disaster employees, volunteers, etc.)		
Establishing and maintaining agreements for acquiring or borrowing temporary staff? (Note: Such agreements may be mutual aid arrangements or Memorandums of Understanding.)		
Granting emergency authority to hire or call up temporary staff or those on loan from other organizations?		
Establishing and maintaining job descriptions and qualifications for individuals serving as your organization's PIO and other roles during an incident?		
Assigning a staff member—and at least one alternate—the role and responsibilities of PIO?		

Assessment	Yes	No
Determining whether the assigned PIO(s) is qualified? Sample qualifications include: ▪ Experience and skills in providing general and emergency public information. ▪ Ability to represent your organization professionally (i.e., can articulate public information messages well when dealing with the media and the public and can handle on-camera interviews). ▪ Written and technical communication skills (i.e., writing/editing, photography, graphics, and Internet/Web design proficiency). ▪ Management and supervisory experience and skills needed to run a JIC.		
Establishing and maintaining a network/list of language translators available to assist with public information? (Note: Such network should include sign language interpreters and individuals capable of writing and speaking the non-English language(s) used by individuals in your jurisdiction.)		
Establishing and maintaining working relationships with PIO partners from other organizations that you might need to work with during an incident (e.g., PIOs from other jurisdictions, other government agencies or departments, nongovernmental organizations, and private entities)?		

Assessment	Yes	No
Developing and maintaining working relationships with your local and regional media and establishing procedures for providing information to those media entities effectively and efficiently during incidents?		

LOGISTICS

Assessment	Yes	No
Do you have a go-kit for PIO use during an incident, including:	**Yes**	**No**
Laptop computer and other devices capable of linking to the Internet/email?		
Cell phone and other mobile devices with wireless capability (e.g., personal internet hot-spots)?		
Digital camera, photo storage media, and charger/backup batteries (i.e., personal mobile chargers/"juice packs")?		
Flash drives or other external storage devices containing the elements of the crisis communication plan (including news media contact lists, PIO contact lists, and information materials such as topic-specific fact sheets, backgrounders, talking points, and news release templates)? REMEMBER: Redundancy is important.		
Office supplies such as paper, pens, self- stick notes, etc.?		
Manuals and background information necessary to provide information to the media and the public (e.g., your Smart Book)? (Note: A Smart Book is a compilation of factual information assembled about your jurisdiction, such as population, number of schools and hospitals, size, and description of geographic or infrastructure features, etc.)		
Hard copies of all critical information?		

Assessment	Yes	No
Do you have systems for:	**Yes**	**No**
Acquiring and maintaining go-kits with a funding mechanism (e.g., credit card) that can be used to purchase operational resources? (Note: A go-kit is a mobile response kit that allows PIOs to maintain communications in the event that they are working outside of their normal place of operation.)		
Ensuring PIOs can use the go-kit when serving at an incident?		
Acquiring and maintaining portable communications equipment, critical up- to-date information, and supplies?		
Acquiring and maintaining essential media production equipment (cameras, digital storage, laptops, etc.)?		
Acquiring and maintaining a Smart Book (or equivalent technologies) to assist PIOs in accurately informing the media and the public during an incident?		
Identifying a dedicated location to house the JIC? (Note: The location selected must be wired for telephone, Internet, cable, etc.)		
Securing and maintaining the necessary JIC equipment and supplies to allow information to be disseminated to the media and the public?		
Inventorying and restocking the PIO go- kit after an incident?		
Inventorying and restocking JIC equipment and supplies after an incident?		
Periodically updating your Smart Book with current information?		

Assessment	Yes	No
Do you have equipment and supplies needed for a JIC, including:		
Computers on LAN with Internet and email listservs designated for news media and partner entities?		
Laptop computers?		
Electric and manual typewriter(s) in case power outage or other problems interfere with computer/printer usage?		
Fax machine, pre-programmed for broadcasting fax releases to news media and partner entities?		
Printers and copy machines, with supplies such as toner and paper?		
Paper shredder and trash bags?		
Televisions with cable hookups and VHS VCRs?		
Cell or satellite phones, pagers, and/or PDAs/palm computers with wireless email capability?		
Digital camera, photo storage media, and charger/backup batteries?		
Audio recorder and batteries?		
Flash drives, CDs, and/or disks containing the elements of the crisis communication plan (including media contact lists, PIO contact lists, and information materials such as topic- specific fact sheets, backgrounders, talking points, and news release templates)?		
Office furniture/accessories such as desks, chairs, file cabinets, bulletin boards, white boards, trash cans, lights, in/out baskets, landline phones, clocks, large calendars, etc.?		
Audio equipment and furniture necessary for conducting news conferences (e.g., wireless microphones, lectern, mult box, etc.)?		

Assessment	Yes	No
Office supplies (e.g., white, and colored paper, pens, self-stick notes, folders, blank tapes, binders, overnight mail supplies, tape, poster board, erasable and permanent markers, chart paper, easels, staplers, and staples, press kit folders, binders, digital storage devices, hole punch, organization logo on stickers, letterhead, postage stamps, etc.)?		
Manuals, directories, and background information necessary to provide information to the media and the public (e.g., your Smart Book)?		
Hard copies of all critical information?		

The 8-Step Process

Strategic Communications 8-Step Process

Step 1: Assess Current Situation

In this step, you will collect information to help you make strategic planning decisions. This step sets the stage for the entire communications 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.

You must begin by acquiring a thorough understanding of:

- The problem.
- The audience.
- The action you want the audience to take.

Step 2: Set Communication Goals and Measurable Objectives

The next step in this process is setting communication goals and measurable objectives. 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. When setting your communication goals, you need to also develop objectives for implementing those goals. The objectives should be SMART objectives.

Examples of 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.

Step 3: Identify Intended Audiences

- After identifying the audience for a public awareness campaign, then look a little deeper.
- When we segment down to a very specific audience, we learn what makes that particular group tick.
- And we can use that information to create messages that will align with the needs, beliefs, values, and priorities of our audiences.
- While some of your messages may apply to everyone, you may want to communicate differently to one or more segments.
- A potentially endless number of audience segments could exist. Making judgments based on which would provide the biggest "bang" for the effort invested in communication is essential.

Step 4: Develop and Pretest Messages

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.
- 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.

Step 5: Select Channels and Activities.

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

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

First, consider your audiences:

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

Second, select your materials:

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

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

- Phone apps are growing in popularity, especially among young people.
- Fun runs, contests, meetings, and town halls—these events may work better than print materials to inform, educate, and motivate certain audiences.
- When considering materials, think about your audience:
    - Can they read? Do they like to read?
    - Are they literate in the English language? In their native language?
    - Would a video be more effective?
    - Would they be more receptive to hearing the message from a trusted community member?
- Determine where they are likely to find your message:
    - On the Web?
    - At a community center?
    - In the newspaper or on a television news program?

And third, select your partnerships:

A stakeholder partner is a person or group that could have an interest in or benefit from the work you do.

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

- Partners can use their communication channels to communicate your messages.
- Partners can put links to you on their Websites.
- Partners can write newsletter articles about your programs.

Step 6: Develop an Action Plan

The greatest strategic plan is just a piece of paper until it is enhanced to become an action plan.

Use an action plan to determine where, when, how, and by whom each task will be completed to successfully implement your communications plan.

At a minimum, your plan should include:

- A listing of major activities, tasks, and subtasks.
- The target date(s) for completion.
- The person responsible for ensuring each task is completed.

Step 7: Develop and Pretest Materials

Ideally, testing materials would include the following steps:

- Create product mock-ups and get feedback from:
  - Interviews (telephone or in-person) with a series of individuals
  - A scheduled formal discussion based on a standard set of questions about the product
  - Informal feedback from people on the street or in a mall
  - Focus groups (telephone, online, in-person)
- Prepare report summarizing responses.
- Make changes suggested by the test results.

Step 8: Implement, Evaluate, and Modify Plan

- Implement your plan: disseminate your materials.
- Evaluate effectiveness through media analysis and other measurable means.
- Modify your implementation plan, if needed.

Incident Action Planning

Incident management personnel involved in an operation that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is coordinating use the Incident Command System's (ICS's) incident action planning process to develop Incident Action Plans (IAPs). All partners involved in the incident (Emergency Support Functions [ESFs], Nongovernmental Organizations [NGOs], and state) achieve unity of effort through its disciplined process. Additionally, the IAP is the vehicle by which the senior leaders of an incident, the governor of an affected state—through the State Coordinating Officer (SCO), and the President—through the Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO)—communicate their expectations and provide clear guidance to those managing an incident. The incident action planning process requires collaboration and participation among all incident management leaders and their staffs from across the whole community.

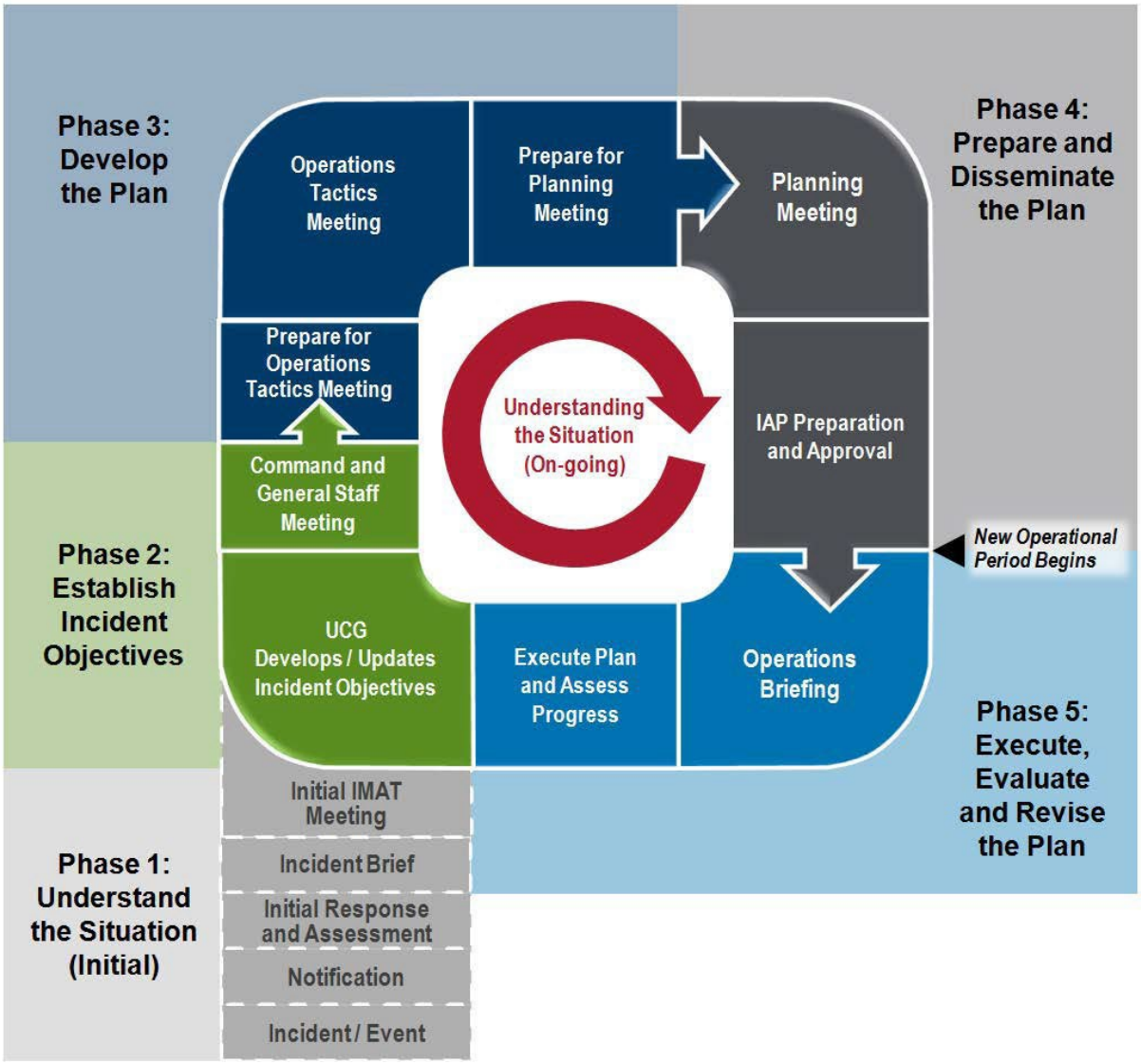
The incident action planning process is built on the following phases:

- Understand the situation.
- Establish incident objectives.
- Develop the plan.
- Prepare and disseminate the plan.
- Execute, evaluate, and revise the plan.

The product of this process—a well-conceived, complete IAP—facilitates successful incident operations and provides a basis for evaluating performance in achieving incident objectives. The IAP identifies incident objectives and provides essential information regarding incident organization, resource allocation, work assignments, safety, and weather.

The Planning "P" (below) depicts the stages in the incident action planning process. The leg of the "P" includes the initial steps to gain awareness of the situation and establish the organization for incident management. Although maintaining situational awareness is essential throughout the life cycle of the incident, the steps in Phase 1 are done only one time. Once they are accomplished, incident management shifts into a cycle of planning and operations, informed by ongoing situational awareness that continues and is repeated each Operational Period. This cycle, which is depicted in the barrel of the "P," becomes the Operations "O."

THE PLANNING "P": THE INCIDENT ACTION PLANNING PROCESS



The Planning "P" is a guide to the process and steps involved in planning for an incident. The leg of the "P" describes the initial response period: Once the incident/event begins, the steps are Notifications, Initial Response & Assessment, Incident Briefing Using ICS 201, and Initial Incident Command (IC)/Unified Command (UC) meeting.

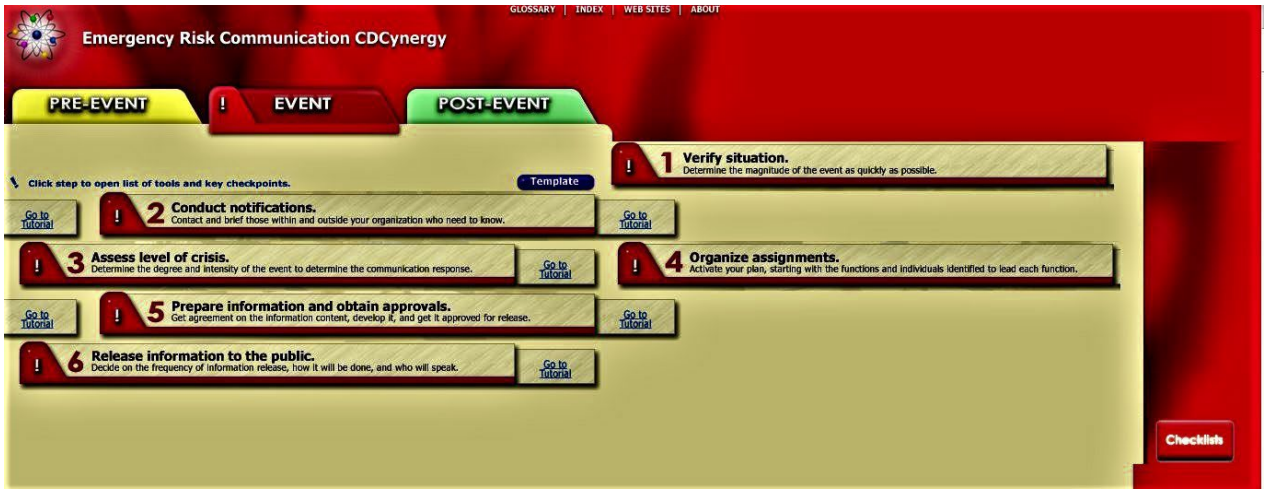
At the top of the leg of the "P" is the beginning of the first Operational Planning Period cycle. In this circular sequence, the steps are IC/UC Develop/Update Objectives Meeting, Command and General Staff Meeting, Preparing for the Tactics Meeting, Tactics Meeting, Preparing for the Planning Meeting, Planning Meeting, IAP Prep & Approval, and Operations Briefing.

At this point a new Operational Period begins. The next step is Execute Plan & Assess Progress, after which the cycle begins again.

Risk and Crisis Communication Resources

Below are several resources for improving your risk and crisis communications.

- Message mapping (Covello)— Available at Message (https://www.orau.gov/hsc/ercwbt/content/ERCcdcynergy/Content/activeinformation/resources/Covello_message_mapping.pdf). This 9-page PDF by Vincent T. Covello, Ph.D., explains the message mapping process in detail.
- CDCynergy Website — Excellent compilation of crisis communications resources for PIOs, (https://www.orau.gov/hsc/ercwbt/content/ERCcdcynergy/Content/activeinformation/resources/print_Master.pdf). Don't forget to check out the Emergency View link. The Emergency View link includes a comprehensive list of templates, including a message development worksheet, anticipated Q&A worksheet, and other useful templates.



Emergency Risk Communication CDCynergy screenshot above shows tabs for Pre-event, Event, and Post-event. The Event tab is highlighted and shows the steps: 1) Verify situation, 2) Conduct notifications, 3) Assess level of crisis, 4) Organize assignments, 5) Prepare information and obtain approvals, and 6) Release information to the public.

- Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication resources, (https://www.cdc.gov/cerc/php/about/index.html). The CERC Manual (2024 Edition) is one of the best crisis communications publications available from the government.
- Questions commonly asked by the media in a crisis (Covello, 1995). The best way to view this list of 77 questions is by entering the term "Covello 77 questions" into your preferred search engine.

Message Planning Outline

Organizing Messages Using the Rule of Three

Topic:

Audience:

Key Message #1

- Talking Point 1.1 -
- Talking Point 1.2 -
- Talking Point 1.3 -

Key Massage #2

- Talking Point 2.1 -
- Talking Point 2.2 -
- Talking Point 2.3 -

Key Message #3

- Talking Point 3.1 -
- Talking Point 3.2 -
- Talking Point 3.3 -

Remember to write down anticipated questions or hot-button issues related to each key message.

Activity Workbook

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

Note	Refer to the instructions on the visual; pair up with another participant and “interview” one another. Then you will introduce your partner to the class. Keep your introductions of one another to 1 to 2 minutes.

Activity 2.1: Why Is It Important?

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

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

(Instructor Guide)
Visual 5: Activity 3.1 — The 8-Step Strategic Communications Wheel

This is an individual learning activity.

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.

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.

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

Scenario 1.

Stuffing Isn't Forever

You are part of the Public Information Office (PIO) for a county health department working in coordination with local hospitals, emergency medical services, and emergency management officials. In the week following Thanksgiving, emergency dispatch data shows a spike in 911 calls reporting gastrointestinal distress and **chest pain**, prompting emergency responses and hospital transports.

Healthcare providers report that many patients are experiencing foodborne illness related to Thanksgiving leftovers. While some cases require medical care, many emergency calls could have been prevented through better food safety practices and earlier public awareness.

With upcoming winter holiday gatherings approaching, local officials want to proactively reduce preventable illnesses and avoid unnecessary strain on emergency and healthcare systems. Your team is tasked with developing a **public awareness campaign** focused on safe leftover food practices and early symptom awareness to help prevent foodborne illness during the remainder of the holiday season.

Scenario 2.

The Central City Fire Department conducted a risk assessment for their response area. The final report indicated there was a neighborhood consisting of 100 single family homes that had the highest number of fire related injuries (75%) and fire related deaths (80%). In most cases (90%) there were no working smoke alarms found in homes that experienced an injury or death. All deaths occurred between 10:00 pm and 8:00 am.

The Department wants to plan a public awareness campaign focusing on the importance of working smoke alarms for the entire city and concentrate their efforts into this neighborhood of 100 homes. A local insurance company provided the department with 200 10-year smoke alarms, free of charge, to install in homes.

Scenario 3.

The Central City Police Department has historically seen an increase in the number of thefts from autos during the month of December. Most of these thefts occur at the Central City mall and in the downtown area.

As the holiday season is approaching the police department wants to plan a public awareness campaign highlighting precautions to take every day to discourage these thefts from occurring, however, with particular attention to this time of year.

Scenario 4.

You are the PIO for Liberty County Emergency Management and you have received the assignment of developing a public awareness campaign to promote "Know your Zone." Liberty County has recognized the need to identify zones along the Roaring River. These zones would identify homes, businesses, schools and houses of worship if evacuations would be required. Zones would allow faster notifications and allow for a more orderly evacuation. They have identified Zone A as any structure that is within 200 feet of the normal water level of the Roaring River. Zone B would be any structure within 500 feet of the normal water level. These areas need to know what zone they live in and how to find that information out. The notification of which zone you are in will be mailed to you by the County and will be listed on signs at major intersections throughout the community. Your zone will also be listed on your monthly utility bills and a map can be located at www.LibertyCounty-RoaringRiver.gov

Scenario 5.

Flu season is approaching and the Green County Health Department wants their PIO to promote everyone obtaining their annual flu vaccine shot. You are to develop a public service campaign. Flu vaccines are available at most minute clinics, health departments and primary care physicians' office. Green County has a high number of elderly living in the Monroe area. Locations and additional information can be found at www.GreenCountyHeathDepartment0105.gov

Activity 3.1: Worksheet

MESSAGE MAP

SCENARIO:
STAKEHOLDER:
CONCERN:

KEY MESSAGE 1 →	KEY MESSAGE 2 →	KEY MESSAGE 3

Support Point 1.1	Support Point 2.1	Support Point 3.1

Support Point 1.2	Support Point 2.2	Support Point 3.2

Support Point 1.3	Support Point 2.3	Support Point 3.3

PIO Message Map

1. Incident Name:	2. Operational Period:	
Smoke Alarm Awareness Campaign	Date From: 12-1-2025	Date To: 12-3-2025
	Time From: 0800	Time To: 1700

Key Message #1
Smoke Alarms Save Lives

Support Point 1.1
75% of homes have working smoke alarms. In 25% that do not 80% of deaths occur

Support Point 1.2
90% of fire deaths occur between 11 pm and 6 am when people are sleeping.

Support Point 1.3
Non-working alarms lack a battery, have dead battery or alarm is 10+ years or older

Key Message #2
Smoke Alarms Locations

Support Point 2.1
Place a working smoke alarm on every level of your home

Support Point 2.2
Place high on wall or ceiling just outside of sleeping areas

Support Point 2.3
Install a smoke alarm in every bedroom and sleep with door closed

Key Message #3
Smoke Alarm Maintenance

Support Point 3.1
Install 10-year smoke alarm with battery backup

Support Point 3.2
Test alarm every month and replace battery at least once a year

Support Point 3.3
Best option is hardwired interconnected 10 year alarms with sealed battery backup

MMap	Sept 2021	4. Prepared by: Name: Brady	Position/Title: PIO	Signature: Mark Brady	Date/Time: 11-1-2025

STRATCOM Wheel Worksheet

Name _____ Date: _____

Step 1 – Assess the Current Situation

What is the communication need?	Who is in most need of messages?

What actions should they take?	What will success look like?

Step 2 – Set Communications Goals and Objectives

Write one communications goal and one SMART communications objective in the appropriate format.

1. **GOAL:**

2. **SMART OBJECTIVE:**

Step 3 – Identify Intended Audiences

Identify three to four target audiences and at least two segments of each audience.

Audience 1	
Segment	
Segment	

Audience 2	
Segment	
Segment	

Audience 3	
Segment	
Segment	

Audience 4	
Segment	
Segment	

Step 4 – Develop and Test Messages

Develop a message that meets your communications objective and addresses the audience you identified. List at least one way you will test the message.

Message

Testing Process

Step 5 – Select Channels and Activities

Identify three communication channels (or activities) you would use to distribute the message.

	Channel one	**Channel two**	**Channel three**

	Channel one	**Channel two**	**Channel three**

	Channel one	Channel two	Channel three

	Channel one	Channel two	Channel three

Step 6 – Develop an Action Plan

Use the space below to identify what tasks are necessary to develop the materials and activities you have planned up to this point. Use that information to create a Staffing Plan and document the Staffing Plan using ICS Form 213RR.

Step 7 – Develop and Test Materials

Describe the materials you would create for your communication objective.

Describe how you would test those materials.

Step 8 – Implement, Evaluate, and Modify Plan

Describe how you would evaluate whether your messaging was meeting your objectives.

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 10 minutes for the activity.
- Keep the report to 2 minutes.

Activity

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

Instructions: Read the scenario assigned to your table group and work through the discussion questions. Assign a spokesperson to recap your group's scenario before presenting findings to the class. When reporting your findings, provide a very brief synopsis (three to four sentences) of your scenario and explain key strategies your group came up with using the 8-Step Strategic Communications Model. Keep the report to 2 minutes. The scenarios are:

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

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

Note

Scenario 1 – "Pool Party"

The wildfire had burned for 7 days, fueled by high temperatures, windy conditions, and dry terrain. Hundreds of firefighters 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 entry 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 entry 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 available shelters) that affected primarily an economically depressed neighborhood. Your agency has done a good job putting in place new policies and protocols to address the issue, and you have fully briefed your agency director on the accomplishments to date. A reporter stands up to ask a question. He begins by recapping the issue and citing a number of "facts." He states that your agency continues to ignore the needs of the

community, as there are no designated shelters to date. Then the reporter asks: Don't you think this is clear evidence of extremely discriminatory practices?

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

Scenario 3 – News Conference Gone Wrong

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

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

Scenario 4 – Social Media Bites Back

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

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

Scenario 5 – The Misquote

Your agency director has granted an interview to a newspaper reporter from your city. You have developed a good rapport with the reporter and feel it is a good time to go "on the record" about the issue. The issue at hand is complicated—and controversial—but your director does a good job fully explaining the situation and why your agency has taken the action it did. You feel the interview went well and are optimistic about the upcoming story. However, when the story runs a week later, above the fold on the front page, you're not sure you were sitting in the same interview as the reporter. The

facts are incomplete, the quotes are taken out of context, and there are places where it's clear the reporter failed to understand the intricacies of the situation. The headline, particularly, is a nightmare.

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

Activity 5.1: Writing an External Product

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

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

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

Estimated Time: 30 minutes.

Total Time for the Activity: 30 minutes

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

Instructions:

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

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

Activity

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

Instructor Note

- Ask participants which errors they thought were the most serious.
- Emphasize that errors that cause confusion can lead people to make the wrong decisions and cause them to lose confidence in your organization.
- After the activity, have the participants use the news release writing exercise to write three talking points that they will be interviewed on.

Written Product #1

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

NR #3 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE October 2, 2009

State Notified of Alert at Nuclear Power Station

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

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

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

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

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

# # #

Written Product #2

Contact: Pat Kelly

#31 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE July 21, 2009

Homestead Police Announce Holiday Program

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

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

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

# # #

Written Product #3

Contact: CDEM Public Affairs (800) 555-6793

Saturday, December 12, 2009

Stay safe from chemical spills and terrorist attacks

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

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

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

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

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

Written Product #4

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

Dinwoody Police Officers Discover Marijuana

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

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

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

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

-30-

Written Product #5

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Contact: Jay Moore, PIO, NPEM

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

Volunteer Sandbaggers Needed

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

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

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

###

Written Product #6

Contact: Jan Morrison (800) 555-1234

NR #18 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE August 19, 2009

Media Advisory

(Not for Publication)

MEDIA BRIEFING SCHEDULED

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

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

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

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

# # #

Total Time for the Activity: 30 minutes

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

Instructions:

Activity

You will work in table groups for this activity. Review a news release and write one each of the following:

- Facebook post
- Microblog post
- Instagram post
- Short-form video outline
    - One Tweet
    - One Facebook entry
    - One idea for YouTube

You have 15 minutes for this activity.

If you are short on time, you can divide this work amongst the table, then get together to review it before reporting your work.

Activity 6.1: On-Camera Interviews

Purpose: To practice on-camera performance.

Instructions:

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

Activity

Total Time: 2 hours

Instructions:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

To find out more about Fire Prevention Week programs and activities in (Your Town/City), please contact the (Your Town/City) Fire Department at (provide your phone number or appropriate contact information). To learn more about smoke alarms and "Hear the Beep Where You Sleep. Every Bedroom Needs a Working Smoke Alarm!" visit NFPA's (https://www.nfpa.org/events/fire-prevention-week) and Sparky's FPW Fire Safety for kids (https://www.sparky.org/fpw).

Activity 7.1: Crisis Communications

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

Working in your table groups:

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

You have 30 minutes to complete this activity.

Crisis Communications Scenario

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?

Activity 9.1

- 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?

Scenario

- There has been a report of chemicals released into the local water supply.
    - There is a sheen on the water.
    - The Central City Water Department has issued an order to stop using tap water.
- Residents within a three-block area of the fire have started reporting to Central City and Faith Hospitals with complaints of respiratory distress.
- The mayor has signed a State of Emergency for Central City and, on recommendation of the Incident Commander, ordered an evacuation in a radius between 1 and 3 miles from the fire.
- The Central City EOC is activated, triggering full multiagency coordination.

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?

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.

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.

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.

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**.

Activity 11.1: New Conference Activity

Instructions: This is a group activity. Based on a scenario:

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

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

Estimated Time: 3 hours

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

Instructions:

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

Presenters will be:

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

First news conference will begin 30 minutes after the start of the activity.

Each press conference will be 10 minutes long total including questions from the press and will be followed by a 10-minute critique.

News conferences will be timed. Teams will be signaled at 5- and 1-minute intervals before the end of the conference.

Activity

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

Equipment will be set up during the team design session.

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

Teams will be evaluated on:

- Professionalism of the news conference
  - Start/end on time
  - Clear ground-rules
  - Demeanor of the presenters
- The delivery of the speakers
  - Key Messages
  - Articulate
  - Statement 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 a crew of 12 was flying from Los Angeles to Oakland. A small jet carrying six people and a 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 border with SLUDMAR. A small brushfire erupted. The big jet crashed within minutes of its radio transmission on East Sixth Avenue between "F" Street and "H" Street.

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

Scenario #3: Proposed Public Safety Ballot Measure

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

Scenario #4; SLUDMAR Earthquake

On 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 Building have collapsed. Fatalities and numerous injuries are reported. There is also a building collapse at Lakeview Jr. High. Multiple buildings have collapsed in the 1800 block of R Street. The southbound of- ramp on I-9 at Kilometro Calle is damaged and unusable. There is a major traffic accident at Shoreline Drive and Bayshore Boulevard, and a gas tanker is leaking there. Traffic signals are out throughout the city. A structure fire is reported at the Cal-Agra-Hydra Chemical facility at East 2nd and I Street (possible hazmat). There are four single structure fires in the city. There is also a fire in the

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

Scenario #5: Mall Explosion

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

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

Scenario #6: HAZMAT

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

The lone passengers in each of two of the vehicles were killed instantly. The third vehicle swerved onto the sidewalk, crashing into a bus stop. A passenger in the vehicle was ejected and died at the scene. The driver was trapped 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 a weapon. An examination of the interior of the truck produced several interior and exterior photographs of the SLUDMAR city hall.

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

Scenario #7: Protest Demonstrations/Civil Unrest

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

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

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

Scenario #8 Flooding

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

The weather is turning, however, and rain is on the way. On today's date and time, a much-needed winter rainstorm has arrived. The needed water is showing up in a torrent coming down in President's Canyon in the county. Floodwaters have risen up the canyon walls, chasing out hikers and, at the mouth of the canyon in the south, flooding is spreading in the neighborhoods, both in the county and in the city. The main area 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 4 to 5 hours with a break and another serious storm following in 24 hours.

Scenario #9: Wildland-Urban Interface Fire

A 2-year drought has left SLUDMAR extremely dry. The hills in President's Canyon and in the Tucker National Forrest are ripe for a conflagration.

On today's date, about 5 hours ago, a brushfire broke out in Tucker National Forrest. It is spreading fast in the dry timber and winds. It has spread to where fire authorities and local government officials are fearful it may reach SLUDMAR homes lying in its path within hours.

Scenario #10: SLUDMAR City Scandal

The SLUDMAR City Manager has become aware of potential wrongdoing alleged against members of the City Council and the Mayor related to possible illegal and unethical procurement practices of city equipment and services for the Fire and Public Works Departments. The City Manager learned of the problems from a "whistle-blower" who is a non-sworn employee of the Police Department.

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

Scenario #11: Mardi Gras

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

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

Exercise Brief-Out

Working in your table groups, answer the following questions:

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

Note

Activity Time:

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

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

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