

LESSON OVERVIEW

This lesson provides information on Evaluation Area 5, Emergency Notification and Public Information.

Lesson Objectives

At the completion of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Identify the two elements to be evaluated under emergency notification and public information.
 - Summarize the criteria used to evaluate emergency notification and public information.
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OVERVIEW OF EVALUATION AREA 5

EA-5, Emergency Notification and Public Information, looks at the ORO's ability to notify the public of an incident and to effectively communicate protective action decisions. It includes two sub-elements:

- 5.a Activation of the Prompt Alert and Notification System
 - 5.b Emergency Information and Instructions for the Public and Media
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5.a ALERT AND NOTIFICATION

Sub-element 5.a, Activation of the Prompt Alert and Notification (A&N) System, assesses the ORO's ability to provide prompt instructions to the public within the plume pathway EPZ. Two criteria have been published; a third has been deferred for later publication.

Criterion	Concerns . . .
5.a.1	Timeliness and quality of primary alert and notification
5.a.2	[Alert and notification in "fast-breaker" situations— Deferred]
5.a.3	Backup alerting and notification and exception areas

These criteria are to be evaluated every exercise (5.a.3 every exercise as needed).

Alert vs. Notification

- **Alert** refers to activation of an attention-getting warning signal (e.g., by sirens, tone alert radio, TDD, EAS, route alerting, or speakers on cars, helicopters, or boats) to alert the public to the emergency.
 - **Notification** refers to distribution of an instructional message through the Emergency Alert System (EAS) or some other system.
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Criterion 5.a.1: Primary Alerting and Notification

This criterion states: Activities associated with primary alerting and notification of the public are completed in a timely manner following the initial decision by authorized offsite emergency officials to notify the public of an emergency situation. The initial instructional message to the public must include as a minimum the elements required by current FEMA REP guidance.

Meeting the 5.a.1 Criterion

5.a.1 has several components. The ORO should demonstrate the capability to:

- Sequentially provide an alert signal followed by an initial instructional message.
- Provide the signal and message to populated areas throughout the 10-mile plume pathway EPZ.
- Complete the A&N in a timely manner.
- Include the elements required by current FEMA REP guidance in the initial message.

“Timely manner” is not subject to specific time requirements. It will be judged in relation to the scenario. For exercise purposes, this definition is used:

Timely: The responsible ORO personnel/representatives demonstrate actions to disseminate the appropriate information/instructions with a sense of urgency and without undue delay.

If message dissemination is to be identified as not having been accomplished in a timely manner, evaluators need to document a specific delay or cause as to why a message was not considered timely. Be sure to record times and document circumstances!

Required Message Elements. The required content of initial EAS messages depends on the emergency. Current FEMA REP guidance requires that messages contain, as a minimum, these four components:

- Identification of the ORO and the official authorizing the A&N.
 - Identification of the power station and a statement that an emergency exists at the plant.
 - Reference to REP-specific emergency information (e.g., brochures, information in the phone book).
 - Closing statement asking people to stay tuned.
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Simulated vs. Actual. Procedures to broadcast the message should be fully demonstrated as they would in an actual emergency up to the point of transmission. Broadcast of the message(s) or test messages is not required.

The alert signal activation may be simulated. However, the procedures should be demonstrated up to the point of actual activation.

The capability of the primary notification system to broadcast an instructional message on a 24-hour basis should be verified during an interview with appropriate personnel from the primary notification system.

Criterion 5.a.3: Exception Areas and Backup Alert

This criterion states: Activities associated with FEMA approved exception areas (where applicable) are completed within 45 minutes following the initial decision by authorized offsite emergency officials to notify the public of an emergency situation. Backup alert and notification of the public is completed within 45 minutes following the detection by the ORO of a failure of the primary alert and notification system.

An **exception area** is an area located about 5 to 10 miles from a nuclear power plant, specifically designated in an organization's plan, for which the 15-minute A&N provision does not apply.

Exception Area Alerting

OROs with FEMA-approved exception areas should be able to complete primary A&N of the exception area(s) within 45 minutes after the initial decision to notify the public, as follows:

Timing. The 45-minute clock will begin when the OROs make the decision to activate the A&N system for the first time for a specific emergency situation.

Message content. The initial message should, at a minimum, include:

- A statement that an emergency exists at the plant.
- Where to obtain additional information.

Routes. At least one route needs to be demonstrated and evaluated. The selected route(s) should vary from exercise to exercise, and the most difficult route should be demonstrated at least once every 6 years.

Simulation. All A&N activities along the route should be simulated as agreed upon in the Extent of Play. That is, the message that would actually be used is read for the evaluator, but not actually broadcast.

Actual testing. Actual testing of the mobile public address system will be conducted at some agreed-upon location.

Backup Alerting

Backup alert and notification of the public should be completed as follows:

Timing. Backup A&N should be completed within 45 minutes after the ORO detects a failure of the primary A&N system.

Situation. Backup route alerting needs to be demonstrated and evaluated (per the ORO's plan/procedures and the Extent of Play agreement) only if:

- The exercise scenario calls for failure of any portion of the primary system(s).
- Any portion of the primary system(s) actually fails to function.

Implementation. If backup alerting is demonstrated:

- Only one route needs to be selected and demonstrated.
 - All alert and notification activities along the route should be simulated as agreed upon in the Extent of Play.
 - Actual testing of the mobile public address system will be conducted at some agreed-upon location.
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5.b EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Sub-element 5.b, Emergency Information and Instructions for the Public and the Media, assesses the ORO's ability to disseminate emergency information and instructions to the public and the media and to maintain a public inquiry hotline.

This sub-element includes one criterion:

Criterion 5.b.1: OROs provide accurate emergency information and instructions to the public and the news media in a timely manner.

Timely and Sufficient Information

After the A&N has been accomplished, subsequent emergency information and instructions should be provided to the public and the media in a timely manner. Again, timeliness is scenario-dependent, and a determination that timeliness has been inadequate must be documented and justified.

Emergency information and instructions should be consistent with protective action decisions made by appropriate officials. They should contain sufficient instructions to assist the public in carrying out the protective actions. Examples of information to be provided are listed on the next screen.

Types of Information Provided

Examples of information provided to the public include:

- Evacuation instructions
 - Evacuation routes
 - Reception center locations
 - What to take when evacuating
 - Information concerning pets
 - Shelter-in-place instructions
 - Information concerning protective actions for schools and special populations
 - Public inquiry telephone number
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Information Clarity

Key aspects of effectively communicating with the public and media include:

- Disclosing and explaining the incident ECL. (At a minimum, the ECL must be included in media briefings and for media releases.)
 - Using language that is clear and understandable to the public within both the plume and ingestion pathway EPZs.
 - Using familiar landmarks and boundaries to describe protective action areas.
 - Developing emergency information in a non-English language when required by the plan and/or procedures.
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Quality of Information

OROs need to ensure that information provided the public and media is:

- **All-inclusive:** Previously identified protective action areas that are still valid are included along with new areas.
 - **Up-to-date:** Information that is no longer valid is rescinded and not repeated by broadcast media.
 - **Repeated regularly:** Current emergency information is repeated at pre-established intervals in accordance with the plan and/or procedures.
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Information on Ingestion Pathway Measures

If ingestion pathway measures are used, OROs should have a system in place for rapid dissemination of ingestion pathway information to pre-determined individuals and businesses.

Information for the Media

OROs should be able to provide information to the news media for subsequent dissemination to the public. This should include:

- Providing accurate, concise, and coordinated information.
- Conducting timely and pertinent media briefings.
- Distributing media releases as the situation warrants.
- Responding appropriately to inquiries from the news media.
- Making copies of pertinent emergency information (e.g., EAS messages and media releases) and media information kits available for dissemination to the media.

All information presented in media briefings and media releases should be consistent with protective action decisions and other emergency information provided to the public.

Public Inquiry Hotline

OROs should have an effective system in place for dealing with calls to the public inquiry hotline. This should include:

- Having hotline staff who are capable of providing or obtaining accurate information for callers or referring them to an appropriate information source.
 - Including information from the hotline staff (including information that corrects false or inaccurate information when trends are noted) in emergency information provided to the public, media briefings, and/or media releases.
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