Lesson 3. Communicating In an Emergency
Video: Communicating in an Emergency

Click on the image to view the video.
Lesson 3 Objectives

- Indicate how day-to-day communication differs from communication during an incident.
- Identify strategies for communicating effectively in an emergency situation.
- Select the most appropriate form of communication for a given situation.
- Indicate how social media and other communications technology can be used to communicate with members of the community.
Delivering Effective Emergency Communications

This lesson presents information about three aspects of communicating in an emergency:

- Emergency Communication Challenges
- Emergency Communication Tools
- Creating Effective Emergency Communications
Importance of Emergency Communication

In an emergency, information is as critical to people as food and water.
Key Functions of Emergency Information

- Save lives and reduce injury.
- Protect property and the environment.
- Facilitate the tactical response.
- Educate, inform, and change behavior and attitudes.
- Seek the public’s cooperation.
- Instill public confidence.
- Provide information to help families reunite.
Characteristics of Emergency Communications

Emergency communications differ from routine communications in several ways:

- Barriers
- Timeliness
- Required response
Factors That Affect Response

- Individual characteristics
- Perceptions
- Message source
- The message itself
How you will get the message to the audience is influenced by:

- The audience itself.
- Urgency of the message.
- Reliability of the medium.
- Appropriateness of the medium.
- Resources.
Activity: Communication Challenges

**Instructions:** Entire group:

- Your instructor will read each statement in the Student Manual and ask if it is true or false.
- Be prepared to explain your answers.
The most effective communication tool is the one that:

- Reaches the target audience.
- Gets information to the audience when they need it, for as long as they need it.
- Can be expected to deliver the message reliably.
- Enhances comprehension of the message content.
- Can be accessed within resource limitations.
Communication Tools and Methods

- In-person events
- Print media
- Broadcast media
- Internet and social media
In-Person Events

Advantages:
- Interactive.
- Can target specific populations.

Limitations:
- Must have ability to stay on message.
- May expose you to difficult questions.
Print Media

Advantages:

- Allow for detail.
- Can use a variety of approaches.

Limitations:

- Take longer to get the message out.
- May be filtered through another spokesperson.
Broadcast Media

Advantages:
- Immediate broadcast.
- Varied programming.
- Reaches a wide audience.

Disadvantages:
- May be less detailed.
- Messages may be filtered or edited.
- Listeners/viewers must turn on the device.
Internet and Social Media

Advantages:
- Can be updated quickly.
- Can incorporate varied media.
- Flexible.

Limitations:
- Updates may only be at certain times.
- Limited message control after sending.
Coming to Terms With New Media

“New media” include:

- Blogs
- Photo sharing
- Podcasts
- RSS feeds
- Social networking
- Webcasts
- Wikis
Activity: Social Media Self-Assessment

Instructions: Working individually:
- Review the list of social media in the Student Manual.
- Assess your comfort level with each type of media.
Activity: Communication Tools

**Instructions:**

- Review the list of communication tools/methods in the Student Manual.
- Match each communication tool/method by entering the number beside the description.
Creating Effective Emergency Communications

Successful emergency communications should:
- Present the information in sequence.
- Be worded precisely.
- Avoid jargon, code, and acronyms.
- Use common terminology.
- Omit unnecessary details.
- Speak in sync with other related authorities.
- Keep messages consistent across various media.
Creating Alerts and Warnings

- Alerts and warnings are products or messages intended to get the attention of the public and to prompt some type of action.
- In practical usage, there is little distinction between the two.
Alert and Warning Message Content

Successful messages should include:

- Specific hazard
- Location
- Timeframes
- Warning source
- Magnitude
- Likelihood
- Protective behavior
Accessible Alert and Warning Systems

- Ensure messages are accessible to all audiences by using clear and simple language.
- Provide information in multiple languages.
- Be aware of text-to-speech technology requirements.
- Ensure audio is consistent with text.
- Explain images and maps.
- Use multiple delivery channels.
Using Warning Message Templates

Using templates tailored to threats and hazards likely in your warning area, that incorporate pre-approved language, can:

- Help prevent errors or omissions.
- Reduce delays in issuing alerts and warnings.
- Allow for language translation in advance.
Activity: Developing a Warning Message

**Instructions:** Working in your table group:

- Review the scenario in the Student Manual.
- Imagine this scenario occurring in your jurisdiction. You may add additional facts and details not contained in the scenario.
- Develop a warning message to address the scenario.
- Be prepared to follow up with a group discussion.
Preparing for Briefings and Public Meetings

- Identify objectives.
- Prepare officials and experts in advance.
- Prepare a statement and handout materials.
- Anticipate difficult or sensitive questions.
- Make provisions to comply with all legal requirements.
Activity: Creating Effective Emergency Communications

**Instructions:** Entire group:

- Your instructor will read each statement in the Student Manual and ask if that action is recommended or not recommended.
- Be prepared to explain your answers.
Summary and Transition

- Lesson 3 presented strategies for communicating effectively in an emergency situation.
- Lesson 4 will present strategies for improving your oral presentation skills.