AWR 209: Working with the Media: A Short Course for Rural First Responders

Course Design Document - ILT

March 2015

Homeland Security | **Rural Domestic Preparedness Training Center**

Course Description

Course Overview	Description
Overview	*Working with the Media: A Short Course for Rural First Responders* is designed to provide emergency responders with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to interact with the media and perform public information functions in preparation for and during incidents. Many agencies from small and rural communities do not have a full- or part-time public information officer (PIO) on staff and responders often assume this responsibility without formal training and practice. The intent of this course is to prepare responders for interacting with the media when required, whether it be roadside at the scene of an incident or for conveying directions to the public in a crisis situation. It is important to understand how the media works and how best to work with the available media outlets. Responder organizations often appoint one or more of their staff to assume the role of talking with the media, or arranging and assisting with such contact, in both emergency and non-emergency situations. Many who assume this role, however, struggle with what to say or how to say it, and few have training on writing press releases and other facets of the public information function critical to protection of lives and property. They also often lack awareness of the importance of good media relations, forgetting the extent to which negative coverage can influence public opinion and the reputation of the organization and local elected and appointed officials. This course provides training in these areas, giving responders more confidence in their ability to communicate with the media, and ultimately, with the public. In addition, this course would benefit spokespersons for elected and appointed officials and responders from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) (e.g., American Red Cross), institutions of higher education, and private sector organizations (e.g., hospitals and healthcare organizations, utility providers). Note that course concepts may be applied for communicating with individuals with disabilities and access and functional needs, and people with limited English proficiency.

| | This course supports the Whole Community approach described in the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)'s *Whole Community Approach to Emergency Management: Principles, Themes, and Pathways for Action*. This document stems from years of collaborative research focused on ways to tap the inherent resources available within a given community.

FEMA (2011) defines Whole Community as "a means by which residents, emergency management practitioners, organizational and community leaders, and government officials can collectively understand and assess the needs of their respective communities and determine the best ways to organize and strengthen their assets, capacities, and interests." Its benefits include the following.

Shared understanding of community needs and capabilities Greater empowerment and integration of resources from across the community Stronger social infrastructure Establishment of relationships that facilitate more effective prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery activities Increased individual and collective preparedness Greater resiliency at both the community and national levels |
|---|---|
| Scope | This 7-hour, awareness-level course is designed to provide emergency responders with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to interact with the media and perform public information functions in preparation for and during incidents. Many agencies from small and rural communities do not have a full- or part-time PIO on staff and responders often assume this responsibility without formal training and practice. The intent of this course is to prepare responders for interacting with the media when required, whether it be roadside at the scene of an incident or for conveying directions to the public in a crisis situation.

Responders are often asked by their colleagues, supervisors, or members of the media to talk with the media about both emergency and non-emergency situations. Many struggle with what to say or how to say it, and few have training on writing press releases and other facets of the public information function critical to protection of lives and property. They also often lack awareness of the importance of good |

media relations, forgetting the extent to which negative coverage can influence public opinion and the reputation of the organization and local elected and appointed officials. This course provides training in these areas, giving responders more confidence in their ability to communicate with the media, and ultimately, with the public.

Specifically, the course helps responders:
- Manage camera crews that show up unannounced at an incident scene.
- Know how to handle and control high-pressure TV interviews.
- Know where to look and what to say during the interview.
- Develop standard operating guidelines for responding to reporter calls.
- Use the Internet and social media for educating the public on hazards.

The primary focus of this course is on the interaction between responders and the news media for disseminating emergency public information. Examples of the news media include companies that print newspapers and publish e-news, television (TV) broadcasters, radio stations, and other organizations that utilize the Internet for disseminating information on incidents. The dissemination of emergency public information is commonly referred to as crisis communications, the dissemination of messages in response to a crisis, which explain the severity of the situation and action steps to take.

While the focus remains on interacting with the news media, this course also provides an introduction to the use of informal networks and "new media", a term meant to encompass digital, computerized, or networked information and communication technologies such as social networking services (e.g., Facebook, Twitter). Both response agencies and the news media are using informal networks and digital technologies for monitoring and disseminating emergency public information. For example, many agencies today use Twitter as one method for disseminating alerts and warnings, and messages to the public. This course describes how these informal networks and technologies are impacting the way response agencies interact with the news media.

Digital technologies are often used by organizations for disseminating emergency public information and for public

	education purposes. The terms "public education" and "public awareness" are used interchangeably in this course and refer to the process of making the public aware of their risks and preparing them for hazards in advance of a disaster and as a long-term strategic effort (Emergency Management Accreditation Program [EMAP], 2006).
	Although the course is designed for responders in rural areas, the media with which they work may be in urban as well as rural areas; that is, the coverage area of the urban media may extend well into surrounding rural areas. Therefore, responders from rural communities may need to work with newspapers, and radio and TV stations outside of their local areas.
	This course consists of five instructional modules and an end-of-course practical exercise that allows participants to apply their knowledge using simulated scenarios and interviews. Modules contain discussion-based exercises and videos to provide visual examples of interview techniques. The course appendix provides guidance on dealing with the media in preparation for planned events such as local parades, festivals, sporting events, and regional celebrations.
Target Audience	This course is targeted toward responders from small, rural, and remote communities who have responsibility for public information functions as an assigned duty as their agency's PIO, as well as responders who are likely to interact with the media at an incident scene. The target audience for this course includes responders from the following disciplines: • Emergency Management • Emergency Medical Services • Fire Service • Governmental Administrative • Law Enforcement • Public Health In addition, this course would benefit spokespersons for elected and appointed officials and responders from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) (e.g., American Red Cross), institutions of higher education, and private sector organizations (e.g., hospitals and healthcare organizations, well as other planners representing emergency management, emergency medical service (EMS), fire service, and public health. State law enforcement and other state officials involved in planning event security in coordination with local

	personnel are also encouraged to attend this course. This course supports the Whole Community approach described in the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)'s *Whole Community Approach to Emergency Management: Principles, Themes, and Pathways for Action*. This document stems from years of collaborative research focused on ways to tap the inherent resources available within a given community.
Prerequisites	In advance of this course, participants are encouraged to complete ICS-100.b: Introduction to the Incident Command System (ICS) and IS-700.a: National Incident Management System (NIMS), An Introduction in order to gain familiarity with the public information function. Although AWR 209 is an awareness-level course, select learning objectives and aspects of the course such as the techniques for conducting interviews are performance oriented. The course also promotes planning for crisis communications and public awareness campaigns. As such, the course is recommended for PIOs with formal training as well as responders with no formal training. Following completion of this course, participants may continue training through one or more of the following courses: State & Local Public Information Courses: G-289 Public Information Officer Awareness G-290 Basic Public Information Officer G-291 Joint Information System/Joint Information Center Planning for Tribal, State and Local Public Information Officers E-388 Advanced Public information Officer Other FEMA-Sponsored Courses: MGT-318 Management Public Information in an All-Hazards Incident *Texas Engineering Extension Service* MGT-902 Advanced Public Information Officer: Health and Hospital Emergencies Resident/Non-Resident *Center for Domestic Preparedness*

	PER-304 Social Media for Natural Disaster Response and Recovery *University of Hawaii, National Disaster Preparedness Training Center*
Course Length	7 hours

Required Materials/Facilities	Facilities:
	   • Participant guide
	   • Laptop projector and projector screen
	   • Slide presentation
	   • A room that seats 40

Course Description

Course Overview	Description
Required Materials/Facilities (con't)	**Classroom Materials** • One instructor manual • Max 30 participant manuals • Attendance roster • Name tents/name tags • Flip charts/easels/markers • Copies of pre-test • Copies of post-test • Copies of course evaluation • Copies of registration forms
Testing/Certification	Each DHS course requires a pre- and post-test as a means of measuring the effectiveness of training from a learning perspective. After the course introduction is complete, each participant will take a pre-test. There is no pass/fail for the pre-test; it is intended to gauge participants' understanding of the material. At the end of the course, each student will be required to take the post-test. In order to receive a course completion certificate, students must score a 70% or better on the post-test. Should remediation be necessary, the instructor will provide additional instruction in any problem areas, and the student will be allowed to take the test again. Classroom participation is evaluated by the instructor(s) throughout the course, and they will assess your participation in the classroom during discussions as well as how you interact with other students. The end-of-course exercise is another class participation evaluation tool. In this exercise, students will break into groups to develop a security plan surrounding a fictitious scenario and will present a security briefing based on their plan. Also at the end of the course, a standard DHS FEMA course evaluation form will be provided to participants to measure reaction (e.g., did you find the content favorable?, did it meet your expectations?). Finally, the RDPC commonly implements a questionnaire to participants months after completing the course to assess the transfer of knowledge, skills, and abilities. For example, did you apply what you learned during the course for planning security for a community event?

Reference List	See Attached List of References at Page 18
Evaluation Strategy	- Observation of student participation during each module and end of course practical exercise - Instructor facilitated verbal review of each module's content - Course Post-Test - Student Course Evaluation

Course Structure/Content Outline

Modules	Topics
Course Introduction, Administration and Pre-test	• Course purpose, goals and objectives • Admin instructions and requirements
MODULE 1: Understanding the Media	The media consistently ranks low in public opinion polls. It's an industry we love to hate. However it is important to understand the importance of public information and role of a PIO and how to effectively communicate with the media and the public
MODULE 2: At the Scene of an Emergency	Handling the media at the scene of an incident can be challenging, but extremely important for effective communication with the public. In this module, participants will learn how to handle the media at the scene of an incident, how to help the media without endangering emergency workers, and how to choose a media staging area. This module also describes use of systems, including social media, for issuing alerts and warnings to the public.
MODULE 3: Giving Interviews that Work	Most responders from small and rural communities are volunteers with day jobs that involve no contact with media representatives. Therefore, it may be challenging for them when faced with an interview situation. To be successful, it takes preparation, practice, and familiarity with media representatives. In this module, participants learn about the steps to prepare for and conduct on-scene and planned interviews, the elements of an interview, and various interview tips.
MODULE 4: Public Awareness Campaigns	Besides dealing with the media during emergencies, response agencies are often tasked with ongoing contact with the public through the media, which is often important for increasing public awareness of threats and hazards and upholding a positive image of the organization. This module helps participants interact with the media for public awareness purposes by providing tips on what makes stories interesting to the media and timing the release of stories.
MODULE 5: Writing and Disseminating News Releases	Getting news releases noticed, let alone read, is not always easy. Newspaper, radio, and TV newsrooms, even those in small markets, are bombarded with e-mailed news releases. Participants will learn how to write releases clearly and concisely and learn how to get them noticed, and used, by the media.

Practical Exercise	• Practical exercise
Post-Test and Course Evaluation	• Course Post-Test • Student Course Evaluations

Course Design Matrix

Module 1: Understanding the Media	
Duration	1 hour, 30 minutes
Scope Statement	This module aids participants in identifying how to successfully communicate with the public through the media in the event of an emergency.
Terminal Learning Objectives (TLO)	At the conclusion of this module, participants will recognize the role of the media and possess the knowledge and skills to work with them.
Enabling Learning Objectives (ELO)	Upon completion of this module, participants will be able to: ELO 1-1 – Explain the importance of working with the media. ELO 1-2 – Explain what makes a story "newsworthy" and what the media wants when requesting information. ELO 1-3 – Describe the forms of media and what types of information they require for a story. ELO 1-4 – List laws detailing why it is important to work with the media. ELO 1-5 – Explain the media's role in society during a disaster. ELO 1-6 - Describe the strengths and limitations of social media.
Resources	PowerPoint™ slides Instructor Guide Participant Guide
Instructor to Participant Ratio (e.g., 1:25)	1:15-30
Practical Exercise Statement	Not applicable to this module.
Assessment Strategy	There will be observation of student participation in instructor-led class discussion.
References Emergency Management Degree. (n.d.). Using social media as a crisis management tool. Retrieved from: http://www.emergency-management-degree.org/crisis/ Federal Emergency Management Agency. (2007, November). Basic Guidance for Public Information Officers (PIOs) (FEMA 517). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Retrieved from: http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/12578	

Federal Emergency Management Agency. (2009, October). Basic Public Information Officer Awareness Course (G290): Student Manual. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Course Design Matrix

Module 2: At the Scene of an Emergency	
Duration	**1 hour**
Scope Statement	This module helps participants to identify preparatory measures as well as on-scene risks and benefits to dealing with the media. It also suggests ways to work effectively with the media while enabling your organization.
Terminal Learning Objectives (TLO)	At the conclusion of this module, participants will be able to describe the skills and knowledge necessary to deal with the media at the scene of an emergency.
Enabling Learning Objectives (ELO)	At the conclusion of this module, participants will be able to: ELO 2-1 – Describe preparatory measures for dealing with the media at the scene. ELO 2-2 – Describe the factors in providing a media staging area.

ELO 2-3 – Explain the advantages of holding a news conference. |
Resources	PowerPoint™ slides Instructor Guide Participant Guide
Instructor to Participant Ratio (e.g., 1:25)	1:15-30
Practical Exercise Statement	Participants will complete multiple-choice questions at the end of this module.
Assessment Strategy	Observation of student participation in instructor-led class discussion.
References

Federal Emergency Management Agency. (2007, November). *Basic Guidance for Public Information Officers (PIOs) (FEMA 517)*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Retrieved from: http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/12578
Federal Emergency Management Agency. (2009, October). *Basic Public Information Officer Awareness Course (G290): Student Manual*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Homeland Security. | |

Course Design Matrix

Module 3: Giving Interviews that Work	
Duration	**1 hour, 15 minutes**
Scope Statement	This module helps participants to understand, prepare and practice the elements of a successful media interview. It also describes the attributes of a good interviewee as well as dealing with an aggressive interviewer.
Terminal Learning Objectives (TLO)	At the conclusion of this module, participants will comprehend components of on-scene and planned off-scene interviews and have the skills necessary to provide them.
Enabling Learning Objectives (ELO)	Upon completion of this module, participants will be able to: ELO 3-1 – Explain long-term preparation activities required for successful on-scene interviews. ELO 3-2 – Describe attributes of a good interviewee. ELO 3-3 – Identify the various types of aggressive interviewers and list strategies for dealing with each. ELO 3-4 – Explain the essential elements of the interview.
Resources	PowerPoint™ slides Instructor Guide Participant Guide
Instructor to Participant Ratio (e.g., 1:25)	1:15-30
Practical Exercise Statement	Not applicable to this module.
Assessment Strategy	Observation of student participation in instructor-led class discussion.
References Federal Emergency Management Agency. (2007, November). *Basic Guidance for Public Information Officers (PIOs) (FEMA 517)*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Retrieved from: http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/12578 Federal Emergency Management Agency. (2009, October). *Basic Public Information Officer Awareness Course (G290): Student Manual.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.	

Course Design Matrix

Module 4: Public Awareness Campaigns	
Duration	**45 minutes**
Scope Statement	Besides dealing with the media during emergencies, response agencies are often tasked with ongoing contact with the public through the media, which is often important for increasing public awareness of threats and hazards and upholding a positive image of the organization. This module helps participants develop and implement public awareness campaigns using the news media as mechanism for disseminating messages to the public. It also provides tips on what makes stories interesting to the media and timing the release of stories.
Terminal Learning Objectives (TLO)	At the conclusion of this module, participants will be able to describe the purpose of disaster public education and steps in developing and implementing public awareness campaigns. They will also be able to describe ways to make stories more interesting to the media and know when to best promote a story idea.
Enabling Learning Objectives (ELO)	Upon completion of this module, participants will be able to: ELO 4-1. Describe the purpose of disaster public education. ELO 4-2. List the six steps in the Disaster Public Education Planning and Implementation Cycle. ELO 4-3. Identify characteristics of effective public awareness messages. ELO 4-4. List ways to make potential stories more interesting to media representatives. ELO 4-5. Identify times when the media is most receptive to story suggestions. ELO 4-6. Apply steps of the Disaster Public Education Planning and Implementation Cycle to a notional scenario.
Resources	PowerPoint™ slides Instructor Guide Participant Guide
Instructor to Participant Ratio (e.g., 1:25)	1:15-30
Practical Exercise Statement	Not applicable to this module.
Assessment Strategy	Observation of student participation in instructor-led class discussion.

References

American Red Cross. (2007, March). *Talking About Disaster: Guide for Standard Messages.* Washington, DC: American Red Cross. Retrieved from: http://www.crh.noaa.gov/images/bis/AmericanRedCross_TalkingAboutDisaster.pdf

Emergency Management Accreditation Program. (2013). *Emergency Management Standard.* Lexington, KY: Emergency Management Accreditation Program. Retrieved from: http://www.emaponline.org/index.php/root/for-programs/23-2013-emergency-management-standard

Emergency Management Accreditation Program and the Council of State Governments. (2006, October). *Assessing Your Disaster Public Awareness Program: A Guide to Strengthening Public Education (through support from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation).* Lexington, KY: EMAP and CSG.

Federal Emergency Management Agency. (2007, November). *Basic Guidance for Public Information Officers (PIOs) (FEMA 517).* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Retrieved from: http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/12578

Federal Emergency Management Agency. (2009, October). *Public Information Officer Awareness Course (G289): Student Manual.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

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U.S. Department of Homeland Security. (2013c, August). *Comprehensive Preparedness Guide (CPG) 201: Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA), Second Edition.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Retrieved from: http://www.fema.gov/threat-and-hazard-identification-and-risk-assessment

U.S. General Accounting Office. (2003, October). *Public Health Response to Anthrax Incidents of 2001 (GAO-04-152).* Washington, DC: U.S. General Accounting Office. Retreived from: http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d04152.pdf

Course Design Matrix

Module 5: Writing and Disseminating News Releases	
Duration	**1 Hour**
Scope Statement	This module provides an overview of elements of effective news releases and aims to assist participants developing and disseminating news releases to the media.
Terminal Learning Objectives (TLO)	At the conclusion of this module, participants will be able to identify elements of effective news releases and apply tips for developing and disseminating news releases to the media.
Enabling Learning Objectives (ELO)	Upon completion of this module, participants will be able to: ELO 5-1. Identify the primary reasons for using news releases. ELO 5-2. List and explain the significance of the "5 Ws + One." ELO 5-3. Identify styles and formats that characterize effective news releases. ELO 5-4. Identify the elements of a news release. ELO 5-5. List examples of written materials used for disseminating messages to the media and public.
Resources	PowerPoint™ slides Instructor Guide Participant Guide
Instructor to Participant Ratio (e.g., 1:25)	1:15-30
Practical Exercise Statement	Not applicable to this module.
Assessment Strategy	Observation of student participation in instructor-led class discussion.
References Federal Emergency Management Agency. (2007, November). *Basic Guidance for Public Information Officers (PIOs) (FEMA 517).* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Retrieved from: http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/12578 Federal Emergency Management Agency. (2009, October). *Public Information Officer Awareness Course (G289): Student Manual.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.	

International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). (2011, December). *Increasing Your Social Media Presence Fact Sheet.* Alexandria, VA: IACP. Retrieved from: http://www.iacpsocialmedia.org/Resources/Publications.aspx

International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). (2012, December). *Twitter Fact Sheet.* Alexandria, VA: IACP. Retrieved from: http://www.iacpsocialmedia.org/Portals/1/documents/Fact%20Sheets/Twitter%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf

International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). (2013, January). *Social Media Fact Sheet.* Alexandria, VA: IACP. Retrieved from: http://www.iacpsocialmedia.org/Resources/Publications.aspx

Course Design Matrix

Practical Exercise	
Duration	**30 Minutes**
Scope Statement	This group exercise will allow students to apply knowledge and information presented in modules 1 through 5 using simulated scenarios and interviews. Representing groups of public information officers (PIOs), participants will analyze an incident scenario and develop a key message using the emergency message formula and 5Ws +1. A designated spokesperson will deliver the message to the media and respond to questions using facts and bridging techniques.
Terminal Learning Objectives (TLO)	Given an incident scenario, students acting as PIOs will analyze the scenario and construct a key message for disseminating to the public as part of an interview with the news media.
Enabling Learning Objectives (ELO)	Upon completion of this module, participants will be able to: ELO-1. Using knowledge and course information, analyze an incident scenario and recognize facts and unknowns. ELO-2. Construct a key message and talking points using the emergency message formula and 5Ws + 1. ELO-3. As a spokesperson, perform an interview with the media. ELO-4. As a spokesperson, evaluate and formulate a proper response to questions from the media using facts and bridging techniques. ELO-5. As a spokesperson, demonstrate empathy and proper use of nonverbal communication techniques during an interview.
Resources	PowerPoint™ slides Instructor Guide Participant Guide
Instructor to Participant Ratio (e.g., 1:25)	1:15-30
Practical Exercise Statement	Students will be provided a fictional scenario and, acting as PIOs, analyze the scenario and develop a key message using the emergency message formula and 5Ws +1.
Assessment Strategy	Observation of student participation in instructor-led class discussion.

Course Agenda

Course Introduction and Pre-Test – 30 Minutes

Module 1: Understanding the Media – 1 Hour, 30 minutes

Module 2: Preparations for the Incident and Crisis Communications – 1 Hour

Module 3: Conducting Interviews – 1 Hour, 15 Minutes

Module 4: Public Awareness Campaigns – 45 Minutes

Module 5: Writing News Releases – 1 Hour

Practical Exercise – 30 Minutes

Post-Test and Course Evaluations – 30 Minutes