Emergency Communications Center Crisis Response Taskforce
Final Report

Friday, July 12, 2019

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Foreword

In November 2018, the APCO Executive Committee established the Emergency Communications Center Crisis Response Task Force with a mission to create a best practices reference guide listing emergency communications center (ECC) responses to situations that were encountered and impacted ECC operations during and after a prolonged or large-scale emergency event. Situations such as mass casualty events, line of duty deaths, active shooter events, and other high impact/low frequency events impact ECC operations and ECC personnel. Although our public safety telecommunicators (PSTs) are well trained and prepared to respond to these types of incidents, often they are not prepared to respond to the impact such events have on the ECC once the initial response to the event is complete. Assisting managers, supervisors, and PSTs better prepare for the aftershocks that come from high profile events is the overall goal of this task force. Taking care of those who staff our ECCs so they can take care of our public is paramount.

The members of the task force held sixteen teleconference meetings over seven months, created more than two hundred individual documents, and shared over one hundred thirty-five postings on PSCONNECT. Members completed countless hours of independent work, especially the eight members that served as topic chairs coordinating the content research and development. Task Force Member Lauren Yankanin and Task Force RPL Intern Christine Massengale did an outstanding job serving as the primary editors for the response guide. In addition, the chairs would like to thank APCO Staff Representative Stacy Banker for her excellent service in support of this task force.

As you will see in our report, the members believe that the work produced by the task force is a strong start to addressing crisis response preparation in our nation's ECCs. However, more work must be done to expand the current response guide and to keep it current with new and yet unforeseen impacts that may occur. We believe that by rolling the response guide into the ProCHRT toolbox and the ProCHRT structure, this guide can become a priority resource for directors, managers, and supervisors as they plan for the unthinkable.

On behalf of Task Force Vice-Chair Maureen Will, I would like to thank the members of the Emergency Communications Center Crisis Response Task Force for their passion, commitment, dedication, and hard work over these last seven months. The work completed here will serve our most valuable resource, our human resource, for many years to come.

Sincerely,

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Chair, Emergency Communications Center Crisis Response Task Force

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History

Highly trained public safety telecommunicators (PSTs), supervisors, and managers work every day in emergency communications centers (ECCs) across our nation, prepared to respond to critical situations that occur in the diverse communities they serve. Policy and procedure, emergency operations plans, technical response plans, and other preparatory resources focus on how to respond and mitigate emergencies when they occur. However, when those emergencies are large scale, prolonged, or they shock the conscious of the community, they can have a significant impact on the ECC long after the initial response. All too often, ECCs find themselves inadequately prepared for the residual effects these types of events have not only on the operation of the ECC but also its staff members. Most of the available training and preparatory resources focus on how staff will respond to the needs of the community. There is often very little focus given to supporting the ongoing needs of ECC staff members.

In November 2018, the APCO Executive Committee established the Emergency Communications Center Crisis Response Task Force with a mission to create a best practices reference guide containing recommendations for ECC responses to situations that impact ECC operations during and after a prolonged or large-scale emergency event. Incidents such as mass casualty events, line of duty deaths, active shooter situations, and other high impact/low frequency events have a substantial impact on ECC operations and personnel. Assisting managers, supervisors, and PSTs to better prepare for the aftershocks that come from high profile events is the overall goal of this task force. Taking care of those who staff our ECCs so that they can take care of their communities is paramount.

Mission

The Emergency Communications Center Crisis Response Task Force was established by APCO to create a structure that assists directors, managers, and supervisors with preparation for high impact, prolonged, or large scale emergency events that place a significant strain on staff members.

The members of the task force held sixteen teleconference meetings over seven months, created more than two hundred individual documents, and shared over one hundred thirty-five postings on PSCONNECT to meet the task force mission and complete the seven assigned tasks. In this document, we report our results and make recommendations on how we believe this effort should continue.
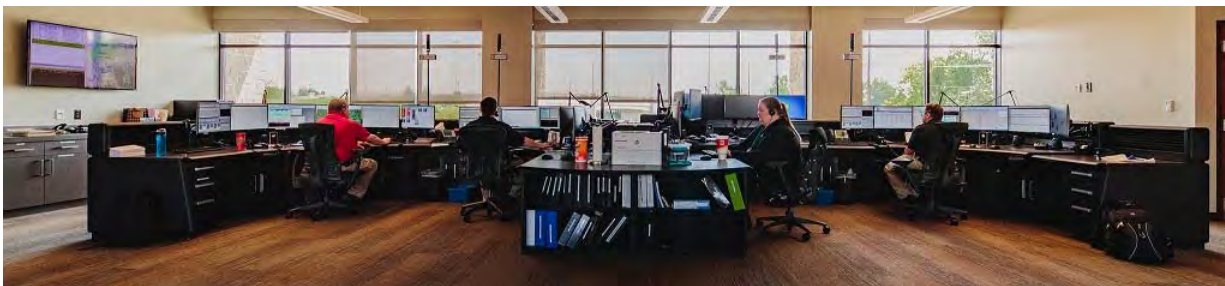
Tasks

The task force was assigned seven tasks. Members conducted independent research, held group discussions, drew from personal experience, communicated with subject matter experts, and reviewed numerous agency after-action reports to answer these tasks and make the following recommendations:

Task #1: Identifying specific situations that arise within the ECC immediately following a sudden death or mass casualty crisis such as hate calls to the ECC, outside law enforcement inquiries and large unexpected community donations, etc.

The task force members have included specific guidance on how to respond to these and similar situations through the development of a Crisis Preparation Manual. The manual was developed as part of task three and provides numerous recommendations on how to prepare for these events following a critical incident. The task force also identified and addressed several other impacts on ECC staff and operations.

Task #2: Catalog differences, if any, between a line of duty death and community/residential deaths and the internal handling of those incidents.

Handling a line of duty death is different from managing the death of a community member. The loss of a coworker presents profound challenges to ECC staff. For that reason, the task force developed a "Co-worker/Line of Duty Death Plan" as part of the Crisis Preparation Manual. This plan addresses the many impacts on staff, both during the incident and post-incident, and provides recommendations on how to respond to the unique demands posed by these events.

Task #3: Develop best practices to address items such as staffing, event coordination, and peer counseling from the sudden crisis situation.

The task force created a best practices guide entitled, "Emergency Communications Center Crisis Preparation Manual." The manual is a series of guide cards that includes specific recommendations for ECC managers on how to prepare for various large-scale incidents that affect ECC operations and staff. The guide cards are broken down in sections by incident type, general plans, and supplemental forms. All of these documents are intended to assist directors and managers in their preparation for impactful events. Each guide card includes recommendations for the creation of policies, procedures, staff training, and resource management. Members of the task force worked in teams, organized by topic and overseen by a topic chair, as they conducted research and developed content. Research methods included drawing from member's personal experiences, the interviewing of staff from ECCs where these incidents have occurred as well as reviewing after-action reports provided by ECCs from across the nation. A draft best practices guide is attached to this report.

> "Taking care of those who staff our ECCs so they can take care of our communities is paramount."

Task #4: Compile all information into a relatable situational document to be shared with APCO members through the ProCHRT toolbox that provides guidance to ECCs during moments of utter chaos.

The Crisis Preparation Manual is proposed as a living, evolving document. The task force envisions that it will become a section within the ProCHRT toolbox, easily accessible to the APCO Membership, for use in planning for high impact/low frequency events. However, it is also designed in a way that allows an agency to use the contents of the manual immediately following an event in the absence of prepared policy. It was important to members of the task force that the content be concise and be provided in a consistent, easy to access format. Although the task force has provided such a format, it encourages the ProCHRT committee to make any alterations they deem necessary to the content, so it is consistent with other ProCHRT offerings.

Task #5: Discuss possibilities/need and make any recommendations for the creation of a PSConnect group.

The PSConnect format provided by APCO is an excellent forum for membership discussion on a wide range of topics. It is also a useful platform for committees, task forces, and other organized work teams to communicate and share files. The creation of a PSConnect group specific to the task force mission is not necessary at this time. The task force believes that after the rollout of the Crisis Preparation Manual, a mechanism to continue the discussion and ensure that the manual keeps pace with changing practices may be necessary. At that time, the ProCHRT Committee may need to consider a PSConnect resource.

Task #6: Create a template for widespread community contributions tracking.

Accepting, tracking, and the disposition of community contributions following a high impact event can be very taxing to an ECC staff. A significant number of the agency after-action reports reviewed by the task force noted community contributions as a considerable post-incident challenge. Several of the task force members experienced a high impact event in their community and confirmed the impact contribution management has on an ECC. The task force developed a series of donation management forms to help address this issue. The forms include a Donation Accounting Worksheet, a Donation Processing Coversheet, and a Monetary Donation Processing Coversheet. These documents are described in the "Donation Management" section of the Crisis Preparation Manual and are located in the associated appendix.

Task #7: Address the process for interactions with federal agencies on requests for information and documents related to the crisis.

Interaction with federal agencies are frequent on some large-scale incidents but may be nonexistent on many high impact local incidents. The task force researched best practices and made a recommendation to include elements of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) in each section of the Crisis Preparation Manual. The direction provided by NIMS, specifically the various ICS directives, forms, and indexes, is the best way to prepare for federal agency interaction and reporting. With virtually every ECC following the NIMS protocols, the task force believed this was the best way to provide direction on this topic.

Crisis Preparation Manual

The primary work product of the task force is the development of the Crisis Preparation Manual. Every member of the task force contributed content for the manual. The goal for this manual was to provide an easy to use quick reference guide that will help directors, managers, and supervisors prepare in advance of a high impact/low frequency event of significant community impact. The manual is not intended to work as the standalone direction in a given situation, but instead as a guide to help agencies make decisions on how to handle such circumstances within their agency structure. It does not replace local policies, procedures, and directives. Although the manual is designed for use as a preparatory resource before an incident occurs, it was important to the task force that it is organized in such a way that it could be utilized immediately following an incident as a tool to aid an agency as they work through such events.

The manual guides responses to specific incident types such as active assailant incidents, communications center evacuations, co-worker/line of duty deaths, earthquakes, mass casualty incidents, terrorist attacks, weather events, wildfires, and other unusual occurrences. The manual is further supported by general preparation topics that are relevant across all incident types such as continuity of operations planning, donation management, emergency staffing, employee stress management, incident recovery, media and public information, and mutual aid management.

Each of the topics addressed in the manual is organized like a dispatching guide card. Along with a description of the incident, each document includes planning suggestions for both during the incident and post-incident, specific considerations for managers, and a listing of resources available to help improve advanced preparation.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER CRISIS PREPARATION MANUAL

GUIDE INTRODUCTION

On behalf of public safety communications professionals, the Emergency Communications Center Crisis Response Taskforce diligently worked to create a best practices reference guide to assist agencies in developing agency-specific plans to respond to critical incidents that may have a significant impact on center operations and the public. Included are recommendations and templates to use when planning for situations encountered during and after a prolonged or significant emergency event as in planning for handling a significant incident and the aftermath. We encourage you to make yourself familiar with your policies and procedures, customize this document for your agency, and keep it updated for immediate use.

USE OF THE GUIDE

The guide has been developed to allow for ease of use when it is needed. It has been broken down into a variety of core categories and then further broken down into a variety of sub-categories. The guide does not replace local policies, procedures

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CRISIS PREPARATION MANUAL

GUIDE INTRODUCTION

On behalf of public safety communications professionals, the Emergency Communications Center Crisis Response Taskforce diligently worked to create a best practices reference guide to assist agencies in developing agency-specific plans to respond to critical incidents that may have a significant impact on center operations and the public. Included are recommendations and templates to use when planning for situations encountered during and after a prolonged or significant emergency event as well as how to return to normal operations. The recommendations include, but are not limited to events such as a line of duty death, a terrorist incident, or a weather-related catastrophe.

Many hours were volunteered in developing this guide by subject matter experts who have firsthand knowledge and experience in the areas discussed. It is important to acknowledge their time and efforts as well as their willingness to share lessons they have learned as they worked through the challenging situations addressed within this document. The document covers a wide variety of areas such as staffing, peer counseling, long term health and welfare of the teams, and community donations. It is available to assist your agency if a similar situation occurs.

Please note that this document is not intended to work in every situation at every agency, nor is it meant to replace your agencies' policies and procedures, but rather, it is a plan to assist directors and managers in planning for handling a significant incident and the aftermath. We encourage you to make yourself familiar with your policies and procedures, customize this document for your agency, and keep it updated for immediate use.

USE OF THE GUIDE

The guide has been developed to allow for ease of use when it is needed. It has been broken down into a variety of core categories and then further broken down into a variety of sub-categories. The guide does not replace local policies, procedures, and laws. Information that is relevant to each type of situation comes from experience, research, and typical protocols.

You will find an explanation of each category as well as what type of information and subsequent situations you may have to consider when events occur in your area. In some of the categories, we have included basic templates that you are welcome to use or customize to comply with your agency's policies.

The user should understand what works or has worked at one agency may not work at their own. Every user requires a specific understanding of their agency operations during an incident. Considerations should include geographic, economic, and demographic information about the area served.

MASS CASUALTY INCIDENTS

A mass casualty incident is an incident which has overwhelmed the typical, local response capabilities of emergency responders and their resources necessary to provide a proper response, due to the number and severity of casualties associated with a situation.

Initiating mass casualty protocols varies from agency to agency, depending on agency size and available resources. A mass casualty incident for a small agency with limited resources may be easily managed by a larger agency.

Mass casualty incidents pose unique challenges for the total agency response, especially the agency's communications division before, during, and post-incident.

MAKE A PLAN

Centers should establish policy and procedure to provide direction to staff during a mass casualty incident. Training on the policy and procedure is critical to the successful management of a mass casualty incident. Consideration should be given to the following items in preparing a plan for responding to mass casualty incidents:

CONSIDERATIONS

o   Redundant processes for notification of key personnel or command staff, including center manager (if not on-duty). Ensure staff receives training on procedures for making notifications.
o   Maintain and update an ICS-217 form or an agency radio template to allow quick creation of an ICS-205 radio communications plan form during the response phase.
o   Create personnel recall protocols for emergency staffing needs.
o   If possible, designate a workstation or prominent location in the center for managing high impact incidents.
o   Have a point of contact or process for notification of stress management teams and consider making debriefings mandatory to remove the stigma.

o   Organize a process and establish a policy for directing or responding to inquiries from media, on and off-duty agency personnel, PIOs, and jurisdictional stakeholders such as the mayor, city manager, city council, etc.
  - *Guidance on media relations is in the Media and Public Information section.*

DURING THE INCIDENT

Proper guidance and incident management helps ensure the overall success of all response teams.

CONSIDERATIONS

o   Management of call surges, both at the time of occurrence and after social media or media response publishes initial scene reports.
o   Management and assignment of radio talk groups and interoperability among assisting agencies.
o   Potential for agency personnel to have a personal connection to victims or the incident location.
o   Avoid an "all hands on deck" response which can deplete agency personnel for additional operational periods, or utilizing managers as part of the front-line, initial response.
o   Maintain documentation of all employees on the schedule, especially when incidents span more than one shift or operational period.
o   Provide relief as soon as possible for employees who need to step away from the incident.
o   Do not force employees off of their assignment if they are handling the situation correctly and with focus. Use regularly scheduled breaks or shift change to relieve the employees initially handling the incident.
o   Ensure a supervisor or manager speaks to employees as a group or if necessary, individually, before releasing from duty. If CISM staff have been called in, a team debriefing should be conducted, if practical.
o   Incident management may be facilitated and standardized through the use of the following command forms:
  - Assignment List – ICS 204
  - Communication List – ICS 205A
  - Incident Briefing – ICS 201
  - Organization Assignment List – ICS 203

- Radio Communication Plan – ICS 217 and 205

MEMORIAL SITES

Mass Casualty incidents will likely generate a memorial site that is visited by the public or those directly impacted. Community involvement may further complicate the recovery process for center personnel.

CONSIDERATIONS

o Large publicly attended funerals or ceremonies
o Funeral or dignitary escorts
o Additional security needs, crowd control, and traffic impacts
o Protests or demonstrations

These factors may involve extra work assignments or shifts for center personnel as well as cumulative stress and compassion fatigue.

Further guidance on memorial sites management is in the Donation Management section.

POST INCIDENT

Post-Traumatic Stress

Mass casualty incidents often result in post-traumatic stress. It is not unusual for employees to struggle with how to process an incident for weeks or even months later. Employees who were not working during the incident may also have feelings of guilt because they were unable to help, or don't know how to respond to changes in their co-workers. These incidents impact everyone, regardless of the level of involvement.

CONSIDERATIONS

o Critical incident stress management for center personnel directly handling the incident, and concerns over secondary or vicarious harm.
o Stress management for personnel handling resource allocation for all other calls for service.
o Continuous or looping news coverage during and after the incident, which may impact center personnel with imagery of the scene.

o Consider monitoring how much news coverage is allowed on center TVs in the days following an incident.
o Be mindful of on-the-job triggers such as employees working the same assignment, handling similar but smaller-scale incidents, or even loud noises.
o Be mindful of follow-up activity triggers, such as court dates, fund-raising events, or anniversaries.
o Follow-up with all personnel at regular intervals after the incident.
o Keep employees updated on after-action reviews, even if they are not directly involved.

AFTER ACTION REPORTS

After action reports are a critical part of any significant incident. A full review of how the mass casualty incident was managed should be included in the after action report to determine what went well and where improvements can be made for handling future incidents.

CHECKLIST

☐ Have a plan
☐ Develop necessary policies and procedures
☐ Determine CISM resources

OTHER RESOURCES ON THE TOPIC

o ICS Forms:
https://training.fema.gov/icsresource/icsforms.aspx

ACTIVE ASSAILANT INCIDENTS

An active assailant incident is defined as an individual or group of persons actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill or cause serious bodily injury to a person or group of persons.

While the term "active shooter" is commonly used, active assailant encompasses various means of assault, such as vehicle intrusion/ramming, knife attacks, and use of other weapons.

MAKE A PLAN

Centers should establish policy and procedure to provide direction to staff during an active assailant incident. The policy should define active assailant incidents, the agency response, and guide instructions staff will provide callers. Training on the policy and procedure is critical to the successful management of an active assailant incident. Consideration should be given to the following items in preparing a plan for responding to active assailant incidents:

CONSIDERATIONS

o   Redundant processes for notification of key personnel or command staff, including center manager (if not on-duty). Ensure staff receives training on procedures for making notifications.
o   Maintain and update an ICS-217 form or an agency radio template to allow quick creation of an ICS-205 radio communications plan form during the response phase.
o   Create personnel recall protocols for emergency staffing needs.
o   If possible, designate a workstation or prominent location in the center for managing high impact incidents.
o   Have a point of contact or process for notification of stress management teams and consider making debriefings mandatory to remove the stigma.
o   Organize a process and establish a policy for directing or responding to inquiries from media, on and off-duty agency personnel, PIOs, and jurisdictional stakeholders such as the mayor, city manager, city council, etc.
o   *Guidance on media relations is in the Media and Public Information section.*

DURING THE INCIDENT

Proper guidance and incident management helps ensure the overall success of all response teams.

CONSIDERATIONS

o   If staffing allows, assign an individual to review CAD events for duplicate reports, missing information, or critical status updates to better assist primary dispatchers in quickly processing information.
o   Management of call surges, both at the time of occurrence and after social media or media response publishes initial scene reports.
o   Managers should immediately or as soon as practical, begin coordinating with PIOs or other key Administrative Staff to utilize local media, social media, public alerting systems, or other means of public notification to publish a situation report, provide instructions, or establish a point of contact for third-party callers seeking victim status updates.
o   Management and assignment of radio talk groups and interoperability among assisting agencies.
o   Potential for agency personnel to have a personal connection to victims or the incident location.
o   Avoid an "all hands on deck" response which can deplete agency personnel for additional operational periods, or utilizing managers as part of the front-line, initial response.
o   Maintain documentation of all employees on the schedule, especially when incidents span more than one shift or operational period.
o   Provide relief as soon as possible for employees who need to step away from the incident.
o   Do not force employees off of their assignment if they are handling the situation correctly and with focus. Use regularly scheduled breaks or shift change to relieve the employees initially handling the incident.
o   Ensure a supervisor or manager speaks to employees as a group or if necessary, individually, before releasing from duty. If CISM staff have been called in, a team debriefing should be conducted, if practical.
o   Incident management may be facilitated and standardized through the use of the following command forms:

- Assignment List – ICS 204
- Communication List – ICS 205A
- Incident Briefing – ICS 201
- Organization Assignment List – ICS 203
- Radio Communication Plan – ICS 217 and 205

POST INCIDENT

Scene Management

The scene of an active assailant incident is often a location that requires on-going coordination with property owners, municipal leaders, or other stakeholders. Scene management ensures the scene is secured for lengthy crime scene processing, help in relocating future planned activities or assembly, and management of large volumes of onlookers, media, and the general public who may gather out of curiosity at the site.

Further guidance on memorial sites management is in the Donation Management section.

Post-Traumatic Stress

Active assailant incidents often result in post-traumatic stress. It is not unusual for employees to struggle with how to process an incident for weeks or even months later. Employees who were not working during the incident may also have feelings of guilt because they were unable to help, or don't know how to respond to any changes in their co-workers. These incidents impact everyone, regardless of the level of involvement.

In particular, active assailant incidents can create a level of anxiety not only throughout the community but also for the first responders, including communications personnel who may experience heightened situational awareness, hyper-vigilance, subsequent triggering events such as sights, sounds, or temporary feelings of fear of visiting public spaces, venues, or locations outside of the home or workplace.

CONSIDERATIONS

- Critical incident stress management for center personnel directly handling the incident, and concerns over secondary or vicarious harm.

- Stress management for personnel handling resource allocation for all other calls for service.
- Continuous or looping news coverage during and after the incident, which may impact center personnel with imagery of the scene.
- Consider monitoring how much news coverage is allowed on center TVs in the days following an incident.
- Be mindful of on-the-job triggers such as employees working the same assignment, handling similar but smaller-scale incidents, or even loud noises.
- Be mindful of follow-up activity triggers, such as court dates, fund-raising events, or anniversaries.
- Follow-up with all personnel at regular intervals after the incident.
- Keep employees updated on after-action reviews, even if they are not directly involved.

CHECKLIST

- ☐ Have a plan
- ☐ Develop necessary policies and procedures
- ☐ Determine CISM resources

OTHER RESOURCES ON THE TOPIC

- ICS Forms: https://training.fema.gov/icsresource/icsforms.aspx

TERRORIST ATTACK PLAN

A terrorist attack is broadly defined as the use of violence or threat of violence against civilians, to advance an agenda.

The FBI describes international terrorism as acts perpetrated by individuals or groups inspired or associated with designated foreign terrorist organizations or nations (state sponsored). Domestic terrorism is acts committed by individuals or groups inspired by or associated with primarily U.S. based movements that espouse extremist ideologies of a political, religious, social, racial, or environmental nature.

Regardless of whether an attack is considered International or domestic, the emergency communications center (ECC) serves a vital function during the response. Public safety telecommunicators are often first to recognize a potential act of terrorism when the center becomes inundated with 9-1-1 calls. The ECC assumes responsibility for making notifications and coordinating emergency responders. General understanding and ability to participate in the incident command / unified command structure is imperative.

Law enforcement (local, state and federal) takes the lead role in handling terrorist attacks; the laws of our country assign primary authority to state and local governments to respond to the aftermath of the events. Local emergency management departments usually activate and take the lead role in terrorism aftermath management, in coordination with other local, state, or federal assets, such as the health department, in cases of biological agents.

This document is not intended to be your guide to terrorist attacks; it is intended to help provide an assessment, planning, and dialog tool for managing the impact a terrorist attack may have on the ECC, it's on-going operations, and long-term recovery for the employees who handle a terrorist incident.

CONSIDERATIONS

- o The ECC's role in the emergency operations plan of state or local agencies
- o ECC participation in the planning of local emergency operations plans
- o The ECC should conduct regular emergency drills
- o ECC staff should understand their roles and the role the ECC plays in interacting with other agencies during a terrorism incident
- o Availability of terrorism response equipment or personnel inventories for teams to deploy to an emergency operations center
  - Includes responses to chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive agents
  - A testing and maintenance schedule for communications equipment (such as software updates, log-ins, and batteries)
- o Maintain an emergency contact list that is accessible at redundant locations

DURING THE INCIDENT

As with any event, but especially with terrorist attacks, there is a real possibility of a secondary device could be used to attack responders.

When practical, delegate an individual to help maintain situational awareness of duplicate reports, such as victims who have migrated away from the scene, or the potential of secondary, cascading, or coordinated attacks, suspicious activity reports that may be related, or other related reports that fall below priority for immediate dispatch.

CONSIDERATIONS

- o Maintain documentation of all employees on the schedule, especially when incidents span more than one shift or operational period to facilitate easier follow-up for critical incident stress management.
- o If possible, verify that no employees have a direct connection to incident casualties (relatives or close friends).
- o Provide relief as soon as possible for employees who need to step away from the incident. If

possible, facilitate the transition by allowing them to brief the relief employee.

o Do not force employees off of their assignment if they are handling the situation correctly and with focus. Use regularly scheduled breaks or shift change to relieve the employees handling the initial incident.

o Employees should be briefed on their legal obligations to maintain confidentiality during a terrorism investigation and made aware of their potential to compromise data or intelligence-gathering efforts by discussing details of the case.

o Ensure a supervisor or manager speaks to employees as a group or if necessary, individually, before releasing from duty. If CISM staff have been called in, conduct a team defusing if practical.

- Based on the event that occurred, this may not be feasible, but your presence is essential.

o Proper guidance and incident management helps ensure the overall success of all response teams and minimizes the likelihood of employees second-guessing whether or not they took appropriate actions during the incident.

o Incident management is facilitated and standardized through the use of the following command forms:

- Assignment List – ICS 204
- Communication List – ICS 205A
- Incident Briefing – ICS 201
- Organization Assignment List – ICS 203
- Radio Communication Plan – ICS 217 and 205
- COMPLETE LIST OF FORMS CAN BE FOUND ON THE FOLLOWING LINK AND ARE FILLABLE FORMS: https://training.fema.gov/icsresource/icsforms.aspx

POST INCIDENT

Further guidance on memorial site management is located in Donation and Volunteer Management

Post-Traumatic Stress

Terrorist attacks/incidents often result in post-traumatic stress. It is not unusual for employees to struggle with how to process an incident for weeks or even months. Employees who were not working during the incident may also have feelings of guilt because they were unable to help, or don't know how to respond to any changes in their co-workers. These incidents impact everyone, regardless of the level of involvement.

CONSIDERATIONS

o Monitor how much news coverage is allowed on center TVs in the days following an incident

o Keep employees updated on after-action reviews, even if they are not directly involved (this helps avoid feeling that the process is meant to find fault among individuals)

o Be mindful of triggers such as employees working the same assignment, handling similar but smaller-scale call types, or even loud noises

o Follow-up with all personnel at regular intervals after the incident

o Be mindful of follow-up activity triggers, such as court dates, fund-raising events, or anniversaries

CHECKLIST

☐ Make a plan
☐ Determine CISM resources

OTHER RESOURCES ON THE TOPIC

FBI Resource on Terrorism:
https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/terrorism

Homeland Sercurity document for planning for terrorist attacks:

https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1532550673102-c4846f270150682decbda99b37524ca6/Planning_Considerations-Complex_Coordinated_Terrorist_Attacks.pdf

FEMA guide for handling the aftermath of a terrorist incident:

https://www.fema.gov/pdf/plan/managingemerconseq.pdf

FEMA Center for Domestic Preparedness:

https://cdp.dhs.gov/

CO-WORKER/LINE OF DUTY DEATH PLAN

The line of duty death of a first responder or the death of an emergency communications center (ECC) coworker associated is emotionally debilitating. The following guidance is for managers to prepare themselves and ECC staff for such an incident.

DURING THE INCIDENT

In the event of a line of duty death, there are several considerations regarding incident management, personnel management, and notifications.

CONSIDERATIONS
o   Incident management
    •   The evolving investigation
    •   Potential search for a suspect
    •   Media management
        For further information on media, see the Media and Public Information section
    •   Prepare for phone call management
        ▪   Inundation of phone calls
        ▪   "Hate" calls from the public–consider setting up a voice mailbox for later review, as necessary
o   Personnel management
    •   Establish a procedure for calling in additional staffing. *For further information on staffing and mutual aid, see the Staffing section and Mutual Aid Resources section.*
    •   Plan for mutual aid staff to have access to the secure facility, computers, and other equipment required for daily operations
        ▪   Consider necessary temporary agreements for agency use of NCIC data
        ▪   Spare headsets on hand for mutual aid personnel whose headsets are not compatible
    •   Know locally available critical incident stress management (CISM) resources
        For further information on CISM, see the Employee Stress Management section

o   Notifications
    •   Have pre-planned notification plans in place
    •   Have the public information officer's (PIO) information available

POST INCIDENT

Recovery from a line of duty death or the death of an ECC coworker requires resources, time, and patience. Consider the following to help facilitate the process:

CONSIDERATIONS
o   Care of employees
    •   Ongoing CISM availability
    •   Chaplain availability
    •   Ensure staff can drive or leave the center after a loss
    •   If ECC staff is not aware of the death pronouncement, ensure they receive notification before leaving to prevent them from hearing about it on the news

Various resources may be necessary to ensure adequate staffing in the ECC and allow ECC staff time to receive necessary attention after a death.

CONSIDERATIONS
o   Temporary replacement of all staff with mutual aid public safety telecommunicators (PSTs). *For further information on mutual aid, see the Mutual Aid Resources section.*

Anticipate that large volumes of food donations, flowers, and volunteers may show up. Prepare for the influx of these things. *For further information on donation and volunteer management, see the Donation and Volunteer Management section.*

FUNERAL SERVICES

It is crucial to keep staff aware of funeral service arrangements and consider making accommodations for staff to attend.

o   Consider the use of mutual aid PSTs for coverage during services

- If a command post will be staffed for the service, factor in a PST to cover that position
- Establish transportation plans for PSTs with other attendees in departmental vehicles
- Prepare a final call radio script
  *See the appendix for examples of scripts

INCIDENT RECOVERY

Plan for ongoing grief assistance from chaplains, grief counselors, CISM teams, and therapy dogs. Consider employing these resources around the anniversary of the loss. Review the Employee Stress Management section for further information on managing employee's recovery to an incident.

CHECKLIST

- ☐ Create a plan
- ☐ Consider establishing mutual aid or TERT agreements
- ☐ Know CISM resources and have contacts available
- ☐ Create the final call radio script

UNUSUAL OCCURRENCES

Unusual occurrences include any event that impacts the emergency communications center (ECC) but does not elicit an evacuation of the center. Examples include but are not limited to the following situations: a bomb threat, armed suspect at large, prisoner escape, Telephony Denial of Service (TDoS), and chemical spill. Unusual occurrences – depending on the nature and severity of the incident may cause personnel to shelter in place for the duration of the incident.

MAKE A PLAN

Directors and managers should consider what unusual occurrences could impact the ECC and make plans for handling such events. Criminally initiated events such as a prisoner escape at or around the ECC requires different considerations than an unforeseen event such as a chemical spill.

Criminal events:

CONSIDERATIONS
o   ECC and building security
o   Availability of camera system viewing in the ECC
o   Notification procedures for staff in the building as well as off-duty command staff if necessary
o   Contact numbers for area SWAT teams, negotiators, and bomb squad
o   Notification of surrounding agencies and establishment of mutual aid request procedures

Unforeseen events:

CONSIDERATIONS
o   Establish a procedure for shutting down HVAC if necessary
o   First aid and medical protocols for exposure to hazardous substances
    •   Agency training on Narcan for accidental employee exposure to narcotics
o   Notification procedures for staff in the building as well as off-duty command staff if necessary
o   Contact numbers for HazMat teams or clean up resources

o   Potential for the evacuation of the ECC due to deteriorating conditions or infrastructure failure *Guidance on evacuation is in the ECC Evacuation section.*

DURING THE INCIDENT

During the incident, off-duty staff needs notification if they cannot report into the ECC. Current contact information should be on file for all employees to facilitate efficient notification of emergencies. Establish an alternate location for off-duty staff to report to. If a need exists for additional staffing, see the *Emergency Staffing and Mutual Aid* sections.

CONSIDERATIONS
o   Ensure everyone understands the difference between sheltering in place and hard/soft lockdowns
o   A Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) provides overall guidance for maintaining operations during an occurrence that directly impacts a center's ability to function
o   If the center has a publicly accessible lobby where citizens would normally go to request police reports, make reports, in person, or seek assistance in person, have pre-printed signage that can be quickly and prominently posted at the entrance, directing the public to report elsewhere
o   Coordinate with agency representatives or PIOs to inform the public if services are delayed or compromised; include alternate means or processes for making reports and calls for service if disruptions such as Telephony Denial of Service (TDoS) attacks are suspected

CHECKLIST

☐   Make a plan
☐   Conduct training on plans for handling unusual occurrences
☐   Develop policy and procedure

OTHER RESOURCES ON TDOS

Homeland Security on Denial of Service Attacks:
https://www.dhs.gov/science-and-technology/blog/2018/07/09/partnering-prevent-tdos-attacks

APCO Link to Cybersecurity:

https://www.apcointl.org/cybersecurity/

MUTUAL AID RESOURCES

A crisis can affect the operational readiness of personnel through illness, pandemic, or a personal or professional loss. This document is intended to help the emergency communications center (ECC) directors and managers to utilize mutual aid resources when a crisis severely affects the operational readiness of the ECC. Establishing mutual aid requires preparation. Memorandums of understanding may need to be in place before an incident occurs.

MAKE A PLAN

Reach out to similar ECCs in the area to set up a mutual aid agreement. Consider the following list during the development of agreements and plans:

CONSIDERATIONS
- Conditions of the mutual aid
- Required legal agreements
- Determine how much staffing is required to replace various portions of the staff
  - Mutual aid staff may not replace ECC staff at a one-to-one ratio. A two-to-one ratio may be more effective.
  - Consider having an agency member in the center, if possible, who is available to answer questions or provide guidance.
- Conduct cross-training with mutual aid agencies
  - Share training resources such as maps, unit files, call types, and specific agency response details
- Know who the state Telecommunicator Emergency Response Taskforce (TERT) coordinator is and how to reach them
- Determine if the transportation of staff is necessary and if so, how

DURING THE INCIDENT

With the mutual aid plan in place, the focus during the incident is making the required notifications to get mutual aid into the ECC, making additional notifications as needed, and tracking staff and expenses.

CONSIDERATIONS
- Notify the state TERT coordinator
  - Name_____
  - Phone Number_____
  - Provide the coordinator with the incident description, number of staff needed, number of supervisors needed, and estimated duration of the deployment.
- Make required notifications
  - Supervisory staff
  - Communications center staff
  - Departments served by the center
  - Local communications centers
- Track employees
  - Number of employees out of the office
  - Number of incoming mutual aid employees
- Track of incurred expenses

POST INCIDENT

Following an event that required mutual aid, it is critical to conduct an after action review. Examine what went well and what can be improved for the next incident.

CONSIDERATIONS
- Complete an after action report
- If necessary, make changes to the mutual aid plan and agreement
- Send thank you cards to the agencies who assisted
- Long term impacts of the event that necessitated the mutual aid request

TRAINING

Resources for the National Joint TERT Initiative can be found at: www.njti-tert.org
The APCO-NENA-ANSI standard can be downloaded through:
https://www.apcointl.org/download/standard-for-telecommunicator-emergency-response-taskforce-tert-deployment/

CHECKLIST
- ☐ Establish mutual aid agreements
- ☐ Look up TERT coordinator information
- ☐ Conduct necessary training

CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS PLAN

A Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) ensures that emergency communications centers (ECCs) can continue performing essential functions during an event. Event types range from fires in the ECC, a natural disaster, or terrorist attack. Having a COOP in place enables public safety telecommunicators (PSTs) to carry out their functions with minimal interruption in service to the community and responders.

An ECC COOP should include several elements such as a list of essential functions, the delegation of authority, alternate facility location(s), continuity in communications, management of records, staffing contingencies, training for the COOP, and guidance for returning to normal operations.

MAKE A PLAN

Essential Functions
The COOP plan should focus on how to keep critical operations functioning. An inventory of ECC critical systems and functions is a good starting point.

CONSIDERATIONS
o   Radios - interoperability
o   Telecommunications
  •   9-1-1 calls
  •   Non-emergency calls
o   Teletypes
o   Computer Aided Dispatch System
o   Report Management System
o   Computer systems
o   Generators and uninterrupted power supply (UPS) systems
o   Have emergency contact numbers for vendors who service systems and software

Delegation of Authority
The COOP should include delegation of authority for those who make critical decisions during the event to account for a disruption in the chain of command.

Alternate Facility Locations
The primary ECC may not be functional after an emergency. Alternate facilities must be determined ahead of time, and procedures need to be established for evacuating to those facilities.
For further information on evacuation, see the Communications Center Evacuation section.

Continuity of Communications
Communications provide responders with the ability to complete their essential job functions. Interoperability of radio communications is critical. In an emergency, agencies may need to communicate with mutual aid responders. Should radio or phone communications be unavailable, alternative communications methods may be necessary. For example, a system where calls for service assignments are provided in person at one location that an officer reports back to after completing each call for service.

Management of Records
Identify what records, reference documents, and resources are critical to the support of essential functions during an emergency. Determine how these are maintained and accessed in a COOP situation.

Staffing Contingencies
During a COOP event, additional employees are necessary. Evaluate if PSTs of the ECC can handle events and consider if mutual aid is needed. Have current contact information available for PSTs. *For further information on staffing and mutual aid, see the Staffing section and Mutual Aid Resources section.*

Training
Training employees on the COOP is essential to successfully implementing the plan during an event. Establish a training plan for new employees as well as recurring training for current employees.

Testing
Establish a test schedule for critical systems and functions such as the UPS and generator systems.

Return to Normal Operations
Have an established procedure for returning to normal operations after an event. Several factors require consideration before transitioning back to normal operations.

CONSIDERATIONS

o   Arrange for repairs or restoration at the primary facility if necessary
o   Complete an assessment of communications systems to ensure they are functional
o   Have IT assess computer systems

AFTER ACTION

Conduct a "hotwash" or debrief as soon as possible after returning to normal operations and record key activities that should be incorporated in the after action report.

Complete an after action report and include feedback from the PSTs involved in the event. If updates to the COOP are required, make the updates and train staff, so they are familiar with revised procedures during the next event.

Outline an Improvement Plan and set follow-up dates for an implementation timeline during the after action review with key personnel and stakeholders.

Follow-up with employees who expressed emotional distress as a result of the incident (for example, as a result of a natural disaster with severe impacts on the center).

CHECKLIST

☐   Create a plan
☐   Create policy and procedure that guides the execution of the COOP
☐   Train staff on policies, procedures, and the COOP

OTHER RESOURCES ON THE TOPIC

- Federal template for a COOP
  https://www.fema.gov/pdf/about/org/ncp/coop/continuity_plan_federal_d_a.pdf
- Minnesota Emergency Communications Board template for a COOP
  https://www.mnecb.org/DocumentCenter/View/871
- About COOPs
  https://www.fema.gov/pdf/about/org/ncp/coop_brochure.pdf

- FCC guidance for emergency planning at PSAPs
  https://www.fcc.gov/research-reports/guides/emergency-planning-public-safety-answering-points

COMMUNICATIONS CENTER EVACUATION

An evacuation plan should provide for continuity of operations with priority given to the safety and security of public safety telecommunicators (PSTs). Maintaining continuity of operations may mean a full evacuation to an alternate site, evacuation to another area of the same building, or evacuation to a command vehicle.

It is essential that each emergency communications centers (ECCs) determine what types of incidents trigger an evacuation for their center. Some events may be unexpected, such as natural disasters, terrorism, or a critical building maintenance issue. Other events may be planned, such as renovations or equipment upgrades.

Other incidents or events may warrant the need to shelter in place or initiate a hard lockdown (no one leaves the primary center) or soft lockdown (no one leaves the building/campus).

ESTABLISHING A BACKUP LOCATION

A backup location should be determined before establishing policy and procedure. Safety and security of PSTs at the backup site should be a primary concern. Some ECCs may have established backup centers that function the same way as their home center. Other centers may evacuate to a pre-determined available space and operate on laptops, cell phones, and portable radios or walkies. Non-traditional centers, such as on a college campus, may need to explore establishing a back-up facility off of campus. Due to the compressed area a campus occupies, it may be difficult, if not impossible, to evacuate to a viable building in the event of a disaster.

CONSIDERATIONS
o Security
o Amount of available space
o Available technology
o Transportation to the backup location
o Transferring operations to the backup site

PREPARATION

Preparation before an evacuation event is critical. Agencies should have an implemented policy and procedure that guides an evacuation. Training on the evacuation plan is another crucial component.

CONSIDERATIONS
o Establish policy and procedure
o Training for staff
o Yearly evacuation drills

CONTINUITY OF TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS

ECCs have a significant amount of technology. Access to some technology may be unavailable during an evacuation and while operating at a backup site. For example, phone calls may require routing to another ECC or a phone line at the backup location, and full radio consoles may not be available.

CONSIDERATIONS
o Routing
  o 9-1-1 calls
  o Non-emergency calls
  o Teletypes
o Radios
  o Batteries
  o Chargers
o Telecommunications
  o Cell phones
  o Landline phones
o Computer Aided Dispatch system
  o Back up run sheets if unavailable
o Computers

RESOURCES TO HAVE AVAILABLE

Managers should consider resources that staff will need to have available when operating outside the center.

CONSIDERATIONS
o Critical phone numbers
o Maps
o Hard copies of policies and procedures
o Office supplies
  • Staples/stapler
  • Paper clips
  • Dry erase board/markers
  • Clipboards

- Pens/pencils
- Tape
- Blank paper
- Post-It Notes
- Aspirin/antacids
- First Aid Kit w/extra band-aids

☐ Determine a backup location
☐ Establish policy and procedure
☐ Create an evacuation kit
☐ Train staff on the procedure
☐ Check back-up equipment monthly

NOTIFICATIONS

In the event of an evacuation, notifications will be made to several people. For example, oncoming staff needs to know not to report to the communications center. Supervisors will need to evaluate staffing levels and notify additional staff to report if necessary. Area ECCs need to be aware that an evacuation has occurred, and it is possible the PIO will require involvement as well depending on the circumstances.

CONSIDERATIONS
o   Supervisory staff
o   Communications center staff
o   Departments served by the center
o   Local communications centers
o   Media/PIO

OPERATIONAL READINESS

To ensure the readiness of equipment to be used during an evacuation, a documented inspection should be completed at least monthly and after use of the equipment. Any items that require replacement or replenishment should be brought to the attention of management, so the items are ready for evacuation.

AFTER ACTION REPORTS

After action reports are a critical part of any significant incident. The report provides for the collection and evaluation of information related to the evacuation. The nature of the circumstances surrounding the evacuation should be evaluated. An after action report is vital to assessing what went well during the evacuation and what can be enhanced in the future.

CHECKLIST

☐ Continuity of Operations Plan accessible to key personnel

EMERGENCY STAFFING

Staffing becomes especially critical during an emergency. At times leadership can plan on additional staff to augment the schedule, such as with advanced notice of weather events, funerals, memorials, special events, and other planned occurrences.

On the other hand, unexpected emergencies such as an active assailant, terror attack, or bomb threat create an immediate need for more staff. Contingency planning in advance of an emergency can lessen the burden of finding coverage for the center.

MAKE A PLAN

Pre-plans may include the following considerations:

CONSIDERATIONS
o Verification of employee contact information so that staff is reachable during emergencies
o Alternate methods for emergency contact, such as paging, phone tree, etc.
o Conduct emergency recall exercises regularly, and log responses:
   • Whether or not contact is made
   • ETA for simulated response/recall
   • Note any updates to contact information
o Number of personnel needed to handle standard minimum staffing plus additional staff for the emergency
o Number of available consoles in the emergency communications center (ECC)
   • Alternate locations for staffing positions to support the ECC
o Possible schedule changes (8-hour shifts vs. 12-hour shifts)
o Supervisory coverage
o Create a system for Staffing Alerts, and define each level and expected response, for example:
   • Alert (be ready to receive additional info)
   • Standby (Staffing recall is possible/imminent)
   • Recall (Report immediately or as directed)

AGENCY PARTNERS

See the Mutual Aid Resources section for guidance on obtaining staffing assistance from agency partners or a Telecommunicator Emergency Response Taskforce (TERT).

SCHEDULING

Alternate schedules may be necessary to fulfill emergency staffing needs. Additionally, documentation of hours worked for each employee is critical for financial impacts should there be a federal declaration authorizing funding.

CONSIDERATIONS
o Impact of labor agreements on alternate schedules
o Duration of event
o Separate or collapse call taking/dispatch duties
o Configure the annual schedule to include the alternate schedule staff works in an emergency staffing situation
o Examine supervisor placement on the schedule to ensure proper supervisory coverage
o Type of coverage needed
   o Call Takers
   o Dispatchers
   o Certification levels
      ▪ EMD
      ▪ NCIC
      ▪ Fire
      ▪ Law Enforcement

AFTER AN EVENT

After an event is over, complete a debriefing and after action review. Take into account feedback from staff. Emergency plans should be reviewed and updated.

CHECKLIST

☐ Develop alternate schedules
☐ Annually verify employee contact information
☐ Look into mutual aid partnerships with similar ECCs

INCIDENT RECOVERY

In every Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), recovery is a vital component, and an emergency communications center (ECC) must have operation and recovery plans. Managers contend with short and long term disaster recovery, regardless if it is from a natural or man-made disaster or center coverage for a line of duty death.

CONSIDERATIONS

o   Work with the emergency management team to be included in the community's emergency operations plan
o   Work with state/local officials on operational needs
    • IT infrastructure
    • Radios
    • Phones
    • CAD
    • 9-1-1 System
o   Form partnerships with private-sector organizations for response efforts

FORM PARTNERSHIPS AND MAKE PLANS

Establish partnerships with other agencies and resources before an event occurs. Those partnerships can assist with:

• Housing/feeding and support for public safety telecommunicators (PSTs) who may be affected by a disaster
• Coordination of damage assessment for Stafford Act disaster declaration
• Set up a disaster recovery center
• Plan mitigation measures for the future
• Formulate a Disaster Survivors Advocacy Team to provide disaster case management for PSTs
• Attend emergency management planning meetings and discussions

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

Actions to promote short-term and long-term recovery should begin concurrently with response operations if at all possible. Set priorities for the recovery of critical functions, service, staffing, and infrastructure.

Depending on the type of event, short-term recovery begins early. For memorial services and funerals, recovery begins immediately following those events where staff resumes their regular schedule with the possible exception of one or two PSTs who may require additional time off.

Long-term recovery may be focused on establishing a "new normal" if critical infrastructure is damaged or if there is widespread community damage from weather events requiring the rebuilding of homes. Mental health assistance and support is the highest priority for managers and their staff.

Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP) further assists managers in recovery efforts. COOPs include information on staffing levels, scheduling, and mental health assistance. Plans should also include the continuity of business practices to respond, recover, and mitigate the effect of the event(s) on the ECC and PSTs.

IMPACTS ON STAFF

A consideration that has a fundamental impact on personnel during and after events is the families of the employees and what considerations are made for them. PSTs should be encouraged to promote family preparedness, possibly even offering joint training for the family and staff.

When employees are recalled during their off-duty time for an emergency, preplan the notification and response times so that the employee may arrange for the safety and care of family members. Failure to address family issues can result in additional stress factors for the PST – failure to report to work or leaving work, worse yet, distraction during the crisis.

CHECKLIST

☐ Make a plan
☐ Foster necessary partnerships
☐ Develop a COOP

OTHER RESOURCES ON THE TOPIC

Ready.gov Prepareathon:

https://community.fema.gov/AP_Loginhttps://www.ready.gov/prepareathon

Ready.gov Make a Plan:

https://www.ready.gov/make-a-plan

APCO course for Disaster Operations and the Communications Center:

https://www.apcointl.org/training-and-certification/continuing-dispatch-education-cde/cde-courses/disaster-operations-and-the-communications-center/

EMPLOYEE STRESS MANAGEMENT

Managing employee's stress is equally important before, during, and after a critical incident. Critical incidents can affect some or all of the staff and may affect those who were off duty at the time just as much as those who were on duty during the incident. For example, a line of duty death may impact public safety telecommunicators (PSTs) that developed a friendship with the officer and the stress and grief felt by these staff members can be as profound as those that worked the actual incident.

Directors and managers need to be aware of the possible needs of staff facing stress and plan accordingly.

CONSIDERATIONS
o Management staff should receive training in employee stress management, including how to recognize and respond to it.
o Stress management resources should be available to all employees at all times.
o Employees may need help when any critical incident occurs, not just those that involve the first responder community.
o How and when to notify staff of an incident can have an impact on how they deal with it.

MAKE A PLAN

Planning for stress management stemming from a critical incident can be difficult, especially if emergency communications center (ECC) has never experienced something of the magnitude of a line of duty severe injury or death. The following are areas that directors and managers should consider:

CONSIDERATIONS
o Notifications
  - Have a list of who needs to be called
  - Determine how and at what point notifications will be made
o Breaks
  - Provide on-duty staff with an opportunity for time off the console to process the event

- Call in additional PSTs to relieve those that handled the event
o Know the different stress management assistance programs and when to implement them
  - Critical Incident Defusing
    - Determine what warrants a defusing
    - Establish who can call and schedule the defusing
    - Designate where the defusing will take place and if there is immediate access to the location
  - Critical Incident Debriefing
    - Determine what warrants a debriefing
    - Determine if the PSTs will be debriefed alone or with other first responders
    - Allow for staff that worked the incident to attend
    - Establish if debriefing is mandatory
    - Know the local contact information for a Critical Incident Stress Management Team
  - Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
    - Have information for EAP readily available to all staff members
    - Management should be familiar with agency procedures for recommending EAP

TRAINING

Directors and managers should make sure that all shift supervisors and PSTs that may be in charge of a shift are skilled in handling incidents that are critical and high stress in nature. When an event occurs, supervisors handle not only their duties but the added responsibility of monitoring the room to make sure that staff is still capable of performing their duties. If not, PSTs may need to be removed from their console. Supervisors should receive training in recognizing stress symptoms. See Appendix F for a detailed list of stress indicators and recommendations for handling stress symptoms.

Supervisors should also receive training in recommending professional help if an employee is

experiencing ongoing signs and symptoms of stress that affect their performance.

It is imperative that managers, directors, and supervisors recognize that they should participate in stress management assistance programs. Employees are not the only ones who may suffer long term stress symptoms that impact performance. Leadership staff needs to be aware of their well-being and address their needs as well.

AFTER THE INCIDENT

When things begin to return to normal review the incident from an operational standpoint. Verify that staff complied with policies and procedures, and if they did not, determine why. If policies or procedures require updates or changes after evaluating the incident, make the updates. If additional training is warranted, provide it. Ensure that supervisors document efforts to provide staff with CISM or EAP resources, even if the employee does not accept the support.

Keep in mind that while post incident discussions are an excellent opportunity for training, they can also be stressful for employees as old emotions can resurface. These discussions should be kept short and non-investigatory.

CHECKLIST

- ☐ Obtain contact Information for EAP
- ☐ Locate contact information for local CISM team
- ☐ Establish the notification list
- ☐ Write policy and procedure for handling critical incidents

WILDFIRE PLAN

Wildfires are becoming an all too common occurrence each year, leaving devastation in various parts of the United States. Wildfires move quickly, may generate a large volume of high-priority calls for service, and can easily overwhelm emergency communications center's (ECC) employees and tax resources.

MAKE A PLAN

ECCs should establish policy and procedure to provide direction to staff during a wildfire incident. Training on the policy and procedure is critical for successful incident management. Consideration should be given to the following items in preparing a plan for responding to a wildfire:

CONSIDERATIONS

o Determine what local resources are available to assist with the incident
  - Contact lists for the American Red Cross, local churches or organizations to support the public, food pantries, etc.
o Establish an evacuation plan to be used if the ECC is at risk
  Guidance on evacuation is in the ECC Evacuation section. See the Continuity of Operations Plan for information on developing a COOP.
o Identify fire and police mutual aid resources
o Once the wildfire plan is created, provide staff training so they can efficiently carry out the plan

DURING THE INCIDENT

Proper guidance and incident management helps ensure the overall success of all response teams.

CONSIDERATIONS

o Activate the procedure for calling in additional staff. *Further guidance on emergency staffing is available in the Emergency Staffing section.*
o Send a representative to the emergency operations center (EOC), if established
o Notify the state TERT coordinator if mutual aid is necessary
  - Name_____

- Phone Number_____
- Provide the coordinator with the incident description, number of staff needed, number of supervisors needed, and estimated duration of the deployment.
Further guidance on mutual aid is available in the Mutual Aid Resources section
o Consider housing needs for displaced employees
o Incident management is facilitated and standardized through the use of the following command forms:
  - Assignment List – ICS 204
  - Communication List – ICS 205A
  - Incident Briefing – ICS 201
  - Organization Assignment List – ICS 203
  - Radio Communication Plan – ICS 217 and 205
  - COMPLETE LIST OF FORMS CAN BE FOUND ON THE FOLLOWING LINK AND ARE FILLABLE FORMS: https://training.fema.gov/icsresource/icsforms.aspx

IMPACTS ON STAFF

A consideration that has a fundamental impact on personnel during and after events is the families of the employees and what considerations are made for them. PSTs should be encouraged to promote family preparedness, possibly even offering joint training for the family and staff.

When employees are recalled during their off-duty time for a wildfire, preplan the notification and response times so that the employee may arrange for the safety and care of family members. Failure to address family issues can result in additional stress factors for the PST – failure to report to work or leaving work, worse yet, distraction during the crisis.

AFTER ACTION REPORTS

After action reports are a critical part of any significant incident. The report provides for the collection and evaluation of information related to the wildfire. An after action report is vital to assessing what went well during the handling of the wildfire event and what can be enhanced in the future.

CHECKLIST

- ☐ Create a wildfire plan
- ☐ Establish policy and procedure
- ☐ Conduct training, such as tabletop exercises, with staff

OTHER RESOURCES ON THE TOPIC

o The National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) www.nifc.gov

- National Interagency Incident Communications Division (NIICD), https://www.nifc.gov/NIICD/ provides portable communications, training, and airborne remote sensing imagery services. Contact Information: 3833 Development Ave. Boise, ID 83705-5354, 208-387-5512

- National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC), https://www.nifc.gov/nicc/index.htm coordinates the mobilization of resources to fight wildfires. Visit the website to select the appropriate regional coordination center for the ECC to obtain contact information.

EARTHQUAKE PLAN

In the event of an earthquake, calls for service inundate the emergency communications center (ECC) in the affected area. In the worst-case scenario, the ECC may sustain damage from the earthquake.

MAKE A PLAN

ECCs should establish policy and procedure to provide direction to staff during an earthquake incident. Training on the policy and procedure is critical to the successful management of the incident. Consideration should be given to the following items in preparing a plan for responding to an earthquake:

CONSIDERATIONS

o Determine what local resources are available to assist with the incident
- Contact lists for the American Red Cross, local churches or organizations to support the public, food pantries, etc.

o Establish a procedure for calling in additional staff to help
o Establish an evacuation plan to be used if the ECC sustains damage and is no longer functional
  Guidance on evacuation is in the ECC Evacuation section. See the Continuity of Operations Plan for information on developing a COOP.
o Once the earthquake plan is created, provide staff training so they can efficiently carry out the plan

DURING THE INCIDENT

Proper guidance and incident management helps ensure the overall success of all response teams.

CONSIDERATIONS

o Activate the procedure for calling in additional staff. *Further guidance on emergency staffing is available in the Emergency Staffing section.*
o Send a representative to the emergency operations center (EOC), if established
o Notify the state TERT coordinator if mutual aid is necessary
- Name_____
- Phone Number_____

- Provide the coordinator with the incident description, number of staff needed, number of supervisors needed, and estimated duration of the deployment.
  Further guidance on mutual aid is available in the Mutual Aid Resources section
o Consider housing needs for displaced employees
o Incident management is facilitated and standardized through the use of the following command forms:
- Assignment List – ICS 204
- Communication List – ICS 205A
- Incident Briefing – ICS 201
- Organization Assignment List – ICS 203
- Radio Communication Plan – ICS 217 and 205
- COMPLETE LIST OF FORMS CAN BE FOUND ON THE FOLLOWING LINK AND ARE FILLABLE FORMS: https://training.fema.gov/icsresource/icsforms.aspx

IMPACTS ON STAFF

A consideration that has a fundamental impact on personnel during and after events is the families of the employees and what considerations are made for them. PSTs should be encouraged to promote family preparedness, possibly even offering joint training for the family and staff.

When employees are recalled during their off-duty time for an earthquake, preplan the notification and response times so that the employee may arrange for the safety and care of family members. Failure to address family issues can result in additional stress factors for the PST – failure to report to work or leaving work, worse yet, distraction during the crisis.

AFTER ACTION REPORTS

After action reports are a critical part of any significant incident. The report provides for the collection and evaluation of information related to the earthquake. An after action report is vital to assessing what went well during the handling of the earthquake event and what can be enhanced in the future.

OTHER RESOURCES ON THE TOPIC

Ready.gov:

https://www.ready.gov/earthquakes

National Earthquake Information Center (NEIC):

https://earthquake.usgs.gov/contactus/golden/neic.php

FEMA Earthquake Safety at Work:

https://www.fema.gov/earthquake-safety-work

American Red Cross – Preparing for an Earthquake:

https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/earthquake.html

CHECKLIST

- ☐ Create an earthquake plan
- ☐ Establish policy and procedure
- ☐ Conduct training, such as tabletop exercises, with staff

WEATHER EVENT PLAN

Severe weather can impact a community anytime in any part of the country. Weather events can include but are not limited to thunderstorms, which may produce damaging winds – tornadoes – large hail and flooding. Winter storms are associated with freezing rain, sleet, snow, and strong winds.

Not only will the community experience the impact of a severe weather event, but public safety telecommunicators (PSTs) in the emergency communications center (ECC) may experience impacts as well. Staffing needs in the center may increase requiring that PSTs are unable to leave or additional staff needs to report. Consideration should be taken into account regarding the PST's mental well-being as they are concerned with their families and homes.

Preparing the ECC and PSTs for weather events needs to occur before an event strikes, and knowing what weather hazards can affect the community helps with recovery efforts.

CONSIDERATIONS
o Know the hazardous weather that may affect the community
o Develop a plan and practice the plan yearly
o Work with emergency management officials on plan development
o Work with state and local officials on disaster recovery

MAKE A PLAN

Directors and managers have a responsibility to develop a plan before a weather event so that there is clear direction to staff as to what they expect. Plans should include actions to address the unique challenges of an ECC. Pre-plans may include the following:

CONSIDERATIONS
o ECC Personnel Response
- Minimum staffing requirements for shifts
- Holdover plans or procedure for calling in personnel for mandatory hours

Guidance on staffing is in the Staffing section.
o Encourage PSTs to develop personal emergency plans in case they are at work and unable to assist their families at home
o Transportation for staff to/from work
o Determine if and how to define a process for suspension of non-life-critical EMD or other protocols, and rapid triage for call-processing
o Sleeping accommodations may need to be available for staff
o Availability of fresh food/water for staff
o Redundant systems for potential component failures i.e. electrical / phone / radio / CAD
o Potential for the evacuation of the ECC due to deteriorating conditions or infrastructure failure *Guidance on evacuation is in the ECC Evacuation section.*

DURING THE INCIDENT

During a weather event, the suspension of some non-emergency operations may be necessary.

o Personnel management – documentation PST of schedules and only on-duty personnel should be in the ECC
o The ECC should have a role in the established incident command system
o Radio assignments must be maintained, and non-emergency transmission kept to a minimum
o Emergency calls are prioritized and dispatched following agency policies and procedures
o Special announcements or routine services may be unavailable
o Consider utilizing active-incident reporting on the web page, or through social media updates to communicate traffic impacts or infrastructure damage, which may help limit call load into the center from the public and media

Facility Check

During a weather event, it is essential to ensure that the ECC facility has the structural integrity necessary to maintain operations. A regularly scheduled inspection of the interior and exterior of the facility should be completed to ensure structural upkeep.

Follow evacuation procedures in the event damage occurs during severe weather, and the structure is deemed unsafe.

Guidance on evacuation is in the ECC Evacuation section.

RETURN TO NORMAL OPERATIONS

After the weather event, the director or his/her designee terminate emergency operations and normal operations resume.   Before returning to regular operation, there are several things to keep in mind:

CONSIDERATIONS

o   The ECC must be thoroughly inspected to ensure it is structurally sound. Until a full inspection of the facility has occurred, normal operations should not resume.
o   Notify the necessary state and local officials that the ECC has resumed normal operations
o   Hold incident debriefings as needed
o   All PSTs who were held for staffing are released
o   Complete necessary after action reports

CHECKLIST

☐   Make a plan
☐   Conduct training on the severe weather plan
☐   Develop policy and procedure

OTHER RESOURCES ON THE TOPIC

Ready.Gov FEMA Preparedness Portal:

https://community.fema.gov/AP_Loginhttps://www.ready.gov/prepareathon

Ready.Gov Make a Plan:

https://www.ready.gov/make-a-plan

APCO Disaster Operations and the Communications Center Course:

https://www.apcointl.org/training-and-certification/continuing-dispatch-education-cde/cde-courses/disaster-operations-and-the-communications-center/

DONATION AND VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

When an event occurs at an agency, and it generates widespread coverage, regardless if it is man-made or weather, the first inclination that people have is to help. The generosity of public safety telecommunicators (PSTs) and the public can be overwhelming. An agency can quickly become inundated with food, flowers, balloons, and other tangible items. Staff may receive phone calls and e-mails asking what they can do to help. Additionally, well-meaning people may show up in the lobby/center, expecting to come in and lend a hand.

Each event may trigger a different type of donation or volunteer response to a communications center and the community. Each community and agency should have its own policy/procedure for donation/volunteer management. Natural disasters may bring its own set of donation criteria, whereas a line of duty or sudden death of a telecommunicator or responder, or mass casualty incident may bring an entirely different type of response.

MAKE A PLAN

Directors and managers need to be aware of the potential of being overwhelmed with donations and requests to help. Having documents, supplies, and procedures for the center to utilize is essential.

CONSIDERATIONS

o Engage in "scenario planning" on how to handle an outpouring of donations in preparation for such an event.
o Determine what gifts can and cannot be accepted. Have a plan for handling donations that cannot be received.
o Establish a storage location for donations
   • Secured site for items
   • Accessibility to storage
   • Designated area for communications
o Tracking of Donations
   • Database
   • Running list
   • Receipts and acknowledgments

RESOURCES FOR DONATION MANAGEMENT

Certain items will need to be on hand to maintain organization when donations/volunteers arrive. Having these items prepared will save time and prevent confusion later in the acknowledgment of gifts. A word of caution, lists will need regular updates to keep them current.

The following items kept in a small storage container will be helpful:
o Full employee list
   • Names and shirt sizes
o Thank you cards – blank inside
   • Department specific or generic
o Extra lanyards, to keep credentials visible
o Incident command forms
   • Assignment List – ICS 204
   • Communication List – ICS 205A
   • Incident Briefing – ICS 201
   • Organization Assignment List – ICS 203
   • Radio Communication Plan – ICS 205
   • Complete list of forms is at the following link. Forms are fillable. https://training.fema.gov/icsresource/icsforms.aspx
o Extra headsets
o Envelopes and stamps
o Office supplies
   • Staples/stapler
   • Paper clips
   • Dry erase board/markers
   • Clipboards
   • Pens/pencils
   • Tape
   • Blank paper
   • Post-It Notes
   • Aspirin/antacids
   • First Aid Kit w/extra band-aids

*See the appendix for donation management forms and a tracking sheet.

EMPLOYEE DONATION NEEDS

In large scale events where communications staff may be affected, the donations that come in can be overwhelming and difficult to manage. Staff will face immediate needs but may continue to require

donations months into the future. Communicating the needs of staff will be vitally important to those who want to help. How best to manage that requires planning.

It is important to note that managers will also need respite during this time and may also need donations for themselves. PSTs look to the management team for strength and guidance during the incident. It is important to be mindful of ensuring self-care during this time to remain effective in support of the staff.

CONSIDERATIONS
o   The type of donations needed
- Clothing
- Supplies
- Furniture
- Cleaning supplies

o   Available assistance
- APCO Chapters
- Sunshine Fund
- Red Cross
- Salvation Army
- Municipal (local) resources
- FEMA

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT
Be prepared for volunteers to self-report to help after an incident.

CONSIDERATIONS
o   An individual responsible for tracking volunteers
o   Establishment of a location for volunteers to report to
o   Credentialing of volunteers if they will have access to secure areas
o   Enlist the assistance of the PIO to communicate with the public about the need for volunteers

MEMORIAL SITES
Memorial sites are a different type of donation that may begin after an incident such as a line of duty death or active shooter. These sites are part of the healing process for a community and responders and have special meaning. Communities often stage memorials at or near the location of the incident. In the case of law enforcement/fire or EMS line of duty deaths,

memorials are often set up at the facility itself. PSTs located in a separate facility may consider having a memorial at their location if practical.

CONSIDERATIONS
o   Location of the site
o   Hours people can view
o   Determine what can or cannot be left
- Flowers
- Pictures
- Candles
- Flags
- Various items such as stuffed animals and balloons
o   Disposal of items
- When they will be removed
- How they will be removed and by whom
o   Documentation of memorial
- Photo montage from beginning to removal

MANAGING COMMUNICATIONS
Managers should consider utilizing the "Out of Office Assistant" on their e-mail with a standard message indicating that e-mails will be returned during specific times, and set up a separate folder for those emails for historical purposes. A similar message can also be set up for voicemail. Consider having a sheet for messaging to track when calls were returned.

Social media can be helpful for donation management. If the agency has Facebook or Twitter accounts, a staff member can be designated to update the homepage consistently with new information and tasteful photographs of memorials, if any. Social media can also be a forum for donations. The agency public information officer (PIO) can work in conjunction with other involved PIO's for the incident, to provide consistent messaging. Most importantly, there should be only one voice for the center designated by the manager or director.

AFTER ACTION REPORTS
After action reports are a critical part of any significant incident. A full review of how donations were managed should be included in the after action

report to determine what went well and if any improvements are necessaryfor the plan.

CHECKLIST

- ☐ Have a plan
- ☐ Create a kit
- ☐ Create alternate schedules
- ☐ Ensure NIMS training is up to date for all staff members
- ☐ Check back-up equipment monthly
- ☐ Access to the Emergency Operations Plan

MEDIA AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

ECCs should expect media inquiries when an event or incident occurs in the community. There may be times when staff is required to speak with the media to release information. The function of the news media is to keep the public informed on matters of public interest. However, public safety telecommunicators (PSTs) should not contact the media to advise them of incidents in their jurisdiction unless the policy specifically outlines a procedure for doing so.

PSTs may be asked to refer media inquiries to the on-duty supervisor or agency named public information officer (PIO). Media representatives may call to confirm specific calls for service, and it is proper to confirm that a specific incident occurred, however, policy and procedure should guide the release of additional information. PSTs need to be firm but courteous with media representatives, as they are a reflection on the emergency communications center (ECC).

USING SCRIPTS

The utilization of standard scripts can assist PSTs, supervisors, and managers in handling media calls. Scripts can save time and prevent confusion. Scripts can be used for a multitude of events such as major accidents or road closures, active assailants, or robberies. The message confirms an incident occurred while letting the media know that a statement from the PIO is forthcoming.

Sample Scripts
- **Media inquiries**: *There has been an incident at (location of incident). We have no further information to provide at this time. The PIO will contact you through normal channels.*
- **For family or civilian inquires**: *There has been an incident at (location on of incident). We have no further information to provide at this time.*
- **If an event is at a school** – *Advise family/parents – Do not go to the school – advise them to stay by the phone and the school system will contact them.*

MEDIA REQUEST VOICE MAILBOX/EMAIL

If the ECC PIO is unavailable and an overwhelming number of calls come in from media, consider creating a voice mailbox for media inquiries. Forward media calls to this mailbox, which has a generic greeting. The media outlets can leave their information for the designated spokesperson to contact them at a later time. Also, consider an email address where electronic releases are sent when time permits. If this is not possible, keep track of all of the contacts and their information in one place for dissemination to the proper spokespersons. A template for tracking media requests is available in the appendix. The form ensures that all requests with complete information are delivered to the proper person.

ACTIVE INCIDENTS / LIVE FEED

Some agencies utilize an active incidents or current activity feed to provide media and the general public with a broad overview of current events within the jurisdiction. This can be beneficial for traffic reports or weather-related incidents. Things to consider:

- Omit calls that would violate privacy rules or create safety concerns, such as certain medical calls or domestic violence reports
- Officer safety is the topmost concern- limit or omit traffic stops or officer-initiated events
- Provide agency or response-specific filtering for calls (city, county, police, fire, EMS, etc.)
- Include filters such as traffic accidents or road closures
- Including active burn permits may limit unnecessary "smoke" reports from the public
- For responder and citizen safety concerns, a delay may be incorporated or a consolidated daily report automatically published every 24-hours

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media can be helpful for ECCs during emergency events. With proper use and regular updates, social media provides our communities with

factual information from a controlled source. Essential information disseminated through social media is useful for both the 9-1-1 center and community as it is a form of communication that is used often used by residents. However, it does not replace the voice to voice contact and is it not meant for citizens to request emergency assistance. Consider that there must be personnel assigned to keep social media accounts updated and monitored.

Find Additional guidance for social media use in the ECC at EffficentGov:
https://efficientgov.com/blog/2018/07/19/8-best-practices-for-emergency-communications-on-social-media/

AGENCY PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER (PIO)

If the ECC is a standalone agency, the director is more likely to act as the PIO. An ECC incorporated within a police/fire department has a PIO who serves the agency. All parties must coordinate to provide one consistent message. It is crucial to determine who handles media inquiries before an event occurs. Consult with the PIO to get a clear understanding of their expectations.

When it comes to communications, very rarely does a manager need to be out in front of the cameras. However, each manager needs to prepare if called upon to do so. Numerous classes are available online or through FEMA for training in how to engage with the media.

View FEMA PIO courses here:
https://training.fema.gov/programs/pio/trainops.aspx

STAGING OF MEDIA

During significant events, the potential for an onslaught of media vans and personnel is likely. Where the media stages can tax a community/neighborhood and the ECC. If possible, pre-plan staging areas for media functions. Consider the following when establishing a staging area:

CONSIDERATIONS
o Location characteristics

- Large enough to accommodate vans and satellite trucks
- Portable lavatories
- Trash cans
- Water
- Electricity needs
- Accessibility
- Noise
o Suggested locations
- Parks
- Municipal complex
- Large open parking lots

CONCLUSION

ECCs should have a specific policy and procedure for handling media and be familiar with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and their state open records request laws. Staff should have predetermined scripts that can be loaded into a CAD and should be comfortable with repeating those scripts. Tailor processes to the different types of communication, such as television, radio, and social media.

CHECKLIST

- ☐ Establish an ECC policy and procedure for media inquiries
- ☐ Establish an ECC policy and procedure for managing agency social media accounts
- ☐ Determine who the PIO is and obtain their contact information
- ☐ If needed, take a training course in media relations

Appendix A - DONATION MANAGEMENT / ACCOUNTING

DATE	NAME/ORGANIZATION	DONATION DESCRIPTION			MONETARY AMOUNT	ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	DATE SENT	PHOTO Y/N	DISPOSITION OF DONATION
		FOOD	GIFT	ITEM					

MONETARY DONATION PROCESSING COVER SHEET

INSTRUCTIONS:

**Note: If you receive a suspicious looking item, __do not__ open it. Refer to your agency's policy on handling this type of item.

- Open envelope carefully. Consider using an envelope opener, not to destroy the envelope.
- If you receive a donation in a package, carefully cut out the return address area.
- Paperclip or clamp together:
    - This cover sheet (on top)
    - Envelope or return address portion of the package
    - Check/cash
    - Letter/card

COMPLETE THIS INFORMATION:

DONATION AMOUNT_____   CASH ☐   CHECK ☐

STATED PURPOSE OF DONATION

☐   **VICTIMS / VICTIMS FAMILIES**

☐   **POLICE**

☐   **FIRE**

☐   **FIRST RESPONDERS**

☐   **MEMORIAL**

☐   **SCHOLARSHIP**

☐   **EDUCATION**

☐   **OTHER** _____

☐   **UNDESIGNATED (NO STATED PURPOSE)**

COMPLETED BY _____

DATE COMPLETED _____

DONATION PROCESSING COVER SHEET

INSTRUCTIONS:

Note: If you receive a suspicious looking item, **do not open it. Refer to your agency's policy on handling this type of item.

- Open envelope carefully. Consider using an envelope opener, not to destroy the envelope.
- If you receive a donation in a package, carefully cut out the return address area.
- Paperclip or clamp together:
    - This cover sheet (on top)
    - Envelope or return address portion of the package

COMPLETE THIS INFORMATION:

ITEM DESCRIPTION

_____
_____
_____
_____

STATED PURPOSE OF DONATION

☐   **VICTIMS / VICTIMS FAMILIES**

☐   **POLICE**

☐   **FIRE**

☐   **FIRST RESPONDERS**

☐   **MEMORIAL**

☐   **SCHOLARSHIP**

☐   **EDUCATION**

☐   **OTHER** _____

☐   **UNDESIGNATED (NO STATED PURPOSE)**

COMPLETED BY _____

DATE COMPLETED _____

Appendix D - MEDIA REQUEST DOCUMENTATION

REQUESTOR NAME	AGENCY	DATE	TIME	TAKEN BY	REQUEST	DISPOSITION

APPENDIX E – FINAL CALL EXAMPLES

FIRE DEPARTMENT FINAL CALL

It is with deep regret that (Agency) announces the passing of (Rank and Name). Roll call has been taken and (Rank and Name) has failed to answer. The bell has been struck for his/her last alarm.

May the sun shine upon his/her path, may the wind always be at his/her back and may the Lord hold him/her in the palm of his hand until we meet again.

POLICE OR FIRE DEPARTMENT FINAL CALL

Radio/ECC/Dispatch calling (Unit#), pause…

Radio/ECC/Dispatch calling (Unit#), pause…

Radio/ECC/Dispatch calling (Unit#), (Rank and Name), pause…

(Alert Tone)

It is with deep regret the (Agency) announces the passing of (Rank and Name), roll call has been taken, and (Rank and Name) has failed to answer. He answered his final call/alarm on (Date) and will be deeply missed. Rest easy (Rank/Name/and or Badge), we will take it from here.

Call sign (xxxxx) (Agency) is clear, and off the air.

DISPATCHER FINAL CALL

Sheriff/Chief (Name) to Dispatcher (Name)
5-second pause

Sheriff/Chief (Name) to Dispatcher (Name)
5-second pause

Sheriff/Chief (Name) to Dispatcher (Name)

This is your final call. Thank you for over (Number) of years of service and selfless dedication to the citizens of (County, State, City or Town) and the (Department).
May you rest in peace and God bless.

MULTI-USE FINAL CALL

(Alert Tone)

(Center Name) to (Rank and Name)

(Center Name) to (Rank and Name)

Having heard no response from (Rank and Name), we know that he/she has responded to his/her last call on earth and that the Emergency Services Department in the hereafter has a new responder.

(Name) served the citizens of (County, State City, or Town} for (Number) years. We appreciate (Name)'s dedication and his/her family's sacrifices during the time (Name) was a (an) (rank).

(Name) has now become a Guardian who will help watch out for all First Responders as they respond to emergencies.

(Rank and Name) completed his/her tour as a (an) (Rank) in this life.

Be safe until we meet again.

APPENDIX F – STRESS INDICATORS

STRESS INDICATORS

Stress does not always manifest itself immediately following an incident, and it may stick around for a while. If the following symptoms are present, then the staff member is most likely dealing with stress. If this continues or affects employee performance, professional help may be necessary.

Some key indicators of stress:

- Physical
  - Nausea, upset stomach, tremors, profuse sweats, chills, diarrhea, dizziness, chest tightness, rapid heart, fast breathing, headaches, sleep problems, fatigue, grinding teeth, visual difficulty, thirst, twitching, and exhaustion.
- Thinking/Cognitive
  - Slower thought process, difficulty making decisions, difficulty in problem-solving, confusion, disorientation (place/time), difficulty calculating, difficulty concentrating, memory problems (short/long), difficulty naming familiar items, seeing an event over and over, distressing dreams, poor attention span, blaming, hypervigilance, increase or decrease in alertness, offensive or defensive self-review, overwhelmed with normal routine and drawing nothing but blanks.
- Emotional
  - Anxiety, fear, guilt, grief, depression, sadness, feeling lost, feeling abandoned, feeling isolated, worry about others, wanting to hide, limited contacts, intense anger, irritability, numb all over, denial/uncertainty, apprehension, and devoid of feelings.

- Behavioral
  - Changes in activity, speech pattern changes, withdrawn into oneself, emotional outbursts, suspiciousness, loss or increase in appetite, alcohol consumption, inability to rest or relax, antisocial actions, non-specific body plans, hyper-alert to settings, startle reflex intensified, pacing, erratic movements, changes in sex life, harsh with family, relational difficulties, and regressive activities.
- Spiritual
  - Questioning or doubting God, doubting your faith, resisting fellowship, stop prayer activity, ceasing worship, rejecting your faith, spiritually numb, leaving the church, blaming God, faulting the creator, spiritual shut-down, avoiding devotions, anxiety regarding "beliefs," overzealousness, and issues with faith and hope.

If an employee is observing these traits in themselves or other employees, some things they can try are:

- Within the first 24-48 hours, periods of strenuous exercise and relaxation will alleviate some of the physical reactions
- Structure your time and keep busy
- Recognize you are normal and are having normal reactions
- Beware of numbing the pain with overuse of drugs and/or alcohol. This complicates the stress reaction with a substance abuse problem.
- Reach out to people
- Maintain as normal a schedule as possible
- Spend time with others; don't isolate yourself
- Help your co-workers as much as possible by sharing your feelings with them and checking on how they are doing
- Give yourself permission to feel rotten and share your feelings with others
- Do things that feel good to you, in moderation.
- Realize that those around you are also under stress
- Don't make any significant life changes for at least several months

- Make as many daily decisions as possible, which will give you a feeling of control over your life
- Get plenty of rest
- Recurring thoughts, dreams, or flashbacks are normal, don't try to fight them, they'll decrease over time and become less painful
- Eat regular, well-balanced meals, even if you don't feel like it

Employees could also provide a copy of stress-related symptoms to their family members so that if they observe any of the symptoms they can understand where they are coming from.