Disaster Planning for California Hospitals

Driving readiness in dynamic times

BREAKING NEWS:

PIO and Social Media Roles in Emergency Management and Response

Valerie Lakey, Mayers Memorial Hospital District
(530)336-5511 Ext. 1136
vlakey@mayersmemorial.com

Resources and Training Recommendations:

- **Public Information Officer Position Checklist Template – Option 1**
- **Public Information Officer Position Checklist Template – Option 2**
- **Message Map**
- **Key Organizational Challenges to Social Media**
- **Common Steps to Adopting Use of Social Media**
- **Commonly Used Social Media Platforms**
- **Typical Stages of Development in Use of Social Media**
- **Additional Resource Links and Training Recommendations**

Public Information Officer

Position: Public Information Officer   Name: _____
Positions Managed: Public Information staff and Emergency Public Information Hotline
Report To: Incident Commander

Serve as the coordination point for all media releases for (facility name). Represent the (facility name) as the lead Public Information Officer.

Ensure that the public within affected areas receives complete, accurate, and consistent information about life safety procedures, public health advisories, relief and assistance programs and other vital information.

Coordinate media releases with Public Information Officers representing other affected emergency response agencies within the Operational Area. Where appropriate establish a Joint Information Center (JIC) and coordinate the JIC activities.

Organize the format for press conferences in conjunction with the Incident Commander.

Maintain a positive relationship with the media representatives.

Establish a system to manage rumor control.

	Initial Actions (Activation Phase)	
	Task	**Notes**
1.	Report to the IC, sign-in at the check-in area and receive a vest and badge	
2.	Obtain Situation Status Briefing from the previous Public Information Officer (if one was previously assigned) and the IC. • Make a list of key issues to be addressed by the PIO / JIC • Identify objectives to be accomplished during the operational period • Read the IC Status Boards for information relating to the PIO / JIC functions • Identify immediate resource needs, priorities and projected shortfalls	
3.	Ensure the PIO / JIC is properly set up and personnel, equipment, and supplies are in place Determine resource needs such as a computer, phone, plan copies, and other reference documents are available. Determine staffing requirements Obtain a current communication update	
4.	Assume the responsibilities of the Emergency Public Information Hotline, if that position is not staffed	
5.	Maintain a log of events and actions	
6.	Obtain policy guidance and approval from the IC Director for media releases.	

Public Information Officer

	Task	Notes
7.	Keep the IC advised of all unusual requests for information and of all major critical or unfavorable media comments. Recommend procedures or measures to improve media relations.	
8.	Interact with other IC sections, branches, and units to provide and obtain information relative to public information operations	
9.	Coordinate with the Situation Analysis Branch (Planning/Intelligence) and identify method for obtaining and verifying significant information as it is developed	
10.	Develop and publish a media-briefing schedule, to include location, format, preparation, and distribution of handout materials	
11.	Establish a media or joint information center, as required, providing necessary space, materials, telephones, and electrical power	
12.	Maintain up-to-date status boards and other references at the media information center. Provide adequate staff to answer questions from members of the media	
13.	In coordination with other IC sections and as approved by the IC, issue timely and consistent advisories and instructions for life safety, health, and assistance for the public	
14.	At the request of the IC, prepare media briefings.	
15.	Ensure that a rumor control function is established to correct false or erroneous information	
16.	Monitor media broadcasts and develop follow-up news releases to control rumors	
17.	Monitor social media sources to identify rumors or extract intelligence to be shared with the Plans Section Chief	
18.	Maintain file copies of all released information and provide copies of all releases to the IC Director	
19.	Provide information to the public as related to healthcare and other important information.	
20.	Ensure that announcements, emergency information, and materials are translated and prepared for special populations (non-English speaking, hearing impaired, etc.).	
21.	Conduct shift change briefings in detail, ensuring that in-progress activities are identified and follow-up requirements are known	

Incident Command Center Position Checklist

Public Information Officer

	Operational Period Change or Demobilization (Deactivation Phase)	
	Task	**Notes**
22.	Prepare final news releases and advise media representatives of points-of-contact for follow-up stories	
23.	Deactivate your assigned position and close out logs when authorized by the IC Director	
24.	Complete all required forms, reports, and other documentation. All documents not needed by your relief should be submitted through the IC Director to the Planning/Intelligence Section prior to your departure	
25.	Brief your relief if the incident is continuing into another operational period	
26.	Be prepared to provide input to the After Action Report	
27.	Leave a phone number where you can be reached	

Public Information Officer

Activity Log:

Date/Time	Notable Activities

Public Information Officer Position Checklist

The following checklist should be considered as the minimum requirements for this position. Note that some of the tasks are one-time actions; others are ongoing or repetitive for the duration of the incident.

✓	**Task**

1. Obtain briefing from Incident Commander:

   - Determine current status of Incident (ICS Form 209 or equivalent).

   - Identify current organization (ICS Forms 201 and 203, resource lists, etc.).

   - Determine point of contact for media (scene or Command Post).

   - Determine current media presence.

2. Participate in Administrative Officer's briefing:

   - Determine constraints on information process.

   - Determine pre-existing agreements for information centers, Joint Information Centers (JICs), etc.

3. Assess need for special alert and warning efforts, including the hearing impaired, non-English speaking populations, and industries especially at risk for a specific hazard, or which may need advance notice in order to shut down processes.

4. Coordinate the development of door-to-door protective action statements with Operations.

5. Prepare initial information summary as soon as possible after activation. If no other information is available, consider the use of the following general statement:

   ### Sample Initial Information Summary

   We are aware that an *[accident/incident]* involving *[type of incident]* occurred at approximately *[time]*, in the vicinity of *[general location]*. *[Agency personnel]* are responding, and we will have additional information available as we are able to confirm it. We will hold a briefing at *[location]*, and will notify the press at least ½ hour prior to the briefing. At this time, this briefing is the only place where officials authorized to speak about the incident and confirmed information will be available. Thank you for your assistance.

Public Information Officer Position Checklist

<table>
<tr><td>☐</td><td>6. Arrange for necessary work space, materials, telephones, and staff. Consider assigning Assistant Public Information Officers to:</td></tr>
</table>

6. Arrange for necessary work space, materials, telephones, and staff. Consider assigning Assistant Public Information Officers to:

   - Joint Information Center (JIC).

   - Field (scene) Information.

   - Internal Information.

7. Establish contact with local and national media representatives, as appropriate.

8. Establish location of Information Center for media and public away from Command Post.

9. Establish schedule for news briefings.

10. Coordinate, with Logistics, the activation and staffing of message center "rumor control" lines to receive requests and answer questions from the public. Provide statement to operators.

11. Obtain current incident status reports from Planning Section; coordinate a schedule for updates.

12. Observe constraints on the release of information imposed by the Incident Commander and according to agency guidance.

13. Obtain approval for information release from Incident Commander:

   - Confirm details to ensure no conflicting information is released.

   - Identify site and time for press briefings, and confirm participation by other Incident Management Team (IMT) members.

14. Release news to media, and post information in Command Post and other appropriate locations.

15. Record all interviews and copy all news releases:

   - Contact media to correct erroneous or misleading information being provided to the public via the media.

Public Information Officer Position Checklist

☐ 16. Update off-incident agency personnel on a regular basis:

- Utilize electronic mail for agency updates.

- Establish phone line in the Command Post dedicated to internal communications to update agency personnel.

- Provide standard statement which can be given to general requests for information.

☐ 17. Coordinate information releases with information staff from other impacted agencies and jurisdictions:

- Ensure that information provided to the public is consistent across jurisdictional boundaries, when appropriate.

☐ 18. Attend Planning Meetings:

Sample Planning Meeting Agenda

	Agenda Item	Responsible Party
1	Briefing on situation/resource status.	Planning/Operations Section Chiefs
2	Discuss safety issues.	Safety Officer
3	Set/confirm incident objectives.	Incident Commander
4	Plot control lines & Division boundaries.	Operations Section Chief
5	Specify tactics for each Division/Group.	Operations Section Chief
6	Specify resources needed for each Division/Group.	Operations/Planning Section Chiefs
7	Specify facilities and reporting locations.	Operations/Planning/Logistics Section Chiefs
8	Develop resource order.	Logistics Section Chief
9	Consider communications/medical/ transportation plans.	Logistics/Planning Section Chiefs
10	Provide financial update.	Finance/Administration Section Chief
11	Discuss interagency liaison issues.	Liaison Officer
12	Discuss information issues.	Public Information Officer
13	Finalize/approve/implement plan.	Incident Commander/All

☐ 19. Respond to special requests for information.

☐ 20. Provide all news releases, bulletins, and summaries to Documentation Unit to be included in the final incident package.

☐ 21. Confirm the process for the release of information concerning incident-related injuries or deaths.
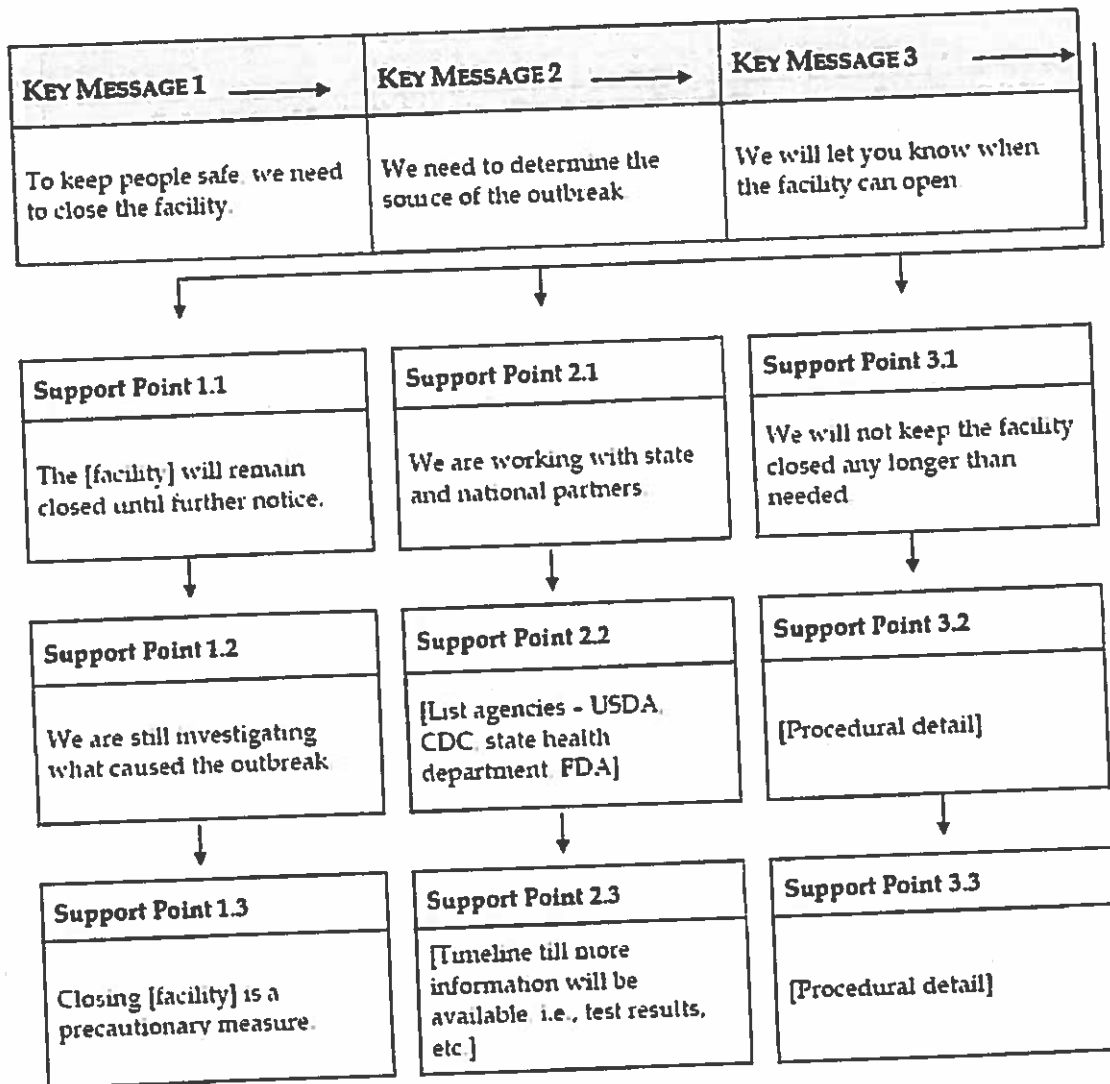
☐ 22. Document all activity on Unit Log (ICS Form 214).

MESSAGE MAP

SCENARIO: E. COLI ~ OUTBREAK AT LOCAL RESTAURANT
STAKEHOLDER: BUSINESS
CONCERN: DO I HAVE TO CLOSE DOWN?*

KEY MESSAGE 1 →	KEY MESSAGE 2 →	KEY MESSAGE 3 →
To keep people safe, we need to close the facility.	We need to determine the source of the outbreak	We will let you know when the facility can open

Support Point 1.1	Support Point 2.1	Support Point 3.1
The [facility] will remain closed until further notice.	We are working with state and national partners.	We will not keep the facility closed any longer than needed

Support Point 1.2	Support Point 2.2	Support Point 3.2
We are still investigating what caused the outbreak	[List agencies - USDA, CDC, state health department, FDA]	[Procedural detail]

Support Point 1.3	Support Point 2.3	Support Point 3.3
Closing [facility] is a precautionary measure.	[Timeline till more information will be available, i.e., test results, etc.]	[Procedural detail]

Name:
Stakeholder:
Question or Concern:

Key Message 1	Key Message 2	Key Message 3
Supporting Fact 1-1	Supporting Fact 2-1	Supporting Fact 3-1
Supporting Fact 1-2	Supporting Fact 2-2	Supporting Fact 3-2
Supporting Fact 1-3	Supporting Fact 2-3	Supporting Fact 3-3

Key Organizational Challenges to Social Media in Emergency Management:

Key Organizational Challenges	Better Practices to Address Challenges

Leadership Buy-In and Organizational Culture
Fear and distrust of what is new or not familiar, questions about the reliability of information, and ability to verify what is provided by social media; May be fear of its misuse or abuse making them look bad.
	• Explain the significant benefits and the small risks of it use.
	• Acknowledge that those unfamiliar with social media may find its use uncomfortable or intimidating. These anxieties are similar to those that accompanied the introduction of the Internet, email, and web tools have become in business.
	• Emphasize the downside of not being included in the public conversation already occurring:
	   o Do you want the public discussing your emergency or disaster without you:
	   o Don't you want to know what they are saying (about you)?
	   o Do you know how to participate and respond?
	• Show examples of other government users and their experiences.
	• Suggest starting slowly, experimenting with a few tools, and adapting to ever-changing situations and technologies.

Organizational Capability IT staff may not be familiar with enterprise deployment of social media or lack the infrastructure capacity to accommodate its use, especially high-definition or high-bandwidth applications such as images and streaming audio or video. Emergency management workforce may be unfamiliar with it or might lack the skills required to use it efficiently.	• Develop a support structure, including human resources who will manage the accounts with guidelines (policies and procedures when necessary), and training in their use at all levels. • Have those who are familiar with those platforms explain the terms and ways they are used so that all staff can communicate effectively. • Pair staff who understand the platforms with those less familiar to bridge the knowledge gap.
Sustainability (competition for resources, skills, time) With emergency service organizations working with lean resources and expected to do more with less, there is more completion for shrinking staff and their time. Emergency response staffs are already overloaded with their daily responsibilities	• Be creative in using current staff to enhance what you want to do and cross train staff on the different platforms used. • Identify reliable volunteer pools within the community with the requisite skills and commitment for cooperation in areas of social media use such as monitoring and

and training in emergency protocols and other IT systems.	coordinating communication.
Security Policies and Restrictions Related to IT Systems IT staff may perceive social media platforms as potential security risks and guidelines for allowing their use and management may not have kept pace with the current state of web technology.	• Use social media on computer systems that are off the organizations main computer network and do not link it with any internal systems. • Work with the IT staff to identify areas of concern and work together to problem solve. • Develop guidelines on social media use with IT staff.
Privacy of Personal Information Legal staff and public citizens advocates may have concerns about citizens' privacy and personal information, how it will be handled, tracked, stored, and used.	• Ensure legal language is included where needed. Make sure that promises are kept. • Establish practical and transparent reporting and analysis processes, and track progress to measure program success.
Public Records Retention Requirements Legal records retention requirements for archiving communications at States and Federal level can damper use of these tools. Many locales are not staffed and do this or the staffs they have are not familiar with the technologies. Changes in legal requirements have been outpaces by adaptation of social media.*	• Make sure that you have staff who can monitor your social media sites on a steady basis using an aggregating tool or other regular update. • As above under organizational capacity, ensure that staff are cross trained on platforms and guidelines for use.

*Quote from Tom Olshanski, Director of External Affairs at the U.S. Fire Administration.

Source:

Course Title: Social Media in Emergency Management, IS-042

Common Steps to Adopting the Use of Social Media in Emergency Management

Focus first on the outcome you wish to achieve

Establish the outcome that you wish to achieve: With whom are you communicating and why? What is the communication about? What is the intent of the message or what are you looking to know?

Be prepared to adapt how you engage your audience

Be prepared to adapt how you engage your audience through social media as you and your audience explore applications and their limitations. Create an emphasis on making your tools and communication accessible through mobile means.

Choose a few tools and develop them well*

Many new users to social media start with one platform, become comfortable with the communication and its relationship to existing operations, and then slowly start to use other social media platforms, naturally picking them up, learning, and then expanding. This includes integration between social media platforms and organizational websites and the use of multimedia sites which are a natural progression with links to multi-media.

Create a trial account before creating an official one

While still operating out in the open, creating a trial account allows you to gain familiarity first before broadly rolling out your official presence. This will give you the opportunity to make some mistakes, operating under the radar, without having them publicized broadly at the start.

Establish a support structure

Develop a support structure, including human resources who will manage the accounts with guidelines (policies and procedures when necessary), and training in their use at all levels. Be creative in using current staff to enhance what you want to do and cross train staff on the different platforms used. Use subject matter experts to help with data collection.* Social media management and measurement can be complicated and using subject matter experts who understand the field can help make use out of the wealth of data available.

Develop a mentorship and demonstrations from experienced users

Wading into the language of social media may be like reading to a foreign language. It can help to have those who are familiar with those platforms explain the terms and ways they are used so that all staff can communicate effectively. Pairing staff who understand the platforms with those less familiar is a good way of bridging the knowledge gap.

Establish new feeds (RSS)

Establishing a news feed or using RSS (Really Simple Syndication) allows an organization to publish new content on a website, blog, or other news and syndicate this to subscribers. The feed is a summarized text of the original web page along with metadata, such as date, ownership, title, and description. News feeds make it easier for people to subscribe to your web pages without having to go and visit.

Leverage partners and volunteers

Partner agencies and volunteers, whether under the umbrella of an organization or independent, should be taken into consideration. Establishing connections formal and informal where you can coordinate your messages or activities before, during, and after an emergency helps to communicate with one voice. Using trained volunteers, can help increase your capacity to manage social media communication, in particular during a crisis when social networks are lit up with posts.

Make people available to answer questions

Remember that social media is a conversation and not just a broadcasting channel. Make sure that you have staff who can monitor your social media sites on a steady basis using an aggregating tool or other regular update, and reply to question or correct misinformation when it appears.

SOURCE:

Course Title: Social Media in Emergency Management, IS-042

List of Commonly Used Social Media Sites, Platforms, and Tools by Emergency Managers

Note: while other sites and platforms may be used for the purposes given below. The list represents those most commonly used by emergency managers in the USA. The list is not meant as a comprehensive representation of all social media sites, or an endorsement of any of these sites or platforms.

Blog Sites: allow for a dingle author or a group of authors using one account to post content and links as a series of articles or posts arranges in a chronological sequence like a diary or journal.

Site Name	URL	Free/Cost	Main Features	Important Notes
Blogger	http://blogger.com	Free	All sites offer similar features including posting text, pictures, video, and links to other sites, and integrated with other social media sites. Posts are typically archived and can be searched, saved, edited, and deleted.	Software may be used with a custom domain but is not free and open source software (FOSS)
	http://blogspot.com	Free		

Micro-Blogging: a micro-blogging site provides users with a platform for short text messages that may include web links, attached pictures and links to videos.

| Twitter | www.twitter.com | Free | Message are limited to 140 characters, similar to text messaging (SMS or Short Message Service) except that it is typically shared with a group of people and most often are public. Users can subscribe to other users' Tweets or connect to them, and share a common thread through the use of what are called hash tags. | Unless the user decides to restrict their tweets from being searched they are public and can be searched, aggregated, and analyzed. Tweets or Twitter posts, when the location feature in enabled by the account holder, contain geo data that, when linked to picture or video, can help provide a more accurate common operating picture. |

Peer to Peer Sharing-Common Social Media Networking Sites: these sites allow individuals, companies, organizations, and associations to post text, video, picture, links to other web content and combinations of all of these electronic media. This posted media, some sections permanent, other section constantly changing, comprised he profile for an individual or organization. Increasingly more information about the individual can be shared such as location based information, media preferences: music, pictures, video, etc. that they allow users to comment with one another directly, through groups or networks or

even by location when this feature is enabled. They also allow other users to comment directly or obtain a direct feed of content to their own page or to a mobile device for easy viewing and response.

Site Name	URL	Free/Cost	Main Features	Important Notes
Facebook	www.facebook.com	Free-Facebook allows advertisements on right sidebar	Allows short blog posts, text chat, inbox, pictures, video, and integration with other social media sites. Live-streaming video and video chat.	Currently the largest global social network.
Google+	plus.google.com	Free-Need to sign up with a Google Account		New social network, started by Google and looking to grow a larger network.
LinkedIn	www.linkedin.com	Free-Premium account available with more features.	Similar features to those given above except that the primary use is for professional and business networking, by companies, organizations, association, and individuals. Used by many communities of practices (COPs) for sharing better practices.	Some groups are open while others are restricted and require invitations to join. Messages can only be sent to other users if they are within your network (by opt-in) unless a premium account is paid for.

Media Sharing Sites: These sites offer hosting for pictures, audio, videos, and other multi-media. Users can often include text commentary, group photos or video together, edit them directly on site, and also embed certain graphics or links in the media. This media can then be shared through links, text message, embedded in a blog, Facebook page, or included in a Tweet.

Site Name	URL	Free/Cost	Main Features	Important Notes
YouTube	www.youtube.com	Free	Hosting for video. Allows editing, management, and tracking number of viewers.	Limited upload amount of HD video

Source:

Course Title: Social Media in Emergency Management, IS-042

The Typical Stages of Development in the Use of Social Media

Level 1 Monitor	Level 2 Command	Level 3 Coordinate	Level 4 Cooperate	Level 5 Collaborate
(Listening in order to get your battle rhythm) One way communication from the public, intended to inform and instruct (the EM).	(Broadcasting) One way communication to the public, intended to convince, compel, instruct.	(Conversation) 1 or 2 way communication intended to avoid or minimize conflict.	(Discussion & Analysis) Two way communication intended to facilitate shared expectations.	(Synthesis and Value Creation) Two way communication that produces shared meaning and objectives.
Means focused	Means focused	Ends focused	Shared means and ends	Shared means and ends
Prevention				
Preparation				
Mitigation				
Response				
Recovery				

Source:

Course Title: Social Media in Emergency Management, IS-042

Public Information Officer

ONLINE RESOURCES

Basic Guidance for Public Information Officers

https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/20130726-1623-20490-0276/basic_guidance_for_pios_final_draft_12_06_07.pdf

Public Information Officer Position Checklist

https://training.fema.gov/emiweb/is/icsresource/assets/pio_pcl.pdf

TRAINING RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Basic Public Information Officers Course (G-290)**

  http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/EMICourses/E388.asp

  http://www.fema.gov/about/contact/statedr.shtm

- **Advanced Public Information Officer (E-388)**

  http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/EMICourses/E388.asp

- **IS-29: Public Information Officer Awareness**

  https://www.training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=is-29

- **IS-42: Social Media in Emergency Management**

  https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=is-42

Contact:

Valerie Lakey vlakey@mayersmemorial.com for detailed notes of presentation.

Visit: www.mayersmemorial.com (Staff Resources link) for resources