

from Zoom to the Room

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set up

- ensure role-specific binders are just as **easy to access** online
- offer training, virtual open houses, and use in exercises to **demonstrate** how it works and **refine**
- develop a **scheduling** system showing who is staffing each role now and who's up next
- create custom "**virtual vest**" backgrounds to distinguish who is first up for each role

types of responses

- in-person, virtual only, or **hybrid**
- after hours, weekend, holiday
- **widespread / regional** incidents
- **initial, immediate** response (e.g., software downtime)
- potential extended response (e.g., work stoppage)
- known long-term response (e.g., pandemic)
- when not all response roles are needed fulltime

collaboration

- compile, view, share, and archive **situational awareness** with a broader group (vs. physical whiteboard)
- engage **external response partners** who would not otherwise be able to be physically dedicated to site
- migrate established/published in-person role-specific phone numbers to individuals' phone numbers
- set clear expectations for engagement as this setup can be **susceptible to a few dominating participants**

discipline

- be mindful of the **risk of passive consumption** rather than active participation
- mitigate how the **loss of in-person social connection** over time can lead to less benefit of the doubt

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many meetings went from in-person to virtual. How / has this changed how you convene your Incident Management Team and Command Center?

challenges - / + opportunities

additional work to outline virtual workflows (e.g., when/where to save documentation)

plan

set thresholds / informing principles for what types of response merit a virtual or hybrid activation

response pace can feel **too fast** (e.g., not enough time between briefings to do other follow up)

expedite

faster to convene (e.g., no travel time or room setup time)

"Zoom fatigue" when online meetings are too frequent, especially during the pandemic

recognize

virtual meetings are **common in other work experiences** and not a new emergency-specific program to learn

remaining in operational areas presents **more distractions** and expectations from multiple groups

engage

leaders remain **more integrated with their teams and operations**, avoiding Command Center insulation

decision-making can be more difficult when it's challenging to discern **who's "on first"**

participate

more cross-training and back-ups, complimentary to functions that require teamwork (e.g., Joint Information Center)

distraction and temptation to do other work or unrelated things

multi-task

ability for **faster follow up** (e.g., don't have to wait to research or ping someone for help)

less interaction when in one virtual "room" with one speaker at a time

interact

options for **break out spaces + chat** to share (and document) supporting information to the main dialogue

resources

- do all responders have the necessary **technology** to engage in this format (e.g., laptops, cellphones, radios) and is remote technology support available?
- external setups with **fewer redundancies**:
 - power outages at sites without generators
 - unstable home internet
 - cellular service disruptions

accessibility

- improved **audio** with headsets, microphones; avoids poor room acoustics
- **infection control**, easier to understand speech without masks
- **easier to read** information from digital materials than handwritten ones
- **customize visuals** (e.g., increase font size, contrast)

savings

- many **free or inexpensive** virtual meeting tools that can be leveraged for virtual response
- reduces single occupancy vehicle **commuting** due to unpredictable/unusual response timing
- fewer printed materials
- better **personal balance** for the long haul: in your space (ergonomics), with your favorite healthy drinks and snacks, ability to make the most of breaks, and balance with caregiving responsibilities

conclusion

- while not suitable for all responses, inclusion of digital tools can **improve flexibility and efficiency** of emergency management when applied to exclusively virtual, hybrid, and in-person settings