

**Job Aid: Post-Incident Evaluation of Public Information Preparedness**  
**(Page 1 of 4)**

**Evaluation Process To Conduct:** After an incident, evaluate the effectiveness of your public information preparedness so you can learn from that incident and improve for the next one.

You will want to determine:

- **Step 1:** What did we do this time?
- **Step 2:** What do we want to do next time?
- **Step 3:** What do we need to do **now** to be ready?

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**People To Consult:** People who can provide valuable information about public information performance after an incident include:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ The Incident Commander</li><li>✓ Field/On-scene PIOs</li><li>✓ Joint Information Center (JIC) PIOs</li><li>✓ Other agency/department PIOs</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Public Inquiry Center personnel</li><li>✓ News media (reporters, editors, producers)</li><li>✓ Partner organizations</li><li>✓ The general public</li></ul> |
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**Step 1: What did we do this time?**

Assess the effectiveness of the public information operation.

▪ **Evaluate JIC Activation:**

- Was the JIC activated as soon as possible?
- How smoothly did JIC activation go?
- What could be done to improve JIC activation?

▪ **Evaluate Message Transmission:**

- Did the right people get the right information?
- Was information transmitted in a timely manner?
- Were there issues of miscommunication or confusion? If so, how were they caused, and resolved?
- What could be done to improve message transmission?

▪ **Evaluate Quality of Information:**

- Was the information that was disseminated accurate?
- Was the information easy to understand?
- What can be done to improve the quality of the information?

**Job Aid: Post-Incident Evaluation of Public Information Preparedness**  
(Page 2 of 4)

**Step 1: What did we do this time? (Continued)**

▪ **Evaluate Accessibility of Information to Special Populations:**

- Was the information made accessible to people with special needs (e.g., people with visual and hearing impairments, language translation needs, and mobility impairments)?
  
- What can be done to improve the accessibility of the information?

▪ **Evaluate Incident Documentation and Products:**

**Review:**

- ✓ Media contact logs
- ✓ Newsclippings
- ✓ Audiotapes/videotapes of interviews and news coverage
- ✓ Copies of products: news releases, talking points, briefing booklets, news conference agendas, flyers

**Ask:**

- Did the written products present information clearly, succinctly, and professionally?
  
- Did PIOs speak articulately and present information well during news conferences and in interviews?
  
- What can be done to improve the quality of incident documentation and products?

▪ **Evaluate PIO Relationships With Media, Partners, Responders, and the Public:**

- Describe any problems during the incident regarding PIO relationships with:
  - ✓ Media:
  
  - ✓ Public information partners:
  
  - ✓ Other response personnel:
  
  - ✓ The public:
  
- What can be done to improve PIO relationships?

▪ **Evaluate JIC Internal Operations:**

- Did PIOs have the equipment needed? If not, what was lacking?
  
- Did PIOs get the information they needed? If not, why not?
  
- Did the message approval process work? If not, why not?
  
- What can be done to improve JIC internal operations relating to public information?

**Job Aid: Post-Incident Evaluation of Public Information Preparedness**  
**(Page 3 of 4)**

**Step 2: What do we want to do next time?**

Look at successes to replicate and problems to avoid repeating. Set goals for next time.

▪ **Set Goals for Output and Products:**

- What products will you produce?
  
- What quality will you accept—in products, documentation, and PIO performance?
  
- How will message transmission meet the needs of the various people who need information?

▪ **Set Goals for Systems Issues:**

- How can approval processes be designed to work efficiently?
  
- How can necessary public information resources be secured in a timely manner?
  
- How can public information production and dissemination processes be designed to work effectively?

▪ **Set Goals for Logistical Factors:**

- What equipment is necessary for the JIC, and how can you assure it will be available when needed?
  
- What technology is necessary for the JIC, and how can you assure it will be available when needed?
  
- What personnel are necessary for the JIC, and how can you assure they will be available when needed?
  
- What environment is necessary for the JIC, and how can you assure it will be available when needed?

▪ **Set Goals for Human Factors:**

- What skills and technical proficiencies are necessary for public information staff?
  
- What special skills do public information personnel possess that can be utilized to enhance JIC operation?
  
- What personnel are necessary for successful JIC operation?
  
- What relationships can be improved to facilitate informing the public?
  
- What comfort, security, and safety issues must be under control for successful JIC operation?

**Job Aid: Post-Incident Evaluation of Public Information Preparedness  
(Page 4 of 4)**

<b>Step 3: What do we need to do <i>now</i> to be ready?</b> Focusing on the goals for next time, consider the following strategies for improving in key areas.	
<b>To Improve Output</b>	<b>Consider . . .</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Provide training to enhance PIO skills (e.g., writing, on-camera interview techniques, photography).</li> <li>✓ Rewrite pre-scripted news releases and factsheets so they are current.</li> <li>✓ Update and expand your Smart Book.</li> </ul> <b>Comments:</b>
<b>To Improve Systems:</b>	<b>Consider . . .</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Streamline processes that slowed down the public information operation (e.g., approval, production, dissemination).</li> <li>✓ Institutionalize into the standard operating procedures those processes that contributed to incident success (e.g., alternative dissemination process).</li> </ul> <b>Comments:</b>
<b>To Improve Logistics</b>	<b>Consider . . .</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Identify equipment that could improve efficiency, and determine how to secure it.</li> <li>✓ Research new technology that would improve operations.</li> <li>✓ Research costs and other factors or consideration during the appropriate budget cycle.</li> </ul> <b>Comments:</b>
<b>To Improve Human Factors</b>	<b>Consider . . .</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Identify gaps in skills in public information personnel and recruit to fill those gaps.</li> <li>✓ Update records to ensure that PIOs' skills are being tapped.</li> <li>✓ Revise standard operating procedures to address personal comfort, security, and safety issues.</li> </ul> <b>Comments:</b>