

Unit 4:

Media Relations at the Scene



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Visual 4.1

Unit Objectives

- Outline media needs at the scene
- Explain the news conference cycle
- Apply news conference logistics



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Why Coordination at the Scene Matters

- The bigger the event, the more media will arrive
- All media can now tell the story from where it is happening
- Local outlets can easily link with national and international counterparts; stories can go global within seconds



And, To Make It More Interesting . . .

Anyone with a mobile device can be a field reporter

What can you do to help ensure good media relations at the scene?



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Initial Actions That Can Make It Work

- Get there quickly
- Have a go-kit
- Be educated
- Make contact with the on-scene commander
- Take control of the situation
- Keep your cool
- Make contact with your supervisor



State and Federal Laws

- State sunshine laws
- Federal laws
- Federal highways
- Temporary flight restrictions



Know the law ahead of time!



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The PIO-Media Partnership

What the **PIO** wants:

- A conduit to the public
- Respect for incident perimeter (no interference with response operations)
- Accurate and fair reporting

What the **media** want:

- Access
- Prompt answers to queries
- Fair treatment
- Respect for deadlines
- Timely updates and corrections to information in evolving incidents



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Media Needs at the Scene

Access to:

- You
- The scene
- Newsmakers

Basics:

- Explanation of the big picture
- Respect for deadlines
- Updates as quickly as possible in evolving situations



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Media Needs at the Scene (*Continued*)

Logistics:

- Where they can set up
- Location of nearest food, lodging, gas stations



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PIO Needs at the Scene

- Access to workers, leadership, legal staff
- Involvement in all management briefings
- Trust of coworkers and management

**How do you gain the trust of co-workers and management?
How can you lose it?**



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Media Staging Areas

Ask yourself:

- Does it infringe at the scene (crime scene)?
- Does media presence interfere with work being done?
- Are they in danger? Will they endanger others?
- Is it convenient for you and policymakers?



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Media Staging Areas (*Continued*)

Ask yourself:

- Are they too close to sensitive information?
- Do they have a clear line of sight to satellite or microwave towers?
- Can they get the images they want?
- Are there “convenience” facilities available?
- How can you keep them at the staging area?



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Media Pools

- A media pool is one representative from each type of media
- Media pools allow you to provide access under a more controlled system
- Don't overuse the media pool



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News Conference Responsibilities

- The PIO organizes and manages the news conference
- The Incident Commander or official from the lead agency serves as the primary spokesperson



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Location, Location, Location

Key considerations for location are:

- Minimizing distractions
- Providing unobstructed access for satellite or “live” trucks
- Controlling environment (weather, backdrop)
- Providing access and egress for speakers
- Minimizing background noise
- Providing optimal camera line of sight
- Managing security



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News Conference Cycle

Preparing

- Determine location and time
- Announce
- Prepare participants

Opening

- Greet media
- Provide introductions and overview
- Manage Q&A



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News Conference Cycle (*Continued*)

Closing

- Summarize; reiterate key messages
- Announce time of next briefing
- Allow speakers to leave

Following Up

- Document what was said and questions
- Monitor media coverage; address errors
- Debrief participants; use “lessons learned”



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Activity 4.1: Media Staging Area

**Instructions: This is a group activity.
Based on the scenario:**

- Determine two potential media staging areas
- Make a list of potential logistical requirements
- Write a draft media advisory
- Write a draft micro-blog on a scenario issue of your choice (use job aid)

Purpose: To apply media relations techniques to an ICS scenario.

Estimated Time: 20 minutes



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Visual 4.19

Summary

In this unit, we discussed:

- Media relations at the scene, including the needs of both the news media and the PIO
- The use of staging areas and media pools
- Where, when, and how to conduct news conferences at the scene



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