

CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS AND THE MEDIA

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The Importance of a Joint Information Center (JIC)

A JIC helps to instill confidence in the community that government is there, is doing everything possible to fix the problem, and will keep the public informed as the incident evolves.

Case Study: Attacks of September 11, 2001

During 9/11 the City of New York Office of Emergency Management's JIC was destroyed and staff had to set up a JIC at an alternate facility.

The media was chasing the story throughout Ground Zero, OEM staff had to devise a way to efficiently and quickly "feed the beast" in this new era of 24-hour news coverage. The JIC needed to provide central information point for media and limit spread of false information, so it instituted media controls and limited access to ground zero.

Within 24 hours, the JIC was able to coordinate the assembly and dissemination of pertinent information which helped to create a singular, consistent message. In the aftermath of 9/11 the JIC served a myriad of national and international news organizations and handled more than 25,000 press inquiries.

JIC Organization

The JIC concept worked in the response to the 9/11 attacks because of good organization. The following components are essential to a successful JIC operation:

News Desk

- Answers all incoming calls whether it's the media or the general public
- Handles all media callouts
- Gathers intelligence and information from field public information officers and operations centers
- Provides media monitoring and analysis

Research and Writing Desk

- Develops news releases, talking points, fact sheets and other emergency public information documents
- Creates and maintains current information on the incident website
- Conducts in-depth research for future projects or publications

Media Liaison Desk

- Manages on-scene media

- Plans/schedules pending interviews
- Identifies media issues and questions that need to be addressed by JIC
- Participates in background interviews

JIC Checklist

- Identify JIC Location
 - Permanent Facility
 - Mobile Facility
- Identify Key Players
- Get PIOs' Contact Information
- Equipment
 - Phones
 - Computers
 - Fax
 - Printer/Copier
 - TVs
 - Status Boards
- Agency Logos
- Podium and/or Mult. Box
- Activation/Operation Procedures
- Training and Exercise

Conclusion

Communicate with one voice – no matter whose voice it is.