



From Prep to Practice: Crisis Communications

Room 52A



From Prep to Practice: Crisis Communications *Interactive Session*

Presented in partnership with the Massachusetts Municipal Communicators

Facilitator

- Elaine Driscoll
- Director of Communications and Policy for the Mass. Executive Office of Public Safety and Security
- Veteran Public Service with Nearly 20 Years of Experience Leading City and State Government Communications
- Prior to EOPSS, served with Boston Police Department and Mass. Gaming Commission



Exercise Agenda

- Exercise Introduction
- Module One:
Immediate Response
- Module Two:
Long-Term Coordination
- Hot Wash
- Closing and
Participant Feedback



Exercise Structure and Format

- Tabletop Exercise
- FEMA's definition: "a facilitated analysis of an emergency situation in an informal, **stress-free** environment."
- Discussion based (all simulated)
- A "no-fault" exercise
 - **Testing the procedures, not the people**
 - Ask questions, state where we are lacking
 - This is a safe environment



Rules and Expectations

- The facilitator will introduce each module and provide participants with scenario information in the order the events would occur.
- All information will be provided to participants.
- At the end of the module, the scenario will be suspended for questions and group discussion.
- Participants will respond to the situation presented based on their knowledge and their organization's plans and procedures.

Rules and Expectations

- Participants may communicate with other individuals and groups in attendance to obtain information they need.
- This is a training event.
- Many issues that come up may not be able to be solved within the scope of this exercise.
 - Parking lot

Assumptions

- Artificialities may occur as the result of the format of the tabletop exercise (try not to fight the scenario).

StartEx: Module One



Module One: Immediate Response

Tuesday, August 12th

- Record high temperatures have been impacting MA since May and the state is experiencing an extreme drought.
- Today marks the 4th day of a heat wave.
- Reservoirs are down 20-30% of their normal levels. Your town's reservoirs are operating with 25% less water.

6:00am

- Today's forecast shows the potential for thunderstorms and tornado activity.

9:00am

- The National Weather Service (NWS) issues a severe thunderstorm warning for 10am.
- At 10:30am, a severe storm cell is located near your town's Water Treatment Plant (WTP) and the NWS issues a tornado warning due to rotation on the radar, causing the personnel at the WTP to shelter-in-place.

10:45am

- The tornado warning is canceled and WTP personnel go outside to assess damage.
- Sensors alarm due to the low water level at the water intake infrastructure and WTP personnel shut down the intake.

12:30pm

- Upon further assessing the damage, WTP personnel find that the intake has been damaged and recommends a 25% reduction of water usage throughout the town.

Module One: Immediate Response

Key Issues/Questions

- Large Group Discussion
 1. What are your initial concerns/priorities upon receiving this information?
 2. How will the City/town educate the public about this situation? What instructions will be given to reduce water usage?
 3. Who do you need to coordinate with within your agency/organization? What external partners do you need to coordinate with throughout the City/town? How will you do this?

Module One: Immediate Response

Key Issues/Questions

- Table Discussion

1. What have you done as an agency/organization to prepare for this type of situation to care for your community?
2. How will you alert your community about this situation? Do you need to alert your community about this incident yet? How will you coordinate alerting and public information?
3. What existing plans would you put into place to manage this situation within your agency/organization? What plans do you need?
4. What resources do you have/need to address the water shortage? What resources can you share?

Module Two



Module Two: Long-Term Coordination

Wednesday, August 13th

■ **8:00am**

- Your Water Department has determined that a complete repair can be performed on the damaged infrastructure by the morning of Friday, August 15th.
- MWRA is unable to supply backup water so the town/citywide reduction in water usage by 25% must continue until Friday.

■ **12:00pm**

- The public is panicking about the reduced water supply throughout the City/town and bottled water is becoming scarce at local retailers and grocery stores.

■ **3:00pm**

- Boston area media outlets have received news about the water shortage and are seeking additional information. News vans are stationed throughout the City/town.

Module Two: Long-Term Coordination

Key Issues/Questions

- Table Discussion
 1. What additional resources do you have/need to address the ongoing incident? How are any shared resources managed?
 2. From your organization's perspective, have your concerns/priorities changed? What are your new objectives and how do you pivot?
 3. Which external resources are you continuing to rely upon? With resource shortages occurring in the area, how are you prioritizing resource requests?
 4. Based on the discussions so far, what problem areas/challenges can you identify? What best practices could be used in the future? What plans are needed to make response more efficient in future incidents?

Hot Wash

- What went well?
- What did not go well?



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Learn More: <https://www.mma.org/members/massachusetts-municipal-communicators/>