Communicating During A Crisis:
Expect the Unexpected
Presentation

- Crisis Communications Overview
- Case Studies
- Q&A and Discussion
What is a Crisis?

• Doesn’t have to be your entire city burning to the ground or being demolished in an earthquake
• Can me anything that causes stress/strike for the residents
• Issues can be viewed as a crisis by the community even if they are not a big deal for your agency
• The tips you use when approaching everyday issues/crisis can be used on larger-scale events

*Great operations response but bad communications does not equal project success*
Why Communicate?

• Compelling communications allows you to tell your City’s story

• Fosters relationships and goodwill amongst your stakeholders

• Builds trust, satisfaction and value with your community

Your City’s communications pros are here to help you
Why Communicate During a Crisis?

- Manage your City’s reputation
- Honesty, transparency and speed are key
- Nanosecond news cycle

*How you communicate (or don’t) during the crisis can have a longer lasting impact than the actual event that triggered the crisis.*
Social Media During a Crisis

• Monitor social media for emerging issues

• Another outlet for people to attack your City

*Twitter is the new Associated Press*
*– Dave Samson, GM of Public Affairs, Chevron*
Practice Makes Perfect

• Update your City’s Crisis Communications Plan

• Host and attend regular EOC trainings

• Get to know each other before a crisis
What Crisis?
Paving work on El Camino Real today. Please use alternate routes and plan for delays.
Traffic is backed up for miles! How come nobody told us about this?

My kids are now late for school. Who thought it was a good idea to do road work first thing in the morning?

Hey it’s Annie from the City Manager’s office. We are getting a lot of calls about traffic on El Camino Real. What’s going on?

I have been waiting in this mess for nearly an hour!!! These idiots are ruining my day. Worst management ever!!
Hey, it’s Matt from Inspections. The traffic control doesn’t match the plans. We are going to shut down the operation.

Is there any way to get around this mess on El Camino? Why is there no detour?

Annie again...the Mayor is seeing posts on NextDoor about the traffic. He’s asking for speaking points...help??

It looks like the traffic signal is flashing but I don’t see any fire trucks or anything....WTH? Who can I call about this?
Mayor: Working on finding out what the holdup is on El Camino Real and who is responsible. Stay tuned...

This is Don from water ops. We are on our way to a call on ECR but stuck in traffic, something we don’t know?

NBC7: Accident on El Camino Real leads to road shutdown, avoid the area
WELL

THAT ESCALATED QUICKLY
City of San Marcos Crisis Case Studies
When Crisis Strikes...flashback to May 2014 Firestorms

Photo Credit: Allen J. Schaben, Los Angeles Times
The Lessons Learned

What Matters:

● Planning & Training
● Social Media
● Relationships
● Being Your Own News Source
● Don’t Let a Good Crisis Go to Waste
Training Matters

Planning  Housing  Library

HR  Finance  Arts  Fire  Contractors  Volunteers
Social Media Matters

City of San Marcos @sanmarcostc • May 18

#CocosFire Link for interactive map detailing semi repopulation of evacuated areas in San Marcos bit.ly/1mWol89 @CAL_FIRE @211SD

City of San Marcos @sanmarcostc • May 18

#CocosFire PARTIAL RE-POPULATION OF EVACUATED SAN MARCOS AREAS- See link for static map bit.ly/S0VpxP. @CAL_FIRE @ReadySanDiego

City of San Marcos @sanmarcostc • May 18

ALL EVACUATIONS AND ROAD CLOSURES HAVE BEEN LIFTED. #CocosFire

City of San Marcos @sanmarcostc • May 18

ALL EVACUATION AREAS AND ROAD CLOSURES LIFTED-EFFECTIVE AT 11 AM. #CocosFire

City of San Marcos @sanmarcostc • May 18

THANK YOU to the community and businesses who donated time and resources during the #CocosFire

City of San Marcos @sanmarcostc • May 18

Evacuation orders lifted for all areas affected by the Cocos fire EXCEPT the Coronado Hills Community bit.ly/1mWol89
# Social Media Matters

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<th>Pre-Cocos Fire</th>
<th>Post Cocos Fire</th>
<th>Total % Increase</th>
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<td>E-Alerts</td>
<td>2,076</td>
<td>2,576</td>
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<td></td>
<td>33</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>64</td>
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Post-fire data represents stats after a 92-hour period.
Relationships Matter

Photo Credit: Allen J. Schaben, Los Angeles Times
Winter is coming...

Fire-charred trails to reopen in San Marcos
Being your own news source
Don’t let a good crisis go to waste
Flash forward to 2018

Photo Credit: Allen J. Schaben, Los Angeles Times
Water main break goes social

Road repairs continue on San Marcos Blvd. at Rancho Santa Fe Rd. Expect major delays Avoid the area Drive safe

Road repairs continue on San Marcos Blvd. at Rancho Santa Fe Rd. Expect major delays Avoid the area Drive safe

Views of today's work taking place at the intersection of San Marcos Boulevard and Rancho Santa Fe Road

www.san-marcos.net/roadwork (Link in bio)

San Marcos, California

Info: www.san-marcos.net/roadwork
Looking to the future

Photo Credit: Allen J. Schaben, Los Angeles Times
Wheel of Disaster
Q&A AND DISCUSSION
COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH PLANNING WORKSHEET

PROJECT TITLE:

DESCRIPTION What is happening? Why is it happening? What are the benefits?

AUDIENCES Who cares about this project? Why do they care? How will they be affected by the project?

SCHEDULE
When will the public first hear about this project?

Construction Start Date

Anticipated construction completion date

Project milestones

Construction hours

Will there be night or weekend work? Under what circumstances?

How frequently will communications occur?

CHALLENGES / RISKS What could get in the way of achieving the goal(s)? What is outside of our control? How does this impact the communications strategy?
**GOALS** What is the purpose of communicating? What is the desired outcome? What actions do we want people to take? How will success be measured?

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**KEY MESSAGES** What do we want people to know about this project?

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**STRATEGIES** How will we approach our goals? What are the most effective, efficient methods?

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**TACTICS** What tools are available to implement the strategy? In what ways do the audiences prefer to receive communication? What format(s) most effectively convey the information?
COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH PLANNING WORKSHEET

KEY CONTACTS
Who must authorize this communications plan?
Who will be the primary source of information about the projects?
Who is in charge of field operations?
Who will be the public spokesperson for the project?
Who will the public think to contact first?
Who else needs to know about this plan?
Who needs to be copied on information shared with the public?

RESOURCES AVAILABLE
Available budget and funding source for communications
Internal staff
Interdepartmental support
Interagency support
Consultants
Other

EMERGENCY PLANS
What types of emergencies are most likely to occur?
How will you be notified in an emergency?
Who can you contact after-hours?
What additional resources are available to you?
What are the most important piece of information to communicate? Who will receive the messages, and how?
Emergency Incident Communications Check List

Gather Information
- Incident lead check in /briefing
- City role in incident?
- Scope and timeline

Initial Communications
- Post key messages
- Begin holding statements
- Out of office messages on work voicemail and email with where to get incident information (website and PIO cell)
- Citywide staff email
- Decide on public hotline or other regional information resource

Secure Resources
- Get map
- ID Available spokespeople (chiefs, elected)
- Call resources/contractors/staff
- Assign field PIO if needed
- Find IT support
- Call families/coordinate care

Electronic communications / social media
- Incident name/hashtag
- Log into city website, post emergency banner
- Unschedule social media posts
- Monitor social media for comments
- Email city email lists with info

News outlets
- Email media with contact info
- ID media holding area
- Plan first news conference

Inter-agency Coordination
- Get other agencies PIOs contact
- Reverse 9-1-1 Message
- Make contact with community leaders
- Utilize regional information center hotlines, online resources
Standard Statements

Responding/No Info to Share
We are currently responding to reports of an incident/fire/collision/hazardous materials release/active shooter/slope failure/etc. in the area of _____________. More info to come. #carlsbad

Please stay out of this area until more information is available.

Will post verified information as it becomes available.

Check City of Carlsbad website and social media for updates.

Verifying incident details. Follow for updates.

First responders are on the scene. More details to come.

No additional information has been verified at this time. More details coming

No information yet on injuries and property damage.

We have activated the city’s Emergency Operations Center.

We have called in all available resources to assist.

Remain calm and monitor the news, the city’s website and official government social media accounts.

General Welfare

The safety of the public is our first priority.

We have activated the city’s Emergency Operations Center and will be staffing it around the clock through the duration of this incident.

We have trained to respond to incidents like this.

We have called in additional staff and resources.

City leadership is fully engaged and coordinating with county, state and federal authorities.

Preparation/What You Can Do Now
Text, don’t call. Keep phone lines free.

Post to social media to let your families know you are okay.

Please check on neighbors and loved ones and share information as it becomes available

Make sure your car has a full gas tank/charged battery

Walk around your home and make a note of things you would take in case you need to evacuate. Take photos or video for insurance claims, just in case

Pack a bag like you are going on a trip – change of clothes, toiletries, medications, mementos you can’t replace

Bring your child’s favorite toy, book or something else that provides comfort.

Things not to forget when preparing to evacuate (if there is time):
Originals of important paperwork
Photos not backed up
Computer hard drive if not backed up
Mementos that can’t be replaced
Medications, eyeglasses
Change of clothes
Comfort items for kid

Shelters usually have food, water, toiletries, pet food, blankets. Don’t need to take those things

If you have pets, bring a leash, carrier/crate, food, medication and a favorite toy

**Evacuation/Shelter in Place**

We are asking the public to shelter in place (which means stay where you are) and wait for updates.

If you are in a mandatory evacuation area, remain calm and leave now

If you are in a voluntary evacuation area, make a list of what to take if you need to evacuate. Start gathering those items.

Stay out of the affected area.

Stay off the roads.
**Donations/How to Help**

The best way to help victims is to donate money to an established non profit, like the Red Cross.

Businesses can contact Ready Carlsbad at ______.

We currently have all the food, water and supplies we can handle. If you want to help, check on friends and neighbors. See if they need any supplies or other assistance.

http://www.sdcountyemergency.com/donations/

San Diego Foundation, www.sdfoundation.org or send text to 50155, reference “SD Recover”

Visit San Diego Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster website www.sdvoad.org for list of items needed

Volunteer with 2-1-1 San Diego call center, https://www.handsonsandiego.org/211sandiego
Info Gathering Check List

- WHO is affected?
  - Schools, churches, assisted living, special needs?
- WHEN did events occur?
- Any maps available?
- WHAT is the location of the affected area?
- What is being done now?
- Injuries, fatalities?
- What will be done next?
- Road closures?
- When will we have more info?
- Property threatened/damaged?
- How is the public affected?
- Evacuations?
- What has happened in last half hour?
- Temporary evacuation point?
- Can this be released to the public?
- Shelters? Where? Services (pets, etc.)
- City services/facilities/programs affected?
- Who is assisting (other jurisdictions, etc.)
- Warnings/instructions for public?