



**Emergency
Network
Los Angeles**

Voluntary Organizations
Active in Disaster
for LA County

COMMUNICATION & COORDINATION IN DISASTERS

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Objective

- Equip VOAD members with the knowledge and skills to communicate effectively and coordinate during disaster scenarios, ensuring seamless collaboration across organizations and agencies.
- Why communication matters
 - Clear, effective communication can save lives and improve resource allocation during crises.
- Key challenges
 - Typical barriers to communication in disasters, such as power outages, misinformation, and lack of coordination among multiple agencies.

Effective Communication Strategies

- Message Clarity
- Consistency Across Channels
- Communication Tools
- Two-Way Communication

Incident Command System (ICS) Overview

- **What is ICS?**

- A standardized, flexible framework for managing emergencies

- **Roles and Responsibilities**

- Incident Commander: Overall leader
 - Public Information Officer: Handles communication with the media and public
 - Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance Sections: Coordinate specific aspects of the response

- **VOAD Role**

- Supporting ICS structure by aligning organizational efforts with ICS principles

How Does VOAD Work Within ICS?

- Integration into the ICS Structure
- Coordination Through the Planning Section
- Supporting Operations
- Logistical Support
- Advocacy and Community Engagement
- Demobilization and Recovery

National Incident Management System (NIMS) Basics

- **What is NIMS?**
 - A nationwide approach to enable organizations to work together during disasters
- **Key Components Relevant to VOAD**
 - Unified Command: Multiple organizations work together effectively
 - Resource Management: Sharing and deploying resources across jurisdictions
 - Communication and Information Management: Consistent terminology and interoperability
- **Importance for VOAD**
 - Ensures alignment with government agencies and smooth resource allocation

Communication Hubs: Centralized vs. Decentralized

■ **Centralized Communication**

- A single point of contact (e.g., Emergency Operations Center or EOC)
- Advantages: Reduces confusion, ensures consistent messaging

■ **Decentralized Communication**

- Multiple hubs or direct communication between field teams
- Advantages: Faster decision-making and flexibility in dynamic situations

■ **VOAD's Role**

- Balance both approaches by relaying accurate information while empowering field teams to communicate directly when needed

Lunch 'n Learn Activity:

- Tabletop Exercise:
- Communications Breakdown

Scenario

- A wildfire breaks out in the hills near our community.
- The fire is spreading quickly due to strong winds.
- Multiple agencies are responding.
- Your organization is part of the VOAD response.
- You face communication challenges as events unfold.

Exercise Timeline (1)

- Internal Coordination

- *Staff spread across sites, phones/texts unreliable*
- *How do you share updates? Who issues them?*

Exercise Timeline (2)

■ Partner Communication

- *County EOC requests a situation report in 30 mins*
- *What do you send with partial info?*

Exercise Timeline (3)

■ Public/Media Communication

- *Reporter calls, rumor spreading online about shelters*
- *What's your message? How do you counter misinformation?*

Wrap-up Discussion

- What worked well in your communication process?
- Where did you see gaps?
- What improvements should you make to your communication plan?
- What improvements should we make to ENLA's communication plan?

Thank You!

Questions or comments?

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