

THE HRSP ON ALL-HAZARD ASSIGNMENTS

12/05

Why HRSP's are needed on All-Hazard Assignments:

All hazard assignments present the IMT with human resource issues expected on large incidents. Many of the "normal" human resource issues are more challenging to resolve due to the intense and unique conditions associated with the incident.

Just as in fire assignments, the HRSP's role remains the same. Although the IMT's mission and assigned workforce may be different, the HRSP provides education, prevention and early resolution of human resource-related problems.

The Role of the HRSP on All-Hazard Assignment:

- The HRSP provides direct support to the IMT and to those under the jurisdiction of the IC. Personnel of other agencies, organizations, and contractors usually fall under their own jurisdiction and rules of conduct. Their rules of conduct and expectations of behavior may differ. The HRSP should address concerns about inappropriate behavior of other personnel through proper channels including coordination with the IC.
- Emphasis needs to be placed on delivering the Mutual Respect message, standards of conduct and appropriate behavior expectations due to the variety of assigned personnel.
- HRSP's may be asked to assist in functions outside their normal duties and that are within their capabilities.
- HRSP's can assist in resolving conflicts between IMT personnel and those of other agencies and organizations.
- Emphasis should be placed on liaison role with EAP's or CISM providers due to fatalities, catastrophic damages, etc.

Key Pointers for HRSP's on All-Hazard Assignments:

- HRSP's need to be very flexible.
- HRSP's should meet with the IC to clarify expectations for the HRSP, especially in regard to relations with other agencies and organizations. Discussion may include a strategy to encourage all agencies and organizations to adopt, publicize and promote appropriate behavior standards.

- HRSP's should become generally familiar with the mission, function, and personnel of the agencies, organizations, and contractors being supported by the IMT, as well as aware of any unique human resource-related rules and policies.
- HRSP's should assess and recommend, when appropriate, that the IMT order qualified resources to perform necessary stress management services, including CISD and grief counseling, for incident personnel. The HRSP also may recommend to heads of the other entities that they consider obtaining similar services for their personnel.
- HRSP's assigned to all-hazard incidents occasionally have been asked to perform duties outside the traditional role, such as grief counseling of evacuees. Based on the title of the HRSP position, there may be an erroneous assumption by some incident personnel that the HRSP is qualified to serve as a mental health professional. However, until qualified professional services are in place, the HRSP can serve as a good listener and/or provide a CISM defusing.
- The nature and location of recent all-hazard assignments exposed many incident personnel to conditions much more extreme than they usually encounter on a typical fire assignment. Conditions may include:
 - Extremely uncomfortable living conditions and lack of amenities that personnel are accustomed to on fire assignments. This affects the moods and attitudes of incident personnel which may result in shorter tempers and the potential for more interpersonal conflicts.
 - Exposure to local cultures that vary significantly from what most incident personnel are accustomed to.
 - Exposure to situations involving the seriously injured or sick, extremely distraught people, and in some cases human corpses. It is important that HRSP's be observant of the emotional health of incident personnel. As stated above, it is also important that requests are made for appropriate mental health professionals.
- An HRSP may be assigned to Area Command and would be available to provide additional assistance to field HRSP's and IMT's.