**INCIDENT-WITHIN-AN-INCIDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

After a fatality: Restrict media access until bodies have been removed and all families notified. Then provide media a tour date and time and escort them to the scene.

Lead PIO

* Contact AA or IC for initial briefing
* Contact Agency PAO
* Contact NIFC External Affairs
* Contact Fire Desk in WASO
* Designate Internal, Media & Community PIOs
* Assign PIOs to Hospital (if injuries)
* Assign PIO to survivor group
* Place order for additional PIO staff.
* Set up notification process to ensure all PIOs / PAOs are notified when talking points are updated.
* Develop talking points for approval
* Obtain authorization for all info release
* Interface with / distribute approved talking points to:
	+ IC / C&G / Liaison Officer
	+ Agency Administrator
	+ Agency PAO - request they contact:
		- Regional / national public affairs
		- Agency frontliners – dispatchers, receptionists, etc.
		- Agency FOIA Coordinator
	+ Incident PIOs
	+ Elected Officials
	+ Partner agency PAOs / PIOs
		- Sheriff’s Department
		- EOC
		- JIC
		- MAC / Area Command
		- FAA / NTSB
		- FAST / SAIT
		- CISM
* Ensure PIOs take frequent short breaks
* Brief PIOs with incoming teams
* Prepare transition plan which incorporates follow-up including:
	+ - Continuing impacts, staff rides, visitors, traffic, media, production companies, etc.
		- Need for follow-up committee
		- Requests for dedication memorials (plaques and statues)
		- Plan for facilitating return visits to the incident site by family members/survivors/visitors
		- Evaluate public information activities / adjust communication plan as appropriate
		- Provide updates to family members

**Internal Lead**

* Chase down rumors
* Interface with operations for updates
* Update employees through emails, calls, info board
* Provide avenue for responders/employees to write notes to family
* Prepare for incoming teams / VIPs
* Prepare briefing packets
* Designate liaisons/escorts
* Arrange for transportation
* Help coordinate press conferences
* Keep key personnel informed
* Provide regular updates and contact with all internal / family PIOs

**Normal Fire PIOs**

- Continue to provide fire info operations

**PIO to work with Family Liaison**:

* Update family before info released to media
* Ask family if they want to talk to the media
* Contact home unit PIOs to help coordinate media contacts with families back at home
* Protect the rights of those who do not want media contact
* Prepare condolence letters within 24 hours (coordinate at all levels in the agency)
* Arrange escorts for families, etc.

**Community Lead**

* Post approved talking points in information center (to be updated with approved messages only)
* oversee information center operations
* provide regular updates and contact with all office / community PIOs
* Determine if community meeting is warranted & plan

**Community PIOs**

* Update / staff community
* Provide support to hospital if needed

**Office PIOs**

* Staff info center phones
* Update website with approved info
* Periodically check e-mail and monitor blogs
* Prepare thank-yous and commendations
* Tasks for volunteers – herding, faxing, etc.?
* Maintain documentation file

**Field PIOs**

* Intercept looky-loos and reporters on scene, in camp, at hospital, helibase, etc.
* Provide media/ VIP escorts
* Coordinate media access to accident site, overflights, memorial services, etc.

**Media Lead**

* Identify / serve as primary spokesperson
* Provide regular updates & contact with all field / media PIOs

**Media PIOs**

* Contact reporters via phone / return calls as soon as releasable info available / updated
* Prepare news release(s) for approval
* Distribute approved news release
* Prepare photos/bios of victims
* Arrange press conferences
* Designate “media-free” space for incident personnel.
* Designate media briefing area.
* Consider media needs – phones, work areas, parking, deadlines, PPE, photo opportunities, interviews, etc.
* Need for pool photographer?
* Publicize info phone / website
* Incorporate key messages
* Monitor media coverage

**INCIDENT-WITHIN-AN-INCIDENT QUESTIONS TO ASK**

**Discuss with Incident Commander / AA**

* Who will handle info release – Incident or Home Unit?
* Who will approve info release– IC or AA?
* What other agencies will be releasing information (Sheriff, Contractors, etc.)?
* Who will speak for the incident if there is an immediate press conference?
* What information is confirmed?
* What information is NOT releasable?
* If names are being withheld, who will know once family has been notified and tell IC/PIOs?
* When the IC decides to release the names, how will information find out?
* How will families / home units / other people most directly affected be provided with critical information?
* How will incident personnel be notified?
* How will agency personnel be notified (Safety Manager, Personnel Officer, PAO, LE Staff, Aviation Mgmt, Solicitor, Tort Claims Officer, etc)
* How will national personnel be notified (agency director, agency administrators, OIG, etc.)?
* Who will contact WFF Foundation?
* How will cooperator personnel be notified?
* How will fire home unit personnel be notified?
* What is response for people who want to help?

**Discuss with Agency PAO**

* Does host agency have qualified PIOs?
* Can any nearby incidents loan staff?
* Bring PAO on site with PIOs?
* Need to establish JIC?
* Need to establish 800 number?
* Can incident assist cooperators in need of phones, press conference location, etc.?

**Discuss with C&G Staff**

* Will incident personnel be authorized to make one short call home using the incident’s cell or stationary phones?
* Are technical experts (safety, aviation, fire behavior, etc.) available and prepared for media interviews?

**Discuss with Operations**

* Media access, including overflights?
* Potential for press to block access / how to manage?
* How and when will PIO receive updates?
* Designate an operations liaison to be available to resolve questions of fact.

**Discuss with Plans**

* Do any personnel assigned to incident have PIO quals?
* Need for maps / graphics?

**Discuss with Logistics**

* Additional logistics needs for info function – radios, etc?
* Need to establish media briefing area?
* Need to establish media-free areas for incident personnel?

**INCIDENT-WITHIN-AN-INCIDENT - FIRST MESSAGE**

1. Expression of empathy
2. Clarifying facts
3. What we don’t know
4. Process to get answers
5. Statement of commitment
6. Referrals

* Provide information to victim/family first.
* State only facts. Do NOT speculate.
* Confirm the obvious.
* Document all individual actions on unit log.
* Restrict radio communications. Share info via phone or face-to-face.

*We are aware that an [accident/incident]\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ involving [type of incident]\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ occurred at approximately [time]\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, in the vicinity of [general location]\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. [Agency personnel]\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ are responding, and we will have additional information available as we are able to confirm it. We will hold a briefing at [location]\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and will notify the press at least [time, ie. ½ hour]\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ prior to the briefing. At this time, this briefing is the only place where officials authorized to speak about the incident and confirmed information will be available. Thank you for your assistance.*

Check message for:

* Positive action steps
* Honest / open tone
* “We” not “I”
* Be careful with early promises
* Avoid jargon
* Avoid judgmental phrases
* Avoid humor
* Avoid extreme speculation

**RELEASABLE INFORMATION**

* How many people involved / number of injuries / number of fatalities
* What happened
* When
* Where
* Response Actions

**Do NOT Release without Agency Administrator permission:**

* Names of Fatality Victims, including juveniles (only after next of kin are notified)
* Names of Injured or Missing Victims
* Names, ages, and hometowns of the individuals involved in the incident.
* Crew names or designators or other identifying info
* Description of lost, stolen, or missing property.
* Criminal charges if applicable.

**Do NOT Release:**

* Home Address, Phone, or Social Security Number
* Names of Juveniles Charges with Criminal Offenses
* Names of Victims of Sexual Assault
* Names of people or witnesses who may become victims of crime or retaliation in the future
* Information on incidents where criminal action is still under investigation and information released could hinder or adversely affect the investigation.
* Investigative information beyond general incident reporting
* Explicit details, including graphic photos or images of extreme injuries or brutal fatalities.

**INCIDENT-WITHIN-AN-INCIDENT - FIRST MESSAGE**

**Expression of empathy**

* This is an evolving emergency and I know that – just like we do – you want as much information as possible right now. I wish I could answer all of your questions here. While we work to get your questions answered as quickly as possible, I want to tell you what we can confirm right now.
* Our \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (hearts / deepest condolences) go out to the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(firefighter’s last name) family and friends during this very tragic time.
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(firefighter’s name) is a member of our \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(agency) ‘family,’ and will be deeply missed.
* He/she took on a difficult job, and served our nation well, in the finest tradition of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (agency). His/her through his/her dedication, courage, and spirit – will live on in the hearts and minds of all of us.
* Our thoughts and prayers are with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ firefighter’s name) family, friends, and co-workers.

**Clarifying facts** (VERIFIED facts only, skip if not certain)

* On \_\_\_\_(date) firefighter \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (name), an \_\_\_\_\_\_\_(age)-year-old \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(agency) firefighter based out of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (home unit) in \_\_\_(state) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(describe situation - received multiple injuries yesterday, was killed while \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (clearing trees, etc.) while working on the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (fire name) fire on the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(unit name) in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(state).
* We are extremely relieved that no one was apparently injured in this incident
* The crew has been taken off the fire pending investigation into the incident.
* It is with great sadness that we confirm the names of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(agency) firefighters who tragically lost their lives while in the line of duty \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(when).

**What we don’t know**

* At this point, we do not know \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (# of injuries, # of deaths, cause of accident, etc.)
* All of our efforts are directed at bringing the situation under control, so I’m not going to speculate about the cause of the incident.

**Process to get answers**

* We have a system (plan, procedure, operation) in place for emergencies such as this and we are being assisted by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_(Sheriff’s Dept. etc.) as part of that plan.
* We’ve just learned about the situation and are trying to get more complete information now.
* The accident investigation is ongoing.
* \_\_\_\_(park mangers, etc.) are working with \_\_\_\_\_ (Sheriff’s Dept, etc.) to ensure site safety and integrity.
* The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (DOI’s Aviation Management Directorate, etc.) will participate in the crash investigation, which is being coordinated with the \_\_\_\_ (National Transportation Safety Board, Federal Aviation Administration, etc.).
* An interagency (DOI, Contractor, FAA, Serious Accident Investigation Team, etc) investigation team is scheduled to arrive in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_(location) \_\_\_\_\_\_(when) to conduct a review of the incident.

**Statement of commitment**

* The situation is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (under, not yet under) control and we are working with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_(local, state, federal) authorities to (contain this situation, determine \_\_\_\_\_ (how this happened, determine what actions may be needed by individuals and the community to prevent this from happening again.)
* Whenever injuries such as these occur during firefighting operations, a top priority is to learn everything we can about them so we can work to prevent similar incidents from happening again.
* People are our most valuable resource and we remain committed to the safety of our firefighters. We cannot forget that there are still \_\_\_\_\_(number) firefighters continuing to work to suppress fires here in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_(location). We’ve made great progress but much remains to be done.
* Our interagency fire teams develop strategies for fighting a fire. Fire managers continue to consider fire behavior, weather forecasts, terrain, accessibility and proximity to communities when considering fire suppression strategies.
* We must consider firefighter safety in all of our tactical decisions. Firefighter and public safety will remain our number one concern.
* As a precaution, all \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(aviation, etc.) operations on the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (home unit, etc.) are discontinued until further notice.

**Referrals (if possible, skip if not yet ready)**

* We will continue to gather information and release it to you as soon as possible. I will be back to you within \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (amount of time, 2 hours or less), to give you an update. As soon as we have more confirmed information, it will be provided. We ask for your patience as we respond to this emergency. For more information…
* The name will be released by the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Sheriff’s Department pending notification of family members.
* Next scheduled update…
* Calls on this incident will be taken starting at 0800 tomorrow morning (date) at the following numbers: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* How can I reach you when I have more information?
* I’m not the authority on this subject. Let me have \_\_\_ (name) call you right back.
* We’re preparing a statement on that now. Can I fax it to you in about two hours?
* You may check our web site for background information and I will fax/e-mail you with the time of our next update.
* Photographs will be made available as soon as possible at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* A fund will be established by the Wildland Firefighter Foundation in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (firefighter’s name) name. The foundation is online at <http://wffoundation.org/> and can be contacted by calling 877-336-2950.

**INCIDENT-WITHIN-AN-INCIDENT FACTS**

**BOLD CAPS = RELEASABLE INFO /** *All other info DO NOT RELEASE without AA approval.*

**Initial Report By: To Whom: Date/Time:**

**# Personnel Involved: ` # Vehicles: # Injuries:**

**# Fatalities: # OK:**

**What were they doing at the time:**

**Response Resources: Response Time:**

**Response Actions:**

**Fire Name: IMT/IC:**

**Home Unit: Location/State:**

**Cause: Start Date:**

**# Personnel: Fuels:**

**Terrain: Weather:**

*Name:* *Age:* *Fireline Position:*

**Transport: Hospital: Location:**

**Injuries:**  *Treatment: Cause of Death:*

*Affiliation: # Members: Location:*

*Home Unit: Agency: State:*

*Hometown: Yrs in Fire:*

**Equipment Type:**  *Name: Make/Model:*

*Damage:*

*Driver/Pilot:* **Total # Onboard:**

*Names Onboard:*

*Description of lost, stolen, or missing property:*

*Criminal charges:*