

Checklist for PAO or PIO Duties

Fillable Version 2024

Incident Name

Purpose

It is inevitable that at some point, a unit of the NPS will have a large-scale emergency or disaster. Fortunately, these incidents occur infrequently for most, and even fewer require an outside National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) qualified public information officer (PIO) to provide aid. Yet, when a PIO arrives during the critical beginning of an incident, it's important to have a clear delineation of duties and work that will be done by both the unit and the PIO so not to duplicate efforts and keep the incident and the park on message.

Note:

PAO = public affairs officer: They represent the home unit and focus on branding and long-term strategy for the unit. It's a position, either full-time or collateral duty.

PIO = public information officer: They represent the incident and focus on the messaging for the incident. It's a qualification, regardless of what the person(s) day job is.

Need

Going through a checklist, like this one, better manages workload and expectations, promotes understanding, and removes many human emotional barriers during a time of crisis. This ultimately aids in the dissemination of timely and accurate information.

Considerations – *Suggestion: check off the boxes and fill in blanks as you go to help with communication planning*

Who will be the Lead PIO's primary point of contact?

For whom do the qualified incident PIOs work (PAO, FMO, park-assigned IC, etc.)?

If that person is not available, then who are the next two?

- *PIOs assigned to an incident don't have days off, so there should be a contact available fairly quickly 7-days a week.*

Who will greet the lead PIO and provide a briefing about the unit?

Provide copies of Unigrd and / or area maps, any keys / access tools, local issues/concerns.

Does your unit have a pre-drafted Delegation of Authority letter? Yes No

Does it cover PIO duties? Yes No

If so, who will be providing a copy to the Lead PIO?

Will they be writing or drafting news releases? Yes No

Whom do they need to contact for approval? IC PAO Superintendent Other

Who is next in line if that person is not available? IC PAO Superintendent Other

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What is the turn-around time for a response to the PIO?

Is there a deadline where the team will publish the release without park PAO/Superintendent approval? Yes No If yes, what time?

Is the PIO going to be sending out news release or is someone from unit doing that?
PIO Other If "Other," whom?

- *If not the PIO, is there a plan for 7-day coverage?* Yes No

Is there an external outreach system like Adobe Campaign, etc.? Yes No

Are there templates for news releases and statements?

Is there a local style guide? Yes No

If it's an interagency incident, is there a pre-approved template? Yes No

Are there agency, partner, and other logos to be used? Yes No

Who will provide those?

Do you have contact lists to share? Yes No

Are they comprehensive, understandable, and well organized? Yes No

Local phone list? Yes No

E-mail list? Yes No

Shared / group e-mail for news release distribution? Yes No

Pre-determined media contacts? Yes No

What is the process for the park adding additional names to that distribution list?

Is there a desire to have a community meeting? Yes No

Are there predesignated or established venues? Yes No N/A

Who will contact these areas?

Are there predetermined unit representatives desired to be there? Yes No N/A

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Is the PIO going to post to your unit's digital platforms? Yes No

Who do they need to contact for approval? IC PAO Superintendent Other

InciWeb access? Yes No

Social media or CMS? Yes No

Who are the contacts and backup contacts in park/region who will provide access?

Will unit-specific communications materials be available? Yes No

Unit communication strategies/key messages? Yes No

Pre-approved general talking points / current fact sheet? Yes No

Are there predetermined subject matter experts that the unit has identified to speak at community meetings, news conferences, VIP / political visits? Yes No

If so, is there a list with contact info on it? Yes No N/A

Who makes the initial and follow-up contacts to them?

Is there PPE available for loan for the local / unit subject matter experts or media if needed?

Yes No N/A

If so, from whom / where do they get it?

Does the park/unit have a messaging plan for an Incident within an Incident (IWI)? Yes No

Is it different depending on the type of IWI? Yes No

Who will be the IWI contact for the PIO?

[Agency Administrator's Guide to Critical Incident Management?](#)

[Loss of Human Life Response Handbook?](#)

Does your unit have an Employee Alert System? Yes No

Will the PIO be using it to get info out? Yes No N/A

Will the PIO need to be added to it as a recipient? Yes No N/A

Who is the contact for the Employee Alert System?

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Is there additional local staff available either formal or collateral duty? to help or gain experience as an information officer? Yes No

Will those staff be assigned to the incident? Yes No N/A

Who will have control over their schedule and hours?

What are the expectations for the PIO when the incident decreases in complexity?

Does your unit have a pre-drafted transition plan for PIOs? Yes No

To whom does the PIO submit produced content? (such as pictures, videos, etc.)

Who will be at the transition plan meeting?

Is there anything else the incoming PIO should know?