

Multi-Agency Interaction



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Session Objective

The purpose of this session is to familiarize emergency management audience members with techniques for working with other agencies at an incident.

Session Outline

- From the Eyes of Other McLean County Public Safety Agencies
- Understanding Other McLean County Public Safety Organizational Structures
- Behavior and Etiquette Practices
- Confidentiality Practices



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From the Eyes of Other McLean County Public Safety Agencies

One of the best ways to understand someone else is to know what's driving them – from goals to responsibilities to past experiences. Understanding what other agencies aim to accomplish from a general perspective will provide insight into how they operate and make decisions.

A simple yet effective way to do this that's easily available to all of us is to understand an agency's mission statement.

Why is a mission statement important? Because it provides the overarching drivers for the agency's actions and response in a given situation.

To illustrate this point, consider this example:

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From the Eyes of Other McLean County Public Safety Agencies

During the Virginia Tech massacre, many questioned the Virginia Tech Police Department's response and decisions.

The purpose of the Virginia Tech campus police as stated in the university's Emergency Response Plan is as follows: **"The primary purpose of the VTPD is to support the academics through maintenance of a peaceful and orderly community and through provision of needed general and emergency services."**



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From the Eyes of Other McLean County Public Safety Agencies

As noted in the report's findings, **“Although some do not consider police department mission statements of much importance versus how they actually operate, the mission statement may affect their role by indicating priorities.”**

Recall that the mission statement placed emphasis on supporting academics by maintaining a peaceful and orderly community. The second piece of the statement stated that this is accomplished through provision of needed general and emergency services.

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From the Eyes of Other McLean County Public Safety Agencies

Think back to the incident. If you remember, the police did not immediately provide a campus-wide emergency warning after the first two murders in Ambler-Johnson Hall.

The consensus of the assessment panel was that the university had the police place greater emphasis around maintaining an academic environment than providing emergency and tactical response due to the department's mission statement wording.

The panel stated the following in its findings: **“The mission statement of campus police should give primacy to their law enforcement and crime prevention role. The lack of emphasis on safety as the first responsibility of the police department may create the wrong mindset, with the police yielding to academic considerations when it comes time to make decisions on, say, whether to send out an alert to the students that may disrupt classes.”**



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From the Eyes of Other McLean County Public Safety Agencies

What's the point in talking about mission statements for a multi-agency interaction course?

Regardless of the incident type, each agency representative will arrive on-scene with a pre-defined lens through which they'll be looking at their response. They will follow procedures established within their department that have been created based on the agency's mission statement.

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From the Eyes of Other McLean County Public Safety Agencies

Let's take a look at some of the mission statements for public safety agencies in the county. On a piece of paper, note the commonalities and differences in each statement.

Bloomington Police Department

The mission of the Bloomington Police Department is to work in partnership with the citizens of Bloomington to enforce the laws and enhance the quality of life in our community.

Normal Police Department

The Mission of the Normal Police Department is to promote excellence while providing effective police services and protection to all members of the community.

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From the Eyes of Other McLean County Public Safety Agencies

Illinois State University Police Department

The mission of the Illinois State University Police Department is to provide professional law enforcement service to the campus community. We strive to maintain peace and harmony, to protect life and property, to prevent crime, to apprehend criminals and to recover lost or stolen property.

McLean County Sheriff's Office

The McLean County Sheriff's Office is dedicated to the highest traditions of excellence in the practice and delivery of law enforcement and corrections.

Illinois State Police

The Illinois State Police will promote public safety with integrity, service, and pride to improve the quality of life for our citizens.



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From the Eyes of Other McLean County Public Safety Agencies

Discussion

What did you find all of these agencies have in common based on their mission statement?

Were there differences? If so, what were they? Any contradictions that could create difficulties between the agencies on-scene?

How do you think the members of these agencies will approach working at a scene to which they've been called?

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From the Eyes of Other McLean County Public Safety Agencies

Bloomington Fire Department

The mission of the Bloomington Fire Department is protecting life and property; minimizing the impacts of fire, medical emergencies, and other natural man-made disasters without subjecting our personnel to unreasonable risk.

Normal Fire Department

To provide for the safety and well being of the citizens and visitors of the Town of Normal through planning, education, fire prevention, fire suppression, rescue and emergency medical service.



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From the Eyes of Other McLean County Public Safety Agencies

Discussion

What do you feel these two agencies have in common based on their mission statement?

Were there differences? If so, what were they? Any contradictions that could create difficulties between the agencies on-scene?

How do you think the members of these agencies will approach working at a scene to which they've been called?

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From the Eyes of Other McLean County Public Safety Agencies

McLean County Health Department

The purpose of the McLean County Health Department is to fulfill the public interest in assuring conditions conducive to good health and providing leadership in promoting and protecting the health of county residents.

American Red Cross

The American Red Cross will provide relief to victims of disaster and help people prevent, prepare for, and respond to emergencies.

McLean County EMA

Our mission is preparing for and carrying out disaster response and recovery as may be necessary or proper to prevent, minimize, repair, and alleviate injury and damage resulting from disasters occurring by natural or man-made causes.



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From the Eyes of Other McLean County Public Safety Agencies

Discussion

Given the other agency mission statements you've just read, how does the McLean County EMA mission statement support those statements?

Are there any contradictions?

In terms of scope, which agency has the broadest focus in its mission statement?

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Understanding Other McLean County Public Safety Organizational Structures

Most public safety organizations operate using a para-military model. Just as is the case with the Operations Team, there is a unified chain of command with delegation of authority. This model utilizes a formal rank structure to define the scope of responsibilities and supervisory expectations for agency staff members.

At an incident, it is important to recognize such structures and work within them, just as we work within our chain of command for the Operations Team.

The next slides will cover general organizational structures of police and fire departments in McLean County.

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Understanding Other McLean County Public Safety Organizational Structures

Police Departments

Departments in McLean County utilize a nearly-identical structure (with the exception of the Illinois State Police) to distinguish the chain of command.

Officer – entry-level position. This is sometimes referred to as Patrolman, Deputy, and Trooper depending on the agency. These individuals typically have no supervisory responsibilities.

Corporal – exists in only in the ISUPD. Designates assistant shift supervisor.

Sergeant – exists in all agencies. Generally recognized as a first-line supervisor (except for the ISP). These officers typically focus on work of a tactical nature and serve as the point of contact for Officers of the agency.

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Understanding Other McLean County Public Safety Organizational Structures

Police Departments

Master Sergeant – exists only in the ISP. Considered to be a first-line supervisory position with formal evaluation and salary administration responsibilities.

Lieutenant – exists in all agencies. Typically serves as the commander over a specific division. This is considered to be a second-line supervisor position as they have an increased scope of responsibility and supervisory powers. In districts in the Illinois State Police, the Lieutenant usually serves as the executive officer for the district headquarters under a Captain.

Captain – exists in ISUPD and ISP. In the ISUPD, the rank of Captain is a stepwise promotion from the rank of Lieutenant. Scope of responsibility is not necessarily increased at this level. In the ISP, Captains can serve as district commanders overseeing operations at a given Illinois State Police District. This is considered to be a third-line supervisor position.



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Understanding Other McLean County Public Safety Organizational Structures

Police Departments

Each rank is denoted using standard US Army rank insignia. The rank insignia are shown below.



Corporal



Sergeant



Master Sergeant



Lieutenant



Captain



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Understanding Other McLean County Public Safety Organizational Structures

Police Departments

Specialty positions exist in the Bloomington, Normal, and McLean County Sheriff's Office beyond the rank of Lieutenant.

In Bloomington and Normal, the position of Assistant Chief is used to direct bureaus such as Operations and Administration. In the McLean County Sheriff's Office, the Chief Deputy is the second-in-command for the department. All are distinguished by US Army Colonel's Eagles insignia as shown below.



Assistant Chief / Chief Deputy



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Understanding Other McLean County Public Safety Organizational Structures

Police Departments

A Police Chief / the Sheriff is the executive administrator of their agency. Chiefs / the Sheriff typically wear US Army General's Stars as their insignia. The number of stars can vary depending on the department.



Police Chief / Sheriff



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Understanding Other McLean County Public Safety Organizational Structures

Fire Departments

Departments in McLean County utilize a nearly-identical structure to distinguish the chain of command.

Firefighter – entry-level within the department. These individuals have no supervisory responsibility.

Engineer – experienced firefighter with detailed knowledge of equipment and vehicles. These individuals also have no supervisory responsibility.

Lieutenant – a first-line officer with supervisory responsibility over a defined team of firefighters / engineers.

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Understanding Other McLean County Public Safety Organizational Structures

Fire Departments

Captain – a second-line officer. Captains can have supervisory responsibility for stations, trucks, or larger teams of lower-ranking officers.

Assistant Chief – a first-line agency administrator. Assistant Chiefs in rural departments typically serve as a liaison between line officers and the Chief. In Bloomington, Assistant Chiefs serve as the shift commander. In Normal, the Assistant Chief is the second highest-ranking officer in the department. Assistant Chiefs often assume command of large-scale or complex events involving their departments.

Deputy Chief – a second-line agency administrator. Deputy Chiefs exist only within the Bloomington Fire department and are aligned over a division such as Operations or Administration.

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Understanding Other McLean County Public Safety Organizational Structures

Fire Departments

Chief – executive agency administrator. The Chief is responsible for the overall operation of the department and reports to either the City / Town Manager or a board of Fire Trustees.



Lieutenant



Captain



Assistant Chief



Deputy Chief



Chief



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Understanding Other McLean County Public Safety Organizational Structures

Fire Departments

About helmet colors...

Fire departments throughout the nation use helmet colors to designate the rank of the officer wearing the helmet. Unfortunately, there is no defined standard for what color should represent what rank. The positive side for this is that departments in McLean County appear to consistently implement helmet colors. The following colors typically identify each rank:

Firefighter – Black

Lieutenant – Yellow

Captain – Red

Assistant Chief / Deputy Chief / Chief – White



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Behavior and Etiquette Practices

Your behavior when working with other agencies is a direct reflection on the other members of the your agency, the Agency itself, the local government, and the Emergency Management discipline.

While many of the items below may seem to be common sense, it is important to formally acknowledge that this behavior will provide the best reflection individuals can create for the professionalism and skill of your agency.

- Refrain from swearing or using derogatory or inflammatory language.
- Display a professional demeanor and attitude at all times.
- Follow defined chains of command within your agency as well as outside the agency.
- Address all individuals, regardless of agency affiliation, unless otherwise directed, by title and last name (i.e. Lieutenant Siron, Chief Humer, Sergeant Trickett, Director Cannon).



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Behavior and Etiquette Practices

- Maintain a clean, professional appearance.
- If a member has a message, idea, or suggestion, ensure they utilize the appropriate chain of command.
- Display confidence in your skills, training, and work with team members and those from other agencies. Do not confuse confidence with arrogance.
- Do not display negative, combative, or sarcastic attitudes to any representative of another agency, even if that individual or group is doing so to you or in your presence.
- Recognize whenever possible, the key representatives from each agency.

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Behavior and Etiquette Practices

- Address all questions from the public, media, or non-involved parties to the appropriate information officer if you have not been authorized to speak with such individuals when staffing any activation.
- Do not, at any time or under any circumstances, disparage your agency, its staff, representatives of other agencies, or the municipality administration in the presence of others. It is ok to have your own opinion of these groups, however it is a bad idea to air dirty laundry in any forum other than with a supervisory member of your agency.
- Be aware of your own surroundings. Note safety concerns, equipment issues, etc. immediately to supervisory staff member.
- Do not loan equipment to any other agency or its representative unless specifically instructed to do so. If a loan request is made, ensure proper authorization has been given before providing the equipment.



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Behavior and Etiquette Practices

- Do not allow any non-agency member to operate agency-owned equipment unless authorized by an appropriate supervisory team member.
- Guide other team members so that the team as a whole is successful in fulfilling its mission when working with other agencies.



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Confidentiality Practices

The nature of the work emergency management professionals are involved in is typically confidential. Agencies are often asked to assist with crime scenes, situations that pose a danger to the public or environment, or disasters.

It is imperative that each agency member does his / her due diligence in maintaining confidentiality regarding agency activities at all times.

Unless otherwise specifically approved in writing from an appropriate official, team members should not discuss any details of an activation, event preparation, scenario, or drill with individuals, organizations, or groups outside of the agency. This includes family members.

Unauthorized disclosure of information can jeopardize investigations, place individuals in mortal danger, create panic, foster inaccurate rumors, damage the reputation of the agency or other agencies, and present opportunities for civil litigation and criminal charges.



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Confidentiality Practices

If you feel that confidentiality has been breached in any way, contact a supervisory staff member immediately with specifics regarding the incident. Supervisors should be a conduit for addressing such issues.

Should a member of the public, media, or other entity approach you as an official representative of your agency to request information, if you are not authorized to speak on such matters, refer all such requests to the appropriate PIO. Provide no other information unless specifically authorized to do so.

Occasionally, family, friends, or co-workers will know you executed your duties as an emergency management official for a given incident. One or several media outlets will report seemingly detailed information on the incident that you may be asked to verify or discuss by family, friends, or co-workers. (continued on next slide)



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Confidentiality Practices

Do not confirm or deny any information reported by the media. Do not repeat any information that you have obtained from the media because it may be perceived that you are affirming or denying such information in your capacity as an agency official. Again, refer all inquiries to the appropriate authorized official.

Many scenes are compartmentalized from a flow of information perspective. Do not share information between parties unless directed to do so.

Secure any documentation pertaining to an agency response, planning, etc. Such documentation should not be taken from official facilities unless authorization has been obtained. Shred all documentation that is no longer needed for the execution of your official duties or duties of the agency.

Err on the side of caution if unsure of what to do in an information-sharing situation. Always obtain authorization before disclosing any information.

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Wrap-Up and Questions

Questions regarding the course content?