
Unit 2: Position Concept

INSTRUCTOR GUIDE

Objectives

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- Understand the role and importance of the Liaison Officer as a member of the Command Staff
- Describe the roles and responsibilities of the Liaison Officer
- Describe the relationship between the Liaison Officer and the Agency Representative (AREP)
- List qualities and behaviors that lead to the success of the Liaison Officer
- Describe the relationship between the Liaison Officer and the other Incident Management Team (IMT) members
- Define, compare, and contrast Assisting Agencies, Cooperating Agencies, and Non-Governmental Organizations
- List other common duties the Liaison Officer may encounter

Methodology

This unit uses lecture and discussion to provide an overview of the Liaison Officer's role and responsibilities.

Content from this unit will be tested through the Final Exam. Specific responsibilities and duties of the position will be further covered and evaluated in-depth in subsequent unit presentations and the Final Exam.

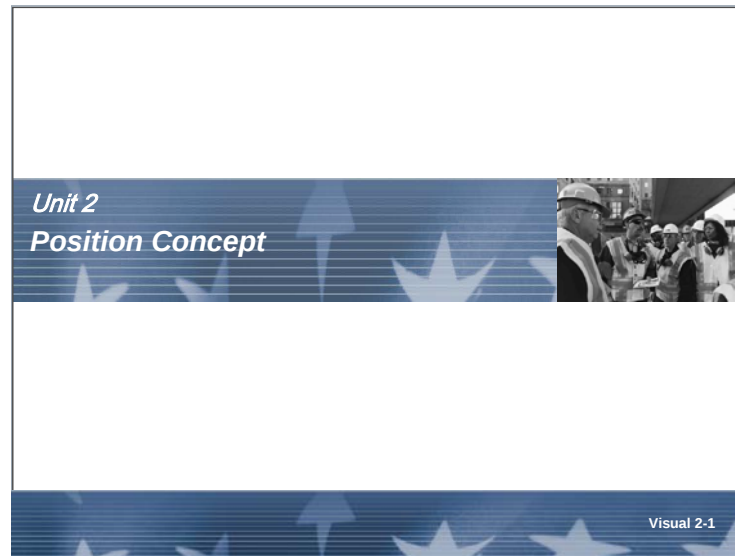
Time Plan

A suggested time plan for this unit is shown below. More or less time may be required, based on the experience level of the group.

Topic	Time
Lesson	1 hour
Total Time	1 hour

Reference Materials

- Projector and other equipment as necessary for PowerPoint presentation
- Easel board and easel board paper
- Marking pens
- Blank ICS Form 211
- Blank ICS Forms 214 for the entire class
- All Hazards Liaison Officer Position Task Book (PTB)
- ICS 420-1 Field Operations Guide (FOG)
 - The FOG is optional and available from FIREScope
- Handout 2-1: Expectations of IMT Members
- Handout 2-2: Agency Fit on an Incident
- Handout 2-3: Liaison Officer Kit

**Explain the Following Key Points**

Announce unit and quickly move to next slide.

Unit Terminal Objective

Understand the role and responsibilities of the Liaison Officer as a member of the command staff.



Explain the Following Key Points

Introduce the unit objectives.

Remind students that the Final Exam questions are based on the Unit Enabling Objectives, which are in the Student Guide.

Unit Terminal Objective

Understand the role and importance of the Liaison Officer as a member of the Command Staff.

Unit Enabling Objectives

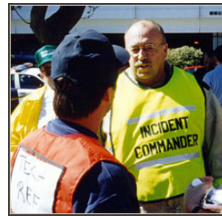
- Describe the roles and responsibilities of the Liaison Officer
- Describe the relationship between the Liaison Officer and the Agency Representative
- Describe the relationship between the Liaison Officer and the other IMT members
- List qualities and behaviors that lead to the success of the Liaison Officer
- Define, compare, and contrast:
 - Assisting Agencies
 - Cooperating Agencies
 - Non-Governmental Organizations
- List other common duties a Liaison Officer may encounter

Topic

Definition of Incident Management Team (IMT)

Definition of Incident Management Team (IMT)

The Incident Commander (IC) and appropriate Command and General Staff personnel assigned to an incident (NIMS definition).



Unit 2:
Position Concept

Visual 2-3

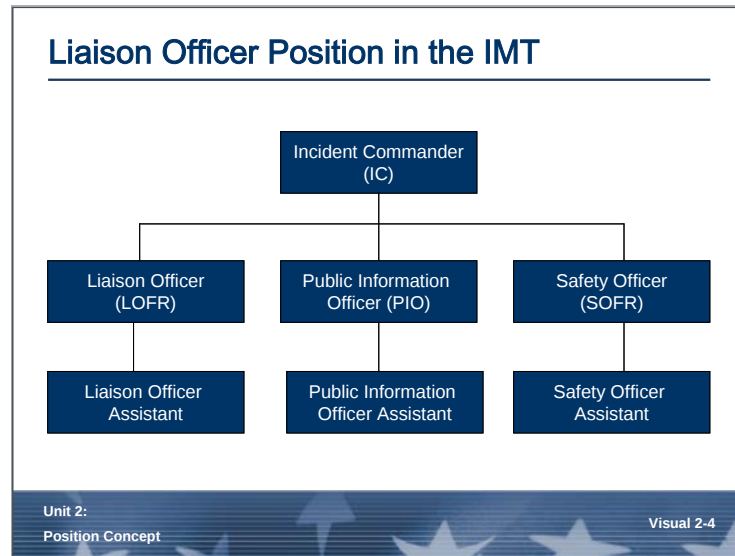
Explain the Following Key Points

Explain the National Incident Management System (NIMS) definition of an IMT—the Incident Commander (IC) and appropriate Command and General Staff personnel assigned to an incident.

According to this definition, the word “appropriate” means that not all eight positions are necessarily applicable to all incidents. For the purposes of this course, assume all eight positions are in play. However, the role of the Liaison Officer still applies even in smaller incidents that might not have full staffing.

Topic

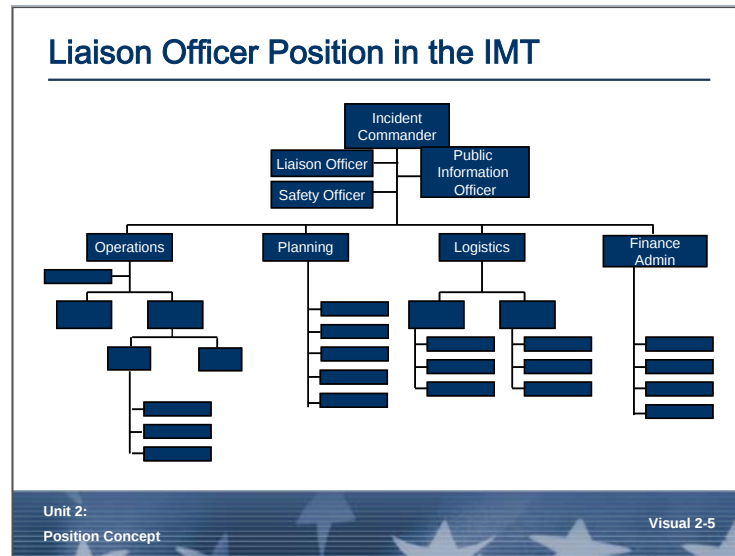
Liaison Officer Position in the IMT

**Explain the Following Key Points**

Explain how the Liaison Officer fits into the Command and General Staff.

Staffing depends on incident needs.

The Assistant Liaison Officer position is not frequently used on wildland fire assignments. The assistant position is often used on larger incidents, especially marine incidents, natural disasters, or oil spills. Given the experience of this class, all could serve as an Assistant Liaison Officer. Deputies must meet the full qualifications of the position they are Deputy for. An Assistant does not.

Topic Liaison Officer Position in the IMT**Explain the Following Key Points**

Explain how the Liaison Officer, specifically, and the Command and General Staff, generally, fit into the entire Incident Command System (ICS) structure.

The Liaison Officer provides information to and collects information from all four Sections of the ICS structure.

Liaison Officer Job Functions

- The Liaison Officer is a member of the Command Staff
- Liaison Officer is the conduit for communication between the Incident Management Team and the AREP



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Visual 2-6

Explain the Following Key Points

Discuss the functions of the Liaison Officer and additional resources students can use to find out more. Students may be able to offer job aids from their agencies to one another.

The more agencies involved, the more important it is to establish the Liaison Officer position.

Some teams do not carry a Liaison Officer on staff because they prefer to staff that position on an incident-by-incident basis with someone that has local knowledge and relationships.

Suggested Question

What experiences have you had that showed the importance of the Liaison Officer in effectively managing an incident?

Interaction with the IMT

- Participates in the planning process to collect and share resource and AREP info:
 - The “Go To” team member for Assisting and Cooperating agency info
 - Ensures the Incident Management Team (IMT) understands the appropriate use of resources from assisting agencies

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Visual 2-7

Explain the Following Key Points

Explain that the Liaison Officer participates in the Planning Process to collect and share information about resources and AREPs. Do not go into detail about the Planning Process on this slide. The Planning Process is covered in Unit 7.

The Liaison Officer:

- Participates in the planning process to collect and share resources and AREP information
- Is the “Go To” team member for information concerning assisting and cooperating agencies:
 - The entire IMT should be dealing with the Liaison Officer on a regular basis and should know that the Liaison Officer is the go-to person for agency resource issues
 - The Liaison Officer is the conduit of information between AREPs for resources and the Operations Section Chief (OSC) for all matters relating to that resource
- Ensures the IMT understands the appropriate use of resources from assisting agencies:
 - The Liaison Officer keeps the OSC aware of constraints, types of assignments, and work and rest issues regarding assisting and cooperating agencies
 - Appropriate use of agency resources also includes paying attention to work and rest issues

The Liaison Officer might also be speaking directly with the agency office about a resource if there isn't an AREP. This might put pressure on the agency to send an AREP.

The Liaison Officer needs to determine if the agency needs to assign an AREP. This depends on workload, incident needs, resources, and the complexity of the incident.

Discussion Question

Do you have any agency-specific examples of work and rest policies?

Suggested Question

What are some examples of the limitations and capabilities of assisting agency resources?

Potential Answers

- Emergency Medical Services (EMS) status—Does the Agency have all anticipated certifications?
- Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT) qualifications
- Expected equipment (like forklifts)
- Validity of qualifications and certifications across States
- Quality and condition of equipment
- Authorities and jurisdiction
- Time limitations—Are they available for the entire operational period (work/rest ratios)

Suggested Question

Why should questions and discussions about resources go through the Liaison Officer and not directly to the Resources Unit?

Potential Answers

- The Liaison Officer probably already knows the agency well, and he or she may already know about pitfalls, politics, and other issues
- Using the Liaison Officer as much as possible can help keep Command and General Staff away from extraneous concerns that may be a distraction
- If an agency doesn't have an AREP, the Liaison Officer needs to monitor and coordinate with the Resources Unit and the Strike Team Leader to get information to the IC

Topic Interaction with the IMT (cont.)**Interaction with the IMT (cont.)**

- Coordinates flow of information between AREPS and Incident Management Team
- Troubleshoots problems with other agencies
- Monitors for developing situations that Incident Management Team needs to know

Handout 2-1: Expectations of IMT Members

Unit 2:
Position Concept

Visual 2-8

Explain the Following Key Points

See Handout 2-1: Expectations of IMT Members. Note that Handout 2-1 is not an official ICS document, but rather a helpful guide that has been put together by the team.

Discuss the basic ways the Liaison Officer will interact with other members of the IMT.

The Liaison Officer:

- Coordinates flow of information between AREPs and the IMT
- Troubleshoots problems with other agencies
 - Is proactive and works to encourage easy, open communication with AREPs
- Monitors for developing situations that the IMT needs to know
 - The Public Information Officer (PIO) is another member of the IMT that's very likely to need information on developing situations

Suggested Questions

As Liaison Officers, who might you deal with in the IMT? What are some examples of the ways in which you would interact with specific members of the IMT?

- **Operations:** The OSC can inform the Liaison Officer about strategies and tactics, and the Liaison Officer can also tell Operations which agencies are available to help with tactics
- **Planning:** The Liaison Officer can provide Planning with a list of agencies, AREPs, and contact information so it can include it on the IAP, and the Liaison Officer can also give information to the Resources Unit for tracking purposes

- **Logistics:** The Liaison Officer can provide Logistics with information on the location of critical resources to expedite ordering of additional resources
- **Finance/Administration:** Finance/Administration can provide information about personnel rates, contracts, compensations, and claims

Suggested Question

What kind of problems might you run into with other agencies?

Personality conflicts:

- When dealing with Native American teams, it's sometimes the case that members of different tribes are not willing to work with one another, and there can be strong conflict if they are assigned to the same division or search team
- The Liaison Officer can help make sure the team addresses local customs and standards

Suggested Question

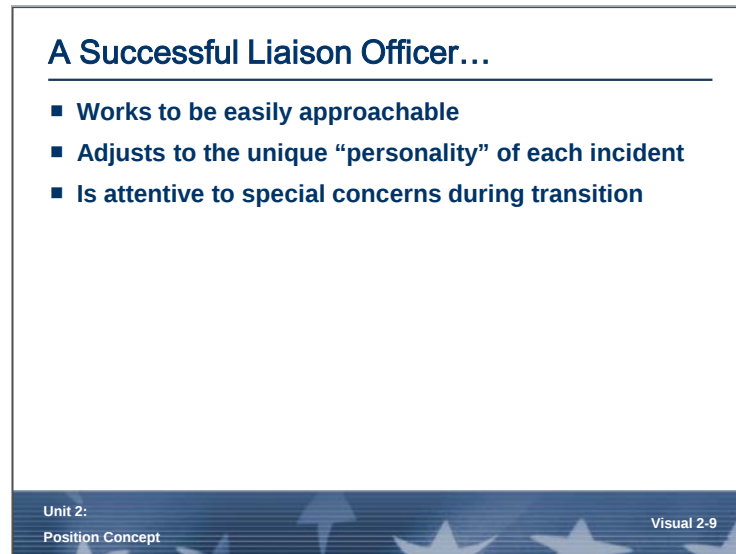
What are developing situations the Liaison Officer might see or anticipate?

Potential Answers

- Complaints or concerns about available facilities, such as showers
- Current events; other incidents in other parts of the country that might constrain responders in terms of tactics and resource availability

Topic

A Successful Liaison Officer...

**Explain the Following Key Points**

Discuss the skills and qualities that contribute to the Liaison Officer’s success in interacting with AREPs and other members of the IMT.

Explain that fostering certain skills and behaviors will help the Liaison Officer interact effectively with AREPs and other members of the IMT. Some personalities may lend themselves to these behaviors more easily, but these are things that anyone can work to achieve.

A successful Liaison Officer:

- Works to be easily approachable:
 - Maintain a calm demeanor and communicate clearly and openly
 - Make it clear that you are well-versed on the incident, resources, and team members to inspire calm and confidence in others
- Make everyone feel like part of the solution, not part of the problem
- Adjusts to the unique “personality” of each incident:
 - Take note of the style of dress (casual versus formal) and social morals in the particular locality of the incident
- Is attentive to special concerns during transition:
 - Do your homework—know who the key players are, and find out the history of the interactions with other agencies and community members
 - Changes in work location, equipment, and personnel can change the nature of the interaction

Suggested Question

What tips/tactics have you used to build good relationships and encourage good communication?

- Shake hands
- Learn names quickly
- Make sure to say thank you
- Share a meal
- Hand out pins or hats

Suggested Question

What clues have you used to help you figure out for yourself how to adjust to the different ways of acting or dressing in different places? Any challenges?

Suggested Question

Do you have any examples of how changes in work location, equipment, or personnel can change the nature of the interaction?

For example, the previous team may have had a nice trailer that had plenty of room for law enforcement and other local officials to come in and sit down. The new team might not have that resource available to them. How do you adjust?

Topic

National Response Framework (NRF) / NIMS Definition of AREP

NRF/NIMS Definition of AREP

“A person assigned by a primary, assisting, or cooperating Federal, State, local, or tribal government agency or private entity that has been delegated authority to make decisions affecting that agency’s or organization’s participation in incident management activities following appropriate consultation with the leadership of that agency.”

Handout 2-2: Agency Fit on an Incident

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Visual 2-10

Explain the Following Key Points

The phrase “delegated authority” is an extremely important part of both definitions. If an AREP doesn’t have decision making authority, it can really hinder incident operations. The Liaison Officer may consider contacting the Agency if this occurs.

Suggested Discussion Question

How do you deal with the issue of an agency that comes to the table as Assisting or Cooperating Agency, but which believes it deserves a seat at the table as part of the Unified Command (UC)?

Potential Answer

An effective way to handle this may be to ask, “How do you plan to pay for your part of Unified Command?” If an Agency has no money to contribute to the incident, it can be a strong indicator that it should not be part of UC. Also look into legal and jurisdictional responsibility. Conversely, you may find an Agency that should be part of UC, but isn’t currently playing that role.

Remember that many of these concepts are still new to agencies around the country, and as they are learning about UC, and as NIMS encourages it, they might think they belong. The Liaison Officer can act as a filter and help sort out their needs, what they want to do, and what they bring to the table. The Liaison Officer can help manage people who don’t know all the ins and outs of ICS. Clarifying the responsibilities of the roles can help.

TopicInteraction with the Agency Representative (AREP)

Interaction with the Agency Representative (AREP)

- AREPs interface with the Liaison Officer
- AREPs work for their agency, not the incident
- A complete discussion on AREP duties will be included in Unit 3

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Visual 2-11

Explain the Following Key Points

Explain, briefly, the role of the AREP and the basic interaction between the Liaison Officer and the AREP. Emphasize that the AREP works for their agency, not the incident.

Topic

Other Agencies

Other Agencies

- **Assisting Agencies**
- **Cooperating Agencies**
- **Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) may serve as Assisting or Cooperating**

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Position Concept

Visual 2-12

Explain the Following Key Points

Explain the difference between Assisting and Cooperating Agencies.

Assisting and Cooperating Agencies are those agencies that do not have jurisdictional or statutory responsibility to respond to incidents, but are providing resources or support in some way.

An Assisting Agency provides tactical resources. If an Agency is supporting your incident objectives, it is most likely serving as an Assisting Agency.

An agency that supports your incident responders is most likely serving as a Cooperating Agency.

A utility company is a good example of an agency that could serve as either an Assisting Agency or a Cooperating Agency. If restoring power is one of your incident objectives, then the utility company would be serving as an Assisting Agency. If the utility company is providing power or telephone lines to the Incident Command Post, then it is serving as a Cooperating Agency, because it is supporting the incident responders, not the incident objectives.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) serve vital roles on incidents. Examples include:

- Red Cross
- Salvation Army
- Community clubs like the Lions Club
- Ham radio operators

An NGO could be serving as either a Cooperating or Assisting Agency, depending on its role on a given incident. If the NGO is providing resources that support incident objectives, that NGO is serving as a Cooperating Agency. If it is providing resources that support incident responders, that NGO is serving as an Assisting Agency.

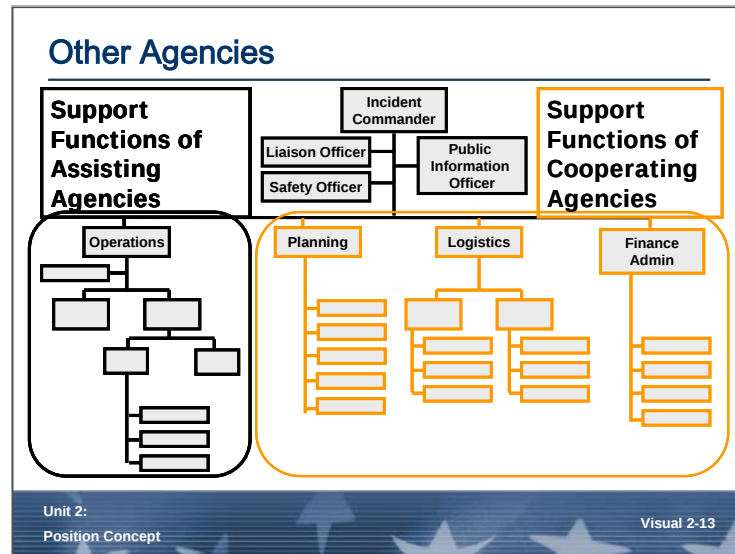
On some large incidents, Liaison Officers may want to consider designating an Assistant Liaison Officer purely dedicated to NGOs.

Suggested Question

Why is it important for the Liaison Officer to differentiate between the Cooperating and Assisting Agencies?

Potential Answer

Knowing the role of an agency helps the Liaison Officer know who in the IMT to take his or her needs or concerns.



Explain the Following Key Points

Explain that functions of Assisting and Cooperating Agencies roughly correspond to the functions on the ICS Form 207 Organizational Chart.

Generally, the incident support functions of Assisting Agencies correspond to the functions of the Operations Section. The incident responder support functions of Cooperating Agencies generally correspond to the functions of the Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration Sections.

Topic Other Types of Liaison Officers

Other Types of Liaison Officers

- Only 1 Incident Management Team Liaison Officer per incident
- Other types of Liaison Officers may be encountered
- Other Agencies may have Liaison Officers as permanent positions:
 - TSA
 - Military
 - EPA
 - Others

Unit 2:
Position Concept

Visual 2-14

Explain the Following Key Points

Explain there is a lot of room for confusion and creativity in the role of the ICS Liaison Officer. It is critical that Liaison Officers know the ICS role as well as other non-ICS roles and duties. Other types of “Liaison Officers” are often encountered.

It is important to stress that there is only one ICS Liaison Officer per incident. Often, the person labeled as a Liaison Officer by an agency may in fact be an AREP, according to ICS.

Suggested Discussion Question

If there are a lot of other Liaison Officers there, couldn't you just make them all Assistant Liaison Officers?

Potential Answer

No—these people are AREPs, which means they work for their own agency, not the incident. The term “Liaison Officer” may have a different meaning to other agencies or may describe other duties than those common in ICS.

Some agencies have Liaison Officers as a normal organizational position:

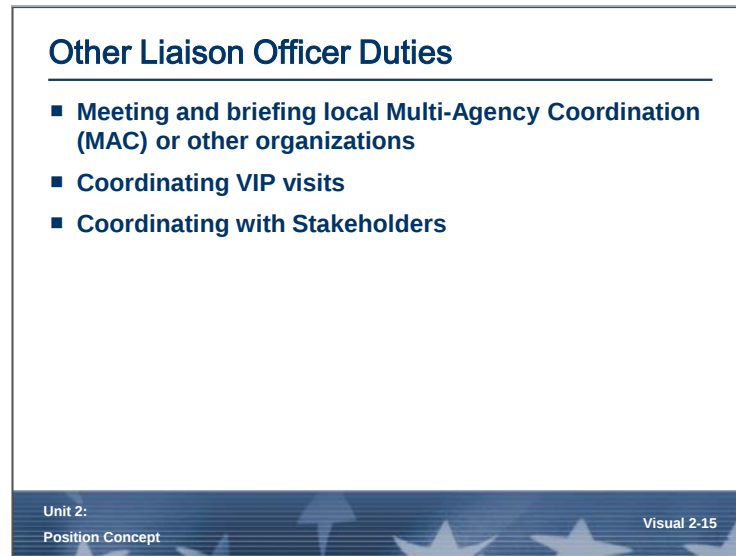
- US Military
- US Coast Guard
- Government Agencies
- Corporations
- Others

Only one Liaison Officer will be assigned at each incident, including incidents operating under UC and multi-jurisdictional incidents.

Other agencies may assign “Liaison Officers” to an incident because they don’t fully understand the ICS system. They may be using the term “Liaison Officer” as a day-to-day job description and not to describe an incident role under ICS. In such cases, the IMT Liaison Officer must tactfully correct this or clarify it to minimize confusion among responders. According to ICS, these people are most likely AREPs.

Topic

Other Liaison Officer Duties



Explain the Following Key Points

Explain there are other duties a Liaison Officer may be likely to encounter, which are not listed in the FOG.

Suggested Question

Why is it important to coordinate these duties with other IMT members?

Potential Answer

The IMT Liaison Officer may encounter or be assigned duties not described in the FOG. Such activities must be discussed with the IC to ensure they are being executed as directed or approved by the IC. They must also be coordinated with the other IMT members.

Examples:

- Meeting or briefing local MAC groups or other organizations
- Coordinating VIP visits
- Coordinating with Stakeholders

Discussion 1

Liaison Officer Kit



Handout 2-3: Liaison Officer Kit Contents

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Visual 2-16

Explain the Following Key Points

Instruct the class to brainstorm items that an Liaison Officer might need in his or her kit. Items should be the things necessary to get through the first two or three Operational Periods.

Note student responses on an easel pad.

After the discussion, distribute Handout 2-3: Liaison Officer Kit Contents. This handout is a list made by a previous class and serves as an example.

Objectives Review

- 1. What are the roles and responsibilities of the Liaison Officer?*
- 2. What is the relationship between the Liaison Officer and Agency Representatives?*
- 3. What is the relationship between the Liaison Officer and the other Incident Management Team members?*

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Visual 2-17

Explain the Following Key Points

Pose the Unit Enabling Objectives as questions. Ask the group to give a brief example or short explanation to answer each question. Try to call on a different student for each objective.

Leave the Objectives Review slide up so that students can think about what they learned in relation to the objectives.

Unit Terminal Objective

Understand the roles and responsibilities of the Liaison Officer as a member of the Command staff.

Unit Enabling Objectives

- Describe the roles and responsibilities of the Liaison Officer
- Describe the relationship between the Liaison Officer and the AREP
- Describe the relationship between the Liaison Officer and the other IMT members

Objectives Review (cont.)

4. *What are the qualities and behaviors that lead to Liaison Officer success?*

5. *What are:*

- *Assisting Agencies*
- *Cooperating Agencies*
- *Non-Governmental Organizations?*

6. *What are other common duties an Liaison Officer may encounter?*

Unit 2:
Position Concept

Visual 2-18

Explain the Following Key Points

Pose the Unit Enabling Objectives as questions. Ask the group to give a brief example or short explanation to answer each question. Try to call on a different student for each objective.

This is not intended to be an inclusive discussion of all material covered in Unit 2, but rather a quick and engaging way to wrap up the unit, and reconnect the students to the material before moving on to Unit 3.

Ask the students to write down the top three to five things they learned in this unit on their ICS Forms 214.

Leave the Objectives Review slide up so that students can think about what they learned in relation to the objectives.

At the end of the day, collect their ICS Forms 214. This will help identify what the students have learned and what areas may be especially important to highlight throughout the rest of the course.

This activity should be done at the end of each unit.

Unit Enabling Objectives (cont.)

- List qualities and behaviors that lead to Liaison Officer success
- Define, compare, and contrast, Assisting Agencies, Cooperating Agencies, and Non-Governmental Organizations
- List other common duties a Liaison Officer may encounter