
Unit 5: Incident Communications and Work Location

INSTRUCTOR GUIDE

Objectives

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

- Identify types of communication and work location needs for a given incident
- Given an incident assignment, identify and list the means and types of communications that are used to keep the agency and incident personnel informed
- Identify and list the requirements for a Liaison Officer work location

Methodology

This unit uses lecture and discussion.

Content from this unit will be generally tested through discussion and the Final Exam, as the unit is meant to serve as an overview of the Liaison Officer's role and responsibilities regarding incident communications and work location. 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 Pads
- 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

TopicUnit Title Slide

**Explain the Following Key Points**

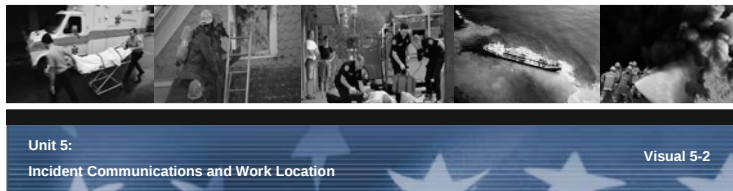
Announce unit and quickly move to next slide.

Topic

Unit Terminal Objective

Unit Terminal Objective

Identify types of communication and work location needs for a given incident

**Explain the Following Key Points**

Introduce the unit objectives.

Explain the Unit Terminal Objective to the class. Remind students that the Final Exam questions are based on the Unit Enabling Objectives, which are in the Student Guide.

Unit Terminal Objective

Identify types of communication and work location needs for a given incident.

Unit Enabling Objective

- Given an incident assignment, identify and list the means and types of communications that are used to keep agency and incident personnel informed
- Identify and list the requirements for a Liaison Officer work location

Topic

Communication Challenges

Communication Challenges

- On a large incident the AREPs are constantly moving:
 - ICP
 - Visiting agency resources
 - Lodging
 - Home office
- Liaison Officer may have similar changes in location

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Visual 5-3

Explain the Following Key Points

Engage students in a discussion about challenges they anticipate in incident communications. Encourage them to briefly share their own experiences and suggest solutions to the challenges they identify.

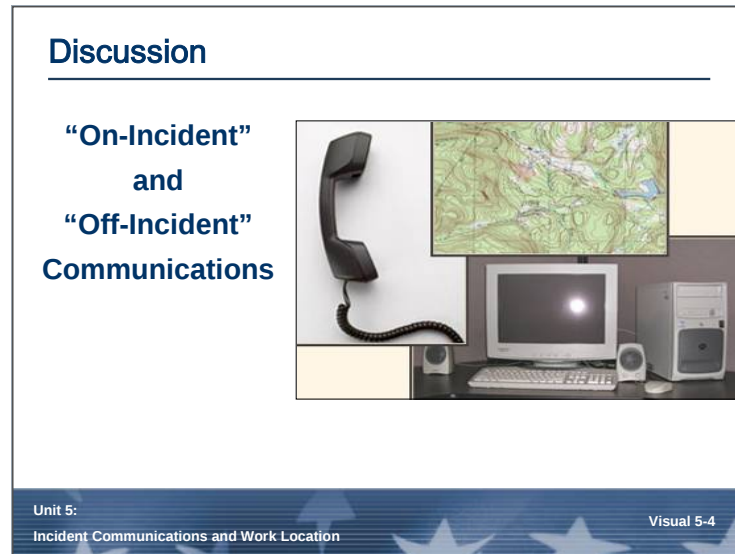
On a large incident, AREPs are constantly moving:

- Around the Incident Command Post (ICP)
- Visiting agency resources
- To and from Lodging
- To and from their home office

The Liaison Officer may have similar changes in location.

Topic

Discussion

**Explain the Following Key Points**

Ask Students to list methods of communication that a Liaison Officer might use “on-incident” and “off-incident.”

Sample responses might include for on-incident:

- Face-to-face
- Bulletin board
- Phone, radio, or pager
- Incident Action Plan
- AREP meetings
- ICS Form 213 (via runner)
- Office hours
- Meals
- Computer

Sample responses for off-incident might include:

- Phone, radio, or pager
- Incident Action Plan
- Fax
- Email or Blackberry
- Meals

- Face-to-face
- Emergency Operations Center (EOC)
- Key Agency Offices
- Computer

While some AREPs are very responsive, others can be very difficult to find or get a message to. The Liaison Officer needs to establish the best way to reach different AREPs.

Consider the use of a runner when the normal methods of communication aren't working. Prescheduled meetings help to establish a routine, and also cut down on the iterations of giving information.

Bulletin boards and white boards can hold a check out sheet so that when someone leaves, the Liaison Officer knows where they went and how to contact them. Keep this in mind, because AREPs can be harder to get a hold of than IMT members.

Incident responders might fill up the nearest hotels, so AREPs may not necessarily be near the larger group.

Using the ICS Form 213 – General Message Form creates a paper trail. While email communication is efficient and helps create a “paper” trail, its overuse can harm your working relationship with others. You can't judge mood, tone, or body language through email.

Topic

Communication Priorities

Communication Priorities

- Liaison Officers need to establish communication priorities
- Examples of priority types:
 - Assisting agencies
 - Agencies with the largest number of resources
 - Agencies with more critical resources
 - Cooperating agencies
 - Law enforcement for temporary assistance
 - Red Cross

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Visual 5-5

Explain the Following Key Points

To maximize efficiency and effectiveness, the Liaison Officer needs to establish communication priorities. Within one group of AREPs, some agencies may have more urgent needs or information to provide.

Suggested Discussion Question

Why are agencies with the most resources a high priority?

For agencies that have many resources to keep track of, and thus have a lot of activity, it could take longer to get information from one place to another. It could also be more difficult to get information out easily, just because of the large number of people involved.

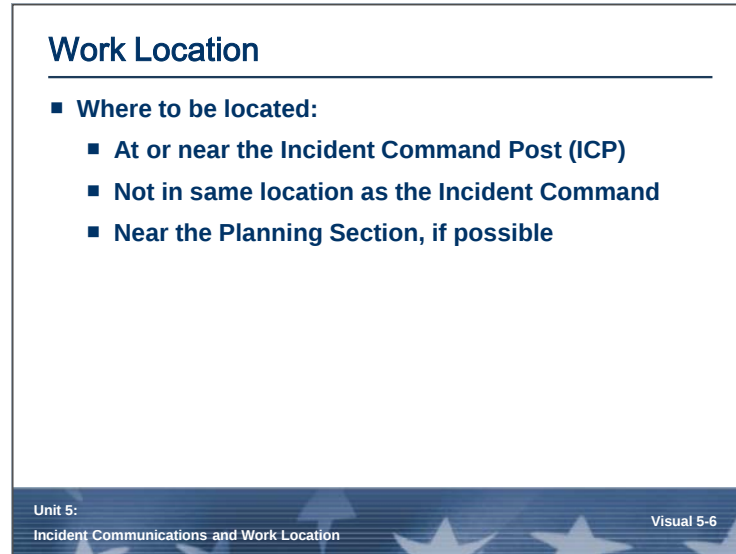
A critical resource is something that the incident doesn't have enough of or that the incident is in danger of running out of.

Liaison Officers need to establish communications priorities. Examples of priority types include:

- Assisting Agencies, such as agencies with the largest number of resources or more critical resources
- Cooperating Agencies, such as law enforcement for temporary assistance or Red Cross

Topic

Work Location



Explain the Following Key Points

Introduce ideas that will help the Liaison Officer determine where to be. Subsequent slides cover more information on work location, including suggestions for things to do and things to have.

Think about your location in proximity to the other Sections.

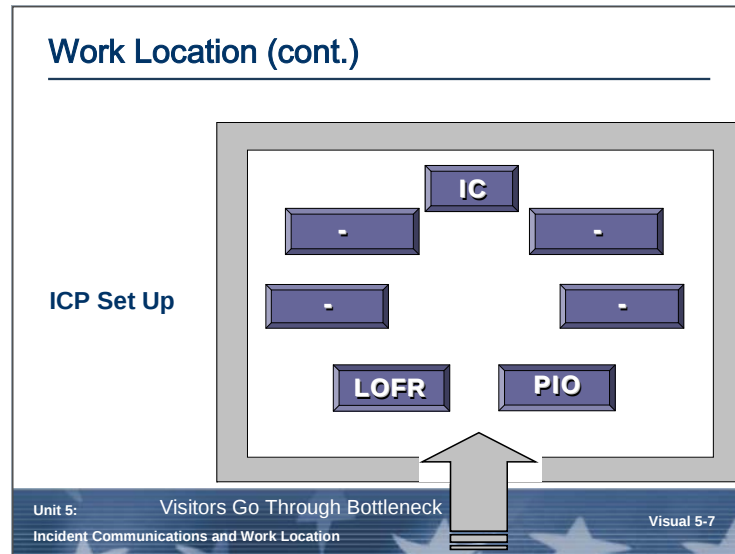
Where to be Located

- In front of, not in the same location as the Incident Command
- Near a location AREPs are likely to visit:
 - Public Information Officer
 - Planning Section
 - Resources Unit

Keep in mind that the Logistics Section can often be noisy and chaotic. Choose a quiet location, if possible. Also, try to avoid being near large machinery. For example, don't set up your tent 3 feet from a generator!

Topic

Work Location (cont.)

**Explain the Following Key Points**

Explain that this is not an exact diagram of an ICP, nor is it inclusive of every ICS function. It is simply a representation of how the Liaison Officer and PIO can position themselves in front of the Incident Command to act as “gatekeepers.”

Putting the Public Information Officer and Liaison Officer physically in front of wherever the Incident Commander is set up, so the Incident Commander is at the back of the ICP, creates the physical bottleneck past the Public Information Officer and Liaison Officer to protect access to the Incident Commander.

The Liaison Officer and Public Information Officer can use a work location to protect access to the Incident Commander. The Liaison Officer can also protect the feelings of the person who wants access to the Incident Commander by:

- Offering email instead
- Inviting the person to a briefing

Topic

Work Location (cont.)

Work Location (cont.)

- Things to do:
 - Advise the Communications Unit where you are located
 - Use bulletin boards, if possible
 - Put up signs

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Visual 5-8

Explain the Following Key Points

Engage students in a discussion about things they can do, relating to their work location that will facilitate effective interactions on the incident.

Things to Do

- Set up a bulletin board for AREPs:
 - Post messages
 - Provide off-shift and emergency contact information
 - Post a traffic flow plan
- Provide an AREP contact list
- Create a check-out board
- Advise the Communications Unit and all check-in locations where AREPs can find you

TopicWork Location (cont.)

Work Location (cont.)

- Things to have:
 - Adequate number of potential assistants
 - Space for AREP workspace and briefing area
 - Adequate communications capability
 - Weather and creature comforts

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Visual 5-9

Explain the Following Key Points

Coordinate with Logistics Section for additional personnel, space, equipment, and supplies.

Topic

Check-in Locations



Explain the Following Key Points

Explain the impact that check-in locations have on the Liaison Officer and why these locations are important.

The Liaison Officer should coordinate with these locations and have an understanding of who is coming in where. The Liaison Officer should also post a sign that says, “Liaison Officer can be found at... called at...” Remember that Division or Group leaders might get a little behind with the check-in process, and you may need to consider sending an Assistant Liaison Officer to help keep on top of the agencies and resources arriving.

Review locations on the incident where check-in can occur, if necessary, and how that may affect your operation:

- ICP
- Staging areas
- Base
- Camps
- Helibases
- At a Division or Group

Objectives Review

- 1. Given an incident assignment, what are the types and means of communication that are used to keep agency and incident personnel informed?*
- 2. What are the requirements for a Liaison Officer work location?*

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Visual 5-11

Explain the Following Key Points

Review the Enabling Objectives for this unit to ensure that the class has obtained the knowledge necessary to successfully meet the Unit Terminal Objective.

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 5, but rather a quick and engaging way to wrap up the unit, and reconnect the students to the material before moving on to Unit 6.

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

Leave the objective 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 Terminal Objective

Identify types of communication and work location needs for a given incident.

Unit Enabling Objectives

- Given an incident assignment, identify and list the means and types of communications that are used to keep the Agency and incident personnel informed
- Identify and list the requirements for a Liaison Officer work location