Checklist 4–5. Needs Assessment for Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication

Planning, Research, Training, and Evaluation

❏ Yes ❏ No   Does your organization have an crisis and emergency risk communication operational plan for public information and media, partner, and stakeholder relations?

❏ Yes ❏ No   Have you coordinated your planning with the community or state emergency operation center?

❏ Yes ❏ No   Have you coordinated your planning with other response organizations or competitors?

❏ Yes ❏ No   Have designated spokespersons received media training and risk communication training?

❏ Yes ❏ No   Do the spokespersons understand crisis and emergency risk communication principles to build trust and credibility?

If Your Organization Has a Plan, Does It Have the Following Elements:

❏ Yes ❏ No   Designated responsibilities for public information team?

❏ Yes ❏ No   Information verification and clearance procedures?

❏ Yes ❏ No   Agreements on information release authorities (who releases what, when, and how)?

❏ Yes ❏ No   Regional and local media contact list, including after-hours news desks?

❏ Yes ❏ No   Procedures to coordinate with the public health organization response teams?

❏ Yes ❏ No   Designated spokespersons for public health issues in an emergency?

❏ Yes ❏ No   Public health organization emergency response team after-hours contact numbers?

❏ Yes ❏ No   Contact numbers for emergency information partners such as governor's public affairs officer, local FBI public information special agent in charge, local or regional department of agriculture or veterinarian public information officers, Red Cross and other nongovernmental organizations?

❏ Yes ❏ No   Agreements and procedures to join the Joint Information Center (JIC) of the emergency operations center, if activated?

If Your Organization Has a Plan, Does It Have the Following Elements:

❑ Yes   ❑ No   Procedures to secure needed resources such as space, equipment, and personnel, to operate the public information operation during a public health emergency 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, if needed?

❑ Yes   ❑ No   Identified methods of information dissemination to public, stakeholders, and partners such as websites, Twitter feeds, e-mail lists, broadcast fax, door-to-door leaflets, and press releases, during a crisis?

Message and Audiences

❑ Yes   ❑ No   The following are types of incidents that could require intense public information, media, and partner communication responses:

> ❑ Infectious disease outbreak
>   (e.g., pandemic influenza, cholera, E. coli infection)?
> ❑ Bioterrorism (e.g. anthrax, smallpox)
> ❑ Chemical emergencies (e.g., nerve agents, oil spill)
> ❑ Explosions (e.g., explosions, terrorist bombing)
> ❑ Natural disasters and severe weather
>   (e.g. earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes)
> ❑ Radiation emergencies (e.g., dirty bomb, nuclear accident)

❑ Yes   ❑ No   Have you identified special populations, such as the elderly, people who speak a first language other than English, Tribal communities, and border populations? List any specific subpopulations, such as tribal nations, persons with chronic respiratory illnesses, and unvaccinated seniors, that need to be targeted with specific messages during a public health emergency related to your organization.

❑ Yes   ❑ No   Have you identified your organization's partners who should receive direct information and updates (not solely through the media) from your organization during a public health emergency?

❑ Yes   ❑ No   Have you identified all stakeholder organizations or populations who should receive direct communication during a public health-related emergency? These are groups or organizations your organization believes have an active interest in monitoring activities, to whom you are most directly accountable, other than official chain of command.

❑ Yes   ❑ No   Have you planned ways to reach people according to their reactions to the incident (fight or flight)? Are messages, messengers, and methods of delivery sensitive to all types of audiences in your area of responsibility?

Message and Audiences

❑ Yes ❑ No Are there mechanisms and resources in place to create messages for the media and public under severe time constraints, including methods to clear these messages within the emergency response operations of your organization? Make sure to include cross clearance in this consideration.

❑ Yes ❑ No Have you identified how you will perform media evaluation, content analysis, and public information call analysis in real time during an emergency to ensure adequate audience feedback?

❑ Yes ❑ No Have you developed topic-specific pre-crisis materials for identified public health emergency issues, or identified sources of these materials if needed:

❑ Yes ❑ No Topic fact sheet (e.g., description of the disease, public health threat, treatment?)

❑ Yes ❑ No Public Questions and Answers?

❑ Yes ❑ No Partner Questions and Answers?

❑ Yes ❑ No Resource fact for media, public, or partners to obtain additional information?

❑ Yes ❑ No Web access and links to information on the topic?

❑ Yes ❑ No Recommendations for affected populations?

❑ Yes ❑ No Background B-roll for media use on the topic?

❑ Yes ❑ No List of subject matter experts outside your organization who would be effective information sources for the public and the media regarding your activities during a public health emergency?

Messenger

❑ Yes ❑ No Have you identified public health spokespersons for media and public appearances during an emergency?

If Yes, Have You…

❑ Yes ❑ No   Identified persons by position, such as a media spokesperson or a community meeting speaker, to act as spokespersons for multiple audiences and formats about public health issues during an emergency?

❑ Yes ❑ No   Ensured that the spokespersons understand their communication roles and responsibilities and will incorporate them into their expected duties during the crisis?

Methods of Delivery and Resources

❑ Yes ❑ No   Does your organization have "go kits" for public information officers who may have to abandon their normal place of operation during a public health emergency or join a JIC?

Do the Kits Include…

❑ Yes ❑ No   Computer(s) with access to the Internet and e-mail?

❑ Yes ❑ No   CD-ROM, DVD, or flash drives containing the elements of the crisis communication plan, including media contact lists, public health contact lists, organization contact lists, partner contact lists, and information materials?

❑ Yes ❑ No   Cell phone or satellite phone, wireless device, etc.?

❑ Yes ❑ No   Funding mechanism, such as a credit card, that can be used to purchase operational resources as needed?

❑ Yes ❑ No   Manuals and background information necessary to provide needed information to the public and the media?

❑ Yes ❑ No   Care and comfort items for the public information operations staff?

❑ Yes ❑ No   Have you identified the mechanisms that are or should be in place to ensure multiple channels of communication to multiple audiences during a public health emergency?

Channels of Communication

❑ Yes ❑ No   Have you identified the mechanisms that are or should be in place to ensure multiple channels of communication to multiple audiences during a public health emergency?

If Yes, Do Mechanisms Include…

❑ Yes ❑ No   Media channels such as print, TV, radio, and Web?

❑ Yes ❑ No   Websites, Facebook, Twitter, and other social media?

❑ Yes ❑ No   Phone banks?

❑ Yes ❑ No   Town hall meetings?

❑ Yes ❑ No   Listserv e-mail?

❑ Yes ❑ No   Broadcast fax?

❑ Yes ❑ No   Letters by mail?

❑ Yes ❑ No   Subscription newsletters?

❑ Yes ❑ No   Submissions to partner newsletters?

❑ Yes ❑ No   Regular or special partner conference calls?

❑ Yes ❑ No   Door-to-door canvassing?

❑ Yes ❑ No   Are contracts or agreements in place to post information to broadcast fax or e-mail systems?

❑ Yes ❑ No   Have locations for press conferences been designated and resourced?

Personnel

❑ Yes ❑ No   Have you identified employees, contractors, fellows, and interns currently working for you or available to you in an emergency that have skills in the following areas:

❑ Yes ❑ No   Public affairs specialist?

❑ Yes ❑ No   Health communication specialist?

❑ Yes ❑ No   Communication officer?

❑ Yes ❑ No   Health education specialist?

❑ Yes ❑ No   Training specialist?

❑ Yes ❑ No   Writer/editor?

❑ Yes ❑ No   Technical writer/editor?

Personnel

❏ Yes ❏ No   Audio/visual specialist?

❏ Yes ❏ No   Internet/Web design specialist?

❏ Yes ❏ No   Social media specialist?

❏ Yes ❏ No   Others who contribute to public and provider information?

❏ Yes ❏ No   Have you identified who will provide the following expertise or execute these activities during a public health emergency (including backup):

Command and Control

❏ Yes ❏ No   Directs the work related to the release of information to the media, the public, and partners?

❏ Yes ❏ No   Activates the plan, based on careful assessment of the situation and the expected demands for information by the media, partners, and the public?

❏ Yes ❏ No   Coordinates with horizontal communication partners, as outlined in the plan, to ensure that messages are consistent and within the scope of the organization's responsibility?

❏ Yes ❏ No   Provides updates to the organization's director, EOC command, and higher headquarters, as determined in the plan?

❏ Yes ❏ No   Advises the director and chain of command regarding information to be released, based on the organization's role in the response?

❏ Yes ❏ No   Ensures that risk communication principles are employed in all contact with the media, the public, and partner information release efforts?

❏ Yes ❏ No   Advises on incident-specific policy, science, and the current situation?

❏ Yes ❏ No   Reviews and approves materials for release to the media, the public, and partners?

❏ Yes ❏ No   Obtains required clearance of materials for release to the media on policy or sensitive topic-related information not previously cleared?

❏ Yes ❏ No   Determines the operational hours and days, and reassesses throughout the emergency response?

❏ Yes ❏ No   Ensures resources are available, such as personnel, technical resources, and mechanical supplies?

Media

❑ Yes ❑ No Assesses media needs and organizes mechanisms to fulfill media needs during the crisis, such as daily briefings in person versus a website update?

❑ Yes ❑ No Triages the response to media requests and inquiries?

❑ Yes ❑ No Ensures that media inquiries are addressed as appropriate?

❑ Yes ❑ No Supports and briefs spokespersons?

❑ Yes ❑ No Develops and maintains media contact lists and call logs?

❑ Yes ❑ No Produces and distributes media advisories and press releases?

❑ Yes ❑ No Produces and distributes materials such as fact sheets and B-roll?

❑ Yes ❑ No Oversees media monitoring systems and reports (e.g., analyzing environment and trends to determine needed messages, determining what misinformation needs to be corrected, identifying concerns, interests, and needs arising from the crisis and the response)?

❑ Yes ❑ No Ensures that risk communication principles to build trust and credibility are incorporated into all public messages delivered through the media?

❑ Yes ❑ No Acts as member of the JIC of the field site team for media relations?

❑ Yes ❑ No Serves as liaison between organizations through the JIC?

Direct Public Information

❑ Yes ❑ No Manages the mechanisms for responding to public requests for information via social media, telephone, in writing, or by e-mail?

❑ Yes ❑ No Oversees public information monitoring systems and reports (e.g., analyzing environment and trends to determine needed messages; determining what misinformation needs to be corrected; identifying concerns, interests, and needs arising from the crisis and the response)?

❑ Yes ❑ No Oversees and activates social media, telephone, public e-mail correspondence response systems?

❑ Yes ❑ No Organizes and manages the emergency response Web sites, Web pages, Facebook page and other social media?

Direct Public Information

❏ Yes ❏ No Establishes and maintains links to other emergency response Web sites?

Partner and Stakeholder Information

❏ Yes ❏ No Establishes communication protocols based on prearranged agreements with identified partners and stakeholders?

❏ Yes ❏ No Translates EOC situation reports and meeting notes into information appropriate for public and partner needs?

❏ Yes ❏ No Works with subject matter experts (SMEs) to create situation-specific fact sheets, Q&As, and updates?

❏ Yes ❏ No Manages the development and testing of messages and materials for cultural and language requirements of special populations?

❏ Yes ❏ No Coordinates with other communication team members regarding content and message needs?

❏ Yes ❏ No Adapts messages based on analysis from media, social media, public, and partner monitoring systems, SME clearance, and feedback?

❏ Yes ❏ No Guides documents through formal clearance process before they are released to the media, the public, or partner organizations?

Content and Material for Public Health Emergencies

❏ Yes ❏ No Develops and establishes mechanisms and protocols to rapidly receive information from the EOC

❏ Yes ❏ No Translates EOC situation reports and meeting notes into information appropriate for public and partner needs

❏ Yes ❏ No Works with subject matter experts (SMEs) to create situation-specific fact sheets, Q&As, and updates

❏ Yes ❏ No Manages the development and testing of messages and materials for cultural and language requirements of special populations

❏ Yes ❏ No Coordinates with other communication team members regarding content and message needs

Content and Material for Public Health Emergencies

❏ Yes ❏ No Adapts messages based on analysis from media, social media, public, and partner monitoring systems, SME clearance, and feedback

❏ Yes ❏ No Guides documents through formal clearance process before they are released to the media, the public, or partner organizations

Suggestions to Consider about Resources

Space

❏ Yes ❏ No You have space to operate communication teams or the JIC outside the EOC. A place is also needed to bring media on site that is separate from the EOC and the JIC.

❏ Yes ❏ No You have quiet space to quickly train and brief spokespersons.

❏ Yes ❏ No You have conference space for team meetings.

❏ Yes ❏ No You have office space dedicated for equipment exclusive to your use. You cannot stand in line for the copier when facing media deadlines.

❏ Yes ❏ No You have space where staff can take breaks when necessary, whether for eating, sensory deprivation, rest, or even a nap.

❏ Yes ❏ No An offsite space is identified in case the crisis damages your original space.

Contracts and Memoranda of Agreement(s)

❏ Yes ❏ No Consider a contract with a comprehensive newswire service that will disseminate your information across a wide variety of platforms, such as print and broadcast news, Internet, and social media sites. Also consider using a variety of communication tools, such as press releases, videos, images, e-mail, and social media tagging.

❏ Yes ❏ No Consider contracts with writers or public relations personnel who can augment your staff, especially persons with social media writing and monitoring expertise, if your organization doesn't have those personnel.

❏ Yes ❏ No Consider a contract for administrative support and technical support.

Contracts and Memoranda of Agreement(s)

❑ Yes ❑ No   Consider a phone system/contractor that can supply a phone menu that directs the type of caller and level of information desired:

      ❑ General information about the threat

      ❑ Tip line listing particular actions people can take to protect themselves

      ❑ Reassurance/counseling

      ❑ Referral information for media requests for information or interviews

      ❑ Referral information for health-care/medical facility workers

      ❑ Referral information for epidemiologists or others needing to report cases

      ❑ Laboratory and treatment protocols

      ❑ Managers looking for policy statements for employees

Equipment

❑ Yes ❑ No   Computers (desktop or laptop) loaded with secure Internet access, software programs, and documents needed for crisis communication and information sharing. These items include e-mail lists, the crisis communication plan, and collaboration software.

❑ Yes ❑ No   Landline phones with dedicated lines and 800 MHz radios, in case of power outage or cell phone network overload

❑ Yes ❑ No   Fax machines with numbers preprogrammed for broadcast fax releases to media outlets and partners

❑ Yes ❑ No   Dedicated computer server with additional bandwidth to handle increased Internet traffic

❑ Yes ❑ No   Computer printers, including at least one color printer

❑ Yes ❑ No   Tables (You will need a large number of tables.)

❑ Yes ❑ No   Color copier machine and backup

❑ Yes ❑ No   Cell phones, pagers, personal data devices, and e-mail readers

❑ Yes ❑ No   Extension cords

❑ Yes ❑ No   Visible calendars, flow charts, bulletin boards, and easels

Equipment

❏ Yes ❏ No Designated personal message board

❏ Yes ❏ No Small refrigerator

❏ Yes ❏ No A/V equipment to host press conferences such as portable microphones, sound system, multibox or press box, projector and screen, and recording devices

❏ Yes ❏ No Podium

❏ Yes ❏ No TVs with cable hookup

❏ Yes ❏ No DVD player

❏ Yes ❏ No Paper shredder

❏ Yes ❏ No Alternative power supply, such as a generator, for the EOC and the JIC

❏ Yes ❏ No Portable cots
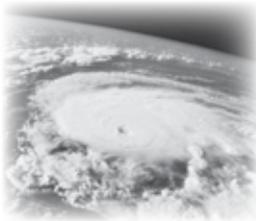
Equipment

❑ Yes ❑ No   Supplies (all labeled "for emergency only use"):

❑ Copier toner

❑ Printer ink

❑ Paper, notepads, and notebooks

❑ Pens, pencils, markers, highlighters, and erasable markers

❑ Supplies for mail, FedEx, UPS, and other shipping services

❑ Sticky notes

❑ Standard press kit folders

❑ Flash drives and portable hard drives

❑ Color-coded everything (copy paper, folders, inks, etc.)

❑ Baskets to contain items that you're not ready to throw away

❑ Organizers to support your clearance and release system

❑ Expandable folders with alphabet or days of the month

❑ Staplers (lots of them)

❑ Paper punch

❑ Three-ring binders

❑ Organization's press kit or its logo on a sticker

❑ Organization letterhead

❑ Paper clips (all sizes)

❑ Tape