

Communications of Exposure and Health Monitoring and Surveillance Data During an Emergency Response

Purpose

The collection of environmental exposure data and individual health and safety monitoring data, along with aggregate surveillance data are relevant to protecting all the responders involved in an event, both in the short-term and long-term, but it is not an end unto itself. This information must be communicated to workers, intra-organizationally, inter-organizationally, and within and outside the Incident Command Structure.

Principles of Communication to “Workers”

- Data use disclosure forms:
 - Explains what is being done, what the data will be used for, how data will be protected, and contact information.
- Consent forms.
- Personal exposure or monitoring results.

Principles of Intra-agency/Organizational Communication

Guidance on the need to communicate information about environmental sampling, exposures monitoring, and tracking of injuries and illnesses should include common elements:

- Disseminate timely, accurate information to personnel involved in the response effort.
- Use meetings, phone calls, or intranet to share information on a periodic/ real-time basis.
- Designate a safety and health officer who will communicate this information.
- Develop and distribute a contact list for all personnel.
- Include provisions to disseminate information rapidly.
- Develop an Emergency Communications Plan.

Principles of Inter-Agency Communication

- Send a unified message.
- Write clearly and avoid any internal jargon or acronyms.
- Keep information organized and secure.
- Meet deadlines.

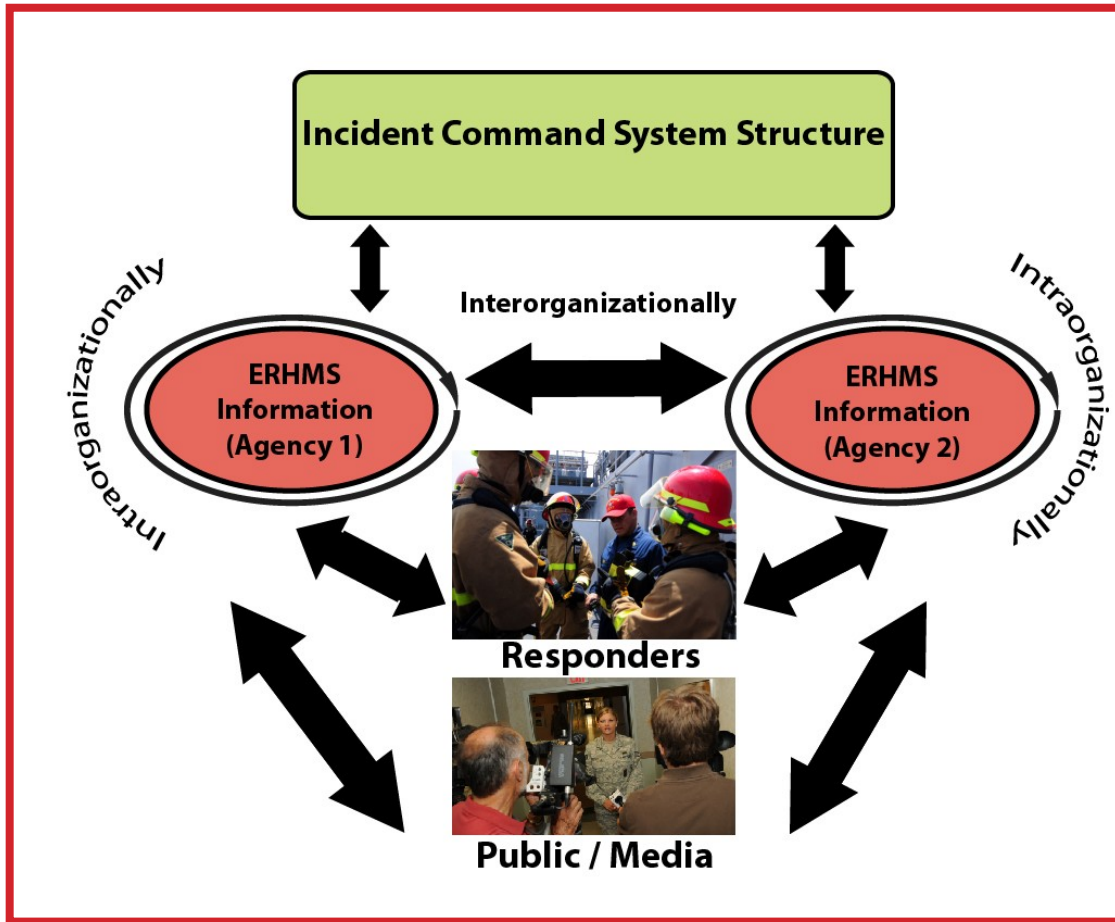
Principles of Public/Media Communication

- Determine media needs and coordinate with media representative.
- Answer media questions and calls.
- Refer media to other contacts/information.
- Direct media to staging area.
- Escort media to scene if appropriate.
- Document media calls.



Briefing the media and answering media inquiries

Communications Within the Incident Command System:



Emergency Responder Health Monitoring and Surveillance

The Emergency Responder Health Monitoring and Surveillance (ERHMS) system is a health monitoring and surveillance framework that includes recommendations and tools specific to protect emergency responders during the pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment phases of a disaster. The intent of ERHMS is to identify exposures and/or signs and symptoms early in the course of an emergency response in order to prevent or mitigate adverse physical and psychological outcomes and ensure workers maintain their ability to respond effectively and are not harmed in the course of this response work. Data will also help to identify during the post-deployment phase which responders would benefit from medical referral and possible enrollment in a long-term health surveillance program. Please refer to Chapter 8 and section 8T for more information on Communications of Exposure and Health Monitoring and Surveillance Data During an Emergency Response.

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For more information on ERHMS, please visit:

www.cdc.gov/niosh/erhms