

University of Illinois Fire Service Institute

Course Syllabus

Course Title: All-Hazards Public Information Officer

Course Duration: 40 hours

Program: NIMS/ICS

Course Prerequisites: IS 100, IS 200, ICS 300, ICS 400, IS 700, IS 800

Course Description: Before the 9/11 attacks, ICS training was exercised nearly exclusively on fire-based incidents. Recognizing the applicability and genuine need for NIMS principles across incident response disciplines, an “all-hazards” approach to training will be embraced in this course.

With an “all-hazards” approach, this course will focus on how a Public Information Officer (PIO) needs to fundamentally possess the same core knowledge, skills, and abilities whether they are responding to a fire, an oil spill, a mass-casualty incident, or another incident. In other words, regardless of the hazard, discipline, or incident, the essential job of a Public Information Officer is the same.

This course uses lecture, discussion, student participation, and activities to focus on understanding the behaviors, duties, responsibilities, and capabilities of an effective PIO on a Type 3 All Hazards Incident Management Team (AHIMT).

The intended audience(s) are Federal, state, tribal, and/or local level emergency responders who may be designated as a Public Information Officer (PIO) on their local or state IMT. The materials were developed with the assumption that audience members may have little or no actual experience as a member of an AHIMT.

The audience may include students from a variety of agencies and functional disciplines, including fire service, law enforcement, emergency management, public works departments, as well as public health organizations, medical emergency teams, and hospitals.

NIMS ICS specific training should be completed by personnel who are regularly required assigned to function under the Incident Command System (ICS), by personnel who may be called upon to function in a Command, Staff, or Unit Leader position on a Type III or IV AHIMT, or by those persons who desire to seek credentials/certification in those positions

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Course Requirements and/or Recommendations:

Pre-Course Work –

- None

Course Work –

- Participate in class discussion, activities and in group activities and exercises
- Complete unit quizzes
- Achieve 75% or higher on the final quiz

Post-Course Work –

- None

Required Textbook:

E/L 0952 NIMS ICS All-Hazards Public Information Officer November 2019, Version 1

This will be provided to the student on Day 1 of the class (digital version).

Course Policies:

Safety Policy: Students shall understand and follow all instructions pertaining to operational safety, as stated by instructors or as written in course materials. Instructors and students shall be mindful of safety at all times. Conduct judged to be unsafe shall be grounds for dismissal from the course.

Academic Integrity Policy: IFSI has the responsibility for maintaining academic integrity so as to protect the quality of the education provided through its courses, and to protect those who depend upon our integrity. It is the responsibility of the student to refrain from infractions of academic integrity, from conduct that may lead to suspicion of such infractions, and from conduct that aids others in such infractions. Any violation of the code of conduct is grounds for immediate dismissal from the course.

American Disabilities Act: As guaranteed in the Vocational Rehabilitation Act and in the American Disabilities Act, if any student needs special accommodations they are to notify their instructor and provide documentation as soon as possible so arrangements can be made to provide for the student's needs. If arrangements cannot be made at the class site, the student will test at an alternative time and place where the special accommodations can be made.

Evaluation Strategy: Students will be evaluated with an end of course quiz.

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Course Content:

Unit: 1

Title: Unit Introduction

Terminal Learning Objective: Upon completion of this unit, students will identify the course objective and position-specific resource materials for the position of Public Information Officer.

Unit: 2

Title: Roles and Responsibilities

Terminal Learning Objective: Upon completion of this unit, students will describe the role and importance of the Public Information Officer position in incident operations, especially as it pertains to initial incident operations.

Unit: 3

Title: Incident Information Operations

Terminal Learning Objective: Upon completion of this unit, students will describe the fundamentals of information operations during incident management

Unit: 4

Title: Developing a Communications Strategy

Terminal Learning Objective: Upon completion of this unit, students will develop a communications strategy for disseminating incident information.

Unit: 5

Title: Effective Media Relations/Using Social Media

Terminal Learning Objective: Upon completion of this unit, students will describe the importance of effective media relations, including social media, and the role of the Public Information Officer in developing and maintaining such relationships.

Unit: 6

Title: Assistant Public Information Officer Tasks and Assignments

Terminal Learning Objective: Upon completion of this unit, students will describe the roles and responsibilities of Assistant Public Information Officers (PIOs).

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Unit: 7

Title: Effective Community Relations

Terminal Learning Objective: Upon completion of this unit, students will describe how the Public Information Officer may establish and leverage effective community relations.

Unit: 8

Title: Special Situations

Terminal Learning Objective: Upon completion of this unit, students will describe the role of the Public Information Officer as it pertains to handling special situations within incidents.

Unit: 9

Title: Creating a Safe Environment

Terminal Learning Objective: Upon completion of this unit, students will describe how Public Information Officers can keep themselves and those they escort and work with in the incident environment.

Unit: 10

Title: Transition and Demobilization

Terminal Learning Objective: Upon completion of this unit, students will define the Public Information Officer's roles and responsibilities during incident transition and demobilization.

Reference List:

National Incident Management System (NIMS), October 2017

Public Information Officer Position Task Book

The ICS 420-1 Field Operations Guide by the U.S. Fire Administration.

https://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/field_operations_guide.pdf

The "Redbook 2018 Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire/Aviation Operations" from the National Interagency Fire Center Group

The U.S. Coast Guard "Incident Management Handbook"

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Course Schedule

DAY ONE

<u>Event</u>		<u>Duration</u>
Unit 1	Course Introduction	2 hours
Unit 2	Roles and Responsibilities	1 hour 30 minutes
Lunch		
Unit 2 (Cont.)	Roles and Responsibilities	2 hours 30 minutes
Unit 3	Incident Information Operations	1 hour 30 minutes
Review		30 minutes

DAY TWO

<u>Event</u>		<u>Duration</u>
Unit 3 (Cont.)	Incident Information Operations	1 hour
Unit 4	Developing a Communications Strategy	2 hours 30 minutes
Lunch		
Unit 5	Effective Media Relations	4 hours
Review		30 minutes

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DAY THREE

Unit 5 (Cont.)	Effective Media Relations/ Using Social Media	3 hours 30 minutes
Lunch		
Unit 5 (Cont.)	Effective Media Relations/ Using Social Media	1 hour 30 minutes
Unit 6	Assistant Public Information Officer Tasks & Assignments	2 hours 30 minutes
Review		30 minutes

DAY FOUR

Unit 7	Effective Community Relations	3 hour 30 minutes
Lunch		
Unit 7 (Cont.)	Effective Community Relations	1 hour
Unit 8	Special Situations	3 hours
Review		30 minutes

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DAY FIVE

Unit 8	Special Situations	3 hours 30 minutes
Lunch		
Unit 9	Creating a Safe Environment	1 hour
Unit 10	Transition and Demobilization	1 hour
Review		1 hour
Final Quiz		1 hour
Review of Course Final		30 minutes
