

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

A Dinner and Discussion for Jurisdiction Leaders

January 23, 2013

6:00-8:00pm

**Hilton Garden Inn
235 Hoosick Street
Troy, NY 12180**



Hosted by:

Rensselaer County Department of Health
Rensselaer County Bureau of Public Safety
Rensselaer County Office of the County Executive

Funded by the NYS Department of Homeland Security Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI).

Emergency Procedures & Important County Contact Information

During emergencies, your first point of contact should be to call 9-1-1.

After calling in to 9-1-1 the dispatcher will:

- Dispatch fire, police, and/or EMS services as appropriate for emergencies
- For Non-emergencies call 270-5252. If the county has opened an **Emergency Operations Center (EOC)**, the dispatcher will share with you the EOC phone number(s) to contact for information and resources. From here, the EOC will be your point of contact for identifying action steps and requesting resources from the county.

During Non-Emergencies

**For information relating to
Public Information, contact:**

Chris Meyer
Public Information Officer,
County Executive's Office
270-2900 (Regular hours)

**For information relating to
Public Safety/Emergency Management,
contact:**

Kelly Paslow
Director, Bureau of Public Safety
266-7676 (Regular hours)
Pager (24/7):
446-4368
Dispatch (24/7):
270-5252

**For information relating to
Public Health, contact:**

Rensselaer County Department
of Health
270-2655 (Regular hours)
Duty Officer (Afterhours):
857-4660

**For information relating to
Public Health Preparedness, contact:**

Mark Waldenmaier
Public Health Planner,
Rensselaer County Department
of Health
270-2720 (Regular Hours)

Remember—in emergencies you can always call 9-1-1. If it is a non-emergency and you are looking for a specific county agency, you can call Dispatch at 270-5252 who will assist you in your request.

Dear Elected Officials,

During emergency situations, it is important to have a Chain of Command in place to understand who is in charge, and who follows the chain of command if someone cannot be reached. This is helpful to your jurisdiction, so you know who to involve in emergency situations. It is also important to the County, so that the County Executive Office, Bureau of Public Safety, Department of Health and other County agencies know who to contact in the event of an emergency or imminent emergency. As such, we ask you to complete the following Chain-of-Command information for your purposes and for the County's purposes. Please mail this back to the County Executive's Office within one month of receipt. A new form will be mailed to you each year to be updated after your jurisdiction's elections. If any changes should occur in the meantime, please contact Carrie Lyons at the County Executive's Office at 270-2912. Keeping this information current will help you respond better to emergencies, and will also help County agencies serve you better during emergency situations.

Chain of Command for _____ (name of jurisdiction)

Completed on _____ (date) by _____ (name, please print)

In the event of an emergency or imminent urgent situation, please proceed to contact the following individuals in the order they are listed until a commander can be reached:

	Name	Title	Daytime phone	Evening/ weekend phone	Email
First					
Second					
Third					
Fourth					
Fifth					

Please retain a copy for your records. A copy will also remain on file with the Rensselaer County Executive Office, the Bureau of Public Safety and the Department of Health.

Thank you for your time and support!

Emergency Communications: A Dinner & Discussion for Jurisdiction Leaders
Wednesday, January 23, 2013
6:00pm to 8:00pm
Troy Hilton Garden Inn

- 6:00-6:10, Welcome by Kathy Jimino, County Executive
- 6:10-6:50, Dinner
- 6:50-7:20, Remarks from Allison Marron, Community Communications Consultant
 - *Community and Leadership Survey Results*
- 7:20-7:30, Remarks from Kelly Paslow, Director of Bureau of Public Safety
 - *Introduction to Leadership Toolkit*
- 7:30-7:55pm, Q & A with County Panel
 - Panel Members:
 - Chris Meyer, Public Information Officer
 - Kelly Paslow, Director of Bureau of Public Safety
 - Mark Waldenmaier, Public Health Planner at Department of Health
- 7:55-8:00, Closing Remarks by Kathy Jimino, County Executive

Rensselaer County's
Emergency Communications:
A Dinner & Discussion for Jurisdiction Leaders

Index

Tab	Contents
Inside Folder Pocket	Important Jurisdiction to County Communication Information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Contact Lists for County Agencies • Chain of Command template and return envelope
1 Red	Overview of Emergency Communications Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover Letter • Presentation slides on survey results
2 White	Local Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BPS Fleet Vehicles • NY-Alert Factsheet
3 Blue	NYSAC Overview of Emergency Actions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergencies • Emergency Forms
4 Orange	NYCOM Emergencies: A Field Guide for Local Officials
5 Yellow	CDC Crisis & Emergency Risk Communication: By Leaders for Leaders
6 Green	DHSES Information for Local Chief Executives regarding declaring a state of emergency and issuing emergency orders
7 Pink	NYCOM Authority of a municipal chief executive during an emergency: A discussion of Article 2-B of the Executive Law
8 Lt. Orange	National Incident Command System (NIMS) for Elected Officials Fact Sheet and information on Incident Command System Courses
Back Folder Pocket	Public Health Preparedness Fact Sheet



**RENSSELAER COUNTY
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE
NED PATTISON GOVERNMENT CENTER
TROY, NEW YORK 12180**

**Kathleen M. Jimino
Rensselaer County Executive**

**Phone: (518) 270-2900
Fax: (518) 270-2961**

January 2013

Dear Elected Officials:

As leaders of the county's jurisdictions, elected officials play a crucial role in emergency communications. This fall, the County Executive, Rensselaer County Department of Health and Bureau of Public Safety led an emergency communications project to understand how you and residents of your jurisdictions communicated during emergencies. Community members from each jurisdiction, over 500 in total, responded to the survey, and have shared how they receive emergency messages.

This binder contains summary information of both the community survey *and* surveys completed by leadership of towns, cities and villages, conducted November and December 2012. The results of this survey helped us determine what resources were most useful to support emergency management at the jurisdiction level. Included in this binder are resources on developing emergency management plans, responding to emergencies and communicating to the public. You will also find general information on resources available from the county, and information about some of the preparedness activities intended to support the county as a whole and your community.

Copies of these materials will be posted to the County website, www.rensco.com, in February 2013. If you have any further questions on emergency management for your jurisdiction, please contact the Bureau of Public Safety for support.

Sincerely,

The Emergency Community Communications Project Committee

*Kathy Jimino, County Executive
Chris Meyer, Public Information Officer
Kelly Paslow, Director of the Bureau of Public Safety
Mary Fran Wachunas, Director of the Department of Health
Mark Waldenmaier, Public Health Planner at the Department of Health
Allison Marron, Community Communications Consultant*

Emergency Communications: A Dinner & Discussion for Jurisdiction Leaders

January 23, 2013

Troy Hilton Garden Inn

Agenda

- 6:00-6:10, Welcome by Kathy Jimino, County Executive
- 6:10-6:50, Dinner
- 6:50-7:20, Remarks from Allison Marron, Community Communications Consultant
- 7:20-7:30, Remarks from Kelly Paslow, Director of Bureau of Public Safety
- 7:30-7:55, Q & A with County Panel
- 7:55-8:00, Closing Remarks by Kathy Jimino, County Executive

Welcome by Kathy Jimino

County Executive

Community and Leadership Surveys

Allison Marron, MPH, CHES

Community Communications Consultant

A Friendly Reminder Before We Begin...

Please complete your
evaluation before leaving!

Thank you!

Emergency Communications Project

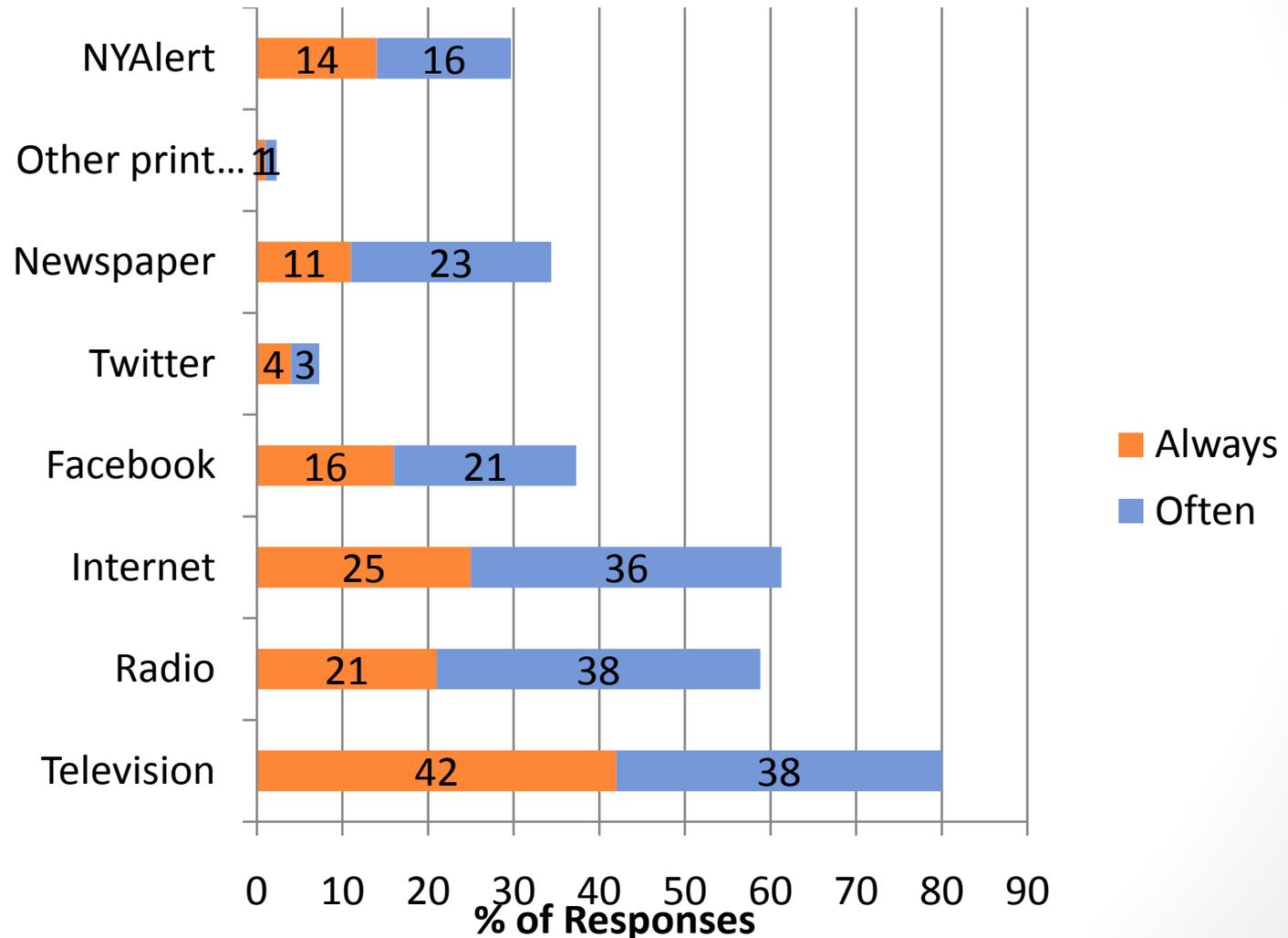
- Project Objectives
 - Develop and distribute assessments of emergency communication and public information systems
 - Community Survey
 - Leadership Survey
 - Develop and summarize assessment data
 - Identify and collect resources to support jurisdiction leaders
 - Complete a summary presentation

Community Survey

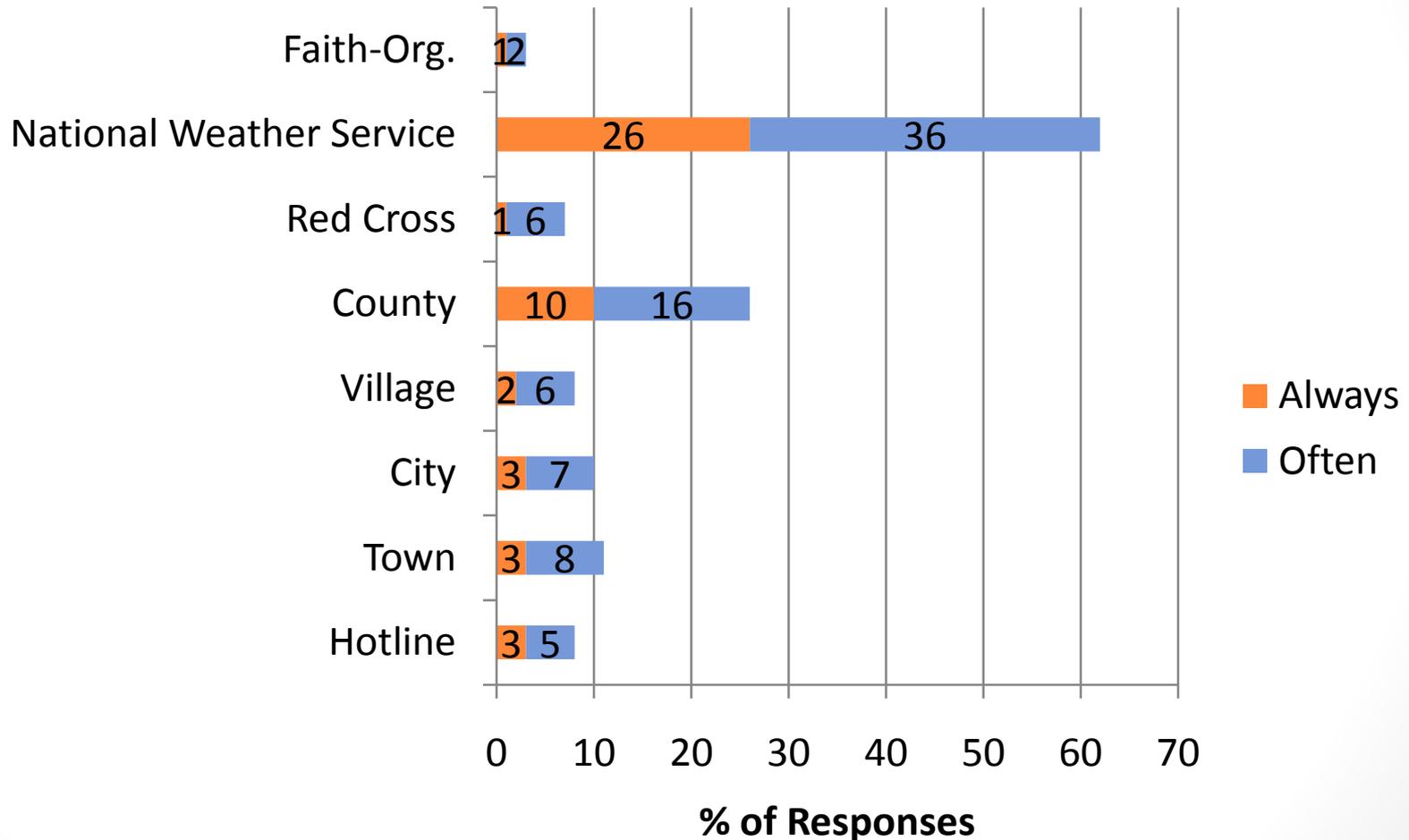
Community Survey

- Open to all residents of Rensselaer County
- Recruitment through local papers
- Results collected Nov 7 – Dec 20
- Over 500 responses
- Responses from each jurisdiction
- Demographic information

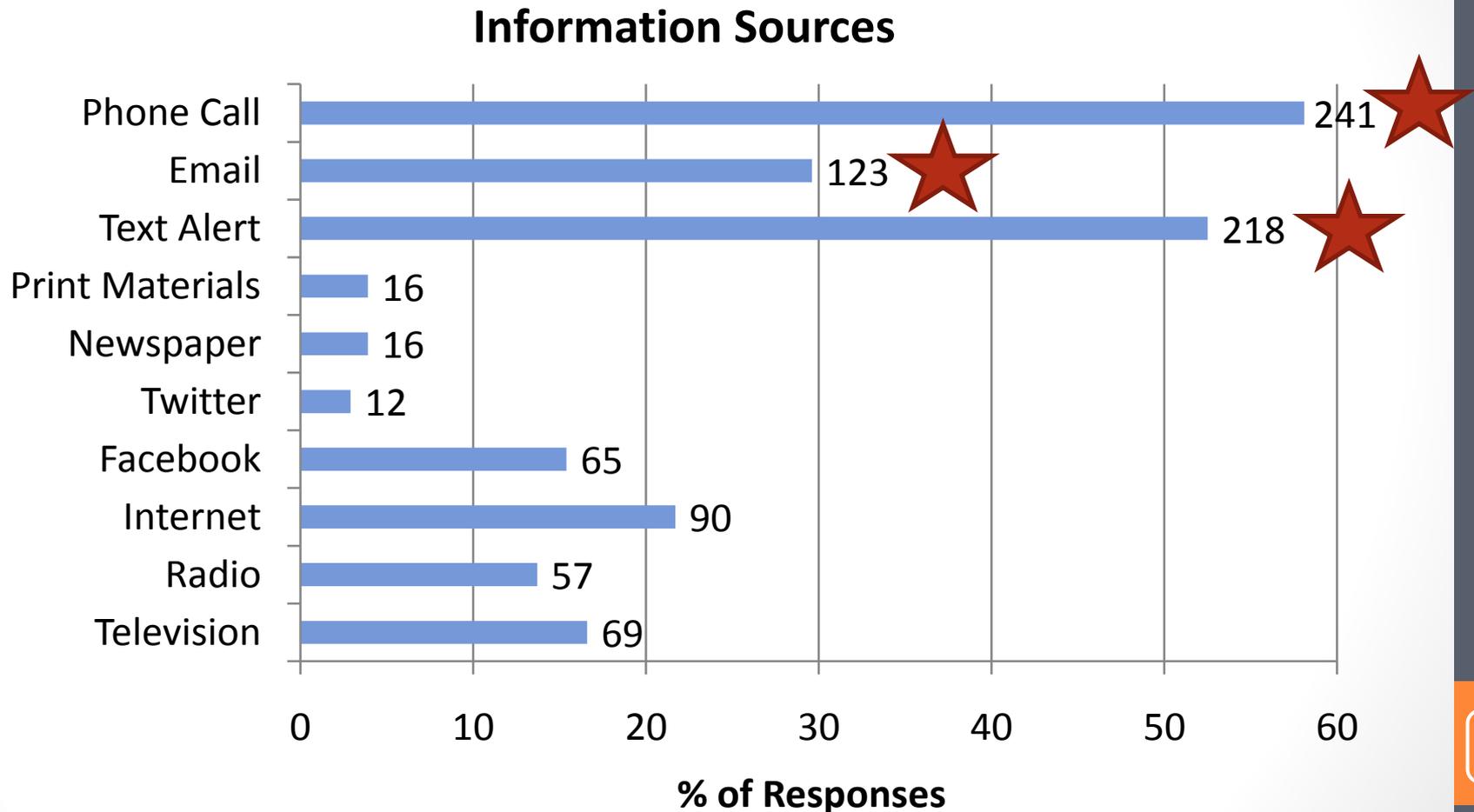
How often do you get emergency information from these sources? (n=452)



How often do you get emergency information from these sources? (n=452)

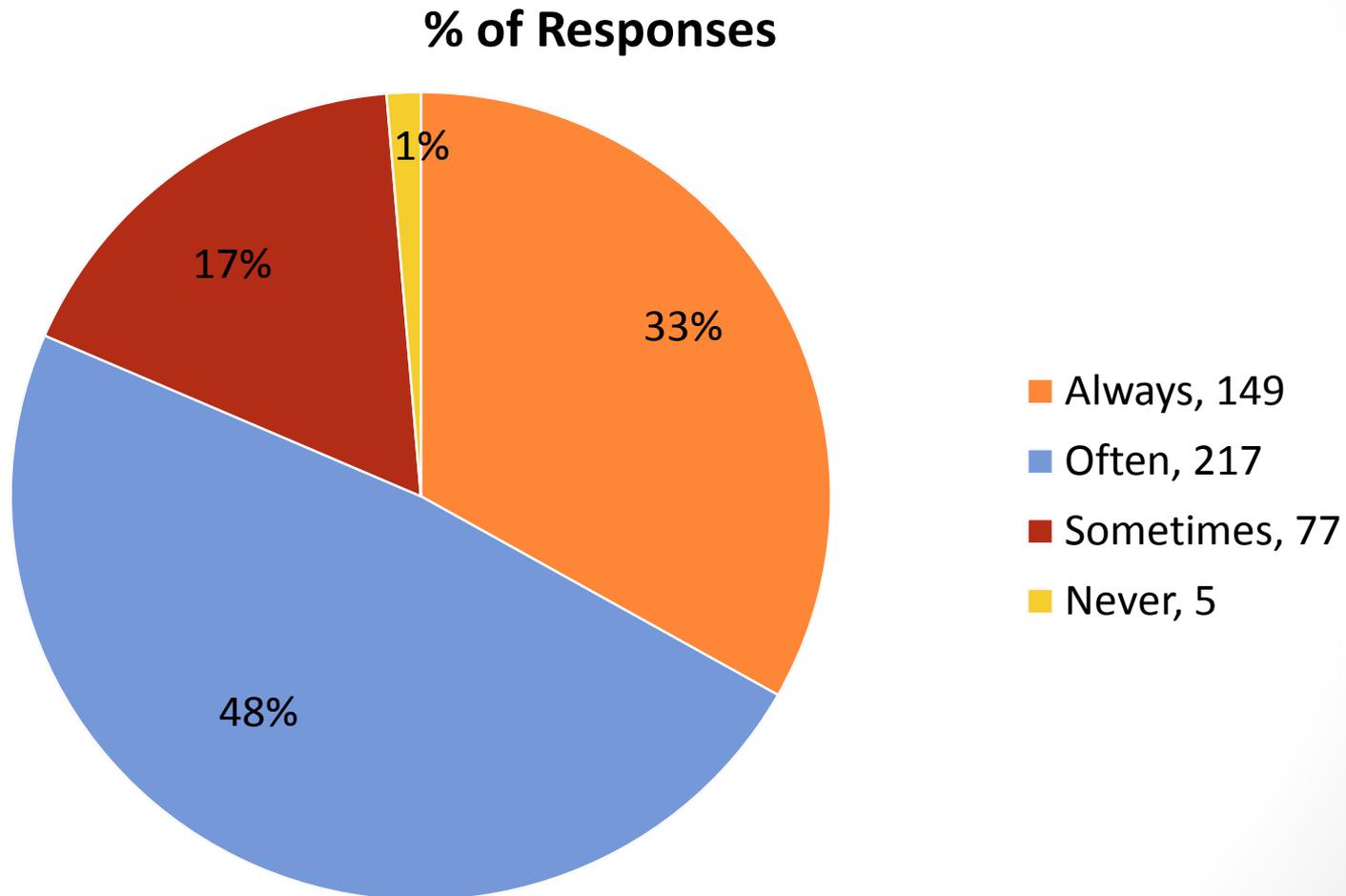


How else would you like to get emergency information?* (n=415)



**that is different from how you get it now*

How often is emergency information easy to understand? (n=449)



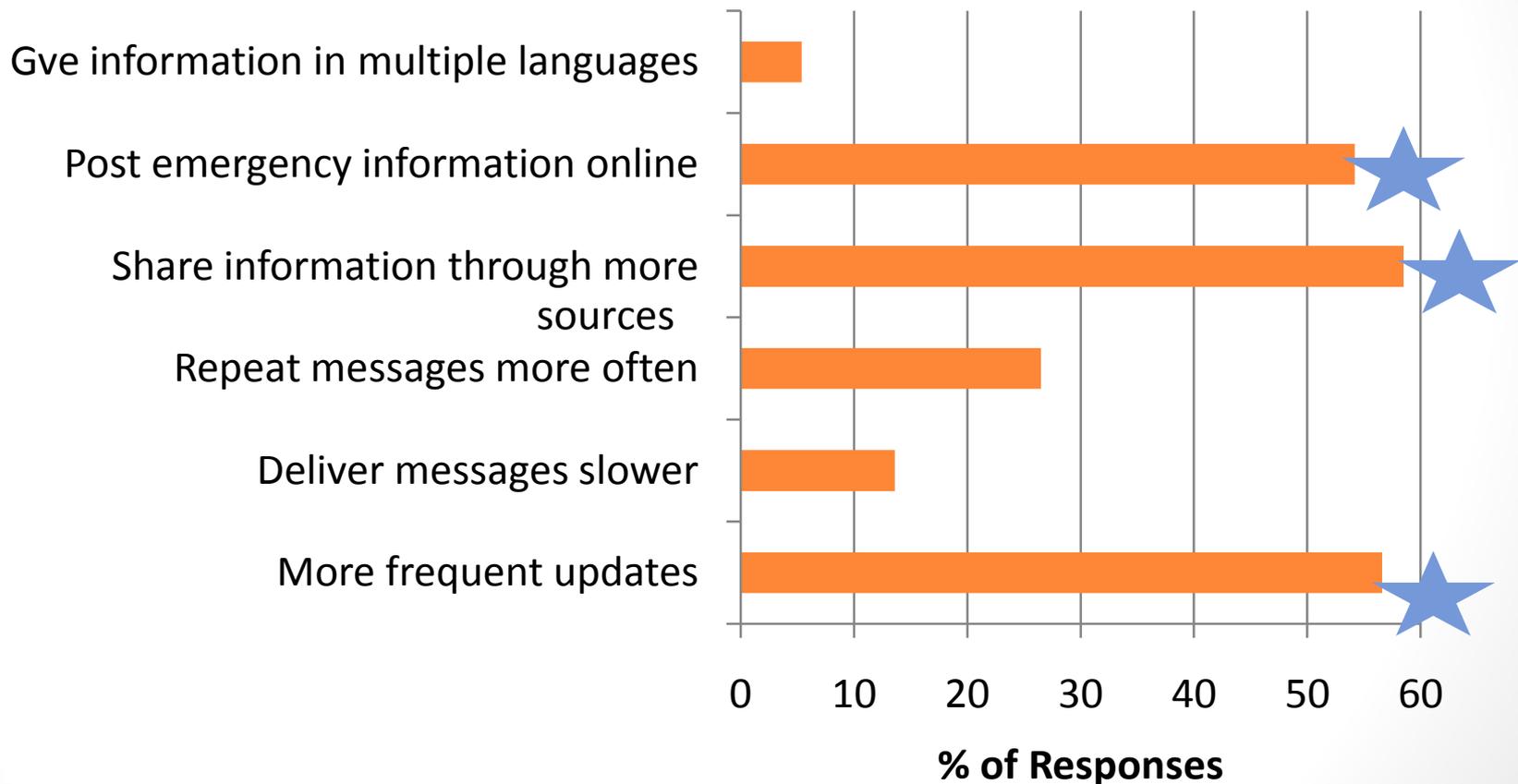
What is helpful about these messages? (n=444)

Answer Choice	%	N=
Information is easy to understand	66%	291
Information is repeated often	63%	281
Updates occur often	62%	277
Every news source shares same message	42%	190
Information is given in multiple languages	3%	12

- Other comments:
 - That it gets to us in a timely manner
 - Exact location is given

How could these messages be improved? (n=426)

Choices



How could these messages be improved? (n=31)

- “Other” comments provided by individuals
 - Use reverse 911
 - **Consistency among providers**
 - Update city’s website more often during emergencies
 - **Use social media / use social media *more***
 - Columbia County has a presence on Facebook. Rensselaer County does not...it would be really helpful if they would.

Leadership Survey

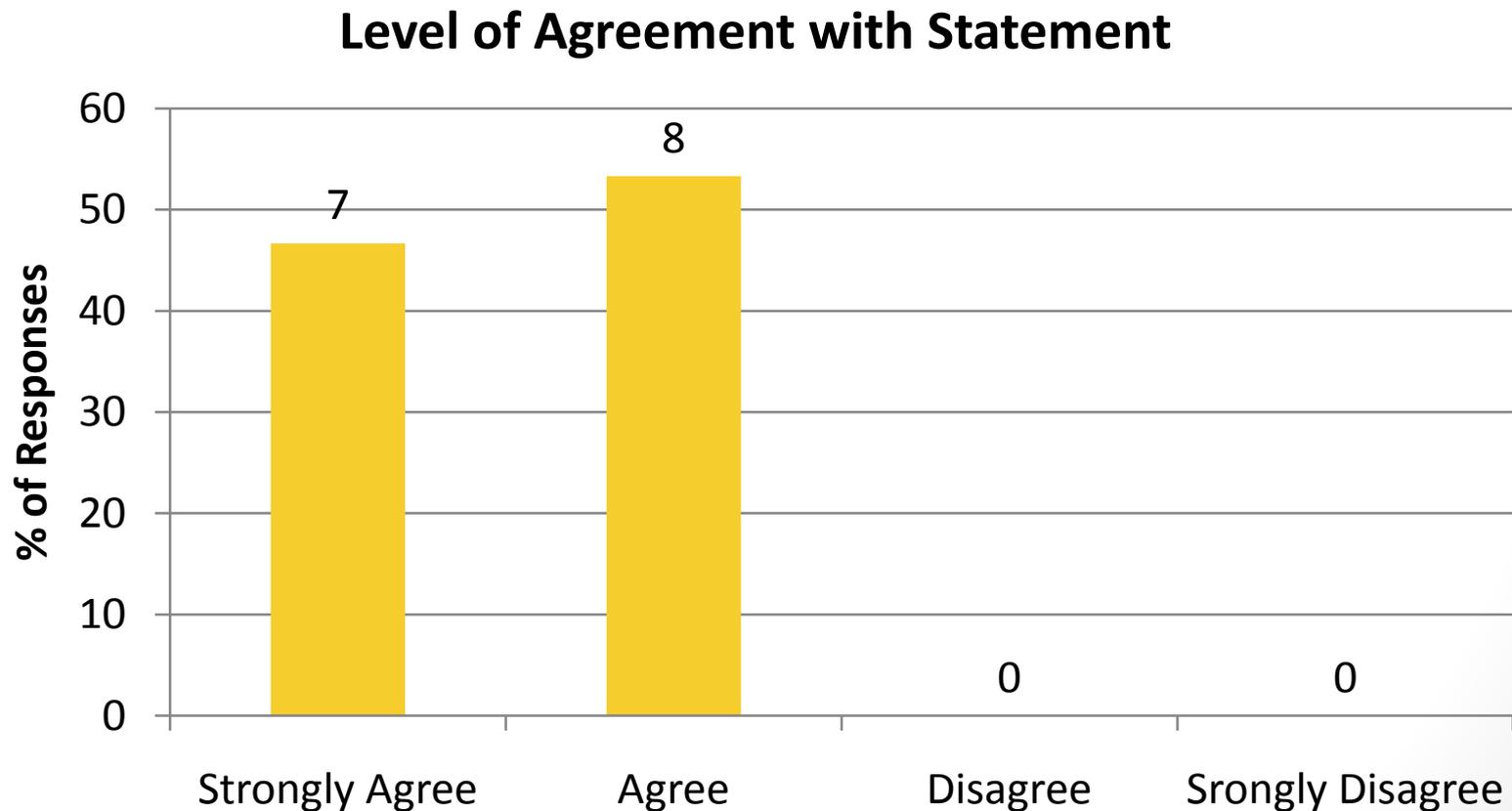
Leadership Survey

- Responses from 14 jurisdictions
- Survey advertised to elected officials via letters, emails and follow-up phone calls

What is your responsibility as an individual to your community during an emergency? (n=12)

- **Communicate information to the public**
- Communicate with / Coordinate with / Delegate Tasks to jurisdiction's departments
- Assess community's needs & **communicate needs to proper agencies**
- **Overall command responsibility**

My jurisdiction has responsibility for an incident taking place within its borders. (n=15)



How do you assign responsibility for response to an incident within your jurisdiction? (n=12)

- **Communicate with various groups to coordinate a response**
- Provide resources available at the jurisdiction level
- Defer to other departments for advice
- Work with department heads to prioritize tasks, **gather information to share with public**
- **Utilize our Emergency Plan**

Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP)

Does your community have a CEMP in place? (n=15)

Yes	80%	12
No	13%	2
Unsure	7%	1

When was your CEMP last updated? (n=12)

Within the last year	33%	4
Within the last 2-3 years	25%	3
Within the last 4-5 years	0%	0
More than 5 years ago	33%	4
Unsure	8%	1

Chain of Command

Do you have a chain of command established for emergency situations? (n=15)

Yes	60%	9
No	20%	3
Unsure	20%	3

- Titles / Agencies listed in Chain of Command
 1. Supervisor / Mayor
 2. Deputy Supervisor / Mayor; Police Chief
 3. Chief of Police; Highway Superintendent
 4. Battalion Commander; DPW/ Highway Superintendent; Town Councilman
 5. Police Captain; EMS / Fire Responders; Town Councilman; Building Inspector

Who in the county do you share your chain of command with?* (n=7)

- Information shared primarily with Bureau of Public Safety / Dispatchers
- Smaller number share with County Executive's Office, Health Department, State Police

*/ Do you have a protocol to inform the county and other agencies when your chain of command is updated?

Has your jurisdiction identified...

....community resources that could be utilized during an emergency? (n=14)

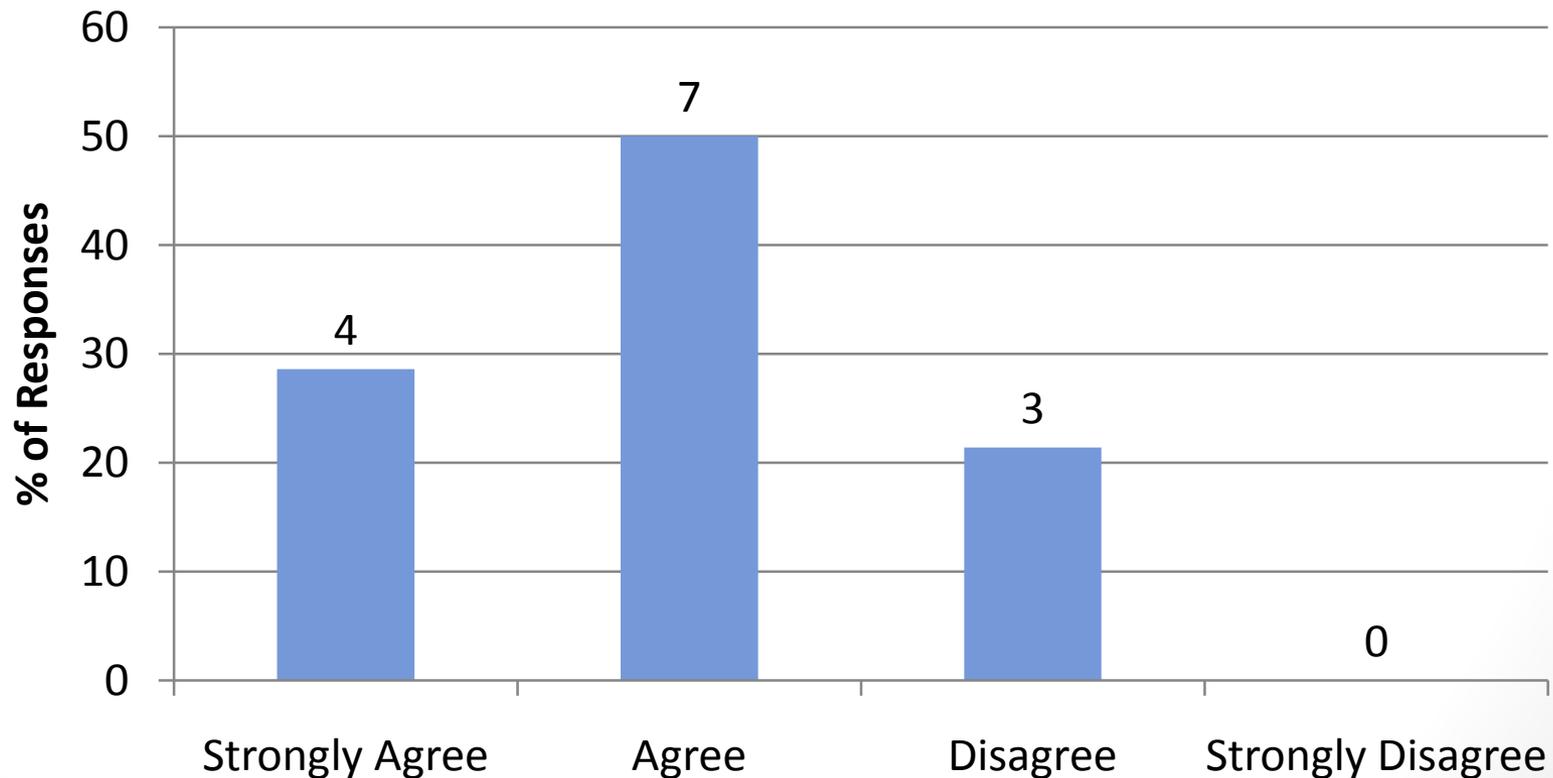
Yes	64%	9
No	29%	4
Unsure	7%	1

....facilities in your community that could accommodate an Emergency Operations Center? (n=14)

Yes	92%	13
No	7%	1
Unsure	0%	0

I feel county resources are available to me during an emergency. (n=14)

Level of Agreement with Statement



What resources do you feel are available to you from the county? (n=14)

Resource	%	N=
Emergency Operation Center Support	71%	10
Public Information Support	71%	10
Transportation Support	14%	2
Sheltering Support	43%	6

What resources do you feel are available to you from the county? (n=14)

- Other
 - Hazardous material response
 - Police, rescue devices and personnel
 - Generator for water supply support
 - **To be honest, not sure what is available**
 - EMS and Fire Management
 - County Executive PIO
 - Heavy equipment
 - Highway Department barricades

Communicating with the public

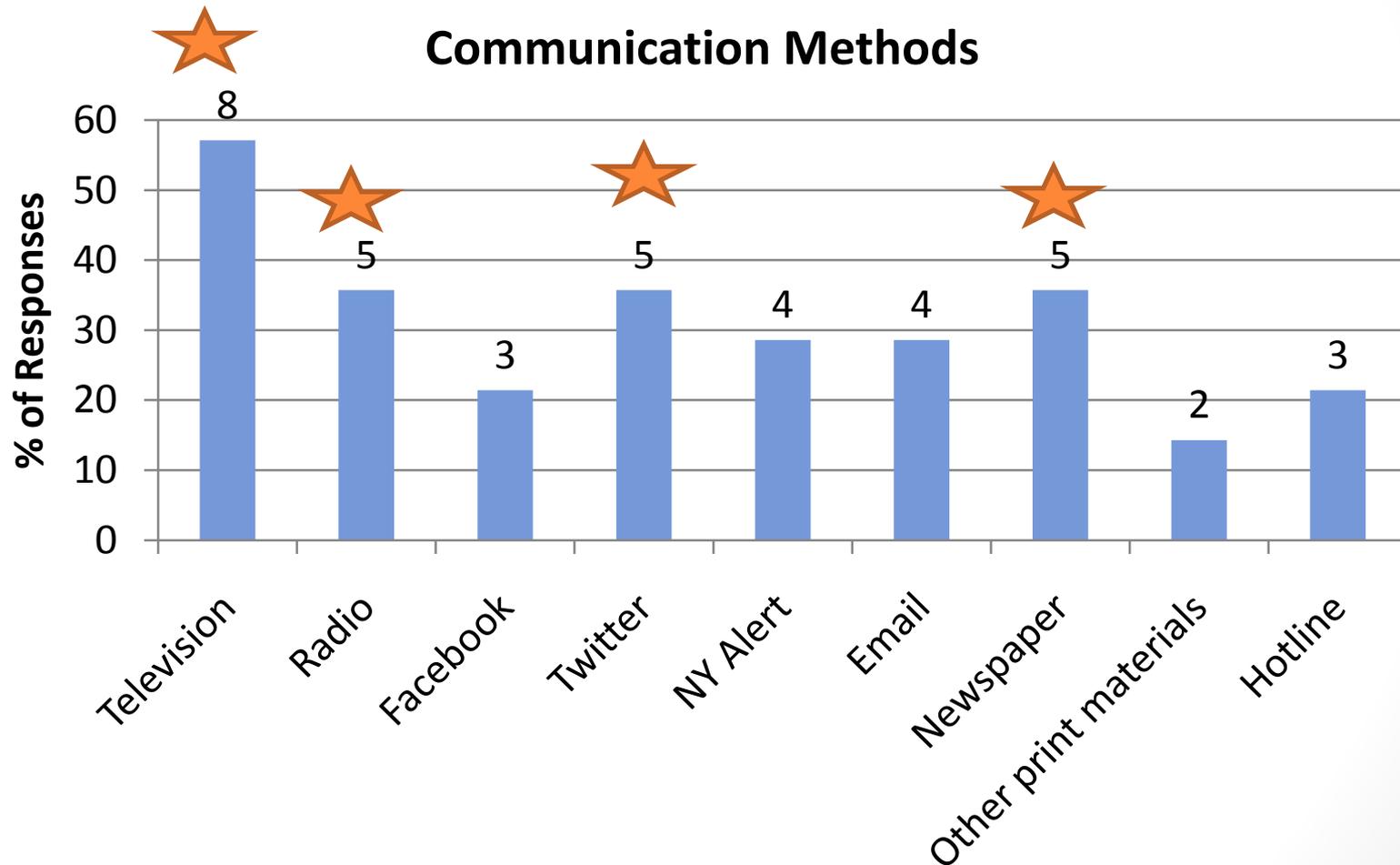
Does your jurisdiction have a public information system? (n=14)

Yes	57%	8
No	42%	6
Unsure	0%	0

During emergencies, does your jurisdiction communicate emergency messages to the public? (n=13)

Yes	92%	12
No	8%	1
Unsure	0%	0

How are these messages communicated? (n=14)



Leadership & Community Response Comparison*

Leadership

TV - 1

Radio, Twitter,
Newspaper - 2

NY Alert,
Email - 3

Community

TV - 1

NWS - 2

Internet - 3

Radio - 4

Facebook - 5

Newspaper - 6

NY Alert - 7

**Ways jurisdictions use to convey messages vs. ways in which public gets emergency messages*

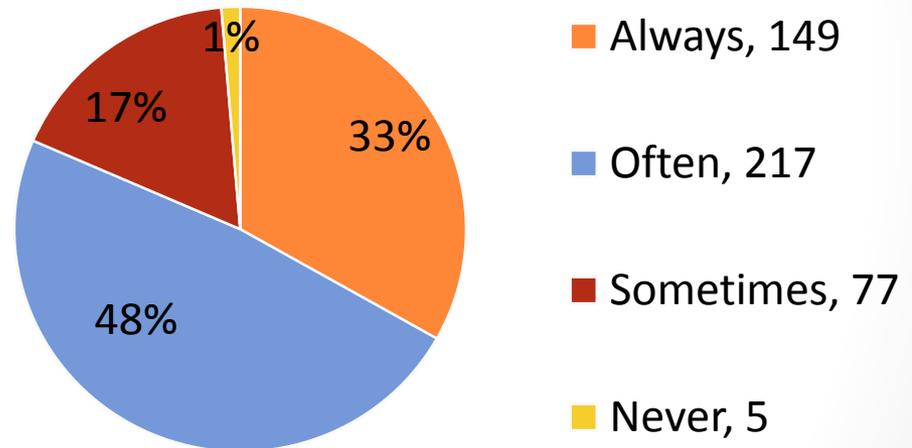
Leadership & Community Response Comparison

Leadership Responses:

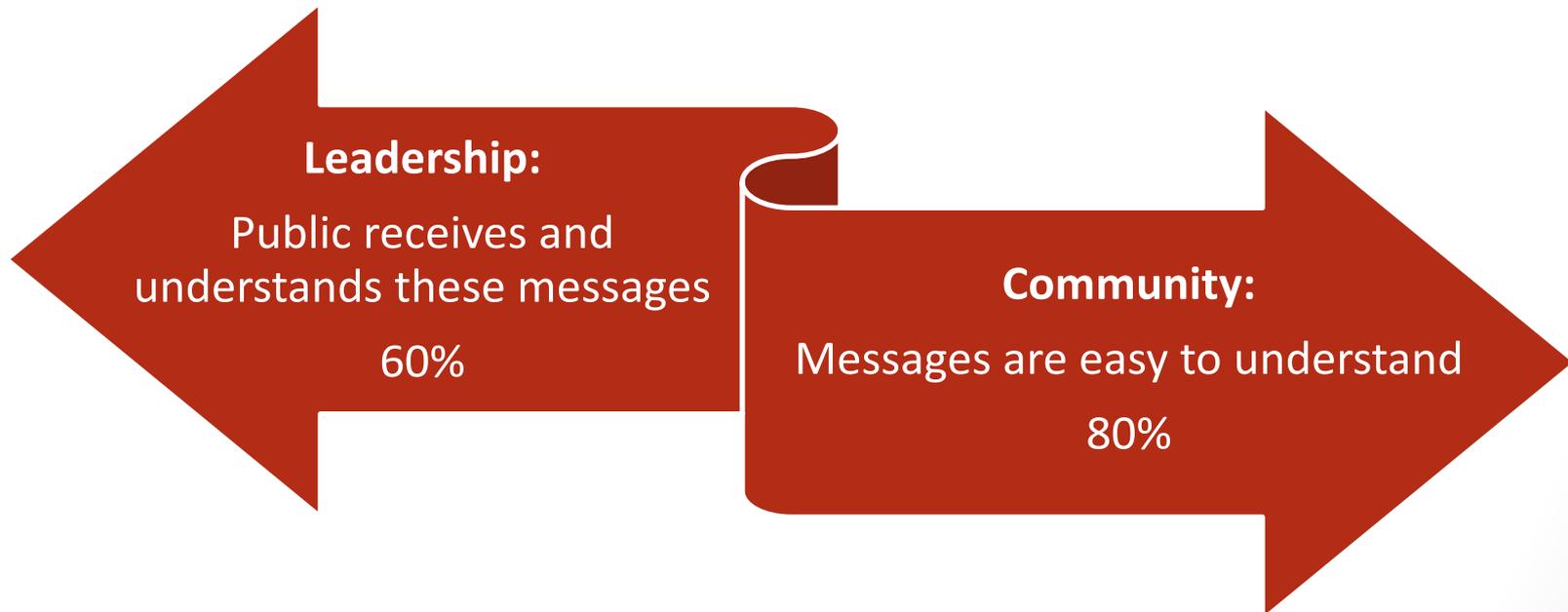
To what extent do you think the public receives and understands these messages? (n=13)

Well	15%	2
Good	46%	6
Fair	31%	4
Poor	8%	1

Community Survey: Number of Responses



Leadership & Community Response Comparison



...public receives and understands these messages?

- Yes
 - Public complies with requests
 - “Thanks” for job well done / no complaints
- No
 - Different forms of media reach different demographics—hard to update all population groups at one time
 - When power is out during an emergency, which is often, we have no way of sharing messages

Message Coordination

To what degree do you think these messages are coordinated before they are shared with the public? (n=14)

Well	36%	5
Good	43%	6
Fair	21%	3
Poor	0%	0

Community: about 40% said all sources are sharing the same information

Message Coordination

- WHY?
 - Representatives from all agencies are in constant contact
 - Irene demonstrated that a coordinated message can be sent
 - Make every attempt to have one spokesperson during unusual events
- WHY NOT?
 - Have seen too many conflicting reports in the past to say messages are coordinated—could use improvement
 - Too many required calls to get too many people on board quickly

Remarks by Kelly Paslow

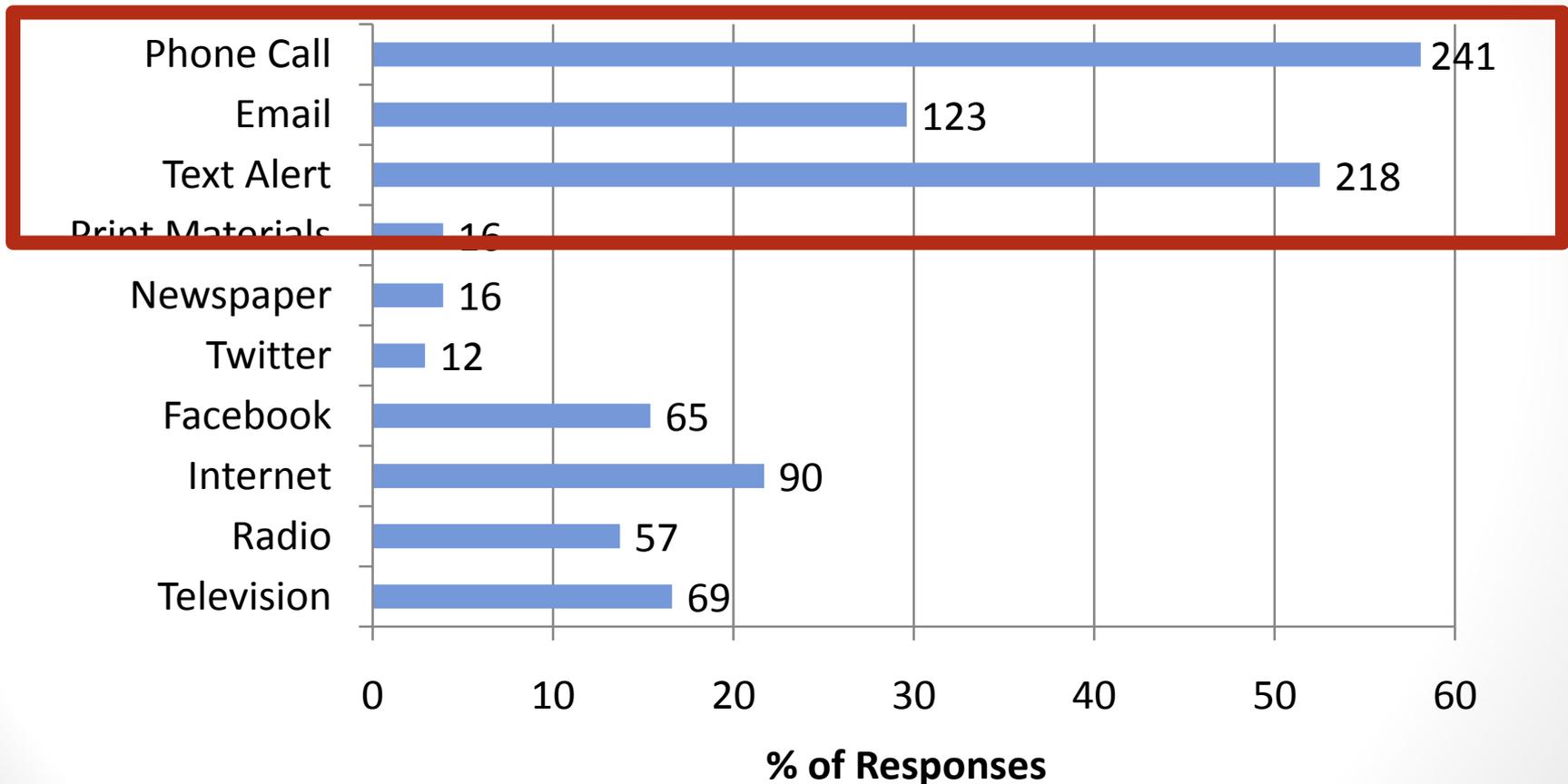
Director, Bureau of Public Safety

Remarks from Kelly

- Other key points for leaders based on survey results
- Emergency Management Resource Binder

How else would you like to get emergency information?* (n=415)

Information Sources



**that is different from how you get it now*

Chain of Command

Do you have a chain of command established for emergency situations? (n=15)

Yes	60%	9
No	20%	3
Unsure	20%	3

- Titles / Agencies listed in Chain of Command
 1. Supervisor / Mayor
 2. Deputy Supervisor / Mayor; Police Chief
 3. Chief of Police; Highway Superintendent
 4. Battalion Commander; DPW/ Highway Superintendent; Town Councilman
 5. Police Captain; EMS / Fire Responders; Town Councilman; Building Inspector

Is there any reason why you do not reach out to county agencies?

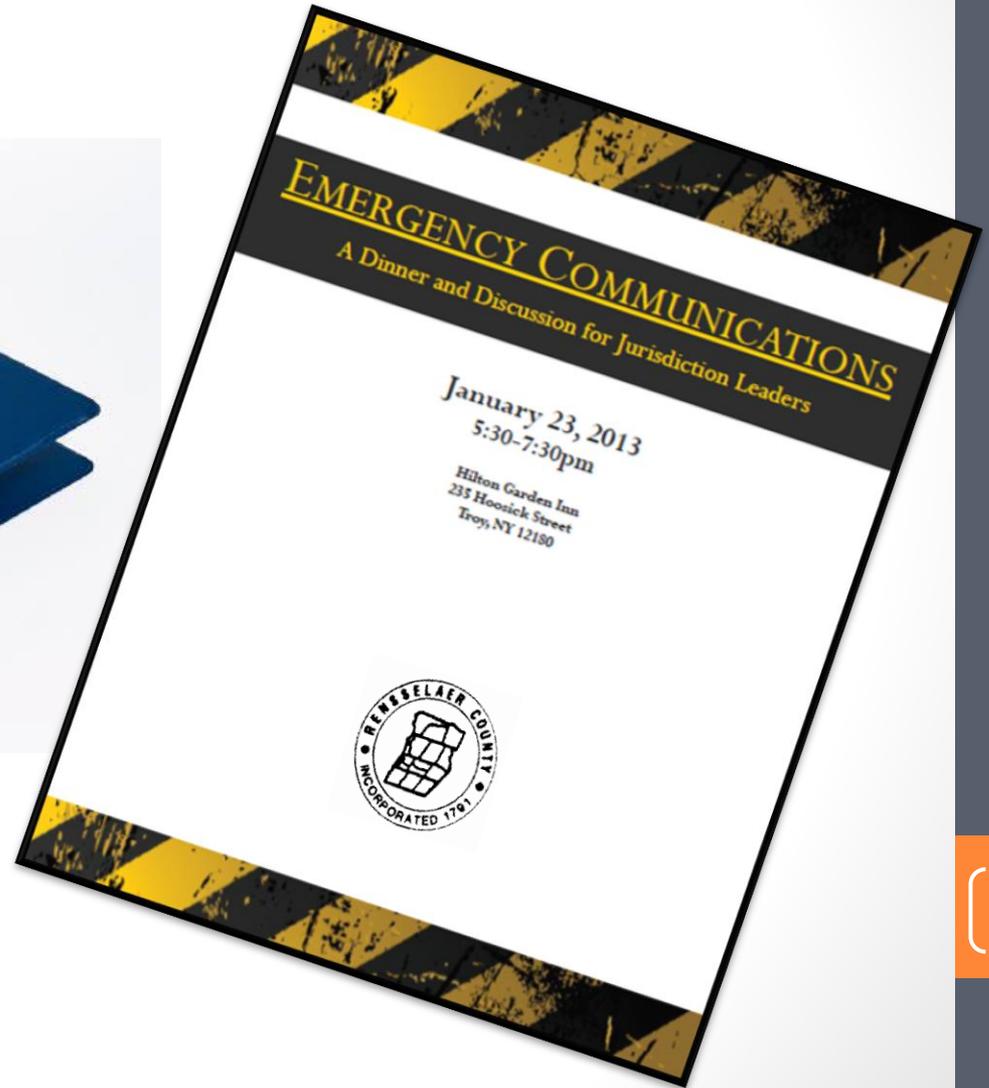
- During a county-wide emergency we may not contact the county if we have the situation under control in our jurisdiction
- **I have no idea who I would call at the county, what they could do, how to contact them on the weekend or after hours**
- Depends on the level of the emergency and if the services are truly needed
- Rarely, other than the highway department, is any timely response provided
- Often did not receive a response

Emergency Operations Center

Do you know the procedure for making requests to the county Emergency Operations Center? (n=13)

Yes	46%	6
No	54%	7

Resources for Leaders



Q & A with Panel

Q & A with Panel

- Chris Meyer, Public Information Officer
- Kelly Paslow, Director of Bureau of Public Safety
- Mark Waldenmaier, Public Health Planner at Department of Health

Closing Remarks by Kathy Jimino

County Executive

Thank you for attending!

Please remember to complete
your evaluation before leaving!

Thank you!



RENSSELAER COUNTY
BUREAU OF PUBLIC SAFETY
KELLY PASLOW
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SAFETY

Bureau of Public Safety Fleet Vehicles

MCP – Mobile Command Post

An eighteen foot Mobile Command Post which can transmit radio messages on all county radio frequencies. This unit is generally deployed to more rural settings for coordination purposes.

MCC – Mobile Communication Center

A thirty-eight foot Mobile Communications Center which can transmit radio messages on most emergency service radio frequencies. It has additional space for a conference room and can be deployed to areas in need as long as there is a good flat surface for it to be set up.

HAZMAT

- Hazmat Response Truck (HAZMAT 5-0) – City of Troy Fire Department (TFD is a Level A team used in Rensselaer County)
- Foam Trailer – Clinton Heights Fire Department (concentrated foam applicator on a trailer)

DECONTAMINATION TEAM

- DECON Trailer (Level D) - Speigletown Fire Department
- DECON Trailer enclosed (Level D) - Speigletown Fire Department
- HAZMAT PRIME MOVER (tow vehicle) – Speigletown Fire Department

(All are operated by Battalion One Decontamination Team to be used to decontaminate people and equipment that has been exposed to chemicals.)

MCI – (trailers that are positioned for Mass Casualty Incidents- supplies to be used on an EMS response to a multi-patient incident)

- Hoosick Fire Department - (covering all of NY 22)
- Pittstown Ambulance - (covering NY 7 and northern half of Rensselaer County)
- Pleasantdale Fire Department – (covering northern half of Rensselaer County)
- Averill Park Fire Department – (covering the central part of Rensselaer County)
- Nassau Ambulance – (covering the south end of Rensselaer County)

NOTE: City of Troy has a unit which has some county MCI equipment in it.



NY-ALERT

Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor



New York State All-Hazards Alert and Notification Portal

NY-Alert is the New York State All-Hazards Alert and Notification web-based portal. It is part of New York State's ongoing commitment to provide New Yorkers with information so that they will understand the risks and threats that they may face and know how to respond accordingly. Each of us has the responsibility to be as prepared as possible for any emergencies that may arise. One of the keys to preparedness is having up-to-date information.

This website contains critical emergency-related information including instructions and recommended protective actions developed in real-time by emergency service personnel. Concurrent with the posting to this website, that same information will be disseminated through various communications systems (e.g. email, cell phones, media outlets) to those who sign up.

The information posted here will include severe weather warnings, significant highway closures, hazardous materials spills, and many other emergency conditions. Additionally you will find information regarding response actions being taken by local and state agencies and protective actions that you should take to protect you, your family and your property.

By signing up for NY-Alert, you can receive warnings and emergency information via the web, your cell phone, email and other technologies. Signing up for NY Alert is free. Your information is protected and never shared with any one else. You can modify what type of information you receive or unsubscribe at any time. It is a tool to provide you with critical information when you may need it most.

By signing up for NY-Alert, you can receive warnings and emergency information via the web, your cell phone, email and other technologies from both Rensselaer County directly and from New York State.

Sign up here → <http://www.nyalert.gov/home.aspx>



Storm coming? Stuck in traffic? Need to get to a doctor fast? *iAlertz* is your answer. This iPhone and iPad app gives you the information you need to know.

Receiving alerts and notifications from member systems has never been easier.

Find contact information based on the location of your handheld device.

Zoomable, scrollable and interactive mapping to contact information, which allows routing directions based on the location of your device.

Information updated based on member system notifications and alerts.

08-08-2011
iAlertz Update

Version 1.0.3 Released (iOS 5.0 Support, small bug fixes and interface changes)

Emergencies

OVERVIEW

Every municipality should consider how it will deal with a disaster before it happens, formalizing its response process into a written plan and periodically practicing its response. The exercise of pre-planning and disaster drills will not solve all of the problems that municipal officials will face during an emergency. However, it will give the municipality a head start, saving time that is critical during the initial stages of an emergency.

This chapter includes a model local emergency management plan which can be used as a starting point for most localities. This is an initial planning document and should not take the place of a thoughtfully drafted plan that includes input and participation from all local government departments.

Local officials should consider taking the following steps in the pre-planning process:

- Identify all possible disaster or emergency conditions that might occur within your jurisdiction.
- Pre-plan what actions will be taken and by whom if one of these conditions occur.
- Schedule meetings or drills to walk through what actions or steps will be taken during the course of the disaster or emergency.
- Inventory existing municipal equipment and manpower that may be available to respond to a disaster or emergency.
- Prepare a listing of other equipment and manpower sources from nearby municipalities and contractors that may be available to supplement or provide specialized assistance in an emergency.
- Develop a communications plan for emergency staff to coordinate activities of all personnel, assuming that there will not be any telephone service or electricity.
- Maintain flexibility. No matter how well you plan, the unexpected will occur. Assume that plans will need to be altered to meet existing conditions.

EXECUTIVE LAW ARTICLE 2-B

Article 2-B of the Executive Law requires state and local disaster preparedness planning and provides local chief executives with extraordinary authority during the course of a disaster. Article 2-B is an extremely important statute, an understanding of which can assist the efforts of local chief executives to plan for, respond to, and recover from a disaster.

One of the main components of Article 2-B is the State Disaster Preparedness Commission. The Commission consists of the commissioners of transportation, health, division of criminal justice services, education, social services, economic development, agriculture and markets, housing and community renewal, general services, labor, environmental conservation, mental health, parks, recreation and historic preservation, corrections and community supervision and children and family services, the president of the New York State energy research and development authority, the superintendents of

state police, insurance, banking, the secretary of state, the state fire administrator, the chair of the public service commission, the adjutant general, the directors of the offices within the division of homeland security and emergency services, the office for technology, and the office of victim services, the chairs of the thruway authority, the metropolitan transportation authority, the port authority of New York and New Jersey, the chief professional officer of the state coordinating chapter of the American Red Cross and three additional members, to be appointed by the governor, two of whom shall be chief executives.¹ The commissioner of the division of homeland security and emergency services is the chair of the Commission, and the governor designates the Commission's vice chair.

The Commission is tasked with the following powers and responsibilities:

1. To study all aspects of man-made or natural disaster prevention, response and recovery;
2. To prepare a state comprehensive emergency management plan;
3. To prepare, keep current and distribute to chief executives and others an inventory of programs directly relevant to prevention, minimization of damage, readiness, operations during disasters, and recovery following disasters;
4. To direct state disaster operations and coordinate state disaster operations with local disaster operations following the declaration of a state disaster emergency;
5. To create, following the declaration of a state disaster emergency, a temporary organization in a disaster area to provide for integration and coordination of efforts among the various federal, state, municipal and private agencies involved; upon a finding that a municipality is unable to manage local disaster operations and with the approval of the governor, to direct the temporary organization to assume direction of the municipality's local disaster operations, for a specified period of time, utilizing the municipality's local resources (the state will not be liable for any expenses incurred in using the municipality's resources);
6. To assist in coordinating federal, state, and private recovery efforts;
7. To provide for periodic briefings, drills, and exercises to ensure that all state personnel with direct responsibilities in a disaster event are prepared to respond, and to coordinate such activities with federal, local or other state personnel;
8. To submit to the governor, the legislature and the state's chief judge an annual report which includes a summary of Commission's and state agencies activities for the year and plans for the ensuing year with respect to the duties and responsibilities of the Commission, recommendations on ways to improve state and local capability to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters, and the status of the state and local plans for disaster preparedness and response, including the name of any locality which has failed or refused to develop and implement its own disaster preparedness plan and program; and the extent to which all forms of local emergency response assets have been included, and accounted for in planning and preparation for disaster preparedness and response; and



9. To develop public service announcements to be distributed to television and radio stations and other media throughout the state informing the public how to prepare and respond to disasters.

The Commission has all powers of the state's Civil Defense Commission. The Office of Emergency Management within the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services serves as the staff arm of the Commission and is responsible for implementing Executive Law Article 2-B as well as the Commission's rules and policies.²

THE LOCAL ROLE

LOCAL COMPREHENSIVE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANS

Each municipality is authorized to prepare local comprehensive emergency management plans. The Commission provides assistance and advice for the development of these plans. City, town and village plans must be coordinated with the county plan.³

The purpose of these plans is to minimize the effect of disasters by identifying local prevention measures, developing mechanisms to centrally coordinate local resources during and after disasters, providing aid to reduce human suffering from a disaster, and providing for recovery and redevelopment after disasters.

The preparation of a plan requires the cooperation, advice and assistance of local government officials, regional and local planning agencies, policy agencies, fire departments and fire companies, local civil defense agencies, commercial and volunteer ambulance services, health and social services officials, community action agencies, organizations for the elderly and the handicapped, other interested groups and the general public. Advice and assistance may be obtained through public hearings.

All locally developed emergency management plans or any revisions thereto must be submitted annually to the Disaster Preparedness Commission by December 31 to facilitate state coordination of disaster operations.

Plans must include, but need not be limited to:

- **Prevention**
 1. Identification of potential hazards and risk assessment;
 2. Recommended disaster prevention projects, policies, priorities and programs, with suggested implementation schedules, which outline federal, state and local roles;
 3. Suggested revisions and additions to building and safety codes and zoning and other land use programs; and
 4. Such other measures as reasonably can be taken to protect lives, prevent disasters and mitigate their impact.⁴
- **Response**



1. Coordination of resources, manpower and services, using recognized practices in incident management, organizations and lines of authority and centralized direction of requests for assistance;
2. The location, procurement, construction, processing, transportation, storage, maintenance, renovation, distribution use of materials, and facilities and services which may be required in time of disaster;
3. A system for warning populations who are or may be endangered;
4. Arrangements for activating municipal and volunteer forces, through normal chains of command so far as possible, and for continued communication and reporting;
5. A specific plan for rapid and efficient communication and for the integration of local communication facilities during a disaster including the assignment of responsibilities and the establishment of communication priorities and liaison with municipal, private, state and federal communication facilities;
6. A plan for coordinated evacuation procedures including the establishment of temporary housing and other necessary facilities;
7. Criteria for establishing priorities with respect to the restoration of vital services and debris removal;
8. Plans for the continued effective operation of the civil and criminal justice system;
9. Provisions for training local government personnel and volunteers in disaster response operations;
10. Providing information to the public;
11. Care for the injured and needy and identification and disposition of the dead;
12. Utilization and coordination of programs to assist victims of disasters, with particular attention to the needs of the poor, the elderly, individuals with disabilities, and other groups which may be especially affected;
13. Control of ingress and egress to and from a disaster area;
14. Arrangements to administer state and federal disaster assistance;
15. Procedures under which the county, city, town, village or other political subdivision and emergency organization personnel and resources will be used in the event of a disaster;
16. A system for obtaining and coordinating disaster information including the centralized assessment of local disaster effects and resultant needs;
17. Continued operation of governments of political subdivisions,⁵ and
18. Utilization and coordination of programs to assist individuals with household pets and service animals following a disaster, with particular attention to means of evacuation, shelter and transportation options.

- **Recovery**



1. Recommendations for replacement, reconstruction, removal or relocation of damaged or destroyed public or private facilities, proposed new or amendments to zoning, subdivision, building, sanitary or fire prevention regulations and recommendations for economic development and community development in order to minimize the impact of any potential future disasters on the community;
2. Provision for cooperation with state and federal agencies in recovery efforts; and
3. Provisions for training and educating local disaster officials or organizations in the preparation of applications for federal and state disaster recovery assistance.⁶

DECLARING A LOCAL STATE OF EMERGENCY

In the event of a disaster, the local chief executive is authorized to declare a local state of emergency within the municipality and to issue local emergency orders to protect life and property or to bring the emergency under control.

NOTE that for the purposes of declaring a local state of emergency, “chief executive” is defined to mean:

1. A county executive or manager of a county;
2. In a county not having a county executive or manager, the chairman or other presiding officer of the county legislative body;
3. **A mayor of a city or village, except where a city or village has a manager, it shall mean such manager; and**
4. A supervisor of a town, except where a town has a manager, it shall mean such manager.⁷

These orders may:

- Establish a curfew;
- Prohibit/control traffic, except essential emergency vehicles and personnel;
- Designate specific zones within which the occupancy/use of buildings and the ingress/egress of vehicles and persons may be prohibited or regulated;
- Regulate and close places of amusement and assembly;
- Suspend or limit the sale, dispensing, use or transportation of alcoholic beverages, firearms, explosives, and flammable materials and liquids;
- Prohibit and control the presence of persons on public streets and places;
- Establish or designate emergency shelters and/or emergency medical shelters; and
- Suspend any of its local laws, ordinances or regulations which may prevent, hinder, or delay necessary action in coping with a disaster or recovery only when (1) a request for the governor’s assistance has been made, or (2) whenever the governor has declared a state disaster emergency. Suspension of any local law, ordinance or regulation in this manner is subject to standards and limits listed in the statute.⁸

A local emergency order is effective from the time and in the manner prescribed in the order and must be published as soon as practicable in a newspaper of general circulation in the area affected by the order and provided to the media (radio and television) for publication and broadcast. These orders may be amended, modified and rescinded by the local chief executive during the state of emergency. These orders terminate five days after issuance or by declaration of the local chief executive that the state of emergency no longer exists, whichever occurs sooner. The local chief executive may extend these orders for additional periods up to five days each during the local state of emergency. The legislature may, by concurrent resolution, terminate emergency orders at any time.⁹

The local emergency orders of a county chief executive must be executed in triplicate and must be filed within 72 hours or as soon as practicable in the office of the clerk of the governing board of the county, the office of the county clerk, and the office of the secretary of state. The local emergency orders of a chief executive of a city, town or village must be executed in triplicate and must be filed within 72 hours or as soon as practicable in the office of the municipal clerk, the office of the county clerk, and the office of the Secretary of State.¹⁰

A local government board may grant its chief executive any additional duties or responsibilities deemed appropriate.¹¹

Any person who knowingly violates any local emergency order of a chief executive issued pursuant to this section will be guilty of a class B misdemeanor.¹²

Whenever a local state of emergency is declared by a local chief executive, the chief executive of the county in which the local state of emergency is declared, or where a county is wholly contained within a city, the city mayor, may request the governor to remove all or any number of sentenced inmates from institutions maintained by the county in accordance with Correction Law § 93.¹³

Whenever a local state of emergency has been declared, the county chief executive, or the city chief executive where the county is wholly contained within a city, may request the governor to provide assistance, provided the chief executive determines that the disaster is beyond the capacity of local government and state assistance is necessary to supplement local efforts.¹⁴

USE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT RESOURCES IN A DISASTER

When a disaster or the threat of disaster occurs, the local chief executive is authorized to use the facilities, equipment, supplies, personnel and other resources of the municipality as necessary to deal with the disaster.¹⁵ Coordinated assistance may also be obtained from the county chief executive.¹⁶

The local chief executive may also obtain assistance from any other political subdivision, on mutually agreed upon terms and conditions. Local chief executives are authorized to give, lend or lease any services, equipment, facilities, supplies or other municipal resources to assist a municipality in emergency relief, reconstruction, or rehabilitation from a disaster.¹⁷

The local chief executive may request assistance from the civil defense and disaster preparedness forces of another municipality, but only if those forces have already been activated within the requesting municipality. A local chief executive who receives such a request is authorized to respond.¹⁸

GOVERNMENTAL IMMUNITY

A municipal official will not be liable for any claim based upon the exercise, performance or failure to exercise or perform a discretionary function or duty in carrying out the provisions of Executive Law § 25, Use of Local Government Resources in a Disaster.¹⁹

Any elected or appointed municipal official will not be held responsible for acts or omissions of disaster preparedness forces or civil defense forces when performing disaster assistance.

Additionally, local chief executives, officers and employees are immune from liability when performing disaster assistance pursuant to a civil defense plan, drill or test. Employees may be entitled to indemnification under the General Municipal Law if they are not granted immunity by Article 2-B. Where the immunity provisions of Article 2-B do not apply, local executives, officers and employees may raise the defense of governmental immunity.

CONTINUITY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Every municipality is authorized to provide by local law, for its continuity and that of its elective and appointive officers, when, in the event of a disaster, any of its officers is unable to discharge the powers and duties of office or is absent from the political subdivision. The local law may authorize a lower level official who is temporarily filling an office to continue serving in that capacity if the officer replaced subsequently becomes able to serve. A referendum is not necessary for the local law to become effective; however, one certified copy must be filed with each the municipal clerk, the State Comptroller, and three with the Secretary of State.²⁰

CITY USE OF DISASTER EMERGENCY RESPONSE PERSONNEL

During and immediately following a disaster, the city's chief executive may direct the city emergency management director to assist in protecting and preserving human life and property, activating city disaster emergency response personnel to perform their emergency response duties.

The city's chief executive may activate or deactivate the city's disaster emergency response personnel of their own accord or upon the request of the head of the city police force.

If the local office of emergency management in a city is under the jurisdiction of a consolidated county office of emergency management, the city chief executive must request disaster emergency response personnel assistance from the county chief executive in which the city is located.

When performing disaster assistance, disaster emergency response personnel forces operate under the direction of the emergency management director and have the same

powers, duties, rights, privileges, and immunities they would have when performing their duties in a locally-sponsored emergency management drill or training exercise in the city where they are enrolled, employed or assigned emergency management responsibilities.

When city emergency management forces have been directed to assist in local disaster operations and local resources are insufficient to cope with the disaster, the city chief executive may request the county chief executive to direct the county emergency management director to render assistance in the city.

The city's chief executive is responsible for conducting disaster operations within the city, including the operations directed by the county emergency management director, when rendering disaster assistance within a city.

The local chief executive or any elected or appointed municipal official will not be held responsible for acts or omissions of disaster preparedness forces or disaster emergency response personnel when performing disaster assistance.²¹

THE STATE ROLE

STATE DISASTER DECLARATION

The governor may declare a disaster emergency by executive order whenever a disaster occurs or is imminent and for whichever local governments are unable to respond adequately. This action may be on the governor's initiative or upon request from one or more chief executives.

The executive order must include a description of the disaster and the affected area. The order, or orders, remain in effect for up to six months or until rescinded by the governor, whichever occurs first. The governor may issue additional orders to extend the state disaster emergency for up to six months.

The governor is authorized to request federal assistance whenever a disaster is beyond the response capability of the state and affected jurisdictions.

In the event of a radiological accident, the governor must direct chief executives and emergency services organizations to notify the public that an emergency exists, and take protective actions. The governor may direct that other actions be taken by chief executives pursuant to the extraordinary authority granted to them under the Executive Law.²²

POST-DISASTER RECOVERY PLANNING

Whenever a state disaster emergency has been declared, any county, city, town or village included in the disaster area must prepare a local recovery and redevelopment plan, unless the local legislative body determines that the plan is unnecessary or impractical. Prior to making this determination, the municipality must notify the Disaster Preparedness Commission of its intent to forego preparation and provide the Commission an opportunity to comment. Within 15 days after a state disaster declaration, any local government included in the disaster area must report to the Commission whether preparation of a plan has begun, and if not, the reasons for not preparing a plan. Within 60 days after the state

disaster declaration, the Commission must report to the Governor and the Legislature the status of local recovery and redevelopment plans, including the name of any municipality which has failed or refused to develop a plan. The Commission must provide technical assistance upon request to local governments developing plans.

A local recovery and redevelopment plan must include, but need not be limited to:

- Plans for replacing, reconstructing, removing or relocating damaged or destroyed facilities;
- Proposed new or amended regulations such as zoning, subdivision, building or sanitary ordinances and codes; and
- Plans for economic recovery and community development. Plans must take into account, and to the extent practicable incorporate, relevant existing plans and policies and the need to minimize the potential impact of any future disasters on the community.

Proposed plans must be presented at a public hearing upon five days' notice published in a newspaper of general circulation in the area affected and transmitted to the radio and television media for publication and broadcast. The notice must state the time and place of the hearing and indicate where copies of the proposed plan may be inspected or obtained. Any county, city, town, or village preparing a recovery and redevelopment plan may, upon mutual agreement with any other county, city, town or village, hold a joint hearing to consider the plan.

Plans must be prepared within 45 days after a state disaster declaration and must be transmitted to the Commission. The Commission must provide comments on the plan within 10 days after receipt. A plan must be adopted by a county, city, town or village within 10 days after receipt of the Commission's comments. The adopted plan may be amended at any time in the same manner as originally prepared, revised and adopted. The adopted plan will be the official policy for recovery and redevelopment within the municipality.²³

STATE DISASTER ASSISTANCE

The governor may direct that state assistance be provided in the event of a state disaster declaration. This assistance may include:

- Utilizing, lending, or giving to political subdivisions - with or without compensation - equipment, supplies, facilities, services of state personnel, and other resources, other than the extension of credit;
- Distributing medicine, medical supplies, food and other consumable supplies through any authorized public or private agency;
- Performing temporary emergency work to protect public health and safety, clearing debris and wreckage, making emergency repairs to and temporary replacements of damaged or destroyed public facilities; and
- Making any other use of their facilities, equipment, supplies and personnel as may be necessary to assist in coping with the disaster.²⁴

SUSPENSION OF OTHER LAWS

The governor may, by executive order, temporarily suspend specific provisions of any statute, local law, ordinance, or orders, rules or regulations, or parts thereof, of any agency during a state disaster emergency, if compliance with these provisions would prevent, hinder, or delay action necessary to cope with the disaster.

Suspensions are subject to the following standards and limits:

- No suspension may exceed 30 days, however, the governor may extend a suspension for up to 30 days;
- A suspension must safeguard the health and welfare of the public and be reasonably necessary to the disaster effort;
- A suspension order must specify the statute, local law, ordinance, order, rule or regulation or part thereof to be suspended and the terms and conditions of the suspension;
- An order may provide for a suspension only under particular circumstances, and may provide for the alteration or modification of the requirements of a statute, local law, ordinance, order, rule or regulation suspended, and may include other terms and conditions;
- A suspension order must provide for the minimum deviation from the requirements of the statute, local law, ordinance, order, rule or regulation suspended consistent with the disaster action deemed necessary; and
- When practicable, specialists must be assigned to assist with the related emergency actions to avoid needless adverse effects resulting from the suspension.

Suspensions are effective from the time and in the manner prescribed in the order and must be published as soon as practicable in the state bulletin. The Legislature, by concurrent resolution, may terminate executive orders at any time.²⁵

STATE USE OF CIVIL DEFENSE FORCES

The Governor may direct the state disaster preparedness commission to conduct an emergency management exercise or drill, under its direction, in which the state's emergency management forces may be used to perform the duties assigned to them in a disaster. During a disaster or drill, disaster emergency response personnel in the state would operate under the direction and command of the commission's chair, and possess the same powers, duties, rights, privileges and immunities applicable in a drill held at the direction of the state civil defense commission under the provisions of the New York State Defense Emergency Act.²⁶

WHAT IS DHSES?

The New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (DHSES) houses the Office of Emergency Management Office (OEM), which is responsible for coordinating all activities necessary to protect New York's communities from natural and technological disasters and other emergencies that threaten the state. The State OEM coordinates Emergency Management Services for the state by providing leadership,

planning, education and resources to protect lives and property and the environment. In times of emergency or disaster, OEM coordinates the response of state agencies ensuring the most appropriate resources are dispatched to the impacted area. OEM works with local governments, volunteer organizations and the private sector throughout New York State to develop disaster preparedness plans, mitigation activities and provide training and exercise programs. **Information about the programs and resources of the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services and the Office of Emergency Services may be found online at: www.dhses.ny.gov.**

THE FEDERAL ROLE IN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

WHAT IS FEMA?

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is an independent agency of the federal government which reports to the President. Since its founding in 1979, FEMA's mission has been to reduce loss of life and property and to protect our nation's critical infrastructure from all types of hazards through a comprehensive, risk-based, emergency management program of mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.

There are 10 FEMA regions in the United States. FEMA Region II serves the federal emergency management needs of the State of New York, the State of New Jersey, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the Territory of the U.S. Virgin Islands. In addition to Region II full-time employees, FEMA can draw on a cadre of hundreds of Disaster Assistance Employees (DAEs) or "reservists" during a Presidential Disaster Declaration.

FEMA Region II is located at 26 Federal Plaza, Suite 1337, New York, NY 10278. FEMA's website is www.fema.gov.

FEDERAL DISASTER DECLARATION

Local and state governments share the responsibility for protecting their citizens from disasters, and for helping them to recover when a disaster strikes. In some cases, an appropriate response to disaster is beyond the capabilities of the state and local government.

The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, Public Law 93-288, as amended (the Stafford Act) was enacted to support state and local governments and their citizens when disasters overwhelm them. This law establishes a process for requesting and obtaining a Presidential disaster declaration, defines the type and scope of assistance available under the Stafford Act, and sets the conditions for obtaining that assistance. The following explains the declaration process and provides an overview of the assistance available.

The Declaration Process

The Stafford Act (§§ 401 and 501) requires that: "All requests for a declaration by the President that a major disaster or emergency exists shall be made by the Governor of the affected state."²⁷ The Governor's request is made through the regional FEMA office. State, local, and federal officials conduct a preliminary damage assessment (PDA) to estimate the extent of the disaster and its impact on individuals and public facilities. The

information gathered during the PDA documents the severity and magnitude of the event and is included in the Governor's request. Normally, the PDA is completed prior to the submission of the Governor's request. However, when an obviously severe or catastrophic event occurs, the Governor's request may be submitted prior to the PDA. Nonetheless, the Governor must still make the request and damage assessments are still conducted.²⁸

As part of the request, the Governor must note that the state's emergency plan has been implemented and the situation is of such severity and magnitude that the response is beyond state and local capability and Stafford Act assistance is necessary. The Governor must furnish information on the nature and amount of state and local resources that have been or will be committed to alleviating the results of the disaster, provide an estimate of the amount and severity of damage and the impact on the private and public sector, and provide an estimate of the type and amount of assistance needed under the Stafford Act. In addition, the Governor will need to certify that, for the current disaster, state and local government obligations and expenditures (of which state commitments must be a significant portion) will comply with all applicable cost-sharing requirements.

Based on the Governor's request, the President may declare that a major disaster or emergency exists, thus activating an array of federal programs to assist in the response and recovery effort.²⁹

Assistance Available Under a Major Disaster Declaration

Not all programs are activated for every disaster. The determination of which programs are to be activated is based on the needs found during the joint preliminary damage assessment and any subsequent information that may be discovered.

Federal disaster assistance available under a major disaster declaration falls into three general categories:

- Individual Assistance – aid to individuals, families and business owners;
- Public Assistance – aid to public (and certain private non-profit) entities for certain emergency services and the repair or replacement of disaster-damaged public facilities; and
- Hazard Mitigation Assistance – funding for measures designed to reduce future losses to public and private property. In the event of a major disaster declaration, all counties within the declared state are eligible to apply for assistance under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.

Some declarations will provide only individual assistance or only public assistance. Hazard mitigation opportunities are assessed in most situations. For more information, see Part 206 - Federal Disaster Assistance of Title 44 of the Code of Federal Regulations.³⁰

-
- 1 Executive Law § 21(1).
2 Executive Law § 21.
3 Executive Law § 23.
4 Executive Law § 23(7)(a).
5 Executive Law § 23(7)(b).
6 Executive Law § 23(7)(c).
7 Executive Law § 20(2)(f).
8 Executive Law § 24(1).
9 Executive Law § 24(2).
10 Executive Law § 24(3).
11 Executive Law § 24(4).
12 Executive Law § 24(5).
13 Executive Law § 24(6).
14 Executive Law § 24(7).
15 Executive Law § 25(1).
16 Executive Law § 25(2).
17 Executive Law § 25(3).
18 Executive Law § 25(6).
19 Executive Law § 25(5).
20 Executive Law § 27.
21 Executive Law § 29-b.
22 Executive Law § 28.
23 Executive Law § 28-a.
24 Executive Law § 29.
25 Executive Law § 29-a.
26 Executive Law § 29-b(1).
27 42 U.S.C.A. § 5170 and 42 U.S.C.A. § 5191.
28 See Tilte 44. Emergency Management and Assistance of the Code of Federal Regulatons.
29 Id.
30 44 Cfr Ch. I-Subch. D, Pt. 206.

FORMS

The following forms are for your use in your municipality:

1. Model Emergency Management Plan
2. Local State of Emergency Proclamation
3. Order Controlling Presence of Persons on Public Streets and Places
4. Order Establishing Curfew
5. Order Prohibiting Sale and Distribution of Alcoholic Beverages
6. Order Closing Places of Amusement and Assembly
7. Order Regulating the Purchase, Storage, etc. of Flammable Materials

MODEL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN

 (Insert City Name) , New York

 (Insert Date)

PURPOSE

The purpose of this plan is to cite the authority, formulate procedures, and provide guidance for coordinated action in rendering assistance to the citizens within this municipality in the event of a disaster.

BASIS

This municipality recognizes that planning and preparatory actions are required before an emergency. Emergency preparedness allows this municipality to prepare and react to emergency situations to save life and property if the city is threatened or hit by a disaster and major emergency.

The city council has the primary responsibility to see that everything possible is done to prepare for any disaster and to provide for the safety and security of the community during a disaster.

MOBILIZATION

Designate Emergency Management Center (EMC)

The Emergency Management Center for this municipality will be in the (name, place and location). Once the mayor or next in line has declared an emergency exists, the EMC will be staffed on a 24-hour basis until the declared emergency subsides. The EMC will forward all warnings, directives, information, etc. to various local departments as appropriate. This will be done through the use of department representatives, telephones (located in the EMC), radios in the Police, Fire, Highway and Emergency Management Departments and in the offices of cooperating agencies. Each member assigned to the EMC will be familiar with this plan, particularly with the section pertaining to each responsible person's service duties.

Essential Emergency Management Records

The mayor and clerk, functioning at the EMC, are responsible for the maintaining and making available records, documents, plans and other materials required to discharge their and others' functions during an emergency.

Sequence of Action

Members of the council/board and other designated personnel will assemble as soon as possible at the EMC after being notified of an emergency. To cope with



the effects of an emergency, appropriate steps will be taken at the EMC to mobilize fully the available personnel, resources, facilities, supplies and materials in this municipality according to the guidelines set forth in this plan.

1. The mayor or the designated emergency coordinator is responsible for notifying and declaring an emergency or disaster.
2. Each department head is responsible for assuring maximum effectiveness and utilization of all personnel and equipment of the department to accomplish the city's responsibilities. Each department head must retain control of the assigned department and implement orders received from the EMC.
3. This municipality should seek the cooperation and aid of any or all surrounding communities in the event of an emergency or disaster. Arrangements for mutual aid should be made prior to any emergency or disaster.
4. This municipality should contact the county emergency management office regarding any major emergency or disaster situation. Emergency management and disaster assistance should be requested when local or mutual aid resources are exhausted. All requests for county assistance of any nature by any department will be approved by the mayor or other designated person and will be made to the county director of emergency management by direct phone contact.
5. Military assistance requests will be made by the mayor to the County Executive who will forward the request to the County Office of Emergency Management which will forward it to the State Office of Emergency Management.
6. The American Red Cross is recognized as the agency responsible for mass care to persons immediately following a disaster. Local Red Cross chapters can extend natural disaster relief assistance to individuals and families and the Red Cross can assume administrative and financial responsibility in providing such assistance. American National Red Cross has been assigned this responsibility by the Congress of the United States. The Red Cross chapter responsible for the municipality is (give name, address, contact person and phone number).

RESPONSIBILITIES AND FUNCTIONS

The responsibilities and functions listed below recognize only basic duties. Each of the position descriptions may be altered or expanded to suit the needs of the individual city. One person may fill one or more of the below-listed descriptions:

1. The mayor is responsible for conducting disaster operations within this municipality. The mayor may use any and all facilities, equipment, supplies, personnel, and other resources of this municipality in such a manner as may be necessary or appropriate to cope with the disaster. The mayor may direct the activities of all agencies within this municipality against the effects

of emergency in conformance with the approved plans for the rescue and relief of the people, the recovery and the rehabilitation of this community. The mayor may utilize services of the EMC and its staff for implementation of necessary measures to achieve emergency operations.

2. The council/board as the elected body of the people, may take all appropriate steps to prepare for any disaster or emergency and is responsible for implementing this and other emergency preparedness plans.
3. The clerk is responsible for maintaining and making available essential records, documents and other materials, required during the emergency.
4. The emergency coordinator appointed by the mayor directs the implementation of the comprehensive plan for the EMC, under the direction of the mayor. Also, under the direction of the mayor, the emergency management director coordinates the emergency operations of the EMC, prepares estimates of the situation, advises the mayor of operational priorities and recommends requests for assistance from the (name) County emergency alert radio network.
5. The fire chief and fire officers will be responsible for the direction of all action to contain and extinguish fires resulting from emergencies and the removal of trapped and injured persons from damaged buildings and flooded areas. The local fire chief may call upon the _____ (name) County Fire Coordinator or the County Office of Emergency Management, under mutual aid, for advice and/or assistance concerning fire related emergencies, relief operations, and coordination of emergency shelter and feeding operations.
6. The local police may designate a traffic control officer to be part of the EMC for the purpose of controlling traffic and population movements. The local police will direct all action to maintain order, prevent looting, and help alleviate panic; direct injured to medical installations, and assist handicapped persons by obtaining transportation and directing them to the nearest EMC. The police chief may call upon the (Insert Name of County) (name) County Sheriff's Department and/or the New York State Police for advice and/or assistance.
7. The local superintendent/director of highways is responsible for maintaining streets and bridges and all official trucks, cars and equipment. The superintendent will direct action to check, restore and maintain essential public facilities and services, such as streets, bridges, public buildings and other vital community services, calling upon all public works and engineering services of (Insert Name of County) (name) County for such assistance. The highway director will work in conjunction with the local electric and gas utility, the local telephone company, the local water and sewer board, and with any other local utility to restore essential services.



New York Conference of Mayors

8. The building inspector of the city is responsible for inspecting the safety of damaged homes and businesses before evacuees are allowed to reoccupy such buildings.
9. The public information officer, under the supervision of the mayor, locally disseminates emergency information, issues news reports to the public, and notifies the County Office of Emergency Management on the status and development of emergency measures, using all media of public communication.
10. The communications officer or staff supervises, directs, arranges and restores communications for all emergency purposes using available communications means and methods. Maximum use of all available forms of communications will be planned by all departments to aid the communications staff in carrying out their duties.
11. The medical officer or staff directs all action to render health and medical services to the community. The officer or staff is responsible for altering hospitals and ambulances in the area regarding anticipated medical needs.
12. The supply officer carries out measures necessary to the emergency handling of all local resources.
13. The manpower officer directs the assignment of personnel to the various emergency services as requested.
14. The transportation officer carries out measures necessary for the utilization of all transportation modes for support and rescue operations.
15. The school representatives direct the action related to care for school students in school during an emergency situation.
16. Additional responsibilities and functions: All department heads and/or those responsible for carrying out parts of the emergency operations for the city shall have their responsibilities and functions listed within this plan. List below any additional responsibilities and functions:

* * *

LOCAL STATE OF EMERGENCY PROCLAMATION

A State of Emergency is hereby declared in _____ for a period of time beginning at _____ hours on the date of _____ and continuing in effect for a period not to exceed five (5) days and ending at _____ hours on the date of _____.

The State of Emergency has been declared due to emergency conditions produced by:

Such conditions threaten or imperil the public safety of the citizens of this municipality.

As Chief Executive of this municipality, I have exercised the authority given to me under New York State Executive Law, Article 2-B, to preserve the public safety and hereby render all required and available assistance vital to the security, well-being and health of the citizens of the community.

I hereby direct the Department(s) of _____ to take whatever steps necessary to protect life and property, public infrastructure and other such emergency assistance as deemed necessary.

Signed: _____

Title

Date



ORDER CONTROLLING PRESENCE OF PERSONS ON PUBLIC STREETS AND PLACES

As Chief Executive of (municipality) in accordance with a proclamation of State of Emergency executed on the _____ day of _____, 20__ do hereby declare that the following areas within this municipality are restricted and all pedestrian and vehicular movement, standing and parking, is prohibited; except for the provisions of designated essential services such as fire, police and hospital services including transportation of patients thereto, utility emergency repair and emergency calls by physicians:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

These restrictions apply until removed by order of the _____ of this municipality.

Signed this _____ day of _____, 20__, at _____ o'clock, in _____, New York.

Witness

ORDER ESTABLISHING CURFEW

I, (name), (title), of (municipality), New York, in accordance with a Proclamation of State of Emergency executed on the _____ day of _____, 20____, do hereby declare that a curfew is established and imposed.

The curfew will commence at _____ o'clock on the _____ day of _____, 20____, until removed by the _____ of this municipality.

During the period of this curfew, all pedestrian and vehicular traffic, except essential emergency vehicles and personnel is prohibited from using the public streets within this municipality between the hours of _____ and _____.

Signed this _____ day of _____, 20____, at _____ o'clock in _____, New York.

Witness



ORDER PROHIBITING SALE AND DISTRIBUTION OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

I, (name), (title), of the (municipality), New York, in accordance with a Proclamation of State of Emergency executed on the _____ day of _____, 20____, do hereby prohibit the sale and distribution of alcoholic beverages (as defined by Section 3 of the Alcoholic Beverage Control Law, but not included patented medicines) within this municipality effective immediately until this order is rescinded by the

_____.

Signed this _____ day of _____, 20____, at _____ o'clock in _____, New York.

Witness

ORDER CLOSING PLACES OF AMUSEMENT AND ASSEMBLY

I, (name), (title), of the (municipality), New York, in accordance with a Proclamation of State of Emergency executed on the _____ day of _____, 20____, do hereby order the closing of all places of amusement and assembly within this municipality effective immediately and continuing until further order of the _____.

Signed this _____ day of _____, 20____, at _____ o'clock in _____, New York.

Witness



ORDER REGULATING THE PURCHASE, STORAGE, ETC. OF FLAMMABLE MATERIALS

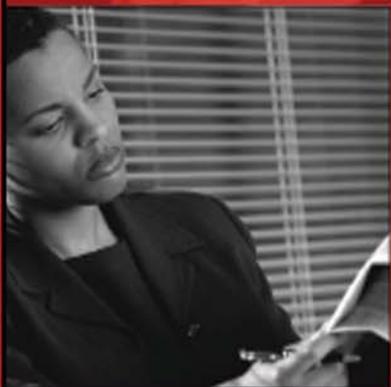
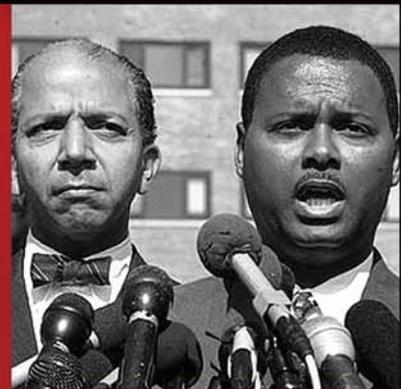
I, (name), (title) of the (municipality), New York, in accordance with a Proclamation of State of Emergency executed on the _____ day of _____, 20____, do hereby prohibit the sale or other transfer, with or without consideration, of gasoline or any other flammable or combustible liquid or of any explosive, or the possession in a public place of any portable container containing gasoline or any other flammable or combustible liquid (except that delivery into a tank properly affixed to an operable motor driven vehicle and necessary for the propulsion thereof shall not be prohibited hereunder).

Signed, this _____ day of _____, 20____, at _____ o'clock in _____, New York.

Witness

CRISIS + EMERGENCY RISK COMMUNICATION

by Leaders for Leaders



BE FIRST. BE RIGHT. BE CREDIBLE.



**Crisis & Emergency Risk Communication:
By Leaders For Leaders**

Made possible by:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

In partnership with:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Public Health Practice Program Office
CDC Office of Communication (OC), Office of the Director (OD)

Project Development

William Hall, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs (ASPA), HHS
Barbara Reynolds, OC, OC, CDC
Marsha Vanderford, Ph.D., OC, OD, CDC

Written by:

Barbara Reynolds, MA, OC, OD, CDC

Edited by:

William Hall, ASPA, HHS
Marsha Vanderford, Ph.D., OC, OD, CDC
Marc Wolfson, ASPA, HHS

Project Consultants

Matthew Seeger, Ph.D., Wayne State University
Tim Sellnow, Ph.D., North Dakota State University
Daniel Baden, M.D., OC, OD, CDC

Graphic Layout/Research:

Chad R. Wood, OC, CDC

Digital Graphic Design and Development

Pete Seidel, PHPPPO, CDC
Alex Casanova, PHPPPO, CDC

Audiovisual Production Specialists.

Morris Gaiter Producer
Bryon Skinner Videographer
Todd Jordan Videographer
Susy Mercado Production Assistant

Video Clips Coordination

Chad R. Wood
Bindu Tharian

With special thanks to the following

State and Local Health Department Communication Consultants:

Bob Alvey, Arkansas
Mary Anderson, Montgomery County, MD
Ken August, California
Roxanne Burke, Shasta County, CA
Jamie Durham, Alabama
Kimberly Fetty, West Virginia
Don Pickard, Kansas City, MO
Richard Quartarone, Georgia
Terri Stratton, California
Mary Jo Takach, Rhode Island
Melissa Walker, Louisiana
National Public Health Information Coalition Members
William Reynolds, Atlanta American Red Cross
Susan Dimmick, Ph.D., University of Tennessee, Knoxville

“The Leaders”



John Agwunobi
Anthrax



Jeff Bowman
San Diego Fires



Douglas Duncan
D.C. Sniper



Julie Gerberding
SARS



Frank Keating
OK City Bombing



Patricia Owens
ND Floods



Ivan Walks
Anthrax

Crisis & Emergency Risk Communication: By Leaders For Leaders

Introduction:

This book gives leaders the tools to navigate the harsh realities of speaking to the public, media, partners and stakeholders during an intense public-safety emergency, including terrorism. In a crisis, the right message at the right time is a “resource multiplier”—it helps response officials get their job done. Many of the predictable harmful individual and community behaviors can be mitigated with effective crisis and emergency risk communication. Each crisis will carry its own psychological baggage. A leader must anticipate what mental stresses the population will be experiencing and apply appropriate communication strategies to attempt to manage these stresses in the population.

Nowhere in this book is there an implied promise that a population or community faced with an emergency, crisis, or disaster will overcome its challenges solely through the application of the communication principles presented here. However, this book does offer the promise that an organization can compound its problems during an emergency if it has neglected sound crisis and emergency risk communication planning. Readers should expect to gain the following understanding:

The Psychology of Communicating in a Crisis

- 5 communication failures that kill operational success
- 5 communication steps that boost operational success
- How to reduce public fear and anxiety, and come to terms with “panic”
- Why people need things to do
- 5 key elements to build and maintain public trust in a crisis

Your Role as a Spokesperson

- New research on the public’s perception of government
- Applying the STARCC principle in your communication
- Questions the public and media always ask first
- 5 mistakes that destroy stakeholder cooperation
- How to deal with angry people

Working with Media during a Crisis

- Your interview rights with the media
- Countering media interview techniques that can hurt you
- 2 things that guarantee your press conference will fail
- 3 things to say early in the crisis when the media are beating on your door

Public Health and Media Law

- The media’s right of publication
- Employee access to media
- Legal definitions of detention, isolation and quarantine

Included in this book are excerpts from interviews so that you can hear directly from leaders—governors, mayors, health officials, and fire chiefs—who stepped up to the microphone during crises and faced their community and the world. Learn how they made tough decisions about how to inform, console and motivate their constituents during and after the crisis.

Table of Contents

Communicating in a crisis is different	4
What the public seeks from its leader	4
Five communication failures	5
Five communication steps for success	9
During a disaster, what people feel?	13
Expected behaviors that must be confronted ...	15
Perception of risk	18
First message in a crisis	20
Audience judgments about your message ...	21
Make the facts work in your message	22
Employ the STARCC principle	23
Crisis Communication Plan	24
Working with the media	25
Successful press conferences	29
Writing for the media during a crisis	30
The Leader as a spokesperson	31
Grief and your role as spokesperson	37
Know the needs of your stakeholders	38
The dreaded town hall meeting	40
Media law	43
Definitions and processes	44
Keeping fit for duty in a crisis	46
CERC Tools	48
Bibliography	53

The need to communicate clearly was never more compelling than during the recovery from the World Trade Center attacks. People were desperate for information. The information had to be correct, but there were delicate questions of taste and sensitivity as well.

-Rudolph Giuliani

We talked about the anthrax attack because two members of our community had died. That's not a scare when you actually kill someone. It's an attack, and that sort of language nuance builds a level of connection with the community so you're viewing the incident the same way they're viewing the incident.

-Ivan Walks, M.D., Health Director, Washington D.C., Anthrax, 2001

Communicating in a Crisis is Different

Crisis can assault your community in an instant or creep slowly into your midst randomly wreaking havoc until it has you firmly in its grip. Conventional explosions, category-5 hurricanes, chemical releases, shooting sprees, deadly disease outbreaks, 500-year floods, dirty bombs, nuclear bombs, fertilizer bombs, earthquakes, blazing brush fires, infrastructure collapses, and raging tornadoes are just some of the disasters we know threaten somewhere at sometime and are, ultimately, outside our control.

Leaders do control, however, how well their communities respond and recover from the disasters they suffer. As a leader in a crisis you can have a real, measurable affect on the wellbeing of your community through the words you say and the speed and sincerity with which you say them. Research indicates that, in natural disasters, the public perceives the success of the operational response by the amount and speed of relevant information they receive from the emergency response officials (Fisher, 1998).

Communicating in a crisis is different. **In a serious crisis, all affected people take in information differently, process information differently and act on information differently** (Reynolds, 2002). As a leader, you need to know that the way you normally communicate with your community may not be effective during and after it suffers a crisis.

In a catastrophic event, your every word, every eye twitch and every passing emotion resonates with heightened importance to a public desperate for information to help them be safe and recover from the crisis. In several surveys, **the public was asked who they would trust most as a spokesman or reliable source of information** if a bioterrorism event occurred in their community. Respondents trusted most the local health department or a local physician or hospital. However, respondents also trusted “quite a lot” or “a great deal” their own doctor, the fire chief, the director of the health department, the police chief, the governor and a local religious leader.

What the public seeks from its leaders in a crisis

The public wants to know what you know. The leader’s challenge is to give the public what they are demanding within the fog of information overload. The public wants to accomplish the following 5 things with the information they get from their leaders:

- Gain the wanted facts needed to protect them, their families and their pets from the dangers they are facing
- Make well-informed decisions using all available information
- Have an active, participatory role in the response and recovery
- Act as a “watch-guard” over resources, both public and donated monies
- Recover or preserve well-being and normalcy, including economic security

That's a lot to expect from a leader "hell-bent" on making sure his community is going to get all it needs to make the crisis end and the community well again. Leaders who have faced a crisis in their community readily admit that in their planning for a crisis they may have invested only about one percent of the pre-crisis funding to public communication planning and then training about 10 percent of their time in drills or exercises on the public education component. They then found that when the crisis occurred they were spending about 90 percent of their time dealing with decisions about communicating to the public.

Leaders lead with goals in mind

A leader who wants to do the following will need to have a community on board to help them accomplish these goals:

- Decrease illness, injury and deaths
- Execute response and recovery plans with minimal resistance
- Avoid misallocation of limited resources
- Avoid wasting resources

The fact is, in a crisis, good communication to the public is a necessity, not a luxury. The public needs information from its leaders and leaders need support and cooperation from the public.

Leaders will make the following communication decisions

The following are the decisions a leader will be expected to make during a crisis about communicating to the public:

- What to release
- When to release it
- How to release it
- Where to release it
- Whom to release it to
- Why release it

A well-prepared leader will have communication plans and resources in place to help minimize the number of decisions about communication that must be made in the moment. We can predict both the types of disasters our communities face and we can predict the questions the public will have during a disaster. Plan now. Plan with your communication and public information professionals. Plan with your disaster-response partners.

Five communication failures that kill operational success

Communication experts and leaders who've faced disasters can tell others what is going to cripple or even destroy the success of their disaster response operation.

This [fireman] was on the verge of emotional exhaustion. I mean he had seen a horror, he didn't know what to do. There was no living person in that building that he was able to save. So I knew that my function had to be one of reassurance to those who were risking their lives to help us.

-Frank Keating, Governor, Oklahoma City, Bombing, 1995

- Mixed messages from multiple experts
- Information released late
- Paternalistic attitudes
- Not countering rumors and myths in real time
- Public power struggles and confusion

1. *Mixed messages*

The public doesn't want to have to "select" one of many messages to believe and act on. During the mid-90s the Midwestern United States suffered a spring of great floods. Response officials determined that the water treatment facilities in some communities were compromised and that a "boil water" directive should be issued. The problem developed when multiple response organizations, government and non-government, issued directions for boiling water and each of them was different. The fact is, in the United States, we turn on the faucet and clean water comes out. Few of us know the "recipe" to boil water because we've never had to.

So, what's the big deal? Just pick one and get to it. Not so fast! Consider this. I'm a young mother with an infant son and I need to mix his cereal with water. I'm a middle-aged son caring for his mother

☑ Reality check: Unofficial experts will undoubtedly pop up to offer unsolicited advice. First, be concerned about what the "official" officials are saying and whether these messages are consistent. Your cumulative, consistent voices may drown out conflicting messages. Also, consider identifying the unofficial experts in your community and ensure they have early access to the recommendations you will be giving.

who is currently immune compromised because of cancer chemotherapy. I'm the sister living down the street from my HIV-positive brother whose T-cell count is back on the way down. Or, just maybe, I'm an average person who doesn't like the thought of gambling on a bad case of diarrhea if I don't pick the right boil-water instructions.

In a crisis, people don't want to "just pick one" of many messages, they want the best one or the right one to follow. When faced with a new threat, people want a consistent and simple recommendation to follow. They want to hear absolute agreement about what they should do from multiple experts through multiple sources. Messages do not have to be wrong to be damaging. If they are inconsistent the public will lose trust in the response officials and begin to question every recommendation. Local, state, regional, and national response officials and their partners must work together to ensure messages are consistent, especially when the information is new to the public.

2. *Information released late*

Following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, many people wanted

I think the most important thing to learn from this or any other tragedy that is handled well in the public domain is that unlike the frustration we feel sometimes on an airplane when something goes crack or the plane doesn't leave and there's total silence from the cockpit, that's the worst thing to do. The best thing is transparency and openness.

-Frank Keating, Governor,
Oklahoma City, Bombing, 1995

advice on whether or not to buy a gas mask. These calls found their way to CDC. Three weeks after the attack, CDC had an answer on its website. During the 3 weeks CDC took to develop and vet its answer, a number of experts were willing to give an answer—unfortunately it wasn't the right one. When CDC issued advice to the public not to buy gas masks, the “gas-mask” aisles at the local Army-Navy Surplus stores were already empty. In all fairness, few of us could anticipate the consequences of a 9-11 type attack— but all of us can now create a process to quickly react to the information needs of the public. If we can not give people what they need when they need it, others will. And those “others” may not have the best interest of the public in mind when they're offering advice.

If the public expects an answer from your organization on something that is answerable and you won't provide it or direct them to someone who can, **they will be open to being taken advantage of by unscrupulous or fraudulent opportunists.**

3. Paternalistic attitudes

Putting on a John Wayne swagger and ostensibly answering the public's concerns with a “don't worry little lady, we got ya covered” doesn't work in the information age. People want and expect information to allow them

☑ Reality check: Don't spread a rumor by holding press conferences every time you hear a rumor, unless it has been widely published already. If the rumor is circulating on the Internet, have a response on the internet and with your telephone information service ready to deal with the rumor. The media will report rumors or hoaxes unless you can answer quickly why it's false. Have an open, quick channel to communicate to the media if your monitoring system picks up a troublesome rumor. Don't think “this is preposterous, no one will believe it.” In a crisis the improbable seems more possible. Squash rumors fast, with facts.

to come to their own conclusion. As a leader, it's not enough to satisfy your own worries with copious bits of information and then turn around and state a bottomline unsupported with the facts you know. As difficult as it may be, **help the public to reach the same conclusion you did** by sharing with them what you learned to reach that conclusion. What did you learn that made you believe the situation wasn't worrisome? Share that.

Treat the public like intelligent adults and they will act like intelligent adults. Treat them any other way and they will either turn on you or behave in ways that seem illogical to you. You are a leader for the public, you are not their parent. **Never tell people “don't worry.”** Tell people what they need to know so they can reach the decision that they do not need to worry. Engage the public in the process and they will follow your lead.

I think that there is always a tendency for individuals to try to take out the bad parts and leave in only the good parts. I think it's absolutely critical as a leader to deliver an honest message, a message that contains all the parts, the good and the bad.

-John Agwunobi, M.D., State Health Director, Florida, Anthrax, 2001

4. *Not countering rumors in real-time*

During a pneumonic plague outbreak, how successful will your drug distribution program be if a rumor starts that there isn't enough drugs for everyone? What is your system to monitor what is being said by the public and the media? What is your system to react to false information?

5. *Public power struggles or confusion*

Did you hear about the governor who held a press conference about a public safety crisis at the same time the mayor of the city was holding one on the other side of town? It really happened and it set the tone for a lot of speculation about who was in charge and what was or was not true.

In the information age, it's easy to see how this could happen. Sometimes there may be a power struggle over jurisdictions or other issues. The important thing is to make sure these are worked out quickly and confidentially. It's naturally disconcerting to the public to think that the people responsible for

helping them are not getting along. All partners need to have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. When they overlap, and they do, make sure you can settle concerns without

☑ Reality check: The best laid plans . . . No matter what's on paper and agreed upon, response officials should understand that plans need to be flexible. The trick is that the process of creating a plan means that the response officials will not be strangers to each other when the crisis occurs and may have built relationships that can withstand the strain the crisis will naturally cause.

causing headlines about power struggles or, worse, confused response officials. When all else fails, stay in the scope of your responsibility and refrain from declaring "I'm in charge" without being certain that you are.

Even if everyone shows up at the same press conference, the officials could send the wrong message to the public. If people are jockeying for the microphone or looking back and forth at each other hoping someone will answer a question posed by a reporter, the public will be left with the impression that there are power struggles or confusion going on.

Early in the sniper shooting incident in metro Washington D.C., Montgomery County Police Chief Charles Moose had to formally request involvement by the F.B.I. Although there were natural concerns about what that might mean to local law enforcement, the chief chose to involve the F.B.I. and did it quietly and what appeared seamlessly to the public. **At no time did the public perceive a power struggle** among the response agencies. This, however, was a community who had previously survived a terrorist attack at the Pentagon and an anthrax attack at the Capitol. They had learned the value of a united front with multiple jurisdictions working cooperatively for the good of their community. Turf wars need to end at the moment the crisis begins. A good plan can help avoid turf wars from the start.

It was everyday for three weeks. Everyday people got up and said this might be the day I get killed. When I walk out of my house, when I walk out to my car, when I pump gas, when I go into my store or office building, this is the day someone might shoot me.

-Douglas Duncan, County Executive, Montgomery County, Maryland, D.C. Sniper Attacks, 2002

Five communication steps for success

Could it be as simple as 5 steps to communication success in a disaster? Yes and no. These 5 steps are the keys to success, but each step is a challenge in itself. However, every bit of research in the area of successful communication, especially in a crisis, unanimously agrees you can't skip any one of these and expect to be successful. Remember, the reason you as a leader are focused on better communication is because most of this burden will fall to you, according to peers who've been there before you. The following are the 5 steps to communication success:

- Execute a solid communication plan
- Be the first source for information
- Express empathy early
- Show competence and expertise
- Remain honest and open

1. *Execute a solid communication plan*

Working from a communication plan is as important in a crisis as working from a logistics plan—stuff won't get where it needs to go when it needs to be there without a good plan. (A later segment will discuss the elements of a communication plan. Consult with your communication director or public information officer.) As a leader, you need to know that the public judges the success of your operation, in great part, by the success of your communication.

Any doubts? Consider what CDC experienced during the 2001 anthrax incident and then in the 2003 SARS outbreak. A full year after the 2001 anthrax incident, national media were still criticizing CDC's anthrax operation. However, the theme of the criticism was consistently about its inability to effectively communicate to its partners, important stakeholders and the media. In 2001, CDC did not have a crisis communication plan and adequate resources dedicated to the effort.

A lot changed at CDC following the anthrax incident, especially in the area of crisis communication. Then in late 2002, people started dying around the world from an emerging disease, SARS. While the SARS outbreak was still unfolding, and there was great uncertainty about the magnitude of the outbreak, national media were praising CDC for its effective operational response. The change the media perceived was not in the operational functions, because both in anthrax and in SARS CDC had smart, dedicated people responding. The difference perceived by media, stakeholders and partners was the speed and consistency of its communication. CDC had a plan and the plan was executed and the plan made a huge difference in the public's perception of its ability to do the job.

2. *Be the first source of information*

There are two important reasons to strive to be the first source of infor-

Leaders must find a balance between speed and deliberation. . . .The need for quick decisions . . . is strongest in times of crisis. People are afraid and uncertain, and need to feel that someone is in charge.

-Rudolph Giuliani, Mayor, New York City, 2001, from his book *Leadership*

mation in a crisis. The public uses the speed of information flow in a crisis as a marker for your preparedness. No matter that the HAZMAT team showed up in 2 minutes, evacuated the scene and determined that the fire at the chemical plant should be allowed to burn out instead of putting water on it which could spread hazardous chemicals into the water table. The operational response was perfect. Yet, when this happened recently in Atlanta, the local news coverage was filled with angry families who saw the black smoke and wanted to know if they should evacuate but weren't able to find out as quickly as they wanted. Parents, gripping the hands of their small children, castigated the people who knew but didn't tell them that they were safe. Living in the information age, means being expected to not only save lives, but be able to tell people while it's happening that you are saving lives.

The second reason is a psychological reality. When a person is seeking information about something they do not know, **the first message they receive carries more weight.** The tendency is for people to typically accept the information and then if they hear a second message that conflicts with the first, they start to weigh them against each other. This is especially dangerous if the first message is incorrect but it sounds logical.

For example, the news media reports that health officials are swabbing the noses of congressional staffers for anthrax spores to see if they need to take antibiotics. So, Mr. Public is exposed to a white substance in the break room of his factory, and he thinks he should get a nose swab too. In fact, a positive or negative nose swab for anthrax spores is not a reliable way to determine if someone should be given antibiotics. That determination is made with other data such as proximity to the exposure site and ventilation systems. Even so, reasonable people who had heard about the nasal swabs and were incorrectly told they were to help in a medical diagnosis would be expected to clamor for the same kind of care.

So, by putting energy into getting the right message out first means that later incorrect messages will have to bounce up against the right message. That's better than having to not only get out the right message, but having to spend considerable effort discounting the incorrect first message.

3. Express empathy early

If a leader takes only one concept from this book, this may be the most important and, for some, the most challenging. Your peers who have experienced a leader's role in a public safety crisis and academic experts from around the country agree on this point: a sincere expression of empathy is as essential to your ability to lead the public in a crisis as the right key is to opening a lock. You can stick other keys or bent paper clips or tiny screw drivers into the lock, but it won't open until you insert the key with the right grooves and edges. So it is with your message: the public won't be open to you until you express empathy. So what's empathy? Empathy is the ability to understand what another human being is feeling.

Empathy is the door that opens your voice to the information that you want to communicate. So if people can perceive that you actually care about it in a genuine, human way, I think they're much more willing to listen to anything else that you have to say. If you don't do that, you have really lost your audience because people won't listen to you.

-Julie Gerberding,
M.D., Director, CDC, SARS, 2003

Empathy does not require you to feel what that person is feeling. Empathy does not require you to agree that what the person is feeling is appropriate. Empathy is the ability to at the very least describe your understanding of what they are feeling. In its best form, empathy is talking from the heart and relating to fellow human beings as fellow human beings, not victims, not casualties, not evacuees or refugees or the public, but as people who, in a crisis, are hurting physically, perhaps, but especially emotionally.

Research shows that an expression of empathy should be given in the first 30 seconds of starting your message. To do otherwise is to waste your time, because, the public will be waiting to hear whether or not “you get it.” Your audience is wondering whether you understand they are frightened, anxious, confused? If you don’t articulate what they are feeling in the moment, your audience’s minds will be consumed with the question of “do they get it” and not hear a thing you are saying. A sincere expression of empathy early in your communication will allow people to settle down the noise in their minds and actually hear what you have to say.

4. Show competence and expertise

If you have a title and are part of the official response to a crisis, the public will assume you are competent until you prove otherwise. It’s not necessary to recite your entire resume or *Curriculum Vitae* at the start of a crisis response. According to the research, most people believe that a person holds a professional position because they are experienced and competent.

5. Remain honest and open

If you are a government official, there is a healthy belief in your community that the government withholds information, according to research done as recently as 2003 (CDC unpublished). So, before you even begin to communicate with the public they already assume you are holding back information. In criminal investigations that may be true. In all cases, treat people like you would like to be treated yourself. The danger comes from assuming you are protecting people or avoiding a bigger problem by keeping information away from the public. The motives may be noble, but the outcome could be the opposite. CDC and five universities did a series of 55 focus groups. Among the findings, three points were clear themes from the participants: *any* information is empowering, uncertainty is more difficult to deal with than knowing a bad thing; and participants are prepared to go to multiple sources for information.

Here’s where the idea of holding back information as a way to “manage” the crisis breaks down. We live in the information age. It’s going to get out either in an up front way or a back door way. Assume that if someone other than you knows the fact, everyone knows the fact. Do you want to present the facts in context or do you want to try to clean up a mess of someone else’s making?

You know, I'm struck by the fact that as the towers fell on September 11th, Rudy Guilliani, covered in dust stood there in front of the cameras and said what he saw, said what everyone had seen. He looked up and looked around him and basically told the world, I saw what you saw, it's true, the buildings fell. But what he didn't do at that early stage in his message delivery was try to put answers on all the questions that all of us had. He left us, however, very sure, very certain that there was a machine that had been set in place that was gathering that information.

-John Agwunobi, M.D., State Health Director, Florida, Anthrax, 2001

Commitment and dedication

State up front what your organization's objective is in this emergency response, and commit to reaching that objective. Show dedication by sharing in the sacrifices and discomforts of the emergency. Don't fake hardship for the cameras. Effective governors know that they'd better walk the territory in which they're declaring a state disaster area. Dedication means not leaving the emergency until the community is recovered. This often means staying in touch with the community long after the media lose interest in the story. Resolution and follow-up should be committed to from the start and carried through to the end.

Accountability

For most people that literally means "keeping the books open." If government or non-profit money is being spent in the response to a disaster, sooner or later the public and media will demand to know to whom that money or resources are being distributed. A savvy official would anticipate the questions and have the mechanisms in place to be as transparent as possible, perhaps keeping an accounting on an Internet site related to the disaster and updating it weekly or monthly as appropriate.

Make the Facts Work in Your Message

Consider the following when creating your initial communication to your audiences:

- For the general public, **present a short, concise, and focused message** (6th-grade level). It's difficult in a heightened state of anxiety or fear to take in copious amounts of information. Get the bottom line out first. In time, the public will want more information.
- **Cut to the chase**—*relevant information only* at this time. Don't start with a lot of background information. Don't spend a lot of time establishing yourself or your organization. One sentence should be enough.
- **Give action steps in positives**, not negatives (e.g., "In case of fire, use stairs," "Stay calm," are positive messages. Negative messages are "Do not use elevator" and "Don't panic.") Use positives, not negatives.
- **Repeat the message**—repetition reflects credibility and durability. Correct information is correct each time you repeat it. Reach and frequency, common advertising concepts, tell us that your message is more apt to be received and acted upon as the number of people exposed to the message (reach) and the number of times each person hears the message (frequency) go up.
- **Create action steps in threes or rhyme, or create an acronym.** These are ways to make basic information easier to remember, such as "stop/drop and roll" or "KISS—keep it simple, stupid." Three is not a magic number, but in an emergency, you should expect someone to absorb three simple directions. Research indicates that somewhere between three and seven bits of new information is the limit for people to memorize and recall. It makes sense in the stress of an emergency to

The best advice . . . is to disclose bad news sooner rather than later. Whenever a convoluted explanation is offered in favor of not disclosing, overrule the advice and disclose.

-Rudolph Giuliani,
Mayor, New York City, 2001, from his
book Leadership

ask you audience to remember fewer bits of information. (For example, Anthrax is a bacterium that is treated with antibiotics. Anthrax is not transmitted from person to person. Seek medical care if you believe you have symptoms of anthrax: fever, body aches, and breathing problems.)

- **Use personal pronouns for the organization.** “We are committed to . . .” or “We understand the need for . . .”

Avoid

- **Technical jargon** Cut the professional jargon and euphemisms; they imply insecurity and lack of honesty.
- **Condescending or judgmental phrases**—(e.g., “You would have to be an idiot to try to outrun a tornado.” “Only hypochondriacs would need to walk around with a prescription for Cipro.”) Many of us are neither idiots nor hypochondriacs, and both ideas have crossed our minds. Don’t insult your audience by word or tone. That doesn’t mean condoning the behavior; instead, validate the impulse but offer a better alternative and the reasons why it’s better.
- **Attacks**—Attack the problem, not the person or organization.
- **Promises/guarantees**—only what you can deliver. Otherwise, promise to remain committed throughout the emergency response.
- **Discussion of money** —In the initial phase of a crisis, discussion of the magnitude of the problem should be in the context of the health and safety of the public or environment. Loss of property is secondary. Also, a discussion of the amount of money spent is not a surrogate for the level of concern and response from your organization (what does that money provide?).
- **Humor**—Seldom is humor a good idea. People seldom “get the joke” when they are feeling desperate. Humor is a great stress-reliever behind closed doors. Anyone who has responded to emergencies knows that sometimes inappropriate humor creeps in as a coping mechanism. Be careful not to offend others responding to an emergency, even behind closed doors. Be especially sensitive when speaking to the public. One person’s attempt at humor may be another’s insult.

Employ the STARCC Principle

Your public message in a crisis must be:

Simple—Frightened people don’t want to hear big words

Timely—Frightened people want information NOW

Accurate—Frightened people won’t get nuances, so give it straight

Relevant—Answer their questions and give action steps

Credible—Empathy and openness are key to credibility

Consistent—The slightest change in the message is upsetting and dissected by all

And sometimes we said, we don't have anything to tell you that's happened in the last day in the investigation because it's confidential information, but here's some tips on mental health, here's some things you can look for in the community, here's some tips on being a good witness. If we couldn't give them information on the investigation itself, we tried to give them other information everyday that would help them get through that day.

-**Douglas Duncan**, County Executive, Montgomery County, Maryland, D.C. Sniper Attacks, 2002

CERC: Leader Pre-event Checklist

The following are keys to successful crisis communication. Discuss these with your communication director.

I know:

- Public information and media response is perceived by us as critical to our operational success
- Spokespersons (by topic) are identified and trained (e.g., empathy, honesty, commitment)
- Crisis Communication plan is integrated into overall operational plan
- A written procedure and agreement on clearance procedures is in place
 - These clearance procedures take 15 minutes or less to accomplish
 - These clearance procedures ensure accurate information is released
 - These clearance procedures have been tested in drills/exercises
 - These clearance procedures allow for authority delegation to speed response
- Contact information (including after hours) for primary media is handy to all who need it
- Adequate manpower and equipment is set aside to keep a 24-hour media operation going for up to 10 days
- Our information telephone number (hotline) for public inquiries is ready with trained operators
- Our response partners are identified and know our communication role and expectations
- Our stakeholders are identified and know how we will respond directly to them
- We have the capability of holding a national press conference if needed
- We can monitor media reports and public inquiries for rumors and respond to rumors in real time
- Strategic National Stockpile communication tools are in place
- Our emergency response plan notifies the communication director in first wave of calls/pages
- As an important stakeholder, we know our elected officials will want to communicate to constituents about this crisis and we have a plan to ensure a consistent message is delivered to the public
- Our Internet site can post media and public information materials within 45 minutes of final clearance
- We have an accountability plan to public/media about resource allocations during and after the crisis such as a web page that shows where disaster response funds are going that is updated routinely
- We can conduct a meaningful town hall meeting during crisis recovery
- All potential incident command or department leaders are fully trained in Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication and understand their role as a spokesperson

CERC: Crisis Leader—First Message

Build credibility with these 6 emergency message components:

1. Expression of empathy (e.g., understand you are hurt, confused, anxious, frightened):

2. Clarifying facts (Fill in only VERIFIED facts, skip if not certain):

Who _____

What (Action) _____

Where _____

When _____

Why _____

How _____

3. What we don't know: _____

4. Process to get answers: _____

5. Statement of commitment: _____

- 6. Referrals (If possible, skip if not yet ready):**

For more information _____

Next scheduled update _____

Finally, check your message for the following:

Positive action steps	Avoid jargon
Honest/open tone	Avoid judgmental phrases
Say "we" not "I"	Avoid humor
Careful with early promises (can you do it?)	Avoid extreme speculation

Delivered: _____ **Time** _____ **Date** _____

INFORMATION FOR LOCAL CHIEF EXECUTIVES REGARDING DECLARING A STATE OF EMERGENCY AND ISSUING EMERGENCY ORDERS

The following information can be used by local Chief Executives and Emergency Managers on matters pertaining to declaring a “local state of emergency”, pursuant to Article 2-B of the State Executive Law. This document addresses the most commonly asked questions regarding a local state of emergency. Additional information or clarification may be obtained by contacting your local, County or State Office of Emergency Management. If you have a specific legal question regarding the use of the provisions found in 2-B it is always best to consult with your attorney.

A. INSTRUCTIONS FOR DECLARING A LOCAL STATE OF EMERGENCY:

1. Only the local chief executive (County Executive, Town Supervisor, Village or City Mayor) can declare a local state of emergency covering all or any part of his/her jurisdiction.
2. A local state of emergency is declared pursuant to section 24 of the NYS Executive Law.
3. It can be declared in response to, or anticipation of, a threat to public safety.
4. A declaration of a local state of emergency should be written.
5. The declaration should include the time and date, the reason for the declaration, the area involved, and the expected duration.
6. The written declaration should be kept on file in the Municipal or County Clerk's Office. Copies of the written state of emergency must be sent to the Department of State and the State Office of Emergency Management.
7. A local state of emergency must be declared BEFORE emergency orders are issued.
8. A local state of emergency should be formally rescinded when the declaration is no longer needed.
9. Only the local chief executive, or person authorized to act for the local chief executive, may rescind a local state of emergency.
10. The rescission should be written.
11. The rescission should include the time and date of the original declaration, the reason for the local state of emergency, and the time and date the state of emergency is rescinded.

12. The written rescission should be kept on file in the Municipal or County Clerk's Office. Copies of the rescission should be sent to the Department of State and the State Office of Emergency Management.

B. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON DECLARING A STATE OF EMERGENCY

1. *Who is considered a local chief executive for the purpose of declaring a local state of emergency?*

The Mayor of a City or Village, a Town Supervisor, the County Executive or County Manager are considered local Chief Executives. When a County does not have a County Executive or Manager, the Chairman or other presiding officer of the County Legislature serves as Chief Executive. In cases where the City, Village or Town has a Manager, then the Manager serves as the Chief Executive.

2. *Why should I declare a local state of emergency?*

It provides the local chief executive with additional powers in order to respond adequately to a disaster. These powers, exercised through the issuance of emergency orders, include, but are not limited to:

- Establishing curfews;
- Implementing public protective measures (e.g., controlling traffic, prohibiting ingress and egress into the affected area, prohibiting the sale of alcohol and firearms);
- Establishing shelters, medical shelters, or alternate care sites;
- Suspending local laws; and
- Requesting supplemental assistance.

3. *Can a declaration give legal protection?*

Yes. A declaration of a local state of emergency provides legal protection and immunities for the local chief executive and local emergency officials when they make decisions and take actions to respond to disasters or emergencies.

4. *Can a state of emergency be declared at any time?*

No. A local state of emergency can be issued only when a situation exists that has or will place the public at risk and that will require extraordinary measures for proper protection.

5. *When should I declare a local state of emergency?*

You should consider declaring a local state of emergency when a dangerous situation is present or imminent and emergency officials are considering protective actions such as:

- Evacuation of people for a large or heavily populated area street, road, housing development, multi-resident buildings),
- Sheltering people in designated areas or buildings,
- Large-scale closing of roads due to conditions considered to be dangerous to lives and property, or Impending emergency or disaster caused by natural forces (floods, blizzards, ice storms, tornadoes).

6. *Can I issue Local emergency orders without a state of emergency?*

No. A state of emergency must be declared before you may issue local emergency orders.

7. *Will a declaration help in getting assistance from the state?*

Yes. If you declare a local state of emergency and you determine the disaster is beyond the capacity of your jurisdiction's resources, and the resources of the county, the **County Chief Executive** may request the Governor to declare a state disaster emergency which will allow the Governor to provide assistance from state resources.

8. *Must I rescind a declaration of state of emergency?*

No. Executive Law § 24 does not require you to rescind the declaration of a state of emergency, however, a written rescinding statement should be made when the emergency no longer exists. The local chief executive can rescind the declaration of emergency at any time.

9. *If I don't rescind a state of emergency, does it end automatically?*

Yes. If no time limit was specified in the declaration, the state of emergency will terminate automatically 30 days after the effective date of the state of emergency. In the alternative, if a time limit was indicated in the declaration of state of emergency it will terminate at that the time and date indicated therein.

10. *When should I rescind a state of emergency?*

Even though the state of emergency will automatically terminate after 30 days, you should rescind it when the conditions that warranted the declaration no longer exist.

11. *Must the rescission be issued in writing?*

No. However, it is recommended, in the same manner as a declaration of state of emergency is recommended, to be issued in written form.

12. *Must the rescission be filed?*

No. However, it is recommended that it be filed in the Office of the Municipal or County Clerk.

C. INSTRUCTIONS FOR ISSUING LOCAL EMERGENCY ORDERS

Local Emergency Orders can be issued only if there is a State of Emergency in effect pursuant to section 24 of the State Executive Law

1. Local emergency orders can only be issued by the local chief executive for his/her own jurisdiction following the declaration of a local state of emergency by that same executive.
2. Local emergency orders must be written.
3. Local emergency orders should include the time and date they take effect, the reason for the declaration, the area involved, and the duration.
4. A local emergency order expires automatically after five (5) days. It can be rescinded before that by its own terms, or by a rescission by the local chief executive. It is also automatically rescinded when the state of emergency is rescinded

5. The local chief executive may extend local emergency orders for periods not to exceed five (5) days each during the state of emergency.
6. Local emergency orders must be published as soon as practicable in a newspaper of general circulation and provided to radio and television media for broadcast.
7. Local emergency orders may be terminated at any time by the local legislative body via concurrent resolution.
8. Local emergency orders must be executed in triplicate and filed within 72 hours or as soon as practicable in the Office of the County Clerk, and the Office of the Secretary of State.
9. Local emergency orders must be re-filed if they are extended.

D. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON ISSUING LOCAL EMERGENCY ORDERS

1. ***Can anyone issue a local emergency order?***

No. Only the chief Executive of a county, city, town or village may issue a local emergency order.

2. ***What can a local emergency order include?***

An emergency order can require whatever is necessary to protect life and property or to bring the emergency situation under control as long as what it is within the constitutional powers of the local government. An emergency order should be used to execute the additional powers given to the chief executive by virtue of declaring a local state of emergency. *See section B.4 above.*

3. ***Can a local emergency order be issued at any time after I've declared an emergency?***

Yes. Once the local chief executive has declared a local state of emergency s/he can issue local emergency orders.

4. ***Is it in effect indefinitely?***

No. A local emergency order automatically terminates 5 days after issuance, or by rescission by the local chief executive, or a declaration by the local chief executive that the state of emergency no longer exists, whichever occurs sooner. It can also be terminated at any time by concurrent resolution by the local legislative body.

5. ***Can an order be modified once it's issued?***

Yes. A local emergency order may be amended, modified, or rescinded at any time by the local chief executive during the state of emergency.

6. ***Can a local emergency order be extended beyond five days?***

Yes. The local chief executive may extend an order for additional periods up to 5 days each during the local state of emergency. Each extension must be re-filed.

7. ***Can a citizen who disobeys an emergency order be arrested?***

Yes. Any person who knowingly violates any local emergency order of a local chief executive issued pursuant to Section 24 of the Executive Law can be found guilty of a class B misdemeanor.

E. ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS REGARDING DECLARATION OF A STATE OF EMERGENCY

1. *Do I have to declare a local state of emergency to receive state and federal disaster assistance?*

No. A local state of emergency is not required for the municipality to receive state and federal aid. By proclaiming a local state of emergency, the local chief executive of a community is stating that a serious situation exists, or is imminent, that will affect public health and safety and may require extraordinary measures for effective response or recovery. The Governor may, on his own initiative, declare a state disaster emergency for the affected local area, which will allow the use of state assets. In addition, the threshold for seeking assistance from higher levels of government is the inability to respond adequately with available local resources. The declaration of a local state of emergency can be an acknowledgement that the disaster is beyond the capabilities of the local government.

2. *What are the advantages of declaring a local state of emergency?*

The declaration of a local state of emergency increases the powers of the local chief executive. These powers are implemented through the use of emergency orders. Additionally, an emergency declaration gives greater legal protection and immunities for local chief executives and local emergency officials when making decisions and taking actions during disasters and emergencies.

3. *Are there circumstances when it would be inappropriate to declare a local state of emergency?*

A local state of emergency can be declared and emergency orders can be issued in the event of a disaster, rioting, catastrophe or similar public emergency---or when there is reasonable apprehension of an immediate danger from such events. Declarations under Executive Law generally have been in response to disasters, emergencies and related catastrophes or threats that pose an immediate peril or have an acute impact on the community and public safety.

In many cases, the need to proclaim a local state of emergency is obvious. When a situation exists which has or will place the public at risk and will require extraordinary measures for proper protection, a declaration should be made. For example, a Category III hurricane travelling up the coast, a blizzard that dumps 4' of snow in a short period of time, an explosion and subsequent release at a local chemical plant.

In most situations assessing the need for the special powers, authorities and protections are primary concerns when deciding whether to declare a local state of emergency. When the incident can be effectively managed within the capabilities of the community and extraordinary measures are not required for response or recovery, a local state of emergency is not necessary. Examples would be a minor hazardous materials incident or normal and low-lying flooding from rains or spring snowmelt.

4. *Can a local state of emergency be declared in anticipation of a disaster or in advance of an expected emergency?*

Yes. If the impending disaster or emergency creates an imminent danger and may imperil public safety, a local state of emergency can be proclaimed. Doing so permits the community to obtain resources or take actions needed to provide more timely public protection or services in anticipation of an emergency (for example, ordering an evacuation).

5. *When a municipality declares a local state of emergency, must the county also declare?*

No. It is not necessary for the County to declare a local state of emergency because a municipality does.

6. ***Can a county declare an emergency in an area if the affected town, village, or city has not done so?***

Yes. The county chief executive can declare an emergency if it determines the situation may have impacts or requirements that affect the county and its resources. The county chief executive may declare a local state of emergency for any portion of the county, including part or all of any Town, Village or City --- even when the local jurisdiction does not declare.

7. ***Should the local state of emergency include the entire jurisdiction or can a declaration be made for a specific area within the jurisdiction?***

A local state of emergency can include the entire jurisdiction, or it can be designated for a specific geographical section or area of the community. In either case, the declaration area should be clearly defined. Counties may consider issuing a declaration for specific communities and contiguous areas, in case the situation has impacts or requirements extending beyond a local site. For example, when the Governor declares a state disaster emergency for an event that has occurred within one county, that county will be specifically named along with the generic statement "and contiguous counties."

8. ***Does declaring a local state of emergency require the local jurisdiction to pay for assistance it receives from other local governmental units?***

Under the provisions of the Intrastate Mutual Aid Program (IMAP) (Exec. Law § 29-h), the assisting local government is authorized to seek reimbursement from the requesting local government. The assisting local government may choose to lend or loan resources to the requesting local government without any expectation of reimbursement. However, this expectation should be made clear prior to sending or accepting resources. If the assisting local government offers to provide resources and makes it clear that it is expecting to be reimbursed, the requesting jurisdiction may choose to refuse to accept assistance or accept the resources and reimburse the assisting local government. The IMAP committee is responsible for creating guidelines to be used and procedures to be followed when requesting reimbursement for the deployment of resources from the assisting local government.

9. ***If a local state of emergency is declared, does it allow officials to confiscate or demand the use of private resources, property, and equipment?***

No. Declaring a local state of emergency does not permit government to demand or confiscate private property and resources. The local chief executive can undertake emergency actions on any property within his or her jurisdiction, including private property, with the possible exception of Federal and Indian property.

10. ***Is there a difference between a disaster declaration, an emergency declaration or proclamation and a local state of emergency?***

The wording in Article 2-B of the Executive Law refers to a proclamation of a local state of emergency. When a declaration is issued, it actually means a local state of emergency is in effect, as proclaimed by the local chief executive. The terms "disaster declaration," "local state of emergency," and "disaster proclamation" are often used interchangeably to refer to the same thing. However, the correct term as cited in § 24 of the Executive Law is "local state of emergency."

11. ***Is the local chief executive the only local official that can declare a local state of emergency?***

Yes. The local chief executive is the only official that can proclaim a local state of emergency under provisions of § 24 of the Executive Law. It is important to keep in mind that the declaration of a local state of emergency **does** not affect the statutory powers, duties, and authorities which may be given to other local officials pursuant to other provisions of New York State or local laws. For example, a Sheriff

can declare a “Special Emergency” relating to public safety under provisions of the General Municipal Law (§ 209-f(2)). These declarations are applied in specific circumstances and are not considered to be as comprehensive as a proclamation under Article 2-B.

12. *What is the relationship between a local state of emergency and emergency orders? How are each applied and handled?*

A local state of emergency is a declaration or proclamation by the local chief executive that a disaster has occurred and certain emergency conditions exist. The declaration is a statement to the public that some type of hazard or threat exists and has been determined to pose a risk to the community and to public safety. It also establishes a legal basis for the local chief executive and local emergency officials to implement authorities and actions to address the situation.

Once a local chief executive proclaims a local state of emergency, it then permits him or her to issue emergency orders. Emergency orders are the specific actions taken by the local chief executive when a local state of emergency is in effect. An evacuation order or an order limiting access in certain areas would be examples of emergency orders.

13. *Can a local state of emergency be used to suspend existing local laws?*

Yes. A local chief executive can use a local state of emergency to suspend local laws, ordinances and regulations, provided certain conditions outlined in § 24(1)(g) of the Executive Law are met. Requirements associated with suspension of local laws can be complex and should be done in consultation with your local attorney. Before local laws can be suspended, either the Governor must have declared a state disaster emergency, or after a local chief executive has declared a state of emergency, the county chief executive has requested assistance from the Governor. Suspensions must be reasonably necessary as a result of the disaster and provide for minimum deviation from the intent of the law, ordinance or regulation.

Local chief executives cannot suspend state or federal laws, rules, or regulations.

14. *Will declaring a local state of emergency expose me to a greater risk of liability?*

No. Section 25(5) of the Executive Law provides immunity for local officials when making discretionary decisions during a disaster or emergency. Although a declaration of a local state of emergency cannot prevent lawsuits against public officials and municipalities, having a proclamation in effect provides greater protection from liability. While a declaration provides immunity, it is still important that local officials act within the scope of their authority and experience. It is also recommended that a local disaster preparedness plan be followed to the extent possible during the response and recovery to such a disaster.

15. *Do the individuals who provide assistance in response to or recovery from a disaster have any kind of liability protection?*

Yes. Individuals, such as public officers, employees or affiliated volunteers that have duties or responsibilities specified in the local comprehensive emergency management plan are given protection from liability in § 29-b of the Executive Law. These individuals, referred to as Disaster Emergency Response Personnel (DERP), when operating under the command of the county emergency management director, receive the same privileges and immunities they would receive if they were participating in a local civil defense drill in the political subdivision in which they are enrolled. When participating in a civil defense drill, civil defense forces (DERPs in Article 2-B) are provided with immunity from liability (Defense Emergency Act – NYS Unconsolidated Laws § 9193)

16. *Is it necessary to declare a local state of emergency to order an evacuation of the general public?*

Yes. Section 24 of the Executive Law gives the local chief executive the authority to issue emergency orders, which could include the requirement for an evacuation in time of emergency to protect public health and safety. At times, on-scene responders may recognize a need for a limited and immediate evacuation. It may not always be possible or practical to declare a local state of emergency. In these situations, evacuations are commonly conducted as a recommended emergency protective measure, without a local state of emergency and order, and are completely voluntary.

17. *When can the Governor declare a state disaster emergency?*

When the Governor, on his own initiative or upon request from one or more local chief executives, finds that a disaster has occurred or is imminent for which local governments are unable to respond adequately, he may declare a state disaster emergency. In many cases, when state agencies can provide emergency assistance pursuant to existing authorities and resources, a declaration by the Governor is not required.

18. *Is a Governor's state disaster emergency declaration necessary to receive federal aid?*

A declaration by the Governor is not necessary to request federal assistance. A decision by the Governor to declare a state disaster emergency is based upon the scope of the disaster and the authority needed to direct state resources.

State requests for federal disaster assistance are based on an assessment of response and recovery demands and damages to the public and private sectors. The assessment is done in coordination with FEMA staff, and further determines if the implementation of various supplemental federal disaster relief programs is warranted in relation to the scope of the disaster and the capability of state and local governments to effectively address response and recovery needs.

19. *Can the Governor request federal assistance immediately?*

Yes. In catastrophic disasters, where the need for early federal support from the President is proven, the Governor may request federal involvement immediately. When requesting disaster assistance from the President, federal law requires the Governor to submit specific information and meet certain requirements, supported by impact statements and damage estimates. By federal law, the Governor has 30 days to request federal assistance from the President.

In emergencies of less significant scope, a determination on the extent and kinds of federal assistance to be requested are generally not made until a comprehensive damage assessment is completed to ascertain the exact type of assistance needed. It may be that federal disaster relief programs can be implemented under the authority of a Federal Agency (such as the U.S. Small Business Administration, U.S. Department of Agricultural, the U.S. Corps of Engineers, etc.), and that Presidential assistance is not warranted. Such an assessment is conducted jointly by state and local governments, usually with technical assistance from FEMA.

STATE OF EMERGENCY DECLARATION

A State of Emergency is hereby declared in _____ effective at
(area within municipality, or entire municipality)

_____ on _____ .
(time) (date)

This State of Emergency has been declared due to _____

(description of situation)

This situation threatens the public safety.

This State of Emergency will remain in effect until rescinded by a subsequent order.

As the Chief Executive of _____,
(name of municipality)

I, _____, exercise the authority given me under
(name of Chief Executive)

Section 24 of the New York State Executive Law, to preserve the public safety and hereby render all required and available assistance vital to the security, well-being, and health of the citizens of this Municipality.

I hereby direct all departments and agencies of _____ to
(name of municipality)

take whatever steps necessary to protect life and property, public infrastructure, and provide such emergency assistance deemed necessary.

(Name)

(Signature)

(Title)

(Date)

EMERGENCY ORDER

Local Emergency Order for: _____ :
(name(s) of area(s)/municipality(ies) affected by this order)

I, _____, the Chief Executive
of _____, in accordance with a declaration of a State of
(name of municipality)

Emergency issued on _____, 20__, and pursuant to Section 24 of the
(date SOE was issued)

New York State Executive Law, do hereby order _____

(description of the action ordered and the area(s) affected and the reason for the order)

This order shall take effect _____
("IMMEDIATELY" or specify date and time)

and shall remain in effect until removed by order of the Chief Executive. This order may also be renewed in
(5) five-day increments.

Failure to obey this order is a criminal offense, punishable by law under New York State Executive Law § 24(5).

Signed this the _____ day of _____, 20__, at _____ o'clock, in ,
(date) (month) (year) (time)

_____, New York.
(municipality)

(Name) (Signature)

(Witness Name) (Witness Signature)

(Title) (Date)

NATIONAL INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM (NIMS)

NIMS COMPLIANCE INFORMATION

WHAT IS NIMS?	NIMS COMPONENTS	KEY BENEFITS OF NIMS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive, nationwide systematic approach to incident management • Core set of doctrine, concepts, principles, terminology and organizational processes for all hazards • Essential principles for a common operating picture and interoperability of communications and information management • Standardized resource management procedures for coordination among different jurisdictions and organizations • Scalable and applicable for all incidents 	<p>Built on existing structures, such as the Incident Command System (ICS), NIMS creates a proactive system to assist those responding to incidents or planned events. To unite the practice of emergency management and incident response throughout the country, NIMS focuses on five key areas, or components. These components link together and work in unison to form a larger and comprehensive incident management system. NIMS Components include Preparedness, Communications and Information Management, Resource Management, Command and Management and Ongoing Management and Maintenance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhances organizational and technological interoperability and cooperation • Provides a scalable and flexible framework with universal applicability • Promotes all-hazards preparedness • Enables a wide variety of organizations to participate effectively in emergency management/incident response • Institutionalizes professional emergency management/incident response practices

NIMS FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS

NIMS is applicable to all incidents and all levels of stakeholders who assume a role in emergency management. Elected and appointed officials and policy makers, who are responsible for jurisdictional policy decisions, must also have a clear understanding of NIMS to better serve their constituency.

It is important that elected officials be ready to execute the NIMS principles when preparing for and responding to emergencies. The following online courses are important for elected officials to take to understand and execute the NIMS principles. Each course will take up to three hours to complete.

After successfully passing the course quiz, a certificate of completion will be emailed to you. Please keep a copy of this certificate for your records, and send a copy to Kelly Paslow, Director of the Bureau of Public Safety.

These courses can also be offered to groups in person. For more information on scheduling a group training course, contact Kelly Paslow, Director of the Bureau of Public Safety at 266-7676, or Mark Waldenmaier, Public Health Planner at the Department of Health at 270-2720.

FEMA INDEPENDENT STUDY PROGRAM (ISP)

The Emergency Management Institute (EMI) offers self-paced courses designed for people who have emergency management responsibilities and the general public. All are offered free-of-charge to those who qualify for enrollment. To get a complete listing of courses, visit the ISP website at <http://training.fema.gov/IS/> and click on *ISP Course List*.

IS-700.a NIMS An Introduction

This course introduces and overviews the National Incident Management System (NIMS). NIMS provides a consistent nationwide template to enable all government, private-sector, and nongovernmental organizations to work together during domestic incidents. Available at: <http://training.fema.gov/emiweb/is/is700a.asp>

IS-100.b - Introduction to Incident Command System, ICS-100

EMI has revised the ICS 100 course to reflect lessons learned since its release in 2006. This course is NIMS compliant and uses the objectives developed collaboratively by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group, the United States Fire Administration, the United States Department of Agriculture and the Emergency Management Institute. Note: IS-100.b is an updated version of the IS-100.a course. If you have successfully completed IS-100 or IS-100.a, you may want to review the new version of the course. For credentialing purposes, the courses are equivalent. Available at: <http://training.fema.gov/emiweb/is/is100b.asp>

IS-200.b - ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents

ICS 200 is designed to enable personnel to operate efficiently during an incident or event within the Incident Command System (ICS). ICS-200 provides training on and resources for personnel who are likely to assume a supervisory position within the ICS. Available at: <http://training.fema.gov/emiweb/is/is200b.asp>



Rensselaer County Department of Health

Public Health Preparedness Program Fact Sheet

The Preparedness Program provides the day-to-day coordination of the Health Department's emergency preparedness maintenance and response activities. Our mission is to improve the capability of the Health Department to prepare for, respond to, and recover from all hazards. Program responsibilities include:

Medical countermeasure dispensing

In the event of a public health emergency, such as a bioterrorist attack or natural disease pandemic, the health department provides the appropriate prophylaxis and education to the public. A Point of Dispensing or "POD" may be activated by the county, where medications to prevent disease are given to a large number of people in a short period of time free of charge. The Preparedness Program coordinates the planning activities associated with this task and conducts training and drills to test dispensing capabilities.



Recruitment and management of the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)

The MRC is a group of volunteers who are called upon to prepare for and respond to emergencies throughout the county. MRC volunteers are trained to supplement existing emergency and public health resources. For more information or if you are interested in joining, go to

<http://www.rensco.com/publichealth.asp> and click on "Join now" or contact

the MRC Coordinator at 518.270.2633 or sjones@rensco.com.

Community engagement

The Preparedness Program seeks input from the community whenever possible to ensure educational and emergency messages reach the public. We conduct surveys on personal preparedness and hold events with organizations in the county to maintain a high level of knowledge about the county population's needs.

Education

Presentations on personal preparedness can be requested for employees or clients of your organization in Rensselaer County by contacting the Bioterrorism Coordinator at 518.270.2720 or mwaldenmaier@rensco.com. Sign up for the Preparedness E-Newsletter by emailing mwaldenmaier@rensco.com.



Maintenance of all-hazards plans

“All-hazards” planning refers to building the basic framework for responding to a wide variety of disasters. Although the program plans for expected or common emergencies, written plans and procedures are flexible tools that provide resources for persons responding to any emergency. Threats to public health for which we plan include bioterrorism, natural disasters, chemical & radiological emergencies, and natural disease outbreaks.

Other

The Preparedness Program works in conjunction with Nursing, Epidemiology, and the Public Health Director to issue isolation & quarantine recommendations. We also have a supportive role in emergency sheltering at the request of Emergency Management.



For more information about emergency preparedness, visit http://www.rensco.com/publichealth_prep.asp or www.ready.gov.