

## Chapter 4

# EMS SUPERVISOR

PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE

## Communication

# Objectives

- Identify and describe the basic components of the communication process.
- Describe how to communicate effectively with employees, customers, and colleagues.
- Describe how to communicate effectively verbally.
- Describe how to communicate effectively in writing.

# Objectives

- Identify barriers to effective communication and explain how to overcome them.
- Describe the EMS officer's role in media relations.

# Introduction

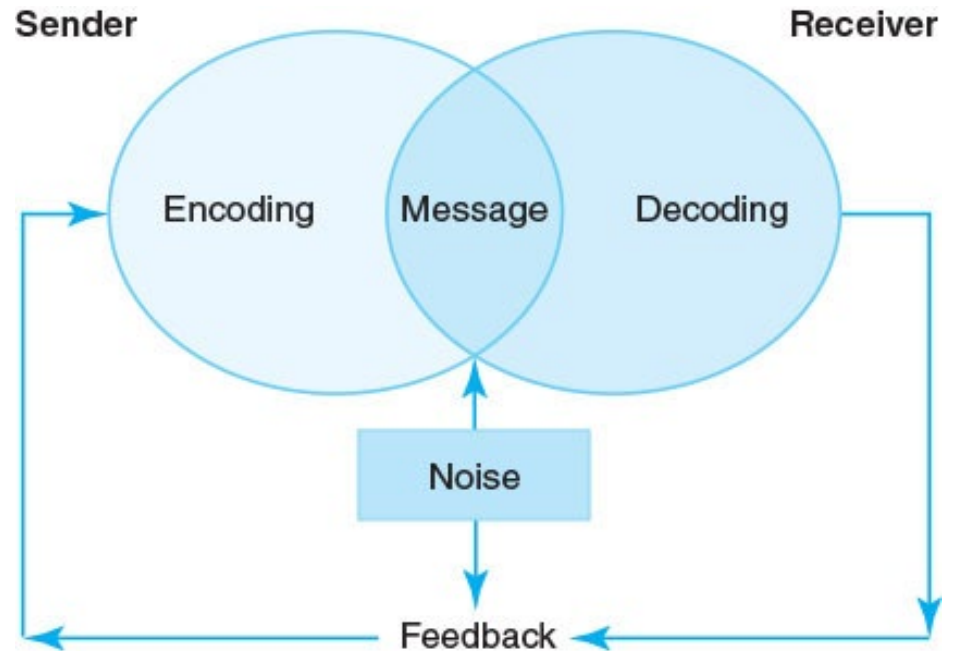
- A managerial leader can expect to spend the majority of his or her time at work being engaged in conversation.
- During these exchanges:
  - The information must be clear and concise.
  - The sender of the message needs to make sure that the receiver understands it.

# Introduction

- Your ability to communicate effectively will make or break the success of many of the actions you initiate as an EMS officer.
- Communicating effectively can determine:
  - Your team's acceptance of you as a leader
  - The success of a project
  - Your marketability for promotion
  - Specific outcomes during a crisis situation

# Communication Basics

- Basic elements of the communication process:
  - The sender
  - The receiver
  - The message
  - The medium
  - Encoding
  - Decoding
  - Feedback
  - Noise



# Communication Basics

- Communicating effectively is paramount both at work and in daily activities outside of work.
- The sender of a message must ensure that when communicating, verbally, nonverbally, or in written form:
  - The message (encoding) is clear.
  - An appropriate medium is used to deliver the message.
  - The message is simple for the receiver to understand (decode).

# Communication Basics

- The clarity of a message can be impacted by:
  - Poor grammar
  - Use of an ineffective medium to deliver the message
  - An attempt to cover multiple topics in the same message without making clear transitions
  - Use of a monotone without any inflection
  - Absence of a clearly defined topic
  - Use of technical or uncommon words
  - Noise that disrupts the communication process



# Communication Basics

- Good communication requires practice and considering the message from the receiver's perspective.
- Good communicators:
  - Make it a habit to say what they are going to say clearly
  - Confirm that the message was received
  - Use transitions when they shift to another topic

# Communication Basics

## Example of a transition:

*We have determined that it is too expensive to purchase an ambulance unit due to the amount of equipment and size of this acquisition.*

*Now let's talk about purchasing a quick-response non-transport unit instead.*

## Why this transition helps:

- The second sentence makes it clear to the receiver that the sender has moved from discussing the ambulance unit to considering the quick-response non-transport unit.
- With such a transition, the possibility for confusion is reduced.

# Communication Basics

- After sending a message, it is important that the sender ask for feedback and/or that the receiver provide some feedback to the sender.
  - Feedback ensures that the correct message has been received.
  - If the correct message has not been received, any confusion can be addressed at this point, before the misunderstanding is compounded further.

# Communicating Effectively

- Effective communication is essential for your success as an EMS officer.
- A poor performance will likely result if you expect team members to understand what you are telling them:
  - Without providing them with clear direction
  - Without asking for feedback to ensure that they understand the directive

# Communicating Effectively

- When you meet with your team for the first time in your new capacity, consider your communication strategy.
- You will most likely use a variety of communication methods when you begin to communicate with your team.

# Communicating Effectively

- Face-to-face communication:
  - Should be considered the first choice for most messages
  - May not always be possible
- The best communication method often depends on the message to be communicated, along with any logistical, financial, or time constraints.

# Verbal Communication

- When attempting to communicate, you need to make sure that the message was received and understood by the receiver.
- Face-to-face communication is typically preferred because it reduces the possibility of miscommunication and adds value to the encounter.

# Verbal Communication

- When using verbal communication, your message must be:
  - Clear
  - Concise
  - To the point
- Verbal communications, particularly face-to-face conversations, can be greatly impacted by nonverbal communications.



# Verbal Communication

- Behaviors that imply that the message is not being well received are if either the sender or the receiver:
  - Appears to be looking away
  - Has shoulders down and arms crossed
  - Is reading e-mail
  - Is looking at his or her phone
  - Is speaking to other team members as they walk by

# Verbal Communication

- When engaging in verbal communication, both the sender and the receiver should:
  - Actively participate in sharing the message
  - Simultaneously show engagement with body language

# Verbal Communication

- When communicating, it is important for both parties:
  - To be aware of the message being delivered
  - To ensure that the message has been received and understood
  - To make every effort to display appropriate body language during the conversation

# Informal Conversations

- Most of an individual's verbal communications are informal conversations.
- Informal conversations do have a role in the workplace, even at an EMS organization.
- As with any workplace interaction, however, certain guidelines must be followed to ensure that you conduct yourself professionally.

# Informal Conversations

- The decision to use formal versus informal communication will depend on the audience, the setting, and the message you are attempting to deliver.
- Informal conversations are more relaxed and conversational.

# Informal Conversations

- Knowing when it is appropriate to use informal versus formal communication is extremely important for the EMS officer.
- You must set an example of what is acceptable at the workplace.

# Meetings

- Meetings are a necessary component in every organization.
- In EMS, meetings can range from one-on-one updates on a task or a disciplinary issue to formal interdepartmental conferences.

# Meetings

- In your capacity as an EMS officer, you are likely to lead meetings and serve as the chairperson of a committee many times.
- It is critical to:
  - Be well prepared for these roles
  - Identify the specific topics you want to address before meeting with others
- Prepare a written agenda well in advance and share it with your team.



# Meetings

- During the meeting itself, how you present yourself will influence:
  - What is accomplished through the meeting
  - How you are perceived by the attendees
- Consider your volume and tone of voice when you are speaking at such gatherings.

# Meetings

- When you are leading a meeting, you must:
  - Set a positive tone
  - Encourage participation
  - Demonstrate that you are highly engaged with the topics being discussed
  - Make sure to use vocal inflection when you are speaking

# Meetings

- When attendees are speaking, make sure that they are not interrupted and follow up with feedback on their comments or questions.
- Avoid distractions such as doodling, clicking a pen over and over, texting, and taking phone calls.

# Meetings

- Meeting with your team is important and is a great opportunity to ensure that everyone is on the same page regarding administrative and operational duties.
- Keep meetings focused, listen to attendee feedback, and follow up with attendees after the meeting if necessary.

# Video Conferencing

- In-person meetings are ideal in that they limit the opportunities for miscommunication; however, they may be difficult to accomplish.
- Video conferencing may be a valid alternative to an in-person meeting.

# Video Conferencing

- Video conferencing offers many advantages:
  - It is an opportunity to engage in face-to-face exchanges.
  - Multiple individuals can share in the conversation.
  - It saves money on travel.
  - The technology can be set up quickly.

# Video Conferencing

- Disadvantages:
  - It may be difficult to capture the other person's body language because the image is being transmitted by a camera.
  - The picture can be grainy, can freeze, or could be put on pause, preventing the viewer from capturing the entire scene.
  - If the connection is poor, not only will the image not be available, but the sound may be interrupted as well.

# Phone Conferencing

- Phone conferencing is similar to video conferencing, but without the visual images.
- This technology is beneficial when multiple individuals need to meet but, due to travel expenses or time constraints, cannot meet in person, and not all attendees have access to video conferencing.



# Phone Conferencing

- When the phone conference date is set, the participants are given a phone number to call and a specific code that allows them entry into the phone conference.
- The phone conference will have a host who is responsible for:
  - Selecting the topics for discussion
  - Ensuring that the items on the meeting agenda are addressed

# Phone Conferencing

- Phone conferencing is quick to set up and inexpensive.
- However, it does have the disadvantage that the host and other participants are unable to see one another.
- You must have a plan that will ensure your message is clear and is properly received.

# Presentations

- Delivering a presentation is an often-feared task, but success can be achieved by:
  - Preparing thoroughly
  - Relaxing during the event
  - Keeping the presentation simple

# Presentations

- Opportunities for presentations include:
  - Department EMS/medical in-service educational programs
  - Orientation for new hires
  - Town hall meetings to discuss the EMS system
  - When requesting the purchase of equipment during budget workshops in front of a city, county, or town board

# Presentations

- Be sure to get a good night's sleep the night before any presentation.
- Dress appropriately for the occasion.
- Ensure you are knowledgeable about the material being delivered.

# Presentations

- Know the Material
  - Be sure you thoroughly know the material that you will be presenting.
  - Your audience will see you as the subject-matter expert during the presentation.
  - It is your responsibility to deliver an organized, clear, and concise message.

# Presentations

- The following tips will help you develop and give an effective presentation:
  - Make it easy for the participants to follow along.
  - Be sure to provide materials that will illustrate your point.
  - Avoid busy slides.
  - Avoid capitalizing every letter.
  - Keep your presentation simple and easy to follow.

# Presentations

- Anticipate the Unexpected
  - You must make contingency plans in case a component of your presentation does not fall into place.
  - The day before the presentation, make sure that:
    - All the equipment is in working order.
    - Your handouts are ready for distribution.
    - You have a backup plan for every aspect of the presentation.



# Presentations

- Know Your Audience
  - If you will be presenting a topic that is familiar to the audience, then you may use terminology that is related to the topic at hand.
  - In contrast, if your audience is new to the topic, be sure to lay out the information in a way that is easy for newcomers to understand and follow during the presentation.

# Presentations

- Become Familiar with Your Surroundings
  - You may be asked to give a presentation somewhere besides the environment in which you work.
  - Regardless of where the presentation will be held, you must prepare well in advance by:
    - Developing the material to be presented
    - Familiarizing yourself with the presentation location

# Presentations

- Plan Your Time
  - Before presenting, determine how much time you have to get your message across.
  - Depending on the content and your presentation style, you will need at least:
    - 30 to 60 seconds per slide
    - 15 minutes for questions and answers after the presentation
  - Practice your presentation several times.

# Emergency Response

- The EMS officer may work in a front-line unit, serve as an area supervisor, or oversee an entire functional work-group (division).
- It is important, regardless of your rank, to understand that as an EMS officer you:
  - Will be dealing with internal and external customers
  - Must know when and how to adjust your communication to ensure your message is received

# Emergency Response

- The EMS officer may need to communicate effectively with various external customers, such as:
  - Patients
  - The patient's family
  - Friends
  - Bystanders

# Emergency Response

- When treating a patient, the EMS officer will need to convey a sense of calm and demonstrate that the situation is under control.
- The way EMS personnel communicate with patients, family members, friends, bystanders, and other prehospital providers while on scene will set the tone throughout the emergency situation.

# Emergency Response

- Every EMS officer must assess the environment in which he or she will be communicating and then make the appropriate adjustments to be most effective.

# Emergency Response

- Depending on the incident and the EMS officer's rank, it is not uncommon for the EMS officer to assume command of the scene.
- The EMS officer will need to take a macro view of the scene because his or her responsibility extends beyond patient care and into the operational components of the scene.



# Emergency Response

- The EMS officer, regardless of rank, will also need to communicate effectively with the other EMS personnel or organizational team members (internal customers).
  - Communicating with an employee or colleague during a prehospital emergency differs from communication in an office environment.
  - Adjusting communication styles is critical to ensure that the message is well received.

# Emergency Response

- Crew Resource Management
  - CRM is a multidisciplinary management system with the primary goal of improving safety and efficiency by focusing on:
    - Leadership
    - Communication
    - Situational awareness
    - Teamwork
    - Decision making
    - Use of all resources available to meet the goal

# Emergency Response

- Crew Resource Management
  - Implementing a CRM system must be a top priority in those organizations where:
    - Team members work under stressful conditions.
    - Time is critical.
    - The smallest error can mean the difference between life and death.

# Emergency Response

- Crew Resource Management
  - The CRM system provides:
    - A foundation for the organization to reduce the likelihood of catastrophic incidents
    - A safety mechanism to stop a crisis from growing

# Emergency Response

- Crew Resource Management
  - As the EMS officer on scene during a prehospital emergency, you must listen to those around you, just as you expect for those around you to listen to your directives.
  - During an emergency or other stressful situation, effective communication among team members is essential, regardless of rank.

# Written Communications

- Written communication may be the most challenging means of getting the intended message to the receiver.
- With this type of communication:
  - You cannot see the receiver's body language.
  - The receiver may interpret the tone of the message as being offensive.
  - You are not readily available to answer any immediate question the receiver has.

# Written Communications

- If the written communication is handwritten rather than typed, the writing must be neat and legible to avoid confusion.
- Regardless of the format of the written communication, correct grammar, punctuation, and syntax are necessary to:
  - Reduce misunderstanding
  - Maintain professionalism and authority

# Written Communications

- When written communication is used, you should be systematic in organizing the topics covered by that communication:
  - Keep the message short.
  - Introduce your topic statement.
  - Include examples that support your message.
  - Conclude the message.



# Written Communications

- When using any form of written communication, make every effort to include a statement within the body of the message that questions are welcomed.
- If several days pass without a response to your message (especially if a reply was requested), consider following up with an e-mail or telephone call.

# Memo or Bulletin

- A memo is used when a specific message is being sent to members of the organization or between functional working units.
- A bulletin is used to post a specific message for all members of the organization.
- Both memos and bulletins are used for internal communication between organizational members and are less formal than letters.

# Memo or Bulletin

- Each organization will have a certain way of crafting its organizational memos and bulletins.
- Therefore, it is important that you become familiar with your organization's template for writing memos and bulletins.

# Letter

- A letter is used when sending a message from a person or on behalf of the organization to another party outside the organization.
- It is more formal than a memo or bulletin and can be either short or long in content.

# Letter

- A letter may be an appropriate form of communication when the EMS officer needs to:
  - Provide a formal response to an internal or external customer
  - Request information
  - Convey a formal message of gratitude

# Letter

- Letters must be written on the appropriate department stationery.
- It is also important that the letter be formatted appropriately, including:
  - The date
  - The recipient's and sender's addresses
  - The name of the recipient's business if applicable
  - The recipient's name and title
  - The sender's signature

# Letter

- Letters are a formal way of communicating.
  - They are sent to convey a message.
  - They also document in writing that a formal message has been sent and the date on which it was sent.

# Standard Operating Guidelines or Procedures

- Standard operating guidelines (SOGs) and standard operating procedures (SOPs) are documents containing a set of instructions to assist employees with the management of operational and administrative conditions.



# Standard Operating Guidelines or Procedures

- Depending on the organization's SOG/SOP implementation policy, the document may be created by:
  - A group of individuals who make up an SOG/SOP committee
  - The organization's leadership team
  - Subject-matter experts within the organization

# Standard Operating Guidelines or Procedures

- It is important to become familiar with your organization's preferred format before attempting to create an SOG/SOP on your own.
- The SOG can be in text format and will commonly consist of the following:
  - Purpose
  - Guidelines

# Standard Operating Guidelines or Procedures

- Like a SOG, a SOP document is typically in text format, but it is more detailed than a SOG and includes the steps required to achieve a certain activity.
- SOPs may include the following sections:
  - Purpose
  - Policy
  - Responsibility
  - Procedure

# Standard Operating Guidelines or Procedures

- Once created, the SOG/SOP must be approved by the organization's chief executive officer or the chief of the department prior to dissemination.
- It is then assigned:
  - A file number
  - A title (indicating whether it is a guideline or a procedure)
  - A functional level unit that is responsible for maintaining the document

# Standard Operating Guidelines or Procedures

- SOGs and SOPs are business processes that serve as references when team members are faced with certain organizational activities, especially those that occur frequently.
- Use of SOGs/SOPs ensures consistency across the organization.

# E-mail

- E-mail is one of the most widely used communications media today and can be very effective.
  - It allows the sender and the receiver to have immediate access to a written message.
  - It can be used for communicating with internal or external customers.
  - It is typically not accepted as a formal medium of communication.
  - However, it can still be very effective in getting messages across to recipients very quickly.

# E-mail

- Benefits to using e-mail include the following:
  - It is an easy way to reach individuals or groups quickly with the same message.
  - It facilitates sending multiple document attachments to another party.
  - It can be sent from anywhere that has Internet access.
  - The process is quick, allowing the recipient(s) to get the information quickly.
  - It creates an electronic record that facilitates keeping track of communications.

# E-mail

- It is still necessary to demonstrate professionalism when sending e-mail messages.
  - Take the time to proofread your e-mails before sending them.
  - If there is a chance your attitude while writing the e-mail could negatively affect the message you really want to send:
    - Step back from the e-mail.
    - Come back to it when you are calm and collected



# E-mail

- When you receive an e-mail, it is important to respond to the sender to let him or her know the message was received, even if you cannot immediately make a full reply to the content of the message.

# E-mail

- If you will be away from e-mail for longer than usual (e.g., when on vacation or traveling), it is best to set an automatic reply to inform senders:
  - That you do not currently have access to your e-mail
  - When you will be able to respond to their message
  - How they can get in touch with you if the need is urgent (or who to contact in your stead)

# E-mail

- When e-mail serves as the preferred means of communication in the workplace, every employee must understand the organization's e-mail policy.
- Using e-mail for non-work-related activities could potentially be considered a dismissible offense depending on the organization's internal policies.

# E-mail

- When assigned to a department-owned workstation computer or other electronics that have e-mail capability, the user must avoid the following activities:
  - E-mailing HIPAA-protected patient information
  - E-mailing an employee's or coworker's confidential information
  - E-mailing non-work-related information
  - E-mailing non-business-related documents
  - Sending threatening e-mails
  - E-mailing passwords
  - E-mailing complex and lengthy information

# E-mail

- Many organizations require disclaimers to be included in all organizational e-mails.
  - Such disclaimers are used to protect the organization or the individual sending the e-mail.
  - A disclaimer could also include specific organizational policies to prevent legal issues among internal team members.

# E-mail

- The EMS officer must ensure that whatever is being e-mailed pertains to organizational business and is not of a sensitive nature.
- As the EMS officer, you will be looked upon as a leader and must set a professional tone when communicating, regardless of the format used.

# E-mail

- When using e-mail, you should:
  - Keep the tone upbeat
  - Open and close the message with positive remarks
  - Stay within the business parameters
  - Avoid e-mailing protected/confidential information
  - Suggest a time to discuss the matter in person if warranted
  - Not respond to an e-mail when you are upset

# Text Message

- Text messages allow for quick, informal, to-the-point messaging between two or several individuals.
- Advantages of this medium:
  - It is informal.
  - The process is easy to master.
  - The sender can attach images and recordings.
  - Messages can be sent from anywhere using any electronic device with text messaging capabilities.



# Text Message

- Text messaging is not used as a means of formally communicating a message or conducting official business, but it may be used to assist with day-to-day work activities.

# Text Message

- Texting language often includes abbreviations such as:
  - TTYL (talk to you later)
  - BTW (by the way)
  - IMO (in my opinion)
  - PWT (point well taken)
- This shorthand is convenient, as long as the receiver is aware of the meaning of the abbreviations.

# Text Message

- It cannot be stressed enough that text messaging:
  - Must be used only in an informal business environment with the intent of obtaining or sending a brief message
  - Should never include any confidential information

# Text Message

- You must ensure that the text message is work related if:
  - You are sending a text message while on duty.
  - You are using a device provided to you by the organization.

# Text Message

- Personal text messaging while on duty, especially using a device belonging to the organization, may be considered a violation of the organization's social media policy and may be subject to investigation.
- Become familiar with your organization's texting policy before you start messaging.

# Organization's Website

- The use of a website to promote an organization and its services and to keep customers informed of current or future events is essential, especially for public safety organizations.
- The creation of a website is typically handled by an organization's information technology division.
- However, as an officer within the organization, you may be called upon to provide some input.

# Organization's Website

- Websites are an outstanding form of communication that may be the first place customers go when seeking information about the organization or when they have questions about its service.

# Organization's Website

- Although graphics, photos, sounds of sirens, flashing lights across the screen, and animations are attention grabbing and relevant to the organization, such “bells and whistles” may:
  - Distract the customer
  - Distort the message the organization is attempting to provide its customers through the website



# Organization's Website

- When creating a website, the golden rule should be to make it customer friendly and keep it simple.
  - Background colors will be a deciding factor in attracting or deflecting your customer's attention.
  - Avoid clutter or placement of too much information on a single page.

# Organization's Website

- The main page should display the organization's:
  - Name
  - Logo
  - Vision and mission statements
  - Telephone number
  - Address
  - A brief summary of the organization's core services
- Be sure to add navigational buttons where they will be seen easily to assist customers in working their way through the site and finding answers to their questions.

# Organization's Website

- Including photos on the website is certainly advisable; however:
  - They should be limited in size and quantity.
  - You should avoid posting photos that are confidential or clearly identify a patient.
  - Copyrighted material should be used only if the author or rights holder gives permission or if the organization has a license to use the material.

# Organization's Website

- Public safety organizations should consider setting aside a page for current or potential public safety events.
  - During natural or human-made disasters, community members will need public safety-related information.
  - Websites are a frequently visited resource during these times.

# Social Media

- Social media encompass any form of written communication, photographs, videos, or audio that can be shared through multiple mass media and electronic sites.
- Examples include blogs, podcasts, texting, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Flickr, and YouTube.

# Social Media

- Social media serve as a good platform through which to promote services provided by the organization, department—community events, and employee recognition.
- This platform is also beneficial when certain public safety concerns arise.

# Social Media

- In today's world, where so many people have cell phones or other devices that can readily access social media sites, public safety organizations must do everything possible to take advantage of this platform.
- Keeping the public informed of public safety issues and drawing attention to the services provided by the organization are extremely important.

# Social Media

- As an organizational leader, you need to promote both the organization's brand and the services it provides.
- Social media represent a great venue to do so because of the low cost and easy accessibility of such media.



# Social Media

- Although social media can certainly add value to public safety organizations, the individuals responsible for posting content must be well informed of their organization's social media policy.
- If no such a policy is in place, the organizational leaders must seek advice from the organization's city, township, or county attorney.

# Social Media

- None of the content posted to social media can include confidential or protected information.
- The organization's social media policy should specify what is considered confidential and protected information; examples include:
  - Photographs of patients
  - Any copyrighted material
  - Protected health information
  - Personal data

# Social Media

- Photos taken by departmental personnel while at an emergency scene must not be posted on any social media site unless the organization's leadership team has authorized its use in that capacity.

# Social Media

- There should be only one source for releasing and posting departmental information.
- It is imperative that members of the organization avoid using their personal social media accounts to post any departmental information.
- There is a high probability that posting department information without approval will lead to discipline or even dismissal.

# Employee Reviews

- The EMS officer is required to conduct employee performance evaluations on a regular basis.
- Written evaluations of employees are most commonly done on an annual basis.

# Employee Reviews

- Those in a managerial leadership role, however, should not wait to compliment or advise an employee about his or her performance until the annual employee evaluation rolls around.
- Verbally acknowledging an employee's good performance is essential and should be done more often than once a year.

# Employee Reviews

- Similarly, if the employee is underperforming, the EMS officer should not wait until the annual written evaluation to address the employee's performance issues.

# Employee Reviews

- When working with a new hire, the EMS officer should consider meeting with the new employee at 30 days, at 90 days, and then as needed to monitor the new employee's progress.
  - The EMS officer must be candid about the new employee's performance.
  - If not, the evaluation process will be unfair to the new employee.



# Employee Reviews

- The evaluation must be documented and signed by both parties if it will include:
  - Discipline
  - Performance improvement benchmarks
  - Situations that may potentially result in conflict
- In addition, if the employee has a history of not understanding what is expected of him or her, having a human resources representative attend the meeting as an observer must be considered.

# Employee Reviews

- Once an evaluation is completed, the EMS officer must not wait another year to meet with the team member.
- Regardless of whether performance benchmarks have been established, meeting with each of your team members at least once each quarter will promote ongoing communication about performance.

# Employee Reviews

- Positive or negative evaluations must be viewed as an opportunity to show the employee you want to help him or her succeed within the organization.
  - If the evaluation is negative, you must convey to the employee what he or she needs to do to get back on track for success.
  - If the evaluation is positive, your communication style must be one of support and celebration.

# Employee Reviews

- Evaluations of senior employees may be more challenging for a new manager.
- Nevertheless, the EMS officer must address such a performance evaluation in the same way as with junior employees by:
  - Being candid
  - Pointing out positive work performance outcomes
  - Discussing where improvement is required

# Employee Reviews

- When providing a written evaluation or verbal feedback to an employee, the EMS officer:
  - Must be fair, honest, and respectful
  - Address the concerns
  - Promote the positive aspects of performance
  - Ensure the employee understands the performance expectations

### EMPLOYEE SELF-EVALUATION FORM

Name:	Dept./Ofc:
Title:	Date:
Performance Review (form does not become part of employee personnel file)	
<b>1. Goals and Objectives/Performance Expectations</b>	
Please list and discuss major objectives and projects covered by this review. Briefly discuss the status of each. (Add additional pages as necessary).	
<b>2. Accomplishments/Achievements</b>	
Please list and briefly describe your most important accomplishments during the past appraisal period.	
<b>3. Unusual Circumstances</b>	
List and briefly describe unusual circumstances, changed priorities or special problems that have occurred during the appraisal period.	
<b>4. Performance Appraisal</b>	
Briefly describe your assessment of your overall performance for the last evaluation period.	

Courtesy of Brevard County Fire Rescue

## Employee Reviews

Before setting up a performance review meeting, be sure to give the employee a few days' notice and provide the individual with a pre-evaluation form.

# Media Relations

- As an EMS officer, you or your designee may be called upon to deal with the media.
- During a significant crisis, the media (TV, print, and/or online) will want to speak to the organization's leader to obtain information about the incident.

# Media Relations

- When establishing a professional relationship with the media, the public information officer (PIO) must routinely reach out to the media outlets by calling or visiting the studio to meet the assignment editors (television) or news director (radio).
- By establishing these contacts before a crisis occurs, the crisis management team will know who to reach out to during a crisis.



# Media Relations

- If your organization is dealing with a small or large event that has the potential to affect lives, you can expect not only local media attention but also national and international media coverage.
- To ensure all media agencies receive accurate information about the event, the assigned spokesperson must have the information approved for release by the organization's leader or the incident commander.

# Media Relations

- During a crisis, a set of command structures must be established to ensure that everyone knows their role, including who will be addressing the media.
- Especially during a large event, the organization may activate a Joint Information Center (JIC) to keep all PIOs in a central location and thereby ensure that all agencies working the incident release the same information.

# Media Relations

- Anyone assigned to disseminate information must be mindful of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act.
- No HIPAA-protected health information can be released to any public or media agency.
- This includes patients' medical history, current medical condition, address, or any other patient identifiers.

# Media Relations

- Although press releases are the most common medium for releasing information to the public, other methods may serve as information outlets and may prove beneficial for a specific event, such as:
  - Social media
  - Department or organization website
  - Press conferences
  - Direct one-on-one interview on camera or phone



## Media Relations

Regardless of the media platform used, the spokesperson must always remain calm, display a professional appearance, be confident, and know the subject matter.

# Media Relations

- The individual assigned to work with the media representatives must:
  - Be well informed on the topic
  - Feel comfortable discussing the release in front of a large gathering
- He or she will be considered the subject-matter expert and will field all the questions from media representatives.
- When filling this role, credibility is key, so do not lie or guess at information.

# Media Releases

- When creating a media release, keep it simple.
- The media will want to know the five Ws: who, what, why, when, and where.



***Release of Information***

**Jones & Bartlett Fire District**

**Public Information Release**



Contact Name: Lt. James Smith  
Contact Title: Public Information Officer  
Office Telephone: 978-443-5000

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Jones & Bartlett Fire District Recruit Graduating Ceremony**

Date: June 10, 2015

(Viera, Fl.)- June 20, 2015- Jones & Bartlett Fire District will be hosting a graduation ceremony for 30 fire fighter recruits. The fire fighter recruits have endured 8 weeks of rigorous firefighting, brush fire, hazardous materials operation, driver apparatus, and medical training. Upon graduation, the recruits will receive their new station assignments. The ceremony will take place at 6:00 pm in the Jones & Bartlett County Commission Chamber. We ask that media representative arrive 15 minutes prior to the beginning of the ceremony.

(###)

## **Media Releases**

Every press release should include certain information.



# News Interviews and Press Conferences

- When conducting a media interview, either on the radio or on camera, you will need to prepare what you will say before you take the microphone.
- Remember to:
  - Keep it brief.
  - Stick to the subject matter.
  - Do not overwhelm the listeners.
  - Use transitions.
  - Keep it simple.

# News Interviews and Press Conferences

- The spokesperson must also consider, depending on the crisis, conducting a set of press conferences throughout the event period.
- This practice will ensure that:
  - The media are organized at a central point for gathering information.
  - They hear the message from an organizational member.

# News Interviews and Press Conferences

- When conducting any form of interview (especially on-camera interviews), spokespersons must:
  - Be well prepared as to what they will be saying
  - Ensure that their body language is professional and that the situation is under control

# News Interviews and Press Conferences

- If the interview is being recorded rather than being broadcast live, you may have the opportunity to start over and re-record your segment.
- Speak in clear, concise statements that can be used as sound bites whenever possible because:
  - The news media will likely abbreviate your interview.
  - You want to ensure that your message is represented accurately.

# Scene Access

- It is the media representatives' job to gather the information, so they will want to get as close to the scene as possible.
- If the scene is unsafe, members of the media will most likely understand that at the current time they will not be allowed to get close to the incident.

# Scene Access

- Every effort must be made to:
  - Inform the media that the scene is unsafe (to ensure their own safety and to maintain scene control)
  - Identify a location where they can receive the information until they can be taken to the site
  - Continue to provide information
- In the absence of such EMS actions, media representatives will undoubtedly seek information elsewhere, but the information they find may not be accurate.

# Scene Access

- If the incident scene is safe, your organization should have a plan that allows media access to the scene when escorted by a designated member of the organization.
- Many departments use social media, such as Twitter and Facebook, to keep the media informed of unfolding incidents in real time.

# Barriers to Effective Communication

- As a managerial leader, you need to know your employees, your customers, and the best means to communicate effectively with all of them.
- No matter which form of communication you use, the key is to keep communication a two-way street.



# Barriers to Effective Communication

- When engaged in a conversation, it is good practice to offer feedback.
- This practice will:
  - Ensure that you understand the message correctly
  - Tell the speaker that you are actively listening to what he or she is saying

# Barriers to Effective Communication

- Effective communication requires elimination of barriers.
- Communication barriers are not specific to external noise, such as:
  - Construction
  - Telephones ringing in the background
  - Notification of e-mails
  - Emergency vehicles with lights and sirens driving by
  - Coworkers talking outside your office

# Barriers to Effective Communication

- Communication barriers also include internal factors, such as:
  - Your assignment, or message, was not clear enough.
  - There are communication issues among the team members because they are divided into groups or do not work in the same building.
  - A computer server is down preventing team members from sending project documents, plans, or illustrations electronically to other team members.

# Barriers to Effective Communication

- Barriers to effective communication can be divided into four categories:
  - Personal barriers
  - Physical barriers
  - Process barriers
  - Semantic and language barriers

# Personal Barriers

- Personal barriers originate with the person who is either attempting to convey a message or receiving the message.
- They occur when the sender or receiver is not committed to communicating effectively.

# Personal Barriers

- This kind of barrier can arise when the sender is not prepared to convey the message and the message is not clearly defined.
- Personal barriers can also become an issue when:
  - The receiver is not listening to or focusing on the message being sent.
  - The receiver does not absorb the entire message because he or she is distracted during the conversation.

# Personal Barriers

- Personal barriers may also present a problem if the sender or the receiver has a preconceived notion about the individual delivering or receiving the message.
- Such an assumption may take the form of not having confidence or believing the other party lacks the knowledge to understand or deliver the message accurately.

# Personal Barriers

- Examples of personal barriers that will impede communication are:
  - Performing certain tasks while a subordinate is attempting to speak with you
  - Ignoring a message because you believe the individual is not well informed about EMS delivery



# Personal Barriers

- When sending a message:
  - Make sure that the topics are clearly defined.
  - Include appropriate transitions to avoid confusing the listener.
  - Ask for feedback from the receiver to ensure the message has been received and understood.

# Personal Barriers

- If you are the listener, ask questions, take notes, and provide feedback to ensure that you have received the correct message.
- Remain engaged when someone is speaking with you and do not let personal bias interfere with the communication.

# Physical Barriers

- Physical barriers to communication fall into two categories: noise and distortion.
- Noise barriers can be environmental in nature.
- Distortion barriers are any disruption in effectively sending a message or decoding the message being sent.

# Physical Barriers

- Physical barriers caused by noise or distortion will cause a message not to be delivered effectively and must be addressed immediately.
- Regardless of the type of physical barrier that is preventing or interfering with communication, the goal must be to identify the barrier and then either adjust to it or move away from the barrier.

# Process Barriers

- Process barriers occur whenever there is a breakdown with any of the processes that make up the communication system.
- The communication system begins with the sender crafting a clear message and selecting an effective medium to deliver the message.
- The message is then broken down and processed by the receiver, who provides feedback to the sender.

# Process Barriers

- A process barrier is any interruption to this communication process:
  - Sender barrier: The sender fails to send the message.
  - Encoding barrier: The sender is unable to state the message clearly.
  - Medium barrier: The sender uses the wrong platform to convey the message.
  - Decoding barrier: The receiver is unable to break down and understand the message being sent.
  - Receiver barrier: The receiver does not pay attention to the message being sent.
  - Feedback barrier: The receiver does not provide feedback.

# Process Barriers

- Addressing process barriers can be quite challenging because these barriers encompass all of the processes that make up effective communication.
- Therefore, as the sender of a message, you must focus on:
  - Being able to send the message effectively
  - Ensuring that the message is clearly presented and easy to understand

# Process Barriers

- The sender has to ensure that the medium by which the message is sent is effective and can be accessed by the receiver.
- The sender must follow up with the receiver to ensure that the message was delivered and understood correctly.



# Process Barriers

- The sender must take the initiative to overcome process barriers when communicating by:
  - Having a clear message
  - Using the appropriate method for message delivery
  - Following up to ensure that the message has been received and understood by the recipient

# Semantic and Language Barriers

- Semantic barriers include:
  - Poor grammar
  - The use of technical or uncommon words
  - Inclusion of too many topics without a clear transition
  - Use of words that have different meanings

# Semantic and Language Barriers

- Language barriers may be as simple as the receiver speaking a different language from the sender, but can also include the sender using technical terms with which the receiver is unfamiliar.

# Semantic and Language Barriers

- Semantic barriers are often encountered in electronic communications that use jargon such as LOL (laugh out loud), IMO (in my opinion), and OMW (on my way).
- At an EMS incident, an example of semantic barriers would be using radio 10 codes (e.g., 10-98 and 10-19) when the receiver is used to plain text.
- To avoid errors in code usage and understanding, many emergency response agencies have now adopted the practice of “clear text” when communicating with each other.

# Semantic and Language Barriers

- If your office is responsible for the oversight of EMS, you may also have nonmedical employees in the office who are not familiar with medical terminology.
- This difference in employees' backgrounds may create a barrier in communication.

# Semantic and Language Barriers

- Terminology issues among employees can be minimized by:
  - Ensuring that your staff is trained to understand the technical language within the related field
  - Agreeing to use a language that all staff members understand
- When speaking with a customer who does not speak the same language or perhaps is not as fluent, you need to have someone available who is fluent in the customer's language.