Communications for Emergency Services Success

CESS-Student Manual

2nd Edition, 7th Printing-December 2013

FEMA

FEMA/USFA/NFA
CESS-SM
December 2013
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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

UNITED STATES FIRE ADMINISTRATION

NATIONAL FIRE ACADEMY

FOREWORD

The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), an important component of the Department of Homeland Security Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), serves the leadership of this Nation as the DHS's fire protection and emergency response expert. The USFA is located at the National Emergency Training Center (NETC) in Emmitsburg, Maryland, and includes the National Fire Academy (NFA), National Fire Data Center (NFDC), and the National Fire Programs (NFP). The mission of the USFA is Provide national leadership to foster a solid foundation for local fire and emergency services for prevention, preparedness and response.

The USFA's National Fire Academy offers a diverse course delivery system, combining resident courses, off-campus deliveries in cooperation with State training organizations, weekend instruction, and online courses. The USFA maintains a blended learning approach to its course selections and course development. Resident courses are delivered at the Emmitsburg campus. Off-campus courses are delivered in cooperation with State and local fire training organizations to ensure this Nation's firefighters are prepared for the hazards they face.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The development of any National Fire Academy (NFA) course is a complex process aimed at providing students the best possible learning opportunity we can deliver.

There are many players in course development, each of whom plays an equally important part in its success. We want to acknowledge their participation and contribution to this effort, and extend our heartfelt thanks for making this quality product.

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COURSE SCHEDULE

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Firefighter Code of Ethics

Background

The Fire Service is a noble calling, one which is founded on mutual respect and trust between firefighters and the citizens they serve. To ensure the continuing integrity of the Fire Service, the highest standards of ethical conduct must be maintained at all times.

Developed in response to the publication of the Fire Service Reputation Management White Paper, the purpose of this National Firefighter Code of Ethics is to establish criteria that encourages fire service personnel to promote a culture of ethical integrity and high standards of professionalism in our field. The broad scope of this recommended Code of Ethics is intended to mitigate and negate situations that may result in embarrassment and waning of public support for what has historically been a highly respected profession.

Ethics comes from the Greek word ethos, meaning character. Character is not necessarily defined by how a person behaves when conditions are optimal and life is good. It is easy to take the high road when the path is paved and obstacles are few or non-existent. Character is also defined by decisions made under pressure, when no one is looking, when the road contains land mines, and the way is obscured. As members of the Fire Service, we share a responsibility to project an ethical character of professionalism, integrity, compassion, loyalty and honesty in all that we do, all of the time.

We need to accept this ethics challenge and be truly willing to maintain a culture that is consistent with the expectations outlined in this document. By doing so, we can create a legacy that validates and sustains the distinguished Fire Service institution, and at the same time ensure that we leave the Fire Service in better condition than when we arrived.

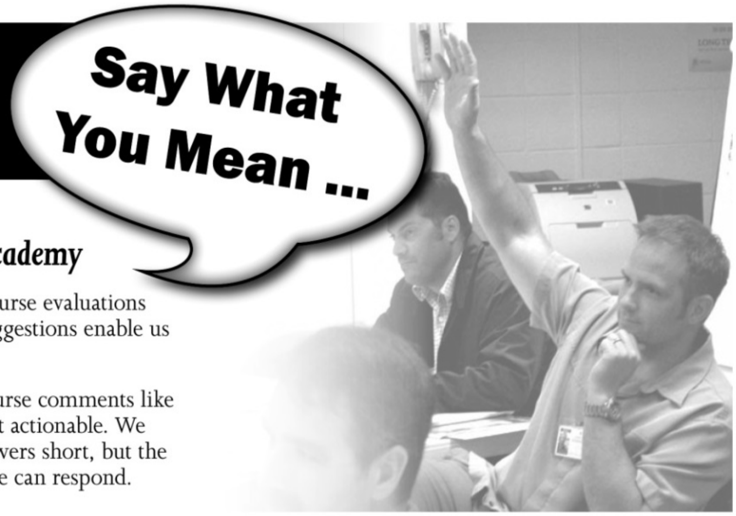
FIREFIGHTER CODE OF ETHICS

I understand that I have the responsibility to conduct myself in a manner that reflects proper ethical behavior and integrity. In so doing, I will help foster a continuing positive public perception of the fire service. Therefore, I pledge the following…

- Always conduct myself, on and off duty, in a manner that reflects positively on myself, my department and the fire service in general.
- Accept responsibility for my actions and for the consequences of my actions.
- Support the concept of fairness and the value of diverse thoughts and opinions.
- Avoid situations that would adversely affect the credibility or public perception of the fire service profession.
- Be truthful and honest at all times and report instances of cheating or other dishonest acts that compromise the integrity of the fire service.
- Conduct my personal affairs in a manner that does not improperly influence the performance of my duties, or bring discredit to my organization.
- Be respectful and conscious of each member's safety and welfare.
- Recognize that I serve in a position of public trust that requires stewardship in the honest and efficient use of publicly owned resources, including uniforms, facilities, vehicles and equipment and that these are protected from misuse and theft.
- Exercise professionalism, competence, respect and loyalty in the performance of my duties and use information, confidential or otherwise, gained by virtue of my position, only to benefit those I am entrusted to serve.
- Avoid financial investments, outside employment, outside business interests or activities that conflict with or are enhanced by my official position or have the potential to create the perception of impropriety.
- Never propose or accept personal rewards, special privileges, benefits, advancement, honors or gifts that may create a conflict of interest, or the appearance thereof.
- Never engage in activities involving alcohol or other substance use or abuse that can impair my mental state or the performance of my duties and compromise safety.
- Never discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, creed, age, marital status, national origin, ancestry, gender, sexual preference, medical condition or handicap.
- Never harass, intimidate or threaten fellow members of the service or the public and stop or report the actions of other firefighters who engage in such behaviors.
- Responsibly use social networking, electronic communications, or other media technology opportunities in a manner that does not discredit, dishonor or embarrass my organization, the fire service and the public. I also understand that failure to resolve or report inappropriate use of this media equates to condoning this behavior.

Developed by the National Society of Executive Fire Officers

A Student Guide to End-of-course Evaluations



Ten Things You Can Do to Improve the National Fire Academy

The National Fire Academy takes its course evaluations very seriously. Your comments and suggestions enable us to improve your learning experience.

Unfortunately, we often get end-of-course comments like these that are vague and, therefore, not actionable. We know you are trying to keep your answers short, but the more specific you can be, the better we can respond.

Actual quotes from student evaluations:	Examples of specific, actionable comments that would help us improve the course:
1 "Update the materials."	• The (ABC) fire video is out-of-date because of the dangerous tactics it demonstrates. The available (XYZ) video shows current practices. • The student manual references building codes that are 12 years old.
2 "We want an advanced class in (fill in the blank)."	• We would like a class that enables us to calculate energy transfer rates resulting from exposure fires. • We would like a class that provides one-on-one workplace harassment counseling practice exercises.
3 "More activities."	• An activity where students can physically measure the area of sprinkler coverage would improve understanding of the concept. • Not all students were able to fill all ICS positions in the exercises. Add more exercises so all students can participate.
4 "A longer course."	• The class should be increased by one hour per day to enable all students to participate in exercises. • The class should be increased by two days so that all group presentations can be peer evaluated and have written abstracts.
5 "Readable plans."	• The plans should be enlarged to 11 by 17 and provided with an accurate scale. • My plan set was blurry, which caused the dotted lines to be interpreted as solid lines.
6 "Better student guide organization," "manual did not coincide with slides."	• The slide sequence in Unit 4 did not align with the content in the student manual from slides 4-16 through 4-21. • The instructor added slides in Unit 4 that were not in my student manual.
7 "Dry in spots."	• The instructor/activity should have used student group activities rather than lecture to explain Maslow's Hierarchy. • Create a pre-course reading on symbiotic personal relationships rather than trying to lecture on them in class.
8 "More visual aids."	• The text description of V-patterns did not provide three-dimensional views. More photographs or drawings would help me imagine the pattern. • There was a video clip on NBC News (date) that summarized the topic very well.
9 "Re-evaluate pre-course assignments."	• The pre-course assignments were not discussed or referenced in class. Either connect them to the course content or delete them. • The pre-course assignments on ICS could be reduced to a one-page job aid rather than a 25-page reading.
10 "A better understanding of NIMS."	• The instructor did not explain the connection between NIMS and ICS. • The student manual needs an illustrated guide to NIMS.

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UNIT 1: OVERVIEW OF FIRE SERVICE WRITING

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

1. *Participate in student and course introductions.*

2. *Identify the five main considerations of a writer.*

3. *Identify elements of effective written communication.*

4. *Complete a self assessment of writing skills through the Personal Writing Profile.*

5. *Identify and describe writing responsibilities and problems by composing a memo to the instructor.*

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INTRODUCTION: WRITING NEEDS OF FIRE/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES OFFICERS

In order to support the activities of the fire/emergency medical services (EMS), officers need an efficient and orderly administrative organization behind them. Through their organizational structure, fire departments support firefighting by training firefighters, procuring dependable equipment, supplying fire stations, supervising operations, and communicating with public and government agencies. They monitor fire codes and conduct inspections and investigations. In some cases, they are involved in other aspects of public safety such as EMS. These, too, require effective administrative support.

Administrations function by means of communication, and today communication means the written word. Almost every action must be documented in a report. Every personnel action must be written down, every operation analyzed, and every policy and procedure noted in writing for the benefit of the fire/EMS and the public. Even though much of the administrative work of the modern fire agency may be supported by the computer, the demand for skilled writers who know the technicalities of firefighting is strong and growing. All the words that describe, analyze, report, and train must be written by someone--and that person is very often a fire/EMS officer.

Fire/EMS officers must have advanced written and verbal communications skills--that is, writing, reading, speaking, and listening. Fire/EMS officers must be able not only to prepare written reports of all types--personnel, occurrence, grievance, and so forth--but also to exercise authority and provide leadership through their writing. Writing enables the fire/EMS officer to express opinions, exert pressure, establish policy, and influence behavior. Writing is recognized as an integral part of the job of fire/EMS administration.

Types of writing a fire/EMS officer may be responsible for producing and evaluating include the following:

- reports;
- instructional and procedural materials;
- correspondence email;
- personnel management materials;
- brochures on fire safety;
- fire code and inspection documents;
- community relations and fire prevention materials;
- research papers and technical analyses;
- proposals and requests;
- budgets and justifications of expenditures;
- policy statements; and
- regulations.

Communications for Emergency Services Success (CESS) addresses the communications needs of fire/EMS officers. The first week of the course takes up writing, and the second week deals with speaking. The goals of the writing segment are

- To help you sharpen your writing skills to a level of proficiency commensurate with your duties as fire/EMS officers.

- To show you how to apply these skills during on-the-job situations.

- To promote effective job performance by training you to use writing skills in creative problem-solving.

Question for discussion: Some officers have assistants or other staff who help with typing and even some writing chores. Is this a reason for complacency? Should an administrator who has a good assistant ignore his/her own writing deficiencies?

ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE WRITING

Writing is basically a means of "freezing" spoken thoughts in a permanent form. Recording on paper (or in a word processor) what passes from person to person in spoken form allows for greater precision and detail, assists in instruction, provides a basis for contractual and legal agreements, and assists in collecting and adding to knowledge. Writing is not just a tool of the highly educated; it is the basis for all civilization. Without some means of recording information and ideas, business, technology, education, and all public services soon would grind to a halt. Just imagine how inefficient the fire/EMS would become if the training of probationary firefighters could be conducted only orally because there were no manuals or textbooks to supplement instruction.

This does not mean that writing is automatic, natural, or easy. Freezing words on paper in a comprehensible form so that the reader can understand them and act on them is a demanding task. Every writer--including every fire/EMS officer who uses writing to do his/her job--must take into account these considerations:

- audience
- purpose
- content
- structure
- style

The **audience** is the reader or legitimate end users of the written document. It may be a single person--a chief who reads a confidential memo from a captain--or, more often, it may be a group of people or several different audiences. A report of a firefighting operation may be read by the chief of the fire department, the press, or lawyers or agents preparing an insurance case. EMS reports may be read by emergency room doctors and/or nurses whose subsequent decisions will be based on information included or not included within the reports. A writer who knows his/her audience can make intelligent decisions about what to write, how much to write, and what language to use.

A document may have one or several **purposes.** The broadest purposes are to inform, persuade, or to make requests. But the specific purposes of written documents are many: a training manual is intended to teach procedures, a request for new equipment is intended to persuade a funding authority to provide funds, a fire safety brochure is intended to persuade the public to prevent fires, an incident report is intended to record and explain a complex event, and a personnel evaluation is intended to judge performance. Awareness of the purpose of writing helps the writer judge what points to cover and how much detail to include.

Content is the substance of the document: the main idea, subordinate points, facts, details, examples, and conclusions that contribute to accomplishing the document's purpose.

Structure is the manner of arranging or organizing the content. An incident report will employ a narrative or chronological arrangement, while a policy proposal may arrange its points in order of importance.

Style is the language chosen to convey the content. It includes the choice of words (colloquial or technical), the tone (authoritarian or informal), and the sentence structure (complex or simple sentences). Style also includes control of grammar, punctuation, spelling, and other conventions of language that must be adhered to if the reader is to understand the purpose and content of the writing.

What causes poor writing? Many writers think poor writing is nothing more than carelessness about mechanical matters of style, such as the use of quotation marks or poor choice of words. But the situation is not so simple. Poor writing may be responsible when communication fails to take place.

Failures of written communication are caused by:

- Misjudging the audience (using technical fire terminology in writing to a civilian).
- Ignoring the purpose (including a detailed history of the city in a request for a new pumper).
- Mishandling content (failing to include enough facts and details in reports).
- Failing to use logical structure (narrating events out of time sequence in an incident report).
- Violating conventions of style (using the wrong words or writing incomplete sentences).

PERSONAL WRITING PROFILE

As an aid to your own self-assessment of writing skills, this unit includes a Personal Writing Profile on page SM 1-7. The profile allows you and your instructor to rate your individual abilities at the time of this course.

The profile takes the five categories of writing concerns (audience, purpose, content, structure, and style), and divides them into the seven most important writing skills:

- consider the audience and focus on the purpose;
- organize logically;
- state the main point clearly;
- give adequate detail and examples;
- demonstrate master of grammar, spelling, and punctuation;
- write concisely; and
- construct readable sentences.

Using the Personal Writing Profile, you will rate yourself on a scale of 1 (low skill) to 7 (high skill) on each of the six categories by marking an X just to the left of each vertical scale line. Then connect the Xs with a pencil line for a visual representation of your current self-assessment as a writer. Enter today's date after "I self" at the top of the sheet and write your name at the right.

On the afternoon of the fifth day of the course, during Unit 9: Conferences, you will rate yourself once again. Mark an X just to the right of each vertical line (you may wish to use a pen of a different color for clarity). Fill in the date after "II self." This rating represents your self-assessment **after** the first week of the course. You probably have discovered that you are stronger in certain areas than you thought you were on the first day, and you may have found that you need more work in other areas. Or maybe you feel you have improved.

In Unit 9, your instructor will rate you on the profile, marking your chart with O's. This represents your instructor's assessment of your current writing skills.

Refer to the completed Personal Writing Profile when you return home; it can serve as a reminder of the writing steps to which you should pay particular attention.

Personal Writing Profile

Put an X in the column that you think best reflects your current abilities in each area of writing. Each X should reflect your score, which shows 1 as the lowest score and 7 as the highest.

Dates:
I SELF _____
II self _____
Instructor: _____

Personal Writing Profile of _________________

1 Considers audience and focuses on purpose		2 Organizes written documents logically	3 States main point clearly	4 Gives adequate detail and examples	5 Demonstrates mastery of grammar, spelling, and punctuation	6 Writes concisely	7 Constructs readable sentences
7							
6							
5							
4							
3							
2							
1							

Instructor's assessment: Enter O

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Activity 1.1

Student Introductions

Purpose

To get acquainted.

Directions

1. You will work in pairs for this activity.

2. You should interview each other to gain the following information. You have 10 minutes for this portion of the activity.)

    a. Your fire department (i.e., size, specialties, your position).

    b. Your city.

    c. Your family.

    d. Personal interests.

    e. Your motivation for attending CESS.

    f. What do you expect to get out of the class?

    g. Other.

3. At the end of 10 minutes, you will introduce one another to the class, providing the background information learned during the interview.

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Activity 1.2

Current Practices and Risks

Purpose

To answer the questions "Why this?" and "Why now?"

Directions

1. The topic in the left column of Slide 1-11 poses a situation that most departments have not experienced; departments rarely suffer direct consequences from poorly written documents. However, it does happen and you may share that example.

2. After considering the topic in the left column, consider the situation described in the right column, and share examples from members of your table.

3. After 10 minutes of small group discussion, your group will pick one of the scenarios brought up by a table member that would be interesting to the class and be ready to discuss it with the class. You will have 2 minutes per table.

4. Think of it this way: Have you ever observed a report or document that led you to think, "I hope my eyes are the last ones to cross this piece of paper because it if were to be viewed, my coworker (or I) will look bad."

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Activity 1.3

Writing Assignment: Memo to Instructors

Purpose

To give you an opportunity to explain and assess your own responsibilities, skills, and problems (if any) as a fire service writer. Your instructor will review it with an eye to learning more about the individual needs of students who compose this class.

Directions

Write a memo to your instructors describing your writing needs and requirements on the job. Your memo should be one or two pages long, and it should cover the following points:

1. The kinds of writing you are required to do on the job and their purpose(s) (be specific).
2. The persons or groups who read what you write.
3. Any writing problems created by the job (e.g., by the department, by your superiors or subordinates, by outside agencies, etc.).
4. Your strengths and weaknesses in writing, as you see them.
5. What you would like to get out of the course.

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Activity 1.3 (cont'd)

Evaluation Criteria
Written Communication

Student: ______________________________ Date: ______________

Instructor: ____________________________ Score: ______________

		Poor									Excellent
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.	Considers audience and focuses on purpose										
2.	Organizes written documents logically										
3.	States main point clearly										
4.	Gives adequate detail and examples										
5.	Demonstrates mastery of grammar, spelling, and punctuation										
6.	Writes concisely										
7.	Constructs readable sentences										

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Skill Drill 1.1

Parallel Construction

Purpose

To revise sentences using parallel construction.

Directions

1. Read the Background Information.
2. Revise the following sentences using parallel construction.
3. Identify item(s) in the outline that violate parallel construction language.

Background Information

Parallel construction is a tool for creating a consistent, easy to read, fluent writing style. Parallel construction is used whenever a series of items are listed and relies on common word forms. In parallel construction, each item in a list should begin with the same word form. Here are some examples:

- The system relies on proper maintenance, frequent updating, and consistent monitoring.

  In this instance, the sentence has three items in a series, and each item begins with an adjective/noun.

- The system will work better when it is properly maintained, frequently updated, and consistently monitored.

  In this instance, the sentence has three items in a series, and each item begins with an adverb/verb.

Follow these steps to complete the form correctly:

- enter your name at the top;
- provide your address;
- enter a correct passport number; and
- sign at the bottom.

In this instance, the sentence has four items in a series, and each item begins with the command verb form.

You can complete the form correctly by:

- entering your name at the top;
- providing your address;
- entering a correct passport number; and
- signing at the bottom.

In this instance, the sentence has four items in a series, and each item begins with the gerund (-ing) form of the verb.

Instructions: Revise the following sentences so parallel construction is achieved.

The critical point to remember in parallel construction is this: each item must begin with the same word form(s).

1. Treating the patient and to record the chain of events are both expectations of the EMT.

2. Customer satisfaction, reducing errors, and creation of accurate documents are essential to our success.

3. The building owner needs to complete the following tasks:

    a. Repair hole in furnace room ceiling.

    b. Three extension cords should be replaced.

    c. First floor west door exit sign is broken.

    d. Remove items from under the stairwell.

4. I. The outlining process

    A. Main idea.

    B. Develop a random list of facts.

    C. Arrange facts in a logical order.

    D. Write a draft of the outline.

    E. Review and revise your outline.

UNIT 2: OUTLINING

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

1. *Demonstrate one brainstorming technique.*

2. *Identify the steps in the outlining process.*

3. *Demonstrate the technique of outlining by developing a group outline.*

4. *Demonstrate the ability to write an individual outline on an assigned fire service topic.*

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OUTLINING AND ORGANIZING

One of the difficult challenges facing the fire service administrator is the need to present large amounts of information in an organized fashion. Investigating a fire, preparing a personnel evaluation, or justifying the purchase of new equipment will confront the writer with a mass of facts, statistics, opinions, recommendations, and statements by concerned parties. Writing up this mass of data as it comes to hand or in the order of acquisition usually will result in an incoherent document; the reader will find it hard to grasp because the ideas and facts are disorganized and have no logical order. One important step, organizing the data, must be completed before writing can begin.

No contractor would think of beginning the construction of a new building without a blueprint that shows the design of the building in a logical form. Even though the materials already may be available, construction must not begin until the blueprint has been carefully drawn. Skipping the preparation of the blueprint would save some time, but much more time would be wasted as the contractor was forced to stop and think where each window and door was to be placed and whether or not to pitch the roof.

Address Logical Organization

An outline is the blueprint for a piece of writing. It is a logical arrangement, in simplified form, of the points, ideas, data, and conclusions to be incorporated into the document. The time spent preparing an outline beforehand is well spent and saves time during the actual writing. The outline permits the writer to arrange his or her information in logical order--suitable to the purpose of the document and the needs of the audience--without having to construct full sentences and paragraphs and without having to worry about choosing effective words. These steps will come later, after the outline is finished.

An Incoherent Report

Example: You have been assigned to explore the problem of ineffective communication between the fire department and local community boards in your town. You have spent several days interviewing department personnel, municipal officials, and civilians. You have reviewed the records of community board meetings and department files on community relations. You also have read some literature on community relations and have consulted with your counterparts in other towns. You have come to the tentative conclusion that the fire department ought to improve its participation in local community board proceedings and that the best way to do this is to establish a special unit within the fire department. Under the pressure of time, you sit down and start writing as the thoughts come into your head. This is part of what you write:

Report on Community Boards

The city charter mandates that the fire department send representatives to community board meetings. The department would benefit from better communication with the boards. The community boards should be encouraged to interact. A community board liaison unit within the fire department should have certain personnel assigned. Community board meeting schedules unfortunately conflict with department duties. Public support for fire department activities would be increased if a liaison unit were set up. This would not cost too much money. It would help the department understand community problems better. The liaison unit should have an appropriate structure. The State might contribute some funds.

You hand this report to your chief. The next day, it comes back marked in blue pencil: Rewrite! You read the report again. What is wrong with it? Is it easy to grasp your point? Are the ideas arranged in logical order? Would the reader be persuaded by this sequence of arguments and facts? Evidently you have not followed a logical series of writing steps.

The Writing Process: Five Steps

Below are steps to use in preparing to write a report, analysis, proposal, evaluation, or any other fire service document.

1. Preplan your document.
   a. Write the main idea.
   b. Gather information.
   c. Write and review an outline.
2. Write a rough draft of the document.
3. Review and revise. Review the outline to make sure it is logical and complete; alter the main idea and conclusions if the data warrant.
4. Edit the draft. Rework the draft.
5. Write the final document, using the outline as a guide.

Approximately **30 percent** of the total time available for a fire service writing task can be devoted profitably to Step 1, planning the document. If an hour is available, spend 20 minutes writing a brief outline. If 4 hours are available, spend approximately 1 hour. If a week is available to complete the entire assignment, spend a day on the outline. Once the outline is ready, much of the hardest work in writing will have been done, in a relatively painless way. The writer then can write out the first draft, or even the final draft, without worrying whether all the points are in place and what should come next. There will be no "mental block" at the top of page one. Instead, writers can focus on using clear style, correct grammar, and concise and readable sentences.

THE OUTLINING PROCESS

Seven Steps

These are the steps to be followed in preparing the outline:

Step 1: Have your material or notes available in the work area.

Step 2: As a guide, write down the main point, idea, purpose, or overall concept of the document to be written. This main idea is subject to modification as you develop your outline and gain a better understanding of the information and of your conclusions.

Example: You are still trying to rewrite your report. This time, instead of taking a blank piece of paper and starting to write the first sentence, you prepare an outline. This forces you to organize your ideas and facts and to come to grips with your general concept of what is to be done about community boards. First, you write down your main point:

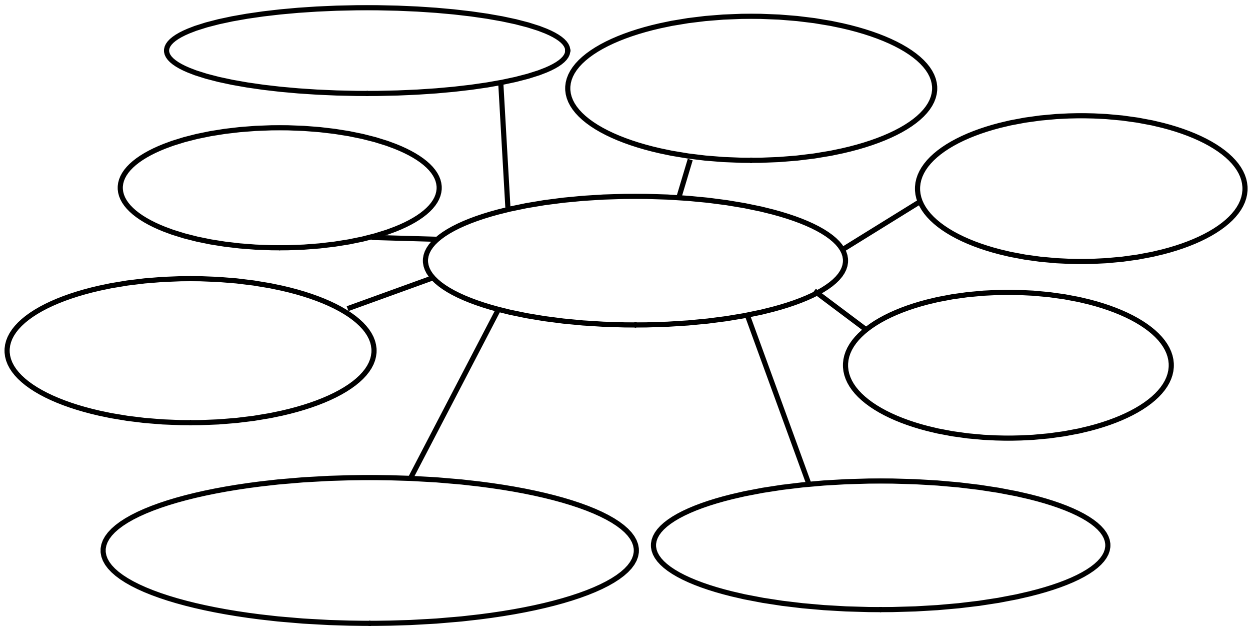
Main point: In order to improve communication with the community, the department should establish a special community board unit.

Step 3: Gather details.

One effective technique for gathering details is brainstorming. A search on the Internet for brainstorming techniques will yield many options. This unit presents one form of brainstorming known as mindmapping or clustering. A cluster is a fast, easy, and effective technique for creating and recording ideas. Taking a few minutes to brainstorm is an effective way to overcome writer's block and to gather useful details before beginning the outlining and writing processes. Use of the cluster usually shortens writing time and encourages more complete information gathering about the topic at hand.

Drawing on your memory, your notes, and other written sources at hand, make a list of your principal findings, points, and facts. Jot the points down in any order; try to include every important fact or idea that has a bearing on the subject.

Brainstorming



Step 4: Organize your details.

Choose from common options for logical order.

- General to specific--This order is typically used in memos. The writer begins with an overview of the topic at hand, usually presented in the introduction, and then develops each specific point with supporting details.

- More important to less important--This layout is useful for budget proposals. Readers typically assume that the writer presents information in this order, and if that is not the case, the writer would want to explain the order.

- Problem/Solution or cause/effect--This order might be used when writing personnel evaluations or when recommending proposed changes or additions to a policy or procedure.

- Chronological--Incident and emergency medical services (EMS) reports usually use this order, which simply means the information is presented in the order in which it took place.

- Spatial--This order describes information according to the location being written about. It might be used when describing a search or when writing the overall incident report from a highway call that was spread out over 1/4 mile. The report might describe a search as it actually unfolded or it might describe what took place from the northernmost units to southernmost units, etc.

Random List of Points and Facts

Example: You proceed with your community board report by making a list. (Note: CB = community board.)

1. City charter mandates fire department (FD) attendance at CB meetings.
2. FD would benefit from better communication.
3. CB would be encouraged to interact.
4. A CB Unit should have certain assigned personnel.
5. CB meeting schedules now conflict with FD duties.
6. We could increase public support of FD activities.
7. There would be certain costs.
8. Community problems would be better understood by the FD.
9. The CB Unit should be structured properly.
10. The State government might give some funds.
11. The police department has a CB Unit.
12. The conflict in meeting schedules causes a loss of communication.
13. A special unit could put the chief's knowledge to better use.
14. Costs would be for personnel services and other items for support.
15. The State has supported similar agencies in other cities.
16. The purpose of the CB Unit.
17. Better fire prevention and firefighting ability.
18. Duties of the CB Unit.

Step 5: Arrange related details. Create sections and subsections.

Example: You review your list and notice that the items can be grouped in this way:

- Items 1, 5, and 12 all describe the **problem** of community board relations.

- Items 2, 3, 6, 8, 13, and 17 all deal with the **benefits** of establishing a special unit. Furthermore, Items 2 and 6 describe benefits to the fire department, Items 3 and 8 describe benefits to the community, and the others describe benefits to both parties.

- Items 4, 7, 9, 10, 14, and 18 deal with the nature and costs of a special unit, or how to **implement** this unit.

- Items 11, 15, and 16 should fit in somewhere, once you get your outline underway. This may not always be the case, and at this point you may need to delete material that is irrelevant to your subject, your purpose, or your audience.

Outline

Use any numbering system you wish. The system used here is known as the Harvard system. It uses capital Roman numerals for the main topics, then capital letters, Arabic numerals, small letters, and small Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, etc.) in descending order. Any other logical numbering system would be suitable, as long as you understand it. For a very short piece of writing, you may prefer to drop the numbers altogether. The purpose of an outline is to aid the writer and save time in the composition of the final draft of the document. Therefore, an outline need not be perfect in appearance and need not even be saved after the document is finished. The outline of a longer piece of writing, such as an annual report, can be adapted as a table of contents.

You can choose to write in complete sentences or to use phrases (fragments) in your outline. The advantage of complete sentences is that they require you to think out your points carefully. The advantage of fragments is economy of time. A so-called "topic outline" using fragments or phrases saves you from having to compose complete sentences until you have finished the outline and are ready to write your draft. But you must be sure that the phrases say what you mean, so that when you write up the report you will not be confused or misled by the incomplete thoughts. The sample outline combines the "sentence outline" and the "topic outline" because it uses both fragments and complete sentences.

Example: You formulate the following outline from your notes, using the main groupings of points as the main sections of the outline. You have been able to locate the proper spots to insert Items 11, 15, and 16 from your random list.

Main point: The fire department should establish a special CB Unit to attend meetings and communicate with the local boards.

I. The problem and proposed solution.

   A. Introduction: history of this study.

   B. Attendance problem.

1. City charter mandate.
2. Conflict in schedule of meetings.
3. Consequent loss of communication.

C. Proposed solution.

1. Establish a community board unit.
2. Purpose of the unit.
3. Police department has a similar unit.

II. Benefits.

A. To the department.

1. Improved communication with community boards.
2. Public support of FD programs.

B. To the community.

1. Boards would be encouraged to interact.
2. Better FD understanding of local problems.

C. To both.

1. Increased use of chief's knowledge.
2. Better fire prevention and firefighting.

III. Implementation.

A. Unit organization.

1. Structure.
2. Personnel.
3. Duties and assignments.

B. Budget.

1. Personal services.

2. Other items.

C. Funding.

1. State has supported similar units.

2. Possible State funds.

IV. Conclusions.

A. I recommend special unit be set up.

B. I can offer further details if desired.

Step 6: Review your outline to make sure it says (in abbreviated form) everything you want to say and presents the information in a clear and logical order.

If you find you have too little information to prove your point, it will be easy to locate the right places to put in more material. If you find you have too much information for the length of the document, you can locate removable sections more easily. Because you are making these decisions with the outline rather than with your finished product, you are able to preserve the logical arrangement of your material.

Step 7: Write the document using the outline as a guide.

As you write, the outline will tell you where to break the paragraphs and sections of the document. Begin a new section at every major division (I, II, III, etc., in the example) and a new paragraph at every smaller division (A, B, C, or 1, 2, 3 in the example, depending on whether the section has enough sentences to warrant its own paragraph). Naturally, you may change, add, or delete material as you go along.

Example: On the basis of your outline, you rewrite your report:

Improving Department-Community Relations

On June 8, Chief Johnson asked me to investigate an apparent lack of communication between the fire department and local community boards in this city. I have learned that there is a problem in communication, one that can be resolved if the department establishes a community board unit.

The problem exists because of scheduling conflicts. The city charter mandates that the department send representatives to all community board meetings. However, all administrative officers to whom I spoke said that their official duties prevent them from attending any meetings.

The community board leaders I spoke with felt that the absence of department representatives was causing a breakdown in communication and a lack of attention to their local fire safety needs.

The best solution to this problem is to assign several officers specifically to a new community board unit, which will be detailed to attend board meetings and maintain liaison. The Police Department already has a similar unit, and it seems to be doing its job well.

The city would obtain great benefits from this new unit. In the first place, the fire department would enjoy improved communication with the community boards. This, in turn, would act to increase public support for fire department activities and safety programs.

The community would benefit as well. Through fire department participation in the meetings of all boards, the local boards would be encouraged to interact with each other in matters of fire prevention. Also, the localities would be glad to know that the fire department listens to their needs and problems in a consistent way.

Another benefit of the community board unit would be to enable the chief to convey her knowledge of firefighting and safety to the citizens of the community. Most importantly, the establishment of a unit certainly would work to increase fire safety in general and to facilitate firefighting through improved public cooperation.

This is how I envision the composition and duties of the community board unit. It should report to the deputy chief and should consist of six experienced officers of the rank of captain or above, appointed by the deputy chief. These members will plan the unit's activities, maintain liaison with the community board staff, and attend all board meetings according to a schedule that will not conflict with their other duties.

I estimate that $10,000 annually will suffice to support the activities of the unit, other than the cost of members' time. They will need funds for office supplies, a part-time secretary-typist, a telephone, and local travel expenses. The State Emergency Services Division has funded similar units in other cities around the state, and I believe we could apply for such funds. With this support, the community board unit could cost us little or nothing to operate.

Measuring the potential benefits against the costs, I believe the fire department should move swiftly to establish the community board unit. Making this move before a serious situation develops in the community boards or in the media over the department's supposed "lack of concern" will demonstrate how seriously the chief and the department regard their responsibilities. I have additional information on this matter and can supply it to you at your convenience.

Practical Uses of Outlines in Fire Service Writing

Every type of fire service presentation, including oral presentations, can be outlined in advance. Your audience will be grateful for the orderly flow of ideas and facts, which will help it grasp and recall what you have said or written. Additionally, you will notice that the upfront time is time well spent, allowing the remaining steps in the writing process to flow more quickly and smoothly.

Recommendation: Prepare an outline for every writing assignment during this course, whether or not it is specifically required.

Activity 2.1

Collaborative Outline

Purpose

To collaborate in preparing a sample outline on an assigned fire/EMS service topic.

Directions

Your instructor will suggest one or two possible subjects, or will ask the class to propose a subject for a sample outline to be prepared collaboratively by the whole class on the chalkboard. Follow these steps:

1. Individually--on a sheet of paper, write your ideas about the suggested topic.

2. Write one- to three-word ideas.

3. Next--at your table--gather everyone's ideas. Write each idea on a 4- by 6-inch index card--one word (idea) per card. Write in large print so it can be seen on the chalkboard from the back of the room.

4. Categorize: At your table, start identifying categories under which your cards could fit. Make new card with category names on them.

5. Send one or two people per table to the front to start taping their category cards to the board.

6. Tape the individual cards underneath the appropriate categories.

7. When all categories and subcategories are posted, all students should look at them and decide if they can identify a smaller number of bigger-themed categories under which the categories could fit.

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Activity 2.2

Individually Written Outline

Purpose

To individually write a three-level outline on an assigned fire/EMS topic.

Directions

1. Create a sample outline of your own. Your instructor will assign a suitable topic or will ask the class to propose a topic.

2. Follow these outlining steps:

   a. Assemble materials or notes.

   b. Write the purpose or main point.

   c. Gather details.

   d. Organize your details.

   e. Arrange related details.

   f. Review and revise the outline.

3. Assume the finished document would run 5 to 10 pages, and make your outline about 1 to 2 pages long. Include at least three levels.

4. Be sure to write legibly and to include your name.

5. The instructor will answer any questions you may have as you write. He/She will collect the outlines and hand them back at a future time.

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Skill Drill 2.1

Clarity

Purpose

To illustrate the misunderstandings that poor control of writing can cause.

Directions

Do commas give you spots in front of your eyes? Do you think the semicolon is part of the digestive tract? Do you think a dependent clause is one of Santa's helpers? Do you really think the chief will know what you mean if you leave out the apostrophes?

If you answered "yes" to the above questions, this exercise is for you. Watch how one or two little black dots change the meaning of a statement completely. Which statement would you want to be responsible for?

1. Which sentence describes a program that offered outdated material?

   a. Previously practical skills made up a part of the program.

   b. Previously, practical skills made up a part of the program.

2. Which sentence accuses the battalion chief of being out of touch with the situation?

   a. The battalion chief says the investigating officer was not aware of the problem.

   b. The battalion chief, says the investigating officer, was not aware of the problem.

3. In which company are the firefighters in charge?

   a. The firefighters in that fire company know they're boss.

   b. The firefighters in that fire company know their boss.

4. Which report title describes an unfortunate situation for American Firefighters?

   a. American Firefighters Broken Down by Age and Sex.

   b. American Firefighters, Broken Down by Age and Sex.

5. Which question suggests that the famous American is not worried?

   a. What famous American wrote an essay that began, "I am worried"?

   b. What famous American wrote an essay that began, "I am worried?"

When everyone has completed this exercise, the instructor will review the answers.

UNIT 3:
PROCEDURAL WRITING

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

1. *Compose instructions for performing a firefighter skill.*

2. *Compose a departmental order.*

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OVERVIEW OF PROCEDURAL WRITING

Procedural writing is a type of technical writing that explains, instructs, or gives orders about performing one or more activities. In the fire service/emergency medical services (EMS), procedural writing most often appears as instructions, operational orders, rules, directives, and procedural memos.

The easiest way to explain, instruct, and give orders is to do so in person. When procedures are explained on a one-to-one basis, the speaker can repeat or rephrase instructions that the listener does not understand. If the instructions involve a specific skill or activity to be performed, the speaker can demonstrate this for the benefit of the listener.

Unfortunately, it is not always possible to demonstrate a skill or give orders in person. When an order--for example, about the proper use of a piece of equipment--has to be given to all the members of a fire department, it would be impractical for one person to instruct each person individually. The cost of such an undertaking would be prohibitive. Besides the inefficiency of such a procedure, there is an even more important reason why instructions and orders are written: the need to keep a record.

Every organization keeps records of its activities. Without records of what it has done and what it is doing, an organization cannot function. Imagine the confusion that would result if, in the fire service/EMS, instructions were spoken but never written down. The result would be chaos. New supervisors could not be certain if their subordinates were aware of the rules, orders, and directives that had been issued by the department. On the other hand, firefighters would not know whether their supervisors understood the procedures of the department.

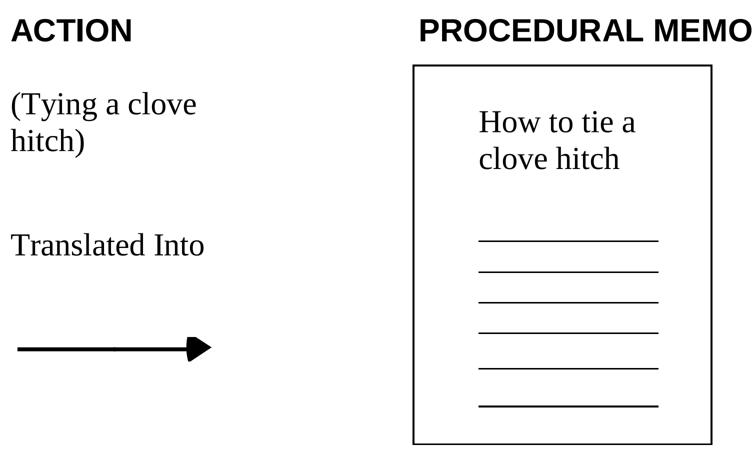
While such a situation would be bad in a business, it would be unacceptable in fire service/EMS. Firefighters expect each other--and the public expects them--to understand the rules and procedures of their profession. The means of gauging the level of their knowledge is to keep records of the procedures of the department and of the fact that the members of the service have been properly instructed in these procedures.

To establish a record of what the rules, orders, and procedures of the service are and to make certain that the members of the service are aware of them, each department writes down its rules, orders, and procedures and circulates them among its members. Although the process is necessary, it can create a great many difficulties for the person who has to do the procedural writing: procedural writing involves the act of translating.

Procedural writing is a kind of translation because it is a statement of something in a different "language." Imagine, for example, that a fire chief wants to establish a new procedure for fueling the battalion car. This procedure involves a series of physical actions: a certain firefighter is to take the battalion car to the gasoline depot at certain specified times, is to fill the gasoline tank, and is to make a record on a specific form of the date, the time, and the amount of gasoline pumped into the automobile. The chief could order the procedure in one kind of "language" by **showing** and **telling** the process to the person responsible for it, but this would not create a record of the chief's order. In addition, the order would have to be repeated whenever someone else became responsible for the job. So the chief decides to write a memo describing the new procedure and identifying the person responsible for it. Now the chief must use a different "language". Rather than show and tell, he/she must write the order.

Anybody who speaks or reads more than one language knows the problem that now arises. Whenever you try to translate an idea from one language to another you must always be careful not to lose some of your meaning during the translation process. Each language has its own special way of expressing ideas; some things that are easy to say in one language often are difficult to express precisely in another.

Writing directives, however, is even more difficult than expressing an idea in a different language. This is because a directive takes an action--such as tying a clove hitch, which appears in the accompanying illustration--and changes it into a series of words--such as the procedural memo, "How to Tie a Clove Hitch," in the illustration. But the process doesn't stop here. The "translation" of actions into words must be good enough so that it can be done in reverse. The procedural memo must be accurate enough so that the words can be translated **back** into action. The memo on how to tie a clove hitch must be clear enough so that the reader can tie a perfect clove hitch!



PROCEDURAL WRITING PROCESS: FIVE STEPS

In creating a procedural directive, the writer has to go through a five-step process. Included in this process are the identification of the audience and purpose of the directive, the gathering of information with the help of the so-called "five Ws and the H," and the writing of the directive in the appropriate format.

The five steps in the process:

1. Determine purpose and identify audience.

2. Gather details.

3. Write and format the draft.

4. Test and revise the procedure.

5. Write coherently and concisely.

Determine Purpose and Identify Audience

First, the writer must ask "Why am I writing this directive?" and "To whom am I writing the directive?" That is, the writer must first consider the **purpose** (the "why") of the directive and then the **audience** (the "who") of the directive.

Purpose: A procedural directive could be written for any of several purposes: to provide information, to establish a new procedure, to enforce discipline within the service, and to achieve compliance with a National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standard, etc.

The following are introductory sections from two procedural directives concerned with the same subject: the proper procedure to be followed in getting back into service after a fire. Although their subjects are the same, the introductions are very different, because the **purpose** of each directive is different.

A. "This directive is to assist all personnel in proper procedures involved in placing equipment and personnel back into service following a fire. It must be understood that this procedure is to be consistently followed to ensure departmental effectiveness and personnel safety. The following checklist must be completed before equipment and personnel are placed back into service."

The purpose of this directive is to provide information. It is not critical of personnel. In fact, the first sentence says that the directive "is to **assist**" all personnel in getting back into service. The writer doesn't blame anyone for improper or careless conduct. Even in insisting that the procedure be carried out, the writer emphasizes that it is for the good of the entire service: "to ensure departmental effectiveness and personnel safety."

The writer implies that those who read the directive are well-intentioned and, with the proper instruction, will perform their duties well. This trust is evident in the form that the writer chooses for the specific instructions that follow. The directive is organized in the form of a checklist, a list of items that must be completed in order to get the equipment and personnel back into service. But the writer doesn't specify a rigid series of steps that must be followed in precise order. The means of carrying out the directive is left to the judgment of those who receive it.

B. "In my review of your last nine building fire incident reports, a concern has arisen over the length of time your company remains out of service. It is unclear to me why your company averages 45 minutes longer for downtime than other companies responding to the same incident.

Although proper procedures were established for a **timely** return to service after a fire incident, it would appear that the delay might be attributed to these procedures **not** being followed.

> Therefore, I am outlining a procedural directive, to be the subject of a company school, in the proper procedure for a timely return to service."

In the first sentence of the introduction, the writer makes clear that the purpose of the directive is to severely criticize the performance of a fire crew. The writer threatens the readers with reports and statistics ("your last nine reports...45 minutes longer for downtime"). The writer has read these reports carefully and is obviously displeased with what they contain.

In the next paragraph, the writer emphasizes two things: that a return should be **timely** and that the company in question has **not** followed procedures. The writer even indulges in a bit of sarcasm: "it would appear" that the company has been lax in performing its duties.

The last paragraph announces that the writer is "outlining" a procedure and repeats the importance of a "timely" return to service. The rest of the directive is constructed in the form of an outline--an outline which will be the lesson plan for a company school. The writer specifies in step-by-step detail exactly how the procedure is to be performed. The writer implies that the company must be treated like undisciplined (school) children who cannot be counted on to get anything right unless it is explained to them in great detail.

Audience: The next item the writer must consider is the document's audience. A knowledge of the audience will determine the kind of language and the amount of technical information that appears in a document. Procedural writing is often, but not always, produced by superiors for their subordinates. Since those who receive these directives are members of the fire service/EMS, their superiors can assume that all have certain basic information about the fire service/EMS and its procedures. But whenever a directive is composed, the writer must make decisions about the knowledge and experience level of those who receive that specific document.

Gather Details

After determining the purpose and audience of the directive, the writer must then gather the specific information that will go into the directive. The writer does this by asking--and answering--the five Ws and the H: who, what, when, where, why, and how. Whatever its subject, a set of directives must be written in such a way that there is no question about:

- **Who** is responsible for carrying out the directive?
- **What** is to be done?
- **When** is it to be done?
- **Where** is it to be done?
- **Why** is it to be done?
- **How** is it to be done?

Write and Format the Draft

Although a procedural directive may vary in format according to the requirements of the local department, it almost always contains three parts:

1. **Heading:** date, to, from, and subject (name of procedure).

2. **Introduction:** a discussion of:

    - the procedure to be performed (**what** is to be done);
    - the person(s) required to perform the procedure (**who** is to do it);
    - the time scheduled for the procedure (**when** it is to be done);
    - the place selected for the procedure (**where** it is to be done);
    - the reasons for the procedure (**why** it is to be done); and
    - general remarks, cautions to be observed, and the like.

3. **Steps to be followed:** (**how** it is to be done).

A sample procedural directive appears below. Read it carefully and attempt to answer the following questions, which will be part of the class discussion of this sample directive:

- How are the three parts of the directive identified?

- What assumptions has the writer made about his/her audience?

- Where does the writer reveal his/her purpose for writing the directive?

- Where do the five **W**s and the **H** appear in the directive?

- Why is the directive so long and so detailed? Wouldn't a memo to the covering lieutenant, reminding him/her to supervise the scheduled oil and filter change, have been sufficient?

Sample Procedural Memo

March 5, 20 __

TO: Company Officers (Units with Assigned Battalion Automobiles)

FROM: Leo T. Devine
Chief-in-Charge, Fire Garage

SUBJECT: Change of Engine Oil and Oil Filter in Battalion Car

Background

In the past, there has been some confusion about the schedule and manner of changing the engine oil and oil filter in the battalion car stored in quarters. As a result, scheduled changes were neglected, which resulted in damage to the vehicle. The change of engine oil and oil filter is scheduled for the first Monday of each month. It will be your responsibility to supervise these tasks. The work consists of raising and lowering the car, removing and replacing the engine oil and oil filter and testing for oil leaks. Below are the procedures for completing these tasks.

Caution: No one is allowed under the car unless the car is supported by safety stands. Use gloves and a heavy long-sleeved shirt to avoid burns from the hot engine. Block rear wheels to prevent car movement. Run the engine only in a well-ventilated area.

Tools Needed:

- hydraulic floor jack;
- two safety stands;
- four wheel blocks;
- 3/4-inch strap wrench;
- 10-quart waste oil pail;
- back creeper;
- oil can spout; and
- cleanup rags.

Materials Needed:

- five quarts of 10W-40 oil; and
- oil filter, Fram FS-1.

All tools and materials are located in the oil room.

Before starting the procedure, run the engine until it reaches the normal operating temperature, then shut off engine.

Procedures

Position Car

- Park car on level surface and allow five feet of clearance at the front and side.
- Place selector handle in PARK position and set hand brake.
- Block the front and back of each rear tire.

Raise Car

- Place contact seat of hydraulic floor jack under the center of the front crossmember. The crossmember is a heavy structure which runs across the width of the car. It is located under the front of the engine.
- Set floor jack in raising mode by twisting jack handle clockwise to stop position. Operate handle up and down and raise the crossmember to a height of approximately 20 inches above the ground.
- From each side of the car, place safety stands under the chassis structures located behind the front wheels.
- Set floor jack in lowering mode by twisting jack handle counterclockwise to stop position. Operate handle slowly and lower until the car's weight is supported by the safety stands.
- Lower floor jack completely and remove jack from work area.

Drain Oil

- Using back creeper, slide under the car from the front.
- Place oil waste pail under oil plug which is located in engine pan.
- Using a 3/4-inch box wrench, remove oil plug and collect waste oil in pail.
- Replace oil plug when oil has completely drained. Screw in oil plug until hand tight; then use wrench to tighten one additional turn.

Remove and Install Oil Filter

- Place waste oil pail under oil filter which is located on the right side of the engine.

- Open hood. From the top side, reach down and place oil filter strap wrench on the oil filter. Slowly turn filter counterclockwise until loose. Remove strap wrench and continue to turn by hand until filter is disconnected. Remove and discard.

- Place a light coat of engine oil on the rubber washer of the new oil filter.

- Screw on new filter until it is hand tight. Then place strap wrench on filter and tighten an additional 3/4 of a turn. Hint: When using strap wrench, avoid placing excessive pressure on thin filter shell. Removal of filter can be very difficult if shell is distorted.

Refill Engine Oil

- Remove oil fill cap located on valve cover.

- Use oil spout and pour 5 quarts of oil into oil fill opening.

- Replace oil fill cap.

Warning: If low pressure oil light fails to go out after 30 seconds of engine operation, shut down engine. Check for cause. Oil may have not been put in engine, or wiring of light circuit may have been accidentally disconnected during the oil change.

Lower Car

- Place hydraulic floor jack under crossmember and raise car off safety stands.

- Remove safety stands and slowly lower car to ground.

Test for Leaks

- Start engine and run for five minutes. Turn off engine.

- Inspect for leaks. Check dipstick to see that oil is at the proper level. If necessary, tighten oil plug and/or filter.

Maintenance Record

Record oil and filter change on the vehicle maintenance card in the office file.

Test and Revise the Procedure

After completing the draft, it is time to test and revise it. It is important to have others read the draft. Ideally, find a reader whose experience with the procedure matches that of your intended audience and test the procedure with that reader. Continue the testing and revising process until the written procedure works.

Checklist for Evaluating Directives

This checklist can be used to evaluate directives of any length.

1.	Does the opening segment identify the procedure(s) to be described or explained?	**WHAT**
2.	Does the opening segment explain the reasons for performing the procedures or does it outline the problem that prompted the directive?	**WHY**
3.	Does the opening segment mention all the materials, tools, and/or items that will be needed to perform the procedures?	
4.	Is it clear who is to carry out these instructions?	**WHO**
5.	Is the time for performing the procedures specified?	**WHEN**
6.	Is the place where procedures are to be performed identified?	**WHERE**
7.	Are all the steps for these procedures included? (Where appropriate, are the reasons stated for doing them this way?)	**HOW**
8.	Are all the steps presented in a logical sequence?	**HOW**
9.	If terms unfamiliar to the reader are used, are they defined?	
10.	Does the procedure take into account the difficulties the reader may face in carrying out the instructions?	
11.	Does the procedure use parallel language?	
12.	Is the directive complete, without being wordy or repetitious?	
13.	Does the procedure follow all applicable safety standards?	

Write Coherently and Concisely

Use parallel language. To achieve clarity, writers of procedures need to use parallel forms of language throughout their instructions. For simple procedures, use of statements that begin with command verbs is effective. Such sentences clearly state the action to be taken.

- Park the engines on a level surface.
- Allow 5 feet of clearance at the front and sides.
- Place wheel chocks behind front tires.

Each instruction begins with a command verb that clearly states the action to be taken.

Use concise sentences. As a general rule, the sentences in procedures should be as short as possible because short sentences are likely to include fewer actions and be easier to understand.

Include no more than one step per sentence.

Use words consistently. An important difference between technical writing (including procedural writing) and other forms of writing is the need to use terms consistently. In composition, writers strive to vary terminology for the sake of variation. However, when writing procedures, repetition of terms adds clarity.

Example: Nozzles should be checked after each use:

- Check for obvious cracks, breaks, or other defects.
- Inspect all rubber and Teflon® parts.
- Check for proper movement of all moving parts.
- Check for foreign objects inside nozzle.
- Ensure that nozzle is clean.

Notice in the example that the first bullet and the second bullet use different terms for the same action. A better option would be to use the word "Check" in the second bullet. Doing so adds clarity for the reader.

Activity 3.1

Composing Instructions for Performing a Typical Firefighter Skill

Purpose

To compose instructions for performing a firefighter skill.

Directions

1. Write a set of instructions for tying a clove hitch. If you have forgotten how to make this particular knot (or never knew how in the first place), you may substitute a square knot. if neither of these knots is in your repertoire, you may explain how to tie a shoelace.

2. Assume that your reader is a recruit firefighter of average intelligence who, although unfamiliar with the particular process you are describing, is capable of following clear directions.

   Note: This is an exercise in precision of expression. You may not use any illustrations to supplement your verbal explanation.

3. Before beginning the instructions, identify below the audience and purpose.

4. Test your instructions, and when you think they're good, write them on easel pad paper.

Instructions for tying a clove hitch:

Audience: ____

____

Purpose: ____

____

Instructions: (Use another sheet of paper and easel pad paper to post instructions.)

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Activity 3.2

Composing a Departmental Order

Purpose

To compose a precise departmental order.

Directions

It has come to your attention that some of the personnel under your supervision have not been getting back into service after a fire in a timely manner.

1. Write a procedural memo (some of you may call it a directive or an operational order) to your staff explaining the procedures to follow. Include information such as exactly how and when turnout gear should be stowed on the apparatus, how and when breathing apparatus should be inspected, type of hose load needed, and how and when to refill water and fuel tanks, etc. You can assume that your readers are familiar with whatever hose lay you suggest.

2. You should include an explanation of why you are writing this directive and why it is important that your readers follow it exactly.

3. Do not refer your reader to a departmental manual or other previously published instructions. The purpose of this exercise is for you to spell out the entire process involved in getting back into service.

4. Before beginning the procedural memo, identify below the audience and purpose.

Procedural Memo--Getting Back into Service:

Audience: ______________________________

____

Purpose: ______________________________

____

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UNIT 4: CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE PUBLIC

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

1. *Demonstrate the application of the basic principles of effective correspondence by editing replies to citizens.*

2. *Write a response letter to a citizen complaint.*

3. *Demonstrate the application of the principle for replying to media criticism by evaluating editorial reply letters.*

4. *Demonstrate the conversion of direct and indirect quotations.*

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INTRODUCTION

Although correspondence with the public may not be the most frequent form of written communication in the fire service and emergency medical services (EMS), it is certainly one of the most important. Effective replies to letters from private citizens project a positive image of the fire department. And if people feel good about their fire department, they will be more likely to cooperate in observing the rules and precautions necessary to prevent fires.

Letters from private citizens come from all kinds of people and deal with a great variety of subjects. A homeowner writes to report that his/her neighbor is illegally burning leaves and rubbish in a vacant lot adjacent to both of their properties. A high school student writes to request information on combustible materials for use in his/her science research project. A woman writes to complain that the firefighters who recently visited her apartment to check out a suspicious odor inflicted damage on her armchair in moving it away from the fireplace. A teacher writes to thank the company for taking his/her third-graders on such an interesting tour of the firehouse. The following are possible categories of citizen's letters:

- complaints;
- suggestions and recommendations;
- requests;
- inquiries;
- reports and notifications (of fire hazards, etc.);
- commendations;
- expressions of appreciation;
- congratulations; and
- condolences.

It should be noted, of course, that some letters fall into more than one category. That is, a letter of complaint also may contain suggestions. A thank-you letter may well include a commendation of individual firefighters.

Standard Response Letters

Since correspondence from the public falls rather easily into categories, it is inevitable that a fire department would develop and use a certain number of standard replies, at least to such routine letters as requests for fire prevention literature, or complaints that should have been directed to another agency.

You might, for instance, compose a basic cover letter to accompany materials sent in response to requests for literature. Or you might devise a basic wording for responses to commendations, letters of appreciation, and congratulatory letters. Even standardized responses, however, must permit flexibility for inserting words, phrases, or whole sentences pertinent to the individual situation. Suppose that a routine request for fire prevention material closes with a question about the availability of still other material. You would surely have to respond to that question in the course of your "standard response" letter. Thus, even in fairly standard replies, you must allow for the possibility of individually worded passages that meet the special conditions of the letter to which you are responding.

It is important to note that **all** replies, even standard response ones, should be **individually** typed. There is nothing more calculated to alienate a member of the public than a duplicated form letter whose recognition of the recipient as an individual is confined to the blank filled in (by a clerical assistant, of course) with the recipient's name and address.

Who is Your Audience?

Even if you are prepared to answer every citizen's letter with an individually tailored response, you still must confront the question, **"Just who is that citizen?"** Sometimes his/her letter tells us either directly or by implication. We should, of course, take advantage of any information provided and design our response to meet the character and circumstances of that individual. But often we cannot know whether our correspondent is young or old, rich or poor, smart or dull, an accountant or a train conductor, a friend of the fire commissioner's aunt, or a cousin of the mayor. **We also cannot know to how many other people our reply will be shown or who those other people might be.**

Principles for Effective Letters to the Public

Because the audience for our correspondence with the public is often an unknown quantity, the most practical approach we can take is to formulate a set of general principles for letter writing that will satisfy the basic requirement of all fire department correspondence. That requirement is best put in the form of a question, which you should keep in mind every time you sit down to write a letter to a citizen. **Does my letter project a positive image of the fire department?**

The following eight principles for composing effective letters to the public will help you project a positive image of your department.

1. Identify with your audience.
2. Address the issues raised.
3. Give concrete information.
4. Omit irrelevant details.
5. Cut out jargon.
6. Organize content logically.
7. Use correct grammar and spelling.
8. Say it tactfully and courteously.

No doubt you already have a good idea of what the eight principles mean. However, a brief explanation of each is offered here to help you to incorporate them concretely into your day-to-day correspondence with the public.

Identify with your audience. If you can form a picture of your reader from the context of his/her letter to the department, you will be able to respond more sensitively to that individual's needs. For example, if the individual is a child, or a disabled person, or a senior citizen, you can design your answer to show awareness of that identity. If you cannot infer very much about the reader from his/her own letter, you nevertheless can identify with that person in the sense of putting yourself in his/her place and on that basis testing how you would feel about receiving such a response. A simple way to keep your focus on the audience is to use the words "you" or "your" more often than "I" or "we."

Address the issues raised. Some writers respond indirectly or incompletely to issues brought up by citizens. Sometimes the writer will ignore a particular aspect of a citizen's letter deliberately because it involves revealing confidential or sensitive information. It is better to confront the issues anyway, if only to say that you are not permitted to reveal the data requested. Otherwise, it will certainly look as if you are trying to hide something.

Give concrete information. Nothing is more infuriating to a citizen than to receive an explanation that is so vaguely worded that it is, in effect, no explanation at all. Be as specific, concrete, and clear as you can without violating the confidentiality of the department.

Omit irrelevant details. Although you should be concrete, it is pointless to burden a reader with too much information. You will only end by wandering away from the real issues altogether and getting entangled in needless irrelevant and extraneous details. It is a good rule never to volunteer information not directly required to answer the issues raised.

Cut out jargon. Any individual who is writing in a professional capacity must constantly guard against using the technical terms of his/her occupation in addressing the lay person. Terminology like "apparatus," "responding unit," "housewatch," "spotting a ladder," "violation referral," and the like should be translated into ordinary, everyday language for lay audiences.

Organize content logically. A letter, like any other type of written communication, needs to be organized logically if it is to be understood by the reader. A response to a citizen that is haphazard in its arrangement of content conveys the impression that the department is inefficient and, by extension, may be disorganized in its firefighting activities as well. A letter of any substance should be outlined before it is written.

Use correct grammar and spelling. In order to make your letter reflect positively on your department, you must use correct spelling and grammar. A good way to achieve this goal is to regularly use style guides and dictionaries.

Say it tactfully and courteously. Even though you may have observed all of the other principles for effective letter writing, if you do not use tact, you will surely lose the goodwill of your reader. It is better, for example, to call a complaint a "problem," or a "difficulty." It is more diplomatic to refer to an elderly woman as a "senior citizen."

Although courtesy is somewhat related to tact, it deserves its own place in any set of letter writing principles. It is not enough to say "please" and "thank you" in your correspondence. You should make it a point to incorporate into your writing repertoire a whole list of expressions that will help you maintain a courteous tone throughout a letter. Words like "appreciate," "grateful," "thoughtfulness," "interest," "kind attention," "generous cooperation," and "helpful suggestion" go a long way toward projecting a positive image of your department.

Suggested Formula for Replying
To Letter from the Public

Fire Department Name Here **Department's Full Address**		**<Heading**
Current date (this could also be centered)		**<Date**
Type recipient's full address		**<Inside address**
Dear :		**<Salutation**
Opening segment: **Body**	(1)	Acknowledge citizen's letter, noting its date and briefly reviewing its subject matter.
(One paragraph.)	(2)	Express appreciation, concern, or other positive sentiment with reference to content of citizen's letter.
Middle segment: **Body** (One to three paragraphs as necessary.)	(3)	Address issues in citizen's letter by (a) giving required information, (b) explaining how you handled the matter, (c) referring to enclosures, (d) other means as appropriate.
Closing segment: **Body**	(4)	Encourage citizen to write again, visit or otherwise continue interest in the fire department.
(One paragraph. Do not necessarily use all three items. Select 4, 5, or 6, or any combination as appropriate.)	(5)	Give specific fire department phone number (and name, if appropriate) to call if necessary.
	(6)	Thank citizen again for interest in fire department.
Sincerely,	<**Closing**	

<Write your signature in the white space

Type your name here
Type your job title

Model Reply Using Suggested Formula

Bettiwood Fire Department

Station 17
32 Morris Road
Bettiwood, Iowa

October 16, 20__

Mr. Paul Marsden
32 Fox Hill Road
Bettiwood, Iowa

Dear Mr. Marsden:

This is in reply to your letter of October 10th advising us of the careless disposal of gasoline-soaked rags at the Lyons Gasoline Station on Underwood Avenue. I want to thank you for reporting this matter to us.

You will be relieved to learn that the day after we received your letter, we dispatched two fire officers to the Lyons Gasoline Station to inspect the premises and to investigate the station's method of discarding used rags. All attendants at the station were carefully instructed by our firefighters in the proper procedures for disposal of such rags. In addition, a warning has been issued to the manager of the Lyons Station putting him on notice that if he does not comply with the instructions, he will be in violation of Order #3652 of this city.

A return inspection of the gasoline station is scheduled for October 25th.

Again, I should like to express my appreciation to you for taking the time and trouble to write to us about this matter. Your generous efforts have surely contributed to eliminating yet another fire hazard in our community.

Sincerely,

Art Pepper
Captain

REPLYING TO THE MEDIA AND OTHER EXTERNAL CORRESPONDENCE

There are many other types of correspondence that the middle-management fire officer is likely to have to deal with in the course of his/her service. The following is a list of persons and/or elements with whom the officer must be able to communicate:

- business people;
- politicians;
- government officials;
- suppliers;
- civic groups and institutions such as community boards, schools, block and neighborhood associations, tenants' committees, landlords' organizations; and
- the media.

Since time does not permit us to examine this vast range of correspondence, we will focus on the single, important topic of replying to the media.

Every fire department must be prepared to reply in print and in broadcast media to editorials that are critical of the fire service and EMS. Some of the same principles that were suggested for use in composing effective replies to the public also can be applied in drafting effective responses to media criticism. A few other principles not on the earlier list also should be included.

The eight principles for replying effectively to media criticism are as follows:

1. Address the issues raised.
2. Give concrete information.
3. Omit irrelevant detail.
4. Cut out jargon.
5. Organize content logically.
6. Use correct grammar and spelling.
7. Avoid assigning blame.
8. Abstain from anger, and sound emotionally balanced.

A word of explanation follows for the last two, which are new principles.

Avoid assigning blame. In replying to criticism, it is better to focus on the department's **good** qualities or actions rather than on some other organization's or individual's **bad** qualities or actions. If you defend the department adequately, the blame will, by implication, fall elsewhere.

Abstain from anger, and sound emotionally balanced. Nothing weakens a reply to criticism so much as an obviously hostile tone. Anger is frequently taken, whether rightly or wrongly, as a sign that the person or institution is protesting too much and is therefore guilty. If you appear to "stay cool," people tend to trust your statements. This principle is related to abstaining from anger but is more inclusive. Some replies to critical editorials tend to sound hysterical and thus give the impression that the writer is emotionally unstable. Since the writer represents the department, the public may conclude that the department as a whole is not as rational as it should be.

Activity 4.1

Revision of Ineffective Departmental Responses

Purpose

To demonstrate the basic principles of effective correspondence by editing replies to citizens.

Directions

The following three passages, adapted from the correspondence files of a major city's fire service and EMS, violate one or more of the eight principles for effective letters to the public. Your instructor will assign one of these passages to you for revision. Rewrite it to make it conform to the eight principles, and be prepared to read your revision to the class.

Excerpt A

We are in receipt of your letter of March 4, 20__, complaining about the lack of water pressure in and around your home. This condition is not the responsibility of the fire department but of the Department of Buildings and the Department of Water Resources. Accordingly, the Department of Buildings and the Department of Water Resources have been notified. Should you have any further complaints, direct them to the aforementioned departments, **not** to the fire department.

Excerpt B

Thank you for your suggestion that the fire department train dogs as fire detectors. Please let me explain why your recommendation, although it is an ingenious one, would not be possible for the department to act upon at the present time. We are currently engaged in comprehensive programs of training, fire prevention, public education, etc. Our fire companies have extensive responsibilities in these fields. They are required to expend much effort and many hours to maintain the high level of productivity and readiness needed to fulfill these responsibilities. Staff personnel in our department who are in management positions must not only meet the same expectations as the fire companies but are also responsible for additional duties such as fiscal management, supply and maintenance programs, emergency operations development, etc. Staff personnel often find themselves unable to adhere to routine daily scheduling due to their workload. All of the aforementioned departmental activities are the methods and tools which enable us to provide the kind of professional service that the citizens of this community deserve. You can readily appreciate why the department could not undertake a dog project at the present time.

Excerpt C

In reference to your letter of 5/7/__ requesting information about fire masks for use in your fifth grade group project of which your teacher has appointed you the chairman, we regret that we cannot send you an actual mask, but enclosed please find the instructional manual, prepared for department personnel, which delineates procedures for the correct use and maintenance of the Scott Airpak. This lightweight respirator, designed by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, superseded the Department's heavier metal models in 1978. Detailed diagrams of the various parts of the mask are contained in the manual and should familiarize you with the technical workings of this modern device for providing toxic-free air to firefighters.

Excerpt D

We recieved your letter asking if we knew what happened to your eyeglasses when one of our crews responded to your medical emergency. I asked the crew that responded and none of them remember seeing the glasses. They remember seeing your purse and cell phone, which they sent with you, Sorry. Good luck finding them.

Activity 4.2

Writing Assignment and Postwriting Critique

Purpose

To write a response letter to a citizen complaint.

Directions

Write a letter responding to a citizen's complaint. Replies will be selected, with writers' permission, for a class critique.

On the next page is a hypothetical letter to the mayor from a concerned citizen of your community complaining about the fire department. The mayor has turned the letter over to the fire department for response since the chief would be the appropriate person to answer the letter. The chief has passed it along to you, requesting that you draft an answer for his signature. Your investigation of the complaint has revealed that the fire department was not at fault in either of the incidents described. Since the bat complaint was a low priority issue, a firefighter was sent only after other, more vital problems had been attended to. The cars that were parked near the Burger King were because the drivers were inspecting the premises. Write what you consider an appropriate reply to the letter, bearing in mind that your answer will reflect on the mayor, the department, the chief, and, indirectly, you. Your letter should adhere to the principles for effective letters to the public and should follow the suggested formula for replies. The physical format of your letter should conform to business letter style as you understand it.

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Activity 4.2 (cont'd)

Writing Assignment and Postwriting Critique

June 14, 20__

Mayor Harold Johnson
The Town Hall
River's Edge, CT 06543

Dear Mayor Johnson:

Yesterday morning I called the fire department because I thought I heard a bat in my garage. The garage is an attached garage and I was afraid the bat would get into the house as I understand they can make themselves very small and squeeze through very narrow spaces. I asked the fire department to come over and look into the situation because I am an elderly person living alone and I did not want to take a chance on getting bit by a bat, which as you know could give me rabies. I explained all this on the telephone and the man I spoke to promised to send someone over as soon as possible. I waited for over an hour but nobody came and I finally had to go out to do my shopping.

En route to the shopping center I saw two fire cars parked near the Burger King on the corner of Vine and Quincy Avenue. Since I didn't see any men in the cars, I knew they must be having a bite in Burger King. Naturally I realized the reason the fire department didn't come to take care of the bat was because they were too busy eating at Burger King. A fireman did come over quite late in the afternoon, and he checked out the garage and fortunately the bat turned out to be just a cricket.

But the point is that the department was not there when I needed them because they were too busy having lunch at Burger King. What I want to know is what if a bad fire had started somewhere during that time? I am concerned about our town and feel the fire department should be out there protecting our citizens, not eating in Burger King. Please see that this letter gets to the proper officials.

Yours truly,

(Mrs.) I. Emma Battaphobe

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Activity 4.3

Correspondence With Media

Purpose

To demonstrate the principles for replying to media criticism by evaluating editorial reply letters.

Directions

1. Read the newspaper editorial. Your group will be assigned one of the three sample replies. Your group will present a critique.

2. Discuss and evaluate the replies in light of the eight principles for replies to media criticism.

NEWSPAPER EDITORIAL

Do the Inspectors Need Inspection?

Last month the Tenants' Committee of the Crestwood Apartments requested a fire department inspection because of what it termed "serious and hazardous fire violations at 210-28 Crestwood Road." Crestwood is the big new housing complex owned by R. G. Properties, Inc., a real estate firm that is notorious for its pennypinching tactics with tenants. The Committee alleged, among other things, that R. G. Properties habitually allowed flammable rubbish to pile up in the rear of the premises, that the basement storage rooms are inadequately ventilated, that the wiring in lobby and hall fixtures is dangerously defective, and that the sprinkler system is marginal.

The fire department dutifully sent a team of so-called experts to inspect the premises. All they could come up with by way of violations were a couple of missing fire exit signs and a jammed window in one of the laundry rooms. The "inspection," according to the Tenants' Committee, took less than 45 minutes.

Since it would be physically impossible to tour the vast premises of the Crestwood Apartments in less than an hour, much less inspect the various facilities, it is highly questionable whether the fire department did more than the most superficial kind of inspection.

With 800 families housed in Crestwood, a fire in that complex would be a major disaster.

Unpleasant though the question may be, one has to ask if R. G. Properties is paying someone off. Could it be that the fire department inspectors need inspecting?

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Activity 4.3 (cont'd)

Sample Replies to Editorial

Reply A

To the Editor:

Your editorial of July 15th was a totally unjustified indictment of the fire department, full of snide innuendoes and below-the-belt observations designed for sheer sensationalism. The **Daily Pictorial** is obviously ignorant of the true story about Crestwood.

The members of my company and I conducted a thorough inspection of the Crestwood Apartments on July 10th between the hours of 1530 and 1630. The company was busy in the afternoon prior to the inspection because of runs and workers in our response area. However, we managed to complete the inspection of the top floor and alternate floors throughout the buildings, including the basement. A violation order was issued to the management of Crestwood for missing exit signs on the first, second, third, and seventh floors of the 224-26 building. Two other violations were issued, one for garbage cans partially blocking the street entrance to the basement of 214-16, and the other for three locked windows in the laundry room of 224-26. No other fire hazards were noticed or found during this inspection. The buildings are clean and well kept as far as the fire department is concerned.

The F.D. is obviously being caught in the middle of a landlord-tenant dispute, and as usual, the department is being used as a cushion. I consider your editorial a personal insult to the integrity of my men and myself. My company and I have always conducted our inspections with the interest and welfare of the people of our neighborhood first on the list in the order of preference; and I think that the people on the Tenants' Committee have some nerve causing all this hullabaloo because they want to get even with the management of the Crestwood Apartments. Why must it be done at the expense of my men and I? It looks like no matter how hard we try to keep these people happy, they will never be satisfied. I hope we can clean up this matter as soon as possible. There has obviously been a bad mistake made on the part of the Crestwood Committee, not to mention your newspaper.

Respectfully submitted,

Lt. Robert C. Dallas
Maryville Fire Department

Reply B

To the Editor:

We of the Maryville Fire Department were deeply distressed by your July 15th editorial, "Do the Inspectors Need Inspecting?" Your implication that our department would overlook serious fire hazards for a "payoff," while hundreds of lives were potentially in danger, is indeed disturbing and unjust. We would like, here and now, to set the record straight. The facts are as follows:

1. The departmental inspection referred to in your editorial was a preliminary one. It was not intended to cover the entire premises but to focus only on the hazardous conditions set forth in your editorial. Our inspection did not disclose the existence of a single one of those conditions. It is entirely possible that the management, on learning of our impending visit, corrected the problems before we arrived on the scene, as frequently happens.

2. In the course of our preliminary inspection, we did discover several other hazards, which you mentioned, although not quite accurately, in your editorial. These hazards had not even been noted by the Tenants' Committee in its complaint.

3. On the basis of our discovery of these other hazards, and because the Crestwood complex is so large, we have scheduled two additional inspections of the premises. These inspections will take place within the next two weeks and will cover the remaining areas to be checked.

It is no secret (the **Daily Pictorial** has carried many stories about it) that the Tenants' Committee and the management of the Crestwood Apartments have been feuding ever since the project was first opened for occupancy. The fire department has never taken sides in that dispute. It is our sole responsibility--and concern--to protect the lives and property of the people, be they tenants **or** landlords.

We invite the editors of the **Pictorial** to investigate fire safety conditions at the Crestwood Apartments for themselves. And we ask them, based on their findings, either to substantiate their editorial of July 15th, or print a retraction of it. We have no fears about submitting to that test.

Sincerely,

Lt. Joseph P. Walters
Maryville Fire Department

Reply C

To the Editor:

In reply to your editorial of July 15th, "Do the Inspectors Need Inspecting," the Maryville Fire Department visited the Crestwood apartments on July 10th, found several violations, notified the landlord of same, and has scheduled two additional inspections of the complex over the next month. Our responsibility, quite simply, is neither to tenants' committees nor to landlords. It is to the public. With respect to the Crestwood apartments, we have carried out, and will continue to carry out, that responsibility to the best of our ability.

Sincerely yours,

Lt. Elaine Parsons
Maryville Fire Department

Reply D

To the Editor:

I can't believe the Pictorial had the audacity to print its false and acusatory editorial based on a complaint from a Tenant's Committee that is well-known to carry a grudge against the managment of the Crestwood Apartments and besides, no one contacted the fire department to check on the credibility of the accusation, which it seems to me should have been done out of respect for the fire department. I would be more than happy to provide the actual details about what happened at that inspection to anyone from your paper who has enough profesionalism to actually contact us for the true story.

Sincerely,

Battalion Chief Bill Prox
Maryville Fire Department

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Skill Drill 4.1

Use of Direct and Indirect Quotations

Purpose

To demonstrate the conversion of direct and indirect quotations.

Directions

Do the skill drill **before** tomorrow's class.

Incident reports, after-action reviews, investigative reports, courtroom testimony, factsheets for the media, and many other types of technical and professional fire writing require that the writer be able to quote an individual or a source both directly and indirectly. The ability to use direct and indirect quotations (also known as direct and indirect discourse) in the correct manner is not only important for your writing assignments in Unit 5: Incident Report Writing and Unit 6: After-Action Reports (or Postincident Analysis), but for all your on-the-job management writing tasks.

Definitions

Direct quotation: reproduces words exactly as they were spoken.

Use quotation marks to enclose the exact words of a speaker or writer.

Example: He said, "I am tired of working 60 hours a week."

The introductory element, as in "He said," in the previous example, will usually be followed by a comma. If the direct quotation appears first, the comma will follow the direct quotation, as in the next example:

"I am tired of working 60 hours a week," he said.
Commas and periods will always go inside the quotation marks.

Indirect quotation: reports the idea but not the exact words. It can be recognized by the use of "that" to introduce it. Indirect quotations will contain no quotation marks.

Example: He said that he was tired of working 60 hours a week. (Note the three changes that took place: "that" was inserted, "I" became "he" and "am" became "was.")

General Rule

When a direct quotation is changed to an indirect quotation, a number of alterations must be made in the wording:

(1) The word "that" is inserted to introduce the indirect quotation.

(2) The pronouns change (from "I" to "he/she" or "we" to "they," etc.).

(3) The time of the verbs in the quotation is changed to match the time of the verbs in the main part of the sentence. If there is no change in the time of the main part of the sentence then there is no change in the verb used in the quotation.

Skill Drill 4.1 (cont'd)

Worksheet

Part 1

Change the following from direct to indirect discourse.

1. The chief complained, "My equipment cannot handle the fire."

___

___

2. The captain said, "This year's city budget will contain a provision for a salary increase for all firefighters."

___

___

3. The duty officer replied, "The primary function of our fire department is to fight fires and save lives."

___

___

4. "The Superpumper System," he said, "demands a stationary base of operations."

___

___

5. When asked, the chief always says, "Firefighting is one of the most demanding of the civil service professions."

___

___

Part 2

Change the following from indirect to direct discourse:

1. Chief Smith said that Captain Baker had performed meritorious service at the fire.

   ____

   ____

2. The mayor stated that firefighters had profited from their training at the National Fire Academy.

   ____

   ____

3. The duty officer complained that there were too few firefighters in the company.

   ____

   ____

4. The captain said that she would report the problem to the inspector.

   ____

   ____

5. The chief declared that he was unable to accept this explanation.

   ____

   ____

UNIT 5:
INCIDENT REPORT WRITING

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

1. *Demonstrate critiquing an incident report.*

2. *Demonstrate using templates in incident reports*

3. *Demonstrate ability to write a well organized, coherent, concise, and complete report.*

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INTRODUCTION

The incident report is a particularly important type of fire service and emergency medical services (EMS) written communication because so many other reports and decisions depend on it and are generated from it. Briefly, the incident report is the **first written official** notification to the department that an incident has occurred. Once the department learns about an incident, decisions must be made whether to order other written material such as investigative reports, arson reports, correspondence, etc.

Listed below are examples of various types of incidents that require reports.

- **Fire-related calls:** a description of the events at a fire-related scene.
- **Medical calls:** a description of the actions taken by responding units. This is not the same as a patient care report.
- **Accidents** involving injury or death to firefighters or civilians.
- **Missing property:** either loss of department property or an accusation, on the part of civilians, that firefighters are responsible for property loss during a fire.
- **Injuries or death** to a firefighter.
- **Unusual occurrences.**

The designation "unusual occurrences" is a catchall designed to include incidents that do not fall into the first four categories because they are uncommon or peculiar, but which, because of their very uncommonness or peculiarity, must be brought to the attention of the department. While it is no problem to identify the incidents in the first four categories that require an incident report, it is often difficult to determine which incidents require an unusual occurrence report. For the sake of definition, we can describe an unusual incident as something that is **serious, suspicious, sensational,** or **unique.** These are descriptive words, of course; they do not have the precise meaning that words like "death" or "missing property" have.

Each department, therefore, must have its own understanding of a particular incident as serious, suspicious, or the like, and whether the incident requires an unusual occurrence report.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD REPORT

Fire departments need to be assured that their members are generating professional reports. A well written report provides a complete picture of events that took place at a scene, and it verifies that a firefighter, emergency medical technician (EMT), or paramedic followed the department's protocols or best practices for that call. If protocols were not followed, the report explains the rationale for the deviations.

Many people in the fire service and EMS identify themselves as weak writers. That weakness does not absolve the writer from producing a good report. It simply means the writer needs to use an array of resources that will enable him or her to produce a respectable document. The primary resources include departmental protocols and policies, document templates or formats, dictionaries, and style guides.

Fire department officers are responsible for generating many types of reports for purposes such as the following: fire, EMS, After-Action Reviews, fire investigations, accident investigations, workers' compensation, or reports to a Fusion Center. Various agencies have their own reports to add to this list, and local, State, and Federal requirements will create the need for new ones.

All reports must pay attention to audience and purpose as demonstrated in earlier units. Additionally, the following list outlines general characteristics that should be applied to any of the listed types of reports.

Accurate and specific: Accuracy refers to entering correct details such as dates, times, names, addresses, phone numbers, meds, and so on. These details are potentially significant to any of the end users.

Inaccurate documents potentially cause many negative outcomes such as the following:

- Department records will be less reliable.
- When meds are misspelled, emergency room (ER) doctors will be deprived of important information that will potentially affect their decisions.
- When documents appear in court, inaccuracies will reflect poorly on the writer.

Well organized: When a document is well organized, the reader will be able to coherently follow the writer's train of thought or description of events. Research shows that a communication is more efficient and effective if it follows a plan rather than being a miscellaneous sequence of sentences or paragraphs. Ways to achieve this include the following: write in logical order, develop templates, and include useful headings.

Write in logical order: Every document should be guided by some form of logic that determines the order in which information is presented. The most common forms of logic are these: chronological, general to specific, more important to less important, problem/solution, spatial, and cause and effect.

Develop templates and use headings: When report writers refer to a template to steer them through regularly written documents, reports can be written more quickly and with more complete information. Additionally, readers can more easily find the information they want or need. Examples of sample formats:

Sample fire report template:

- dispatch information;
- en route and arrival information;
- onscene information;
- actions take;
- results of actions take; and
- disposition.

Sample accident investigation report:

- summary of incident under investigation;
- information learned from investigation;
- cause of accident;
- responsibility for accident; and
- recommendations.

Similar formats can be created for various types of documents, including those written frequently or infrequently.

Objective

An objective report will include only those details that were observed or performed at a scene or event. The report will contain no opinions or inferences that are not supported by evidence included within the same document.

Complete

A well-written report will contain complete information. It will allow the reader 5 years later to answer very specific questions with very specific answers. In a fire or EMS report, complete information is achieved by explaining the complete chain of events from a call and by proving, in writing, that you conformed to your department's protocols, procedures, or best practices expected at the call. If you did not follow protocol, you would explain in the report the reason for deviating. If your department does not have a comprehensive set of policies, procedures, or protocols, your report should explain in detail all actions taken and responses to action taken at all scenes. It will answer the standard report questions: **who**, **what**, **where**, **when**, **how**, and sometimes **why.**

If members of the fire company spoke to witnesses, include witness statements (and signatures) if possible. Photos can also help support the written documentation.

Many discussions revolve around the topic, "Which is riskier: too much information or too little?" A significant number of attorneys and firefighters who have appeared before the courts agree that too little information is by far the riskier option. Too much information might be problematic when it includes unsupported opinions and inferences, but generally, inclusion of all relevant details will better serve the writer, the department, and the legitimate end users.

Preferably, complete the report the same day as the incident. Strive to complete the report correctly the first time you write it. While supplemental reports are accepted within many departments, juries generally view them as coverups.

Readable

When a document is readable, people are more likely to choose to read it, to comprehend it, and to act upon it. Readable reports will allow readers to quickly find the information they are looking for.

Handwritten reports will achieve readability by using legible penmanship, avoiding obliterations, and using the same layout principles suggested for computer-generated reports. Computer-generated reports will achieve readability by using headings, appropriate amounts of white space, and avoiding abbreviations and jargon.

Use headings: Use headings that reflect the terms appearing in a report template. Headings might include terms such as dispatch information, en route information, onscene information, actions taken (this could include subtopics reflecting each team's actions), results of actions taken, disposition, etc. Put more space before the heading than after it.

Normal sentence capitalization: Use normal sentence case rather than all caps for all incident reports. (Normal sentence case = capitalize first letter of each sentence and use lower case for most other letters.) Documents written in all caps are harder to read and comprehend. Reserve the all caps option for titles and headings.

Avoid using jargon and abbreviations: Because the list of legitimate end users of reports includes many readers who have no fire service backgrounds, reports should contain no jargon or abbreviations that would not be clearly understood by its end users. Jargon refers to the special language or terminology of a profession or a group. Examples of jargon include: backdraft, flashover, blitz line, plug, quint, tender, etc.

Abbreviations should be used rarely. EMS reports, especially if handwritten in the field, are particularly tempting for using abbreviations. The recommendation for use of abbreviations is that departments compile a short list of accepted abbreviations and allow only those abbreviations to appear in reports. If the list is long, writers are less likely to use it.

Exercise:

Write a list of abbreviations you commonly use in various reports.

Write a list of terms that could be considered jargon: terms unique to your profession that are unlikely to be clearly understood by readers outside of your profession.

Write Concisely

William Strunk wrote these words of wisdom about the need to write concisely: "Vigorous writing is concise. A sentence should contain no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences, for the same reason that a drawing should have no unnecessary lines and a machine no unnecessary parts."

Writing concisely is a worthwhile goal; the challenge is to achieve conciseness by using words selectively and efficiently rather than by omitting any relevant details.

Techniques for writing concisely will be explored in greater detail in Unit 8: Editing.

Use Correct Grammar and Spelling

A well written report will contain no errors in grammar, mechanics, and spelling. An incident report will lose credibility if presented with incorrect grammar and misspelled words. If a report lands in court, it is in the interest of one attorney in the room to discredit the firefighter's testimony. One way attorneys typically attempt to do that is to link carelessness in the act of writing the document to carelessness in the performance of duty.

The Need for Correct Spelling

Spelling Test

1.	____________________	7.	____________________
2.	____________________	8.	____________________
3.	____________________	9.	____________________
4.	____________________	10.	____________________
5.	____________________	11.	____________________
6.	____________________	12.	____________________

Most members of the fire service and EMS can accurately describe their own spelling abilities. Some people have always struggled with spelling; others have always been decent spellers, while most people fall somewhere in between. However, wherever one falls within that spectrum, the need to create error-free, professional documents is the same.

It helps to know that most people repeatedly misspell the same words. A person who might describe himself or herself as a "lousy speller" probably only misspells several dozen words over and over. When writers realize the list of problem words is probably much smaller than they thought and begin to pay attention to identifying their own problem words, improvements can begin.

The following list suggests steps to help writers spell correctly, even if the documents are written in the middle of the night or on a very busy day.

- Develop the habit of using the dictionary regularly. Online dictionaries make this process convenient and easy.

- Make a list of your own problem words and keep it at your work desk. This is the simplest and most effective technique to help writers spell correctly without spending more time doing so.

- Pronounce words correctly. When words are pronounced incorrectly, the odds of spelling incorrectly are much higher.

- Use spellcheck, but be aware of its serious limitations.

STRUCTURE OF INCIDENT REPORT

Reports Need Structure

When departments provide no guidance regarding the type of information that belongs in the narrative portion of the report, they are more likely to receive disorganized and incomplete narratives.

Templates Provide Structure

Narratives that are developed using a template will more likely include complete, well organized information. An example of a fire report template is included below. Other types of incident reports will require different headings.

Sample template for a fire report: Include all relevant details related to the following headings, plus any others deemed important by the writer.

- dispatch information;
- en route and arrival information;
- onscene information;
- command information: (Who assumed command? Was it transferred? When? To whom?);
- crew assignments;
- actions taken: (Who, what, when/ where, why (if appropriate), and how?);
- results of actions taken;
- investigation; and
- disposition.

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Activity 5.1

Need for, Types of, and Audiences for Incident Reports

Purpose

To practice skills in deciding when an incident report is needed and what type of report to use.

Directions

Consider the following incidents in light of the practices of your department. Would your department require that a report be written about these incidents? Specify the kind of incident report that would have to be written. Each table group will write their responses on an easel pad.

1. A female pedestrian trips over a booster line hose that is lying in front of an engine company's quarters and falls to the sidewalk. The woman suffers a slight abrasion of the left knee. She reports the injury and identifies herself before leaving.

2. A small fire in a vacant lot is extinguished without incident.

   Variation: A 10-story apartment house burns to the ground and 100 families are displaced. No injuries occur to civilians or to firefighters.

3. Two men enter the firehouse and claim that two firefighters made improper remarks to their girlfriends when the young women were passing the firehouse a few moments before. After creating a disturbance, the two men are told to leave the firehouse, which they do.

   Variation: The men punch the two firefighters several times, causing contusions, and bloody noses. They are finally subdued by several other firefighters and flee the firehouse, threatening, however, to return to continue the altercation.

4. A crew responds to a medical emergency and finds the patient in a house with almost no furniture. The engine captain notices a box filled with multiple containers of hydrogen peroxide in the bathroom.

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Activity 5.2

Identify Components of Complete Information

Purpose

To identify components of complete information

Directions

1. Individually read the Report Narrative below.
2. Imagine that you wrote this report and that there was a fire in this building 12 hours after your crew responded to this alarm, which means this narrative will be heavily scrutinized.
3. Presumably, you would do more than this report indicates was done at this call. Make a list of the additional steps you would normally follow on this type of call based on procedures and/or best practices at your department.
4. You are only making a list of steps. You are not writing a new narrative. Share your list with a table group. Don't worry about finding consensus. Simply list steps from all members' lists.

Report Narrative

T32 responded to a fire alarm. No trouble found, unknown why alarm. Alarm silenced and placed in trouble, advised management to contact alarm company.

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Activity 5.3

Evaluating an Incident Report

Purpose

To demonstrate critiquing an incident report.

Directions

Part 1: Individual

The following pages contain two sample incident reports. One reports an injury to a firefighter and the other, an unusual occurrence. Read and evaluate Sample Incident Report 1 and Sample Unusual Occurrence Report 2 on the following pages by answering the questions below:

1. Does the report appear to be well organized?

   ____

   ____

   ____

2. Is the report objective? Does it include any subjective, opinionated conclusions that are not supported by details also included in the report?

   ____

   ____

   ____

3. Does the writer use informative headings to identify sections? Would you suggest adding or changing any?

   ____

   ____

   ____

4. Does the writer use correct grammar and spelling?

____

____

____

5. If you were the supervisor who received this report, would you approve it or ask for revisions? Explain your reasons.

____

____

____

Part 2: Small Groups

6. In small groups, discuss group members' responses to Questions 1 to 4.

7. Next consider if the end users assigned to your group would have unanswered questions in this report based on your interest and rightful need. If so, identify the additional information that should have been included.

Sample 1:

Table 1: The injured firefighter? Coworkers? ______________________________

Table 2: Safety committee? ______________________________

Table 3: Insurance company? ______________________________

Table 4: The training division? ______________________________

All tables: Other? ______________________________

Sample 2:

Table 1: The responding crew? ______________________________

Table 2: EMS division? ______________________________

Table 3: Training division? ______________________________

Table 4: Homeland Security: ______________________________

All tables: Other? ______________________________

Activity 5.3 (cont'd)

Sample Incident Report 1

May 7, 20__

To: Battalion Chief James McGloin

From: Lieutenant Martin Vitale, Ladder Company 4

Subject: Minor Smoke-Related Injury to Firefighter Frank Jordan Due to Defective SCBA

I. On May 6, while conducting a search during a fire at 1884 Fetley Avenue, Firefighter Frank Jordan was injured by breathing noxous fumes when his SCBA became defective. After an examination and some rest, Jordan returned to duty.

II. Ladder 4 responded to box 307 at 2250 hours on May 6, 2009, for a fire located at 1884 Fetley Avenue. The company was assigned and arrived second due. The fire was located in Apt. 3A on the third floor and Ladder 4 responded to the floors above the fire.

Firefighter 1st Grade Frank Jordan was conducting a search of Apt. 4A on the fourth floor, utilizing a 4.5 SCBA. He donned this SCBA in the public hallway and entered the apartment to vent and search in heavy smoke conditions. After he had checked several rooms, his SCBA became defective and smoke entered the facepiece, causing Firefighter Jordan to breathe some noxious fumes. This particular apartment was occupied and Firefighter Jordan completed his primary search.

After the fire was declared under control, Firefighter Jordan's SCBA was examined. The positive pressure device was not working and the metal fastening devise which holds the strap to the facepiece had become dislodged, breaking the seal and allowing smoke to enter the facepiece. Battalion Chief William Kennedy, 8th battalion, examined the SCBA at the scene of the fire.

Firefighter Jordan was granted 3 hours of R and R by Department Physician Edward Elliott, M.D., and then returned to duty. The SCBA was placed out of service until repairs could be made. An evaluation form with recommendations about the 4.5 SCBA has been forwarded.

Respectfully submitted,

Lieutenant Vitale Ladder 4 Group 22

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Activity 5.3 (cont'd)

Sample Unusual Occurrence Report 2

The following report was submitted by a company officer from Union City Fire Rescue to his OEM director after observing suspicious circumstances at a hazmat call. The report was written for the purpose of sending information to the state fusion center.

List the report's strengths and weaknesses.

January 5, 20__

To: OEM Director Mike Schwartz
From: Company Officer Lawrence Phelps
Subject: Report for Fusion Center
Time: Approximately 0800 hours 1/5/20__
Location: 2020 Poplar Street, Union City

Dispatch info: Engine 8 and Rescue 3 responded from Station 3 to a single family dwelling at 2020 Poplar Street to a reported choking victim.

En route info: Upon arrival, dispatch reported that victim's airway was now clear and that the caller did not need the fire department. Per UCFR protocols, crews proceeded to contact the victim and verify the airway was actually clear.

On scene info: A woman who identified herself as the choking victim's girlfriend met us in front of the house. She said her boyfriend had appeared to choke on a piece of meat. He had been unable to talk or cough. She said she had successfully performed the Heimlich maneuver on him, clearing his airway. She said he did not need to see us.

I persuaded her to allow us to verify that the choking victim was stable. Upon entering her house, her boyfriend stated, "I told you to tell them I don't need them anymore."

Observations and actions taken: Rescue 3 Paramedics O'Malley and Thompson introduced themselves to the choking victim, questioned him about the chain of events that took place with the choking, and performed a secondary assessment.

While the paramedics monitored the choking victim and the firefighter took his vitals, I noticed several small propane tanks in a corner of the kitchen plus boxes of Sudafed, coffee filters, and matches on the kitchen counter. Additionally, I saw several metal cans with unknown product and a few glass beakers. I detected a strong urine-like odor in the room. I also observed only one piece of furniture, a folding chair, in the living room. At this point the Incident Commander (IC) notified dispatch to call the police department.

Because these could potentially be components for a meth lab, I am submitting this report for the Fusion Center.

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Activity 5.4

In-Class Writing: Incident Report

Purpose

To demonstrate writing a formatted, well organized incident report that contains complete information.

Directions

1. Since some table members might not typically write this type of incident report and might need more information before writing, spend 10 minutes gathering missing details that reflect actions you would typically take on this type of call. Since this scenario would likely be managed differently by the departments represented at the table, your table could appoint one person to offer one version of the how this scenario played out.

2. Individually compose an incident report based on the fire scenario. You can write the report using the group's scenario or you can write it based on your own department's best practices. The report should be accurate, well organized, readable, and objective. It should be written concisely, contain complete information, and be grammatically correct.

3. Use the following headings, or substitute headings suggested by your group:

    a. Onscene information.

    b. Command information. (Who assumed command? Was it transferred? When? To whom?)

    c. Actions taken (as reported by or about each company).

    d. Results of actions taken.

    e. Investigation.

    f. Disposition: describe scene conditions when you left.

Note: You are permitted to fill in any necessary details in order to complete the report. However, because the various departments represented within the group might handle this scene differently, allow one table member to decide on missing details. Otherwise, your group will spend too much time looking for consensus, which is not the purpose of the exercise.

Reminder: You should retain the option of writing the report to comply with the way you would respond in your own department. The group activity is intended to help identify missing information for those who want or need to use the additional details.

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Activity 5.4 (cont'd)

Scenario

Dispatch Information:
Date: November 22, 20 _ _
Time: 0930 hours
Type: Structure fire--single-family dwelling

Units on Scene:
Engine 12: 2 firefighters--1 lieutenant--1 engineer
- On scene at 0936 hours
- Released at 1259 hours
- Used 500 ft of 5" hose--175 ft of 13/4" hose

Engine 15: 2 firefighters--1 captain--1 engineer
- On scene at 0937 hours
- Released at 1250 hours
- Used for additional personnel

Engine 11: 2 firefighters--1 lieutenant--1 engineer
- On scene at 0941 hours
- Released at 1240 hours
- Used for additional personnel

Ladder 6: 2 firefighters--1 lieutenant--1 driver operator
- On scene at 0938 hours
- Released at 1258 hours
- Used various truck tools

Ambulance 2: 1 paramedic captain--1 paramedic driver
- On scene 0937 hours
- Transported 1 injured civilian at 0945 hours

DEF Ambulance
- Mutual aid--1 paramedic captain--1 driver/EMT--On scene 0945 hours
- Transported 1 firefighter with smoke inhalation at 0950 hours

Battalion Chief's Vehicle--1 BC and 1 driver
- On scene: 0934 hours
- Left scene: 1305 hours

Additional Information:

- Upon arrival, first-in unit observed civilian stumbling out of the house. One civilian with minor injuries was transported.
- On arrival, smoke showing in front windows and door and roof of a single story, wood-frame structure.
- Weather: 29 degrees, wind 10 mph. Snow and ice on the ground.
- Plugged in space heater found in the bathroom.
- Exposure issue: Storage shed close to house.
- Rehab and RIT team established.
- Fire Marshal called to scene 1130 hrs.

UNIT 6: AFTER-ACTION REPORTS (OR POSTINCIDENT ANALYSIS)

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

1. *Identify incidents that require After-Action Reviews.*
2. *Identify process for conducting effective After-Action Reviews.*
3. *Identify information sources for After-Action Reviews.*
4. *Write an After-Action Report (AAR).*

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OVERVIEW OF AFTER-ACTION REPORT WRITING

The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) produced a special report on After-Action Reviews. The report stated, "The fire service is always seeking ways to improve its operations. At training classes and seminars, fire service members seek out insight into tactics and discuss new technologies for their applicability to other jurisdictions. Lessons also are learned from each response to an emergency incident. Unfortunately, many of those experiences and lessons are limited to those who were involved directly in responding. Unless feedback on incident response and command is shared with other personnel in the fire department, a valuable learning opportunity can be lost. The fire service has a duty to its members and the community it serves to evaluate problematic incidents, as well as those that go extremely well, and to communicate the findings (including the lessons learned), to all relevant emergency personnel. An effective way to accomplish this is through a post incident critique."

Harry Carter, a noted fire service expert, observed, "The post incident critique allows emergency responders to get a clear idea of the effects of their actions on the outcome of the operation. By comparing the expected outcome to the actual consequences, the fire department can make personal as well as organizational adjustments. And by assessing what worked, and what did not, improvements can be made."

Several terms are used when referring to postincident critiques. After-Action Reviews are one of these. This unit will use the term After-Action Report (AAR) to refer to the written document generated from the After-Action Review. An After-Action Review is a fact-finding exercise. It is a training tool to discuss and learn from incidents. The primary purpose of the After-Action Review is to evaluate the operations conducted at an emergency scene, compare those actions to the department's operational directives, determine training needs, and recommend or make any needed changes to the department's operations or procedures.

In order for critiques to be successful, the members of the department must trust that the system is fair and that it works. Departments must develop and enforce a written policy that establishes a clear and consistent approach for conducting After-Action Reviews. The policy should be supported by a clear purpose, with clear objectives, and with a clear explanation of the process.

Why Write After-Action Reports?

According to the USFA report, the number of fires in the United States to which the fire service responds continues to decline, even as the population increases. While that is certainly a positive trend, fewer fires lead to less actual firefighting experience for firefighters, and sometimes to a reduction in the number of uniformed personnel in the fire departments. At the same time, if and when the fire service experiences cycles during which significant numbers of senior personnel respond to buyouts and early retirement incentives, it loses people with valuable command and operations experience. The AAR is one way to bridge the experience gap. The department can use the lessons learned to improve plans and procedures. Personnel quickly learn that their actions or inactions at an incident might be reviewed as a means of correcting problems, or they learn that the training was effective and the firefighters correctly applied the skills they learned. The following are examples of the inherent value of critiques and what they can accomplish:

- Provide emergency service personnel with a clear indication of the impact their actions had on the general outcome of an incident.
- Used to analyze and compare how different applied strategies and tactics affect the outcome of incidents.
- Identify trends and patterns in errors during emergency operations so that immediate action can be taken to prevent them from reoccurring.
- Identify positive outcomes that reflect proper attention to procedures, good decision-making, leadership skills, and so forth.
- Serve as a catalyst for revising flawed tactical plans and SOPs.
- Used as a test bed where alternative tactics and evolutions are attempted, and used to study their effect on the outcome of the incident.
- Help identify additional or remedial training for personnel.
- Used as technical reference material and cataloged for retrieval and examination during any similar future incidents.
- Disseminate critical lessons learned during an incident to personnel throughout the fire department.
- Identify fire prevention and code enforcement deficiencies.
- Determine the need to install fire detection and suppression systems.
- Identify illegal and required modifications to structures; identify structural and fire protection system failures.
- Identify built environment and operational challenges that contribute to civilian and firefighter injuries and fatalities.

When Should After-Action Reviews be Conducted?

After-Action Reviews should be conducted and reported as soon after the incident as possible. Guidelines for when to perform an After-Action Review will vary depending on department size, location, and call types; however, directives might include guidelines such as the following:

The officer in charge will generally decide if an incident warrants a review. There should be a good reason for deciding to conduct a critique.

These situations shall require an After-Action Review:

- multiple-alarm incidents (third alarm or greater);
- fires with serious injuries or a fatality;
- technical rescues;
- hazardous materials (hazmat) incidents; and
- exceptional performance that serves as a potential model for future practices.

After-Action Reporting Versus Incident Reporting

What are the differences between an AAR and an incident report? As we noted in Unit 5: Incident Report Writing, the incident report is like a newspaper story in that it is a straightforward, factual account of an event. It is written as soon after the event as possible, and it serves as a first record of it. The AAR is more like a documentary on television or a behind-the-scenes feature article in a magazine or newspaper. Rather than report the incident, the AAR evaluates it. The AAR focuses on evaluating the strategy, the application of tactics, and compliance with applicable policies and procedures.

Another major difference between the AAR and the incident report is in the number and kinds of readers each is likely to reach. The audience for the investigative report is usually much broader than the audience for the incident report. Often, the incident report is seen only by the writer's immediate superior, although an incident of major impact, such as the gasoline explosion in the firehouse, would certainly be read by more people than just departmental superiors. The AAR, however, is almost certain to be read by more members of the fire department at all levels because of their interest in and need to know about the lessons learned. Additionally, other agencies involved at the scene such as electricity and gas companies, the police department, dispatch, hospitals, etc., may choose or be invited to participate in or read an AAR.

PROCESS FOR CONDUCTING AFTER-ACTION REVIEW

The After-Action Review or critique is the meeting that takes place prior to writing an AAR. Department policies will dictate who will be in charge of an incident critique. While the Incident Commander (IC) or Safety Officer is often the logical choice for assuming this position, they may not be the best choices if the incident didn't go well. Sometimes an uninvolved officer or even a trained facilitator might be a preferable choice. For high-stakes incidents, the critique officer should be in a position to promote change if a critique points to needed improvements. The critique officers play a critical role in the critique process; they should be carefully selected and properly trained.

Who Should Attend?

Shift-level options:

- The shift Battalion Chief (BC) or the IC meets with the Company Officers (CO) of the initial three to six companies to discuss strategic- and tactical-level operations.

- The shift BC or IC meets with the crews of the initial three to six companies to discuss strategic-, tactical-, and task-level operations.

- The entire shift is involved through a meeting or through the use of video teleconference. This option is used when the person in charge of the critique determines that the nature of the call or lessons learned are significant enough to warrant the involvement of the entire shift.

Multiagency option: When outside agencies play a role in the call, and when the lessons learned or outstanding performances apply to them, it would be appropriate to invite representatives from those agencies to participate in the AAR process.

What Topics Should Be Covered?

An effective AAR can be conducted in many ways. The following is offered as one model:

- Incident specifics: Call number, date, unit number(s), times, IC, benchmarks met, etc.

- Radio and telephone sound files, and any video that is available.

- All written incident reports (taken from department's Record Management System).

- Photographs, if available.

- Comparison of actions to operational directives.

- Lessons worth learning.

- Safety concerns and remedies.

The IC should ensure that concise and complete documentation is developed from the AAR. Any required or shift-level AAR should include a written report. Any noted safety concerns or policy violations should be sent in writing to the department Safety Officer. Any concerns relative to emergency operations at the given scene should be sent to the person or committee in charge of operational directives.

AFTER-ACTION REPORT INFORMATION SOURCES

A good AAR begins with good information gathering. One of the first things the critique officer should do is develop a checklist of information that should be collected and reviewed from multiple sources.

Sources of information, for most After-Action Reviews, fall mainly into these categories:

- incident reports;
- postincident questionnaires;
- department policies and procedures; and
- video recordings or photographs.

Some departments may wish to add a section on who would be responsible to address needed changes and when and how the proposed improvements will be implemented. The information gleaned from questionnaires can provide the critique officer a good understanding of what occurred during the incident, and the problems encountered during operations. A list of discussion points can then be developed to ensure that all relevant issues and concerns regarding the incident are addressed adequately during the critique. The questions also will help keep personnel engaged in the critique process and help keep the critique on track.

Once a determination has been made to review how the department responded to an incident, questionnaires should be sent within a couple of days of the event to all levels of the fire department that participated in the incident. It is important that a firm deadline be established for completing and returning the questionnaires. Officers need to monitor compliance. Responses are needed quickly so that there is ample opportunity for the critique officer to compile and analyze the results.

The response results will form the basis for both the all-hands critique meeting that comes shortly thereafter, and for the written AAR.

Incident reports will be a primary reference for the After-Action Review.

Postincident questionnaires are an important element of operational critiques. Questionnaires provide the opportunity to identify trends and repeated patterns. They should be prepared with questions that are consistent within each type or level of personnel. For example, suppression personnel would be asked the same questions; emergency medical services (EMS) members would answer the same set of questions, etc. The USFA incident management curriculum has developed comparative Postincident Analysis (PIA) questionnaires that can be used by COs, Command Officers, and/or the critique officer. Sample questionnaires can be found at the end of this unit.

Applicable operational directives, policies, and procedures should be reviewed to confirm that the responders adhered to the department's tactical plans. This step can confirm that the department's plans and procedures were followed or not, and it allows an ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of those plans.

Video recordings and/or photographs are increasingly being used at incidents. They are sources for factual evidence and can serve as valuable training resources.

Activity 6.1

Goals and Objectives

Purpose

To establish goals and objectives for the Unit 5 house fire.

Directions

1. Step 1: In one to two sentences, determine the overriding goal that would dictate how you would approach this scene.

   ____

   ____

   ____

   ____

   ____

2. Step 2: List three to five objectives you would set for how to achieve the goal stated in Step 1. Objectives should be measurable.

   ____

   ____

   ____

   ____

   ____

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Activity 6.2

Sources

Purpose

To identify information sources for an AAR on the Unit 5 housefire.

Directions

1. Based on practices within your own department, identify sources that could be tapped to gather additional details for an AAR about the house fire incident from this morning's incident report in Unit 5.

2. Make a list of relevant policies and procedures from your own department that might need to be reviewed for this type of call.

3. Share results with the large group.

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Activity 6.3

Gather Details for the After-Action Report

Purpose

To gather information needed for a blueprint of significant incident critiques. Upon completion, each student should have enough information to write a coherent and complete AAR.

Directions

1. Each table will be assigned an aspect of the call on which to gather additional details.

2. To complete the form assigned to your group, first review the incident report as the primary source. If the incident report left unanswered questions, group members can fill in the blanks.

3. Upon completion, each group will report its findings. Take notes on topics covered by tables other than your own, so those details can be used in your individual reports.

Fire Suppression--IC

- Provide the following details:

  - Date and time of the incident

  - Incident location

  - Weather conditions at the time of the incident

  - Type of occupancy (fixed property use)

  - Topography of the incident scene

- Describe conditions upon your arrival; specifically, did the conditions warrant offensive or defensive tactics?

- Provide overview of responsibilities and activities assigned to each section.

- Describe rescue problems encountered, if any, and actions taken to overcome them.

- Describe ventilation problems encountered, if any, and the steps taken to overcome them.

- Was the initial assignment adequate to handle the incident, and if not, what additional units were requested and why?
- Describe how many and where Rapid Intervention Teams (RITs) were deployed.
- Describe any exposure problems and the steps taken to protect them.
- Describe all safety-related concerns.
- If you would recommend a different outcome for this incident, explain what could have been done differently to change it?

Fire Suppression Units

- What conditions confronted personnel upon their arrival?
- Describe apparatus deployment.
- Provide sector assignments and assigned objectives.
- Describe the initial water supply: Was it adequate? If not, what was done to provide adequate supply?
- Describe the sizes of supply lines used and the locations where they were laid.
- Describe the position and size of attack line(s).
- Was the initial attack line adequate?
- Were any operational problems encountered during the incident?
- Describe the events/actions the crew initiated to obtain assigned objective.
- Describe all events/actions that hindered accomplishing assigned objectives.
- Were any safety problems encountered during the incident?
- Did the crew experience any equipment failures during operations?
- What could be done differently next time to improve operations?
- What changes are recommended to existing plans, procedures, or training as a result of the incident?

Fire Prevention--Code Enforcement

- Provide a legal description of the structure, including the number of floors, basements, type of construction, type of roof structure, mechanical systems, and number of and locations of exits.

- Describe the type of fire detection and suppression systems in the building, and whether they functioned properly.

- Were building fire suppression systems effective in containing and/or extinguishing the fire?

- Describe the effects the fire had on the structure.

- Did the structure suffer either a partial or a total collapse?

Fire Investigations

- Provide a description of the origin and cause of the fire, including type of ignition (i.e., accidental electrical, suspicious, flammable liquids, etc.).

- Describe the factors that influenced fire spread (i.e., were accelerants used, attack lines placed improperly, ventilation techniques employed improperly).

- Did the fire suppression actions compromise the building's structural stability?

- At any point during the fire did the structure pose hazards to firefighters? If so, where?

- Provide a value and loss assessment of the structure.

- Describe the type of fire detection and suppression systems the building was equipped with, and whether they functioned properly.

- Provide a list of all structural design features, protective systems, and other building components that were not provided, that would have reduced the spread of fire, fatalities, and injuries, or would have reduced property loss.

- Provide a historical overview of all building fire inspections, code violations, use of occupancy certificates that have been issued, and a description of all modifications made to the building.

- Ascertain whether the structure met current building and fire codes, and identify all outstanding code requirements not met.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

- Provide a summary of basic life support (BLS) and advanced life support (ALS) units dispatched on the initial response. Were additional EMS required? When were they requested?
- Were EMS supervisory personnel on the emergency scene?
- Were medivac helicopters used to transport patients?
- Were EMS communications adequate?
- Were multiple-medical control communication points established and with what medical facilities?
- Provide a summary on patient distribution by hospital, number of patients to each hospital, triage category at site, hospital priorities, etc.
- Provide a followup summary report on patient injuries, expected outcomes, etc.
- Describe what went well and what could have gone better.
- Was a critical incident stress debriefing (CISD) team used?

Activity 6.4

Write an After-Action Report

Purpose

Using the material gathered in the previous activities, to write individual AARs.

Directions

1. Write an AAR for your department about the house fire call introduced in Unit 5. Using the listed AAR headings, address the issues requested in the format below.
2. Base your report on the incident reports developed in class, the questionnaires completed earlier, and your own department's applicable policies and procedures.
3. Use the checklist for AARs on the following page to review your report.
4. The length is to be one to three pages.
5. Remember that an AAR is not a chronological narrative of the incident, but rather an organized evaluation of lessons learned at the incident. On the basis of the report, the department will evaluate operations conducted at the scene, compare those actions to your department's standard operating procedures (SOPs), determine training needs, and recommend or make any needed changes to the department's operations or procedures.

After-Action Report Headings

- Notable actions taken.
- Special considerations.
- Notable salvage and overhaul operations.
- Deviations from your department's procedures (if applicable).
- What practices or operations would you change? Why?
- What practices or operations worked well?
- Did you identify any training issues that require further attention?
- Point out any noted safety issues.
- Additional lessons learned?

Checklist for Writing After-Action Reports

1. Is the information accurate?

2. Is document organized clearly?

3. Do the conclusions concerning issues needing further attention, safety considerations, recommended changes, recommended practices to repeat, and/or lessons learned, proceed logically from the data?

4. Does the writer keep the focus on lessons learned and how to do better rather than on a "What-the-heck-were-they thinking" approach?

5. Does the documentation recommend appropriate training or other operational follow up?

6. Would this document contain enough information to enable or convince the department to justify changes or improvements?

APPENDIX

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SUGGESTED FORMAT FOR AFTER-ACTION REPORT FOR FIRE CALLS

AFTER-ACTION REPORT # ______

Call number # _____ Shift ________
Evaluator: ______________________
Date: __________________________

Investigator (when applicable): ___________

Battalion: _____________________________

Responding Companies' Times

Call received:	Engines on scene:	Fire out:
Dispatched:	Fire located:	Last unit leaves:

En route and onscene information:
Actions taken:
Special considerations:
Salvage and overhaul operations:
Safety problems or issues (if applicable):
Areas requiring further attention--explain:

Procedures	Dispatch/Response	Apparatus	Training
Equipment	General operations	Evaluations	Command
Protective clothing	Other		

Deviations from department procedures (if applicable)--explain:
Which practices or operations would you change? Why?
Which practices or operations worked well? Why?
Do any training issues need further attention?
Were any safety issues noted?
Additional lessons learned (if applicable):

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POSTINCIDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Company Officer Input

I. INCIDENT DATA

Alarm #: ______________________________ Date: ______________________________

Your Unit Number: ______________________ Dispatch Time: ______________________

Arrival Time: __________ Alarm: _______ 1st _______ 2nd _____ 3rd _____ Other ________

Your Incident Supervisor: ICS Function:

____

Emergency Type: ____

Describe the situation on arrival: ____

II. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

What were the goals for the incident? ____

What were the objectives? ____

How long did it take to achieve the goals? ____

In what sequence were the objectives achieved?

____

____

Personal Observation: ____

Briefing By: ____

III. TACTICS

Describe the tactical assignments given to you in chronological order: ________________________

____

IPS position that gave the assignments: ____

Coordination required with? ____

Coordination determined: At briefing ______________ During Operations ________________

How did you determine your supervisor? ____

In the Directive __________________________ Observation ____________________________

IV. PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

Type

_____________ Coordination
_____________ Ineffective Equipment Use
_____________ Inadequate Personnel
_____________ Safety
_____________ Other
_____________ Staff Support
_____________ Communications
_____________ Equipment Failure
_____________ Too Many Personnel

Descriptive account of problems checked: ____

____
____
____
____
____
____
____

Recommendations: ____

____
____
____
____
____
____
____

V. ICS ORGANIZATION

Draw the ICS organizational chart for your part of the operation. Start with your immediate supervisor and go up and down as far as you know.

POSTINCIDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Subcommander Report

I. INCIDENT DATA

Alarm #: ______________ Date: ________________ Name or Unit: ______________________

Division, Group, or Sector Assigned: ____

Dispatch Time: ______________ Time Received: ______________________________

Assignment: ____

Describe the situation on arrival: ____

____

____

II. STRATEGY

Describe the situation on arrival: ____

____

____

How did you determine what the plan was? ______________________________________

Personal Observations: ____

Briefing By: ____

III. ORDERS RECEIVED (STRATEGIC OR TACTICAL)

____

____

IV. ORDERS GIVEN

____

____

Engine ____

Engine ____

Engine ____

Engine ____

Truck ____

Truck ____

Other ____

Other ____

V. PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

Type

______________ Coordination	______________ Staff Support
______________ Ineffective Equipment Use	______________ Communications
______________ Inadequate Personnel	______________ Equipment Failure
______________ Safety	______________ Too Many Personnel
______________ Other	

Descriptive account of problems checked: ____

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Recommendations: ____

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VI. ICS ORGANIZATION

Draw the ICS organizational chart for your part of the operation. Start with your immediate supervisor and go up and down as far as you know.

POSTINCIDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Incident Commander Form

I. INCIDENT DATA

Alarm #: ____________ Date: ____________ Your Unit: ____________

Dispatch Time: ____________ Time Assumed IC: ____________

Time Relieved: ____________ Relieved by: ____________

Describe the situation on arrival: ____________

____

____

II. STRATEGY

Identify the action plan strategy: ____________

____

____

Time to achieve: ____________

Describe the tactical sequence: ____________

____

____

Changes made to the action plan: ____________

____

____

III. ORDERS GIVEN

1st Alarm

Engine ____________

Engine ____________

Engine ____________

Engine ____________

Truck ____________

Truck ____________

Other ____________

Other ____________

2nd Alarm

Engine ______________________________
Engine ______________________________
Engine ______________________________
Engine ______________________________
Truck ______________________________
Truck ______________________________
Other ______________________________
Other ______________________________

IV. PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

Type

__________ Coordination
__________ Ineffective Equipment Use
__________ Inadequate Personnel
__________ Safety
__________ Other
__________ Staff Support
__________ Communications
__________ Equipment Failure
__________ Too Many Personnel

Descriptive account of problems checked: ______________________________
____
____
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____

Recommendations: ______________________________
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____

V. ICS ORGANIZATION

Draw the ICS organizational chart for your part of the operation. Start with your immediate supervisor and go up and down as far as you know.

POSTINCIDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Facilitator Narrative Description

I. INCIDENT DATA

Alarm #: ____________ Time: ______________ Date: ________________

Address: ____

Units Responding: ____________________________________

Time of Control: _____________________________________

Describe the situation on arrival: _______________________

____

____

Strategy: ____

____

____

Time to Achieve: _____________________________________

Describe the tactical sequence: _________________________

____

____

II. ORGANIZATION

Describe organizational problems: ______________________

____

____

III. PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

____

____

____

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

____

____

____

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POSTINCIDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

EMS Incident Evaluation Form
(From Phoenix Fire Department)

Officer Reporting: ____________________ Battalion/Shift: __________________ Date: ___________________
Time: ______________________________
Treatment Level: EMT: __________________ Paramedic: _________________ Other: __________________
Units Responding: ____
Description of incident (include number and priority of victims): ____
____
____
Description extrication procedures performed: ____
____
____
Describe treatment: ____
____
____
Description transportations: ____
____
____
Description how triage was performed: ____
____
____
Describe anything that differed from operational manual; anything that created problems or caused the incident to work extremely well: ____
____
____

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UNIT 7: PROPOSALS

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

1. *Identify several types of fire service/emergency medical services (EMS) proposals, requests, and justifications.*

2. *Identify the principles of proposal writing.*

3. *Identify an effective format for writing a proposal.*

4. *Apply the proposal format by collaborating in preparing a sample proposal on an assigned fire service/EMS topic.*

5. *Apply the four techniques of proposal writing by collaboratively writing a short proposal.*

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PRINCIPLES OF PROPOSAL WRITING

Often the fire officer in a management position is called on to produce a written document to make a proposal. Such a document falls into the category of "persuasive writing," writing whose purpose is to **persuade** the reader that a certain policy or practice should be continued, adopted, or ended; that certain changes should be made; or that new equipment or staff should be acquired. Proposals commonly are known as "requests" and sometimes "justifications." All proposals share this one characteristic: the writer must convince a reader who does not necessarily agree with the writer's main idea. Therefore, writing proposals differs in important respects from writing reports, procedures, and most correspondence, because the purpose of these types of writing is to **inform** rather than to **persuade.**

We will use the general term "proposal" to refer to fire service/emergency medical services (EMS) writings in which a manager:

- identifies a need or problem; and
- requests aid or permission to implement a solution.

The audience for a proposal is usually a superior, a peer, or someone outside the fire department who is in a position to furnish funds, support, equipment, cooperation, etc.

Four techniques can help the fire service/EMS manager to improve his or her proposal and request writing:

1. Gathering information.

2. State the main point clearly.

3. Consider the audience's point of view.

4. Use a proposal format.

Gathering Information

As in any type of fire service/EMS writing assignment, the writer's first task is to acquire all the information he/she can within the available time. This step is particularly important in proposal writing because the writer is in the position of having to argue a point to an unconvinced reader who may seize any opportunity to disagree.

To successfully argue a point, writers should back up opinions and suggestions with credible research. Research is more convincing when it is current, when more than one resource supports the writer's claims and when it comes from a source the reader respects. Personal opinions that are not backed up by research carry minimal weight in persuading readers.

Brainstorming and/or outlining can be effective ways to begin the detail gathering process.

State the Main Point Clearly

In every type of writing so far we have seen that the **main idea** or main point is crucial. Without a clear statement of the main idea, writing appears aimless and can even irritate the reader. A proposal without supporting facts is a weak proposal; a group of facts or statements without any clear point not only is weak but is confusing and annoying. This problem is especially common among proposal writers because, in gathering information and preparing their arguments, they have become so convinced of the importance of their proposition that they may fail to realize that the reader doesn't know what the proposition is.

Consider the Audience's Point of View

In writing any proposal, the writer should consider in advance a number of questions about the audience.

- What does the audience currently know about this issue?
- What do you want them to know?
- If applicable, what have they asked for?
- What are their legitimate concerns?
- What objections might they raise?

What Do They Know?

Carefully evaluate what your intended audience actually knows about your topic. Sometimes proposal writers assume an audience knows more than they actually do.

What Do You Want Them to Know?

Ask yourself, "What do they **need** to know?" rather than "What **should** they know?" Be sure to give the readers all the relevant details. At the same time, give them **only** the relevant details. Including too much information will cause readers to lose interest.

What Have They Asked For?

If you are responding to a request for a proposal (RFP), you need to address every topic that is asked for. Use the same terminology used in the RFP, and present it in the same order in which it was listed.

What Are Their Legitimate Concerns?

Your audience will have a set of concerns and interests that most likely differ from yours. To increase the likelihood of receiving approval of your proposal, learn their concerns and respectfully address them.

What Objections Are Your Audience Likely to Raise?

Objections may include legitimate obstacles perceived by the reader to granting the writer's request, or they may include personal and emotional barriers to acceptance. It is not always possible to confront the personal objections in writing; usually the best approach is to adopt an objective posture and state the case for your proposal based on the facts.

The main objections can be incorporated as points in the outline and answered with appropriate concrete details. They should not be labeled "objections" but should be placed in logical positions throughout the document.

Use a Proposal Format

As we learned in Unit 2: Outlining, any effective piece of writing must be based on a logically arranged outline of points and details. A proposal is a particularly demanding kind of persuasive writing that will benefit from a special type of outline format for organizing the ideas and information you have gathered, and for incorporating the answers to the objections you have anticipated.

To maximize your persuasive power, keep these persuasive techniques in mind throughout the writing process:

- **link** the writer's needs to the reader's needs; and
- **link** the major points of the proposal together in a unified persuasive whole.

AUDIENCE

Proposal Format

1. Summary or abstract.

2. **Problem or need** section.

3. Goals and **objectives** of proposed idea.

4. Project description or proposed **solution** to the problem (purchase of equipment, reorganization, hiring new personnel, creating a new project, etc.), including a detailed description of how the **solution** will work. A **schedule of activities** might be included here.

5. **Benefits** to be obtained from the proposed solution.

6. **Budget** for spending the available funds and new funds.

7. Recommendations **and** conclusion.

This format enables you to organize your material in a way that conforms to the psychology of a skeptical reader. First, the reader doubts that any problem exists. So you explain the problem. Then he/she doubts that you have a workable solution. So you offer and explain your solution. You might show that you and your bureau or department already have some resources for your solution--such as staff, space, or community support--you will not appear empty-handed and you have strengthened your case.

- The description of benefits (Item 5) returns to the problem (Item 1) and states it in reverse; it gives you an opportunity to reinforce the desirability of your proposed solution and to stress the positive outcomes.

- An honest and thorough budget offers essential information for decisionmaking.

- Concluding with a concise list of recommendations reminds the reader of your actual request in its simplest form.

Anticipated objections can be put wherever they belong in the proposal-link format, depending on whether they relate to the problem, the benefits, or another category.

Summary or Abstract--One-Half to One Page Maximum

An abstract is a brief, comprehensive summary of the contents of your paper; it allows readers to survey the contents of an article quickly. It presents a general overview and description of your request. It can include a description of the problem or issue, a brief synopsis of your proposed solution, and the benefits. This is usually the last section written even though it appears first.

Problem or Need Section--One to Three Sentences

Start the section with one to three sentences explaining the problem or issue you addressed and a summary answer (one to three sentences) to the question, "Why is change needed?"

Goals and Objectives--Half Page or Less

State a goal and outline your objectives. Goals are usually conceptual and may be abstract. Objectives are the measurable outcomes of the program. They must be tangible, specific, concrete, measurable, and achievable in a specified time period. See writing class handout for examples.

Proposed Solution--200 to 500 Words

This section is sometimes called **Project Description or Methods.** This is the place to explain your ideas to your readers. Clearly summarize your solution in the beginning of this section.

This section should contain many citations. This means that any idea, conclusion, or stated opinion is supported by information learned from a literature review, and that the reader clearly knows from where you drew the conclusion. Additionally, the reader should be able to easily access your source. Answer questions such as these:

- Exactly what needs to be done?
- How will you put this idea into place?
- What will be the main benefits? (Answer by referring to benefits enjoyed by others who have implemented an idea similar to yours. Use of credible resources will strengthen this section.)
- How long will the project take? Spell out a realistic timeline.
- What people, facilities, and materials will be required? (This section requires a significant amount of verifiable research.)
- What resources do you currently have in place that can be used in this project? This could be equipment or people with applicable talents or expertise.

Make this section as readable as possible by putting the most important points at the beginning of the paragraphs and sections and by using headings and subheadings (of your choice) that engage interest and help readers stay on track.

Make sure that the activities you describe all support the goals and objectives you listed. Remember that an important element of persuasive writing is to consider the background, opinions, and positions of each reader. Be particularly tactful if any of the readers helped set up the system you are proposing to change. Anticipate reader objections and provide counterarguments that are supported by the literature you read. Give appropriate credit to your readers. If any part of your proposed idea came from one of them, make that point clear in the proposal. Readers are much more likely to support a proposal if they share ownership in it. If they recognize parts of the proposal as their idea, it can be easier to get their support for the change.

Benefits--100 to 250 Words

Explain the projected benefits of the solution in detail. Point out who in your community will benefit. Funders like to award money to agencies that plan for shared benefits.

Refer to verifiable, supporting details from research. Mention benefits gained by others in comparable situations. Make sure that the benefits you list correspond to the problem and solution you defined.

Budget

Include a projected budget that shows the actual cost of implementing your proposal. Itemize all costs connected to your proposal. Budget numbers should be researched, current, honest, and realistic. Your funders will likely recognize omissions if you've left any.

Recommendations and Conclusion--200 to 300 Words

Conclude your proposal with a short paragraph or two. Include a summary of persuasive facts, conclusions, recommendations, or a positive exit from the paper. Restate the most attractive benefits of your proposal. Remind readers your request is doable and will solve the stated problem.

Activity 7.1

Identify Proposals and Consider the Audience

Purpose

Identify what a proposal is and describe the audience.

Directions

Answer the following questions.

Questions

1. Which of the written documents that were mentioned in the in-class memos in Unit 1: Overview of Fire Service Writing, can be termed "proposals?" List some of them.

   ____

   ____

   ____

2. How would you describe the **audience** for some of these proposals? Analyze the interests of members of those audiences, identify to whom the audience must answer, and consider problems of persuading each audience.

   ____

   ____

   ____

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Activity 7.2

Gathering Information

Purpose

To determine the appropriate method of information gathering.

Directions

1. You will form new groups based on individual interest in the topics given. (Note: Students or instructors can propose other topics.)

2. Answer the questions below based on your group's topic.

3. Topics include

   a. A recommendation to a division chief to revise and improve the department's personnel accountability system.

   b. A proposal to the chief-level officers of three area agencies to create a regional officer development program.

   c. A proposal to purchase a new Quint.

   d. A proposal to develop a kitchen fire safety program for senior citizens.

   e. A proposal to develop a health, wellness, and fitness program.

Part 1

4. What kinds of research or information-gathering would your topic require?

   ____

   ____

   ____

Part 2

5. Identify five resources available to the fire service/EMS writer for gathering information needed to write a proposal.

   a. ____________________

   b. ____________________

   c. ____________________

   d. ____________________

   e. ____________________

Activity 7.3

Example of a Deficient Proposal

Purpose

To identify what is deficient in a proposal.

Directions

Read the sample memo and answer the questions.

Sample Memo

MEMO TO: Area Commander
FROM: Captain Sam Hill
SUBJECT: SCBAs

Engine Company 32 now has five Jones self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBAs), but only four firefighters.

My first point is that we are very unlikely either to get a fifth firefighter or use the fifth SCBA. In the second place, turning in unnecessary equipment could set a precedent for other engine companies. In the third place, we do not need the extra SCBA for spare parts, as we have an ample supply of cylinders and other parts. In the fourth place, if our company exchanges assignments with a five-person company, we can borrow the fifth SCBA from the other company. In the fifth place, we would reduce the chance of the extra SCBA being lost, stolen, or damaged. Finally, we wish to follow the department's current policy of increasing efficiency and reducing costs.

Engine Company 32 was given five SCBAs in October, 2006, because it was then a five-member unit. In June of 2008, however, it was reduced to its present size.

Questions

1. What is missing from this request?

   ____

   ____

2. How could the main point be phrased?

   ____

   ____

3. Where would the main point be placed? Mark this spot in the text.

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Activity 7.4

Proposal Audience

Purpose

To identify to whom your audience answers.

Directions

1. Working with the same topics used in Activity 7.2, identify the audience for each. Then discuss responses in your groups.

2. Next, identify to whom each audience member answers. It might be a board of directors, the voting public, the union, etc.

   a. A recommendation to a division chief to revise and improve the department's personnel account-ability system.

   ____

   ____

   b. A proposal to the chief-level officers of three area agencies to create a regional officer development program.

   ____

   ____

   c. A proposal to purchase a new Quint.

   ____

   ____

   d. A proposal to develop a kitchen fire safety program for senior citizens.

   ____

   ____

   e. A proposal to develop a health, wellness, and fitness program.

   ____

   ____

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Activity 7.5

Questions for Discussion

Purpose

To identify objections and concerns of the audience for your proposal.

Directions

Working with the topics from Activity 7.2, what kinds of objections are likely to be raised by the various audiences addresses in fire service/EMS proposal writing?

Audience	Objections

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Activity 7.6

Elements of Proposal Format

Purpose

To analyze a proposal to determine whether it fits the format.

Directions

Return to Unit 2: Outlining, and reread the example, Improving Department-Community Relations. This report is actually a proposal. Can you find the elements of the proposal-link format in it? How could they be expanded?

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Activity 7.7

Collaborative Writing of a Proposal

Purpose

To collaborate on writing a proposal.

Directions

1. You will work in the same small working groups. Each group will collaborate to refine, write out, and revise the proposal that it has been developing throughout this unit. The finished proposal should be two to three pages long.

2. This writing exercise simulates the circumstances that often occur on the job, where a proposal is not written entirely by one person but involves contributions and endorsements from a number of individuals who know about the subject or whose offices will be affected by the solution.

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Activity 7.7 (cont'd)

Sample Proposal

ABSTRACT

Due to the age of our current Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) units, cost of maintenance of these current units will continue to increase. By moving to SCBA units used by all departments in the county and cost sharing, all parties involved will decrease their maintenance cost. Interoperability with surrounding departments will result. This will increase efficiency on emergencies and minimize the amount of equipment carried by our units. We need to replace our current MSA SCBAs with Scott SCBAs to be consistent with the county.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The problem is what we have poor interoperability with SCBA when responding to multi-jurisdictional incidents.

GOAL

To increase the interoperability of our SCBAs at multi-jurisdictional incidents.

OBJECTIVE

To replace our current MSA SCBAs by the purchase of 50 Scott SCBA units by October 10, 2010.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Pricing:
We will get bids from the local Scott distributor. We will also coordinate with area departments to determine the feasibility of a group purchase. These prices will be compared to the GSA price. The best price option will be chosen by January 31, 2010.

It is estimated the cost of each unit will be $3500.00.

Purchase:
We will purchase 16 units by March 31, 2010. These units will be used for training so that personnel will become familiar with them when they are put into operation. The remaining 34 SCBAs will be purchased by August 1, 2010. New SCBAs will be put into service by October 1, 2010.

Training:
All companies will rotate through training on the basic operation of these units by April 30, 2010. All companies will rotate through survival training by May 31, 2010. After training is complete, an SCBA will be delivered to each station for continued training and familiarization with these SCBAs units.

There will be no additional cost for training. Training will be conducted on shift by the training division.

BENEFITS

Currently all of the departments in the county use Scott SCBAs. Because we use MSAs, we need to maintain our own service technicians. There is a cost associated with the maintenance, training, and certification of these units. There is also a need to maintain a supply of parts for these MSA units. By moving to Scotts SCBAs, we can participate in a county wide maintenance program in which we do not need to have our own technicians and cache of parts.

We currently have mutual aid agreements with all surrounding departments. Standardizing SCBAs will allow for standardization of training with RIT and firefighter survival.

By having the same SCBAs as surrounding departments, we will be able to use their air bottles on incidents, preventing the need for us to maintain and transport a large supply of bottles to emergency scenes. We will be able to standardize bottle fill stations.

Future purchases can be through a county wide bid, reducing continued cost of maintenance and upgrades.

BUDGET

50 SCBA	X	$3500.00	=	$175,000.00

RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

It is recommended that the department replace its MSA SCBAs with Scott SCBAs.

Skill Drill 7.1

Transitional Phrases

Purpose

To give you practice in using transitional phrases.

Directions

1. The following transitional phrases skill drill tests your ability to use transitional phrases, which are expressions that link sentences and paragraphs together by showing the logical relationship of the ideas. Writing may be made more persuasive by using many transitional phrases, provided they are used meaningfully and in the right places.

2. Complete the drill and check your answers.

Here are samples of transitional phrases, expressions which can be used to link your thoughts. They normally are inserted at the beginning of a sentence or a paragraph, although this position can be varied to improve style.

To express addition: besides, furthermore, moreover, also, likewise, too, again, in addition, next, first, in the first place, finally, also.

To express similarity: likewise, similarly.

To express opposition: but, yet, however, still, nevertheless, otherwise, notwithstanding, on the other hand, in spite of this.

To express purpose: for this purpose, with this aim.

To express time or place: meanwhile, immediately, soon, then, afterward, beyond, adjacent to, opposite.

To express result: therefore, thus, consequently, as a result, hence, accordingly.

To express other links: for example, for instance, to sum up, that is, in any case, on the whole, in short.

NOTE: Inserting transitional phrases is often done during the rewriting phase. If you find you have difficulty inserting appropriate transitions, this is a sure sign that your organization is weak and you must outline and reorganize your points.

Insert an appropriate transitional phrase in the second sentence of each item below.

1. In response to your letter of May 3, 2011, about the "hazardous fire violations at 143 Linden Street," please be advised that the fire department sent personnel over to inspect the premises on May 7th. . . . . the owner refused them access either to the dwelling or to the garage.

2. Based on the general "eyesore" condition of the area, the fire department notified the Health Department concerning a possible Health Code violation. . . . . the Area Commander has been directed to conduct a monthly surveillance inspection of the area until November 1992.

3. We would like to express our appreciation for your interest and concern in the matter of fire safety. . . . . we are enclosing a copy of our latest booklet, "Be on the Watch for Fire in Your Neighborhood."

4. The booklet was compiled by a civilian task force. . . . . the content was reviewed for errors and inaccuracies by fire department personnel.

5. If there is anything more we can do, please do not hesitate to let us know. . . . . continue to be on the lookout for fire hazards.

Answers on next page.

Skill Drill 7.1 (cont'd)

Answers

1. However, in spite of this, nevertheless, but, etc.
2. In addition, moreover, furthermore, also, as a result of, consequently, etc.
3. Therefore, for this reason, accordingly, etc.
4. Then, afterwards, in addition, however, etc.
5. Also, meanwhile, in the meantime, etc.

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UNIT 8: EDITING

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

1. *Demonstrate use of plain English.*
2. *Demonstrate ability to write concisely.*
3. *Demonstrate ability to edit a memo.*
4. *Demonstrate ability to edit your own work.*

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WRITING IN PLAIN ENGLISH

Early in World War II, a memo crossed the desk of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The memo, which discussed the methods for blacking out federal buildings during air raid drills, stated:

"Such preparations shall be made as will completely obscure all federal buildings occupied by federal government employees during an air raid drill for any period of time from visibility by reason of internal or external illumination. Such obscuration may be obtained either by blackout construction or by terminating illumination.

"This will, of course, require that in building areas in which production must continue during a blackout, construction be provided, that internal illumination may continue. Other areas, whether or not occupied by personnel, may be obscured by terminating the illumination."

President Roosevelt spent a few minutes studying the memo, crossed it out, and wrote the following:

"In buildings where work will have to keep going, put something across the windows. In buildings where work can be stopped for a while, turn out the lights."

These two versions of the same memo are perfect examples of the difference between bureaucratic, jargon-ridden language and plain English.

Anyone who has had to read income tax forms, insurance policies, or legal contracts knows how difficult they can be to understand. These documents traditionally have been written in highly technical, legal language. The same is true for many fire service/emergency medical services (EMS) documents, which often are written in language that is quite difficult to understand. In large departments especially, some operations orders or procedural memos are written so that the average firefighter can make no sense of them. Such documents can be considered to be failures. They were written to communicate information, yet they cannot be understood.

There has been growing resistance to this type of legalese and bureaucratic language. In 1978, President Jimmy Carter issued an executive order calling for clear, simple English in all government regulations. The president's order specified that every government regulation "be understandable to those who must comply with it." Other Federal laws have been even more specific in requiring plain English. One Federal truth-in-lending statute states that disclosures about loans "shall be made clearly, conspicuously, (and) in meaningful sequence." The Federal Pension Reform Act requires that statements about benefits "shall be written in a manner calculated to be understood by the average plan recipient." Many States have introduced legislation to require plain English. New York's Sullivan Act, for example, mandates that all contracts involving transactions of up to $50,000 be written "in nontechnical language and in a clear and coherent manner using words with common, everyday meanings."

Plain English in the Fire/Emergency Medical Services

The objection can be made that certain documents--fire codes, for example--should be written in legal language. However true this may be, we also must remember one of the constantly repeated themes of this course: that every document must be written with a specific **audience** in mind. If the language of the document is not geared to the audience for whom the document is written, then the document will fail to communicate.

A perfect example of this is the two versions of a notice, written for college and university students, which appeared in a fire department's disaster preparedness notice:

Information Appearing on Disaster Preparedness Notice

> "In order to utilize the maximum effectiveness of citizen participation in this community, individuals must demonstrate a responsibility and willingness to successfully mitigate the negative ramifications that would occur in the event of a disaster, by achieving a personal emergency preparedness level which exceeds their daily operational norms. Consequently, it is the request of this professional emergency services agency that each member of society shall immediately commit to undertaking the designing of, development of, and maintenance of, a unit of goods which has the capability to sustain functional survival for a minimum of 72 hours. The aforementioned unit shall be stored in a location which facilitates easy access and deployment."

What follows is the same statement, written in plain English and printed so that it can be read more easily:

> "XYZ Fire and Rescue recommends that you keep a 72-hour survival kit on hand in case of an emergency."

Qualities of Documents Written in Plain English

In this unit, you will be discussing plain English. In preparing for that discussion, you might keep in mind some of the principles of writing in plain English. Briefly, a document is in plain English if it is

- **concise;**
- **active;**
- **positive;**
- **personal;**
- written for an **audience;** and
- written for **eye appeal.**

Concise: Writers should avoid needless words. Many writers use wordy expressions, thinking these add dignity or seriousness to the document. In fact, the opposite is true: they only make their documents more difficult to understand. The words in the following list of concise expressions can all be substituted for the phrases in the list of wordy expressions and still retain the meaning.

Wordy		**Concise**
due to the fact that	=	since, because
owing to the fact that	=	since, because
despite the fact that	=	despite, although
in spite of the fact that	=	despite, although
call someone's attention to	=	remind someone
whether or not	=	whether
he is a man who	=	he
in a speedy manner	=	speedily
this is an incident that	=	this incident

Besides avoiding needlessly wordy expressions, a writer also should avoid needlessly wordy sentences. Here are two sentences from a sample memo written by a captain:

Original: "It has come to my attention on several occasions in the recent past that there have been problems in getting the equipment back into service after a fire-related incident."

Revised: "I have been noticing problems in getting the equipment back into service after a fire."

Both sentences give the same information, but the first one requires 30 words while the second one takes only 15. The writer of the original sentence was trying to make the memo sound dignified, but instead made it sound pretentious.

Besides getting rid of unnecessary words, a writer also can combine related sentences. Here are the original and revised sentences from the same captain's memo:

Original: "It is very important that every effort should be made in placing all equipment back into service as soon as it is possible to do so. The primary responsibility of the department is to be ready to respond to any number of emergency situations."

Revised: "Because so many emergencies require our response, we must place all equipment back in service as quickly as possible."

The original 2 sentences totaled 44 words. Besides being excessively wordy, the sentences were not connected. The writer did not point out that one fact (the need to return quickly to service) was connected with another fact (the department must respond to many emergencies). The revised sentence makes clear the connection between the facts: ("**Because** so many emergencies..."). Furthermore, it expresses the same ideas as the original sentences, but in only 19 words.

Active: Besides striving for conciseness, the writer of plain English chooses the active voice over passive voice. Use of the active voice leads to livelier, more concise and interesting documents.

In active sentences, the subject **is the doer of** the verb.

Example: The firefighter extinguished the fire.
(subject) (verb)

In passive sentences, the subject does **not** do the verb.

Passive voice (victim's voice).

The opposite of the active voice is the passive voice.

Example: The fire was extinguished by the firefighters.
(subject) (verb)

In the passive voice, the subject is not the doer of the verb. It focuses on the receiver of the action.

The baby **was rescued.**

Passive: An investigation of the scene was conducted by Captain Jones.

Active: Captain Jones investigated the scene.

Disadvantages of the passive:

- It is wordy and roundabout.
- It muddles the meaning and hides responsibility.

The passive is appropriate when:

- "Doer" is unknown or unimportant.
  The station was built in 1939.
  Your manual was shipped yesterday.
- It is more important to draw our attention to the person or thing acted upon:
  The doctor was killed during the early morning hours.

- **Doer** is best left unsaid for tactful purposes.
  Your invoice was written for the wrong amount.

- You want to soften criticism.
  Instead of: You made a mistake.
  Use: A mistake was made.

However, the active voice is generally the preferred option for structuring a sentence.

Positive: A third characteristic of plain English writing is that it prefers the positive instead of the negative statement. The following pairs of sentences say the same thing, one in negative and the other in positive form:

Negative: The captain was not very often on time for inspection.

Positive: The captain was usually late for inspection.

Negative: The trainee did not think that studying the fire code was a useful way to spend his/her time.

Positive: The trainee thought that studying the fire code was a waste of his/her time.

As a rule, it is better (and it saves words!) to express ideas in positive, rather than negative form. Thus, a writer should write "dishonest" instead of "not honest," "unimportant" instead of "not important," and "forgot" instead of "did not pay attention to."

Personal: Another characteristic of plain English is that it prefers **personal** references to impersonal references. Since documents are written by people for people, they can communicate better when they name the people involved. Take the example of the disaster preparedness application cited at the beginning of this section. The original version of the regulation (p. 8-4), was impersonal. It would be difficult in reading this to understand that this was a set of directions for a reader to follow. The revised version (p. 8-4), however, makes it very clear that the regulation is directed toward specific people. The revised regulation mentions the word "you" four times.

The same kind of impersonality occurs in the original version of the captain's memo cited on p. 8-5. As originally written, the document does not sound as if it were written by one person (the captain) to a group of other people (the firefighters). The revised version emphasizes this, however, by referring to emergencies that "require **our** response" and by stating that "**we**" must place the equipment back in to service.

Written for an audience: The importance of keeping the audience in mind has been a theme of this course. Plain English writing is concerned with an **audience,** in that the writer must be careful to provide only the information that the particular audience requires. The first version of the disaster preparedness application form (p. 8-4), was full of legal and governmental citations: "Subsection (e) (3) of the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. 552a (e) (3)...granted by statute...executive order of the President...published in the *Federal Register*." This information is, however, inappropriate. The people who read that form had no interest in the technical title of a particular law; including the citation merely created confusion.

Also keep in mind that unless you are writing for an audience of lawyers, it is inappropriate to sprinkle your writing with legal language. The following terms would, therefore, be out of place in most fire writing: thereat, thereto, therein, herewith, hereunder, hereat, hereby, hereto, etc.

Written for eye appeal: A final characteristic of plain English is that it should be written to **appeal to the eye.** Even a first-rate example of well-written plain English would not communicate well if the document were laid out with the information run together. Again, an example of this is the two versions of the regulation from the disaster preparedness application (SM p. 8-4). In the first version, the entire regulation is printed together, with no divisions between the parts. Furthermore, the type is very small and difficult to read. In the revised version, the type is larger and more legible and each part of the regulation is laid out on a separate line.

Readability factors:

- use easy-to-read font sizes;
- use paragraphs to chunk your information;
- include appropriate amounts of white space in margins and between paragraphs and sections;
- use headings to guide readers through sections; and
- do not use ALL CAPS except for titles and other special situations.

Remember: the proper design of the document is an important part of its ability to communicate.

EDITING FIRE/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DOCUMENTS

All writers must play three roles in the process of translating a "problem" (such as a fire, an investigation, a meritorious act, etc.) into a document (such as an incident or investigative report, etc., commendation request, etc.). **First,** the writer must learn to **outline** and to organize the information for the document. We discussed the technique of organization on the first day of the course and have been dealing with organization in each of the subsequent units. **Second,** the writer must learn to **write** the document in the appropriate format and with attention to the audience and purpose of the document. Various fire service/EMS documents, from correspondence with the public to commendation reports, have been the subjects of units during the past few days. The **third** and final step of the writing process is to **edit** the document.

The editing step is essential in producing a document that represents the writer and the department in a professional manner. If the writer follows all other recommended steps such as outlining, considering the audience, organizing coherently, and including useful content, but fails to edit and revise, an otherwise well-written document will become less effective.

The writer's challenge is to learn and implement useful editing techniques. Today, you will review the entire editing process so that you can improve your editing skills. In this unit you will practice editing some sample documents and some of your own that you created earlier in the week.

EDITING GUIDELINES

Did the writer:

- Consider the audience?
- Include complete information?
- Project a positive image?
- Achieve the purpose?
- Write concisely?
- Use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation?

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Activity 8.1

Active Versus Passive

Purpose

Identify active and passive voice.

Directions

Indicate if the following sentences are written in active or passive voice. The verbs are italicized in the examples.

Examples:

- They *went* home. <u>Active</u>
- He *has climbed* that mountain many times. <u>Active</u>
- That path *has been traveled* many times before. <u>Passive</u>

1. The engine *was repaired*. ______________________________
2. Rich Baker *repaired* the engine. ______________________________
3. Flies *carry* disease. ______________________________
4. Bonnie *drove* the getaway car. ______________________________
5. The getaway car *was driven* by Bonnie. ______________________________
6. The meeting minutes *will be distributed* within 2 days. ______________________________
7. Captain Allen *will distribute* the minutes within 2 days. ______________________________
8. The proposal *was evaluated* by the equipment committee. ______________________________

Change these passive constructions to active. Add a doer if needed.

(Passive) The results of the survey *will be distributed* to all participating firefighters.

(Active) Captain Bennett *will distribute* the results of the survey to all participating firefighters.

9. Your letter was received… ______________________________
10. The decision was made… ______________________________
11. The results will be delivered… ______________________________

Reminder: How to change passive to active:

- Find the verb.
- Next, ask who is doing that action.
- Rewrite the sentence and make the doer of that action the subject.
- Now state who did what or who will do what, etc.
- Add a doer if needed.

Activity 8.2

Changing From Passive to Active Voice

Purpose

To restate sentences in active voice.

Directions

These sentences contain the passive voice. Restate them in the active voice. Make up a **doer** if necessary.

1. Changes in next year's vacation schedule will be determined by the calendar committee at the next board meeting.

2. Weekly computer training will be conducted in each station.

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Activity 8.3

Writing in Plain English

Purpose

To demonstrate editing using plain English.

Directions

In the following sentences, change **passive** verbs to **active** verbs:

1. The pressure valve was left open by the trainee.

2. The rig was driven by the engineer.

3. The child was rescued by Firefighter James Smith.

4. The inspection will be completed by Captain Jones.

5. The report would have been written by the Commissioner.

Eliminate the **unnecessary words** in the following sentences:

6. The engineer replaced the valve because of the fact that it was broken.

7. Owing to the fact that the company is understaffed, the captain cannot grant you leave.

8. Firefighter Carson was depressed because of the fact that he had not succeeded in the promotion examination.

Put the following sentences in **positive** form:

9. Captain Smith was not very often on time for inspection.

10. When she was interviewed, Mrs. Jergins said that before the fire she had not paid any attention to the young men.

11. He has a reputation for not being honest.

12. The chief did not remember the name of Captain Smith.

13. The mayor did not have much confidence in the previous fire commissioner.

14. Despite the fact that his face mask had malfunctioned, Firefighter Smith continued to search the burning apartment.

15. Captain Jane Smith is a woman who loves her work.

16. There is no doubt but that the firefighters will resist this new policy.

17. The question as to whether or not the fire could have been avoided has not been answered.

18. The chief was unaware of the fact that the company was back in service.

19. The lieutenant called Mrs. Battaphobe's attention to the fact that her request did not involve a life-threatening situation.

20. When the wall of the burning building collapsed, the firefighters fled in a hasty manner.

Activity 8.4 (Optional)

Editing a Procedural Memo

Purpose

To edit a memo.

Directions

1. On the next page is a sample memo based on the assignment in Unit 3: Procedural Writing.

2. Review the memo, correcting it **on this page.** As part of your review of the memo, ask yourself the following questions:

   a. Did the writer use language that takes into account the **audience** of the letter?

   b. Did the writer include **complete** information?

   c. Does the letter project a **positive image** of the fire department?

   d. Does the letter achieve its **purpose?**

   e. Are there opportunities to be more **concise?**

   f. Are there any mistakes in **grammar, spelling,** or **punctuation?**

   g. Review procedural memo guidelines by looking at Unit 3.

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Activity 8.4 (cont'd)

Sample Memo

Date 9-8-20___

TO: All Personal
FROM: Asst. Chief Fairbane
SUBJECT: Procedures for getting back in service after a fire

It has been brought to my attention that some of the personal have not been following Department procedures for getting back in service after a fire. The following shall be completed prier to returning to service.

I. Hose
   (a) shall be inspected for damage prier to loading
   (b) couplings in good order. No cross threds.
   (c) no leaks or blisters on hose
   (d) all nozzles checked. Rocks cleaned from nozzles ect & in place.

II. Water tank
   (a) keep full of water. Check filler pipe and gauge.

III. Breathing apparatu's
   (a) in place on apparatus
   (b) harness and masks checked for brakes
   (c) B/A tank no less than 1900 psi on gauge

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Activity 8.5

Editing Your Own Work

Purpose

To edit a letter.

Directions

The Assignment:

1. Review the letter to Mrs. Battaphobe from Unit 4, and correct or improve it. As part of your review of the letter, ask yourself the following questions:

   a. Is the letter format readable?

   b. Did you use language that takes into account the **audience** of the letter?

   c. Did you include **complete** information?

   d. Does the letter project a **positive image** of the fire department?

   e. Does the letter achieve its **purpose?**

   f. Are there opportunities to write more **concisely?**

   g. Did you change any passive voice sentences to active voice?

   h. Are there any mistakes in **grammar, spelling,** or **punctuation?**

2. If you feel that your own letter needs minimal editing, you may edit the sample letter to Mrs. Battaphobe in your SM.

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Sample letter to Mrs. Battaphobe (for students whose own letters do not need to be reworked).

TO: Mrs. I. Emma Battaphobe
FROM: Capt. Frank Smith, Fargo FD.
DATE: 8 Sept 20__
SUBJECT: Bat incident at Residence of Mrs. Battaphobe

Dear Mrs. Battaphobe I am truly sorry and must aplogize for the failure of my men in not responding immediately to your residence when requested on Sept. 5, 20__. I have investigated the incident thoroughly and feel I must explain to you fully why it occured. At the time of the incident I was away from the station in the utility truck checking an "Out of Service" fire hydrant which had been reported the previous day. I had left Engineer Thompson in charge at the station and I was in radio contact at all times. Immediately after receiving your call Mr. Thompson and the engine company were dispatched to a fully involved structural fire on which we were all deployed for a period of three hours. After returning to quarters and placing the equipment and apparatus back into service approximately two more hours had passed before Engineer Thompson remembered the note in his pocket concerning your bat report. I immediately sent one fireman in the utility vehicle to check it out and you know the rest from that point. The two staff cars you reported seeing at the Burger King were performing a commercial building inspection at that location and I assure you that their presence there was in the line of duty. Mrs. Battaphobe I am ultimately responsible for the actions of those men in my company and fully accept the blame for your inconveneince. It was one of those nearly unavoidable incidents for which I am truly sorry.

Thank you very much for your concern and in the future we will do our best to insure that something like this does not occure again.

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UNIT 9: CONFERENCES

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

1. *Identify and summarize lessons learned from Week One units.*

2. *Submit Week One Written Exam.*

3. *Identify their overall perception of their written communication skills by reviewing their writing performance in the course with the instructor.*

4. *Identify their specific writing difficulties through personal discussion with the instructor and by means of the personal writing profile completed by them and by the instructor.*

5. *Identify appropriate procedures and resources through which they can continue to improve their writing skills.*

6. *Have an opportunity to consult with the instructor on any remaining questions or issues related to their writing.*

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GROUP SUMMARIES

You've received a significant amount of content during the week. Your groups will participate in summarizing key lessons from each unit.

INDIVIDUAL SUMMARIES

Week One units contain a great deal of new information. However, adult learners tend to hang onto only a few key lessons. On the lines below, list three lessons from the week that are "yours." Identify three lessons that, if you were to retain and put into practice, would allow you to strengthen your currently vulnerable areas or allow you to simply make notable improvements in your own writing skills.

1. ____

____

2. ____

____

3. ____

____

Week One Written Exam

Rewriting Student's Own Work

Purpose

To apply the lessons learned during the entire week to one of your original documents.

Directions

1. Choose from one of these two exercises: the Memo to the Instructor from Day 1 or the Cluster Narrative from Unit 2: Outlining.

2. Rewrite the document, applying lessons learned and feedback from both instructors.

3. Bring this exercise to your conference.

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INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES

In this unit you will confer with the instructor. Although these conferences must, of necessity, be brief in order to accommodate the total enrollment, they are nonetheless a most important and valuable feature of the course.

During the conference all the elements and facets of your writing, i.e., your skills, problems, performance in the assignments and exercises, self-assessment, and instructor assessment, will be drawn together into a single, meaningful picture that will tell you what your current level of writing is and how you can move up to the next level. (Since even top-level professional writers continue all their lives to seek yet higher planes of performance, you should not feel discouraged upon learning that you, like everyone else, might benefit from additional writing practice.)

What the Instructor Will Do

Your instructor will come to your conference prepared to comment on all of your work in the course. Included in this commentary will be

1. A summary statement of your total performance in the course.

2. A review of your current writing problems, grammatical weaknesses, areas to focus on, etc.

3. A detailed discussion of your written exam/assignment that will be completed during this unit.

4. Recommended procedures to follow and resources to draw on (e.g., books, courses) so that you may continue to improve your writing skills when you are back on the job.

In addition to giving you this written evaluation, the instructor will discuss your work with you and will complete his/her part of your Personal Writing Profile.

What You Should Do

In preparation for your conference, you should

1. Review all the corrections and comments on the writing assignments that have already been returned to you.

2. Go over all the skill drills and exercises you have completed so far.

3. Prepare questions for the instructor concerning any aspect of your work, or of writing in general, that you wish to know more about.

Your instructor will give you an appointment time for your conference. Be sure to complete your portion of your Personal Writing Profile (for the second time) before coming to the conference. Please bring the profile and any written materials that you have generated so far.

Words of encouragement from three famous writers follow:

It took me fifteen years to discover I had no talent for writing, but I couldn't give it up because by that time I was too famous.

- *Robert Benchley*

Nothing you write, if you hope to be any good, will ever come out as you first hoped.

- *Lillian Hellman*

I love being a writer. What I can't stand is the paperwork.

- *Peter DeVries*

UNIT 10:
OVERVIEW OF FIRE SERVICE SPEECH

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

1. *Identify the types and purposes of speech communication in the fire service/emergency medical services (EMS).*

2. *Explain the major concepts of communication.*

3. *Explain the verbal bases of oral communication.*

4. *Explain the nonverbal bases of oral communication.*

5. *Describe verbal and nonverbal barriers to communication.*

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INTRODUCTION

Your success as a fire service/emergency medical services (EMS) officer depends on your effectiveness in communicating with people, both face-to-face and in groups. Until now, your communications skills probably have depended on your intuition, philosophy, or personal style. Well, the time for trial and error is over! The remainder of the course is concerned with the **science** and **art** of oral communication. Information and theory from several fields within the social sciences will be presented. You will apply this knowledge to a variety of simulated oral communication tasks typical of the fire service/EMS.

The study of speech communications will be a different kind of challenge for many of you. Unlike other areas of study in fire science, it will necessitate examining your feelings, attitudes, habits, and verbal and nonverbal language. As a result, you may confront some undesirable attitudes or behaviors in yourself or others. You may also come face-to-face with lifelong fears of public speaking. For some, such confrontation may prove more stressful than the emergency situations you face daily. However, personal growth usually begins when you face your problems and fears. Interestingly, the "high" you can experience from this kind of growth may be as exhilarating as the feeling you have after a daring rescue. But more importantly, the sensitivity and techniques you learn in this course can have far-reaching effects on your personal and professional life.

One word of advice: this unit, which concerns speech communications, is not an athletic competition in which one person is pitted against another. You come to it with varied backgrounds, experience, and self-concepts. It is important, therefore, that you judge your progress and success in terms of your own improvement only. Let advanced students serve as models rather than as measures of comparison. Watch, listen, and learn from each other. With that approach, the course should be challenging and exciting rather than anxiety-ridden.

This unit is designed to sensitize you to the components and complexity of communication. It is divided into four basic areas:

1. Oral communication tasks in the fire service/EMS (types and purpose).
2. Concepts of communication.
3. Verbal bases of communication.
4. Nonverbal bases of communication.

SPEECH/COMMUNICATION TASKS IN THE FIRE SERVICE/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Both formal and informal speech communication tasks are required of mid-level officers. They may occur within the service (internal), between the services (interagency), or within the community (external). Listed below are the major tasks required of fire officers throughout the country.

Internal	Interagency	External
Social exchanges	Telephone exchanges	Public information
Telephone exchanges	Training sessions	Public relations
Briefings	Meetings and conferences	Public education
Training sessions	Informal and formal presentations	Civic groups
Inquiries	Special occasions	School groups
Interviews		Professional groups
Meetings		Legislators
Informal and formal presentations		Media
Special occasions		Courtroom testimony
		Meetings and conferences
		Special occasions

COMMUNICATION CONCEPTS

Oral Communication Concerns

- Audience: To whom am I speaking?
- Purpose: Why am I speaking?
- Content: What do I want to say?
- Structure: In what order shall I say it?
- Style/Intent: How shall I say it?

Communication Model

Scholars from many disciplines agree on the following facts and components of communication.

- **Communication is** a two-way process in which the people involved are **senders, interpreters,** and **receivers.** "Process" suggests that communication is a **dynamic, continuous relationship** between two people with **reciprocal effects** on both sender and listener.

  Example: If you are talking to me, I have not ceased to function. Not only am I listening, I am responding to what I hear...We never can take back what we say...

- The **context** in which communication occurs has an **effect** on that **communication.** The context of the situation can be **physical** (room, place); **psycho/social** (status, relationship, roles, and games); **situational** (formal/informal, serious/humorous); or **temporal** (a.m./p.m., length of time).

Example: No communication occurs in a vacuum. We are bombarded constantly by stimuli from the environment and from within ourselves, which we organize and interpret. Our interpretation influences the messages that we receive and send.

- **Communication**, like a helix or spiral, **builds upon itself.** That is, all future interactions are colored by previous interactions.

  Example: Once you have said something or behaved in a particular way, it cannot be erased.

- Communication includes **reciprocal feedback of verbal and nonverbal cues** by both sender and receiver, which regulates the process. **Planning** also is involved.

  Example: Everything communicates, even silence. Even though I am not talking, I am telling you that I am not talking. One cannot not communicate.

- Communication consists of **messages,** which **are both verbal** and **nonverbal.** Verbal and nonverbal messages are symbolic, organized, and contain information. Many variables influence the sending, interpreting, and receiving of messages. Verbal messages generally express the intellectual content as well as the speaker's intent. Nonverbal messages such as body and facial gestures or tone of voice reflect the emotional component of the messages (liking, disliking) as well as the nature of the relationship (status, dominance, superiority).

  Example: Emotional component: "If looks could kill." Relationship component: "Higher-ups, underlings, looking up to."

- **Messages are transmitted and received through channels.** Channels involve the senses.

  Example: Auditory (spoken), visual (written or nonverbal), and touch.

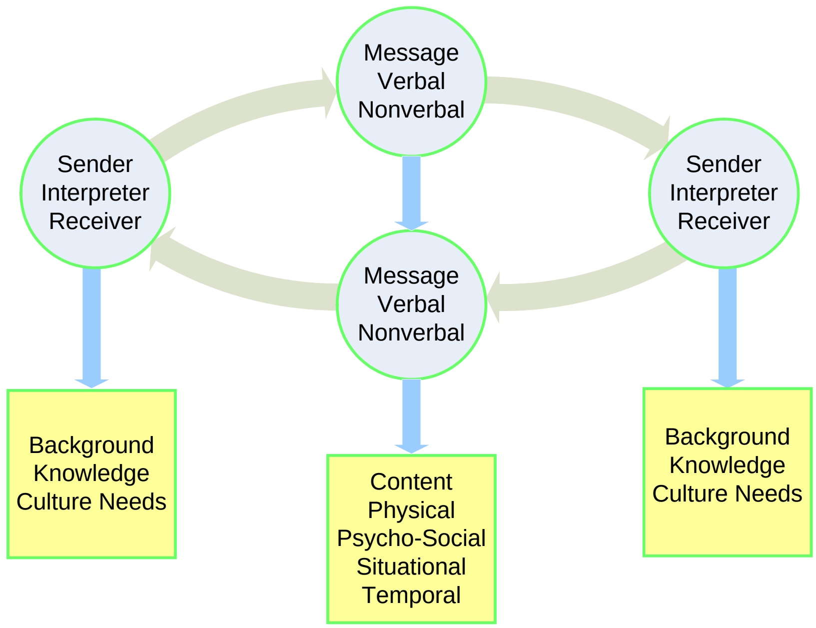
- **Interference with a message** can be caused by **noise,** which can occur externally or internally.

  Example: External noise: static, screaming, music. Internal noise: fatigue, bias, daydreaming, preoccupation.

- **Communication** between senders and receivers **is governed by unspoken rules,** which regulate the conduct of transactions. Rules determine who says what to whom, when, in what channel, and with what effect. Generally, rules are recognized only when they are violated.

  Example: Talking back to a superior. Making inappropriate social remarks. Cursing in a formal, public situation, or behaving inappropriately.

The following **Model of Communication** can help to clarify some of the major concepts that have been presented.



The two-way nature of communication and the reciprocal influences that occur through a continuous feedback loop of verbal and nonverbal messages are illustrated. Each person in the transaction is represented as a sender, interpreter, and receiver. Every message is subject to distortion or misunderstanding, since it is interpreted by another individual with different background, knowledge, culture, and needs, and influenced by the context in which it is delivered.

Feedback/Feedforward

The concept of **feedback** is one of the most significant aspects of communication theory and thus warrants further explanation. Whenever you alter your speaking behavior by adapting in some way to a verbal or nonverbal response from your listener, you may be said to be responding to feedback. For example, if your greeting is responded to pleasantly, you will probably continue your conversation. This is **positive feedback.** However, if your greeting meets with indifference or hostility, you will probably terminate the conversation. That is **negative feedback** in operation. The terms positive and negative are not judgmental. They refer to **whether or not a response causes an increase or decrease in some aspect of your behavior.** The term feedback, therefore, refers to the relationship between your behavior, the response of the listener, and the effect of that response on your further behavior. If you fail to note or to react to a feedback response, the response cannot be considered feedback. In order to be regarded as feedback, a response must be used and be a reciprocal influence (i.e., my behavior affects your behavior, which in turn affects my behavior). Effective communicators are aware of verbal and nonverbal feedback signals (their own and others) and adjust accordingly.

Some feedback adjustments result from **forethought.** That is, one can anticipate the behavior of others and prepare accordingly. This is known as **feedforward.** Feedforward can take one of three forms, which can operate independently or together:

1. **Goal setting.** Setting **specific goals** that you hope to achieve (the purpose). Once you achieve your goal (e.g., getting an answer), you can change your goal.

2. **Establishing expectancies.** A "best guess" **estimate of what you will say before you say it** based on anticipating questions and objections. Guesswork generally is based on knowledge of an audience. Preplanning then can involve any level of a message from the what (words and ideas) to the **how** (general or specific manner). However, everything cannot be anticipated. Sometimes, things occur during the course of an interaction. (Whoops! I shouldn't have said that. Better cover my tracks...)

3. **Planning contingencies.** This type of feedforward goes **one step beyond the "best guess"** estimate of listener reactions where questions and objections are anticipated. Planning for contingencies can involve planting questions in a talk and then preparing for a variety of responses. Just as goals may be revised and expectations changed during an interaction, so may contingency plans be modified.

Example: "We escalate our demands until the city can no longer say 'yes.' Then, if they say 'no,' we threaten a strike. If they call for an injunction, we back down. Jim, you start to work on the press statement; Annette, you get the material ready for our people."

The ability to give and receive feedback as well as to execute feedforward plans are necessary skills for effective social interaction. The more you know about yourself, your listener, and the topic under discussion, the more effective your feedback/feedforward will be.

VERBAL LANGUAGE SUBSYSTEMS

Language

"I didn't say that."

"I didn't mean that."

"She never understands me."

"You never listen to me."

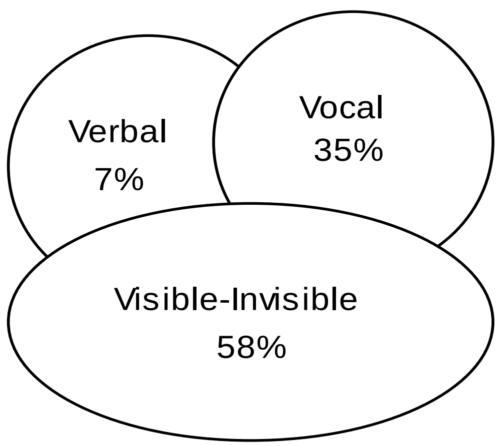
Like most people, you probably give little thought to exactly what you say or how you say it. Yet it is the **what** and the **how** of your **message** that **influence your listeners'** immediate behavior. The what and the how of your message also leads to judgments of your competence and character and colors the quality of your interactions. Therefore, attention to your language is vital to your success as a communicator. However, language is complex and needs clarification.

The following explanations of the systems of verbal and nonverbal language should sensitize you to their many nuances and problems.

Language is a **symbolic system** that **relates thoughts** and **feelings to verbal and nonverbal codes.** It is governed by a set of unspoken rules learned early in life. Spoken messages are characterized by considerable redundancy, since they are conveyed through several channels--verbal, vocal, visible, and invisible. The following model reflects the complexity of spoken messages. What actually is "heard" represents the overlapping section of all areas--particularly verbal, vocal, and visible. The multichanneled characteristic of spoken messages accounts for some of its confusion, since channels may contradict or negate one another. Such contradiction is apparent in sarcasm, where words say one thing and the vocal tone or facial expression say another. Conversely, words can become more powerful and the speaker will appear more dynamic, when the vocal and visible channels reinforce the spoken words

Model of Spoken Messages

- Verbal: Words, grammar, style, and intent.
- Vocal: Fluency, intonation, rate, articulation, laughter, silence, and volume.
- Visible: Facial expressions, eyes, body movements, gestures, space, dress, and artifacts.
- Invisible: Use of time, reaction to touch, and smell.



Verbal Language Subsystems

Phonology

- sound (vowels, consonants); and
- paralanguage (pitch, stress, duration).

Grammar

- word order; and
- word endings.

Semantics

- denotative words; and
- connotative words.

Pragmatics (underlying intent)

- promises;
- threats;
- suggestions; and
- warnings, etc.

Phonology

The meaning of the sentence to the listener can change due to phonology. Things like pitch, stress, and duration can completely change the meaning of a sentence.

Grammar

The meaning of a sentence can be made clearer if the speaker is aware of grammar usage including word order and word endings. The speaker gets his/her message across to the receiver of that message in an auditory fashion. The receiver of the message cannot reread the sentence like he/she can when he/she reads a message. It is important that an auditory message uses acceptable grammar practices in order for the receiver to get the intended meaning of that message.

Semantics

There are two aspects to the meaning of a word. One is its denotation--its dictionary definition or exact meaning. The other is its connotation--the positive or negative meanings associated with the word, often by how it is used in familiar contexts. The meaning of the sentence has a great deal to do with the receiver's life experience or perception. These perceptions are directly connected to the connotative meaning of words to the receiver. The words "thin" and "skinny" have the same denotation "thin." The connotative meaning of "slim" is positive while the connotation of "skinny" is negative.

Pragmatics

Pragmatics is the underlying intent. Pragmatics is often referred to as a social language. Have you ever said something that you know by the reaction of the receiver that they misinterpreted your intent. Mastering social language or pragmatics would help reduce this occurrence from happening.

Pragmatics
(Social use or underlying intent of messages)

Sentence	**Intent**
You were right about the chief.	Admitting
Firefighters are courageous.	Stating, claiming
This equipment is useless.	Evaluating
I am grateful for your help.	Thanking
I am glad you were elected.	Congratulating
Please type this letter.	Requesting
Stand back!	Commanding
Why don't you clean up your desk?	Recommending
Don't play with matches.	Forbidding
This truck will run for 100,000 miles.	Guaranteeing
I'll never do it again!	Swearing
I'm getting hungry.	Suggesting
Won't you take out the garbage, dear?	Command, request

Semantic Barriers

When we communicate with people, we need to be aware of the words we use. Some words and phrases trigger a negative reaction in people. The choice of words and phrases should always be thought about. These words and phrases can result in an instant barrier between the sender and receiver of the message. These words and phrases are called "trigger words."

Semantic Barriers to Communication

Language ⇄	Meaning
Denotative	Objective, consensus of meaning (chair, sun)
Connotative	Subjective, personal meanings (beauty, terrible)
Facts	Observable, verifiable (it's raining.)
Inferences	Assumptions based on facts (?) (it's going to rain.)
Generalizations	Applying to all what applies to a specific (it rains every Sunday.)
Judgments	Evaluations, opinions (rain is awful.)
Stereotypes	Labeling based on a few cues (typical "woman.")

Trigger Words

When we communicate with people, we need to be aware of the words we use. Some words and phrases trigger a negative reaction in people. The choice of words and phrases should always be thought about. These words and phrases can result in an instant barrier between the sender and receiver of the message. These words and phrases are called "trigger words."

NONVERBAL LANGUAGE

Introduction

You give an order and your lieutenant agrees to carry it out but you know he or she thinks it is ill-advised. You telephone your wife or husband and before he/she finishes his/her "hello" you know you are in trouble, or the kids are, or someone is going to "catch it." You just know your secretary is upset although he/she hasn't said a word. You defer to your superior, open the door for him/her and know not to interrupt him/her. You get the messages and know because you "read" facial expressions, tone of voice, gestures, and spatial distances, all cues which tell it "like it really is." Sometimes you grasp the message quickly. At other times you miss it completely. And, if you discount or are insensitive to nonverbal cues, you undoubtedly misread the real meaning or intent of many messages. Such is the power of nonverbal language.

Generally, people associate spoken messages with the verbal component of language only. However, spoken messages consist of both verbal and nonverbal language, creating many levels and kinds of messages. Nonverbal language, even more than verbal language, reflects the emotional component of the message, the intent of the speaker as well as the status and relationship of the speakers. Researchers have said that 30 to 90 percent of the emotional component of the message is nonverbal. Nonverbal language, therefore, is a powerful medium of expression because it is spontaneous, efficient, suggestive, and eloquent. In its highest form, nonverbal language is an art of pantomime, dance, and vocal music. In conversation, it completes the meaning of words that are consciously selected. A verbal message without congruent nonverbal language can be ambiguous, confusing, or dull. Verbal and nonverbal language should work together, in concert, like a driver and tilleroperator. In order to become effective communicators, you must learn to recognize the complexity and power of the nonverbal language system as it interrelates with the verbal language system.

Nonverbal Language Subsystems

Visible	Invisible	Vocal (Paralanguage)
Face	Touch (reactions)	Pitch
Type of expression	Smell	Loudness
Eyes	Use of time	Silences
Direction of gaze	(control of)	Laughing
Duration of gaze		Quality
Body		Rate
Posture (standing, sitting)		Fluency
Movement (gestures)		Diction
Demeanor (tension or relaxation)		Articulation

- Space
  - Personal (distance)
  - Public (interior design, order)
- Dress and artifacts
  - Grooming
  - Clothing
  - Objects

Visible Subsystem of Nonverbal Language

Face--The face is the most expressive medium for conveying reliable information about feelings because of its visibility and the efficiency of its muscular system in reflecting states of emotional arousal. Facial expressions can provide instant feedback about the kind of emotion experienced, such as happiness, sadness, anger, contempt/disgust, surprise, and pain/fear. ("If looks could kill...It's written all over his/her face.") However, some individuals have learned to control or suppress their emotional reactions. Lack of facial expressiveness can mask or confuse feelings and interfere with effective communication.

Eyes--The eyes even more than the face reveal genuine feelings because of their direct relationship with the nervous system. Pupil dilation and muscle movement around the eyes will reflect states of emotional arousal or excitement. Consider the many words and expressions in our language for describing looking (icy stare, glare, glance; he never looks you in the eye). In our culture, lack of eye contact will stop people from talking or will be interpreted as lack of interest, confidence, honesty, or respect. Conversely, some Orientals, Hispanics, and Caribbean Blacks equate direct eye contact with a lack of respect.

Posture, movements, and gestures--Posture, movements, and gestures reflect intensity of feelings as well as feelings of social inclusion or exclusion or rapport among communicators. Parallel or mirrored body orientations, such as forward leans or spatial closeness reflect positive feelings.

Hand movements--Contrary to general belief, hand movements can and do enhance expressiveness if they are natural and congruent with the spoken message. They can be **emblems** and stand alone (e.g., good-bye, A-OK); **illustrators** that illustrate a concept (e.g., gesture for "small" or "no more"). They also serve as conversational **regulators**, signaling turns or emphasizing (punctuating) spoken words. Every ethnic group has a system of hand and body movements that is as distinguishable as the melody of their language. Consider the typical Italian or French gestures They are easily recognizable. **Adaptors** are hand movements that reflect nervousness or individual habits (e.g., wringing hands, fiddling) and are not desirable in any culture.

Space--The flow and shift of distances between people as they communicate are parts of their message. Deliberate spatial closeness reflects positive feelings, while distance may reflect just the opposite. Spatial arrangements of furniture or interior design of rooms also will influence the kind of communication that is expected or will occur among people (i.e., formal versus informal).

Dress and artifacts--Clothing reflects status, emotional states, and degrees of formality/informality, as well as social group. Artifacts such as glasses, jewelry, and trinkets also are part of one's image or personal message. Hence, "packaging" is an essential element of every message since it reflects many things about people and is used as a major cue in judgments of credibility and personality. In some ways, clothes do "make the man," at least in the eyes of the beholder! Therefore, people should dress appropriately for the situation or occasion.

Invisible Subsystem of Nonverbal Language

Touch--Who touches whom, when, where, and how reflects something of the power aspect of a relationship. Touching, or not touching, can project and reflect such feelings as detachment, nurturing, fear, anger, and playfulness. A firm handshake or consoling pat on the shoulder can "speak louder" than many words. Superiors are usually more free to touch subordinates than the reverse.

Smell--Smells can be perceived in several dimensions, including pleasant/unpleasant, clean/unclean, or emotionally arousing. The sense of smell is used, in part, as a guide for spatial distancing between individuals.

Time--Patterns in the use of time are reflective of emotional states or cultural differences. The Hispanic notion of an appointment hour differs markedly from the American notion in which punctuality is valued. In the American culture (comprised of many subcultures), chronically late individuals are perceived to be projecting negative attitudes about events, people, or themselves. The powerful and dominant person usually controls the use of time.

Vocal Subsystem of Nonverbal Language

Voice--The voice is a particularly sensitive barometer of emotional and physical states and plays a significant part in person perception. **Personality traits**, such as degrees of sociability (introversion/extroversion), assertiveness (dominance/submission) and even emotional stability often are judged on the basis of vocal characteristics. In addition, transient emotional states such as warmth, interest, or boredom are assessed by the tone of voice. Such judgments have been found to be fairly reliable indicators of feelings, intent, and genuine meanings of speakers who are generally less conscious of how they say something than of what they say. Sensitive listeners perceive these unintentional vocal cues (together with other nonverbal signals) and are able to discern many unstated feelings and intents of speakers. Effective communicators, therefore, are those who can recognize the nonverbal cues that contradict, negate, reinforce, or even replace verbal messages. That is, they are able to "hear through" the words that have been consciously chosen. Conversely, effective speakers attend equally to what they say and how they say it.

When speakers are unaware of their tone of voice or try to suppress their feelings, "double messages" occur. That is, their words convey one thought and their vocal tone quite another. Examples of double messages are sarcastic comments such as "Yeah, sure!" or "No I don't care," spoken in a contradictory manner. Double messages are confusing and a source of misunderstanding at any age. Children who are repeatedly subjected to mixed messages (verbal and nonverbal) become emotionally confused. For that reason, double messages have been called "crazy makers." Persons who continually send mixed messages (deliberate or unconscious) are poor communicators. Many who do so are not aware of their actions, nor are they sensitive to the effect that their double messages have on others.

Because vocal cues generally are unintentional and spontaneous, they genuinely reflect a speaker's actual intentions, meanings, or feelings. Therefore, when doubtful, listeners should rely on the tone of voice rather than on words for understanding a speaker's "real message" or hidden agendas. For this reason, it is imperative to pay equal attention to the manner in which something is said and to the verbal content of messages.

An elaborate analysis of crossed, ulterior, mixed, and double messages has been performed by psychologist Eric Berne and his students. This work, known as Transactional Analysis, provides a practical framework for viewing interpersonal relations.

The vocal subsystem is discussed in more detail in Unit 13: Informative Speech.

Functions of Nonverbal Language

Nonverbal language is far more complex than the popularized concept of body language suggests. It reflects two major dimensions:

1. **Friendship dimension (horizontal)**--Nature of the relationship or feelings between speakers (e.g., closeness, liking/disliking, intimacy, attempts to conceal).

2. **Power dimension (vertical)**--Status, dominance, superiority, power (e.g., higher-ups, underlings, looking up to, being over).

Nonverbal language also affects the quality and quantity of communication by conveying

- **Turn-taking signals in conversation.**

  Head nods, body shifts, eye movements, and spontaneous vocalizations ("hmmm," "yes," "right").

- **Type of emotion.**

  Facial gestures, type of eye gaze, voice or rate, and fluency of speech.

- **Intensity of emotion.**

  Voice, body movements, and use of speech.

- **Status relationships.**

  Spatial distances, touching, or tone of voice.

Factors Influencing Nonverbal Behaviors of Individuals

Nonverbal language cues cannot be interpreted individually or out of context. They are subject to many influences that must be considered before they are used as a basis for judgments about people.

Emotional states--The nervous system controls all muscular and chemical activity in the body. Emotional responses (generalized or situational anxiety) set off a wide chain of reactions in the body, which are reflected in gestures and postures, or are broadcast vocally. Even if one is very controlled, some degree of emotional leakage is apt to occur (e.g., eyes, corner of lips, voice).

Cultural backgrounds--Cultures have unspoken rules about the kind and degree of emotional display that is permitted. For example, Latin and Mediterranean ethnic groups generally are more expansive or volatile in their emotional responses than are Western Europeans, American Indians, or Orientals. Listening behaviors of some Hispanics and Caribbean Blacks are also known to differ from white American middle-class cultures. Looking at an elder or authority figure while listening is considered a sign of disrespect in some of these groups.

Individual differences--People differ in their degree of emotional awareness and responsiveness. Some individuals will monitor themselves continually, while others place a premium on being themselves at all costs and do not attend to their nonverbal behaviors. Either extreme can be problematic. Lack of nonverbal expressiveness does not necessarily indicate a lack of feeling. Some people have never acquired these important communicative skills because of cultural background, heredity, or learning.

Differences in social and thinking styles also influence nonverbal mannerisms. Social style relates to the degree of assertiveness and sociability. Highly social people are generally expressive. Thinking styles can vary from reflective to impulsive, and influence vocal behaviors such as rate of speech or degree of fluency.

Physical factors--Physical factors, such as visual or auditory handicaps or body build, will influence nonverbal behaviors. Physical states such as fatigue, pain, or illness also influence responsiveness and behaviors.

Summary of Nonverbal Language

- Elements are visible, vocal, and invisible.
- Contradicts, reinforces, complements, or substitutes for verbal messages.
- Comprises the major emotional component of the message such as liking/disliking and degree of responsiveness (horizontal dimensions).
- Reflects the relationship component in terms of status, power, dominance, and superiority (vertical dimension).

- Generally, a more reliable indicator of speaker's feelings and intentions than verbal language, since it is usually unconscious.

- Type of emotion generally is reflected in facial expressions, eye gaze, or voice. Intensity of emotion is reflected in the voice, body, or use of space.

- Provides immediate feedback in speaker/listener interactions.

- Serves as cues that regulate conversation.

- Is an efficient means of communicating feelings (e.g., a pat or a handshake).

- Is an efficient means of conveying suggestion. (Can never be used as evidence in court.)

- Is a significant part of a personal and professional image.

- Provides significant cues that are used for judgments of personality traits and emotional states of people.

EFFECTIVE SPOKEN MESSAGES

A major difference between spoken and written communications is the fleeting nature of the spoken message and the myriad nonverbal influences to which it is subject. Once spoken, messages are subject to (mis) interpretation and forgetting, depending on their length and clarity. Spoken messages can be explicit, implied, or ambiguous. Short messages can convey a world. Verbose messages may say nothing. Saying nothing with a lot of words can be deliberate subterfuge. It can also reflect a lack of knowledge, poor organization, or linguistic deficiency. Saying something simply or eloquently is an art--desired by many, mastered by few. Not everyone is a poet or a silver-tongued orator. Nevertheless, all people have the ability to say what they mean and to mean what they say. It is essential, therefore, that speakers bear in mind the following basic tenets for effective spoken messages, which are similar, in some ways, to written messages. They should

- be adapted to the audience (e.g., children, professionals);
- have a specific purpose (to inform and/or persuade);
- be brief (get to the point);
- be focused (stick to the point); and
- be clear (distinguish facts, inferences, and opinions, and specify meanings).

Face-to-face oral communication is generally the most effective means of conveying any message because it provides immediate nonverbal feedback. This additional information enables rapid adjustment and clarification in cases of misinterpretation or misunderstanding.

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Activity 10.1

Introduction

Purpose

To describe experience and expectations.

Directions

1. Individually describe

   a. Your speech communication responsibilities on the job.

   b. Your personal reactions to these responsibilities.

   c. Your backgrounds and experiences in speaking.

   d. Your expectations of the course.

2. As a large group, you will discuss the similarities of concerns, needs, and goals.

3. Individually complete the following Student Form.

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Activity 10.1 (cont'd)

Student Form

Please complete this form. It is confidential and for the instructor's use only.

Date: ____________________

Name: __________ Rank: __________ Age: __________

Address: ____________________

Department: __________ Size of Department: __________ Years: __________

Paid _____ Volunteer _____ Combination _____ Type of Population Served: __________

Size of Population Served: __________

Educational Background: H.S. ______ College ______ Graduate School __________

Major: ____________________

Minor: ____________________

Previous Speech or Communications Courses: ____________________

Speaking Tasks on Job (Frequency: **3** Often, **2** Sometimes, **1** Occasionally).

Internal

___ Briefings
___ Interviews
___ Training
___ Conduct meetings
___ Special occasions
___ Other (specify)

Interagency

(Specify)

External

___ School groups
___ Civic groups
___ Legislative group
___ Media (radio, TV)
___ Courtroom testimony
___ College teaching
___ Negotiations
___ Other (specify)

General Level of Confidence: Rate according to the following scale: **5** No Problem; **4** Somewhat Nervous; **3** Moderately; **2** Very Nervous; and **1** Avoid.

	Face-to-Face	Small Group	Large Group
Familiar Situation	______	______	______
Unfamiliar Situation	______	______	______

What areas of your oral communication skills do you believe require improvement? Be specific.

____

____

____

____

Describe two typical speaking assignments for which you are responsible. Include situation, audience, and purpose (e.g., to convince town council to increase budget, etc.).

____

____

____

____

Activity 10.2

One-Way/Two-Way Communication

Purpose

To develop awareness of two-way communication and the importance of feedback.

Directions

Draw the following diagrams using the instructions given.

Diagram I

Diagram II

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Activity 10.3 (Optional)

Semantics

Purpose

To interpret the meaning of a sentence based on connotation.

Directions

1. Your instructor will assign one of the pairs of words below to your table.

2. Create a sentence with the same subject but in one sentence use one of the words and in the second sentence use the other word.

   a. Table 1--(mischievous, deceitful).

   b. Table 2--(leisurely, sluggish).

   c. Table 3--(debate, argument).

   d. Table 4--(strange, unusual).

3. Be prepared to explain the difference in the connotative meaning of the pair of sentences that another group reads.

Example: (bold, reckless)

- Driving over the speed limit is a **bold** way of driving.

- Driving over the speed limit is a **reckless** way of driving.

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UNIT 11: ANATOMY OF A PRESENTATION

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

1. *Describe four modes of presentation.*

2. *Explain the purposes of informative, persuasive, and special occasion presentations.*

3. *Discuss necessary audience information.*

4. *Identify the steps and methods used to deliver an oral presentation effectively.*

5. *Develop a presentation introduction using one of five methods given.*

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INTRODUCTION

A major responsibility of executives in every organization, including the fire service/emergency medical services (EMS), is making oral presentations. Many executives enjoy their jobs but loathe the "speech making." They often spend as much time worrying or avoiding these situations as they might productively preparing for them. Interestingly, fire service/EMS officers, courageous in the face of external fears, seem to have an inordinate amount of fear and resistance to speaking assignments. Perhaps you can identify with the following statements actually made by your fellow officers about "speech making":

Captain, Florida:	"I'd rather go into a burning building than give a speech."
Chief, Illinois:	"I never knew the speech bone was connected to the urinary tract."
Battalion Chief, Oregon:	"Giving a speech is the second hardest thing I've ever done in my life. The first was combat."

If you have anxieties about speaking, you are certainly not alone. Studies have shown that 75 percent of the students enrolled in college speech courses have real fears of public speaking. Informal observation of the students who enroll in this course at the National Fire Academy (NFA) shows a similar degree of fear. Although you do not realize it, even those of you with extreme fears of speaking already have made two major types of presentations successfully when you explained something (informative) and when you convinced someone to think in a particular way (persuasive). The difference was that in the informal situation you simply talked rather than made a speech. But that is what public speaking is all about or should be about--simply talking with people. It need not be a performance or an oration. It is the purpose of this unit to help you transfer the speaking skills you already possess to more formal situations typical of your responsibilities in the fire service/EMS. Together, this unit and the units dealing with delivery skills and persuasion will assist you in preparing and presenting oral presentations in public.

MODES OF PRESENTATION

There are four modes of presentation: impromptu, interactive, extemporaneous, and manuscript. The mode of presentation depends on the structure or formality of the situation. Impromptu and interactive presentations require little planning. Extemporaneous and manuscript presentations require extensive preparation and rehearsal. Each mode of speaking will be discussed separately.

Impromptu

A good speaker is one who rises to the occasion and promptly sits down.

- O. A. Batista

An impromptu presentation is a spontaneous, informal talk that is usually no longer than 2 minutes in length. Impromptu speaking is often used when giving reports or explanations. Its spontaneity has a positive effect on the audience. This spur-of-the-moment speech cannot be formally prepared. However, there are things that you can do to facilitate your thoughts and reduce your anxiety, especially if you suspect that you will be called on to speak. The following are some suggestions for impromptu presentations:

- Use the time between being called on and the time you begin speaking to organize your thoughts. This can be from a few seconds to a few minutes.

- Keep your comments "off the cuff." No one expects a polished performance. You would not be asked to speak if you were not knowledgeable.

- Speak slowly. It will give you time to think.

- Listen to the remarks of others. Build on these remarks. Listening is always a part of preparation just as it is in conversation.

- Build on your storehouse of information.

- Formulate a central idea. Agree or disagree with the previous speaker. Use one of the five Ws and one H (who, why, what, where, when, or how) and answer them.

- Select an organizational plan related to the speaker or the audience (what you want them to do).

- Never apologize or talk around a point. Be straight.

- If all else fails, try the PREP formula:

  - **P**oint: Smoke detectors should be installed in every house.

  - **R**eason: Early detection can save lives.

  - **E**xample: Mr. Jones' entire family and house might have been saved if they had been warned in time.

  - **P**oint: Everyone should spend a little to save a lot--invest in smoke detectors.

  - This formula directs your thoughts and reiterates one point in several ways. It can be very effective if you draw a blank. State your point, give your reason, support your point and reason with an example, and restate your point.

- Practice making impromptu presentations. Speak up in meetings. Read editorial articles and comment on them. Pick a topic, any topic, and talk on it.

Interactive

Interactive presentations involve a question-and-answer exchange. They typically start with an impromptu presentation, which is an excellent way of establishing rapport with a small audience, especially when the audience is uninformed or highly anxious about a topic. It is also a relatively easy way for a beginning speaker to present. The following are some suggestions for making interactive presentations.

- Begin with an impromptu presentation; and
- During the question and answer period, do the following:
  - listen for both the content (what) and the intent (how) of the questions,
  - acknowledge the question to indicate your understanding of both the content and feeling,
  - compliment the questioner on the question (I'm glad you asked that question. I understand your concern about ..."),
  - answer the questions briefly and clearly,
  - be polite and stick to the subject,
  - do not show:
    - -- impatience
    - -- anger
    - -- unresponsiveness
    - -- arrogance, and
  - do not be afraid to:
    - -- say, "I don't know but I will try to find out",
    - -- ask for clarification of questions,
    - -- move around the audience (start and end by looking at the questioner),
    - -- start the questions yourself if no one volunteers,
    - -- ask the audience a question to get things going, and
    - -- meet informally with audience members after the meeting.

Extemporaneous

Extemporaneous speeches are the most frequent types of presentations used in formal speaking situations. Unlike impromptu or interactive presentations, they are planned, rehearsed, and delivered from notes or visual aids. Extemporaneous presentations have a definite format (introduction, body, and conclusion) and an organizational pattern. However, the speaker is free to adapt his/her working and delivery style to the audience.

Manuscript

Manuscript presentations are usually reserved for special occasions or official statements of policy. They permit control of content and wording. Manuscripts can be distributed to the press if appropriate.

A manuscript presentation is not an essay. It is a speech and therefore must sound and flow like an extemporaneous speech. A good manuscript presentation can take many hours to prepare. Begin with an outline as you do when preparing an extemporaneous speech. Then, write the first draft, selecting your vocabulary and visual images carefully. Read the first draft aloud to someone and ask for feedback. Using those comments, develop a second and final draft (or until you are satisfied).

When preparing the manuscript for reading, use stiff paper. Write on one side only, being sure to number the pages. Use short paragraphs and capital letters. Triple space and use only one side of the page. Practice the script aloud in front of friends or on a tape recorder. As you are reading, try to concentrate on the ideas, not the words. Slide each page of the manuscript to the side after finishing it. (Make certain you have a lectern for your script when you deliver the speech.) Preparing your manuscript in this fashion should make it easy to read and enable you to look at your audience frequently.

Memorized Speech

Bad idea! Memory has been known to fail. Forget it!

PURPOSES (TYPES) OF PRESENTATIONS

There are three major purposes or types of oral presentations typically used in the fire service/EMS: informative, special occasion, and persuasive. These presentations can be made in any mode--impromptu, interactive, extemporaneous, or manuscript, depending on the formality of the situation, the importance of the occasion, and the amount of time available for preparation. However, the purpose (type) of any presentation need not be exclusive. That is, an informative speech also may be persuasive or a special occasion speech may be both informative and persuasive. Generally, fire service/EMS officers' speeches have a major purpose and typically are used in certain situations (interagency, intra-agency, and external) as diagrammed below.

Informative	**Special Occasion**	**Persuasive**
Public Education	Introductions	Public Education
Public Relations	Welcomes	Public Relations
Briefings	Commendations	Meetings
Reports	Inspirational	Hearings
Training	Eulogies	Proposals
Teaching	After Dinner	Legislatures
Citizens Groups	Acceptances	Citizens Groups
Other		

Informative and selected special occasion speeches (introductions and welcomes) will be discussed in this unit. Persuasive presentations will be covered in Unit 17: Persuasion.

Informative

The primary objective of any informative speech is to present information so that it will be easily understood and remembered. Success depends on the extent to which the speaker adheres to principles of learning involving the following concepts:

Motivation--Learning is easier when it is meaningful. It must relate to people's needs and interests.

Familiarity--Associations of the unknown with the known facilitate learning.

Organization--Logical organization facilitates learning.

Multisensory approach--Learning is fostered when the material is both seen **and** heard.

Reinforcement--Repetition lends emphasis and aids retention. One of the best ways to do this is to restate the same ideas in different ways with a variety of evidence to support the idea.

Preview, enumeration, and summary--Memory is enhanced by alerting the audience to what you will say, enumerating the main points (first...second...etc.), and summarizing what was said.

Maintaining attention and interest--There is no learning without attention or interest. Stating what is impending, close, familiar, personally beneficial, realistic, or amusing can help to gain and maintain interest.

Persuasive

There are three stages of persuasion: convince, activate, and stimulate. First, the convince stage is when we just want someone to believe in an idea that we believe in. Second, the activate stage, is when we have convinced someone and we want that person to do something as a result of the speech (buy something, vote, approve proposal). The third stage is the stimulate stage, which is when we have convinced and activated and want an immediate and emotional response (eulogy, inciting a protest on the spot). This is a very difficult type of persuasion and requires a solid knowledge of psychology. The speaker will decide how many stages to incorporate.

Special Occasion

The most frequent types of special-occasion presentations are introductions and welcomes. Suggestions for preparing these speeches follow.

Speech of Introduction. The purpose of the introductory speech is to create an appropriate atmosphere, to give the qualifications of the speaker, and to stress the importance of the subject.

The introductory speech is **not** your show. You, as the agent for the speaker, should facilitate a speaker's task by enhancing his/her credibility and setting the stage for him/her. Each introduction should vary according to the situation, the speaker, and the speech. The following are some suggestions for the preparation of speeches of introduction:

- Consult the speaker for ideas of what he or she wants included in the introduction. Make sure the speaker knows about the audience, the occasion, the physical setting, and audiovisual materials available.
- Make the speech of introduction separate from announcements. ("Now we come to the main feature of this program--the speaker.")
- Be brief and to the point. The length of the introduction should vary with the occasion. Better known speakers require shorter introductions.
- Use humor in good taste.
- Only talk about yourself if it connects your speaker to the occasion.
- Do not overpraise the speaker--use qualifications and prestige sparingly.
- Avoid trite and hackneyed language. ("I am pleased to introduce"...or "It is a unique privilege...")
- Arrange the ideas according to the traditional format of any speech: introduction, body, and conclusion.
- Speak extemporaneously from a mental outline or notes. Do not read.
- Do not use irrelevant facts in the introduction, e.g., number of children or pets. Select information that relates to the occasion and subject.

Speech of Welcome. The purpose of the speech of welcome is to express appreciation to an organization or person and to create goodwill. Welcome speeches are often stereotyped and perfunctory. Make your welcome addresses original and unique. Some suggestions for the preparation of speeches of welcome follow:

- Do not perform in routine fashion and run away. If you must leave, have the chairperson mention it before you speak.
- Use the traditional format of introduction, body, and conclusion.
- Set an optimistic tone for the meeting if your speech opens the session.

- Be brief. Never exceed 5 minutes. With more than one speech, brevity is even more important.

- Avoid stereotyped expressions and flowery speech.

AUDIENCE ANALYSIS

An audience analysis, which includes information on the types of people to be addressed, their attitudes, and the speaking situation, is essential in order to determine a strategy for your presentation. Either by direct questioning or informal observation, the following information on the audience should be gathered:

- **Demographic**--Sex, age and age range, socioeconomic status, political preferences, ethnic background, and occupations.

- **Topic**--Interest and knowledge in topic and terminology.

- **Opinion leaders**--Influential members of audience who make decisions. Learn something more about them, including their interests and motivations.

- **Beliefs, attitudes and values**--Knowledge of the audience's attitude toward you, your topic, and your purpose.

- **Situational**--Size, physical setting of room, visual-aid equipment, nature of occasion, position on program, time limitations, and question-and-answer period.

SEVEN STEPS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Step 1: Speak about something that interests you. If you are given the opportunity to choose your topic, select one that can be adequately handled within your allotted time. Narrow down your assigned topics to manageable proportions.

Step 2: Research the topic (evidence). Material related to the purpose of your talk and your audience must be gathered. This does not necessarily mean library research. Brainstorm with others. Determine what information you need to support your ideas. Then, gather a variety of supporting evidence, including:

- S--**Statistics** are a frequently used form of evidence, which can be very dramatic if presented properly. It is necessary to state the source of figures in order to strengthen their credibility. Statistics should be presented visually in a clear, well-illustrated visual aid. When appropriate, multicolored graphs or bars should be used with boldface figures. Statistics should be seen and heard!

- A--**Analogy** is a "likeness in one or more ways between things otherwise dissimilar." (Webster.) This infrequently used form of evidence can be powerful because it is a verbal-visual image, which can be recalled easily. Sports and military actions are sources of good analogies. The analogies should relate the subject to the listeners' interest (e.g., teamwork in fire service/EMS and football).

- F--**Facts** are objective truths that can be related to principles or objectives. Facts are **not** inferences or assumptions.

- E^1--**Examples** are vivid forms of evidence and are recalled easily. They may be related directly to your subject or drawn from a related field.

- E^2--**Experiences** are a powerful form of evidence and also enhance a speaker's credibility. Using an audience's experience can provide even stronger evidence to support a point. Actual experiences should not be confused with opinions.

- **Expert** testimony is very effective evidence. However, an expert's credentials or background always should be stated. When possible, specific words should be quoted.

  Note the mnemonic device $SAFE^3$ used above. (A mnemonic device is a way of helping people remember something.) Gather three or more types of evidence to support each idea you present. Varied evidence will help to reinforce and support your main points.

- **Organize the materials (format).** Like a complete meal with an appetizer, entree, and dessert, a well-developed presentation has a basic format. It includes an introduction, body, and conclusion.

Step 3: Focus on one or two main ideas. Determine the purpose of your presentation. Whether it is to inform or to persuade, everything you include in your presentation should relate to your overall purpose. (Speeches are often both informative and persuasive.) Then, decide what specific points you want to make, or can make, within the allotted time. Finally, determine what ideas or actions you want from your audience.

Step 4: Use an outline. The following is an outline for an extemporaneous informative presentation. Note the format.

I. Introduction.

   A. Arouse attention.

   B. Stimulate interest.

   C. Summarize main points to be covered in speech.

II. Body.

A. Adapt material to the audience (from audience analysis).

B. Use clear organization.

C. Strive for audience comprehension.

1. Definitions.

2. Examples.

3. Comparisons and contrasts.

4. Dramatic statistics.

5. Vivid descriptions.

6. Emphasize and reinforce main points.

D. Arouse and maintain interest and attention.

1. Note the impending.

2. Allude to what is physically close.

3. Refer to familiar.

4. Invoke personal needs of audience.

5. Impart activity in body, voice, and content.

6. Use reality.

7. Point out conflict.

8. Use humor.

III. Conclusion.

A. Present summary of main points.

B. Arouse interest in further investigation.

Step 5: Write a first draft.

Step 6: Make appropriate changes.

Step 7: Ask yourself:

- Did you select a subject that really interests you?
- Did you think of a special way to present this subject?
- Did you make changes until your communication said what you wanted it to say?

DELIVERING AN ORAL PRESENTATION EFFECTIVELY

- clearly--voice:
  - volume,
  - vocal variety,
  - repetitive words,
  - use of acronyms, and
  - speed;
- skillfully--physical:
  - posture,
  - weight shift,
  - eye contact, and
  - gestures; and
- enthusiastically--attitude.

The attitude of the speaker will soon be the attitude of the audience.

Rehearse. The final step in preparing oral presentations is to rehearse. Analogous to the editing of a written communication, it is essential (for the beginning speaker in particular) to rehearse both silently and aloud. Think of the word **REHEARSE** in the following way:

- **R**--recite it silently;
- **E**--express-don't impress;
- **H**--hear it--say it aloud to yourself;
- **E**--edit language and style as you practice;
- **A**--anticipate and adjust to audience reactions;
- **R**--record and play back (video or audio);
- **S**--say it for friends; and
- **E**--elicit questions and feedback.

Extemporaneous speaking permits considerable latitude in the way you express your ideas. Do not feel locked into any particular words or phrases. Knowing your purpose and audience and using legible notes should help you to sound spontaneous. Every time you rehearse and give the speech, your wording probably will change. That is as it should be. However, your ideas and organization should remain the same. Do not memorize. It may create more panic than it prevents if you lose your ideas. Your notes or visual aids should serve as memory joggers.

Your style of language is of paramount importance and should be adapted to your audience. Keep your language simple and vivid. Use words and examples that conjure up visual images wherever possible. However, language is always a calculated risk. Watch for feedback from the trial or real audience. Note their expressions of bewilderment, boredom, or agitation. Use this feedback and adjust your language and message accordingly. Your credibility and effectiveness are determined by your demeanor, language, and organization. If your purpose is clear and you know your audience, you should be able to be clear, focused, brief, and interesting. Remember to adhere to the time limitation and to allot time for questions and answers.

Anticipate questions. Anticipating questions and objections should be part of your preparation. You then can plan answers for the more difficult questions and not be caught off guard.

COMMUNICATION ESSENTIALS

Introduction

Tell what you are going to say. Take hold! The purposes of introductions are to:

- capture the attention of the audience;
- arouse interest in what will be said;
- orient the audience to the topic, tell them how they will benefit;
- present background information;
- explain key terms;
- reveal yourself;
- establish your credibility; and
- establish common ground with audience.

Do not write the introduction until after you have developed the body of the speech.

Methods of Introduction

- rhetorical question;
- shocking statement;
- quotation;
- personal experience; and
- story.

Body

Review the notes you have gathered. Keep in mind the purpose of your talk and the information you have gathered from your audience analysis. Select the main points you wish to present. They must clearly relate to the purpose. Then, select varied types of information to support those main points. This evidence (e.g., facts, statistics) should reinforce your main points, not confuse or substitute for them. Finally, outline the body of the speech as illustrated in the following outline of an informative speech on smoke detectors.

Sample of Outline of Body

I. Benefits of smoke detectors.

   Save lives and property.

   A. Statistics.

   B. Facts.

   C. Examples.

II. Types of smoke detectors.

   A. Ionization.

      1. Cost.

      2. Advantages.

      3. Disadvantages.

   B. Photocell.

      1. Cost.

      2. Advantages.

      3. Disadvantages.

   C. Battery-powered.

      1. Cost.

      2. Advantages.

      3. Disadvantages.

III. Maintenance.

A. General considerations.

B. Types.

1. Ionization.

2. Photocell.

3. Battery-powered.

Consider the memory constraints of listeners when determining the amount of information you wish to include in your talk. It is generally advisable to present only three or four main points in a short presentation (10 to 20 minutes). Each main point should relate clearly to your purpose.

Types of organization. There are several options for organizing the main points of a speech. The particular topic should suggest the most suitable organizational pattern. The types of organization are

- Sequential--time sequence (chronological) or natural order (e.g., fire drill procedures);
- Spatial sequence--he element which relates all main points (e.g., fire house placements in city);
- Topical--categories which make up a whole main area (e.g., branches of fire service/EMS, need for increased budget); and
- Logical--usually related to persuasion--problem/solution, cause/effect.
  - inductive--specific to general,
  - deductive--general to specific,
  - familiar to unfamiliar,
  - question/answer, and
  - inquiry (how you learned).

Transitions between main points also should be developed. A speech should flow logically from one point to another.

Conclusion

Once the body of the speech is completed, the conclusion must be developed. The conclusion should

- Convey a sense of closure;
- Summarize;
- Drive home the main points; and
- Stimulate the audience to act.

There are several techniques for achieving these purposes:

- summarize main points;
- state personal intention or challenge;
- use a quotation or poem;
- use an anecdote, analogy, or illustration; and
- use visual aids.

Activity 11.1

Presentation Introduction

Purpose

To develop a presentation introduction using one of five methods given.

Directions

1. As a table group, develop an introduction for the topic on the need for funding for fire prevention, using one of the methods of introduction.

   a. Rhetorical question.

   b. Shocking statement.

   c. Quotation.

   d. Personal experience.

   e. Story.

2. Each table will read their introduction to the remainder of the class. Each report should be limited to less than 5 minutes.

UNIT 12: DELIVERY OF A PRESENTATION

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

1. *Explain why the symptoms of stage fright are physiological reactions to perceived fears.*

2. *Identify methods of coping with stage fright.*

3. *Describe techniques that can be used to make question-and-answer sessions effective.*

4. *Explain how to use a variety of visual aids.*

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"It's really not fun, acting. Always that tremendous fear... Do you know that before a performance sometimes Lawrence Olivier goes back to the foyer and to release his tension, swears at the audience. Some actors even stick pins in themselves."

- *Jane Fonda*

"Acting is a way to overcome your shyness every night. The writer creates a strong, confident person and that's what you become...unfortunately, only for the moment."

- *Shirley Booth*

"Acting scares me senseless. I hate everything I do, even if it's a crummy radio show with a script, I throw up. I tell you...it's the equivalent of going voluntarily to hell."

- *Judy Holliday*

"Any performer who doesn't say he's scared before a performance is a liar."

- *Luciano Pavarotti*

INTRODUCTION

One of the biggest problems for professional performers and beginning speakers alike is stage fright. However, professional performers have learned to concentrate and control anxiety. Conversely, beginning speakers do not know anything about "communication apprehension," a very common syndrome. Understanding some of the facts underlying stage fright and knowing how you manifest your anxiety is one way to reduce it. Another way is to desensitize your fears gradually through a program of increasingly complex speaking experiences.

This unit is designed to help you overcome your fears of speaking and to give you practice and constructive suggestions for improving your presentational speaking. It also is concerned with developing your ability to listen critically and to evaluate presentational speaking.

DELIVERY

Stage Fright

"I have met the enemy and he is I."

"Express--don't impress!"

"Be yourself--your most alert self."

Stage fright wreaks havoc with a person's self-confidence. It also interferes with the career advancement of fire service/emergency medical services (EMS) officers. Yet stage fright is nothing more than a paper tiger, which must be fully exposed and understood in order for speakers to be themselves. The following facts about speaking apprehensions should help to dispel myths about that paper tiger and enable fire service/EMS officers to enjoy their public-speaking experiences.

- Most schools have done little, if anything, to prepare students for public speaking. Unfortunately, a premium has been placed on good behavior and silence despite the fact that most professional requirements involve speaking (and listening) skills.

- Very few fire service/EMS officers know how to prepare or give speeches. However, the procedures for preparing and delivering a successful presentation can be learned and practiced so that even you can become an effective speaker.

- Butterflies are normal. Actually, all beginning speakers, including some high-level executives in the private and public sectors, have problems with nervousness.

- Nervousness is especially common in an evaluative situation. The degree of anxiety you experience will depend on the audience, the subject, the situational factors, and your level of preparation.

- The uncomfortable physiological reactions you experience are the result of your body's emergency response to "perceived" fear. Your feelings of inadequacy and your perceptions of the audience are the enemy--**not** the audience! As a matter of fact, audiences are usually quite sympathetic.

- Everyone responds differently to stress. Some people who appear very calm actually may feel extremely nervous. Others may exhibit overt responses such as fidgeting, rapid speech, or stumbling over words. Still others become stiff, deadpan, monotonous, or inaudible. It is important to know how you react under pressure in order to be able to counteract and control it.

- Generally, your nervousness is not apparent to an audience. They cannot see your internal symptoms (dry mouth, sweaty palms, rapid pulse, or even shaky knees). Your trembling voice always sounds more exaggerated in your head than it does to the audience.

- The effects of adrenaline in the system, the causative agent of your physiological and mental symptoms, take a few minutes to disappear. Take solace in the fact that it **will** diminish **if** you are well prepared.

- Nervousness is usually at its peak before and during the first few minutes of your presentation. Once you become involved in your message, it will diminish.

- Your degree of confidence (or anxiety) is related to your expectations of being confident or nervous (self-fulfilling prophecy).

- Your degree of nervousness is proportional to the extent that you are "yourself." People who try to impress rather than express may suffer from psychological discomfort or stress.

- The degree of your nervousness also is related to your personality. Extroverted types generally find it less difficult to make public presentations than do more reflective, introverted types.

- The degree of your nervousness is related to your level of preparation. This includes knowledge and organization of your material as well as rehearsal. **To be unprepared is to be prepared for failure.**

Coping With Stage Fright

With a basic understanding of some underlying facts about the precipitating and maintaining causes of stage fright, fire service/EMS officers should be able to counter their own fears with behaviors conducive to "overcoming" anxiety. The following are some suggestions for coping more effectively with speaking apprehension:

- Be prepared. Plan, organize, and rehearse aloud with a tape recorder or live audience. Do not memorize.

- Be physically comfortable. If that necessitates leaving the station early, eating, or changing your clothes before speaking, do so. You should feel and look well.

- Arrive early. Familiarize yourself with the room and the facilities. Check out the audiovisual equipment. Become acquainted with your host.

- Monitor everything about yourself from the moment you arrive. You are "on stage" **before** you are actually on stage. Impressions of you are formed from the moment you arrive.

- Prepare your host with suitable background information so that you can have a good introduction. The introduction can ease your first few minutes by enhancing your credibility and providing you with a source for some "off-the-cuff" comments.

- Talk to members of the audience before your presentation. It will help you to relate more easily to them as a group. You might even include some comments in your speech about those interactions.

- Establish a common ground with your audience early in your presentation.

- Have a well-prepared and catchy introduction. Once you get through the first few minutes, the rest will be easy.

- Keep your objectives clearly in mind. Everything you say or do should relate to the purpose of your speech.
- Have well-organized and legible notes, preferably on 5- by 8-inch numbered cards. Write on only one side of the cards. Visual aids can be used as a script if they are well designed. Manuscript presentations should be typed in bold print and triple spaced.
- Get involved in your message. Concentrate on what you are saying.
- Expect some anxiety. It is natural and not all bad. It keeps you on your toes.
- Physical movement helps. Move, use visual aids, demonstration, or natural hand gestures.
- Don't fret if your words don't come out as you had intended or rehearsed. The audience will never know. Just make certain that you make your main points.
- Maintain eye contact with your audience. Give them all a break. Talk to each one for a brief time, if possible.
- Be alert to audience feedback during your presentation. Adjust to their nonverbal cues. Feel free to deviate from your notes, if necessary, but do not lose sight of your objectives.
- Don't try to say everything you know.
- Monitor your rate of speech. Do not speed or drag; vary the rate according to meaning.
- An appropriate sense of humor can relax you and increase the audience's liking for you.
- Do not try to tell an audience everything you know. It is impossible. Rather, be selective and say it clearly!
- Express, don't impress!
- Everyone has his or her own style. Do not imitate anyone. Be yourself! Your most alert self!
- Let your feelings out. Your voice and other delivery factors should reflect your convictions, feelings, and sincerity.
- Speaking is enlarged conversation. Do not give an oration. Simply converse.
- Think positively. Anticipate success, not doom: "I can and I will." (Self-fulfilling prophecy!)

Effective Question-and-Answer Sessions

Often, informative presentations are followed by question-and-answer periods. This can be a challenging and productive time for speakers. It also can be a final opportunity for clarifying issues or driving home your points. Suggestions for responding to questions:

- Anticipate questions in advance and be prepared with answers to difficult ones.

- If you have allotted time and there are no questions, start them rolling yourself. ("One question usually asked is...") Or, **you** can ask the audience a question. Other questions usually follow once the ice is broken.

- If the audience is large, repeat the question for all to hear before responding.

- Acknowledge good questions. ("That's a good question; I'm glad you asked that. I was hoping someone would ask that question.")

- Select questions from various parts of the audience. When beginning to respond, look directly at the person who asked the question. Then direct your attention to the audience as a whole while finishing the response. At the end of your response, return to the original questioner to determine if the answer was satisfactory.

- If two questions are asked at once, answer only one at a time. Ask for clarification if the question is not clear.

- Do not get hooked into a dialogue or argument with any one person. Cut it short by saying you will speak to him/her after the meeting.

- Do not bluff. If you don't know the answer, admit it. If it is possible to do so, tell them you will try to find out and let them know. Another approach is to turn the question back to the audience.

- Never, never lose your composure. Remember, anger is one letter short of danger.

- Never lose control of the question-and-answer period. You are in charge of that session. Do not let the audience take over.

- Use the question period to fill in details of your presentation or to clarify your points further.

Using Visual Aids

Visual aids can be more of a problem than an aid if a speaker is not skilled in using them. The following suggestions are offered to facilitate their use.

- Always check out the environment and the equipment prior to your presentation. Note if the equipment is ready and working.

- Try out the acoustics to determine if you need a microphone. If you do use a mike, stay 8 to 12 inches from its head. Standing too close to a microphone can create feedback and distort your voice. Do not blow into the mike. Check it by tapping on it or speaking into it before you begin. Ask the audience if they can hear you, if necessary.

- Keep visual aids out of sight until you are ready to use them.

- Do not stand in front of an aid, talk to it, or turn your back to the audience for any length of time when using an aid. Lengthy comments should be written on the board **prior** to your talk so that you can refer to them easily by pointing.

- Place standing aids (e.g., easel pads, models) to the side of the platform and walk over to them. After using them, return to the middle of the platform so that eyes are on you.

- Put aids aside or cover them before and after you have used them.

- Create an effective PowerPoint® presentation

  - don't use too many visuals

  - use clear contrasting colors with text and background

  - don't use too many colors

  - use soft colors

  - don't overload a visual with information

  - use design templates

- Font and text guidelines

  - don't use more than six lines per visual

  - don't use more than six words a line

  - avoid long sentences

  - use fonts such as Tahoma or Arial

  - font size should be 22 to 48

  - don't put words in all capital letters

- Clipart and graphics

  - should balance visuals

  - should not overwhelm or distract from the visual

  - limit graphics to two per visual

  - not very effective and sometimes diminish a visual's effectiveness

- Remember, the most important visual aid is **you**! Maintain eye contact with audience members when you speak to them. Take turns looking at everyone in the audience.

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UNIT 13: INFORMATIVE SPEECH

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

1. *Prepare and deliver an informative speech.*

2. *Evaluate an informative speech.*

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Activity 13.1

Speech to Inform

Purpose

To deliver a short informative speech.

Directions

1. You are to deliver a short speech on a topic of your choice with which you are familiar. Your speech should be 4-1/2 to 5 minutes long.

2. If you want class members to be a specific audience, you may explain that.

3. You have up to an additional 2 minutes for a question-and-answer period, if there are any questions.

Scoring

The instructor and three peers will provide feedback using the Speech To Inform Evaluation Form.

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Activity 13.1 (cont'd)

Speech to Inform Evaluation Form

Key
1=Poor
2=Fair
3=Good

Name: ______________________________ Time: ________________

Audience: ___________________________

The speaker uses a proper method of introduction.

1 2 3

The speaker's rate of speed is appropriate to the topic and the audience.

1 2 3

The speaker can be heard and easily understood.

1 2 3

The speaker has good eye contact with the audience.

1 2 3

The speaker's posture, gestures, and movement add to his/her credibility.

1 2 3

The speaker uses appropriate energy throughout the speech.

1 2 3

The conclusion of the speech refers back to the introduction and adequately summarizes the speech.

1 2 3

The speaker uses his/her voice to indicate that the speech is completed.

1 2 3

Comments:

____

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Activity 13.1 (cont'd)

Speech to Inform Evaluation Form

Key
1=Poor
2=Fair
3=Good

Name: ____________________ Time: ____________

Audience: ____________________

The speaker uses a proper method of introduction.

1 2 3

The speaker's rate of speed is appropriate to the topic and the audience.

1 2 3

The speaker can be heard and easily understood.

1 2 3

The speaker has good eye contact with the audience.

1 2 3

The speaker's posture, gestures, and movement add to his/her credibility.

1 2 3

The speaker uses appropriate energy throughout the speech.

1 2 3

The conclusion of the speech refers back to the introduction and adequately summarizes the speech.

1 2 3

The speaker uses his/her voice to indicate that the speech is completed.

1 2 3

Comments:

____

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____

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Activity 13.1 (cont'd)

Speech to Inform Evaluation Form

Name: ______________________________ Time: ________________

Audience: ___________________________

Key
1=Poor
2=Fair
3=Good

The speaker uses a proper method of introduction.

1 2 3

The speaker's rate of speed is appropriate to the topic and the audience.

1 2 3

The speaker can be heard and easily understood.

1 2 3

The speaker has good eye contact with the audience.

1 2 3

The speaker's posture, gestures, and movement add to his/her credibility.

1 2 3

The speaker uses appropriate energy throughout the speech.

1 2 3

The conclusion of the speech refers back to the introduction and adequately summarizes the speech.

1 2 3

The speaker uses his/her voice to indicate that the speech is completed.

1 2 3

Comments:

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APPENDIX

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Sample Informative Speech

SUBJECT: BURNS

HOW TO RECOGNIZE AND IDENTIFY THE DEGREE OR THICKNESS OF BURNS

INTRODUCTION

In the fire service/emergency medical services (EMS) we can expect exposure to burns and to burn victims. Burns are very serious. For example, first-degree burns over most of the body can lead to an electrolytic imbalance unless treated with cortico-steroids. Twenty percent to thirty percent of second-degree burns and only 2 percent of third-degree burns may require hospitalization. Before making these judgments, you must first be able to identify the different degrees of burns.

Also, remember the rule of nines that we covered in our last session.

PRESENTATION/APPLICATION

A. First-degree burn.

1. Reddening of the skin.

2. Involves only the epidermis.

Question: Where do we normally see first-degree burns?

Answer: Sunburn, thermal burn, friction burn.

B. Second-degree burn.

1. Formation of blisters.

2. Sloughing of tissue.

3. Fluids collecting in the interstitial tissue of the dermis.

Question: Should the blisters be broken?

Answer: No! High sepsis or infection risk.

C. Third-degree burn.

1. Full-thickness burn involving the area where new cells are produced.

2. May be char black or pearly white.

3. May have little or no pain.

Question: Why might there be no pain in a full-thickness burn?

Answer: The nerve endings have been damaged.

CONCLUSION

A. Partial-thickness burns.

1. First-degree.

   Reddening of the skin.

2. Second-degree.

   Blisters form.

B. Full-thickness burns.

1. Third-degree.

2. Destruction through all layers: epidermis, dermis, and cell formation area.

QUESTIONS

UNIT 14:
LISTENING

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

1. *Explain the process of listening.*

2. *Describe the five types of listening.*

3. *Describe the major barriers to effective listening.*

4. *Demonstrate skills in active listening techniques.*

5. *Identify techniques for improving general listening effectiveness.*

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Promotion?	"Yes sir!"
Money?	"Yeah---"
Sex?	"Um humm!"
Nagging?	"What's that?"
Conflict?	"What?"

INTRODUCTION

Is there any question which subject you would rather hear? What? I say, is there any question that you suffer from selective hearing? Probably not, for almost everyone hears only what he/she wants to hear at times. Selective listening, a type of selective perception, is symptomatic of many underlying problems, most of which are dangerous to personal and professional health. If ignored, selective listening can lead to hardening of the "attitudes" and other communication problems.

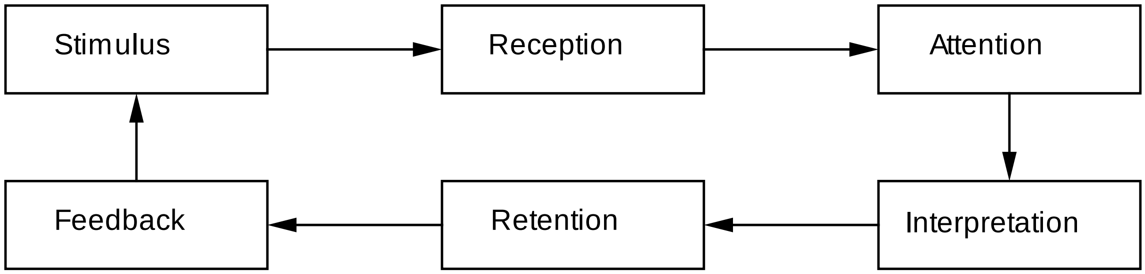
Unfortunately, very little attention has been paid to listening in schools or in professional training programs despite the fact that listening is the most frequently used aspect of communication, followed by speaking, reading, and writing (in that order). Whether it is to gain information, to strengthen relationships, to resolve problems, or to conduct investigations, listening plays a vital role in fire service/emergency medical services (EMS) officers' executive responsibilities. Therefore, you can no longer take your listening skills for granted. They are the core of communication in your personal and professional life. Fortunately, listening skills can be improved at any age if one understands the listening process and practices listening skills. This unit is concerned with just that--the listening process and listening-skills practice.

FACTS ABOUT LISTENING

Can you estimate your listening proficiency? Is that a hard question? Why? What factors are involved in determining your answer? Communication skills include listening, speaking, reading, and writing. People remember what they hear, what they see, what they see **and** hear, and what they feel. Messages can verbal and nonverbal.

PROCESS OF LISTENING

It should be apparent from the many factors that influence your listening proficiency that the process of listening is complex. It is more than simply hearing or agreeing. Listening involves several interrelated components that are illustrated in the following model.



Stimulus--A stimulus involves any cue (verbal, vocal, or nonverbal), which is part of a message. The stimulus in the listening process can be both seen **and** heard.

Reception (predominantly hearing)--Hearing means that the stimulus has been received--nothing more. It involves the physiological processing of what is heard **and** seen (words, vocal cues, random sounds, and nonverbal cues). Reception may be impaired by loss of auditory or visual acuity.

Attention--One can listen to selected details of a message or to the full message itself. However, attention can be distracted or fluctuate as a result of speaker, listener, or message variables. Therefore, attention requires motivation and concentration. Yet reception (hearing) and attention do not account for the total act of listening. Two more steps are necessary. Meaning must be assigned to the message and the message must be remembered.

Interpretation (assigning meaning)--As discussed previously, words are open to a wide variety of interpretation. Some words trigger strong emotions in a listener which are not intended by a speaker. It is this point in the listening process that is a primary source for misunderstanding. Words may be heard and attended to, but misinterpreted by listeners (e.g., hon, boy, trusted employee). It has been said, "Words do not mean, people mean."

Retention--Memory is involved in all aspects of listening. Words and messages are stored in the brain for immediate or later recall. Ability to recall information is influenced by many factors, including familiarity with the subject, the way information is presented, clarity, organization, and amount of information in the message.

Feedback--As discussed previously, listeners' verbal, nonverbal, and vocal behaviors are a major influence in the entire listening process.

TYPES OF LISTENING

There are five major types of listening: appreciative, discriminative, comprehensive, critical, and active. Each type of listening serves a different purpose and can be improved with practice.

1. **Appreciative:** Appreciative listening provides a pleasurable sensory experience. People listen to music, language, or voice because they enjoy them. Appreciative listening can be heightened if a listener focuses in on specifics. Appreciative listening of voice, language, or diction patterns of a good speaker can provide a model to emulate if you need to improve your delivery.

2. **Discriminative:** Discriminative listening refers to distinguishing certain cues for a specific purpose. For example, firefighters distinguish various sounds of fire, which enable them to respond appropriately. Arson investigators learn to discriminate certain verbal and nonverbal cues in order to speculate on the potential guilt or innocence of suspected arsonists. Discriminative listening also is basic to listeners who must evaluate messages. They must discriminate between fact and inference as well as between the verbal and nonverbal language cues or messages. One can learn to discriminate any cue with practice.

3. **Comprehensive:** Comprehensive listening is essential for understanding an entire message, not only for evaluating it. Most of the educational process (lectures, reports, explanations, briefings) is based on comprehensive listening. Note taking generally enhances comprehensive listening skills since it reinforces the spoken message.

4. **Critical:** Critical listening means evaluating a message for some purpose. However, the message must first be comprehended and then judged on the basis of clear criteria. Critical listening is especially important in judging any persuasive messages. Critical listeners must be aware of the effects of a speaker's rhetorical skills and credibility in order to evaluate the content of message objectives. Critical listening demands objectivity.

5. **Active:** Active listening (empathic), unlike critical listening, which is evaluative, is nonjudgmental. It involves **really** listening to people who have a need to talk in an atmosphere free from control, superiority, or evaluation. That is, active listening provides a climate that is supportive and conducive to trust. It is the practiced art and skill of effective counselors, psychiatrists, and friends. For some people active listening is easy and natural. Others may have difficulty with it because of training or personal resistance. For example, people engaged in problem-solving professions may be conditioned to listen for facts only. Lawyers, trained in techniques of cross-examination, may be proficient at discriminative or critical listening, but deficient at listening for feeling and intent of speakers. Although the technique may not come easily, active listening can be learned. Active listening skills are essential when the emotional climate of a situation is tense or when people are troubled. Active listening techniques are listed in Table 14-1.

Table 14-1
Active Listening Techniques

Type	Purpose	Examples
Neutral responses	To convey that you are interested and listening. To encourage the other to continue talking.	"I see. Uh-huh." "That's interesting." "I understand." "Go on..."
Ask for **clarification** (genuine questions)	To get additional facts or opinions. To help explore all sides of an issue. To define a term. To encourage others to analyze other aspects and discuss them with you.	"Can you clarify this?" "Why did that occur?" "What do you mean by...?" "Does that mean...?"
Paraphrase for meaning	To check your meaning and interpretation with the other. To show you understand what the other is saying. To check your expectations of others' behavioral intentions.	"As I understand it then, you mean..." "Am I right then, that you're saying..." "This is what you have decided to do and the reasons are..."
Perception check for feelings	To show that you understand how the other **feels** at this moment. To check the accuracy of your perception of emotion in the other. To help the other evaluate and temper his/her feelings.	"I imagine you feel pretty annoyed right now...right?" "You look pleased." "You're really angry about what happened aren't you?" "You seem a bit upset. What's bothering you? How can I help?"

Table 14-1 (cont'd)

Type	Purpose	Examples
Make **summarizing** statements	To bring all the discussion into focus. To serve as a springboard for further discussion. To check the overall accuracy of your understanding, and for important points overlooked or left out.	"These are the key ideas you have said." "So your main points then are..." "Let me see if I can summarize what you've said..."

FACTORS OF EFFECTIVE LISTENING

Compare your answer with the list of listener, speaker, and message factors that influence the listening proficiency of most people. This list also can be grouped into physical, psychological, and message factors.

- Listener:
  - physical states,
  - emotional states,
  - attitudes toward speaker and message,
  - type of listening required (e.g., general, detail, evaluative),
  - motivation to listen,
  - concentration,
  - training, and
  - experience;
- Speaker:
  - physical states,
  - emotional states,
  - verbal and nonverbal factors,
  - vocal factors,
  - personal image,
  - attitudes toward listener and message, and
  - experience; and
- Message:
  - subject,
  - purpose,
  - clarity,
  - focus,

- audience adaptation,
- organization,
- content,
- complexity,
- methods of transmission (channels), and
- amount of information.

Barriers to Effective Listening

There are many barriers to effective listening, including physiological, psychological, and linguistic barriers.

Physiological

Spare time--A major problem in listening is the difference between the normal conversational rate of speaking (125 to 180 words per minute) and the rate at which information can be processed in the mind (400 to 500 words per minute). Information processing can occur four to five times faster than it is normally taken in. If this time gap is not used productively by listeners, they will daydream, free associate, or "tune out" completely.

Channel capacity--The amount of information that the auditory and visual channels can take in at one time is limited. Therefore, the mind automatically sorts out and selects information in which it is interested or that it can process easily. Messages that are excessively long, dull, or complex may be disregarded. For this reason messages should be interesting, organized, reinforced, and adapted to the listeners' needs. Channel capacity also accounts for why messages, which are seen **and** heard will be remembered longer than those that are only seen. Studies have shown that following a 10-minute oral presentation, adult listeners retain 25 percent of what they hear, 35 percent of what they see, and **65 percent** of what they see **and** hear simultaneously.

Memory--Memory is related to channel capacity. Two kinds of memory exist--short-term and long-term. Short-term memory (immediate recall) is generally 7 ± 2 digits. This fact accounts for the length of identifying numbers such as Social Security, checking accounts, or phone numbers. The nature of short-term memory suggests that unless strategies for immediate recall are used, such as categorizing, mental outlining, or using mnemonic devices, material will be forgotten. This suggestion has implications both for speakers when presenting information and for listeners who wish to retain the information they hear.

Long-term memory (recall after varying time periods) also is related to the effectiveness of presentations. People tend to recall ideas rather than details after a time, but even ideas are forgotten after a while. How much do you recall 2 hours after a lecture? After 8 hours? After 1 week? Organized note taking is basic to long-term recall. The act of note taking itself is reinforcing and facilitates both short- and long-term recall. One-third to one-half of what people "hear" is forgotten within 8 hours. Two months later, people remember only about 25 percent or less.

Psychological

Disregard of emotional aspect of message--Listeners generally understand what is expressed directly but are less able to grasp what is implied. Lack of attention to unspoken elements (vocal and nonverbal) can be a major barrier in listening since they represent 30 to 90 percent of the emotional meaning of messages. Facial and vocal expressions, tone of voice, as well as rate, pitch, and frequency of speech must be seen **and** heard if a message is really to be understood.

Other person's orientation--Listening requires an "other person" orientation. People with extreme personal and social needs who are either unable or unwilling to recognize the emotional aspects of messages and speaker intents make poor listeners.

Negative expectations of listening event--Listeners often approach communication situations with expectations of being bored, overwhelmed, or disinterested. Such negative expectations can affect their actual listening experiences (self-fulfilling prophecy).

Insensitivity to feedback signals--Listener reactions such as eye contact, vocalizations, head nods, body shifts, and other nonverbal behaviors influence speaker behaviors as much as speaker behaviors influence listener reactions. Listener reactions (feedback) are a means of showing approval or disapproval, interest or disinterest, empathy or apathy. In short, listener feedback signals are powerful reinforcers, which regulate the quantity and quality of communication in an interaction. (Recall the characteristics of defensive and supportive emotional climates discussed in Unit 12: Delivery of a Presentation.)

Lack of clearly defined listening purpose--Because various types of listening involve different mental sets, the purpose of listening must be clearly defined if it is to be effective (e.g., listening for facts, names, evaluating).

Linguistics

Message construction--Unless a message is clear, focused, organized, interesting, and adapted to the level and needs of an audience, it will not be "heard."

Semantic barriers--Misinterpretation of words is often the basis for communication breakdowns. Many seemingly neutral words may trigger emotional reactions in listeners (e.g., volunteer, politician, girl). Even one emotionally laden word may cause a listener to tune out or create a serious communication problem. A poignant fire service/EMS story exemplifies the power of semantics in creating misunderstandings. After extricating an elderly man from an automobile wreck, the rescue team called for a Hurst, the equipment needed to remove the man's wife who was still pinned in the wreck. Upon hearing the word "Hurst" the man collapsed from a heart attack because he assumed that his wife was dead.

ACTIVE LISTENING TECHNIQUES

Listeners must recognize their negative listening habits and work to improve them. General suggestions based on the listening process and common barriers to listening are listed below.

- Get ready to listen. Pay attention!
- Determine the purpose of your listening whenever possible (e.g., general comprehension, specific detail, evaluation).
- Listen and watch for the speaker's feelings and intent as well as to the message content. Note what is said as well as what is **not** said. Attend also to the vocal and nonverbal behaviors of listeners.
- Monitor your own listening behaviors (eye contact, head nods, facial expressions). Recognize and elicit feedback on your habitual behaviors.
- Take notes or use strategies to improve your recall of messages. Such techniques as mental outlines, word associations, mnemonic devices, or categorizing information will help you with recall.
- Monitor your expectations about the listening event. They will influence what you hear.
- Resist internal distractions. Concentrate. Find something of interest in what is said. Use your mental time productively by anticipating what the speaker will say or by summarizing what has just been said.
- In stressful situations, consider the other person's emotional condition. Avoid the temptation to make judgments ("You shouldn't feel that way"); to manipulate (change the subject or make irrelevant comments); to be apathetic (ignore); to convey a superior attitude ("When I was your age"); or to be dogmatic ("This is the only way").
- Use difficult listening situations (complex or boring material) as practice for improving listening skills. Listen for some small thing that is of interest to you.
- Avoid overreacting to "trigger" words.
- Check your assumptions by paraphrasing, or asking clarifying questions.
- Recognize your physical limitations. There is no point in pushing yourself to listen when you are tired, ill, or uncomfortable.
- Recognize that poor listening also can be caused by speaker or message factors, such as dull presentation or disorganized content.

- Elicit feedback from others regarding your skill as a listener.

  - Leadership involves effective listening.

  Remember:

  -- Empty barrels make a lot of noise!

  -- Silence is golden!

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Activity 14.1

Grapevine

Purpose

To introduce the topic of listening.

Directions

Observe or participate, as directed by your instructor.

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Activity 14.2

Listening Quiz

Purpose

To help you reflect on how well you listen.

Directions

1. Complete the quizzes on the following pages.

2. Do not look at the Profile Analysis until you have completed the quizzes.

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Activity 14.2 (cont'd)

How Well Do You Listen? (A personal profile)*

Here are three tests in which we ask you to rate yourself as a listener. There are no correct or incorrect answers. Your responses, however, will reveal your understanding of yourself as a listener. They also will highlight areas in which improvement might be welcome--to you and to those around you. When you have completed the tests, you can compare your scores with those of thousands of others who have taken the same test.

Quiz 1

A. Circle the term that best describes you as a listener.

Superior or Excellent	Above Average	Average
Below Average	Poor	Terrible

B. On a scale of 0 to 100 (100 = highest) how would you rate yourself as a listener?

____
(0 to 100)

Quiz 2

How do you think the following people would rate you as a listener?
(0 to 100)

Your best friend: __________________

Your boss: _______________________

Business colleague: ________________

A job subordinate: _________________

Your spouse: _____________________

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Quiz 3

As a listener, how often do you find yourself engaging in these ten bad listening habits? First, check the appropriate columns. Then, tabulate your score using the key below.

LISTENING **FREQUENCY** **SCORE**

	Almost Always	Usually	Some-times	Seldom	Almost Never	
1. Calling the subject uninteresting.						
2. Criticizing the speaker's delivery or mannerisms.						
3. Getting overstimulated by something the speakers says.						
4. Listening primarily for facts.						
5. Trying to outline every-thing.						
6. Faking attention to the speaker.						
7. Allowing interfering distractions.						
8. Avoiding difficult material.						
9. Letting emotion-laden words arouse personal antagonism.						
10. Wasting the advantage of thought speed (daydreaming).						

Key: TOTAL SCORE ___________

For every "Almost Always," give yourself a 2.

For every "Usually," give yourself a 4.

For every "Sometimes," give yourself a 6.

For every "Seldom," give yourself a 8.

For every "Almost Never," give yourself a 10.

Activity 14.2 (cont'd)

Profile Analysis

This is how other people have responded to the same questions that you've just answered.

Quiz 1

A. Eighty-five percent of all listeners questioned rated themselves as average or less. Fewer than 5 percent rated themselves as superior or excellent.

B. On the 0 to 100 scale, the extreme range is 10 to 90; the general range is 35 to 85 and the average rating is 55.

Quiz 2

A. When comparing the listening self-ratings and projected ratings of others, most respondents believe that their best friend would rate them highest as a listener and that rating would be higher than the one they gave themselves in Quiz 1 where the average was 55.

B. How come? We can only guess that best-friend status is such an intimate, special kind of relationship that you cannot imagine it ever happening unless you were a good listener. If you were not, you and he or she would not be best friends to begin with.

C. Going down the list, people who take this test usually think their bosses would rate them higher than they rated themselves. Part of that is probably wishful thinking; part of it is true. We do tend to listen to our bosses better; whether it is out of respect or fear or whatever does not matter.

D. The grades for colleague and job subordinate work out to be just about the same as the listener rated himself/herself--that 55 figure again.

E. But when you get to spouse, husband or wife, something really dramatic happens. The score here is significantly lower than the 55 average that previous profile-takers gave themselves; what is interesting is that the figure goes downhill steadily. While newlyweds tend to rate their spouse at the same high level as their best friend, as the marriage goes on and on the rating falls. So, in a household where the couple has been married 50 years, there could be a lot of talk, but maybe nobody is **really** listening.

Quiz 3

A. The average score is a 62, 7 points higher than the 55 that the average test-taker gave himself/herself in Quiz 1. This suggests that when listening is broken down into specific areas of competence, we rate ourselves better than we do when listening is considered only as a generality.

B. Of course, the best way to discover how well you listen is to ask the people to whom you listen most frequently--your spouse, boss, best friend, etc. They will give you an earful!

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Activity 14.3 (Optional)

"Don't Be Afraid To Ask, Can You Hear Me Now?"

Purpose

To discuss the concept of active listening.

Directions

1. Read "Don't Be Afraid To Ask, Can You Hear Me Now?" by Ron Coleman.

2. After reading the article, discuss it and outline the main points based on the topic assigned to your group.

    a. Table 1: Summarize "focus."

    b. Table 2: Summarize "accountability."

    c. Table 3: Summarize "involvement."

    d. Table 4: Summarize "repetition."

3. Each table will report on their summary

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Activity 14.3 (cont'd)

"Don't Be Afraid to Ask, Can You Hear Me Now?"

Oct 1, 2003 12 p.m.

Ronny J. Coleman

You're not listening! If you've managed to avoid hearing or saying that phrase, then you are a rare human being indeed. Conversations and other forms of auditory stimuli surround us. Sometimes there's so much noise that true communication disappears in the chaos.

My favorite example of this phenomenon took place in a firehouse, where we had an individual who liked to do woodworking when he was on duty. The chief hated him doing it. The woodworker hated the couch that the department had in the station's living room. These two were at each other's throat almost constantly over these issues. The chief wanted the woodworking out of the firehouse, and the firefighter wanted the couch out of the living room.

One day it was raining the proverbial cats and dogs. When the chief came through the door, he saw that there was a great deal of wooden material stacked neatly on the couch. Growing redder in the face as he pointed toward the couch, he began to spit and sputter at the woodworking firefighter, "Get rid of it and get rid of it now!" As the chief left the room, he tossed off a final comment, "This is the last time we are ever going to talk about this — get rid of it right now!"

Imagine the chief's chagrin when he returned a few hours later to find all of the woodwork neatly piled on the chairs in the room. The couch had disappeared. Bolting to the back door and looking behind the fire station, he was outraged to see the couch had become a sodden mess sitting in the parking lot.

Now this particular event had some humorous aspects of it, but the consequences of not listening aren't always funny. As a matter of fact, a lack of active listening skills has cost people their careers, opportunities and even marriages.

Have you ever had a problem with your listening skills while dealing with a spouse or a child? What many of you might not realize is that if the same inactive listening skills are exercised in the fire station, there can be a wide variety of negative results. If you learn what an active listener does and see it as a skill and ability, you can become better at it and improve your interactions with others.

Let's talk first about the whole concept of being a listener versus a talker. The first ground rule is that if you're talking, you aren't listening. The second ground rule is that if you're just listening without talking, then you aren't communicating.

Active listening means focusing on what the other person really has to say. However, in the event that you're absorbing signals from another person without giving feedback on what those signals mean to you, there's a strong possibility that the versions may not be the same when it's all over with.

While the tale of the wet couch shows communication problems in the fire station, active listening also can be applied to the overall fire organization. Developing active listening skills is a very important part in determining the potential success of interaction among small groups in an organizational setting. In large groups it also plays a role, but to a different degree. Large groups often have more misunderstandings as the various sides give out without getting through to the others. In short, being an active listener is very important for a fire captain supervising a small group of people, but it's often more important to a chief officer supervising an entire shift or a fire chief running an entire fire department.

Active listening skills are vital only in certain environments. We all know there's a lot of rhetoric in our organizations, but you also might compare much of the communication that goes on in the firehouse to radio static. Active listening isn't something you can do *24* hours a day, *365* days a year, but it is something you must be prepared to do when consequences could result from not doing it.

For example, the use of active listening skills allows a much more effective application of information when you're trying to resolve a conflict. When a person is coping with conflict, listening is very important. It could be conflict above you; it could be conflict below you; it could be conflict between individuals. In conflict resolution, both sides have to hear and feel the true signals of the other side to reach a level of trust. That comes from active listening.

While conflict resolution may seem to require only problem-solving, it also touches on crisis management. There's an emotional aspect to it that's one notch up from having to solve a problem. Active listening is a technique to get beyond the tears and fears to probe for specifics rather than generalities.

So how do you do this wonderful thing? It might be helpful if we use an acronym here to remind you of these techniques. The acronym is *FAIR*, which stands for focus, accountability, involvement and repetition.

Focus means exactly that. When you're involved in an exchange of information, you can't be multi-tasking. It's important to position yourself in a way that maintains eye contact while allowing you to watch for body language and other non-verbal forms of communications.

The only way that you can be an active listener is to block out all of the other signals that are coming into your consciousness. You need to pay attention to what other people are saying. Nuances such as the choice of words and the manner in which people express themselves often are based on whether they think you are paying attention or tuning them out. You also don't want to provide your own distractions. For example, it's better not to be too direct when you're trying to get another person to tell the truth.

Accountability speaks to the issue of taking responsibility for what you say and holding other people responsible for what they say. In active listening there are no throw-away lines. When you're engaged with another person in an active-listening environment, everything that's said must mean something. You have to take personal accountability as you formulate every thought based on what you're hearing.

Involvement literally means that anytime a person is doing all of the talking and none of the listening, there isn't a lot of communication going on — it's a monologue. Involvement means that there needs to be a continuous assessment in the discussion of how the other person's perspective is being brought out. Instead of making judgments during active listening, good communicators tend to ask a lot of questions in case the other person has yet to form all of their conclusions. It you can get someone to answer questions before he or she forms a final opinion, you may uncover information that will help you with the understanding of that person's true intent.

Repetition is an important component of active listening, requiring you to tell the other person what you think has been said. This type of dialogue often starts off with, "What I think you said to me was …." If you go back to the previous test of involvement, repetition means constantly using new information to update what you actually know about what is being discussed.

Active listeners often give the impression of empathy without being overwhelmed by what they are receiving. They tend to be people who can convert what's being said into what is really being meant. The concept of active listening also includes the idea that judgment is always pending instead of being rendered in the middle of a conversation. The use of any language that gives the person the indication that the jury has already delivered its verdict almost automatically eliminates the opportunity for active communications.

Unfortunately, active listening is not a common practice during many situations in our field. If the comic-strip character Dilbert had been a captain in a firehouse, he probably would have drawn some of the same conclusions about the breakdown in communications that occur in almost every business around the country.

As a person who is leading or supervising others, we often can expand our influence over their roles and relationships in achieving the goals of our organization by being a better listener. When individuals seek to understand, they must have both patience and curiosity.

A 40-year veteran of the fire service, Ronny J. Coleman has served as fire chief in Fullerton and San Clemente, Calif., and was the fire marshal of the State of California from 1992 to 1999. He is a certified fire chief and a master instructor in the California Fire Service Training and Education System. A Fellow of the Institution of Fire Engineers, he has an associate's degree in fire science, a bachelor's degree in political science and a master's degree in vocational education.

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Activity 14.4

Spare Time Listening

Purpose

To identify techniques for improving general listening effectiveness.

Directions

1. Close your books and listen to the instructor.

2. Write down the following:

   a. At least five things you remember from the lecture.

   ____

   ____

   ____

   ____

   ____

   b. At least five things you thought about that were not related to the lecture.

   ____

   ____

   ____

   ____

   ____

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Activity 14.5

Nonverbal Listening Behaviors

Purpose

To identify techniques for improving general listening effectiveness.

Directions

1. You will be divided into pairs (listeners and speakers).
2. Listeners are to follow directions from Handout 14-2: Instructions for Listeners.
3. Speakers will give a 2-minute presentation on ways to improve listening.

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Activity 14.6

Practice in Handling Disagreements

Purpose

To practice handling disagreements and controversial topics through active listening.

Directions

1. The instructor will divide you into groups of three. One person will act as an observer who monitors and evaluates the other two who will engage in a controversial dialogue.

2. You will answer the following questions individually.

3. Compare your answers with another group member. Pick one topic where you have opposite answers. Jot down your reasons for your point of view.

4. Read or verbalize your written ideas on your point of view to your partner. Before your partner responds with his/her point of view, he/she must paraphrase what you said to your satisfaction. (Fill in or correct, if his/her paraphrase is distorted, incomplete, or incorrect.) Only after you are satisfied can your partner present his/her point of view. The discussion then may proceed. However, after each person speaks, the listener must continue to use an active listening technique (e.g., clarification, perception checks, neutral statements, paraphrases, or summary) before responding.

Questions

I believe:		YES	NO
1.	The combat challenge or the International Association of Fire Fighters/International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFF/IAFC) fitness initiative should be administered to all firefighters annually and minimum standards should be satisfied.	____	____
2.	To promote to captain, one should have at least an associate's degree.	____	____
3.	All firefigthers should be emergency medical technicians (EMTs).	____	____
4.	To promote to a chief-level officer position, one should be an Executive Fire Officer (EFO) graduate or in the process of achieving it.	____	____
5.	Seniority should factor heavily in determining promotions.	____	____

		YES	NO
6.	The paramilitary structure is not a good model for the fire service to imitate.	____	____
7.	The all hazard approach in the fire service is getting out of control.	____	____

UNIT 15: POWER OF THE VOICE

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

1. *Identify vocal factors in personal image.*

2. *Discuss oral reading techniques.*

3. *Use oral interpretive markings to define meaning in a poem and be able to read the poem using these interpretive marks.*

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He sounds like a truck driver.

Competent! Impressive!

B O R I N G !

She's got class.

I don't trust him . . .

Oh, that voice! I'm in love.

Comes across like a fine gentleman.

He's pathetic . . .

Charismatic speaker!

Dynamite! Fascinating!

Sound familiar? Were you ever affected by someone else's speech or has your speech been received in this manner? These reactions are related to factors in the delivery of messages, not just to their content.

INTRODUCTION

Listeners' impressions of unknown speakers are made quickly, often within the first few seconds of an interaction. They include judgments of personality, character, social status, educational and intellectual levels, sincerity, competence, and vitality. These impressions are responsible, in part, for the way a speaker's messages are interpreted, for they affect a speaker's credibility. Unfortunately, most speakers are unaware of which cues create impressions since verbal, nonverbal, and vocal behaviors are generally spontaneous or habitual. They are the result of physical and psychological factors as well as social and cultural learning. They are also the tip of an iceberg in the sense that they reflect emotional states that may not be entirely conscious. Nevertheless, verbal, nonverbal, and vocal behaviors are as much a part of a speaker's message as the message itself.

The purpose of this unit is to sensitize you to some of the vocal factors that influence your personal image. Such awareness can lead to increasing your credibility as an individual and the fire service/emergency medical services (EMS) you represent. In addition, improving your image should increase your self-confidence and potential for career advancement.

VOCAL FACTORS IN PERSONAL IMAGE

In addition to verbal cues, judgments of you are based on perceptions of your tone of voice and diction (articulation). Therefore, it is essential to understand something about voice and speech production and the many influences that act on it. Your voice is flexible and capable of considerable variety and expression. Greater awareness of the acoustic dimensions of your voice, such as pitch, loudness, and quality, as well as the influences upon your diction, such as rate and fluency, can help you to become a more effective speaker.

Articulation (Diction)

- Does this shop sell short socks, sir?

- Put the coffee in the proper coffee pot.

There is a standard range of articulatory placements which exists for every sound. Violation of this range creates "errors" such as lisps (buth for bus or Shally for Sally). Clear diction requires precision of muscle movement and time to make the necessary articulatory adjustments required in distinct running speech. Many habits or common physical problems interfere with clarity of diction:

- clenched teeth;
- tight jaw;
- rapid speech:
  - shortened vowel length,
  - running sounds together, and
  - dropping final sounds of words or words in sentences;
- extreme dialects;
- foreign accents;
- casual/informal speech styles;
- lack of energy;
- lack of confidence;
- lack of awareness;
- depressed mood; and
- physical factors.

Rate of Speech

Perhaps the clarity of your diction broke down as you read the above passage quickly, for rate of speech is related to clarity of diction. Rate of speech is also related to several other factors. The overall effectiveness of a presentation, for example, depends in part on your rate of speech. It must be slow enough so that people can understand, yet not so slow that they will be bored. It also must vary according to the meaning and emotional elements of the message. Rate of speech can be varied by increasing the frequency and length of pauses or by prolonging the vowel sounds within words. Varied rate is important for several reasons. It can emphasize ideas or phrases, mark transitions, and create attention or dramatic effects. Actors, clergy, and commentators use rate variation very effectively.

Pitch

Individuals have a wide-pitch range, from the lowest to the highest note they can comfortably speak. Normally, it is about two octaves on the musical scale. People generally speak at the lower portion of their pitch range (1/3 or 1/4 up from the base of their range). It is within the lower pitch range that you can achieve a maximally efficient voice with minimal effort. However, pitch range varies with emotional state, as firefighters well know. Strong emotions usually result in more extensive use of the upper pitch range. Depressed emotions result in flattened pitch levels. Some people, out of habit, or for psychological or cultural reasons, speak at the very base of their pitch range and use very little pitch variation when speaking. The resulting voice is monotonous, unpleasant, and even gravelly.

Volume (Loudness, Stress)

Vocal loudness varies, in part, with the amount of air pressure used when speaking (like water pressure in a hose). It also varies with how you use your vocal cords. Overall loudness of voice should be appropriate for the acoustics of particular rooms or the size of the audience.

Quality

To whom would you rather listen:

Brian Williams or Woody Allen?
Jimmy Carter or Bryant Gumbel?
"Edith Bunker" or Meryl Streep?

Quality is a more illusive parameter of voice than either pitch or volume. It is probably more apparent to you as you listen to different singers than to different speakers. Nevertheless, the quality of your speaking voice plays a major role in the impressions you make with others. You can be perceived as warm or cold, good or bad, pleasant or unpleasant on the basis of your vocal quality alone. Three dimensions of quality can be described: nasality, brightness, and space.

ORAL READING TECHNIQUES

Fire service/EMS personnel are often called on to read a brief official report in front of a group. Oral reading is an art as well as a skill, which can be learned. There are several things you can do to simplify your task of reading aloud.

- Make your message legible. Have it typed in **large letters** on half a page. It should be triple-spaced. Leave wide margins. This will enable you to turn from your paper and look at the audience. You will be able to get back to the paper, glance at the next phrase and go back to your audience without losing your place.

- Develop a system of symbols for marking your material as you want it to be read. Underline words you wish to emphasize, cluster phrases or ideas. Mark phrases and ideas as you wish to read them aloud; use slashes or spaces.

- Punctuation may or may **not** serve as a guide in the way you wish to phrase something. The important point is that you read ideas, not words. That is, oral reading should sound like conversational speech in which pauses occur between complete ideas (i.e., Readathoughtlikethis not each/word/individually/like/this).

- Rehearse aloud. Use a tape recorder, if necessary. Read your manuscript with expression, following your markings.

- Maintain eye contact. Practice looking away from your script. You can read aloud and maintain eye contact with your audience if your manuscript is suitably prepared.

- Guard against any distracting mannerisms such as excessive eye blinks, twitches, frowns, or deadpan expressions. An expressive face is also part of your message when reading aloud.

- Dress appropriately. Monitor your attire and grooming. Determine whether a uniform or civilian clothing will enhance your message. There may be times when a regular suit will help your audience relate to you more easily.

Oral Interpretive Markings

Short Pause	Word / Word
Medium Pause	Word // Word
Long Pause	Word /// Word
Emphasis	$\underline{\text{Word}}$
De-emphasis	$\overline{\text{Word}}$
Stretch	Word
Turn up Voice (?)	Word

Continue on next line (no pause)

Activity 15.1

Interpretive Reading

Purpose

To define meaning in a poem and be able to read the poem using oral interpretive markings.

Directions

1. Refer to the poem **"Sea of Blue"** located in this activity.

2. While watching the **"Sea of Blue"** video refer to the Oral Interpretive Markings in your Student Manual (SM) as the reader is reading. Observe what the reader does with his voice to get his feeling and meaning across to the audience.

3. Discuss what Bill Manning did and how it worked.

4. Next, refer to the poem, **"Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening."**

5. First, read the poem individually, just to get the meaning of the words.

6. Next, read the poem again without marking it to get your own personal meaning from the poem.

7. When that is complete, mark the poem so that you can get the meaning you feel across to the other students when read aloud.

8. Once you have marked the poem, read it quietly aloud to yourself only stopping where there is pause and only using voice effects where marked. Make any necessary changes.

9. You will be called on to read the poem aloud.

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Activity 15.1 (cont'd)

"Sea of Blue"

We miss you, fallen heroes,
And time seems to move slower without you;
Yet through the mists of grief
We feel you still, and that is our relief:
For our hearts beat
As one. Your hearts beat
Within us, within the sea of blue.

Long through the day and into the night,
We turn out, leaving behind
Our homes and fire stations
For a dangerous destination,
A clash with the unknown;
But we are poised, battle-ready, our nerves honed
With steel, and we are not alone"
Your hearts beat within us, within the sea of blue.

Our sirens are heralds of hope--
From those in danger, never far away--
And to the helpless, they say,
"We have made a promise, a sacred trust,
As our forefathers did and as we not must
Fulfill, for we are firefighters true,
And our hearts beat as one in a sea of blue."

As we push through the smoke,
Advance our line through the door,
As we throw ladders and
Search above the fire floor,
As we take command
And make our stand,
We are one true
Sea of blue.

As we drop from planes
And cut fire breaks,
As we search through the rubble,
As we do whatever it takes
To rescue those in mortal trouble,
As the sweat drips from our brows,
As our eyes meet in battle
With a recognition and resolve,

As drops of blood in tears dissolve,
As we burn with the flame of life
And reach deep down
To find the courage
And the strength to carry on,
Our hearts are one,
And your hearts beat still
Within a sea of blue.

When we say "yes"
To the firefighter's life,
When we say "yes"
To duty, honor, and sacrifice,
We are saying "yes" with you, fallen hero.
You are alive in ways that can't be seen:
We follow our dream
In your footsteps and,
As you emptied your goodness into life's cup,
So will we follow and raise it up--
For our hearts are one
In a sea of blue.

Across our hearts and minds
A spirit blows, throughout time, unceasing:
A virtuous spirit called "sister" and "brother"
That joins us to one another
And fills us with the power
To walk this unforgiving road
And lock arms around the helpless
In a rock-solid wall of human kindness
Between the perilous
And the imperiled.
For we are one, a sea of blue.

We are fire patriots, our flags unfurled,
A sea of blue in a circle of lifegiving
That's everwidening
And transcendent of this world.
Your immortality sings within us
To the beat of hearts true,
True to the sea of blue.

Let us testify, brothers and sisters,
To the families of the fallen whose love
For their heroes is deeper than the sea,
Let this be our solemn vow, our destiny:

May our fallen heroes live on
In our every act of courage,
In every deed of honor,
In every discharge of duty,
In every mark of kindness,
In every expression of compassion,
In our passion for the job,
In our every achievement,
In our every success,
In everything we do:
May you live on, fallen heroes,
In the enduring sea of blue.

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Activity 15.1 (cont'd)

"Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening"

Whose woods these are I think I know.

His house is in the village though;

He will not see me stopping here

To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer

To stop without a farmhouse near

Between the woods and frozen lake

The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake

To ask if there is some mistake.

The only other sound's the sweep

Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep.

But I have promises to keep,

And miles to go before I sleep,

And miles to go before I sleep.

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UNIT 16: PERCEPTION

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

1. *Define selective perception.*
2. *Identify factors that influence perception.*
3. *Explain factors related to self-concept and to improving self-concept.*
4. *Discuss individual roles and responsibilities.*
5. *Identify audience perceptions and their impact on communication.*

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"That's just the way I am. I'll never change!"

"I'd rather fight a fire than deal with people. It's more predictable."

"I know I have to face my self-doubts. I've been hiding all my life. I can't hide anymore in my new position."

"If things get tough in the office, I just blow--take a walk--hop on the engine."

"I handle the public this way: First call, ignore it; second call, tell them I'll get back to them; third call, listen to their complaints."

"I told them at least five times. They don't listen."

"That's the only language those guys understand."

These are actual statements made by fire service/emergency medical services (EMS) officers.

INTRODUCTION

Success as a leader in the fire service/EMS depends to a great extent on people skills. Undoubtedly, many of your relationships are already positive. Others may be problematic or fraught with tension. Unfortunately, people in command rarely take the time to examine their own behavior or the nature and quality of their working relationships. Yet to become an effective communicator it is essential to develop a keen awareness of your own behavior and its effect on others. In this sense, communication is as much a people process as a language process. Stated another way, improving interpersonal skills begins with a better understanding of self.

This unit covers an equally important aspect of effective communications, which involves examining and understanding the perceptions of the listener or audience. When officers are able to look at situations from the point of view of others, communication usually improves.

It is not easy to achieve the insights necessary to effect change in behavior as an adult because you are programmed to respond in particular ways and often have personal investments in the status quo. Nevertheless, change is not impossible, given certain conditions. That is, you must become aware of how you feel about yourself, how you are perceived by others, and how your behavior, in turn, affects others. You must also look at a given situation through the eyes of the other people involved. It is the purpose of this unit to briefly introduce you to the process of self-examination, for one cannot change the unknown. Additionally, you will learn to understand the receiver's or audience's perceptions. The activities are designed to help you develop personal insights and understandings of others, with a goal of achieving more effective communications.

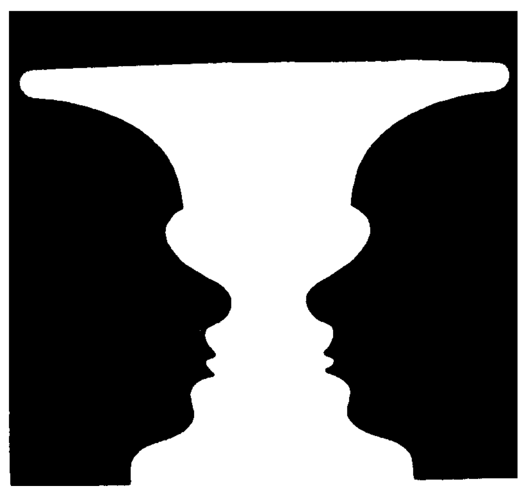
PERCEPTION

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Love is blind. No one disputes these statements. Everyone understands them. Yet, when it comes to different accounts of the same event or different viewpoints on a subject, people are less apt to understand. They even argue about the right and wrong of individual perspectives. People also fail to comprehend why they are misunderstood or why they respond differently to people and events. Or, they insist they were never told something when, in fact, they were. Why do these things occur? They result from the process of perception--the way individuals process the information they perceive from the environment. Understanding the basis of "selective perceptions" is fundamental to the development of communication skills, for human behavior begins in the minds of people.

What you know about the world, your notion of reality, is a result of the way your mind processes the information it receives through your senses. Known as information processing, it begins with perception, a process of selecting, organizing, and interpreting sensory input into a coherent picture of the world. That is, once you select information from the environment through your senses, you organize it according to some innate or learned rules.

You usually organize by giving **priority to what is striking or outstanding.** Note the following illustrations:

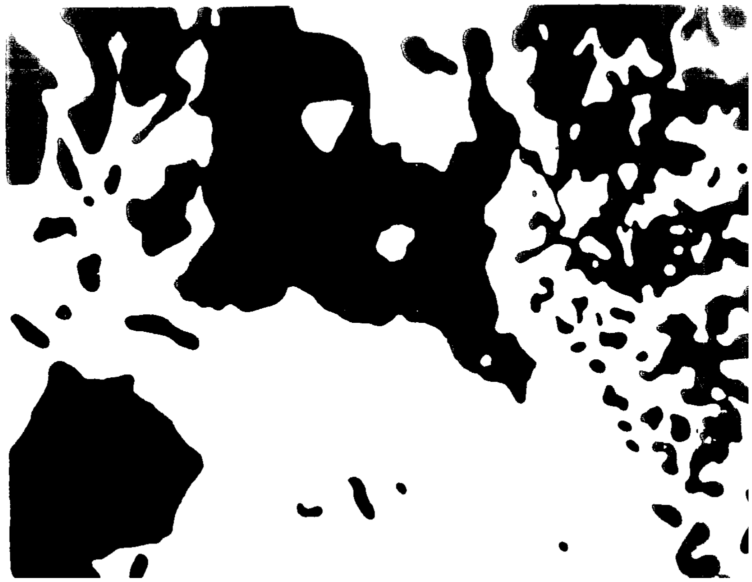
Which do you see? The goblet or the famous twins?



Describe the woman you see in this drawing. How old is she, how attractive, what kind of covering on her head, etc.?

This collection of twenty discrete blotches is a picture of a dog. Do you agree?

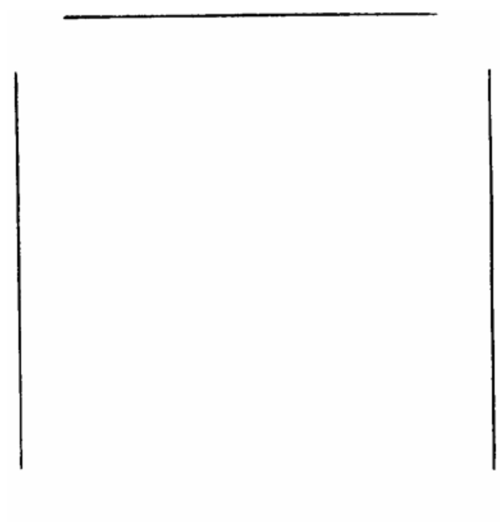
If something is not contrasted enough, it is more difficult to decode.



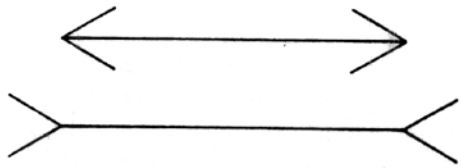
In these patches of black and white, do you see a man's face? No? Keep looking! Why is he so difficult to find?

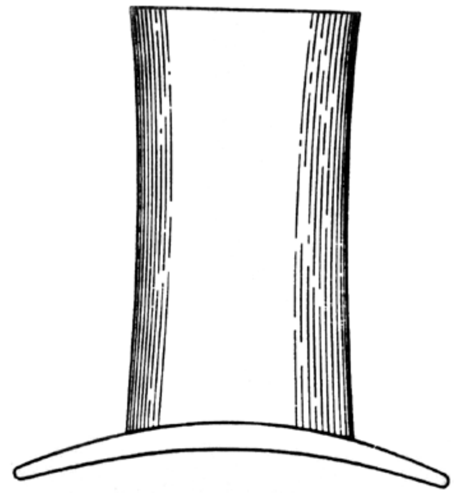
You also tend to organize what you perceive into whole figures. If some of the information is missing, you tend to fill it in. This is a process known as closure.

Even though the corners of this square are missing, you can fill them in with your imagination and make a square.



We do the same thing with the interpretation of spoken language as we do with visual figures. We fill in if it is incomplete or not explicit. Often what you see or hear is ambiguous. Sometimes you don't see or hear things distinctly or you see or hear them in different contexts. All things are influenced by the context in which they are seen or heard. The context is both physical and mental. Note the following figures:

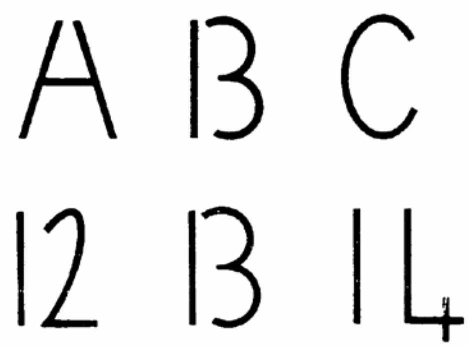




Are both these lines the same length?

Is the hat higher than it is wide?

Another example of the effect of context. The middle figure can either be a letter "B" or a number "13" depending on the context in which it is seen.



A similar thing occurs when you make inferences about any event or message. The context (physical, psychosocial, cultural, or temporal) in which you receive information will influence your interpretation of it. Stated another way, your view of the world is distinctly yours. How you select, organize, and interpret information depends on your past, which itself is a product of your perceptions. Your perceptions, therefore, are your frames of reference or your nets, which filter everything that you see, hear, or experience. Fire service/EMS personnel see the world differently from private citizens or politicians. You see it from a fire service/EMS perspective. It is necessary to become keenly aware of the significance of "selective perception" and the enormous impact it has on communication. Its effect is further illustrated in the poem on the next page.

The Blind Men and the Elephant
By: John Godfrey Saxe

It was six men of Indostan
To learning much inclined,
Who went to see the Elephant
(Though all of them were blind),
That each by observation
Might satisfy his mind.
The First approached the Elephant,
And happening to fall
Against his broad and sturdy side,
At once began to bawl:
"God bless me! but the Elephant
Is very like a wall!"
The Second, feeling of the tusk,
Cried, "Ho! what have we here
So very round and smooth and sharp?
To me 'tis mighty clear
This wonder of an Elephant
Is very like a spear!"
The Third approached the animal,
And happening to take
The squirming trunk within his hands,
Thus boldly up he spake:
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant
Is very like a snake!"
The Fourth reached out an eager hand,
And felt about the knee
"What most this wondrous beast is like
Is mighty plain," quoth he;
"Tis clear enough the Elephant
Is very like a tree!"
The Fifth who chanced to touch the ear,
Said: "E'en the blindest man
Can tell what this resembles most;
Deny the fact who can,
This marvel of an Elephant
Is very like a fan!"
The Sixth no sooner had begun
About the beast to grope,
Then seizing on the swinging tail
That fell within his scope,
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant
Is very like a rope!"
And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,

Each in his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right,
And all were in the wrong!

Language Perception

Perception is not a simple process. In addition to selective filtering, it is largely influenced by language. Language, in turn, influences perception. That is, people do not usually see what they cannot say in words. For example, Eskimos perceive many differences in types of snow and, therefore, have many more words for snow than we do. (**Perceptions influence language.**) Similarly, you (firefighters) perceive and label differences in types of smoke and fire because your life depends on that knowledge. This special terminology for smoke (or snow) enables you to train others to perceive those important differences. (**Language influences perception.**)

This interplay between language and perception clearly illustrates how communication with others involves receiving and sending messages (public reports) about your private perceptions. It is important, therefore, to recognize the following three significant factors about perception and language.

1. **You** play a major part not only in the messages you send but also in how you perceive the messages you receive. Your perceptions may cause distortions in these messages. **You** are not infallible.

2. You need to **validate your perceptions** in order to avoid misunderstandings. You can check your perceptions in several ways:

    a. With other people. ("Did you hear the same thing?")

    b. With yourself. ("Repeat that please.")

    c. With other senses (watch **and** listen).

    d. With past experiences. (Has this happened before?)

    e. With experimentation. (Assume your perception is correct. Then, check the consequences of your intended actions.)

3. **No one has a corner on the truth!** You see things from "your" perspective only, unless you make a concerted effort to "decenter" yourself and see things from another's perspective.

Factors Influencing Perception

Many factors account for selective perceptions.

Physiological state--Acuity for seeing and hearing. General health, biological rhythms, or mood. Everything that affects your health and physiological state also influences your perceptions. Anything may seem difficult to cope with when you are fatigued, ill, or depressed.

Psychological state--Values, emotions, and personalities shape reality. You see what you want or need to see. Your views also will be shaped by your feelings about yourself. Consequently, mistrustful persons rarely find others to trust. Similarly, anger may create a misperception of hostility in others. This phenomenon can account for individuals viewing (interpreting) the same event differently.

Experiential/Background--Experiences such as education, physical handicaps, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds affect perception. Many adults who experienced speech or language problems as children still harbor feelings of inferiority about their oral communication skills despite the fact that they have overcome their difficulty. Early negative experiences have colored their adult perceptions about their speaking ability. It also colors self-images.

Channel capacity (Physiological limitations)--All of the senses (especially visual and auditory) are limited in terms of the amount of information they can receive or retain at one time. Information received via one channel only (hearing) will be forgotten more quickly than information received through two channels (hearing **and** seeing).

Spatial orientation--Views of the same event or objects appear different according to one's physical (spatial) perspective. New York City looks its best from the air. You appear very big to a small child looking up at you.

Context--The context in which an event occurs influences the perception of that event. Presenting the same speech to subordinates can be more anxiety producing than presenting it to peers or superiors. Receiving a message after a "real worker" may be very different than receiving it when you are relaxed.

SELF-PERCEPTION

Factors Related to Self-Concept Development

It should be apparent by now that reality is in the mind. That is, it is what people perceive and believe that causes them to behave or act in a particular way. Your own behavior is based on perception--perception of yourself--your self-concept or self-image. Self-concept is actually a collection of self-perceptions, including such views of self as physical appearance, mental capacities, life roles, skills, and achievements.

Factors Related to Self-Concept Improvement

Whether you think about it or not, you have a self-concept. It is a product of many influences, primarily in your early life, but presently as well. These influences include

- How important people in your life reacted to you (looking-glass view).

- Comparisons of yourself with others (self-comparison view).
- The roles (e.g., family, position, profession) you played in life (role view).

Unfortunately, many people, particularly men, have been conditioned not to focus on feelings or ideas like self-concept. The fact remains, however, that **your feelings about yourself, conscious or not, influence your perceptions and interpretations of people, language, and events.** Feelings of self generally are reflected in myriad verbal and nonverbal behaviors. For example, people with low self-concepts may repeatedly make derogatory or critical statements about themselves. Or, they may reveal their low self-images in inexpressive or inaudible voices, hesitant speech, unhappy facial expressions or postures, or hostility toward others. Conversely, people with positive self-concepts appear confident and generally are good communicators. The more positive your self-concept, the more likely you are to expect and achieve success.

Your self-concept also will filter statements of others about you. If you don't think you do something well, you undoubtedly will look for and listen to statements that reinforce your negative perception of yourself. If given a compliment, a person with a low self-image generally will disregard, discount, or rationalize it.

Very often the problems you encounter in interpersonal relationships, or speaking in public, can be traced to your low self-image rather than to any external factors or inability to express yourself. People who feel positively about themselves generally reflect confidence and have little difficulty with these situations; hence, the importance of becoming aware of your self-concept and improving it. How do you view your communication effectiveness?

Identifying Perceptions

It is highly important to present such things as proposals, training, and fire prevention education, i.e., residential sprinklers from the perception of the receiver or audience.

Internal audience--all the people in the organization.

External audience--those outside the organization.

Such notions as "you can't teach an old dog new tricks" or "he's been like that since I've known him" are simply not true. You can grow and develop self-confidence at any age, providing you engage in self-examination of your many selves and roles. People should be able to integrate all of the roles they play in life and move easily among them. They also should be realistic about appraising themselves. The more realistic your self-appraisal, the greater your personal effectiveness.

The insights developed from self-examination (which may be painful) are the building blocks of growth. As insights develop, so do self-expectations. Insights about yourself also can be gained from others who know you well or from like experiences. But understanding self is only the beginning of growth. You must be motivated to grow, and strive to live up to your potential.

Your "self" can be divided into three separate selves.

1. **Material Self**--The material self consists of trappings and material possessions. The material self is a significant portion of many people's self-concept. They are as much as they own. (I have...therefore I am...)

2. **Social Self**--The social self results from the recognition that you receive from others. ("If **you** say I'm ok...I'm ok. I **am** attractive, articulate, and socially adept.") It also involves your own body image, speaking image, and social awareness.

3. **Spiritual Self**--The spiritual self includes thought processes and psyche. It is comprised of your intellectual, moral, and religious views of yourself.

According to this view, all three selves (material, social, and spiritual) combine in unique ways to form a person's self-concept. That is, each self sets goals for itself. Achievement of the selected goals for each self results in a feeling of self-worth. Together, the three self-esteems make up your overall self-concept. Unrealistic self-goals (material, social, or spiritual) which cannot be realized result in lowered self-esteem. This view of self-concept is useful in devising ways to improve your self-image. Four techniques are suggested:

1. **Set realistic goals**--If you set realistic goals for each self rather than strive for the impossible you will enhance your chances for improving self-worth. That is, if you aspire for an associate degree in college and achieve it, your (spiritual) self-worth will increase. However, if you strive for a master's degree and achieve only a bachelor's, you may feel unsuccessful and less worthy.

In order to increase your self-worth, you should determine long-term goals but set and achieve short-term goals first. Afterwards, increasingly difficult goals can be set until the long-range goal is reached. This formula for improving self-esteem can be applied to all of the selves. It also can be used in overcoming such fears as speaking in public. Any improvement in self-esteem will undoubtedly be reflected in the confidence which you project generally. Nothing succeeds like success.

Example

Long-term goal--to become an effective public speaker.

Short-term goals:

- speak at meetings and gradually increase your amount of involvement;
- engage in question-and-answer sessions with small audiences;
- give a formal presentation to a small group of subordinates;
- give a formal presentation to a large group of subordinates;
- give a formal presentation to a small group of peers; and
- give a formal presentation to a large group of peers.

2. **Elicit positive feedback from others.**

"I am not what I think I am; I am not what you think I am; I am what I think you think I am." (Bleiberg and Leibling.)

In addition to setting realistic goals for yourself and achieving them, your self-concept can be improved by receiving positive feedback from others--particularly significant people in your personal and professional life. Conversely, you have the power to affect someone else's view of himself/herself by providing positive feedback. Known as the **looking-glass self-concept**, this important notion has significance for all interpersonal relationships. As stated previously, appraisal by others affects the way you view yourself. This looking-glass self-concept has been demonstrated repeatedly. If someone is continually told that he/she is incompetent or stupid, he/she will begin to perceive himself/herself that way. On the other hand, if one is consistently received in a positive or supportive manner, his/her self-image will improve and he/she will feel more positively about himself/herself. Hence, the importance of the kind of feedback you give and receive. Do what you must to receive positive feedback and decrease negative feedback from others.

3. **Think positively** (self-fulfilling prophecy).

"Act as if--until you become."

A spinoff of the looking-glass self-concept is the well-documented **self-fulfilling prophecy.** This concept refers to the fact that people will become or do what they believe they will become or do. For example, if you fully expect to miss a shot in tennis, chances are greater that you will miss it. If you expect to be anxious or fail at a task, the probability is greater that failure will occur. This is the rationale behind Norman Vincent Peale's *The Power of Positive Thinking.* It is also cleverly reflected in the well-known George Bernard Shaw play *Pygmalion* upon which *My Fair Lady* was based. This story takes place in class-conscious England in the early 1900s. Eliza Doolittle, a lower-class, Cockney flower girl, is accepted into British high society after being tutored by a linguistics professor as a social experiment in upper class nonverbal and verbal mannerisms (language, dress, posture, and social rituals). Her acceptance into that social circle also reinforced her learned upper-class image of herself (looking glass self-concept). The story also illustrates the notion that in addition to positive self-images, mastery of basic communication skills--in this case, "educated speech and social behavior"--are necessary to achieve and maintain positive perceptions by others who already possess the desired attributes.

4. **Increase role involvement.**

"All the world's a stage and all the men and women merely players."

As discussed earlier, the roles you play in life are part of your self-concept. They influence your behaviors and affect the way you see yourself. In addition to the many roles you play in life, your job as a fire service/EMS officer requires many different roles. You are a command officer, a trainer, a counselor, an administrator, an interviewer, a public relations person, and a public speaker. Increasing your role involvement is another way to improve your self-concept. That is, every new responsibility you assume in your present role or every new role you take on can provide you with an opportunity to grow. Refusing to do so is denying yourself opportunity for growth.

Generally, the success of any role you play, personal or professional, depends on a number of factors.

Your personal investment in the role. You can be half-heartedly interested in effecting change in the fire service/EMS or become completely engrossed in the role.

Your skill in the role. Each role requires specific skills. Dealing with people in any capacity requires effective listening skills. Your skill as a listener influences the emotional climates in which all of your interactions occur.

The consistency of the role with your self-concept. If you view yourself as timid and as a follower, it will be difficult to speak out publicly--a skill required in your role as an officer.

The consistency within and between the many roles you play.

Within roles: The behavior of a command officer in a crisis situation differs markedly from the behavior required of an administrator dealing with a disgruntled superior. Similarly, the manner in which you request something from an indifferent or hostile citizen's group necessitates entirely different approaches.

Between roles: Even more disparate are the differences in role behaviors required of you as a commanding officer in a crisis, as a parent at home, or a counselor on the job. It is hoped that your behaviors differ! Or are you always "the commanding officer?"

The strong male role image is understandable since society and the fire service/EMS in particular have traditionally stereotyped male and female personality characteristics. Males are supposed to be competent and controlled while women are expected to be warm, sensitive, and expressive. Unfortunately, this polarizing of masculine and feminine traits has inhibited many fire service/EMS officers, keeping them from being expressive and displaying their natural feelings of warmth and sensitivity--all qualities basic to effective communication. Effective speakers, leaders, facilitators, and public relations people need "feminine" as well as "masculine" characteristics.

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Activity 16.1

Self-Assessment

Purpose

To explain perception and its effect on communication.

Directions

Complete the self-assessment questions on individual strengths and weaknesses in communication. For this assignment, answer the questions from your own point of view and not from how others see you. Think before you write anything down on paper. Discuss your reactions to these questions with someone at your table.

1. How effective am I as a communicator in a face-to-face situation?

   a. What are my strengths?

   ____

   ____

   ____

   ____

   b. What are my weaknesses?

   ____

   ____

   ____

   ____

2. How effective am I as a communicator in small groups (e.g., committees, work groups)?

   a. What are my strengths?

   ____

   ____

   ____

   ____

   b. What are my weaknesses?

   ____

   ____

   ____

   ____

3. How effective am I in a large group?

   a. What are my strengths?

   ____

   ____

   ____

   ____

   b. What are my weaknesses?

   ____

   ____

   ____

   ____

Activity 16.2

Roles

Purpose

To increase your self-awareness of the roles you play in life (**who** you are), and to increase your awareness of how you see yourself in terms of personal attributes (**what** you are).

Directions

1. List the social and professional roles you play in life with their accompanying responsibilities (i.e., family person--husband, father, wife, mother, provider, etc.). If the role is voluntary, jot down why you chose it. Write down at least eight to ten roles and responsibilities you assume.

   ____

   ____

   ____

   ____

   ____

   ____

2. Discuss your social and professional roles with a partner.

3. Write down 8 to 10 positive personal attributes that **you** think you have (e.g., what you are good at, proud of). Do not write what someone else thinks you are.

   ____

   ____

   ____

   ____

   ____

   ____

4. With a partner, take turns sharing these observations and traits.

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Activity 16.3

Audience Perceptions

Purpose

To identify audience perceptions and their impact on communication.

Directions

Each table will identify what perception would be good to know about the audience when speaking to them about the topic your table was assigned.

Table 1

- Audience--firefighters
- Topic--risks of interior fire attack

Table 2

- Audience--firefighters
- Topic--increasing their duties involving more fire prevention activities

Table 3

- Audience--community residents
- Topic--residential sprinkler ordinances

Table 4

- Audience--town council
- Topic--proposing a new fire station

Table 5

- Audience--local builder's association
- Topic--proposed changes to the building codes

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APPENDIX

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"Focus on Trust While Others Recalculate"

Jun 1, 2007 12 p.m.

By Mike Chiaramonte

The other day I was driving down Route 64 in Raleigh, N.C., with my lady friend Janet on the dashboard. That would normally be quite an image, but Janet is the voice of my portable GPS unit. Both of us were happy, or at least I thought so, when suddenly she said, "recalculating." Her screen showed the triangle that symbolized my car was not on the road. As a matter of fact, it showed that it was going through a forest and over various ponds. I did not know my automobile could do that, so I was concerned. She then said "recalculating" again and told me to make a turn. I looked left and right just to check that I was indeed on the interstate. Yet her display screen still showed that my vehicle was on a fantastic, all-terrain and aquatic journey.

Oddly, she was a little upset that I did not turn. She kept telling me that she was recalculating, and it seemed that the tone of her computer voice was changing for the worse. She continued to tell me to turn at various streets that appeared to be the names of the streets on the exits.

I wondered if I was losing my mind. A couple of days before, I was on that very same road in that very same place without Janet, and I arrived where I was going without making the turns that she now wanted me to make. Then it dawned on me that this was a very new part of the interstate and the GPS unit was a year old. Based on data she thought was accurate, Janet had the absolute perception that I was off course and about to be killed by driving through trees and over water.

I knew I was on the road and that I would get to where I was going with no problem. I also knew that the new part of the interstate would connect with the old part of the interstate because I had been there before. Another thing I knew was that Janet would be OK again when I joined the older part of the interstate, which was in her database.

According the Random House Unabridged Dictionary, perception is the "immediate or intuitive recognition or appreciation, as of moral, psychological, or aesthetic qualities; insight; intuition." It is based on so many of the things that could be considered the core of an individual. Look at these words; they are strong and they bear repeating: intuitive, moral, insight and psychological. The strong feelings that are tied to perception are based on the data individual receive since birth.

A leader may be pursuing a course of action that those around that leader perceive as entirely wrong. Their perception would be based on the data they have. This data could come from research, experience or both. These people could be fire officers, firefighters, city officials or even citizens.

What is a leader to do? Should the leader stay on course, despite these people urging the leader to recalculate and make some turns to get back on the course they think is best? Should the leader yield to the pressure and change course so that the people will be happy and the pressure would be relieved?

Sometimes, depending on who is applying the pressure, it could be job-threatening to stay the course. Should this leader take care of himself and yield, knowing full well it is not the best way for the department to go? These are decisions that a leader makes quite frequently, if not every day.

Leaders often have more information than those under them and sometimes more than those above them. It is the nature of the job to have this data. One way to avoid this dilemma is to share as much information as possible (as I should buy the GPS update disk). In other words, the driver or decision-maker must keep those around him or her as up to date as possible with the most current and accurate data, because roads change and so does information. If this does not happen, those surrounding the leader may have the perception that he or she is driving through trees and over water, so to speak.

To keep doubt at bay, the leader must establish a true sense of trust. Trust comes from a long-term relationship. Trust comes when honesty prevails between people. It comes when the trusting parties understand where the other party is coming from and essentially where the other is going. It comes when those involved understand each other's jobs and respect each other's limitations. It comes when egos are left at home.

However, it is sometimes impossible to inform everyone of why a decision is being made. Some situations require that decisions be made quickly. When this happens, trust is reinforced when the decisions are clearly and honestly explained to those they concern. Trust also is established by using something as simple as the Rotary Creed. It states that when making a decision one should ask these questions: Is it fair? Is it right? Will it create more good will and friendship? Is it beneficial to all?

Another key to good decision-making is that the decision-maker has a clear vision and has confidence that the vision can be achieved. The vision must be beneficial to the organization, and those associated with and affected by that organization must understand that vision.

Always remember that people's perceptions are based on the data that they have been collecting since their lives began. Similar to Janet, they are firmly convinced that they are right. However, there are significant differences between my lady in the box and living, breathing human beings. Changing their perceptions is not as simple as buying a disk, connecting to a computer and pushing some keys. It is not a 20-minute procedure. But do not be discouraged. People can be updated and perceptions can be changed, if the leader or decision-maker is willing to put the time in to do it.

Another difference is that when Janet was frustrated and constantly saying "recalculating," communication between us was impossible. With no interaction taking place, both of us were frustrated; I felt isolated but stayed the course. It was a lonely feeling and the phrase "it's lonely at the top" came to mind. It does not have to be lonely if there is an understanding of perception and what can be done to get those around us to buy into the decisions that are made or being made. Always be aware that many people around us are recalculating, although they may not be verbalizing it.

UNIT 17: PERSUASION

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

1. *Explain the basic concepts and theories of attitude formation and their implications for persuasion.*

2. *Prepare a speech to persuade members of the town council.*

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INTRODUCTION

Whether it is coaxing your son or daughter to do homework, convincing your community board to increase the budget, persuading citizens to vote for a referendum, or resisting pressure from vendors or reporters, you are continually engaged in face-to-face persuasion. There is no escape! You are both a persuader and a "persuadee." Persuasion is an integral part of your job. It is a social force in the family, in the courts, at meetings, and in the media, in particular. Although audiences and attitudes differ, the objectives of persuasion are the same--to influence attitudes and/or behaviors. Some of you already are very persuasive. Others are less so. Probably none of you, however, can explain the basis of your success or failure in persuasion.

THEORIES AND STRATEGIES OF PERSUASION

Two thousand years ago, Aristotle claimed that persuasion was achieved in three ways:

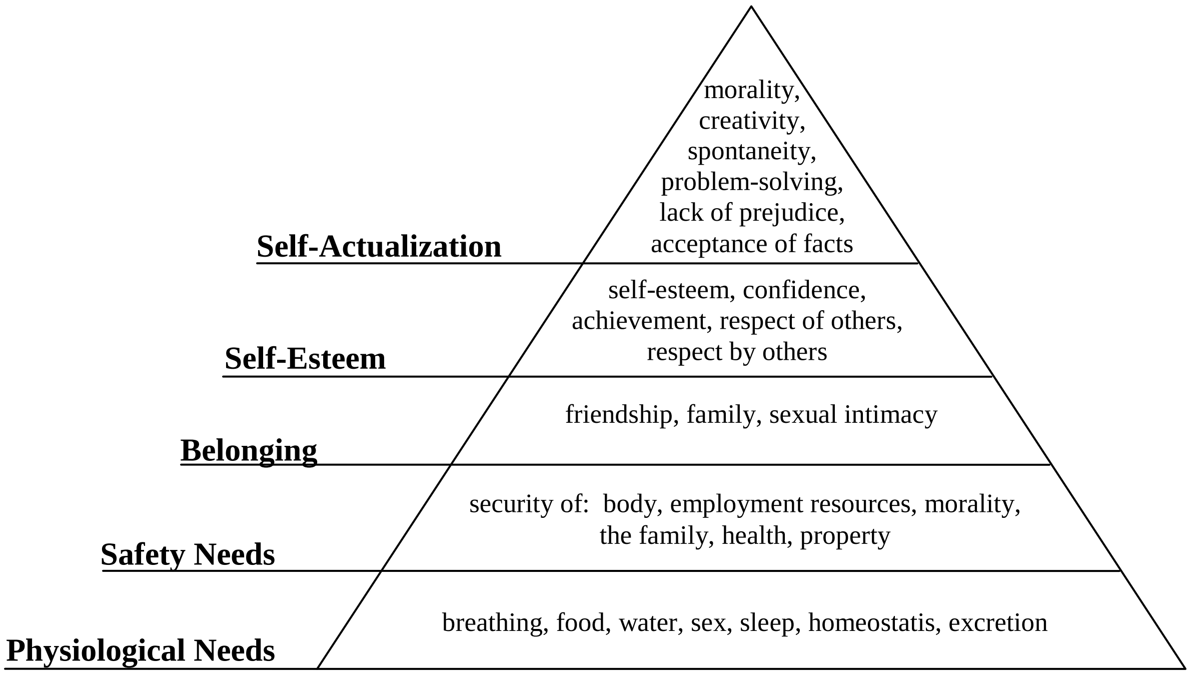
1. Through the character and personality of the speaker (ethos).

2. Through the arguments and reasoning of the speaker's message (Logos).

3. Through the ability of the speaker to arouse and direct the feelings of the listener (pathos).

Although the terminology differs, the same factors are considered the basis of persuasion today. **Ethos** is referred to as speaker or source credibility. **Logos** is referred to as argument and evidence. **Pathos** is referred to as psychological, emotional, or motivational elements. In other words, there are three kinds of appeals used in persuasion--personal, logical, and emotional. In order to use these appeals most effectively, it is essential to understand how attitudes are formed and influenced.

This unit begins with basic concepts and theories of attitude formation and factors in resistance to attitude change. It continues with strategies for developing persuasive presentations, including sections on ethical, logical, and emotional appeals; evidence; and organization. It concludes with a persuader's checklist. This information should prove helpful in preparing your persuasive presentation, which will be given in class.



Maslow's Heirarchy of Needs

RESEARCH AND TARGET AUDIENCE PERCEPTIONS

Opinions and behaviors of people are based on their learned beliefs, values, and attitudes. In view of their significance to persuasion, each of these concepts warrants further explanation.

Beliefs--Beliefs are general or specific **convictions** that something is true or false. Beliefs may be based on evidence, authority, experience, or faith. Many beliefs are unfounded because they are based on emotion, false evidence, or tradition. Beliefs differ in intensity.

Example: We may believe in life after death or in the necessity for a strong national defense.

Values--Values are **sentiments** toward various ideas or actions. There are several different levels of values, ranging from central (core) values to peripheral (superficial) values. Values are strong motivating factors in people's lives. They, too, vary in intensity. Examples of values are

- Central (core) values--honesty or responsibility. Family or professional relationships.
- Societal values--life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.
- Audience values--relate to speaker's message (e.g., pro or con nuclear energy).
- Peripheral (superficial) values--color or fashion preferences.

Attitudes--Attitudes are **predispositions** toward ideas or actions based on beliefs, values, and experience. Attitudes can pertain to the speaker, the issue, and the purpose of the message. Any attitude can be influenced by changes in:

- knowledge (affects beliefs);
- feelings (affect values); and
- actions (affect beliefs and values).

If you are a paid firefighter, you may have negative attitudes toward volunteer departments based on your belief that firefighting is a full-time profession.

If you value honesty and professional integrity, you will have negative attitudes toward people who try to bribe you.

Opinions--Opinions are **verbal expressions** of beliefs, attitudes, and values. However, opinions do not necessarily reflect a person's beliefs, attitudes, or values accurately.

Example: I know he said that, but he doesn't really believe it!

Beliefs--Values--Attitudes--Opinions--Behavior or Actions.

The targets in persuasion should be the beliefs, values, and attitudes of the audience.

RESISTANCE TO ATTITUDE CHANGE

The more one understands about resistance to attitude change, the better one is able to persuade or to resist influence. The following is a review of known factors related to resistance in attitude change.

- People with extreme attitudes on matters of central concern are quite resistant to change. (Don't ask too large a change at one time in this situation.)

- People resist change when the source of the persuasive message is held in low esteem. A low-credibility source will find it much more difficult to persuade.

- People are quite resistant to change when the source of the suggested change is contrary to their own experiences. To change would be to doubt their own senses.

- Normally, people are very resistant to changes in attitudes that were developed early in life, e.g., in the home, church, etc.

- Attitudes associated with membership in important groups (e.g., family, religion) are very resistant to change. People join groups because of compatible attitudes. Therefore, they will be very reluctant to give up these satisfactions.

- A person who has "gone on record" publicly with a given attitude is likely to be resistant to changing that attitude. A change in attitude might jeopardize his/her image, reputation, or ego.

- An attitude maintained to avoid psychological pain is resistant to change. (The pain of admitting that a close friend has been false to you may be avoided by suggesting that the **evidence**, not the friend, is false.)

- Remember, the **self** is also an object of attitude. Attempts to change one's self-image will meet with great resistance.

- Messages seeking attitude change, carried by some channel or vehicle (memo, radio, TV, newspaper, etc.) that is held in low esteem, will meet with resistance. "If it appeared in **that** newspaper, I wouldn't believe it." OR "It was only a memo, and, therefore, it couldn't have been very important."

- In general, messages that use high anxiety or fear appeals are less effective than moderate fear appeals. "That horrible thing could never have happened. It's too horrible to be true."

- Suggestions for attitude change that are contrary to the reasons for holding the attitude will be resisted.

- Attitudes that are near a neutral or moderately favorable position toward some proposition still can be resistant to change, but generally are less so than attitudes that are deeply embraced.

- An attitude does not exist in isolation. Attitudes are interrelated. Therefore, one attitude resistant to change may be related to a number of others, which also become resistant to change.

- Attitudes tend to cluster around points of general concern. Thus, you may have a series of attitudes clustered around certain topics such as a view of leadership or economic philosophy. These clusters comprise what are called **values** or **value systems.** These values are of central concern to people and, therefore, are very resistant to change.

FORMULA FOR PERSUASIVE PRESENTATIONS

An overall plan for developing persuasive messages is necessary if you (ethos) are to capture the minds (Logos) and hearts (pathos) of your audience. The following outline is offered to guide you in that endeavor.

I. DETERMINE OVERALL PURPOSE

A. What is the problem?

B. What response do you want?

C. When do you want the response?

D. What compromises will you accept?

II. ANALYZE THE AUDIENCE

A. Who are they?

Demographic information.

B. What are their attitudes, beliefs, and values toward:

1. You?

2. Your objective?

3. The issue?

C. What is their knowledge, interest, and ego involvement in the issue?

D. What are their needs, motivations, and thinking styles?

E. How varied is the audience?

F. Who are the opinion makers in the audience?

G. How credible are you with the audience and the opinion makers? Do you have their trust, respect, and liking?

H. Are you the appropriate person to deliver the message to the audience?

III. DESIGN YOUR PERSUASIVE TACTICS

A. Research and gather information related to your purpose and audience analysis.

B. Analyze and incorporate appeals.

1. **Ethical appeals.**

   a. **Your reputation.** Do they know you and your reputation? If not, establish yourself as an authority on the subject, either through advance publicity, or statements about your qualifications, background, or experience. Try to do this early in your discussion.

   b. **Your introduction.** A good introduction is especially helpful to unknown speakers. It should inform the audience about your qualifications and establish goodwill toward you. Use a person who knows you well to introduce you. Less needs to be said if you are already known.

   c. **Your subject.** You will be judged by what you say and how you say it. The content and style should be appropriate for the particular audience. Substantial evidence, sound reasoning, and maturity of judgment will affect the logical and ethical components of your presentation.

   d. **Your personal image.** Factors of personal appearance, dress, language, voice, speech, nonverbal behaviors, energy levels, humor, level of preparation, organization, and interpersonal skills influence your ethos. Your impressions are created from the very first moments of contact with an audience, even before you begin your formal presentation. Monitor yourself. You are attempting to build trust, and image will help or hinder those efforts.

   e. **Audience identification.** Similarity of values, background, or experience is a powerful force in persuasion and interpersonal liking. Try to establish some means of identification with the audience. If this is not possible, and the situation or topic is difficult, have someone else who is similar (e.g., in ethnicity, age, sex) present the message. He or she will probably be more influential.

   f. **Your authority.** Either by design or "in passing," state your related accomplishments, honors, and experiences that make you the "authority" on the subject. It is not considered bragging if you inform the audience that you are an expert. Cite the sources you use. Let the audience know you also have done your homework.

2. **Logical appeals** (Logos, reasoning, and argument). There are two types of reasoning, inductive and deductive.

   a. **Inductive reasoning.** Principal form of reasoning, which includes generalization. It starts with specific(s) and leads to a generalization. It is especially effective in problem-solving. Takes three forms:

- **Simple generalization.**

For example:

-- Hotel fires have increased in New York.

-- Hotel fires have increased in Las Vegas.

-- Hotel fires have increased in California.

-- Hotel fires have increased all over the United States.

(The number of specifics used depends on the knowledge and background of the audience.)

- **Analogy** (comparison of unlike things which are similar in some respects).

For example:

-- As in any sport where members must work together to win, members of the fire service/emergency medical services (EMS) also must work together to maximize their effectiveness and achieve their objectives.

- **Causal relationship** (cause-effect).

For example:

-- Fuel costs go up, building maintenance goes down; decrease in building maintenance, increase in potential fire hazards; unemployment and frustration increase, vandalism and arson increase. There is a greater demand for the fire service/EMS today than ever.

b. **Deductive reasoning.** Starts with a generalization such as the importance of an issue. Leads to a specific. Particularly effective in persuasion.
For example:

- An efficient fire service/EMS is essential to the safety of this community.

- An efficient fire service/EMS requires adequate funding.

- A cutback in funding endangers this community.

3. **Emotional appeals** (pathos, benefits relative to the basic motives, needs, and desires of an audience).

   Knowledge of your audience's background and attitudes, coupled with persuasive strategies based on theories of attitude formation, should suggest influential emotional appeals. There are four types of emotional appeals:

   a. Need for consistency (psychological balance).

   b. Ego involvement (increase, decrease, or rechannel).

   c. Functions attitudes serve (pleasure, values, etc.).

   d. Basic needs (physical, security, etc.).

IV. GATHER VALID EVIDENCE

It is imperative that everyone concerned with persuasion be cognizant of the quality of evidence used in the support of arguments, whatever type of reasoning is used.

A. **Examples of valid evidence:**

   1. Statistics.

   2. Analogies.

   3. Facts.

   4. Examples.

   5. Expert testimony.

   6. Experience.

B. Examples of the types of evidence to avoid (because they are weak, false or misleading) are listed below.

   1. **Inaccurate use of language** or the use of overworked words, such as cherished, grassroots, or un-American.

   2. **"Begging the question."** "The incompetent mayor should be impeached." The speaker is assuming that you agree with the first conclusion that the mayor is incompetent and should, therefore, be impeached, which is the second conclusion.

3. **Appeal to tradition** which assumes that because something has been going on for a long time, it should be continued. "You should vote for me because I have the experience." This is a favorite tactic of politicians.

4. **Shifting ground** or refusing to clash directly with a premise. For example, if you were to lament how poor the emergency services were in a community and someone replied, "Yes, but we have such a high standard of living."

5. **Personal attacks.** Instead of answering a point with evidence, someone attacks the person as if the idea and the person were the same. (Senator Joe McCarthy used these tactics in the 1950s.)

6. **Name calling.** When opposing ideas are called names or are slandered. Such terms as "socialists," "right-wingers," "women's libbers," or "bleeding heart liberals," are examples of these tactics.

7. **Nonsequitors.** (It does not follow.) This fallacy creates a causal relationship between two unrelated statements. "If we didn't go to the moon, we could build adequate hospitals." There is no evidence that the money would be used for "good" things.

8. **False cause.** This fallacy asserts that because events were sequenced they were causal. "Because there was a fire and someone left the scene, that person caused the fire."

9. **Circular reasoning.** This is a fallacy which interchanges premise and conclusion. "America, love it or leave it."

10. **Appeal to pity.** Most people are masters of this appeal. "Person X should receive a promotion because of his/her years in the service."

11. **Plain folks fallacy.** This one asserts that everyone is alike because they do similar things. "He's/She's one of us."

12. **Bandwagon fallacy.** Advocates a certain course of action because everyone does it.

13. **Rationalization.** This fallacy involves thinking backwards from what we want emotionally to how we can justify it rationally. "I'm glad I bought an expensive sports car because it is easy to park and has good trade-in value."

Evidence Cards

Front of Card

Statement you intend to prove	**1**
Source of evidence	

Back of Card

Quote actual evidence or statistic
Connecting "therefore" statement

V. ORGANIZE PERSUASIVE ARGUMENTS

The organization pattern of persuasive arguments can enhance or diminish the effectiveness of the message. Two basic orders exist.

A. Intrinsic (related to topic).

1. Problem-solution--inductive (specific to general).

2. Cause-effect--deductive (general to specific).

B. Extrinsic (related to audience psychology).

1. Importance of argument.

a. Most important argument first:

- To gain attention of apathetic audience.

- To establish speaker credibility.

- To achieve strong emotional response.

b. Least important argument first:

- If no strong emotional arguments.

- Last argument easily retained.

2. Both points of view.

a. When audience will be exposed to counter arguments first.

b. When audience initially disagrees with the speaker.

c. When audience is well educated or knowledgeable about the subject.

VI. FORMULA FOR PERSUASIVE PRESENTATIONS

A. Introduction.

1. Get audience's attention.

2. Introduce topic.

B. Body.

1. Present main ideas (arguments).

2. Clarify perceptions and beliefs.

3. Support ideas with valid evidence.

4. Use data-driven, logical appeals.

C. Conclusion.

1. Summarize.

2. Issue a plea.

3. Call for action.

VII. SELECT MODE OF DELIVERY

A. Extemporaneous.

B. Manuscript.

VIII. CREDIBILITY

Regardless of the type or mode of presentation, the impact of any message depends, in part, on who sends it. Your perceived character, personality, sincerity, status, and expertise will influence the reception of your message. The admiration, trust, and affection that you receive from the audience will depend on your reputation and the impression you make during your presentation. This aspect of public speaking is known as source or speaker credibility.

Three independent perceptions of speakers have been found related to credibility: competence, trustworthiness, and dynamism.

- **Competence**--involves perceptions, intelligence, knowledge, judgment, and experience.

- **Trustworthiness or character**--involves perceptions of honesty, integrity, goodwill, and predictability.

- **Dynamism or charisma**--involves perceived energy, likability, attractiveness, and liveliness. This is an asset, but not essential for one to be considered an effective speaker.

Whatever the reality, it is what the audience believes that determines your credibility.

Impressions are related to the content and organization of your message as well as your delivery skills.

Checklist for Persuaders

The following are some points to remember when giving a persuasive presentation.

- There is no persuasion without attention. People attend only to what interests them. Attention must be constantly retained.
- People recall and perceive more accurately what they both see **and** hear.
- People perceive things in terms of their own experiences. They see things not as they are, but as they perceive them.
- Persuasion must be audience centered. If a person is persuaded, it is for his/her reasons, not yours.
- Attitudes are resistant to change because they are learned and reinforced. Even if changed, they tend to retrogress if they are not reinforced by subsequent persuasion.
- A changed attitude does not necessarily result in changed behavior, just as changed behavior does not necessarily reflect changed attitudes.
- There is a hierarchy in people's needs and responses to appeals. Priority is given to bodily needs, then security, followed by social and esteem needs.
- Reference groups exert strong influences on attitudes and behaviors. Groups fulfill a belonging need for individuals.
- Opinion leaders exert great influence on individuals.
- Habits (need for psychological constancy) exert strong influences on individuals.
- The setting and occasion (situation, environment) influence susceptibility to persuasion.
- Direct person-to-person persuasion has been found to be more effective than written communication.
- Suggestion is more effective when it is used affirmatively or positively. "You shall" is usually more effective than "You shall not."

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Sample Persuasive Speech Outline

Title: Need for Fire District Consolidation

Audience: Fire district board of directors

Purpose: To convince board of need for consolidation

I. INTRODUCTION

Current relationships among the five fire districts in the service area are deteriorating. Change seems warranted. Contract in effect among the districts needs major revision. Problems related to provisions of the contract are affecting services, and taxpayer is not receiving level of service in relation to tax dollar paid. I would like to briefly outline the problems and propose a solution for your consideration.

II. BODY

A. Problems (examples).

1. One board attempting to set fire department service levels for all districts.

2. Each district has its own best interests at heart, rather than considering the overall picture.

3. Growth within all districts is not uniform, meaning expenditures are not equitable.

4. Reluctance of the various boards to meet to jointly resolve common problems.

B. Results of problems.

1. Fire department receiving conflicting directions from various boards.

2. Fire department personnel end up in position of mediator between boards and board members.

3. Staffing levels and company deployment decisions are made by various boards rather than by fire department staff.

C. Suggested solutions:

1. Immediately form a fire authority with a five-member board composed of one member from each existing board. Each existing board recognizes authority as agency responsible for all major policies and fiscal decisions.

2. Long-range--dissolve five existing districts and form one new district overlapping all current service areas.

III. CONCLUSION

I encourage your close consideration of this proposal. Keep in mind that the ultimate goal is the service we provide to the taxpayers. You may have to give up some of your individual powers. This proposal also will be given to the other four boards.

Activity 17.1

Speech to Town Council

Purpose

To prepare a speech to persuade members of the town council.

Directions

1. You will be collaborating in the preparation of a speech to persuade the town council.
2. Each table will be assigned a part of that speech.
3. Once completed, the speech will be delivered aloud.

Table 1

1. Using one of the following methods of introduction, prepare an introduction for this presentation:
   a. Rhetorical question.
   b. Shocking statement.
   c. Quotation.
   d. Personal experience.
   e. Story.
2. Prepare a conclusion that does the following:
   a. Refers back to the introduction.
   b. Uses your voice to let the audience know that you have completed your speech (stretch, pause, and lower).

Tables 2 and 3

1. Make a statement in your own words that you intend to prove.

2. State the source of your evidence:

   a. Where it came from.

   b. Date of publication.

   c. If possible, author, and author qualifications.

3. State the evidence or statistic word for word as you found it.

4. Connect your evidence with your first statement by using a word like "therefore."

5. Note: Draw an evidence card as per the example seen in class filling in the information needed in appropriate location on the card. Do not put a number on the card until instructed.

Table 4

1. Prepare a phrase outline for the scenario above with at least two main points in addition to the introduction and conclusion. Use subheadings for each main point of your presentation.

2. Phrase outline--use incomplete sentences for each main point of your presentation and less than four words for each subheading.

   a. Introduction--just use the word--do not fill anything else in here.

   b. Start your main points and subheadings here and continue until you have completed your main points and subheadings.

   c. Conclusion--just use the word--do not fill anything else here. Use the Roman numeral that would follow your last main point.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PERSUASIVE SPEECH

You will develop a 5- to 7- minute speech on a topic of your choice. Determine the audience you want to address and the background of the situation prior to your presentation. Make the topic and occasion as realistic as possible. Classmates and instructors will role-play your selected audience. They also will evaluate the quality and effectiveness of your message and presentation. Allot at least 2 minutes for questions.

Suggested topics:

- community board presentation requesting increased budge;
- civic or professional group presentation requesting cooperation or change in policy; and
- interagency presentations requesting a new or revised policy.

Remember that one of your two speeches must be fire related and one should include the use of a visual aid.

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Speech to Persuade Evaluation

1 – Poor 2 – Fair 3 – Good

Name: ____

The speaker uses a proper method of introduction.
1 2 3

The speaker's rate of speed is appropriate to the topic and the audience.
1 2 3

The speaker can be heard and easily understood.
1 2 3

The speaker has good eye contact with the audience.
1 2 3

The speaker's posture, gestures, and movement adds to the credibility of the speech.
1 2 3

The speaker uses voice effects (emphasis, rate, and pause) to aid in persuasion.
1 2 3

The speaker uses appropriate energy throughout the speech.
1 2 3

The speaker uses evidence properly in the speech.
1 2 3

The conclusion of the speech refers back to the introduction and adequately summarizes the speech.
1 2 3

The speaker's voice indicates that the speech is completed.
1 2 3

Comments:

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UNIT 18: MEETINGS

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

1. *Describe how to prepare, hold, and summarize a meeting.*

2. *Describe the advantages of and process for using the Nominal Group Technique (NGT).*

3. *Demonstrate an efficient method of developing consensus during a meeting.*

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"Another meeting? Oh, no!"

"What a waste of time!"

"Come on, guys, I've got a lot of work to do!"

"Thought we had resolved that three meetings ago."

"What a charade. Why bother asking us what we think?"

"They sure railroaded that through."

"Don't bother me with the facts--my mind is already made up!"

INTRODUCTION

Meetings--committees--committees on committees. Probably more hours have been wasted on unproductive meetings than most offices or executives care to remember. Yet, it is the small work groups within larger groups that keep any organization operating. It is the purpose of this unit to guide you in conducting those meetings with a minimum amount of time and conflict, and maximum productivity. This can be done if some basics of group dynamics and principles of conducting meetings are understood.

This unit begins with types of meetings in the fire service/emergency medical services (EMS). It continues with basic information on conducting meetings, including planning, structure, establishing positive climates, and problem-solving strategies. It continues with techniques for questioning, encouraging participation, and controlling problems. It concludes with a guide for observing and analyzing groups and a checklist for conducting meetings.

NOMINAL GROUP TECHNIQUE

Advantages of Nominal Group Technique

- Each member participates.
- Prevents domination.
- Each person has equal vote.
- Structured process.
- Many ideas.

Five-Step Process

1. Silent generation of ideas.

2. Recording ideas.

    a. No discussion.

    b. Roundrobin process.

    c. "Hitchhiking" encouraged.

    d. "Passing" is O.K.

    e. Reentry allowed.

3. Clarification.

    a. Clarify meaning, don't discuss.

    b. Combine obvious duplicates.

    c. Eliminate problems that need to be solved by:

        - Upper management.

        - Chief alone.

4. Voting.

5. Scoring.

    a. Collect cards and shuffle.

    b. Record votes on easel pad beside item.

    c. Prioritize.

Activity 18.1

Solving a Problem Using the Nominal Group Technique

Purpose

To use a problem-solving method and learn the advantages of that method.

Directions

The instructor will guide you through the following steps after reading a scenario to the class.

1. **The silent generation of ideas--**Take out a piece of paper and quietly **without discussion** write down whatever ideas you have for cutting the budget. **This is to be done silently.**

2. **Recording ideas--**one person in each group should be selected as a recorder. Each member of the group is to read his/her ideas while the recorder writes them on the easel pad. **Again there is no discussion.** No idea will be rejected. Every idea is recorded even if it is repetitive or somewhat repetitive. **No comments are to be made about the merit or lack of merit of any idea.**

3. **Clarification--**look at each item listed on the easel pad and **without discussing the merit of any item on the list** look and see if there is agreement that there are obvious duplications and if so eliminate one of those. Also see if there are items that are so close that they can be combined without changing the meaning of either. Once completed, number the items on your list.

4. **Voting--without discussion,** pick the item that you like the most and fill out one of your index cards and score it by placing the number **5** in the lower left corner of the card. When that is complete, do the same thing with your second favorite item and put a number **4** in the lower left corner. Using a separate card for each item choice, place **3** in the lower left corner of the card and so on through **1.**

5. **Scoring--**Each group member will read their item number and score to the recorder of their group, who will place the score next to the appropriate item on the easel pad. When your group is finished, tally up the score for each item.

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UNIT 19:
PERSUASIVE SPEECH

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

1. *Demonstrate persuasive presentation.*

2. *Evaluate a persuasive speech.*

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Persuasive Presentation

1. Develop a 5- to 7-minute persuasive speech on a fire-related topic* of your choice.

2. Determine the audience you want to address and the background of the situation prior to your presentation.

3. Allot at least 2 minutes for questions.

4. Make the topic and occasion as realistic as possible. Select something that you may actually be called upon to do in the future. Your classmates and instructor will role-play your selected audience. They also will evaluate the quality of your persuasive message as well as the effectiveness of your presentation.

5. You will be videotaped and able to rate yourself immediately after your presentation.

6. The following evaluation form will be used for this purpose.

7. Suggestions for this presentation include

   a. Community board presentation requesting increased budget or a change in policy.

   b. Civic or professional group presentation requesting cooperation or change in policy.

   c. Interagency presentations requesting cooperation or change in policy.

*If students prefer, topic may be other than fire related, if informative presentation was fire-related. Visual aids should be used if not incorporated in previous presentation.

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Speech to Persuade Evaluation

1 – Poor 2 – Fair 3 – Good

Name: ____

The speaker uses a proper method of introduction.
1 2 3

The speaker's rate of speed is appropriate to the topic and the audience.
1 2 3

The speaker can be heard and easily understood.
1 2 3

The speaker has good eye contact with the audience.
1 2 3

The speaker's posture, gestures, and movement adds to the credibility of the speech.
1 2 3

The speaker uses voice effects (emphasis, rate, and pause) to aid in persuasion.
1 2 3

The speaker uses appropriate energy throughout the speech.
1 2 3

The speaker uses evidence properly in the speech.
1 2 3

The conclusion of the speech refers back to the introduction and adequately summarizes the speech.
1 2 3

The speaker's voice indicates that the speech is completed.
1 2 3

Comments:

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