Continuous Improvement

Mission Critical Knowledge

Mindset Shift Reminder!

Consider the following scenario: A wildfire is spreading through your community. Cell towers are burning while officials delay looking for passwords or remembering how to use the system or deciding the geographic parameters or whether to send an alert at all. By the time the alert is sent, the fire has eaten up the infrastructure and not everyone receives the alert.

These types of issues can be avoided by building confidence (and competence) through constant improvement.

Ask yourself: What actions is my team taking to continue to build comfort with the steps involved in sending emergency alerts? What else can we be doing?

After-Action Reports (AARs)

AARs are an essential and required component of emergency alerting. The data captured should be used to improve your program, policies and procedures so you can put a plan in place to respond more effectively during the next emergency.

An AAR should answer questions like:

- Did the designated emergency officials take the appropriate actions?

- Was an alert launched in a timely manner?

- Was the alert missing critical information?

The report should also include a summary of the incident and the actions taken, as well as a section that outlines recommendations for future improvement.

Analytics/Record Keeping

To utilize actionable intelligence from all three alert pathways, ensure you're preserving data for analysis. All outcomes should be tracked and recorded to create statistics to serve as a basis for recommendations as new cases develop. This includes, but is not limited to, the details of search and rescue missions, such as the average length of time to locate missing persons and average geographic span of search grids in cases of successful recovery.

It's also essential to perform regular maintenance on your emergency alerting system. A logbook of all actions taken serves as an official record of the actions you decided to take should you ever be questioned. It also demonstrates your commitment to the emergency alerting program.

The logbook should include the following details:

- Record (including date and time) of software updates

- Names of individuals who performed the updates

- Verification that functionality was tested after an update was installed

- Dates of training and drills and a list of attendees/participants

- Results of training exercises and drills

Continuing Education

Additional Resources

FEMA Preparedness Toolkit — Templates and Resources: This site provides a variety of templates, tools and other resources designed with continuous improvement in mind. Users can search by categories and tags. An AAR template is available here for those in need.