The Role Relationships Play During Emergencies & Disasters

The Key to Successful Incident Management
- 4,282 Fires
- 1.77 Million Acres
- IMTs in the field for over 100 days
Significant Impacts to Communities: Washington
2015 Northwest (NW) Fire Statistics

- A total of 3,814 fires were reported in the total NW Geographic Area (1,541 were in Washington)
- Approximately 1,636,970 acres were affected by wildfire
- Northwest Incident Management Teams were mobilized 56 times
- During peak activity, 11,450 firefighters and support personnel were actively on NW fires
- The largest NW fire was the North Star/Tunk Complex
North Star/Tunk Complex

- 371,960 acres burned
- 360 miles of fire line perimeter
- 3,000+ structures threatened
- 1,810 personnel
- 14 rotor/fixed wing--285 hours
- 13,850 gallons of retardant
Delegation of Authority

- DNR
- BLM
- Colville Confederated Tribes
- Ferry/Okanogan County FD 13 & Okanogan FDs 3, 4, 7 & 8
- Okanogan/Wenatchee National Forest
- Colville National Forest
Agency Administrator’s Intent

“Develop and maintain relationships with Agency Administrators, Agency Reps, Cooperators, Resource Specialists and the general public.”
Agency Administrator’s Intent, cont.

“Develop these relationships by providing quality communications, helping them understand values at risk, and maintaining a forum of continuous input and feedback to those the Team serves (internal and external).”
Commander’s Intent

- Task
- Purpose
- End State
FIRE OPERATIONS*
FIRE OPERATIONS

- LOFR (Liaison Officer)
- PIO
- Ops
- Plans
- Finance/Admin
- Safety
- Logistics
- IC
- Dep. IC
- FIRE MGMT Officer
- District Ranger
- City and/or County Fire
- Zone or District FMO (Fire Mgmt Officer)
- Forest FMO (Fire Mgmt Officer)
- Resource Advisor
- Fire Finance
- State Forestry
- Zone or District FMO (Fire Mgmt Officer)
MEDIA

PIO (Public Affairs Officer)

LOFR (Liaison Officer)

Newspaper

Radio

TV

Social Media

MEDIA
What Does This All Mean?

Helping all involved understand the reality of the situation will lead to communication success.

- Fire environment
- Response capability
- Community expectations & stakeholder values and concerns

And how do we do it best?
Research Suggests the Following Common Characteristics of Effective Communication

- Engagement in interactive processes with all involved
- Understanding and taking local context into account
- Providing timely, accurate and useful information—especially during the actual event
- Credibility of individual delivering information is vital
- Relationships should continue to be leveraged over time—before, during and after the incident
How Do We Do It Best?

This is done by the Incident Management Team (IMT)’s...

- Ability to build trust
- Raise awareness of capabilities
- Reach agreement with stakeholders and the community
It’s all about relationships!