

PHYSICAL ARRANGEMENT OF INFORMATION CENTERS (September 1991)

0655

Although Information and Field Centers physical environments will vary, an optimum facility will provide separate or partitioned areas for visitors, phones, work site, rest area, and adequate parking space for staff and visitors.

Plan the location and arrangement of suitable Information Centers in your area. A major advantage of this approach is that you can provide prewired phone hook-ups and telephones.

Interior arrangement requires space for phones, tables, and seating for an unobstructed view of the wall display area. Maps, charts, narrative information, and other data must always be visible to the Information Specialists.

Background noise should be as low as possible, preferably limited to radios monitoring the incident communications. Conversations and equipment noises and visitor interference can be avoided or minimized by careful arrangements. ([See IC Lay-Out](#))

Posting current information outside the center for public convenience often satisfies the concerns and interest of visitors. However, information personnel should staff an information desk to keep drop-in traffic separate from other center activities.

CENTER STATUS DISPLAYS (September 1991)

0655.1

Center status displays, posted prominently, should include details of current acreage, damage, personnel, equipment, control status, agencies involved, and other key information. Normally, information personnel enter information on an oversized Form ICS-209 and on conference pads.

This system provides a single source for releasable information. Information personnel enter significant events chronologically on conference pads; the left border shows the time an action occurred, entered as a.m. or p.m. rather than in 24-hour military time, for ease of understanding by the public and reporters.

Information personnel can use separate conference pads for each type of entry. For example, separate pads can be used for:

- Control lines, losses, personnel, and equipment
- Fire, open lines, fire movements, and control status
- Quotes, statements, and weather
- Injuries, accidents, and safety matters

As wall sheets are filled, they should be numbered, placed in sequence and hung on one wall so entries will remain visible for continued reference and to simplify recapping the chronology of events.

Generally, only three or four sheets need be on display to provide a current picture and a summary of past events. Information can be summarized and dated entries deleted as additional hanging space is needed. This practice should be repeated as often as necessary, depending upon the frequency of repeat inquiries from the media.

In any event, chronology sheets should be recapped at least once daily before the early morning news calls, retained until after the incident is completed, and then turned over to the Documentation Unit Leader or lead agency to be kept as incident history.

Individual entries should be neat and concise. Usually printing is more legible than script when entries are made rapidly.

REMEMBER! ANY INFORMATION NOT TO BE RELEASED SHOULD NOT BE VISIBLE OR DISPLAYED.

DISPLAY MAPS (September 1991)

0655.2

A large area map showing pertinent incident details should be displayed near current statistical information (i.e., a map can depict the fire perimeter, burning and control progress, ridgetop and creek locations, access trails and roads, exposures, and location of firefighting bases and camps). The details should be carefully drawn to approximate scale suitable for photographing and for describing and locating incident areas by information specialists. Landmarks, descriptive details, and any special interest items should be noted.

Different colors and standard map symbols help identify land and incident features (see F.O.S. page 3-2). The incident perimeter should be depicted in red and control lines in black. Each section of the incident perimeter should show time and date involved.

Information personnel should update map details as significant changes occur, although both internal and public needs are the greatest when this information is most difficult to obtain. Personnel should devote considerable effort to ensure the timeliness and accuracy of map revisions. Special notation should be made on any change which is approximate or uncertain. Efforts to maintain a current status map should be coordinated with official mapping work, aerial observation, infrared photography, and first-hand reports from incident areas available from the situation unit.

Each day, personnel should update the status map to show changes in the incident. The first update should be made at daylight or following a night IR-scan to use during early morning media inquiries. The next revision should be entered after early morning

smoke clears to reveal the incident perimeter prior to mid-morning. The third change should be made about 5 p.m. for use in evening. Personnel should make one final attempt to update the incident perimeter just before darkness.

If possible a supply of small map reproductions should be available for handout to news reporters, special visitors, and for posting at Incident Base and community bulletin boards. Photocopying equipment is extremely helpful when only single copies of information or maps are available.

[\(see next section\)](#)

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[\(see Forms or Forms Samples\)](#)