

LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT
Media Relations
Expanded Course Outline
1850-33240

Instructional Goal – This course will provide Law Enforcement Executives with the historical background, tools and techniques, and current best practices to communicate effectively in a variety of settings including, small group meetings, large public gatherings, long form print and broadcast interviews, and commission hearings. Executives will understand the principles of effective and empathetic communication, learn tools to simplify complicated information, and develop techniques to maneuver through challenging lines of questioning. Through lecture, supporting videos, and scenario-based training, executives will be prepared to message critical information, while emphasizing core values and empathy in different executive settings.

Performance Objectives - Using lecture, videos, case studies, and role playing, the students will:

- Develop basic verbal executive communication skills to build trust and enhance understanding;
- Demonstrate a minimum standard of strategic communication skills with every technique and exercise presented;
- Understand the historical context of current media relations and public communication landscape;
- Identify and define issues of communicating in various settings;
- Demonstrate the ability to use various verbal techniques when answering questions from the media, the public, or legislative bodies;
- Understand various verbal and non-verbal actions that reduce the effectiveness of executive communication;
- Develop story-telling skills to enhance communication effectiveness;
- Learn effective tools and techniques to deliver impactful speeches & presentations;
- Improve overall public speaking foundations.

References: Instructors, facilitators and training supervisors shall ensure that current references are utilized

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I. The Power of Quality Communication

A. Course Overview

1. Facility description
 - a. Restrooms
 - b. Refreshments

B. Welcome and Introductions

1. Instructor Background
2. Student Introductions
 - a. Current assignment
 - b. Communication experience
 - c. What you hope to get from the class

C. Ice Breaker

1. Activity

D. Critical Communications

1. Why do leaders need to know how to communicate?
2. What do we get wrong?
3. Unique Communication Settings
 - a. Media interviews (print vs. broadcast)
 - b. Small community group settings
 - c. Larger community presentations
 - d. 1:1
 - e. Commission and Board Presentations
4. Group Discussion
5. Video - Review and Discussion

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II. Foundations

A. The Media Landscape

1. Historical Context
2. Discuss the evolution of media- Early 1800s newspapers, 1920s radio, 1940s televisions are in most homes, 1990s internet is widely available.
3. Compare the evolution of media to the evolution of policing.

B. Impacts

1. News cycles
2. Resources
3. Ways we consume media

C. The Power of Storytelling

1. Video - Review
2. Why do we tell stories?
3. The arc of a story
4. The ingredients for a great story

D. What is news?

1. What we think is a story vs. what the public thinks is a story
2. Group Discussion
 - a. News vs. Not News

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III. Social Media

- A. Impact of Social Media on Law Enforcement Messaging
 - 1. We have to be correct not first.
- B. Perception vs. Reality
 - 1. Get out in front
- C. Platforms
 - 1. Instagram
 - 2. Twitter
 - 3. Facebook
 - 4. LinkedIn
 - 5. YouTube
 - 6. Tik-Tok
- D. Emerging platforms and technology
 - 1. Group discussion – list what the group considers as “media”

IV. “Pre-Game” – Preparing for the presentation/interview

- A. Understanding your audience
 - 1. Generation, Demographic, Regional
- B. Homework – Topics to consider
 - 1. Research, research, research
- C. Core Values
 - 1. Integrate into the message
- D. Key Messages
 - 1. What do you want the audience to learn?
- E. “Pre-Game” – Group Exercise
 - 1. Three Scenarios
 - a. Items to consider
 - b. Example of prep work

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V. Tools of the Trade

A. Video Review

1. YouTube

B. Non-Verbal

1. To Zoom or Not to Zoom
2. Body Language
3. Physical environment
4. On the Record vs. Off the Record

C. Verbal Techniques (Scenario Preparation)

1. Bridging
 - a. Bridge from a difficult question to one of your key points
 - 1) "I can't speak to that, but what I can tell you is..."
 - 2) "Actually, that speaks to a bigger point..."
 - 3) "It's an important question but..."
2. Flagging
 - a. Strong statement that makes your point
 - 1) "the bottom line is..."
 - 2) "The most important thing to remember is..."
 - 3) "What it boils down to is..."
 - 4) "At the end of the day..."
3. Pause and Reset
 - a. Take a moment to collect thoughts and redirect
4. The Handoff
 - a. This is not a test and you are not expected to know everything about everything
 - 1) "That's not really my area, but I'd be happy to put you in touch with the right person."
 - 2) "I don't have the exact numbers in front of me, let me pull them together and we'll follow up."

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VI. Critical Communication Tactics

- A. The Ambush
 - 1. Handling surprise questioning
- B. Communicating during a large-scale critical incident
 - 1. EIC – Index
 - a. Empathy, Information, Context
- C. Things to be aware of
 - 1. Speculate
 - 2. We are friends
 - 3. The Long Pause
 - 4. Repeating the Question
 - 5. Paraphrasing what you say
- D. Commission Meetings
 - 1. Public Comment period

VII. Al Crespo v. City of Los Angeles Overview¹

- A. Under the rights guaranteed by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, it is not uncommon for large numbers of people to assemble for the purpose of demonstrating their opinions.
- B. At such demonstrations, it is the Police Department's obligation to protect individuals' First Amendment rights, maintain order, and protect lives and property. Occasionally, demonstrations become unlawful.
- C. In such circumstances, pursuant to California Penal Code, sections 407 and 409, an assembly may be declared unlawful, and all persons present, except members of the news media, may be lawfully ordered to disperse. The law provides that police officers may use reasonable force to disperse an unlawful assembly and to effect the arrest of law violators. Senate Bill 98 (effective Jan 1, 2022) created 409.7 PC which allows media to stay in the closed area of a demonstration or protest.
- D. The Department's Use of Force Policy applies to such actions.
- E. The Department's policies concerning interaction with the news media are described in the relevant provisions in Volume 1 of the Department Manual, the Department's Emergency Operations Guide, and the Department's Media Guide.

¹ Al Crespo V. City Of Los Angeles, Federal Case No. Cv 00-08869

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- F. When the LAPD develops an Operations Plan for an event that involves a public assembly, LAPD, where practicable, will designate an area outside of the anticipated impacted area, but within reasonable viewing distance and audible range or the event in which members of the media may assemble.
- G. To the extent possible, the LAPD will try to prevent the news media viewing area from becoming part of any area impacted by an unlawful assembly declaration and order to disperse.
- H. The risk of continued coverage by the news media after an event has been declared an unlawful assembly, remains the responsibility of each individual reporter making the decision.
- I. The selection of a news media viewing area will take into consideration public and officer safety, police tactics, input provided by the news media, if any, and the ability of the Department to prevent the location from becoming part of the impacted area. The final selection of the viewing location will be made by the IC.

VIII. Senate Bill 98 – Media Access during public demonstrations -Effective January 1, 2022

- A. Intent to achieve parity with CA Penal Code 409.5
- B. Media access to emergency field command posts, police line, or rolling closure
- C. Police cannot intentionally assault, interfere, or obstruct members of the media
- D. Members of the media cannot be cited or arrested for failing to disperse but subject to arrest for other crimes
- E. Arrests for 148 PC
- F. A detained member of the media shall have ability to talk to a Dept supervisor if so requested
- G. What is a duly authorized member of the media?
- H. LAPD still issues News Media Identification cards (press passes), although not required to be recognized as a member of the media.

Note: This should be a point of discussion when planning to disperse a crowd.

- a. If due to changing conditions the initial area no longer affords the news media a reasonable view of the event or becomes a tactical concern for the IC, the IC will relocate the news media area.
- b. This will be done to the extent reasonably possible without compromising police tactics or public safety.
- c. The Department IC will designate an information officer, or multiple information officers to be the media team, as part of the Incident Command System in order to facilitate interaction with the news media.

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- d. The information officer will be clearly identified at the scene. Also, after declaring an unlawful assembly, Department personnel will designate a dispersal route for all persons present, excluding members of the media, to use when evacuating the area

- e. The Department understands that a well-informed public is essential to the existence of a democratic society. The members of the media provide vital information to the public, and the Department has an obligation, within legal limits, to accommodate the media as they perform this task.

IX. Practical Exercise – Scenarios

- A. Long Form Media Interviews
 - 1. On camera – recorded “sit-down”

- B. Public Presentations
 - 1. Press conference format

- C. Group Discussion
 - 1. Dialogue format