



# Principles of Communication in Disaster and Emergency

Seven key principles are outlined below. Each principle is also the starting point for a discussion paper in the pages that follow. Our aim is to go beyond the one-line statements and offer insight into the context of the ideas expressed, and guidance towards making the aspirations into realistic good practice.

## 1 The Seat at the Table - Systems and Structures

Excellent communication is central to excellent operations. Communicators need a seat at the table and a voice in strategic decision making. They should understand, support, and influence operational objectives.

## 2 Strategic Messaging - Connection and Credibility

Effective disaster communication requires a rigorous strategic process. We must do far more than transmit accurate data. We must understand why we speak. We must understand those we are speaking with. We must listen to ensure that we have been heard, understood, and believed.

## 3 Community Focussed Communication

People are the primary focus. We need to work with communities. We need to build communication policy, plans and practice that truly acknowledge the community's capacity and complexity, their perspectives and priorities.

## 4 Creating Connections - Integrating Efforts

Emergencies break things apart. A key responsibility for emergency communicators is to create and strengthen the links between teams, organisations, groups, and individuals.

## 5 Creating Networks - Connecting Stakeholders

Disaster impacts whole communities. It is fundamental to effective emergency communication, to create networks between emergency response agencies, government and the private sector so that we can work together to help the community prepare, respond and recover.

## 6 Working with Media and Social Media Providers - Liaison to Collaboration

Media agencies, journalists and those who work on social media to collect and create content, are our partners in disaster communication. We should move beyond liaison to develop trusted relationships and effectively collaborate to support, guide and empower those impacted.

## 7 Building Teams - Creating Capacity

There is much to be done. We need to resource and build scalable and adaptable teams of skilled communication practitioners. We need to prepare them, build their capacity, and work to ensure their well-being.



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