

What Would You Do?

Many things have changed over the years. We now have more educated, experienced and highly trained individuals with the knowledge of patient care, weather and aircraft limitations as well as good organizational skills filling the positions of Communication Specialist.

Communicators are becoming an integral part of the safety of our flight programs. Many programs are providing extensive training programs for communicators to become an asset to the flight crews in making appropriate and safe decisions. But who helps make those safe decisions if something were to go wrong in the communication center?

Sometime during your career as a communicator the time will come when everything that can go wrong will go wrong, or seems to go wrong. What will you do? Will you throw up your hands and just walk out? Will you be able to blunder through the problems hoping to get lucky and make all the right decisions? Or will you even know that there is a problem? The majority of the communicators will come out of the situation proud of their accomplishments not only to survive but maintain professionalism as well.

Consider the following scenarios and think what would you do if you were involved with one?

Your communication center was struck by a tornado, hurricane or an earthquake, there is a major train derailment with hazardous materials in close proximity of your center, a commercial airliner crashes in your community effecting communications or there is a fire in your building. Who looks after the communicators? Who takes care of the communicator's family members while the communicators are taking care of the community and crew needs? Communicators must deal with the everyday stressors of work and personal lives, such as multiple emergency calls, short staffing equipment failures, financial difficulties and now a disaster that effects the operation of their communication center. No wonder there is a high burnout rate for communicators and they just walk out never to return.

First rule is protect yourself, you could be the one injured. Your decisions or actions in some catastrophes may mean the difference between life and death including the communicators, if you are injured your decision making ability may be altered. If the building starts to shake the communicator may be safest under a desk or in a doorway, you may have to make a decision as to when to evacuate the building.

Second rule is get help. You should always make the call for help before trying to help, call the fire department prior to attempting to extinguish a fire in the communication center. If one of your co-workers should suffer a heart attack while on the console you should call for help prior to starting CPR. You may just need to call additional help to staff the communication center. (Don't forget your boss)

Third rule treat the wounded. After you call for help you may be required to treat your co-workers or even yourself until help arrives. If the building is on fire you may be the deciding factor as to evacuating the building as well as taking care of the injured. Remember if you are providing care until help arrives follow the alphabet, A=airway B=breathing C=circulation then take care of bleeding and shock in that order.

Fourth rule check out the system. After you have protected yourself, gotten help on the way and treated your co-workers you should start a system check of your communication equipment. If your equipment is still in place you should check the power, radios, and telephones, do the cell phones work, and is the building accessible, can responders get to you. What will it take to get the system operational again, who needs to be notified?

Remember that getting your system functional again can take from minutes to days depending on the severity of your outage; you will need to have patience.

What can you do to prepare for these unforeseen situations? Play the "What if game," what if there was a fire, what would I do and in what order? What if there was a tornado and our building was hit what would I do? Does the company have procedures established for such a disaster? Have you reviewed the procedures? Do you know where the fire extinguishers are located and how to use them, what type of extinguishers are they? If you have an automatic extinguisher system, is it Halon? Do you know the potential problems associated with Halon extinguishers? What is your escape route, when do you evacuate? There are thousands of what if scenarios; you need to be familiar with and what you would do if you were placed in any one of them.

What should a Communication Specialist do when everything seems to be going wrong? Start by taking a deep breath and say to yourself "Take it easy and be calm; it will be okay."

Think of yourself first, you are number one! Your team needs you.



What Would You Do?

Quiz

1. There is no problem of high stress and burnout with communication specialist.
 - A. True
 - B. False
2. Rule number one is to protect you.
 - A. True
 - B. False
3. As a communicator you will never have to worry about disaster striking your Communication Center
 - A. True
 - B. False
4. During an earthquake, tornado or hurricane you may be safest?
 - A. Working as usual
 - B. In the hallway in the head tucked position
 - C. Under a desk or in a doorway
 - D. Out of the building
5. In rule number two you should?
 - A. Provide care then call for help
 - B. Call for help then provide care
 - C. Just take care of the wounded
 - D. Document what has happened
6. When providing care to your co-workers you must be a licensed medical provider.
 - A. True
 - B. False
7. If you are providing medical care you should.
 - A. Check for shock first
 - B. Bandage wounds first
 - C. Follow the alphabet A=airway, B=breathing, C=circulation
 - D. None of the above
8. To prepare for the potential disaster the communicator can play what game?
 - A. Hollywood Squares
 - B. Who Wants to be a Millionaire
 - C. The "What if Game"
 - D. There is no way to help prepare for the unknown

9. As a communicator you will never have to make the decision to evacuate your building.

- A. True
- B. False

10. The first thing any Communication Specialist should do when everything seems to be going wrong is, to take a deep breath.

- A. True
- B. False

The logo for NAACCS is displayed in a stylized, 3D font. The letters are red with a white outline and a slight shadow, giving them a three-dimensional appearance. The text is centered at the bottom of the page.

What Would You Do

ANSWER SHEET

Name: _____
Organization: _____
Address: _____
City: _____
State: _____ Zip: _____
Country: _____
Email: _____

Please Print Legibly

NAACS Member #: _____
CFC Certification #: _____

Circle the appropriate letter

- 1 A. B. C. D.
- 2 A. B. C. D.
- 3 A. B. C. D.
- 4 A. B. C. D.
- 5 A. B. C. D.
- 6 A. B. C. D.
- 7 A. B. C. D.
- 8 A. B. C. D.
- 9 A. B. C. D.
- 10 A. B. C. D.

NAACS Education Committee
P.O. Box 19240
Topeka, KS 66619

After Completing, mail a copy of the answer sheet along with \$5.00 to NAACS Education Committee. Please allow four weeks for notification of your score. Once processed, CE acknowledgement will be either mailed or e-mailed to you.

Please retain your CE acknowledgement to be submitted with your recertification.