



National
Operational
Guidance

Control measure

Media Liaison Officer (MLO)



NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council

Developed and maintained by the NFCC



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Contents

Control measure - Media Liaison Officer (MLO) 3



Control measure - Media Liaison Officer (MLO)

Control measure knowledge

Attendance of an experienced media liaison officer (MLO), at the scene should help to ease pressure from the media. It is vital that this person is able to quickly establish a procedure for working with media requests and for regularly briefing them on developments. Rumour and conjecture will flourish in a vacuum, and it is far better that the MLO gains the trust and confidence of the media by providing regular updates on events, even if there is little new to say.

Demonstrating awareness of the media's need to meet deadlines or broadcasting live reports will assist the MLO in establishing credibility with the media at the scene. This is important as he/she may need to seek the media's co-operation in, for example, organising pooled access to the incident site for filming or broadcasting urgent appeals for blood donors or details of evacuation arrangements.

It may be appropriate to nominate senior officers from responding agencies who are outside the main command structure to act as the primary lead for media interviews. This will remove some pressure from the incident commander and ensure the consistency of the message.

Strategic actions

Fire and rescue services should:

- Have arrangements for an experienced media liaison officer (MLO) to be able to attend incidents
- Have trained staff available to co-ordinate media interaction

Tactical actions

Tactical incident commanders should:

- Liaise with media liaison officers (MLO) and strategic commanders on co-ordinating ongoing media interaction