



# PIOs Ready for the Call: How to Deploy, Integrate, and Demobilize for an On-scene Incident

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NEWS SPECIALISTS



Tues. April 9 (day 1 for me)

DNR PIO: Notification of possible dam failure

- Establish relationships now (start of a JIS)

Learned of Garfield Co WEA message

Driving home, called EM, discussed and edited  
WEA message (any Alerting Authorities here?)

Didn't think about it again, until...



# I Got the Call

8:30 p.m. My EM Director called my cell phone while I was teaching a square-dancing class

“DPS Commissioner requests (orders?) my deployment to support Garfield Co PIO needs. Be in Panguitch for 9:00 morning briefing.”

(45 min drive to SLC from home, 3 hour drive to Panguitch)



# Expect to Drop Everything Else

“I have some personal commitments. Can I be back the same day?” (teaching square-dancing)

“Uh, NO. Be prepared for several days!”

My wife worked to reschedule previous commitments.









# Dam wall cracked





# Dam wall kept leaning





# Be Prepared to Deploy

Keep a suitcase packed? I don't.

- What do you wear?

Have a PIO Go-Kit (see handouts)

Have and be familiar with all agency communications (radio, sat phone, mobile apps, etc.)



# ANL Public Affairs Science and Tech PIO Go Kit

1. Tactical backpack (container)
2. Agency radio / SAT Phone
3. Smartphone (128 GB minimum)
4. Basic video editing app
5. Basic language translation app
6. Smartphone headset with microphone (Ear Buds)
7. Portable power bank (1000mAh minimum)
8. Laptop or tablet and accessories
9. Surge protector/power strip
10. Thumb drives and/or portable hard drive
11. [Hemingway Editor App](#) bookmarked on your laptop &
- smartphone
12. Mobile Wi-Fi hotspot (MiFi)
13. Notepad, pencils, pens, highlighter
14. Business cards (physical and electronic)
15. Media staging scene tape
16. Smartphone stabilizer gimbal
17. Tripod
18. Smartphone and/or tablet tripod mount
19. Lavalier microphone for smartphone or tablet
20. Receiver/listen only headset earpiece (Ear Buds)
21. Toiletries (mouth wash, toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, brush, comb, toilet paper, soap)
22. Towel (wash cloth)
23. Change of clothes (minimum under clothes)
24. Make-up (compact w/mirror, etc.)
25. Cash – money
26. PIO vest and/or jacket
27. Compact umbrella
28. Flashlight
29. Bottled water
30. Energy bars or quick snacks



# Utah PIOs JIC in a Box

## Office supplies

Accessories (e.g. clothes, other supplies)

Backpack

PIO vest or PIO shirt

Poncho or umbrella

Flashlight

Battery-powered radio

Clothing for seven days

Sign - "Do not disturb. Interview in progress."

## Electronics

Laptop

Portable printer

Solar charging panel and recharger

## Digital camera

USB drives:

USB digital card reader

Nice webcam

Pay-as-you-go cell phone

## Other

First-aid or other medication

MREs

Three days of food (for austere

conditions)

Snacks

Drinks

Sleeping bag/pillow

Pelican Case or similar to store it all

Contact lists and information (paper and electronic versions)

Copy of 10 codes

PIO Association roster

Emergency Management roster

Stuff from guidelines folder

Standard Operating Guidelines

EOP

ICS forms

Pre-scripted messages and template news releases

Maps

Agency letterhead

## What are we missing?





# Travel Accommodations

EM Director told me his admin assistant would make hotel reservations

- Ended up in Sheriff's family summer house

My wife packed a bag with food, snacks, and drinks

Ate out on our dime (people were so grateful)

Packed my bags and tried to get some sleep.



# Face of dam leaking, outlet closed



# Normal Media Relations

Being the state EM PIO, I had consistent interaction with the local media.


We were running a Be Ready Utah campaign on KSL Radio.

Received call from KSL Wednesday morning asking about the incident. Told them I was deploying and would get back to them later with an update.





Wed. April 10 (day 2)

- Arrived in Panguitch 8:30 a.m.
- I didn't expect to know anyone at the incident
- DEM LNO and UHP officers were there
- Learned UHP PIO was also deployed
- Bit of a cock fight between LNO and UHP officers
- Attended Daily Briefing, took tons of notes
- Called KSL Radio Live Report (27:43-32:26) 



# First Things First

- Identify Who's Who – Get Contact Info
  - Incident Commander or EM
  - Public Officials
  - Other Stakeholders
- Identify Chain of Command
  - Who do I report to?
  - Preferred method of communication
  - Meeting schedule
- Other Expectations



# Second Things Second

- Understand incident objectives
- Establish communication priorities
- Identify the review and approval process
- Identify action items
- Divide assignments amongst the team  
(me and Lt. Roden)





# Get to Work

- Incident was a joint response effort with county, city, dam board (was some differences of opinion – but we stayed out)
- Participated in morning meetings in city office council room
- PIOs were provided small conference room in tourist office in county building
- Lt. Roden started writing a Situation Update to post on [UHP News site](#) (media familiarity)
- Used [Garfield Co. website homepage](#) for all public information products



# Make Contact with Media

- Through media advisory and/or social media, identify yourself as incident PIO
- Provide interviews
- Provide updates
- Monitor media



# Media Coverage

- Local
  - [Fox 13 News](#)
  - [Salt Lake Tribune](#)
- National
  - [Newsweek](#)
- International
  - [MSN Israel](#)





# Get to Work

- At mayor's request I started planning and advertising town hall meeting
- Be prepared to fulfill any and all PIO functions



## Garfield County - Panguitch City

### Panguitch Lake Town Hall Meeting

Officials from Garfield County, Panguitch City, Garfield School District, the state, and other agencies are conducting a Town Hall meeting to inform residents of the current situation involving Panguitch Lake, including mitigation measures, evacuation plans, and preparedness information.

Residents from Panguitch City and other potentially affected areas are invited to attend.

When: Wednesday, April 10, 2024; 6:00 p.m.

Where: Panguitch High School Gymnasium

Who: Garfield County Sheriff Eric Houston, Garfield County Commissioner David Tebbs, Panguitch Mayor Kim Soper, Garfield School District Superintendent John Dodds, West Panguitch Irrigation Chair Allen Henrie, Utah Department of Natural Resources, Division of Water Rights Everett Taylor, and other invited guests.

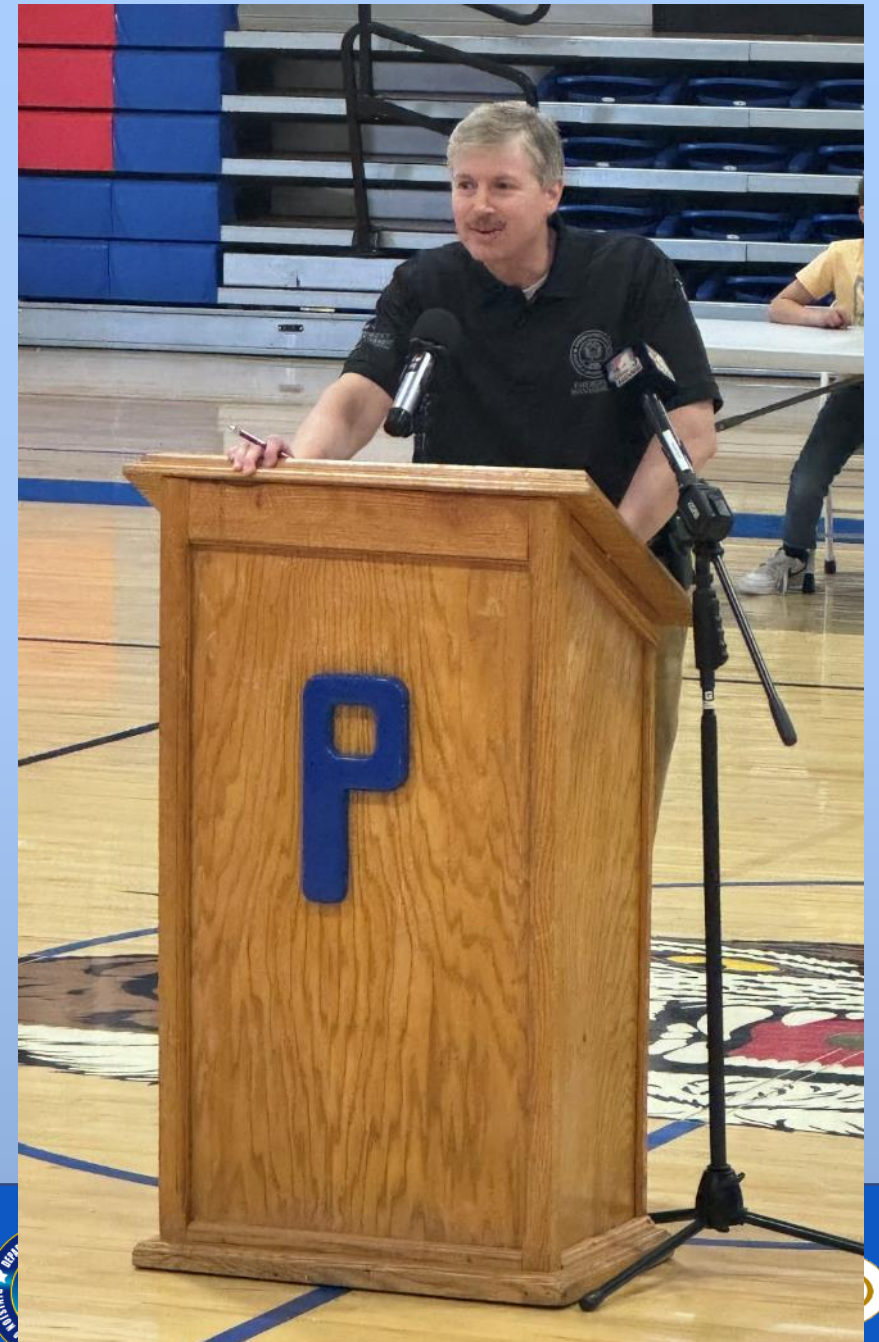
You can find a [virtual option to view the Town Hall Meeting here](#).

ZOOM LINK: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89873979301?pwd=VDhraEFVUDY1RHJJZ0l2RTErRWxPZz09>



# Town Hall Meeting

- Plan, prepare, and conduct the same as a news conference:
- Did site reconnaissance
- Notified public and media (Media attended)
- Conducted participant pre-brief meeting (4:00 – 5:00 p.m.)
- Arrived an hour early to set up
- Confirmed participants were present
- Identified additional/unexpected VIPs
- Provided virtual option



# Check in with Supervisor

- Don't forget to stay in touch with home office or EOC
- Participate in briefings (virtually)
- Provide updates



Thurs. April 11 (day 3)

Situation was much more relaxed  
Continued to focus on  
communication objectives





Thurs. April 11 (day 3)

Resumed the JIS

- Who are the key agencies involved? - invite their PIOs
- Create folder, shared documents on Google Drive
- Conduct JIS coordination meetings

Is a JIC needed? Yes, two of us were working in a small JIC.



# Capture Lessons Learned

Throughout the deployment Lt. Roden and I noted improvements

- Could have used another PIO on scene (DNR Water Rights)



Fri. April 12 (day 4)

We were released to go home

- Checked in with IC (Sheriff) before leaving
- Was able to contact NWS and cancel flash flood watch (daily)
- Keep track of expenses, receipts
- Understand who is reimbursing you
- Be available, if needed after demobilization



Thank You!



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