

COMMUNICATION FOR SECTIONS

Session Length: 40-45 Minutes

Learning objectives:

- To show that having a well-planned and consistent contact between the COC members will make the duties of the Section more simple and better quality.
- To explain the importance of communication and that it goes both ways and not just one person's responsibility.



Required Materials:

Note to trainer: Visuals enhance the learning experience. Try to involve your audience by asking questions and writing them down for all to see. You may need to re-phrase and apply what was said so everyone can understand more clearly.

- Blackboard (or white board) with chalk or markers.
- Flip Chart pad and easel.

Physical Arrangements:

Set up the room in a "U" shape so that every one can see the visuals set up at the front of the room.

Discussion Questions:

Have these questions written on the visual of your choice.

- What methods do we currently use to communicate within our section?
- What can be improved with the communication in our section?

TRAINER PREPARATION

Note to trainer: This syllabus is only a guideline. Read through the whole outline to familiarize yourself with it. It would be recommended that note cards be made with only the key points written on them so as to avoid reading this session and avoiding making eye contact. Also this session is for members of a COC on a section level so it is in a format mostly consisting of motivation and discussion because everyone should be familiar with the topic of communication. Go over what they know but push the training session in a direction that will inspire new ideas on what improvements can be made.

Frequent and well-planned communication is everything. Communication can be defined as the process by which information goes out to the members and also the process by which information is received back. Most people make the mistake of assuming that all of our communication only goes one way, so they wait for a call instead of making the call themselves. For example if someone misses a meeting, the section chief and the person who was absent both have a responsibility to contact each other to discuss the happenings of the conference. It is also important to get information back from the membership since this is the information that allows us to determine if our programs are successful, what additional training is needed, and how dedicated the members are. Training of our leadership can increase the ability to communicate with other leaders and with the membership.

There are several ways of doing this:

- Send information out in a variety of ways; i.e. newsletters, personal contact, posters at chapter and lodge events, postcards, roundtable announcements, etc. Modern technologies such as e-mail, websites, or even video are flashy ways to attract attention. The same message going out through several channels and by using several different ways they will have a greater impact.
- Listen to what the membership (and especially your leadership) is saying. Don't always be on the defensive if the comment seems to be a criticism. Surveys and evaluations are good sources of retrieving feedback.
- People communicate in a variety of ways - by attendance, by body language, by willingness to take part. It might be a good idea to bring someone skilled in the art of communication to do a training session.
- Regularly scheduled meetings need to be planned well in advance. Send a reminder and an agenda out before the meeting to all of the leadership. Meeting in person is always the best but the phone works as well when distance may be a problem.

Once the process is understood by all of the leadership it then becomes easier to focus on making the process effective in the management of the section.

TAKE 15-20 MINUTES NOW TO DISCUSS THE 2 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Note to trainer: here is an opportunity to get feedback from the audience and plan for your section personally. There are no right or wrong answers but keep the group on topic. Let the audience answer and if you know some things that were not mentioned, be sure to bring them up.

Here are some possible answers for question 2:

Our section could create a website. An e-mail link to the web advisor would make it so the COC could have a communication link to the members. Surveys, evaluations, or suggestion forms could be on our section site for members to fill out and better help the section. Maybe a question of the month could be posted along with other materials that would be updated frequently so as to keep members coming back.

The section chief should send a copy of messages he sends to at least his section advisor and vice-versa so that both know what is going on in the section and both are kept informed.

Our section could increase relations with neighboring sections and maybe even create a section ambassador to converse with other members of a different area. By exchanging information on how communication, training, activities, etc. are done in another area both places could benefit thus creating a better scouting program beyond assigned borders.

Meetings either through a phone conference, web chat, or in person could be scheduled in advance with agendas made before the meeting takes place. If progress needs to be made make sure there are deadlines set around a week before the meeting so that the work done thus far can be brought up along with any success, difficulties, or new ideas on the project. Once at the meeting create new deadlines and discuss a plan of action for each one. A person should be in charge of each project and it is up to them to either delegate the duties to people they know or to take on the task themselves.

Contact information of everyone on the COC should be passed between each other. You can never call, or e-mail each other too much with questions or updates. A very tightly bonded COC is connected to a strong section.

Usage of the Lodge Assistance Program helps lodges communicate with one another and should be an important program within our section. Visiting lodges within the section can become both learning and a bonding experience.

Note to trainer: Write all of the answers given on the board, and there may be more than what is listed above. Once no more solutions can be produced by the group go back through the list and get more specific with each answer. Try to make each idea into something that would be workable for your section and go into more detail of how it can be implemented.

Closing:

It is clear that communication is important and that a section cannot function without it. The weight of the section is too much for just one man to do himself so it has to be divided up amongst a selected group of capable youth. Without communication though this group would not share the same goal and they would be unorganized; think of it as if pedestrians could cross the street anywhere or anytime they wanted.

Working together and communicating what each of us is doing, makes our section strong and structured. Seeing how we communicate now and discussing how improvements could be made for the future will benefit all members in our area. It's not exactly easy but it is necessary and takes work on all our parts.

But you, my brothers, now know what it takes and as the leaders you are I know we can truly make something great.

Thank you for listening.