

APPENDIX E

INCIDENT HUMAN RESOURCE SPECIALIST (HRSP) GUIDE

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Introduction

This guide is intended to provide individuals serving in Incident Human Resource Specialist Positions (HRSP) with additional information and tools to assist them in accomplishing various aspects of their responsibilities.

PERSONAL SAFETY AND WELLNESS ON INCIDENTS

Maintaining your own personal safety and wellness while assigned to the incident is essential. Upon arrival at incident camp, take time to locate the First Aid Station and Law Enforcement and Security Management Personnel.

Safety Tips

Heat Stress

Heat stress occurs when the body's core temperature rises beyond safe limits. Evaporation of sweat is the body's main line of defense against heat. As sweat evaporates it cools the body. When water lost by sweating is not replaced the body's heat controls break down and the body temperature climbs dangerously.

Prevention - Acclimate yourself to the heat. Maintain a high level of aerobic fitness. Drink several cups of water, before, during and after work. Limit caffeine drinks. Prevent excess exposure to sun. To minimize UV exposure – keep skin covered by wearing a hat and long-sleeved shirt. Wear sunglasses that filter out 100 percent of UV rays. Use protective sunscreen lotion, and lip balm. Wear the appropriate clothing for conditions. Wash thoroughly each day to keep pores clean. Modify the way you work. Pace yourself.

Walking/Foot Safety

Ensure the proper fit of footwear. Break in new footwear before incident assignments. Change socks daily and wear clean quality cushioned socks which fit snugly to avoid blisters. Wear shoes with slip-resistant heels and soles with firm, flexible support. Make sure laces are kept tied.

Avoid slips trips, falls and strains. Be aware that camp terrain may be uneven with loose or rocky soil. Walk carefully at all times. Watch out for tent lines and stakes, and loose gear. Use a flashlight at night to illuminate pathways. Keep work areas clean, dry, orderly and free of obstacles that create tripping and slipping hazards.

Keep aisles and passageways clear to allow for safe access. Inspect chairs and desks for defective parts. Keep work area sufficiently lighted. Ask for help lifting heavy loads.

Noise Levels

Excessive noise can cause stress, irritability, sleep loss and possible hearing loss. Set up work and rest area away from noisy equipment, such as generators.

Water

Use only potable water from approved source.

Sanitation

Wash your hands before eating or drinking and after using the toilet at all times. Carry instant hand sanitizers, since soap and water may not always be available.

Security Tips

- Take time to become familiar with the incident surroundings.
- Know the layout of the camp.
- Know where to get assistance if needed – interface regularly with law enforcement and security managers.
- Keep security officials aware of your comings and goings.
- Learn some self-defense tactics.
- Keep your head up and walk with confidence.
- Pay attention to what is happening around you.
- Carry a whistle or personal alarm.
- Remember that keys, pens, flashlights can be used to deter an attacker.
- If attacked, SCREAM anything as loudly as possible.

Violence Situations on Incidents

Be alert to:

- Warning signs of potential violent situations such as intimidating, harassing, bullying, belligerent, or other inappropriate and aggressive behavior.
- The appearance of a weapon at an incident – or the making of idle threats about using a weapon to harm someone.
- Statements showing fascination with incidents of violence.
- Direct threats of harm.
- Statements indicating desperation.
- Extreme changes in normal behaviors.

If violence is observed:

- Stay calm, do not overreact, but do not ignore the situation.
- Contact law enforcement and incident management immediately.

Wellness Tips

Managing Stress

Stress is caused by how we respond to events, not by the events themselves. Each person therefore may respond differently to the same event. Not all stress can or needs to be controlled. We need positive high-energy stress because it gives us some motivation and challenge. What we need to learn to control is negative emotional and physical stress.

Stress Relievers:

- Relaxation – Break the stress cycle by taking frequent breaks throughout the day, stretch, take a brief walk, and practice deep breathing.
- Self-message –
 1. Base of the neck: Put thumb on one side of the neck and fingers on the other side, with palm of hand facing the back of neck. Squeeze gently, moving up and down neck.
 2. Shoulders: With tips of fingers, rub in small circles from the end of shoulder to the base of neck.
 3. Headaches: Start at the center of forehead. With finger-tips working in small circles and thumbs resting on cheek bones, work out along temples and the side of head to ears and back to center of forehead.
 4. Feet: Kick off shoes and use thumb to knead the bottoms of feet.

- Eat three nutritional meals a day.
- Eat healthy snacks like fruits and veggies.
- Exercise – Be physical at least 20 minutes each day. This can be as simple as a brisk walk around camp.
- Get enough sleep – At least 7 hours of sleep each night helps your body re-energize itself.



- LAUGH  “He who laughs....lasts!”

Research has shown that laughter is one of the body’s safety valves, a counterbalance to tension. Laughter, as with exercise, increases the level of good hormones in your system and decreases the levels of stress hormones.

KEYS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Effective communication is important in problem solving, conflict resolution, for positive working and personal relationships, and in reducing the stresses associated with interpersonal interactions.

Communication Tips

- Open the door to two-way conversation. Encourage questions. Ask questions.
- Consider the sender/receiver's communications strengths and weaknesses, and communicate in the manner that is best accepted by the sender/receiver.
- Paraphrase what you heard back to the speaker, to ensure you have a common understanding.
- Don't be thrown off course by words that affect you emotionally. Continue to listen even when the urge is to start to debate.
- Communicate to be understood. Many people communicate to impress – not express. Use short words that communicate clearly and concretely; present one idea, at the most two ideas, in one sentence. Avoid jargon. Use strong verbs. Avoid passive voice as much as possible.
- Be open to feedback.
- Be an active listener.

Active Listening Tips

- Listen with purpose. Ask yourself, “What worthwhile idea is being expressed?” “What is being said that I can use?”
- Judge content not delivery. Look beyond the speaker’s delivery and concentrate on what is being said.
- Keep your emotions in check. Avoid becoming over stimulated by what the speaker says. Avoid allowing your own biases or values to detract from the speaker’s message.
- Listen for the main idea or central themes of the message.
- Be flexible. Find a variety of ways to remember what you hear. Find a variety of notekeeping techniques to help you remember.
- Work at listening. Give your full attention to the speaker. Face the speaker. Use facial expressions that indicate you are following what the speaker is saying.
- Resist distractions. Concentrate on what the speaker is saying. Stay focused on the situation at hand.
- Keep an open mind. Avoid developing blind spots regarding cherished convictions. When you hear “red-flag” words keep your emotions in check.
- Capitalize on thought speed. Most of us talk about 120 words a minute. Our thinking speed is about 500 words a minute. Thus, there is a lot of time to spare while a person is speaking to us. Don’t let your mind wander and then dart back to the conversation. Use the spare time to advantage by thinking about what is being said; try to anticipate the point; mentally summarize the point so far; mentally question any supporting points; look for nonverbal clues to the meaning.

Examples of Active Listening

TYPE OF STATEMENT	DESIRED RESULTS	EXAMPLE
Encouraging	Convey interest	“I see.....”
	Speaker continues to talk.	“That’s interesting...”
Clarifying or open-ended questions	Obtain more information.	“Can you tell me more?”
		“Is there anything else?”
		“How do you see the situation?”
Restating	Show speaker that	“As I understand it, your idea is...”
	Listener is listening	“Do you mean, for example, that...?”
	Let speaker know listener understands facts.	“In other words, this is what happened...”
Reflecting	Show understanding of speaker’s view of situation	“You feel that.....”
		“You seem pretty concerned about...”
		“Sounds like you.....”
		“So you would like to see.....”
Silence or Pause	Encourages reflection. Allows speaker to fully express ideas.	
Summarizing	Shows grasp of situation or problem.	“These seem to be the key ideas you have expressed...”
	Highlight key facts and ideas.	“Let me summarize...”

Non-Verbal Communication

65% of the message is sent non-verbally. Become sensitive to non-verbal messages. Look for such things as body position and movement, gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, silence, use of space and time, etc.

- Eye Contact. If you look someone in the eye, they pay more attention to what is being said.
- Posture. Good posture is a sign of confidence and creates a sense of trust in your skills and abilities.
- Gestures. Use only the body movements and gestures necessary to make your point. Excessive motions are distracting to the listener.
- Expression. Your expressions sometimes say more than the words you speak. Try to smile and show interest when you speak.
- Voice. Speak with a firm and assertive quality. This tone implies directness and honesty.

Avoid Communication Stoppers

Behaviors and phrases that often stop a person from communicating:

- ORDERING “Don’t talk like that.”
- WARNING “If you do that, you’ll be sorry.”
- MORALIZING “You ought/should....”
- ADVISING “I suggest that you...”
- REASON WITH “Let’s look at the facts.”
- DIAGNOSING “You feel that way because...”
- JUDGING “You are wrong about that.”
- NAME CALLING “You are acting like....”
- DISTRACTING “Let’s talk about something else.”
- INTERRUPTING “But what about...”

FACILITATING THE PROBLEM SOLVING PROCESS

The incident HRSP assists incident managers and personnel in resolving issues of concern by guiding participants in a problem solving process. The objective is to more easily achieve desired outcomes on issues of concern. Problem solving actually takes place between the individual(s) with the problem, and the individual(s) with the authority to take action regarding the problem. The HRSP, as a neutral party, guides participants through the discovery and learning process in problem resolution. The HRSP documents responses as the process progresses. It is a good idea to have a flip chart or large piece of paper that both participants can view together.

Ground Rules

Lay some ground rules prior to beginning the process, by asking the participants if they can agree to:

- Actively participate.
- Show mutual respect.
- Allow the speaker to talk without interruption.
- Put energy and attention into understanding fully what the other person is saying.
- Share all relevant information.
- Ask questions if further clarification is needed.
- Stay focused on the issue at hand.

Problem Solving Process

Guides participants through the following six steps of the problem solving process.

1. Identify the problem.
2. Generate resolution alternatives.
3. Establish objective criteria.
4. Decide on a solution that best fits the criteria.
5. Proceed with the solution.
6. Evaluate the solution.

The participants provide the answers. The HRSP encourages participation. At each step of the process, the HRSP asks open-ended questions to draw out responses by the participants. The HRSP listens to responses, then guides participants to the next step when appropriate.

Step 1 - Identify the Problem

Types of questions an HRSP might ask the individual who presented the problem:

“What seems to be the problem or concern?”

“How do you see the problem?”

“What seems to be causing the problem?”

Then ask.....

“What are your needs and desires regarding this problem/concern?”

Types of questions an HRSP might ask the individual who can take action:

“Do you have a clear understanding of what the other party sees as the problem?”

“Do you need further clarification?”

“Do you have a clear understanding of the other participant’s needs and desires regarding the problem/concern?”

“What is your perspective of the problem?”

If the perspectives differ – ask each party to further explain their perspectives of the problem. Ask participants to think about what their interests (needs, concerns) are rather than their opinions. Ask “what is the concern” and “why is it a concern?” Once the participants agree that they have a common understanding of the problem the HRSP leads the participants to next step.

Step 2 - Generate Alternatives for Solutions

Explain to participants that alternatives need to be attainable and within limits of authority. The questions an HRSP might ask both participants:

“What do you see as some possible solutions to the problem?”

Encourage more than one solution by asking....

“What are some other solutions that might work?”

Once participants have finished voicing their possible solutions guide them to the next step.

Step 3 - Establish Objective Criteria

Types of questions the HRSP might ask to encourage input:

“What, if any, criteria should be put on your solutions?”

“What is it you want your solution to achieve?”

“What would you like your solution to accomplish or not accomplish?”

“What do you see as qualities of a good solution?” (For example: Is it doable? Fair? Affordable? Acceptable to both participants?)

Once criteria has been agreed upon, guide participants to next step.

Step 4 - Decide on a Solution the Best Fits the Criteria

Questions an HRSP might ask to guide through this step are below:

“Which of the solutions you discussed earlier will best meet these criteria?”

“Which of the solutions is the least difficult to act on?”

“Is there anything that would keep you from acting on this solution, if so what?”

“How might those barriers be easily eliminated?”

You can use the following matrix to guide participants through this step.

The matrix below can be used as a tool to measure the criteria against the solutions.

MATRIX

	CRITERIA				
	1	2	3	4	5
SOLUTION 1					
SOLUTION 2					
SOLUTION 3					
SOLUTION 4					

Placing “Y” in a box indicates that the criterion is met
 Placing “N” in a box indicates that the criterion is not meet

Step 5 - Proceed With the Solution

HRSP asks questions to facilitate agreement on solution:

- “Can you both agree to the solution and put it into play?”
- “When is a good time to get back with each other (a set period of time) to determine if the solution is working?”

Step 6 - Evaluate the Solution

The HRSP contacts participants (XXX DAYS) to see if the solution is working.

Additional Things to Remember

- Let participants talk and listen.
- Stay in the present and future, not in the past.
- Stick to the topic at hand.
- Help participants to avoid put-downs or cross-complaining.
- Look for and capitalize on areas of agreement.
- Take a break if discussion escalates.
- If a participant feels misunderstood, allow them the opportunity to restate what they have said in different ways until there is a common understanding.
- Watch what you say and how you say it, so that you don't give mixed messages and create an atmosphere of distrust.

Encouraging Participation

Some individuals are reluctant to participate. The HRSP can encourage participation utilizing the following techniques:

Ask questions – for example:

“What is your reaction to that?”

“What suggestions do you have to improve....?”

“Tell us more about that.”

“Explain the difference between.....”

Ask for more specifics or examples:

“Could you be a bit more specific?”

“Can you give an example?”

“What do you mean by....?”

Paraphrase for clarity and understanding

“Let's see Joe, if I understand correctly, you are saying....?”

BASIC FACT-FINDING

Basic fact-finding involves gathering pertinent and reliable information about a situation in order to determine what did or did not happen and who needs to be involved in any future action. No form of report is required.

Basic Fact Finding Tips

- Let the other person do most of the talking.
- Be a good listener.
- Keep your mind open, resist distractions and stay focused.
- Maintain eye contact and positive body language.
- Conduct conversations in an area of minimal confusion with some sense of privacy.
- Jot down brief notes after conversations with the person bringing the situation to your attention and any one else who was involved from an observation or hearing standpoint.
- Ask open-ended questions using: who, what, when, where, why, how.

Open-Ended Question Examples

“What did you see/hear/experience?”

“When did the situation occur?”

“Where did the situation occur?”

“Who was involved?”

“How were you impacted by what occurred?” or “How do you see the situation?”

“What concerns do you have?”

“Was anyone else present?”

“What was their involvement?”

“Why do you think it happened?”

“Has this same type of situation occurred before? When, where? Who was involved?”

“Can you tell me more?”

Clarifying Statement Examples

“I do not understand what you said, please explain it to me again....”

“As I understand it, your idea is...”

“Do you mean, for example, that...”

“In other words, this is what happened...”

What to do with Information Gathered

Determine if the situation requires involvement of others, and get them involved as soon as possible. Typically a supervisor or manager will need to be involved.

If information gathered indicates that the situation has potential criminal aspects, the information must be referred to a Law Enforcement Officer.

If the information gathered indicates that the situation is a contractor issue, then the issue must be referred to the Contracting Officer Representative.

DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE

Usually, the difficult person is someone who is working from the negative side of their personality, rather than a conscious desire to be difficult. The person is often unaware of their behavior and the adverse effects of their actions.

The display of negative behaviors is typically a manifestation of arrogance or defensiveness. There is a fear of being hurt, rejected, humiliated, or appearing to be weak. The behavior is a defense against vulnerability and insecurity.

The person is so afraid of being seen as unworthy or incompetent, that they immediately throw up a defensive shield against any possible attack. This defense protects them for a while, but in the end they lose creditability and respect – the thing they fear most.

Common Negative Personalities

“KNOW-IT-ALLS”



- Bombard you with facts and figures
- Feel they have all the answers
- Become upset if you question their judgment

“BULLIES”



- Display abrupt and intimidating behavior
- May use abusive language
- May become loud angry or hostile
- Overwhelm you with their presence

“COMPLAINERS”



- Freely talk about things they don't like or what is wrong, but seldom try to change their situation
- Concentrate on how others “should” behave
- Feel powerless to determine their fate

“SILENT TYPES”



- Unresponsive
- Respond only with “yes” or “no”
- Tough to read

“NEGATIVIST”



- Respond to new ideas with “that won't work”
- Expect the worst
- Reluctant to change

How to Cope With Negative Personalities

We are often required to work with others who may challenge our ability to get things done. Everyone is irritable or indecisive at times. But some people are so difficult that they make others lives and work a strain. These negative personality behaviors cause stress and program us to react.

- Separate the people from the problem. Communicators have two interests – the relationship and the message substance. The message substance and the relationship are easily entangled. The relationship aspect plays out in the manner in which the message is being delivered. The substance refers to the actual message content. In dealing with difficult people, separate the manner in which the message is being delivered from the actual message content.
- Recognize and try to understand the emotions behind the delivery. Avoid being reactive to the delivery and focus in on the message content. Avoid arguing.
- Get into a problem-solving mode. Listen, and show respect. Put energy and attention into understanding fully what the other person is saying. Ask open-ended questions. Avoid taking on their problem. Keep your own sense of self-confidence.
- If necessary, get the right people involved.

There is great value to be gained when we take the time to try to understand another's viewpoint. By changing our attitude toward them and changing our viewpoint about what makes them display this negative side of their personality, we improve our own ability to work with people. We can develop coping skills for dealing with these negative personality factors without trying to change them.

Tips for Overcoming Negative Aspects in Yourself

- Learn to recognize when your defensive mechanisms come up. Realize that you are probably not really being attacked.
- When you catch yourself feeling defensive, avoid reacting so quickly.
- Learn how to listen when someone asks a question or makes a suggestion.
- Ask people to re-state their question/comment/suggestion.
- Try to understand what others are saying by repeating back what you think you hear.
- You may want to ask for more time to respond, and then get back to them. This will give you time to work on the question/comment/suggestion without the pressure of being on the spot.
- Do consider that other people have good ideas that are just as valid as yours.
- Recognize that changing learned patterns of insecurity and defensiveness may take years of work.
- Learn to understand your own personality and your unique strengths and weaknesses.

