

# #2124: Best Practices in Disaster Public Communications

Poster Showcase  
#IAEM22

## Research Question

How can public agencies communicate disaster information to the public in ways that build trust and engender appropriate action?

## Methodology

Literature review and interviews

## Overcome Distrust of Government

Political environment  
COVID racial disparities  
George Floyd = decreased trust in police

## Deter Milling- Dennis Mileti

- Official evacuation order
- People check with neighbors, traditional media - radio, TV, newspaper
- Social media now another resource
  - Self correcting?
- Official versus Nextdoor, Waze; conflict



Diskin, M. (2019, April 28). California Towns at Risk From Fires Often Have Few Ways Out. *Ventura County Star*.

## Technology

- Communication limitations – cell phones fail early, IPAWS/WEA over-notify
- Mountainous terrain can block signals; ham radio, MURS radio, where to go for a signal?
- NOAA weather radio. Add sirens?



Unpublished photo, Sgt. Galen Yusufzai-Boggs, CNG

## Best Practices Motivate Action

- Be Specific
- Pre-event outreach and education are essential to build trust
- Where to go?
- What to bring?
  - Shelter supplies
  - Critical documents
- Special needs issues
- Pets
- Report to work? Disaster Service Worker?

## Basic Rules

- Regular, reliable communication from public safety agencies, elected officials
- Clear, concise, consistent
- Accurate maps
- Repetition of message
- Community languages and cultural competency



Unpublished photo, Sgt. Galen Yusufzai-Boggs, CNG

Frannie Edwards



Competitive Division: Academic

## Outreach

*Fire behavior* – up hill fast, downhill slower, fire makes its own weather.

*CERT* – neighborhood coordination

- Stay and defend - what are your exit routes?
- Educate community on dangers of heat – engines stop, air filters clog, tires melt

## Findings: List of 19 Best Practices

- Benefits emergency managers, PIOs, first responders

## Proposed Cell Phone App (white paper)

- Single source for collected information, limits milling
- Official announcements, social media data scraping sorted by using Big Data and AI functions
- Geo fenced and time limited (current) data collection to ensure relevance to emergency response decision making

SJSU IRB exempt; [www.transweb.sjsu.edu](http://www.transweb.sjsu.edu)



Powell, A. (2015, July 8). North Fire Shuts Down 15 FWY., ABC 7.