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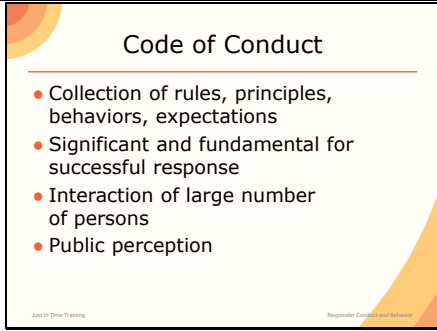
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During an animal health emergency, the conduct and behavior of responders will not only be a reflection of their respective agency, but can also impact responder safety, as well as influence public perception of the response. This Just-In-Time training presentation will overview basic code of conduct practices and responder actions that should be followed during an animal emergency response.

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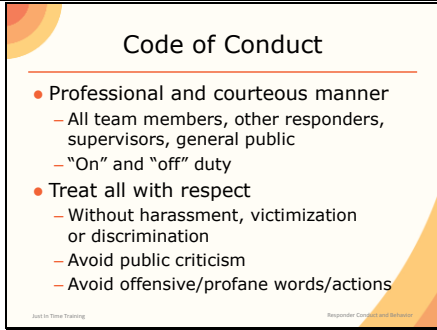
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A code of conduct is a collection of rules, principles, behaviors, and expectations considered significant and fundamental for a successful response. During any animal health emergency, a large number of personnel will be interacting and working together. Additionally, the public will be observing the activities of the response and actions of the responders. For this reason the behavior and conduct of responders can play a critical role in the success and public perception of an event.

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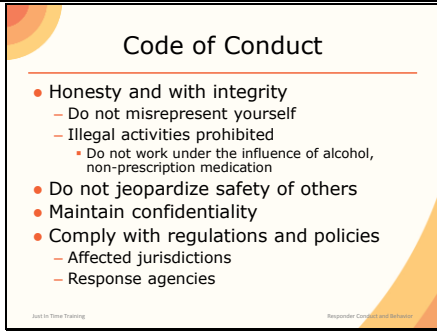
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Responders should conduct themselves in a professional and courteous manner at all times. This includes when the responder is "on" or "off" duty. All persons, including team members, other responders, supervisors, as well as the general public, should be treated with respect, without harassment, victimization or discrimination. Avoid public criticism of team members or other responders. Avoid the use of offensive or profane language or gestures.

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Honesty and integrity are also expected. Do not misrepresent yourself or your training. Do not use your identification to gain unnecessary access, favors, special privileges, benefits, exemptions, or gifts from anyone. Responders are expected to perform to their level of training and within the limits of relevant laws and regulations. Do not engage in any illegal activities or work while under the influence of non-prescription drugs or alcohol. Be cognizant of your actions and do not take any actions that would jeopardize another team members' safety. It is also important for responders to maintain confidentiality. Much of the information encountered during a response can be confidential and should be treated as such. Unless instructed otherwise, information provided during the response (e.g., briefings, situation reports) should be considered confidential and for official use only, until public notification is made. All actions during a response must comply with the affected jurisdiction (e.g. county, state, federal level) laws and policies. Additionally, any policies and procedures established by your respective response agency will also need to be followed.

Supervisors

- Follow chain of command
- Communication
 - Progress, concerns, conflicts
 - Promptly report
 - All injuries and accidents
 - Any unsafe conditions

Responders should follow the chain of command at all times and follow instructions provided by their supervisor. Communication during a response will be essential. Keep your supervisor informed of any progress, concerns, conflicts, or other problems with tasks assigned. Promptly report all injuries, accidents and near misses. If any unsafe conditions are noticed, report them to your supervisor immediately. Seek medical attention as needed.


Communication

- Test radios/phones prior to departure
 - Check batteries often
 - Replace as needed
- Speak slowly and clearly
 - Repeat unclear messages
- Avoid using names over radio
- Keep messages short, professional
- Do not interrupt those on same frequency

To ensure optimum and secure communication, always test radios or phones prior to departure from the staging area. Check batteries often and replace as needed. When communicating information, speak slowly and clearly. If a message is unclear, or complicated, the receiver should repeat the message content to the transmitter. Avoid using names over the radio. Keep radio and cell messages short. Messages should be professional, concise and specific; never derogatory and should never address sensitive issues. Do not interrupt others using the same frequency.

Know Your Limits

- Be aware of current fitness level
- Stay within personal limits
- Effects on health
 - Activity level
 - Extended shifts
 - Reduced sleep



For some responders, duty assignments on a deployment may involve a higher level of physical activity than their normal daily activities. Responders must be aware of their current fitness level and recognize that an increased activity level, working extended shifts, and reduced sleep may have an effect on their personal health and safety. Responders should know their limits and strive to work within their limits to avoid endangering themselves or their coworkers. [Graphic by Kate Harvey, Center for Food Security and Public Health]

Personal Safety

- Personnel accountability
 - Check in and check out
 - Buddy system
- Do not self-dispatch or act independent of response
- Work within your physical capabilities and training
- Avoid risks of injury to yourself or others

During response activities, it will be important for personnel to be accounted for at all times. Follow personnel accountability instructions, such as site check-in and check-out, or the use of the buddy system. Emergency response is a team effort. “Self-dispatching” or acting independently of the coordinated emergency response plan can be dangerous and is not permitted. Only undertake activities that are within your physical capabilities and within the scope of your training. Do not take risks that are likely to cause injury to yourself or others.

Responder Responsibilities


- Comply with established work rules
- Follow safety policies, procedures
- Report unsafe conditions
- Report all injuries to supervisor
- Wear personal protection equipment
- Refuse to perform any dangerous tasks
- Constant awareness of surroundings
 - Location of incident

Each responder is expected to comply with all of the established health and safety policies and safe work procedures. Do not perform tasks until proper safety and health controls have been put into place. Any responder uncomfortable with a particular duty or situation due to safety concerns should relay the circumstances via the appropriate chain of command. Refuse to perform tasks that pose an imminent danger. Wear all personal protective equipment needed for the task. Maintain constant awareness of your surroundings.

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Driving and Vehicle Use

- Responders are responsible
- Must have a valid drivers license
- Response tasks or basic needs
 - Meals, grocery store, hotel
- Obey all traffic laws
 - Seatbelts required
- Do not use cell phones



Responders using response vehicles are responsible for their safe operation and condition. Vehicles will be issued only to personnel with a valid driver’s license. Vehicles are to be used only for response tasks and basic personal needs (e.g., transportation to and from hotels, meals, grocery store, etc.) and may not be used for personal purposes. While driving, obey all traffic laws, including speed limits and seatbelt use. Be patient and courteous to other drivers. Drivers should never use cell phones while the vehicle is in motion – instead pull the vehicle over to safely talk on the phone. Do not text while driving. [Graphic from Center for Food Security and Public Health]

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Vehicle Guidelines


- Keep alert
- Do not drive when drowsy
- Set realistic goals for daily miles
- Avoid taking depressant medications
- Do not consume/carry alcohol
 - Do not drive if impaired
- Do not smoke in vehicles

Long work hours are probable during a response. Keep alert when driving. Do not drive if you are drowsy. Set realistic goals for the number of miles driven in a day. Drivers should never operate a vehicle if impaired by alcohol or medications that induce drowsiness. Alcohol should never be consumed or carried in vehicles. Smoking in vehicles is not permitted.

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Vehicle Accidents

- Report all accidents/damage
 - No matter how minor
- Damage not the result of accident
 - Falling objects, fire, hailstones, etc.



Vehicle damage may occur during response activities. Whether damage occurs by vehicle accident, vandalism, or environmental damage (e.g., hailstones), report it immediately to your supervisor.

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Public Interaction


- Respectful
- No false or misleading information
- Avoid conflicts of interest
 - Bribes, gratuity
 - Report to supervisor
- Cognizant of public perception
 - Be aware of actions at all times
 - Publicly accessed sites and impact on business
 - Live bird markets, custom slaughter plants

Responders should handle all public interaction situations in a respectful fashion. Do not provide false or misleading information. Do not improperly use identification, information, status, power or authority to gain unnecessary access, favors, special privileges, benefits, exceptions or gifts. Avoid conflict of interest situations, including the offer of or acceptance of bribes, gratuity or favor. If these situations occur, report them to your supervisor. Be cognizant of the public’s perception and their impact on businesses, especially those involving publicly accessed establishments, such as live bird markets, or custom slaughter plants.

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Public Communication

- Misinformation and rumors can cause panic
- If approached by media, stakeholders or public
 - Limit or avoid answering questions
 - Refer them to the Public Information Officer
 - Ensures consistent messages delivered



Any animal health emergency situation will be of major interest and concern to individuals residing near the location, as well as in other parts of the country. Misinformation and rumors can cause panic among people who have little or no control over unfolding events. Be cognizant of your actions at all times. In today’s technological society and ease of internet access, the potential for rapid upload of photos or video to the internet can be damaging or beneficial to a response and depends greatly on responder behavior and actions. Limit or avoid communicating with news media during field operations. If you are approached by the media or the public, refer them to the on-site

public information officer. This will ensure consistent messages are delivered regarding the response situation. [Photo from Clem Dussault, USDA]

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Resources

- USDA Foreign Animal Disease Preparedness (FAD PReP) Guidelines: Health and Safety
 – http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/emrs/naheems.shtml
- USDA NAHERC Deployment Guide, March 2010
 – <https://fadprep.lmi.org>

Just In Time Training Responder Conduct and Behavior

For more information on responder conduct and behavior during an animal health emergency response, consult the USDA FAD PReP Health and Safety Guidelines and the USDA NAHERC Deployment Guide.

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JUST IN TIME TRAINING

Acknowledgments

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