



DF 307
Managing Meetings

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COURSE OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this course will enable the participants to:

- Identify the types of meetings and their purposes that FEMA managers and supervisors conduct.
- Describe the characteristics of ineffective meetings.
- Describe the characteristics of effective meetings.
- Describe specific types of meetings held the JFO
- Apply strategies for planning and conducting effective meetings.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The target audience for this training are managers and supervisors or individuals who will be managers and supervisors.

APPROXIMATE TIME

2 hours

CONTENTS

This course includes the following sections:

- Course Overview
 - Activity: What Makes Meetings Annoying?
- Attending Meetings
 - Activity: Meetings at the JFO
- Types of Meetings
- Planning and Conducting Meetings
 - Activity: Planning a Meeting
- Tips for Planning and Conducting Effective Meetings
 - Activity: Conducting Effective Meetings
- Summary

PREPARING

Use the following checklist to help you prepare for this course:

Supplies and Equipment

- Visuals 1 through 23 (Prepare the visuals if necessary.)
- Overhead projector with screen, or laptop computer and projector
- Easel paper, easels, and markers
- Masking tape
- Name cards
- Pens and note paper
- Index cards

Handout Materials (Included in Participant Manual.)

- Handout 1: Sample Agenda: Federal/State Coordination Meeting
- Handout 2: Sample Agenda: JFO Planning Meeting
- Handout 3: Planning/Problem Solving Meetings: How Much Structure and Facilitator Control?
- Handout 4: Activity: Planning a Meeting
- Handout 5: Tips for Conducting Effective Meetings
- Managing Meetings End-of-Course Evaluation

NUMBER OF INSTRUCTORS

One or two instructors may be used to teach this course.

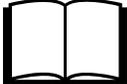
INSTRUCTOR QUALIFICATIONS

Instructors should have training experience, as well as previous experience working at a Joint Field Office. This course should not be taught by instructors without previous disaster field experience. If you are inexperienced, request an experienced instructor to co-instruct the first session with you

COURSE CONTENT

Instructors delivering these course materials should ensure that the course objectives are delivered in their entirety in order to have the course completion recorded in the Automated Deployment Database (ADD). Additional material may be added, based on the need of the audience to enhance the understanding of the subject matter.

ICONS

Overhead Projector 	Projector 	videotape 	Easel 	Key Point 	Instructor Note 	Check List / Evaluation form 	Graduation / Diplomas 
Thank You! / Good Job! 	Activity 	Discussion Question 	Summary Transition 	Participant Manual 	Time Saving Tip 	Participant Handout 	

REFERENCES

There are several good websites with “free” material on Managing meetings: The first website listed is a good website to start with. It has links to the other websites.

“Basic Guide to Conducting Effective Meetings”, by Carter McNamara, MBA, PhD
 Copyright © 1999, Authenticity Consulting, LLC.
<http://www.managementhelp.org/misc/mtqmqmnt.htm>

Lessons Learned “Effective Meeting Facilitation: The *Sine Qua Non* of Planning”
 by Miranda Duncan <http://www.arts.endow.gov/resources/Lessons/Duncan1.html>

“Blocks to Successful Meetings” and “A Model for Successful Meetings” from
[Leadership Training and Development Outline](#) by Don Clark Created January 1, 1998
 Last updated April 23, 2000
<http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/leader/meetings.html>

WELCOME

Begin by welcoming class

- Introduce yourself



Visual 1

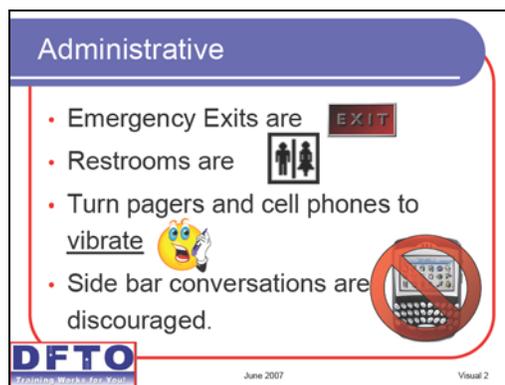


Review class rules and safety items:

- Fire exits
- Restrooms
- Turn pagers and cell phones to vibrate.



Visual 2



COURSE OBJECTIVES



Visuals 3 and 4

Course Objectives

- Describe two specific types of meetings held at the JFO.
- Apply strategies for planning and conducting effective meetings.



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Visual 3

Course Objectives

- Identify types of meetings and their purpose.
- Describe the characteristics of ineffective meetings.
- Describe the characteristics of effective meetings.

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Visual 4

Review the course objectives with the participants:

- Describe two specific types of meetings held at the JFO.
(Objective 1, page 13)
- Apply strategies for planning and conducting effective meetings.
(Objective 2, page 29)
- Identify types of meetings and their purpose.
(Objective 3, pages 11 and 12)
- Describe the characteristics of ineffective meetings.
(Objective 4, page 25)
- Describe the characteristics of effective meetings.
(Objective 5, page 26)

COURSE OBJECTIVES



Review the following key points:

- In this course we will talk about what makes meetings effective or ineffective.
- You will complete several activities that first focus on identifying problems common to poor meetings, then on identifying the unique aspects of meetings that take place in a JFO. Finally, you will practice planning a meeting.
- A supervisor will be called upon to attend a variety of meetings at the Joint Field Office (JFO), Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) or other disaster offices. In addition, every supervisor will schedule and conduct meetings with his or her own staff.
- Meetings can be an effective and efficient means for exchanging information, solving problems, and building a team. However, as you know, a meeting that is not well planned or is conducted poorly can waste people's time.

INTRODUCTIONS



Visual 5



Have participants introduce themselves

- Name?
- Where they are from?
- Course expectations?
- Their position in the organization

MEETING FACTS



Visual 6

Meeting Facts

- Approximately 11 million meetings take place every day in the U.S.¹
- Approximately 50% of meeting time is wasted or unproductive.²
- Individuals who attend meetings regularly admit to³:
 - Daydreaming – 91%
 - Dozing – 39%
 - Doing other things – 73%





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Visual 6

Explain meetings can be an effective and efficient means for exchanging information, solving problems, making plans.

However, as you know, a meeting that is not well planned or is conducted poorly can waste people's time and find them dozing, daydreaming or just tuning out.

- Meetings dominate the way in which we do business today. In fact, approximately 11 million meetings occur in the U.S. each and every day.¹
- Most professionals attend a total of 61.8 meetings per month and research indicates that over 50 percent of this meeting time is wasted.²
- Most professionals who meet on a regular basis admit to daydreaming (91%), missing meetings (96%) or missing parts of meetings (95%). A large percentage (73%) say they have brought other work to meetings and 39% say they have dozed during meetings.³

1. A network MCI Conferencing White Paper. *Meetings in America: A study of trends, costs and attitudes toward business travel, teleconferencing, and their impact on productivity* (Greenwich, CT: INFOCOMM, 1998),

2. Robert B. Nelson and Peter Economy, *Better Business Meetings* (Burr Ridge, IL: Irwin Inc, 1995),.

3. A network MCI Conferencing White Paper, *Meetings in America: A study of trends, costs and attitudes toward business travel, teleconferencing, and their impact on productivity* (Greenwich, CT: INFOCOMM, 1998), .



What types of meetings have you attended in a JFO, DRC, etc.?



What has been your experience with these meetings?

ACTIVITY: WHAT MAKES MEETINGS ANNOYING? (10 Minuets)



Preparing for the Activity:

Make sure each table group has easel paper on which to record its answers.

Conducting the Activity:



Visual 7



Explain that the participants are to work in their table groups to complete the sentence that appears on the visual.



Read the sentence aloud.

Tell the table groups to list each of their responses on chart paper and be prepared to present them to the class. They have 5 minutes to complete their lists.

After 5 minutes have passed, **ask** each group to present its responses.

Ask the participants to review the responses and to comment on what could be done to avoid these problems in future meetings.

Explain that this course is designed to help the participants avoid conducting annoying meetings and to implement the suggestions provided by the class.

TYPES OF MEETINGS



Visual 8



There are three basic types of meetings:

(Objective 3, Learning Check Questions 1, 2 &3)



Review the following key points:

The **Informational** meeting is scheduled for the purpose of giving or receiving information about a specific idea or important matters concerning the attendees.

The **Planning/Problem Solving** meeting is scheduled for the purpose of discussing an issue or conflict and deciding how to solve it. It may entail long-range, short-range planning, brainstorming, and strategy formulation

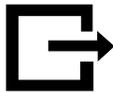
Both occur regularly in the JFO and both have very different objectives.

(Objective 3, Learning Check Questions 1, 2 &3)

Team Building, a third type of meeting you may conduct is a meeting intended to boost the morale of your staff, relieve stress, and/or strengthen the relationships among the members of your team.

- This type of meeting is extremely important in the disaster environment, because Disaster work can be both physically and emotionally stressful.
- Personnel working in the field may not otherwise have adequate opportunities to communicate with and support one another

Most meetings you schedule will fall more or less into one of these three categories.



In our discussion of JFO meetings, we talked about three different types of meetings with three different purposes:

- Informational/briefing meetings
- Planning/problem-solving meetings
- Team Building / Stress Relief / Morale Boosting

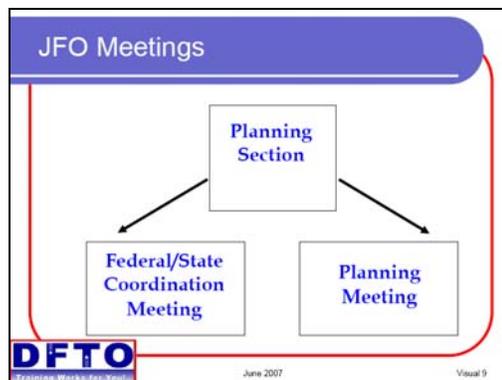
As a JFO supervisor or manager, you are likely to conduct all three types of meetings within your own organization.

Ask if there are any questions before moving on?

ATTENDING MEETINGS AT THE JFO



Visual 9

**Review the following key points:**

- In order to coordinate the efforts of all of the organizations within the JFO and to ensure that everyone receives current disaster status and policy information, JFO-wide meetings are held regularly.
- There are two meetings that are usually facilitated by the Planning Section.
(Objective 1, Learning Check Question 5)
 - Federal/State Coordination Meetings
 - Planning Meetings
- As a supervisor or manager, you may be asked to attend some of these meetings as a representative of your JFO organization. Therefore, it is important that you understand the purpose of each of these types of meetings and the ground rules that are to be followed by each meeting participant.



Tell the participants the types of meetings that are conducted in this disaster and the typical schedule for these meetings.

FEDERAL/STATE COORDINATION MEETINGS

**Review the following key points:**

- The Planning Section helps to facilitate the Federal/State Coordination Meeting. This meeting is conducted daily, usually early in the morning.
- Coordination Meetings are attended by representatives from each functional organization in the JFO and from State emergency response organizations. The Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO) or designee attends as well.
- The primary purpose of the meeting is to exchange information.



Have any of you attended a Federal/State Coordination Meeting?

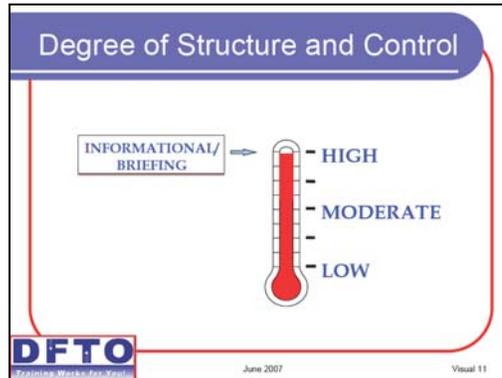
Ask a volunteer to describe the meeting.



Refer the participants to the Participant Manual Handout 1, which is a sample agenda for the Federal/State Coordination Meeting, as well as a list of ground rules for meeting participants. You may want to distribute an actual agenda from a meeting held at this JFO.



Visual 11



What ground rules should be set for individuals attending an informational meeting?



Review the following key points concerning the agenda and ground rules:

- Federal/State Coordination Meetings are highly structured in order to facilitate the exchange of a great deal of information in a short period of time. The meeting is facilitated by a representative from the Planning Section, who maintains tight control over the agenda. Participants speak when requested by the facilitator.
- The purpose of these meetings is to disseminate and collect information. These are not problem-solving or decision-making meetings.
- The meeting begins with a status briefing. The facilitator may call on individuals to report status information from their program or service function.
- Objectives identified in the previous day's meeting are then reviewed to determine those that are still objectives. Any new objectives are also reported. The objectives are generally set by the FCO and SCO.
- The meeting ends with general administrative announcements.

- Notice that the Federal/State Coordination Meeting is an appropriate forum for raising issues. However, solutions will not be discussed at this meeting. Instead, the Planning Section may follow up by scheduling a Planning Meeting to address the issue.
- **Ground rules** are taken very seriously. If you attend a Federal/State Coordination Meeting, be sure to abide by these rules.
- If you are not satisfied with the amount of attention that an issue receives, you must find another forum for discussing your concerns. The goal of these meetings is to share as much information as possible while not using the valuable time of many of the JFO's key players.



What should your goals be when attending a Federal/State Coordination Meeting as a supervisor?

Possible answers:

- *Gather information about the status of operations.*
- *Identify possible areas within the JFO that could use your assistance.*
- *Inform others about the status of your activities.*

Make sure the following points are covered:

- *Participants should review the meeting agenda ahead of time and bring to the meeting any information or ideas that are relevant to the issues contained in the agenda.*
- *Participants must limit their comments to the topics under discussion.*
- *Whenever possible, decisions should be made during the meeting.*



Handout 1

Refer the participants to their Participant Manual Handout 1, where they will find the ground rules for the Federal/State Coordination Meetings that they looked at earlier in this training.

Using the list of ground rules as a starting point, **lead** a discussion on the ground rules that a JFO supervisor may want to set for an informational/ briefing meeting.



Ask: As a JFO Supervisor why would you need ground rules at these meetings?



List responses on easel paper.

Make sure the following points are covered:

- *Participants must wait to be called on before speaking.*
- *When asked to speak, participants must limit their comments to the topics under discussion.*
- *Anyone speaking should be reporting information, not stating opinions or recommendations (unless requested).*
- *Issues should be raised but not resolved.*

TELECONFERENCES



Visual 12



Explain that while you are talking about informational meetings, you would like to discuss “teleconferences” another option available for this type of meeting.



Review the following key points:

- Teleconferences are most effective for informational/briefing meetings, where the focus is on reporting facts.
- Like other meetings, teleconferences should be controlled by a facilitator who determines the agenda and ensures that participants adhere to it.
- In addition, the topics and timeframes may need to be limited. Teleconferences should not be used when an extended meeting is needed with much interaction.



Visual 13



Handout 2

Refer the participants to their Participant Manual Handout 2, which is a sample agenda for JFO Planning Meetings, as well as a list of ground rules for meeting participants.



Have any of you attended a Planning Meeting at a JFO?

Ask a volunteer to describe one Planning Meeting he or she attended, including who attended and what issues were discussed. **Ask** another volunteer to do the same.



Review the following key points:

- The purpose of JFO Planning Meetings is to discuss and solve problems.
- The Planning Section, with input from the FCO, decides when it is necessary to schedule a Planning Meeting and who should attend. Depending on the nature of the issue(s) to be addressed, representatives from relevant JFO functions will be invited to attend.
- Planning Meetings are less structured than the Federal/State Coordination Meetings in order to facilitate collaboration and problem solving.

- The meetings are still facilitated, in order to ensure that the discussion stays on track and the meeting's objectives are met. However, participants speak more freely, not necessarily waiting for the facilitator to call on them.

Review the Planning Meeting agenda items and ground rules shown in Handout 2. You may want to distribute an actual agenda from a Planning Meeting conducted at this JFO.

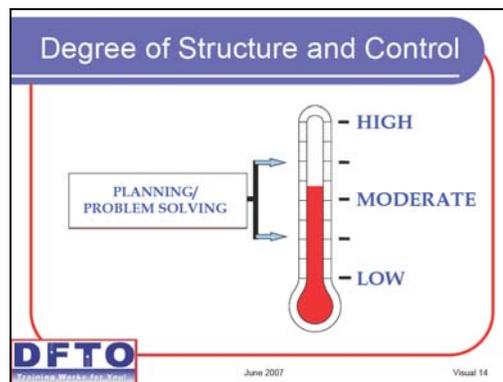
Aside from meetings internal to your organization within the JFO, Federal/State Coordination Meetings and Planning Meetings are the JFO meetings that supervisors are most likely to attend.



What degree of structure and facilitator control is generally needed to achieve the goals of a planning/problem-solving meeting?



Visual 14



Ask for volunteers to describe the objectives of planning/problem-solving meetings.

Some possible answers:

- *To exchange information collected about a problem and then generate alternative strategies for addressing the problem.*
- *To develop the operational plan and objectives.*
- *To get input on how best to accomplish a task that the FCO has just assigned to your organization.*

Explain that planning/problem-solving meetings require more structure than team-building meetings but less than informational meetings. However, the degree of structure can vary greatly.



Handout 3

Refer the participants to Handout 3.

Facilitate a discussion about how to determine the degree of structure to impose on a planning meeting by asking the following question:



Review Handout 3, especially the points in the chart. What other factors might you add to this chart?

For each factor suggested by a participant, **ask** the participants whether it would suggest more or less structure and facilitator control.



What are the responsibilities of the person conducting a planning/problem-solving meeting?

Make sure the following points are covered:

- *Decide who should attend the meeting. Invite only those whose job responsibilities or expertise are relevant to the issues that will be discussed.*
- *Develop a meeting agenda and distribute it to participants ahead of time.*
- *Monitor the discussion and make sure that participants stick to the agenda items.*
- *Ensure that all participants have an opportunity to express their opinions.*
- *Make sure that all agenda items are covered.*
- *Observe the time limit set at the outset of the meeting.*



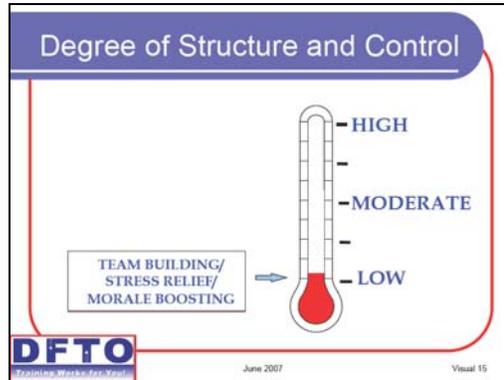
Ask the participants if they have any questions about Planning Meetings before moving to the next section. **Answer** their questions.



What degree of structure and facilitator control is generally needed to achieve the goals of a Team Building meeting?



Visual 15



Have you ever attended a meeting that was intended solely for team building, morale boosting, and/or stress relief?

Follow up this question with the following questions:



What were the circumstances?



Who called the meeting?



Was it helpful?



What are the responsibilities of the person conducting a team-building/stress-relief/morale-boosting meeting?

Make sure the following points are covered:

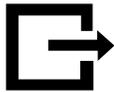
- *Decide who should attend the meeting.*
- *Make sure that everyone is invited and that they know the purpose of the meeting.*
- *Arrange for refreshments.*
- *Welcome participants and set the tone for the gathering.*
- *Facilitate ice-breaker activities if appropriate.*



What ground rules should be set for individuals attending a team-building/stress-relief/morale-boosting meeting?

Make sure the following point is covered:

- *Anyone invited to one of these meetings should attend. These meetings are important even though no information is exchanged and no decisions are made.*



Ask the participants if they have any questions about Team Building Meetings before moving to the next section. **Answer** their questions.



ACTIVITY: MEETINGS AT THE JFO (10 Minutes)



Visual 16

Activity

- How does the disaster environment make meetings at the JFO different from meetings in non-emergency situations?



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Visual 16

Tell the participants to take another 5 minutes to discuss this question in their table groups and list their responses on chart paper.

After 5 minutes have passed, **ask** for volunteers to present their group's answers.

Make sure that the following points are raised:

- *Status is changing frequently, especially early in the response. Therefore, the need for regular communication is great.*
- *Time is critical. Every minute wasted could mean a delay in providing a disaster victim with needed assistance.*
- *Meeting participants are likely to be tired and stressed.*
- *Individuals' opinions are likely to be more emotionally charged.*



Conclude the discussion by making the following points:

Now that we have identified what makes our meetings unique, let's look at what makes meetings ineffective and then we will look at some key points and strategies for making meetings effective.

STRATEGIES OF MEETINGS



Visual 17

Ineffective Meetings

- Meetings are TOO long
- Meetings miss important information
- People wander off topic
- People don't take meetings seriously
- Nothing happens after the meeting
- Meetings never get any better


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Visual 17

(Objective 4, Learning Check Question 4)



Meetings are TOO long¹.

- Regular Meetings should last no longer 90 minutes.
- During a disaster, especially in the early days and weeks, time is critical. Meetings should be kept short. The 30-minute ground rule is a reasonable time limit.

Meetings miss important information.

- Some information may be missed or some people may forget to bring up important information.

People wander off topic

- People spend time digressing rather than discussing.
- Stick to the Agenda and objectives.

People don't take meetings seriously.

- Meetings are supposed to be real work, not a practical alternative to work.

Nothing happens after a meeting.

- Take the meeting to the next stage – “doing”. Assign people to follow up and report back at the next meeting.

Meetings never get any better.

- Monitor what works and what doesn't. Hold people accountable.

1. A network MCI Conferencing White Paper. Meetings in America: A study of trends, costs and attitudes toward business travel, teleconferencing, and their impact on productivity (Greenwich, CT: INFOCOMM, 1998),



Visual 18

Effective Meetings

- Hold only necessary meetings
- Set a time limit
- Have an objective,
- Prepare an agenda, distribute it in advance
- Invite the appropriate attendees
- Follow up, assign responsibilities


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Visual 18

(Objective 5, Learning Check Question 4)



Hold only necessary meetings

- Don't hold meetings just for the sake of having a meeting.

Set a time limit

- Start on time, end on time – show people you are serious. Don't waste your time and their time.

Have an objective

- Have a defined meeting objective, *specific and measurable*.
- If you do have more than one type of objective, decide which is the most important and plan your meeting accordingly. For example, if the most critical objective is to review priorities for the next (ICS) operational period, plan an informational/briefing meeting. If you accomplish your objectives, you may have time to address other issues but be aware of meeting length and creating a free for all meeting atmosphere.

Prepare an agenda, distribute it in advance.

- An agenda will help keep everybody on track.
- Date, location and time of meeting.
- Topics, presenter, time limit, etc. distribute in advance so the attendees are prepared.

Invite the appropriate attendees

- Attendees should be at the appropriate level to make the necessary decisions.

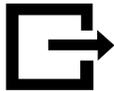
Follow up, assign responsibilities

- End the meeting on time with clear expectations of what will be done at the next meeting and who is responsible to accomplish each task.



Generally, it is not a good idea to try to combine informational briefings, problem solving, and team building into one meeting because:

- It would be difficult to accomplish all three in 90 minutes.
- Different types of communication are required.
- The objectives of the meeting become less clear, and it is difficult to keep the discussion on track.
- Different methods of structuring and facilitating meetings are appropriate for these different types of meetings.



Ask the participants if they have any questions about Strategies for Meetings. **Answer** their questions.

PLANNING AND CONDUCTING MEETINGS



Visual 19



In order to avoid wasting your time and the time of the other meeting participants you should:

- Arrive on time
- Be prepared for the topics of discussion
- Be accurate with your reports and facts.
- Stay on topic to keep the meeting short.
- Participate, constructively and don't play with your Blackberry.



Make sure the following points are covered:

- *Decide who should attend the meeting.*
- *Develop a meeting agenda and distribute it to participants ahead of time.*
- *Stick to the agenda and ensure that all participants do the same.*
- *Limit the amount of time each individual speaks.*
- *Interrupt participants if they begin to report information that is unrelated to the agenda.*
- *Make sure that all agenda items are covered.*
- *Suggest an alternative meeting for continuing prolonged discussions on specific issues as needed.*
- *Observe the time limit set at the outset of the meeting.*



ACTIVITY: PLANNING A MEETING

Conducting the Activity:



Handout 4

Refer participants to Handout 4, where they will find instructions for the activity.



Visual 20

Activity

1. Establish a goal for the meeting.
2. Identify who should attend.
3. Determine the agenda.
4. Establish timeframes for each agenda item.
5. Create any unique ground rules.


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Visual 20

(Objective 2)

Explain that the participants are to read the scenario and then plan a meeting individually, following the steps listed on the visual.

Then, after 10 minutes, **tell** the participants that now the table groups will review each of the plans. The groups are to pick one plan to present to the entire group. The groups have 20 minutes to complete this activity.

After 20 minutes have passed, **ask** each group to present its plan.



Ask the participants if they have any questions about Planning and Conducting Meetings. **Answer** their questions.

TIPS FOR PLANNING AND CONDUCTING EFFECTIVE MEETINGS



Handout 5

Distribute Handout 5, titled “Tips for Conducting Effective Meetings.”

Explain that the handout should serve as a quick reference when the participants hold meetings.

Review the topic headings:

- Getting Ready
- Meeting Basics
- Handling Difficult People
- Handling Difficult Situations
- Encouraging Discussion



ACTIVITY: CONDUCTING EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

Preparing for the Activity:

Divide the handout contents into roughly equal sections to match the number of table groups.

Write page numbers or other descriptions of each section on index cards.

Conducting the Activity:

Give each table group a card containing an assigned section of the handout.

Tell each group to choose the most important tip in its section and present the tip to the whole group.

Allow 5 minutes to complete the task.

Call on a volunteer from each group in turn to present the tip and to explain why the group chose the tip.

Ask the participants if they have any questions about any of the tips or if they have any suggestions to add. **Answer** any questions the participants ask and respond to their comments.



SUMMARY



Visual 21

Summary

- Describe two specific types of meetings held at the JFO.
- Apply strategies for planning and conducting effective meetings


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Visual 21



Visual 22

Summary

- Identify types of meetings and their purpose.
- Describe the characteristics of ineffective meetings.
- Describe the characteristics of effective meetings


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Visual 22



Summarize by reviewing the following points:

- Effective meetings are a vital component of managing your function and relating to the rest of the JFO.
- Focusing on the purpose of the meeting is key to its success.
- Meetings need planning, preparation, and direction.

Student Learning Check

Distribute exam to students. Allow 10 to 15 minutes, the students may use their materials. Correct the learning check as a group.

Ask the participants to complete the course evaluation form.



Evaluation

Please take a few moments to fill out your Evaluation and hand them into the instructor.

Your input is important to us!

Thanks

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Visual 23

Handout #1
SAMPLE AGENDA:
FEDERAL/STATE COORDINATION MEETING

**TYPICAL AGENDA:**

1. Conduct status briefing.
2. Review existing priorities:
 - Modify.
 - Eliminate.
 - Continue.
3. Identify new priorities.
4. Make administrative announcements.

GROUND RULES:

1. Focus on upcoming operational period.
2. Focus on issues, not solutions.
3. Turn pagers to vibrate, and turn off cellular phones, ignore Blackberrys.
4. End meeting within 30 minutes.

Handout #2
SAMPLE AGENDA:
FEDERAL/STATE COORDINATION MEETING

**TYPICAL AGENDA:**

1. Conduct situation briefing.
2. Discuss operational priorities.
3. Specify objectives for each functional unit.
4. Review critical issues from previous meeting.
5. Identify new critical issues and assign action agents to each.
6. Make administrative announcements.

GROUND RULES:

1. Turn pagers to vibrate, and turn off cellular phones, ignore Blackberrys.
2. Be concise; raise critical issues only.
3. End meeting within 30 minutes.

Handout #3
Meeting Structure



**PLANNING/PROBLEM-SOLVING MEETINGS:
HOW MUCH STRUCTURE AND FACILITATOR CONTROL?**

Factor To Consider	Degree of Structure/Control
<p>How many decisions must be made?</p> <p>How complex is the problem?</p>	<p>The more decisions that must be made at a meeting, and/or the more complex the problem is, the more control is required to keep the discussion on track and ensure that all objectives are addressed.</p>
<p>How well do the participants know each other, and how well do they get along?</p>	<p>If participants know each other and get along well, you may not need to impose much structure. However, you must keep the discussion on track.</p> <p>If participants do not know each other or they do not get along, you may need to impose more structure to ensure that all participants are heard and that conflicting issues not relevant to the meeting's objectives are not discussed.</p>
<p>Are the participants likely to come with solutions to propose or do you anticipate a need for group brainstorming?</p>	<p>If participants are likely to come with solutions, structure the meeting so that all ideas can be heard. Brainstorming requires less structure and less control.</p>
<p>How much time do you have to meet?</p>	<p>If time is short, impose more structure on the meeting to ensure that all the objectives are addressed.</p>
<p>Will/must the problem(s) be solved in one meeting, or will a followup meeting be necessary?</p>	<p>If the problem is complex and it is not urgent that it be resolved in one meeting, you may want to hold a more open, unstructured meeting to get ideas on the table. You can then follow up with a more structured meeting to make final decisions later.</p>

Handout #4
ACTIVITY:
PLANNING A MEETING



Purpose: The purpose of this activity is to provide practice in the steps required to plan an effective meeting.

Instructions: Working individually, read the situation description that appears below. Then you have 10 minutes to complete the five steps. In your table groups, review each of the plans. Choose one plan to present to the entire class. You will have 20 minutes to review your table group's plans and select one to share with the class. Use the form that appears on the next page to document your planning.

1. Establish a goal for the meeting.
 2. Identify who should attend the meeting.
 3. Determine the agenda for conducting the meeting.
 4. Establish timeframes for each agenda item.
 5. Create any unique ground rules for this particular meeting.
-

Scenario:

You have been getting reports from field specialists that there is a segment of the community that has been very difficult to reach within Green County. The community felt that the rich residents of Bayport got preferential treatment during Alonzo, the previous hurricane. Although the community needs assistance, its residents feel distrustful toward the Federal Government. Influential leaders within the community have organized a media campaign to draw attention to the plight of disaster victims in their community. The media is reporting that Green County residents are not receiving needed services.

The National Teleregistration Center has reported a low number of applicants from Green County. Community leaders have not responded to Community Relations' attempts to make contact with them. Also, individual disaster victims have not welcomed Community Relations staff with open arms.

U.S. Representative Dorothy Lake has called the Joint Field Office asking why Green County is not receiving needed assistance. The FCO has asked you to develop a strategy for working with Green County. You are planning to hold a meeting to work on the issue.

Handout #5

TIPS FOR CONDUCTING EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

**1. Getting Ready: Tips for Planning a Meeting**

A successful meeting can be an effective and efficient means for exchanging information, solving problems, and building a team. Use the following guidelines as a checklist when planning and conducting a meeting.

- **Set Meeting Goals.**
- **Decide the Meeting Type.**
 - Informational/briefing
 - Planning/problem solving
 - Team building/stress relief/morale boosting
- **Decide Who Should Come to Informational Meetings.**
 - Include all who need to know.
- **Choose People for Problem-Solving Meetings Who:**
 - Know the subject area.
 - Are committed to or have authority to solve the problem.
 - Have time to participate.
 - Have different experiences and viewpoints.
 - Are open-minded.
- **Include All Involved Staff in Team-Building Meetings.**
- **Develop an Agenda.**
 - Discuss suggested items to be covered.
 - Ask for and add suggested agenda items as appropriate.
 - Write the agenda, listing items and including start and end times.
 - Send the agenda to participants.
 - Send information copies of the agenda as needed, marking nonparticipants as having received copies.

TIPS FOR CONDUCTING EFFECTIVE MEETINGS Handout #5 (continued)



- **Take Care of the Logistics.**
 - Reserve or arrange for a place to meet.
 - List the expected participants.
 - Get telephone numbers and make arrangements to connect teleconferences.
 - Get materials and supplies such as chart paper and copies of reports.
 - Arrange for transportation, parking, and security measures as needed.
 - Make sure someone is designated to take notes if you need a meeting report or record.

2. Meeting Basics: Tips for Conducting a Meeting

- **Arrange the Meeting Space To Maintain Eye Contact.**
 - Have participants face the front for an informational meeting.
 - Have participants face one another for problem solving or team building.
- **Introduce Attendees Not Known by All.**
 - Have the participants introduce themselves.
 - Describe roles, positions, and experience as needed.
 - Use icebreaker activities if appropriate.
- **Set Ground Rules.**
 - Explain the meeting purpose and degree of structure.
 - Provide rules for informational meetings.
 - List group suggestions for problem-solving and team-building meetings.
- **Keep the Meeting Moving.**
 - Keep the discussion on the topic.
 - Decide who or what must solve fundamental disagreements and move on.
 - Watch the time.

TIPS FOR CONDUCTING EFFECTIVE MEETINGS Handout #5 (continued)



- **Focus the Process.**
 - Be prepared to record, display, and analyze data.
 - Compare, contrast, and summarize viewpoints periodically.
 - List alternative actions or recommendations and group decisions.
 - Write an action plan that includes responsibilities and deadlines.
- **Get Participation in Problem-Solving and Team-Building Meetings.**
 - Encourage all attendees to contribute information and opinions.
 - Keep the most vocal members from dominating the discussion.
 - Stay neutral, and respect all views expressed.
 - Look for signs of dissatisfaction with the meeting procedures.
 - Suggest new procedures as needed.

3. Handling Difficult People: Tips for Dealing With Difficult People

- **How should you handle a person who dominates the meeting?**
 - Direct questions to the other participants.
 - Have everyone contribute one idea in turn to the subject.
 - Interrupt, ask the person to summarize quickly, and ask others to add ideas.
 - Thank the person for the ideas, and call for others to contribute.
- **What should you do about someone who wants to argue?**

Some people argue viewpoints rationally. Others enjoy the process of arguing and do not contribute to the meeting progress or objectives. When dealing with the chronic arguer:

- Stay calm; lower your voice for greater control and to reduce negative emotions.
- Use questions to draw out unreasonable or foolish statements from the arguer.
- Ask the group for their opinions of unreasonable statements.
- Tell the arguer that time is limited and we need to move on, and ask someone else a question.

TIPS FOR CONDUCTING EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

Handout #5 (continued)



- **How can you stop side conversations?**

Some side conversations will usually take place, especially in larger meetings. You probably can allow a few brief conversations, but stop prolonged side conversations by the following means:

- Make sure the meeting ground rules include a ban on side conversations.
- Refer to the ground rules when side conversations erupt.
- Stop the meeting and ask the talkers to share their comments with the group.
- Be quiet and make eye contact with the offenders.

- **What can you do to deal with people who are skeptical or cynical?**

Prior meetings may have been management briefings where opinions were not really welcomed. Personal antagonism among group members may lead to derogatory comments.

- Clarify the meeting purpose.
- Make clear in the ground rules that all ideas will be respected.
- Make the skeptical person feel that there is real interest in his or her contributions.

4. Handling Difficult Situations: Tips for Dealing With Difficult Situations

- **How can you hold the interest of the group?**

- Get everyone's attention with your opening statement.
- Use visual aids during the discussion.
- Provide case study analyses or other activities, if appropriate.
- Watch for signs of boredom, disagreement, confusion, or fatigue.
- Ask questions to identify problems.
- Change your approach to address problems.
- Speak louder, in a more commanding tone, and with more emphasis.

TIPS FOR CONDUCTING EFFECTIVE MEETINGS Handout #5 (continued)



- **What can you do to keep up with a fast-moving discussion?**
 - Boil down statements into phrases that can be recorded quickly.
 - Ignore statements that bring up side issues.
 - Ask direct questions to capture all information rising from the discussion.
- **How should you handle touchy subjects?**
 - Be ready for sensitive subjects to come up.
 - Remind the group of the meeting objectives if a subject is not relevant to the meeting.
 - Remain neutral if the subject is relevant to the meeting.
 - Do not promise management action, but tell the group their findings will be reported.

5. Encouraging Discussion: Tips for Stimulating Discussion

If you are holding a problem-solving or team-building meeting, good discussion is crucial to the meeting outcome. A good discussion depends on full participation by the people at the meeting. People need to feel that their ideas and opinions are welcome to allow a free exchange of ideas.

- **Ask Questions:**
 - Ask for feelings and opinions.
 - Paraphrase what people are saying.
 - Address quiet people with direct questions.
- **Confront Problems:**
 - Stop the discussion and ask the group for feedback.
 - Question assumptions.
 - Confront differences.

TIPS FOR CONDUCTING EFFECTIVE MEETINGS
Handout #5 (continued)



- **Clarify the Issues:**
 - Ask for a summary.
 - Ask for clarification.
 - Ask for examples.
- **Clarify the Process:**
 - Test for consensus.
 - Do a quick survey.
 - Suggest a procedure such as ranking items in importance.
 - Ask what steps the group should take.
- **Explore Different Aspects:**
 - Ask the group to assume another viewpoint.
 - Ask the group to predict what will happen in the future.

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**Learning Check
Answer Key**



1. The **Informational** meeting is scheduled for the purpose of giving or receiving information about a specific idea or important matters concerning the attendees. **Page 11.**
2. The **Planning/Problem Solving** meeting is scheduled for the purpose of discussing an issue or conflict and deciding how to solve it. **Page 11.**
3. What type of meeting is extremely important in the disaster environment, because Disaster work can be both physically and emotionally stressful.

Team building Page 12.

4. Given the descriptions below, chose which description belongs under each meeting category. **Pages 25 and 26**

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. TOO long c. prepared agenda e. miss information g. have an objective 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> b. necessary meeting d. attendees wander off topic f. nothing happens after meeting h. appropriate attendees
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Effective Meeting

- b
- c
- g
- h

Ineffective Meeting

- a
- d
- e
- f

5. Which section usually conducts Federal/State Coordination meetings at the JFO? **Page 13.**

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Operations c. Planning 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> b. Logistics d. Finance/Admin
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Please take a moment to complete the following items. Your input may help to improve future training sessions. Thank you!



Date of Course _____

Name of Instructor(s) _____ **Disaster Number** _____

1. The instructor was knowledgeable and well-prepared.

___ Strongly Agree ___ Agree ___ Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree

Comments: _____

2. The instructor provided time for questions and review and encouraged group participation.

___ Strongly Agree ___ Agree ___ Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree

Comments: _____

3. The instructor related the material to disaster work and used FEMA-related examples.

___ Strongly Agree ___ Agree ___ Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree

Comments: _____

4. Based on your Requestor/Supervisor/Program Manager's expectations from this course, will you be able to meet or exceed them? Why? Or why not?

5. Overall, how would you rate this course.

___ Excellent ___ Very Good ___ Good ___ Adequate ___ Poor

6. Please list additional training that would benefit your JFO work or benefit the JFO workforce in general.

