



<http://www.apcowa.org>

# Communications Plan

2011 – 2012

**Contents**

Guiding Principles ..... 3

Context..... 4

Regular Occurring Communications: ..... 4

Unscheduled Communications: ..... 4

Electronic Data/Information Sharing Sites ..... 4

Purpose ..... 5

Risk Analysis ..... 6

Stakeholders Analysis ..... 6

Targeting ..... 7

Communication Targeting Recommendation:..... 8

Media and Messaging Plan ..... 8

Budget ..... 9

Assessment ..... 9

Acknowledgement ..... 9

ATTACHMENT A ..... 10

## Guiding Principles

Whatever the form or delivery channel, Chapter communications should strive to meet these goals:

- Effective – Communications should reach all Washington Chapter members at a minimum. In order to be successful in attaining this goal communications must be distributed via as many distribution channels as possible. The individual membership database must be kept current; updates should be done at a minimum following membership purging by International at the beginning of the year and after new memberships are added following State Chapter Conference.
- Consistent -- Communicate across all communications media with the same message. All messaging should strengthen the chapter brand by including the chapter logo, mission statement, tag line, and chapter website URL.

Chapter Logo:



Mission Statement:

Join together as public safety communications professionals to lead, learn, and leverage our influence, for the benefit of our profession, the public safety workforce, and ultimately the public we serve.

Chapter Tag Line:

“Lead, Learn, Leverage”

Chapter website URL:

<http://www.apcowa.org>

- The Chapter website will be the central repository and reference library for chapter communications and significant documents. The repository and reference library will be accessible to all members of the organization. Executive Committee minutes may be accessible to only Executive Committee members.
- Outreach – Chapter communications should be designed to attract new members as well as meet the needs of the existing membership.

## Context

There are six events or conditions that trigger communications with the membership. Three of the six drivers occur with some regularity – monthly or quarterly; the other three drivers occur sporadically based on unpredictable events or conditions.

The Chapter maintains several electronic data sharing sites and sub-sites for use by members, officers, committees, and non-members. These communication tools are frequently used by members as a source for “best practices” and other research queries. Typically one or more members are able to respond to the query with useful information.

### Regular Occurring Communications:

The monthly newsletter is published to membership via the distribution list associated with the Yahoo Group established for the chapter and is also posted on the Facebook page and PS Connect.

APCO/NENA sponsored training occurs regularly as well; therefore the training announcements occur regularly. Training announcements are published via a wide variety of distribution channels including the monthly newsletter.

Meeting minutes are communicated with the membership following all regularly scheduled chapter meetings. Minutes are published on the Chapter web site. Executive Committee meeting minutes are distributed within the Executive Committee via the Executive Committee Yahoo Group. Both minutes documents are also stored on PSConnect in separate locations.

### Unscheduled Communications:

Call to action notifications for action on a national scale. These generally are communicated via the Yahoo Group distribution, PSConnect, and Facebook.

Call to action notifications for action on a state scale. These generally are communicated via the Yahoo Group distribution, PSConnect, and Facebook.

Industry updates – usually FCC, International APCO, or NENA national updates. These generally are communicated via the Yahoo Group distribution, PSConnect, and Facebook.

### Electronic Data/Information Sharing Sites

- Facebook fan page [www.facebook.com/APCONENAWA](http://www.facebook.com/APCONENAWA)
- Twitter
  - [http://twitter.com/#!/WA\\_APCONENA](http://twitter.com/#!/WA_APCONENA)
- Yahoo groups
  - Members (<http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/apcowa> )
  - Executive Committee (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/WaAPCONENA> )

- Web site (<http://www.apcowa.org>)
  - Member only content sub-site
- PS Connect
  - <http://www.psconnect.org/Home>
    - Members (Washington State APCO)
    - Executive Committee (Washington State APCO Executive Board)

## Purpose

### Regular monthly newsletter

Inform the members of recent news; provide legislative updates, technical information, and training updates. Committee updates, member/agency recognition. Convey photographs of recent activities.

### Call to action communications – National

Member call to contact specific national legislators (usually) to encourage some action on behalf of APCO or NENA

### Call to action communications – Local

Member call to contact specific local legislators (usually) to encourage some action on behalf of APCO/NENA

### Training announcements

Inform membership of training opportunities and encourage attendance

### Sporadic Updates

Keep membership informed of local, state, national, and international industry information. Also various chapter committees communicate action plans, end products, or solicit input from time to time.

### Meeting minutes

Meeting minutes are legally required under the terms of the organization's bylaws. They also serve to document decisions and inform the membership.

## Risk Analysis

1. If the Chapter does not communicate effectively, consistently, and with outreach as a goal, the risk is loss of member knowledge, loss of member involvement, loss of member confidence in the organization's value to them, and loss of membership – Which all leads to a dead organization without active involvement within our industry.
2. If the Chapter does not communicate effectively the communications void will be filled; often with communications that are inaccurate or reflective of agendas not necessarily in the best interest of the chapter.
3. If the chapter does not establish and maintain a central repository for information and significant documents it will continue to be challenging for members and chapter officers to locate and use historical data. A central, searchable, and accessible information repository will provide added value for Washington Chapter APCO/NENA members by providing access to best practices documentation that will promote consistency and standardization among Washington Chapter member organizations.

## Stakeholders Analysis

### APCO/NENA Chapter members –

The Public Safety Communications industry is influenced by local, state, and federal governments. The industry is also subject to rapid change from multiple sources – changes in technologies, changes in legislation, and changes in economic environment. These conditions make it very difficult for an individual working in the industry to stay informed and able to take action when necessary to meet the changing conditions. Communication from the international and local chapters of the association is intended to overcome this difficulty with accurate and timely information for the member's consumption.

### Each Washington State PSAP and their employees regardless of their APCO/NENA membership status –

Although most of the PSAP organizations within the state have at least one employee who is also a member of the APCO/NENA chapter, the information provided by the chapter is designed to be widely distributed and utilized by members and non-members within the industry.

### State E911 Office –

The same is true for the State E911 Office; many of the employees at the state office are APCO/NENA members and the communications from the organization helps them stay current with ever changing conditions in the industry.

### Industry vendors –

In addition to receiving the information provided to the membership, vendors benefit from communication paths in other ways. Many of the APCO/NENA chapter communication paths provide an opportunity for vendors to showcase and educate APCO/NENA members to their company and products and provide information about upcoming events that may enable direct interaction opportunities with members.

## Other Public Safety organizations –

Reaching other public safety organizations has a two-fold benefit for the chapter. One, with communication the chapter enhances the relationship with other public safety organizations by keeping them informed. The information, even if not directly related to the other organizations, promotes a sense of collegiality. This sense of collegiality can be very valuable when the second benefit is needed. The second benefit is gained during a local call to action when support from other than APCO/NENA public safety organizations would be most valuable.

## Targeting

1. Chapter members (Operations) – the primary recipient of communication
  - Targeting existing members is a challenge for the organization. Communications are distributed via listserv email distribution groups, Facebook, Twitter, PS Connect, and postings on the Chapter Web site. However, receipt of information from these distribution channels is voluntary so communications are often not effective for the majority of chapter members.
  - The core issue is organizational value...if the organization is valuable enough to the membership they will engage and participate.
  - It is not likely that increasing distribution channels or increasing communications will result in substantial increases in membership communication effectiveness.
  - The chapter should incorporate new channels of communication as they become available, Facebook for example. Broadening the broadcast of information will reach those members who want to engage and participate. Most communication channels are low or no cost so the economics of adding another channel will not negatively impact the organization.
  
2. Each Washington State PSAP and their employees – secondary recipients
  - The same dynamic is present for this target audience as with the membership audience.
  - The Chapter in allowing non-members to consume communication from the chapter may be providing one of the main benefits of membership without requiring membership in the organization.
  - The Chapter must create an incentive to join – an incentive other than communications. The best incentive currently is the discount offered to

members for registration at the APCO/NENA Washington State Public Safety Communications Summer Conference.

For the following three targeting audiences the Chapter newsletter is the most widely distributed regularly scheduled information vehicle for chapter news and promotion of chapter activities.

3. Industry vendors – member vendors only

The newsletter should create value for vendors, e.g. information that will enhance the vendor community's ability to increase business opportunities. It is also an avenue for vendors to advertise or contribute in the technical section of the newsletter.

4. Other Public Safety organizations –

The newsletter should regularly contain information that may benefit other public safety organizations, the Chapter's Legislative Intent for example.

5. Non-members for the purpose of recruitment --

The newsletter should generate interest in and communicate the value of membership whenever possible. Referencing the website data repository would provide a tangible example of the value of APCO/NENA membership.

## **Communication Targeting Recommendation:**

1. Chapter Website: Design the Chapter website to be the central source for all information. Distribution of information via other channels should occur as well. All communications should include direction and linkage to the chapter's website. The website must be maintained to purge outdated materials and include current materials. Maintain the member-only area with chapter specific information including but not limited to meeting minutes, budget, profit/loss statements, etc.
2. APCO/NENA Newsletter: Design the newsletter to be the single source of industry information pertinent to chapter members and non-members. In addition to chapter specific distribution channels, distribute the newsletter via outside channels as well. For example: State E911 Coordinators, State EMD distribution lists, WASPC, WSEMA, etc.

## **Media and Messaging Plan**

The Chapter will ensure that all messaging is consistent with the Communications Plan by:

1. All communications from the Chapter, especially communications intended for internal and external groups, should be professional and consistent with the Chapter's mission statement.
2. Establishing a single gatekeeper for the organization's communications and funnel all communications through a single gatekeeper for distribution and uploading to the Chapter website.
3. The single gatekeeper will be appointed by the President but will typically be the Chapter PIO.
4. The gatekeeper will not be responsible for content of the materials but will review for consistency with the Communications Plan.
5. Authorization of Chapter communications materials will remain a function of the Chapter Officers and Executive Committee.
6. Communication materials will be distributed by as many media channels as practical but will be centrally stored for reference on the Chapter website.
7. Official press releases will be authorized by at least two Executive Committee members prior to release to the media.
8. A media contact list will be maintained as Attachment A of this document and serves as the distribution list for the organization.
9. The PIO will compile and maintain the media contact list.

## **Budget**

Funds will be budgeted in the Chapter's annual budget for purposes of maintaining the Chapter website.

## **Assessment**

The Chapter leadership will review the Communications Plan on a regular basis and may conduct formal or informal surveys of the membership to determine the effectiveness of the Chapter Communications.

## **Acknowledgement**

The communication plan template was obtained from the following source:

<http://www.wilymanager.com/communication-plan-communication-strategy>

**ATTACHMENT A**

Media Contact List

<b>Media</b>	<b>Telephone</b>	<b>Email</b>