

Profile of information and communication specialists¹

Members of the Regional Disaster Response Team must assist those persons working in disaster preparedness and response to lessen negative impacts on health and to achieve rapid recovery for individuals and the community.

During a disaster or emergency, communication specialists on the Disaster Response Team must have the necessary experience and skills to perform effectively. Some of the qualities required are the following:

- Facilitate dialogue among different actors
- Produce, analyze, and organize information
- Promote and stimulate work on the team and in multicultural settings
- Work under pressure
- Make decisions
- Manage politically sensitive situations
- Have both oral and written communication skills
- Prepare and carry out communication strategies that respond to the needs and demands of key actors
- Design, execute, and evaluate communication plans
- Manage computer equipment and software programs
- Be fluent in official PAHO/WHO languages (e.g., English, Spanish, French, Portuguese).

Communication specialists will always work with experts in other disciplines and will have technical support from personnel in areas of administration, information technology, graphic design, multimedia, photography, and audiovisual production. They will have access to other resources that can be hired at the disaster site, when conditions allow.

¹ From: PAHO/WHO: Information management and communication in emergencies and disasters: Manual for disaster response teams. Washington, D.C., 2009.