

Controlling Your Department Public Message

Presented by Jeff Hammerstein and Mike Legeros on October 5, 2015

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Presentation Description

Controlling Your Department Public Message

Social media is everywhere, and everyone is a reporter. Camera phones are taking pictures and recording videos of your actions and activities. Facebook, Twitter, and news site submissions, etc. are putting your department on display.

Fighting this trend is futile, but you can take control of your story and guide the narrative to your department's benefit. Join Wake County EMS Community Outreach Chief Jeffrey Hammerstein and Raleigh/Wake County fire blogger and photographer Mike Legeros for a discussion on how to make social media work for you and your department.

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Slides from Jeff Hammerstein

PART ONE



Controlling Your Department's Public Message



First Do No Harm

A discussion on getting the best
out of the social media that
happens to you

With

Jeffrey Hammerstein &
Mike Legeros



Discussion Points



- ☞ Your scenes are being video taped and posted
- ☞ What we shouldn't do about it
- ☞ What we should do about it



Accept! the

TRUTH

Cell phones and other cameras are recording everything.
Are you going to hand them something worth sharing?

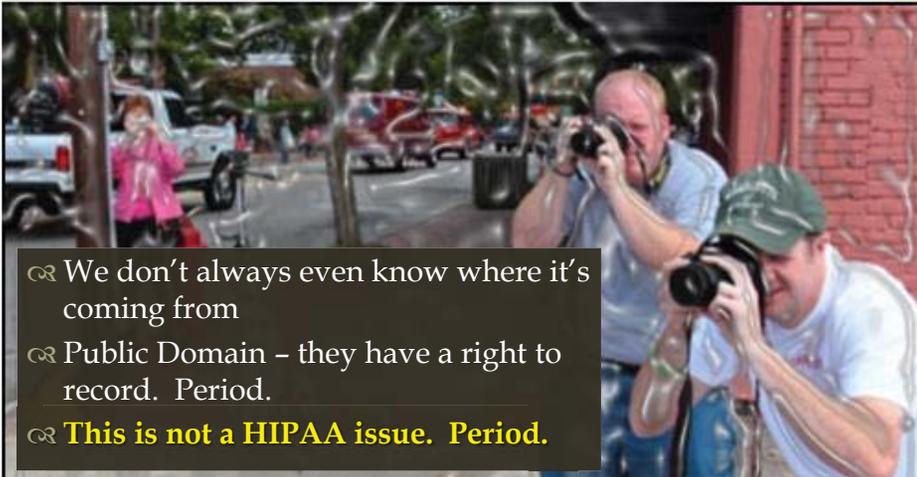
Why Does That Make Us So Angry?



- ☞ The gall and audacity of the photographer?
- ☞ The distraction from patient care?
- ☞ Safety of the photographer?
- ☞ Patient advocacy?



We Won't Stop It



- ☞ We don't always even know where it's coming from
- ☞ Public Domain – they have a right to record. Period.
- ☞ **This is not a HIPAA issue. Period.**

Little Canada man must stand trial in videotaping of ambulance crew

“...a Ramsey County Deputy told him, ‘If she ends up on You Tube, she was going to be upset.’ ”

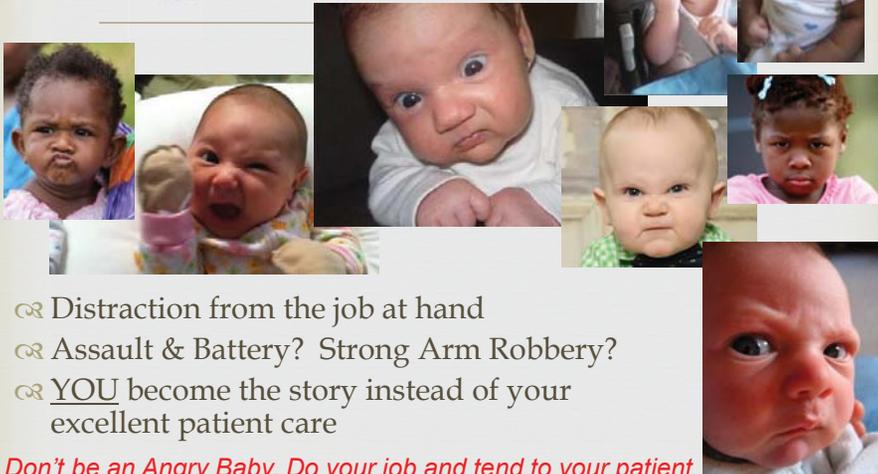
“Part of my job as a paramedic is to be an advocate for this patient,” Norgaard said. “I wanted to protect his privacy by not having him filmed.”



Jury acquits Little Canada man who videotaped deputy, ambulance crew

“A six-person jury found Henderson not guilty Thursday after less than 90 minutes of deliberation...”

Consequences for Trying to Stop Them



- ☞ Distraction from the job at hand
- ☞ Assault & Battery? Strong Arm Robbery?
- ☞ **YOU** become the story instead of your excellent patient care

Don't be an Angry Baby. Do your job and tend to your patient

What We Should Do



- ☞ Let them be (or become their story)
- ☞ Get yourself a Legeros
- ☞ Manage through Traditional & Social Media



Credentials Page



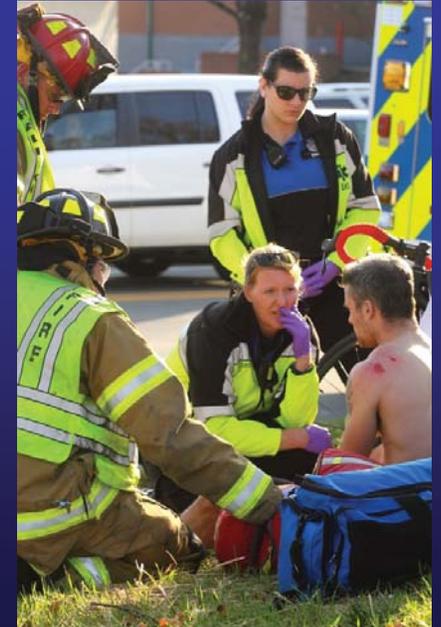
Slides from Mike Legeros

PART TWO

Let's Go!

Spoken Comments

- Let's look at some pictures of responders in action.
- What do you notice about these pictures?







Spoken Comments

- What do you notice about these pictures?
 - Patients are shown.
 - But identities are obscured.
 - No blood 'n' guts.
 - Closer views, some very close views.
- Who took these pictures?
 - Not any responders.
 - Civilian photographers with official credentials.
 - Specifically me.

Mike Legeros

mikey@legeros.com
www.legeros.com

Spoken Comments

- Hello!
- My name is Mike Legeros
- I'm an official photographer for Wake County EMS.
- I'm not a responder, nor a paid employee. Just a civilian.
- Myself and a cohort have comprised the photo unit for several years.
- I'll tell a bit about myself.

Mike Legeros

Man of Many Hats



Spoken Comments

- Call me Man of Many Hats.
- Raleigh firefighter from 1989 to 1991.
- Then brief stint as telecommunicator.
- Worked in computer software industry 1993.
- Remained interested in the fire service.
- For last fifteen years, I've been a buff.
- From writing to books to webmaster to historian to museum president.
- And photographer.





Spoken Comments

- Mostly I am a "fire photographer."
- Today's examples will be drawn from EMS.
- For practical purposes, I'm an ambulance chaser.
 - Listen for calls, respond to scenes.
 - Take pictures of what's happening.
 - Then share on social media.
 - Much as news media does.
 - Much as citizens with camera do.
- But pictures aren't always bad.
 - In fact, they're equally good.
 - Depends on what's in the picture.
 - Depends on how the pictured in used.

Mike as Storyteller

What I am going to talk about

1. Mike as storyteller
2. Why I do it
3. How I do it
4. Why you should do it
5. Lessons learned

Telling Stories

Storytelling through...

1. Taking pictures
(photography)
2. Sharing information
(social media)



Spoken Comments

- Why am I doing this?
 - Personal interest in subject matter.
 - Personal relationship with responders.
 - Connecting with other buffs, like-minded people.
 - Hobby of photographer, social media.
- Why am I NOT doing this
 - Not after ratings.
 - Not for income.
 - Not a watchdog.
- Here to help
 - Add value.
 - Show responders in positive light.
 - While channeling my interests and excitement.

Storytelling through...

1. Taking pictures (photography)

2. Sharing information (social media)



Spoken Comments

- Fire photographer since 2004.
 - Take pictures at fires, accidents, EMS incidents, and even service calls.
 - Also take pictures of training and at stations.
 - Also special events and for stock photography needs.
- Note about Raleigh and Wake County.
 - Fire photographers operating here for over two decades.
 - Responders are used to close proximity of cameras.
 - They're also used to seeing the pictures publically posted.
- Our photos are used in my useful ways.
 - See next slide...



Spoken Comments

- Our photos have been used in printed materials at local, regional, and national levels.
- Local agencies use the photos in various ways, including social media. Wake County EMS Facebook page is prior example.
- We also post our photos on web sites and personal social media accounts.
- Audience is primarily public safety members.
 - Those agencies and members can re-use or repurpose as needed.
 - We also share images with fire news/fire media sites, from time to time.
 - Not permitted for local/national news media, nor intended for same.

Spoken Comments

- So you've got a couple photographers chasing calls, and they've been doing that years.
- How's that worked out? What's been the reaction over the years, to cameras "right there" and potential "in their faces"?
- Very good, most of the time.
- Slight bad, some of the time.
- Really bad, rarely.
- Let's go in reverse order.



Spoken Comments

- Really bad reactions.
 - Very rare.
 - Typically involving a fatality.
- Here's one example.
 - Motor-vehicle accident.
 - Operator of motorcycle died.
 - Posted pictures included mechanism of injury and items of clothing.
 - Family members found these photos.
 - They contacted me, expressing how upsetting the images were.
 - I apologized and removed public access to the images.



Spoken Comments

- Another category of incidents
 - Collision involving emergency vehicles.
 - Both property damage-only and with injuries.
 - Work with departments to determine which images are appropriate for public posting, and the appropriate time frame.
- Incidents with responders as participants require additional layer of consideration.
 - In this case, preemptive reactions prevent possible strong, negative reactions.
 - Same protocol applies to incidents involving off-duty personnel and family of responders.
 - And sometimes this isn't revealed until after the incident. Such as learning later that an off-duty responder (or their family member) was a victim.

Spoken Comments

- Slightly bad reactions.
 - Much more common.
 - Mostly procedural.
 - Not wearing X, incorrect use of Y, someone's showing Z.
 - Some are pre-emptive, please don't post a picture of this.
 - Others are after the fact, Chief saw a picture of me doing that.
- Try to help both when shooting and editing.
 - Will occasionally "leave things out" .
 - Or will "decline to photograph" something.

Spoken Comments

- Also presents a challenge for leaders.
 - There's more imagery than ever, available from incidents.
 - And these images are being readily shared in public.
 - Every leader is challenged to react appropriately.
 - Don't be punitive.
- Here's one example.
 - [Show slide from an EMS incident]
 - Years later, the picture was planned for use in a commemorative book.
 - We noticed that an incorrect technique was being used.
 - Picture was rejected for consideration.

Spoken Comments

- In contrast, there's been overwhelming praise for these pictures.
- They've been highly useful as documentation, for purposes ranging from incident review to investigation to training.
- Public education/marketing asset, for citizens and public officials.
- Families of responders equally appreciate a documentary look into "what my son/daughter really does in their job."
- Real-time documentation in some instances.
 - Raleigh tornado of 2011
 - Provided city officials with early images of what had happened, around the city.

Spoken Comments

- What's the legal impact, you ask?
 - Minimal.
 - Never been subpoenaed.
 - LEOs have requested copies of pictures at major accidents/fatal, a couple times.
 - LEO have contacted fire/EMS officials, to verify my credentials/intention.
 - Lawyers have asked for copies, to use, from time to time.
- Lessons learned?
 - Cameras have a powerful presence.
 - People react to a camera, if they're being photographed.
 - Same for bystanders or others. The presence of a camera changes the dynamic.
 - I wear a vest that reads "EMS photo unit" to help in this regard.
 - Cameras are everywhere AND everyone is using them.
 - People love to share experiences via images.
 - Responders in particular, love scene photos.

Mike's Guide to Fire Photography

www.legeros.com/photos

Storytelling through...

1. Taking pictures (photography)
2. Sharing information (social media)

Twitter – Real Time Public

Facebook – Real Time "Private"

Photo Site – Later – Public

+ Notifications

+ Notifications

Fire News/Media Sites – Later - Public

+ Notifications

Blog Site – Later - Public

Spoken Comments

- How do I share information?
- Here's an example of a major gas leak in Garner.
 - First, I post text and photos in real time using Twitter and Facebook.
 - Later, I post my photos to my web site.
 - Also announce those posted photos using Twitter and Facebook.
 - Sometimes, also write a blog posting about the incident.
 - And announce the posting via Twitter and Facebook.
 - Occasionally, I submit a story and photos to a fire media site.
 - And when the story's posted, again announce via Twitter and Facebook.
 - See a pattern here?

Charlotte Ladder
Overturns - The Photo

Garner is Hiring

Special Called Wake County Fire Commission
Meeting - Thursday, May 1, 2014

Raleigh Rescue Squad in 1968

Morrisville's New Ladder 1

Blowing Rock's
New Rescue

Raleigh's Proposed
FY15 Budget

New Wheels For EMS 101

Raleigh Fire Museum
Open This Saturday

Fayetteville Fleet Listing -
Help Wanted

Armored Fire Engines of Japan

Carolina Brotherhood Fundraiser
in Wake Forest - Sunday, June 22

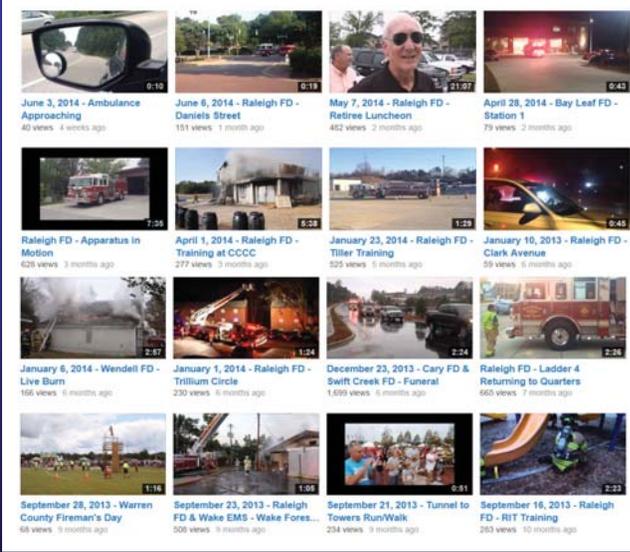


Blog

Twitter



Facebook



Twitter Feeds

Facebook Pages

Facebook Groups

Mailing Lists

Blog Sites

Web Sites

Newsletters

Spoken Comments

- These are ways that I am telling your story.
- These are also ways that others might be telling your story.
- But you can use these tools and technologies tell your own story.
- You can become your own reporter, your own publicist, your own PIO.
- But should you?
- Should you do everything Mike does?
- Yes, no, maybe.

- Local, state, federal laws
...HIPAA
- Legal liabilities
...Spoilage
- Policies and procedures
- Public reactions

Spoken Comments

Should your agency do "everything that Mike does?"

Yes, no, maybe.

Laws

Responders are bound by local, state, and federal laws that don't apply to private citizens. Such as HIPAA, the health information privacy law that applies exclusively to medical providers.

Legal Liabilities

Responders can face liabilities in a court of law, such as fire scene photos subsequently entered into evidence in a court case. Deleting any of those pictures—such as blurry or duplicate shots—could later be considered spoliation of evidence.

Spoken Comments

Polices and Procedures

Responders are bound by policies and procedures, within their own agencies and higher governing bodies. For example, a city fire department wants to use Twitter. Does their municipality have a social media policy that also applies?

Public Reaction

Responders are judged differently in their actions than private citizens. Private citizens (as well as media members) can behave on scene, and say things later that don't have the same consequences when done by a responder or their agency.

What happens when a citizen is perceived as a responder? That can cause problems. "Why is that one taking pictures instead of helping, like the rest of them?" Be careful in your personal representation.

LESSONS LEARNED

Lessons Learned

(is that better?)

- Civility
- Everyone's watching
- Never...
- Facebook
- Free pass
- Best and worst (big finish)

Spoken Comments

Civility is the best policy

Be civil in your online conversations. Use real names. Be wary of anonymous comments and systems that permit them. Praise often. Apologize as needed. Give the benefit of the doubt. Presume good intentions on part of person posting. Edit or delete your comments, if needed (and if permitted).

Everyone's watching

Anyone and everyone may be reading. Some read daily, some read weekly, some hardly ever. There are also lurkers, people who read but never post replies (or send you personal messages). Your posts may also be read weeks or months or years later, as they're found via search engines.

Spoken Comments

Never...

Say something about someone that you wouldn't say to their face. Don't post anything you wouldn't want your mother to read. The only thing truly private is the thing not posted. But don't get paranoid! Watch those voices in your head, as you imagine the reactions from those reading your postings.

Facebook

It's both the day room and the family room. And your "friends" probably include your peers and your spouse and children. Be aware of dark humor or blunt comments about incidents. Also, be careful when posting "prayers for _____" messages in response to news of job accidents, injuries, or fatalities. Better the affected families learn of the situation through official notification, than reading on Facebook.

Spoken Comments

Free Pass

My salary is not derived from a public safety profession. My motivation isn't monetary.

People use social media for different reasons. I'm doing this because it excites me and channels my interests. Others are here for ratings, for creating conversations, for stirring pots, etc. Remember that your motives aren't always their motives.

Spoken Comments

Big Finish

Bottom line, what are the best and worst outcomes, when pictures and information are posted about your department using social media?

Worst Case?

What's the worst that can happen from social media gone wrong?

- Call volume impact? Not likely.
- People will still call for an ambulance when there's an emergency.
- Operational impact? Maybe.
- Changes to procedures or protocols. Maybe even interruption of service, though mutual aid will typically come to the rescue.
- Personal impact? Absolutely possible.
- You can be affected by both (a.) your conduct using social media and (b.) your actions as depicted by others using social media. Both can lead to official, social, and personal consequences.

Spoken Comments

Best Case?

What's the best that can happen from social media made good?

- Sky's the limit.
- Increased public awareness of what you do.
- Stakeholders and officials are more aware of your actions and can better support.
- Reduced call volume due to life safety awareness and education.
- Increased communication within and among agencies.
- And so on.

The End

Postscript

These slides are intended as an introduction to cameras, citizen reporting, social media issues in fire and emergency services. They were presented as a ninety-minute lecture.

What's not covered in these slides? Many things, including:

- Using these tools on internal or private networks.
- Writing policies on media relations and social media usage.
- Perspectives on how other agencies use these technologies and tools.
- Tips for monitoring media and social media, to learn what others are saying about you or your organization. (Tip: Google Alerts.)
- Advice on writing, editing, and creating content.

Maybe next time. Thanks for reading.