

## Standard Operating Procedures for the use of Public Address System

### INTRODUCTION

Along with other existing means of mass communications, the camp's Public Address (PA) system is intended to be used to facilitate the welfare and safety of refugees. In order to ensure that disruptive or arbitrary use of the system is kept to a minimum, *Camp Management* will implement reasonable guidelines on the use of that system. While the responsibility to manage and maintain the PA system primarily lies with *Camp Management*, announcements can be made on behalf of any aid agencies and authorities working in the camp, provided that the present guidelines are adhered to.

These guidelines are intended to assist *Camp Management* in determining when to use the PA system, as explained below.

### DO'S

The PA system may be used for the following purposes:

1. Emergencies – e.g. fire alarms, security incidents, severe weather warnings, system tests, etc.
2. Announcements – Large-scale distributions of humanitarian assistance; Health-related campaigns; High-profile programs (WRD); and milestone events (verification exercise);
3. Locating refugees in some type of emergency situation. Examples would include the following:
  - A. Medical emergency – e.g. Locating a refugee involved in an incident/accident in the camp;
  - B. Attempting to locate a separated parent/child that could not be found by searching;
4. Any situation deemed appropriate by *Camp Management*.

### DON'TS

1. The PA system may not generally be used for the following purposes:
2. Requests by a refugee, member of aid organizations, member of the refugee council, representative of local authorities or a police officer, either in person or by phone, to page in order to locate someone in the camp unless that situation rises to the level of an emergency;
3. Announcements of daily programs or routine events;
4. Announcements that someone has lost/found personal belongings;
5. To contact an aid worker or a refugee in a non-emergency situation;
6. Political campaigning;
7. Preaching;
8. Advertising.

To avoid disturbing the peace, the use of the PA system should be limited to the situations above and the frequency of announcements should not be kept to a minimum – e.g. efforts should be made to resort to the PA system more than once a day and on a daily basis. Whenever possible and appropriate, alternative and less intrusive means of mass communications should be used to disseminate messages among the refugees.

### **ACCESS TO CONTROL ROOM**

As the primary entity responsible for the PA system, *Camp Management* should be granted, at all times, full access to control room and the premises where the control room may be hosted. For contingency, a copy of the key should be available to UNHCR.

### **CLEARANCE PROCESS**

Prior to distribution, announcements must be always vetted by the *Camp Manager*. If in doubt of whether to make an announcement or in the context of sensitive announcements, the *Camp Manager* should seek advice from UNHCR.

### **ANNOUNCEMENT FORMAT**

The following should be taken as good practices:

1. Announcements, if they must be made, should be as short and clearly articulated as possible;
2. Speak clearly and directly into the microphone, in an even tone and voice volume;
3. Do not shout or whisper;
4. Do not repeat an announcement.

### **PAGING ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*Camp Management* will occasionally receive requests by telephone or in-person that a public address (PA) announcement be made for someone thought to be in camp.

When receiving a request for PA announcement:

1. Obtain the caller's name, person to be paged, and determine the nature of the emergency.;
2. Use discretion to decide if the emergency is severe enough to warrant making the announcement. Bear in mind that making one announcement has the effect of encouraging more requests, most of which may not be bona-fide emergencies;
3. Explain guideline to caller and whether you can or cannot make the announcement;
4. If appropriate make a single announcement, requesting person to approach *Camp Management*. Keep the announcement as brief as possible. Do not repeat the announcement;
5. Personal information about the person to be paged should never be made public through the PA system, unless the information is essential to resolving an emergency situation. Generally speaking, personal information includes telephone number, ID or file number, place of residence, place of origin, age, religion and criminal record.

### **RECORD**

*Camp Management* should keep written record of all the announcements that are made through the PA system, including date, time, content of the message, announcement's requester, and speaker.

