



National Social Mobilisation Pillar, in collaboration with



Consolidated Message Guide for Ebola Communication in Sierra Leone

Social Mobilisation Pillar, Messaging Sub-Committee

April 24, 2015

New messaging added since last version is in red.

Includes recent messaging on:

- Ambulances
- Chlorine
- Make a Plan (Ebola Big Idea for 27 April- 17 May)
- Quarantine
- Updates to sexual transmission messages

SMAC partners include:

- BBC Media Action
- U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- Focus 1000
- Goal
- Restless Development

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Purpose

The purpose of this guidance package is to provide a reference of accurate, standardised information in simple language and key message format.

- The information in this guide is intended for Ministries, response committees, and any organizations developing awareness raising activities for the Ebola response in Sierra Leone.
- This document compiles current information and key messages about the Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone to inform activities designed to raise awareness, mobilise communities, and promote safe behaviours to stop the spread of Ebola in Sierra Leone.
- Information is organized by topic.

These messages have been approved by the Messaging and Dissemination Subcommittee of the Social Mobilisation Pillar under the National Ebola Response Center (NERC). These messages have been incorporated into national campaigns such as “Act Against Ebola” and the “Ebola Big Idea of the Week.”

How to Use This Document

All informational and educational materials developed for Ebola awareness in Sierra Leone should be:

- aligned to the information in this document,
- used to inform more extensive talking points and frequently asked questions,
- adapted to target audiences and local vernaculars as possible.

This document will be reviewed regularly, updated, and distributed as new information becomes available. Please direct all feedback to the Messaging and Dissemination Sub-committee of the Social Mobilization pillar under the NERC:

Mr. Lansana Conteh (Health Education Division, Ministry of Health and Sanitation): lans592@yahoo.co.uk

Krystle Lai (SMAC): klai@sl.goal.ie

Requests for Messages

Requests for new messages should be submitted in writing and include:

- a point of contact,
- desired key behaviors, and
- justification of the need for new messages.

Development of new messages is driven by priorities of the response.

Approval of Communication Materials

To ensure that all messages and materials are consistent with on-going response efforts and minimize conflicting information, all organisations are requested to submit materials to the messaging subcommittee for review.

Submit the materials along with the Communication Review Form at the end of this document to: Abubakarr Swaray, Social Mobilisation Pillar Liaison: swarray12@gmail.com

Anticipated return time is within a 1-week period. Only approved materials will be marked with the Ministry of Health and Sanitation logo. All approved materials are documented on a tracking list, held by the Health Education Division.

Access to Library of Developed Materials

Soft copies of developed materials can be accessed at the links provided below. These materials are available for duplication. Logos can be added. If content is adapted, please submit for approval as indicated above.

NERC website: <http://nerc.sl/?q=nercpillartexo/socialmobilization>

Ebola Communications Network: <http://ebolacommunicationnetwork.org/>

SMAC Website: (forthcoming)

About Ebola (Transmission)

Ebola can be spread to others through direct contact (through broken skin or mucous membranes in, for example, the eyes, nose, or mouth) with:

- blood or body fluids (including but not limited to urine, saliva, sweat, feces, vomit, breast milk, and semen) of a person who is sick with Ebola
- objects (like needles and syringes) that have been contaminated with body fluids from a person who is sick with Ebola or the body of a person who has died from Ebola
- infected fruit bats or primates (apes and monkeys)

Ebola is not spread through the air, by water, or in general, by food.

- There is no evidence that mosquitoes or other insects can transmit Ebola virus. Only a few species of mammals (e.g., humans, bats, monkeys, and apes) have shown the ability to become infected with and spread Ebola virus.
- Fruits and vegetables, such as mangos, should be washed before eating. These products should not be eaten if they have been bitten by bat (bat mot) or an infected human, monkey or ape.

Ambulances

Ambulances take sick people to get medical care at a clinic, hospital, or Ebola Treatment Unit. Ambulances are the best and safest way to go to the hospital to get treatment.

- Ambulance drivers will treat you with respect. The ambulance team will help if you cannot walk on your own.
- Ambulance drivers have been asked to turn off their sirens, but sometimes, they use them to warn people and vehicles to not get in the way so that they can get to the sick person quickly.
- Ambulance teams wear protective clothing (PPE) to keep you, others, and themselves safe while working with sick people.
- When you are in the ambulance, the ambulance team may start giving you medical care.

Ambulance teams use chlorine to kill Ebola. Chlorine spray will not harm you.

- The ambulance will smell like chlorine, but the ambulance has plenty of air and is safe. People in the ambulance will be able to breathe freely.
- The stretcher is cleaned with chlorine after each patient leaves, so the stretcher will be clean and safe for the next person.
- You may be able to smell chlorine but the smell is not dangerous.

Breastfeeding

Ebola can stay in breast milk even after you feel better.

- If you have survived Ebola, it is best not to breastfeed IF you have other safe ways to feed your baby. But if there is no other way to feed your baby safely, breastfeeding will still provide the nutrition your baby needs.

Burials – Safe, Dignified, Medical

It is very dangerous to touch the body of someone who is very sick or has died of Ebola—before, during, and after burial.

- Contact with a person who is dying or a dead body is a common way people are infected with Ebola.
- As a person becomes sicker and dies of Ebola, the amount of virus in the body increases.
- Touching a dead body is one of the most common ways people are infected with Ebola in Sierra Leone. For now, we have to stop these practices or we can't stop Ebola.

Calling 117 for safe, dignified medical burials is a way to show respect for the person who has died while keeping yourself and your family safe.

- Not touching the sick and calling 117 quickly will help protect Mama Salone.
- During this crisis, all deaths should be handled as if they could be Ebola.
- Call 117 or district call centers to report all deaths.

When someone dies of Ebola, the virus remains in the body and spreads easily.

- The dead body should only be handled by people who are trained in safe medical burial practices and are wearing protective equipment.
- Washing the body and changing the clothes of a loved one who has died can spread the Ebola virus.
- Protect yourself:
 - Do not touch, wash, or clean a person who is dying or has died.
 - Do not touch body fluids of a dead person or anything a person who has died from Ebola touched while they were sick.
 - Keep people away from the home.

Practicing safe, dignified medical burials is a way to show respect for the person who has died while keeping yourself, your family, and your community safe from Ebola. Until we get to zero, we have to stop practices that spread Ebola.

- Ebola does not change our respect and love for those who have died. However, for now we must stop practices that transmit Ebola. Safe burials are a way to show respect and honor those who have died.
- We all have a role in stopping the spread of Ebola and ensuring that our communities practice safe burials.
- Family and community members can pray for their loved one from a safe distance, and still make some decisions about the funeral while the body is being removed.

Take a pledge for your own safe, dignified, medical burial and share your wish with your family.

- “I pledge that if I die from Ebola, I want a safe, dignified medical burial to protect my family and friends.”
- Tell your family that you want them to honor your pledge to keep future generations healthy and safe. Tell them that honoring this pledge will be an act of care and love.

Burial Teams

Burial teams can help make sure Ebola does not spread and can protect you, your family, and your community.

- After you call 117 or district alert line, someone will come investigate a reported death.
- A burial team of trained individuals arrive and a member of the burial team will talk to you about the death.

- The other burial team members will put on protective equipment to safely remove the body of the person who has died.
- Burial teams will help families understand the need for a safe, dignified, medical burial and will treat the body with respect.

The burial team will determine if a sample to test for Ebola should be collected from the body.

- If the burial team needs to test for Ebola, they will collect a swab sample from the mouth of the person who has died and send it to the laboratory to test for Ebola.
- Test results for Ebola may take 2-3 days.
- To keep you, your family, and your community safe, the burial team must remove the body quickly and can't wait for test results.
- The person who died will be placed in a protective body bag by the burial team.
- The burial team will remove the body from the house in a protective body bag, and take the body to a cemetery or burial space to safely bury the body.

To protect you and your family the burial team will disinfect the house with a safe chlorine solution.

- All items that the person who died touched such as a mattress and clothing should be taken from the house and not used by anyone else. Mattresses that have been burned will be replaced.
- If a swab was taken and sent to the laboratory, a health official will follow-up with the family to share the results of the Ebola test.

Celebrate Survivors

People who survive Ebola need hope and social support from family, friends and the community. We must honor those who have survived Ebola! We are all Ebola fighters!

- Accept survivors and welcome them as heroes back into your family and your community.
- It is safe to be around someone who has survived Ebola.
- If a person has survived and recovered from Ebola, they can no longer spread Ebola to others through casual contact.

Chlorine

Chlorine is a chemical used to clean. It is mixed with water to kill germs and viruses like Ebola. Healthcare workers use chlorine spray to kill viruses like Ebola. Chlorine spray will not harm you.

- Burial teams, ambulance workers, health care workers and other Ebola responders use a chlorine spray to kill Ebola in ambulances, at the patient's home, and at burial sites.
- Healthcare workers know how to mix chlorine safely so that it kills germs and protects you.
- You may be able to smell chlorine but the smell is not dangerous.

Complacency: The Fight is Not Over/ Ebola Stops with Me

Ebola is real. The Ebola outbreak is not over. We cannot relax our guard just because we are seeing signs of progress. We must continue to work together to defeat this disease until we get to zero.

- Communities have the power to stop Ebola, but we can't stop the fight until we reach zero new cases for 42 days.

- The fight will not be over until we have had zero cases for 42 days here in Salone, and our neighbours in Guinea and Liberia have had zero cases for 42 days.
- People continue to become infected with Ebola. This is hurting our communities and our country.
- We can win this fight, but it will take action from everyone to stop Ebola together.

We should celebrate as a community and country when people go for medical care and practice safe, dignified, medical burials. For now, we must stop unsafe practices so we can stop Ebola in Sierra Leone.

- Many communities have identified new ways to keep Ebola from taking more lives.
- Changing some cultural practices for now will help to end Ebola.
- By sharing solutions and working together we will break the chain of Ebola.
- The Ebola outbreak is not over. We all need to work together to stop Ebola.
- Prayer is very important and meaningful, but it is also important take action to prevent Ebola and get care if you become sick.

Contact Tracing

Contact tracing helps people who may have been exposed to Ebola get care quickly if they show symptoms of Ebola. Contact Tracers are working hard to try to stop Ebola from spreading.

- Health workers will visit the house every day for 21 days to check if anyone develops Ebola symptoms. Please cooperate with local health teams in their contact tracing efforts.
- Contact tracers will find and interview every person who came in contact with the person who died from Ebola.
- A person is a contact if they:
 1. Slept in the same house with an Ebola patient
 2. Touched the body or body fluids of an Ebola patient
 3. Touched items from an Ebola patient

Contact tracing helps people who may have been exposed to Ebola get care quickly if they show symptoms of Ebola.

- Contact tracers will visit the house every day for 21 days to make sure no one in the house becomes sick.
- Everyone in the house will be quarantined- they will have to stay at home for 21 days without leaving the house or letting anyone else in the house.

Early Symptoms/ Early Treatment

The first Ebola symptoms are fever, chills, weakness, and headache. These are very similar to malaria symptoms.

- To be safe, think of these symptoms as if it could be Ebola and call 117 or your district hotline.
- If you are sick, show your love by staying 1 meter away from your family while you wait.

Call 117 at the first sign of Ebola symptoms to protect yourself, your family, and your community. If you don't have a way to call 117, contact your chief or a social mobiliser.

- Protect yourself and stay safe while you wait. Do not touch the sick person, their body fluids, or anything they touched.
- Support the sick person by giving them as much liquids as they can drink and oral rehydration solution (ORS).
- Show love by keeping a safe distance. Stop Ebola from hurting your family and future.
- Early care helps the sick person and can help protect others in the family.

- Encourage the sick person to drink plenty of Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS), water or other liquids.
- Show love by keeping a safe distance from your family if you are sick.

Early medical care saves lives.

- Early medical treatment at an (ETU) can significantly improve your chances of survival and can save your family from further exposure.
- The later signs of Ebola are vomiting and diarrhea. If you wait until these symptoms appear, you are reducing your chances of survival, and you risk infecting your family and loved ones.
- Patients who go to an Ebola Treatment Unit (ETU) or Community Care Center (CCC) are protecting their families and loved ones by helping to prevent infections in more family members.

Ebola/ EVD Negative Test Results

It is great news when your Ebola test is negative. But remember, you can still get Ebola and you need to take steps to keep you, your family, and Mama Salone safe.

- Keep your test result letter with you. Others may want proof that you tested negative for Ebola.
- Avoid contact with others. A health care worker will visit your home every day for 21 days to monitor your health and refer you to treatment if you get sick.

Show that you care and continue to protect yourself, your family, and your community.

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water.
- Keep a safe distance from others (1.5 meters).
- Treat any death as if it could be Ebola and call 117 or your district hotline for a medically safe and dignified burial.
- Do not touch body fluids of a dead person or anything a person who has died from Ebola touched while they were sick.
- Be watchful of symptoms that include a fever greater 37.5 degrees Celsius, severe headache, muscle pain, diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain or unexplained bleeding.
- Call 117 or your district hotline immediately if you think you have Ebola symptoms again.
- Share your story with others. Tell your friends, family and community that you are glad you got tested and know your results.
- Let other know that if they develop symptoms, they should call 117 right away to keep their family and community safe.

Make a Plan for Yourself, Your Family, and Your Community

Plan ahead and take action now. It is the best way to protect your loved ones and stop Ebola from harming your community.

- Make sure everyone in your house has a way to call 117 or your district hotline. Be prepared to call immediately if you are sick. If you don't have a way to call 117, contact your chief or a social mobiliser.
- Call 117 immediately if someone in your home gets sick. Do not touch the sick person or anything they have touched.
- Advocate for safe and dignified burials. If someone dies in the home, make sure no one touches the body. Call 117 and tell your neighbors to do the same.
- Make sure you have soap to wash your hands. Washing your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds is an effective way to kill germs. You can also use hand sanitizer to clean hands.

Be prepared. You can stop Ebola from harming you and your family.

- Know the early symptoms of Ebola – fever, shivering/trembling, weakness.
- Early symptoms of Ebola are similar to symptoms of other illnesses like Malaria.
- Call 117 or your district hotline if you or someone in your family gets sick, even if you think you may not be sick with Ebola.

Call 117 or your district hotline immediately if you get sick. Early medical treatment saves lives.

- Plan for what you will do while you wait for medical help to arrive. Drink plenty of water, jelly water or Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS). This will give you a better chance of survival. Do not touch anybody while you wait for an ambulance to protect them from getting sick.

Ebola is not over. Though we are seeing signs of progress, we must continue to work together to defeat the disease until we get to zero.

- Communities have the power to stop Ebola. We must continue the fight until we reach zero cases for at least 42 days.
- By making a plan, we can win this fight, but it will take action from everyone to stop Ebola.

Quarantine

When someone in your house has been confirmed to have Ebola, anyone who had direct contact with them will have to stay at home “in quarantine” for 21 days. This is how long it can take to develop Ebola symptoms.

- Quarantine will help us stop the spread of Ebola. We know it can be difficult, but it is necessary to keep you, your family, and your community safe.
- After 21 days, if no one has symptoms of Ebola, you will be released from quarantine.

During the 21-day period, a contact tracer will visit your home every day to check if anyone has become sick. Let them know if anyone in your home has Ebola symptoms — a fever greater than 37.5°C, severe headache, muscle pain, diarrhea, vomiting, stomach pain or unexplained bleeding.

- Food and supplies will be left for your family to pick up. Do not take food or any other items out of the quarantined area until the quarantine is declared over.
- Security (military or police) personnel will help make sure your family stays safe and that no one leaves or enters the quarantined area. Security personnel can call 117 for you if someone develops Ebola symptoms, and they can contact the District Ebola Response Center (DERC) if there are problems with the delivery of food and supplies.

If someone gets sick in your home during the 21-day period, call 117 immediately to get them quickly to medical treatment. Do this to help stop Ebola from spreading to other people in your home. If the sick person is confirmed to have Ebola, a new 21-day period must start again.

- Continue to protect yourself, your family, and your community from Ebola.
 - Wash your hands frequently with soap and water.
 - Keep a safe distance between you and others. Do not touch a sick person or their body fluids.
 - Early treatment saves lives. Call 117 or your district number at the first sign of Ebola symptoms: a fever greater than 37.5°C, severe headache, muscle pain, diarrhea, vomiting, stomach pain or unexplained bleeding.

- Treat any death as if it could be Ebola and call 117 or your district number when someone dies. Practice safe and dignified medical burials.
- Do not touch the body of someone who has died from Ebola. Do not touch anything a person who has died from Ebola has touched.

We all have a responsibility to protect ourselves, our families, and our communities from Ebola. You can encourage others to make the decision to keep everyone safe by always calling 117 at the first sign of symptoms and for every death in the community.

Schools

School is where children should be as long as it is clean and safe. The schools, your parents/caregivers, and communities are working together to make sure your school is clean and safe.

- Schools have been working hard to disinfect classrooms and school compound if school was used as Ebola care facility.

Many teachers, students, and staff may have family, friends, and co-workers who have died of Ebola, and may need help and support.

- Teachers, students and staff may be Ebola survivors. Someone who has survived Ebola cannot spread the virus to people in the community. Welcome them back into the schools and community.
- Students, teachers, and staff have been out of school for many months. Reopening schools is an important step in getting back to normal!

Schools are taking steps to protect the health and safety of students, teachers, and staff.

- No one will be allowed to come to school if they are sick, or have symptoms of Ebola. If anyone gets sick at school, the school will have a separate room available for the person until a health worker can help.
- Everyone is encouraged to wash their hands often with soap and water.
- Students are discouraged from touching one another and from sharing cups, eating utensils and food.
- Reopened schools have Fever Monitoring Committees, hand washing stations and Safe Bays for sick children or adults. This is to keep children healthy while at school.
- If Ebola comes back in a community, schools will respond quickly, and may close again.

Stigma

There are over 2,000 Ebola survivors in Sierra Leone. Survivors are heroes. People who survive Ebola need hope and support from family, friends and the community, not to be isolated or stigmatized.

- Do not stigmatize Ebola survivors, isolate them from their communities, or arrest them because they had the disease.
- Stigma and social isolation of survivors will not help efforts to stop the spread of Ebola in Sierra Leone. In fact, it may discourage people with Ebola symptoms from seeking care and put themselves and their community at risk.
- Survivors and families affected by Ebola or stigma can get help by calling 117 or district hotlines. District Command Centres are operational to support the response in all districts.

Our health care workers, ambulance workers, contact tracers, and burial teams are heroes taking care of people sick with Ebola.

- They are risking their lives to save yours.
- Cooperate with them and treat them with respect and dignity.
- Speak out against negative comments or negative behaviours.

Sexual Transmission of Ebola

Ebola survivors should not have sex for at least 3 months after recovery. If that is not possible, survivors should use a condom every time they have sex. It is otherwise safe to be around this person.

- Scientists continue to study Ebola and whether or not it can be spread through sex, and if so, for how long.
- Ebola survivors cannot spread the virus to others through casual contact. Although the virus is gone from blood and most other body fluids, the virus can stay in semen for 3 months or longer.
- As a safety measure, Ebola survivors (both men and women) should not have any sex (oral, vaginal, or anal) for at least three months. If they do have sex, they should use a condom every time. Condoms may help prevent the spread of disease to sexual partners.

MATERIALS REVIEW SUBMISSION FORM

Communications tools and products are reviewed on a weekly basis, at the Messaging and Dissemination Sub-committee meeting held weekly on Wednesdays, at 3pm at the Health Education Division, Medical Stores Compound. Partners who are submitting materials are encouraged to attend and present their materials.

To request **review** for clearance of a communications tool or product please fill out and submit it with a copy of the material to: Abubakarr Swaray, Social Mobilisation Pillar Liaison: swarray12@gmail.com Materials submitted by email will be compiled and presented at the Messaging and Dissemination Sub-Committee for approval.

Estimated timeframe for review is 1 week.

Point of Contact

- Name:
- Organization or group:
- E-mail address:
- Phone:
- Date of Submission:

Material Type

- Intended audience:
- Title:
- Type of material (poster, radio jingle, video, ect):
- Distribution Method:

Field Testing

- Has this document been field- tested?
- No
- Yes. Please provide a summary here of the results (include date and location of field test).

Additional Comments or Information

Appendix II: List of available Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

1. Sierra Leone Standard Operating Procedures for Ebola Social Mobilisation and Community Engagement (20 March 2015)
2. Standard Operating Procedures On The Decontamination Of Ebola Care Centres (March 2015)
3. Sierra Leone Emergency Management Program Standard Operating Procedure for Contact Tracing (17 Sept 2014)
4. Sierra Leone Emergency Management Program Standard Operating Procedure for Management of Quarantine (Version 1; Oct 2014)
5. Ebola Virus Disease Exit and Entry Health Screening Standard Operating Procedures (20 Sept 2014)
6. Sierra Leone Emergency Management Program Standard Operating Procedure for Reintegrating Ebola Survivors in Communities (Version 1; Oct 2014)
7. Sierra Leone Emergency Management Program Standard Operating Procedure for Management of Joint Checkpoints (Version 1; Oct 2014)
8. Sierra Leone Emergency Management Program Standard Operating Procedure for interim Home Protection and Support (Version 1; Oct 2014)
9. Sierra Leone Emergency Management Program Standard Operating Procedures for Screening and Infection Control of Ebola Virus at PHUs and other Non-Ebola Healthcare Facilities (Version 1; Nov 2014)
10. Sierra Leone Emergency Management Program Standard Operating Procedure for Safe, Dignified Medical Burials (13 February 2015)
11. Sierra Leone Emergency Management Program Standard Operating Procedure for Food Distribution to Quarantined Households, Holding and Treatment Centres (nd; version 1)
12. Sierra Leone Emergency Management Program Standard Operating Procedure for Home Decontamination after Collection of Corpses or Transfer of Suspect/Probable Ebola Cases (nd; version 3.1)