

CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS: HOW'S YOUR PLAN?

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WELCOME

Our goal is to ask an important question about your crisis communications planning:

How current is your organization's Crisis Communication plan? Is it ready to meet your agency's needs of today?





DEFINING COMMUNICATIONS

CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

Crisis communication is a strategic approach to corresponding with people and organizations during a disruptive event.

When a crisis occurs, proactive, quick, detailed communication is critical; a crisis communication strategy, plan and tools can ensure such communication happens.



CRISIS COMMUNICATION PLANNING

BENEFITS

- *Awareness*
- *Impact*
- *Response*
- *Preparation*

CHALLENGES

- *Lack of Visibility*
- *Information*
- *Severed Crisis Communications Paths and Channels*
- *The Unpredictability of a Future Crisis*

CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

Stages of crisis management



BIGGER PICTURE

At the heart of your ability to communicate in crisis is knowing not only what to say but HOW you're going to say it.

It is important to plan NOW for the eventuality that something will go wrong, because unfortunately it will.



BUILDING THE BETTER PLAN

Key Components to Crisis Communication Planning

PREPARATION, COMMUNICATION, EVALUATION

There are three key areas to consider when establishing a solid crisis communications plan. They involve several factors that we'll discuss.



PREPARING FOR CRISIS

- *Organizing “what if” brainstorming sessions*
- *Selecting crisis ‘teams’*
- *Identify key audiences*
- *Designate a spokesperson*
- *Anticipate tough questions*

COMMUNICATING DURING CRISIS

- *Gather information*
- *Develop messages/communicate facts*
- *Provide graphics*
- *Be proactive, not reactive*
- *Centralize information*
- *Control message and flow*
- *Stay calm*
- *Stay “on the record” and avoid “no comment”*
- *Respond to the media quickly and fairly*
- *Keep track of all calls and requests*
- *Follow every order, direction or suggestion from emergency managers*

EVALUATING AFTER CRISIS

- *Review why the crisis occurred*
- *Evaluate how the crisis was handled*
- *Examine similar scenarios*
- *Revise plans as needed*

CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS CHECKLISTS

PREPARES YOU FOR INITIAL RESPONSE

Highlights actions

Identifies audience

*Sets a timeline that
helps create
expectations*



FIRST-HOUR EMERGENCY CHECKLIST

Customize the following checklist to align with your agency plans and procedures for emergency communication.

Emergency Contact Phone Numbers

Even if this information is in your work phone, make sure staff have a printed updated copy of this checklist (in case of power outage) and a digital version for reference.

Supervisor name: Supervisor phone number

Internal distribution/notification list: Type and location (phone tree, email distribution list, etc)

911 dispatch center: Phone number

Emergency manager name: Phone number (cell and work)

Duty officer: Phone number (cell and work)

Fire Chief name: phone number (cell and work)

Police Chief name: Phone number (cell and work)

Sheriff name: Phone number (cell and work)

0 to 15 minutes after the event

1a. Research the incident – Internal

When notified of an emergency, confirm verified information about what happened. Contact [Identify specific individuals from the list above here: 911 dispatch center, emergency manager, fire chief, police chief, sheriff] and ask the following questions:

- ☐ What happened?
- ☐ When did it happen/Is it still happening?
- ☐ Where is it happening?

WHAT TO ASK AND WHAT TO INCLUDE IN CRISIS

There are multiple other considerations when considering the right crisis communications plan for your organization or agency.



ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- *What communications plans does your agency have?*
- *Is emergency communication referenced in ANY of your agency's plans?*
- *Who is impacted by emergency communications plans?*
- *How are these plans implemented?*

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- *Roles and responsibilities*
- *Access*
- *Records retention*
- *Approval process*

FINAL TIPS & TAKEAWAYS

CONTINUE IMPROVING

Seek feedback

*Reflect on
performance*

Explore new techniques

Set personal goals

Iterate and adapt

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Drills and exercises

Practice with partners

Gauge/measure your audience

Timing and transitions

*Examine new platforms, processes and
procedures*

Watch how others do it

THANK YOU

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