

## Creating a Crisis Communication Plan

A crisis communication plan helps your program respond quickly and effectively when things go wrong. Create the plan before a crisis occurs. This will ensure you have time to think through your protocols and processes and name the team involved in carrying them out. A plan gathers all critical information in one place so you won't have to search for it during the actual event.

A crisis communication plan outlines:

- Who speaks for the organization
- Who needs to know about which type of crisis
- What they need to know
- When they need to know it

Crisis communication plans include:

- **Key names and contact information.** Provide a widely disseminated directory of crisis team members and your program spokesperson. The directory should include multiple ways to reach each individual, where possible listing:
  - Landline phone numbers
  - Mobile text numbers
  - Email or messaging addresses
- **Crisis triage.** Make sure you define what kind of event constitutes a crisis, and how to determine the level of crisis you're facing.
- **First response.** What information has top priority? How will you initially respond to the media?
- **Alert and notification procedures.** Who needs to receive information and in what order of priority? By phone, email, pager, or fax?
- **Stakeholder communications.** How do you plan to communicate with customers, shareholders, employees, government, and the media?
- **Template responses.** Use standardized format, language, and protocol for all communications.

Adapted from:

Nonprofit Risk Management Center, "Communicating During a Crisis," (n.d.), <https://www.nonprofitrisk.org/resources/articles/communicating-during-a-crisis/>

David Weiner, "Crisis Communications: Managing Corporate Reputation in the Court of Public Opinion," Ivey Business Journal (March/April 2006), <https://iveybusinessjournal.com/publication/crisis-communications-managing-corporate-reputation-in-the-court-of-public-opinion>

