



Crisis Response: First 24-Hour Guide

Successful crisis response is guided by what you do (or don't do) immediately after an incident occurs. Use this First 24-Hour Guide to navigate the first steps of response.

Emergency Contacts

Immediately call to activate tiered crisis response, beginning with the Crisis Response Lead* and working down the list in order until you speak with a team member directly. Your emergency contacts should include a PR/comms leader, and may also include a department leader, senior leader, board role or agency partner.

- | | | |
|-----------------|-------|--------------------|
| 1. *Name | Title | Cell: XXX-XXX-XXXX |
| 2. Name | Title | Cell: XXX-XXX-XXXX |
| 3. Name | Title | Cell: XXX-XXX-XXXX |
| 4. Name | Title | Cell: XXX-XXX-XXXX |

Top Priorities:

1. Safety and security of people, then property
2. Gather, document and communicate facts
3. Protect brand reputation

News Media Guidelines

Do not proactively contact media, but prepare to respond to inbound requests.

Utilize an approved holding statement for consistent and rapid media response.

Only trained and appointed spokespeople are authorized to speak with the media.

Brief internal stakeholders, including staff and volunteers, and instruct that all media inquiries be directed to the Crisis Response Lead or Media Liaison.

Do not disclose unconfirmed, private or personally identifiable information, including the names, ages, health conditions or images of affected individuals.

Refer questions regarding incident details to the appropriate local officials.



Crisis Response Lead: _____

- Gather immediate facts about the incident from an authorized, credible source.
- Assemble a Crisis Response Team (CRT) of key internal leaders and staff.
- Brief the CRT on confirmed facts.
- Assign roles and responsibilities.
- Determine the incident tier and follow the corresponding Crisis Response Plan.
- Facilitate CRT communication and adherence to protocols.
- Collaborate with leadership and legal on key messages and a holding statement – only for use in response to media inquiries.
- Be available to serve as a spokesperson if media interviews are granted and CEO or Board Chair is unavailable.

Information Liaison: _____

- Contact the guardians of affected minors, providing essential information and status.
- Gather facts about the situation, cooperating with local authorities.
- Provide frequent, regular updates to the CRT with accurate, clear information.

Note: Crisis Response Lead may serve as Information Liaison.

Documentarian(s): _____

- Log all inbound inquiries and manage as appropriate –
 - Media: time, outlet, reporter’s full name, phone, email, request, deadline
 - Social Media: platform, comment/message, poster’s full name, relationship to the organization, tone, response
 - Employee Platforms (Intranet, Teams, Glassdoor, LinkedIn, Indeed): platform, comment/message, poster’s full name, current employment status/role, tone, response
 - General: platform, message, sender’s full name, relationship to the organization, tone, response
- Provide the approved holding statement only to inbound media requests for comment.

Channel Monitor(s): _____

- Pause appropriate channels.
- Monitor for stakeholder feedback via internal and external channels, including social media channels and brand profiles, online forums, news media, phone lines and general email.
- Work with the Documentarian to record stakeholder engagement, including volume, sentiment and emerging themes.
- Provide regular, concise updates to the Crisis Response Lead, escalating urgent feedback.



Tier 1: Severe Harm or Damage

Tier 1 Criteria (generally, at least 2 present)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Death or life-threatening injury <input type="checkbox"/> Major threat to the security or safety of program attendees, staff or volunteers <input type="checkbox"/> Significant property damage <input type="checkbox"/> Digital attack, data breach or malware <input type="checkbox"/> Criminal accusation, abuse, unethical medical practices or malpractice <input type="checkbox"/> Large volume of negative media coverage and/or social media engagement <input type="checkbox"/> Major threat to brand reputation or organization finances <input type="checkbox"/> Requires extensive resourcing across multiple functions 	
Immediate Actions for a Physical Threat	Information to Secure
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Call 911, if needed 2. Evacuate the building 3. Safely gather participants and staff 4. Secure the building 5. Call the designated Crisis Response Lead 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Safety and conditions of all affected individuals <input type="checkbox"/> Full names and emergency contacts for all affected individuals <input type="checkbox"/> Incident facts – specific location, time of occurrence, current response, status <input type="checkbox"/> Known or anticipated reputational impact <input type="checkbox"/> Potential for additional threat
Potential Media Questions + Sample Talking Points	
<p>What happened, and when did you find out? We just became aware of the incident, and we're quickly working to gather the facts. This situation is still developing, and we're fully cooperating with local authorities as they investigate what has happened.</p> <p>What is the condition of the injured person/people? Out of respect for the individual(s) and their family(ies), we cannot disclose the names or conditions of the individuals involved. Our highest priority is, and always will be, the care and safety of our staff and community.</p> <p>Does the organization have policies in place to prevent this from happening? We have extensive operational policies and procedures to deliver best-in-class care and service to our community. Once we have gathered the appropriate facts, we will evaluate adherence to these standards and make any necessary adjustments.</p>	



Tier 2 – Serious Harm or Threat

Tier 2 Criteria (generally at least 1 present)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Significant damage to property <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate to serious injury to one or more people <input type="checkbox"/> Questionable behavior from a staff member or leader <input type="checkbox"/> Disgruntled client or partner <input type="checkbox"/> Law enforcement involvement <input type="checkbox"/> Negative media coverage and/or social media engagement <input type="checkbox"/> Potential threat to brand reputation or company finances 	
Immediate Action	Information To Secure
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Call 911, if needed 2. Call the designated Crisis Response Lead 3. Pause communication, if needed (social, newsletters, etc.) 4. Monitor social and news media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Identification of staff, clients, volunteers, any others involved <input type="checkbox"/> Condition of any injured individuals <input type="checkbox"/> Location, details of incident <input type="checkbox"/> Immediate impact to organization <input type="checkbox"/> Anticipated threat
Potential Media Questions + Sample Talking Points	
<p>Has anything like this happened before? How will you prevent this from happening again? This is a unique, isolated event. Our team is working to identify additional details and we will implement additional protocol moving forward as needed.</p> <p>How will this impact your staff/community/volunteers? Our top priority is, and always will be, the safety of our staff and community. We’re incredibly sad to be experiencing this incident, but will provide our community with X services to ensure we care for each other well during this time.</p> <p>How will this impact your services? We are committed to <mission>. Our staff, board and community are working diligently to establish what’s next so that we may continue serving our community well.</p>	



Tier 3 – Emerging or Potential Threat

Tier 3 Criteria (generally at least 1 present)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Identified misalignment to protocols <input type="checkbox"/> Negative comments on social media <input type="checkbox"/> Expressed concerns or complaints <input type="checkbox"/> Rumors about a location, leader or staff member <input type="checkbox"/> Potential threat to brand reputation or company finances <input type="checkbox"/> Crisis event for a partner or within the industry 	
Immediate Action	Information To Secure
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gather facts and information 2. Call the designated Crisis Response Lead 3. Monitor social media and news media for related activity, pausing external communication as needed 4. Communicate with staff, volunteers and families, as needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Accusation and cited evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Location, details of incident (if available) <input type="checkbox"/> Current staff training and protocols <input type="checkbox"/> Details of related, previous incident(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Potential brand threat
Potential Questions + Sample Talking Points	
<p>How long has this been an issue? How did it escalate to this level? While this was an isolated issue that was recently brought to our attention, we’re working to implement additional policies and procedures to ensure similar situations are identified and addressed as soon as possible.</p> <p>What are you doing to ensure your team is better prepared for situations like this? We do not take this situation lightly and will be implementing additional training/resources/processes moving forward to ensure we can continue fostering a safe and nurturing environment for our team and our community.</p> <p>What kind of loss are you facing because of this incident? While our team continues to assess the loss that this isolated event has caused, we’re doing everything in our power to ensure proper steps are taken to move forward and minimize future loss.</p>	

Looking to protect your brand?

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