IAAPA Webinar
Crisis Communications
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IAAPA Webinar: Crisis Communications

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I. Defining a Crisis
II. Crisis Planning
III. Working with the Press
IV. Questions
I. DEFINING A CRISIS: Image Bank
Image Bank

- Withdrawals
Bacteria Discovered in Pool
Man Injured after Jumping from Monorail, Tiger Mauling
Panda Cub Dies at Zoo
Man Charged with Grouping Girls at Water Park
Festival Management Arrested after Girl Killed by Electric Shock
Park Sued after Child’s Fall
Woman Sues After Her Hair Became Entangled in Go-Kart
Guiding Principle

Long-term Credibility is Critical for Long-term Success!
What is a Crisis?

- **Crisis**: An unstable or crucial time or state of affairs in which a decisive change is impending; especially one with the distinct possibility of a highly undesirable outcome.

  www.merriam-webster.com
Causes of Crisis Events

- Mechanical Malfunction or Defect
- Employee Performance or Behavior
- Guest Behavior
- Nature
- Financial or Business Problem
- Lawsuits/Government Regulations
- External Events
Characteristics of a Crisis

- Unexpected
- Rapid Onset
- Top Management Attention Required
- Impact Multiple Groups of People Important to Your Success
- Undesirable Outcome
Characteristics of a Crisis

Stress!
In the Beginning of a Crisis

- Accurate Information is Scarce
- Public Perceptions are Forming
Plan = Less Stress!

PLUS More Effective Management and Better Outcome
II. CRISIS PLANNING: Types of Crisis Plans

- Emergency Response Plan
- Crisis Communications Plan
IAAPA Crisis Communications Plan Template

Crisis Communications Plan Template

SECOND EDITION
2011
IAAPA Crisis Communications Plan Template

- Available Only to IAAPA Facility Members
- Electronic Word File
- Request Template (with Member Number):
  - Via e-mail to: pressoffice@IAAPA.org
Crisis Communications Plan

Six Easy Steps

1) Review the Template
2) Customize it for Your Facility
3) Practice
4) Refine
5) Update
6) Practice
Key Considerations

- **Who** (Assign Responsibilities)
- **Where** (Determine Locations)
- **What** (Deliver Consistent Information)
- **How** (Working with the Press)
Tell What Happened
Tell It Fast
Tell the Truth
Who Needs to Hear from You

- Guests/Potential Guests/Customers
- Employees
- Politicians
- Community Leaders
- Government Regulators
- Business Partners
- Shareholders/Bankers
- Suppliers/Vendors
Section 2.2 – The Crisis Team

- WHO (Assign Responsibilities)
Section 2.2 – The Crisis Team

- Crisis Communications Team Leader
- Spokesperson(s)
- Public Relations Support Personnel
- Public Safety Officer
- Operations Officer
- Guest Relations Officer
Section 2.2 – The Crisis Team

- Human Resources Officer
- Family Support Officer
- Telephone Call Center/Switchboard Officer
- Website/Information Technology Officer
- Social Media Officer

*Roles can be combined/adjusted.*
Section 2.2 – The Crisis Team

Golden Rules

- Never Lie, Deny, or Hide Your Involvement
- If You Ignore the Situation, It Will Only Get Worse
- Only the Spokesperson Talks with the Press
Section 2.3 – Spokesperson

- Primary
- Backup
- Technical Experts
Qualifications

- Trained to Work with the Press
- Comfortable on TV
- Believable
- Available and Ready
Section 2.4 – Press Policies

- Respond Quickly, Remember Deadlines
- If You Don’t Talk, Someone Else Will
- All Employees Should Be Trained to Direct Inquiries to the Spokesperson
- Treat Press Equally
TIP
Build Good Working Relationships with the Press BEFORE a Crisis Occurs.
Section 2.5 – Tough Questions

- Know Your Facility/Operations
- Anticipate and Prepare for the Worst
- Don’t Talk “Off the Record”
- Practice
- Warm Up
Section 4.0 – Command Centers

- WHERE (Determine Locations)
- Primary
- Backup
Section 4.0 – Command Centers

- 4.1–4.2 Crisis Communications Team Center
- 4.3–4.4 Press Center
- 4.5–4.6 Employee Information Center
- 4.7–4.8 Affected Guests, Family, Friends Center
Employee Holding Statement

“Thank you for your question. I am not a designated spokesperson for the company. Please go to __________ or call ________ and someone there can help you.”
Section 4.9 – Call Center or Switchboard

- All Press Calls to Spokesperson
- Designated Number for Family/Friends
Section 3.0 – Forms and Logs

- 3.1 Crisis Communications Team Contact List
- 3.2 Senior Management/Corporate Office Contact List
- 3.3 Additional Emergency Notifications List
- 3.4 Press Inquiry Log
Section 3.0 – Forms and Logs

- 3.5 General Public Inquiry
- 3.6 Fact Finding Form
- 3.7 Phone Tree
- 3.8 Website Alert Function
- 3.9 Social Media Alerts and Guidelines
- 3.10 Press Contact List
WHAT (Deliver Consistent Information)
3.6 Fact Finding Form
Tell What Happened
Tell It Fast
Tell The Truth
Section 5.0 – Considerations

- Incident–Specific
- CONFIDENTIAL
- 5.1 Ride Accident
- 5.2 Power Outage
- 5.3 Structural Incident
- 5.4 Drowning
- Etc.
TIP: Use Section 5.0 to Learn about Your Facility and as an Operational Checkup.
III. WORKING WITH THE PRESS
Section 6.0 – Press Statements
Section 6.1 – Overview

- Communicate Immediately
  - Establish Information Pipeline
- Confirmed FACTS Only
  - Who, What, Where, When
- Do Not Speculate
- Spoken, Printed, E-mail
- Show Concern
- Remember Social Media
Creating the Statement

- Truth
- Empathy
- Brevity (3 sentences)
- 3 Key Points
  - Factual
  - Focused
  - Freedom
Section 6.2 – Standard Messages

“The safety and security of our guests and employees are our top priorities in all we do.”

“Our thoughts and prayers are with the affected party and his family and friends.”

“We will reopen as soon as it is safe to do so and not a moment sooner.”
Section 6.0 – Press Statements

- 6.3 Press Release Checklist
- 6.4 Facility/Company Fact Sheet
Section 7.0 – Sample Releases

- 7.1 Ride Accident – Preliminary Statement
- 7.1 Ride Accident – Follow-Up Statement
- 7.3 Power Outage
- 7.4 Ride Evacuation – Power Outage
- Etc.
Section 8.1 – General Rules for Handling Press Interviews

- DO …
  - Tell the Truth
  - Be Correct
  - Be Concise and Succinct
  - Prepare Key Messages
  - Anticipate Questions, Prepare Responses (14)
  - Know What to Expect (Who, What)
DON’T …

- Speculate
- Go Off the Record
- Use Dramatic Language
TIP

Do Interviews with Smaller/Less Influential Press Outlets First to Warm Up.
Common Reporter Traps

- Negative Words
- Putting Words in Your Mouth
- The Silent Treatment
If you don’t say it, they can’t quote you!

Stick with the facts and your messages!
Section 8.0 – Resources

- 8.4/8.5 Press Conference Outline and Sample
- 8.6 Table Top Drill and Mock Emergency Prep
Plan, Practice Stress!
Section 1.0 – Checklist

- Crisis Communications Checklist
- Action
- Person Responsible
- Document
- Section Number
Questions?
IAAPA Member Crisis Support

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Thank You!

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