

Emergency Preparedness Mississippi Arts Commission

Step One: Prepare for the Worst

- For personal safety, identify what storm shelter is available to you and prepare an evacuation plan. Choose two meeting places: one right outside your home; and one outside your neighborhood, in case you can't return home.
- Make sure you have a "Go Bag" prepared: bottled water, a first aid kit, flashlights, battery-powered radio with extra batteries; non-perishable food items, blankets, clothing, prescription drugs, eyeglasses, personal hygiene supplies, and a small amount of cash or traveler's checks.
- Make a plan for your pets. Not all emergency shelters will take pets, so check with your local veterinarian for help with a plan.
- If you need to evacuate your home, turn off all utilities and disconnect appliances.
- Take proactive steps to protect your property from loss. Be sure there is no loose siding on your home and no damaged or diseased trees growing over your home.

Step Two: Take an Inventory of Your Property

- It's always a good idea to take photos or videos of your home before a disaster strikes to properly record the condition of your home. If you use a digital camera, email the photos to yourself, a friend or relative, or store them on a web site.
- Take an inventory of your personal property, such as clothes, jewelry, furniture, computers and audio-video equipment. Photos and video of your home, as well as sales receipts and the model and serial numbers of items, will make filing a claim a lot simpler. Leave a copy of your inventory with friends or relatives, email it to yourself, and/or store it in a safe location. In addition, add insurance information to your inventory information – the name of your company and agent, policy number and contact information.
- Move all of your important documents to a safe location. Take them with you when you evacuate or store them in a safe deposit box outside your area.

Step Three: Review Your Insurance Coverage

- Review your insurance coverage. What does your insurance policy cover? What does it exclude?
- The standard homeowners' insurance policy does not cover flood damage. Check to see if your policy covers debris removal and sewer back-up.
- Find out if your policy covers additional living expenses to reimburse you for the cost of living in a temporary residence, if you are unable to live in your home.
- If you have jewelry or collectibles, check the limits of coverage. You may want to buy more coverage for these items.
- What is your deductible? You will have to pay at least this much if you have a covered loss.
- Be sure you understand the difference between replacement cost and actual cash value.

**Mississippi Arts Commission
Emergency Information Planning**

WHAT IS A CRISIS?

A crisis is any situation that threatens the safety, the integrity, reputation or funding of your organization and its business.

IF A CRISIS HAPPENS TOMORROW –

- **Do you know what your crisis response plan is?**
- **Do you have a crisis response team with roles and job descriptions?**
- **If key personnel are away, can you track them down?**
- **Once the crisis hits, it's too late to start deciding who is in charge of what.**

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF A CRISIS COMMUNICATION PLAN?

A Crisis Communication Plan is a pro-active document to give your organization a specific plan to follow during a crisis. A realistic crisis management plan doesn't have the answer to every question; it merely fills the gap between how our brain works normally and how it works during a crisis.

WHY YOU SHOULD PLAN AHEAD – Your organization's Crisis Plan allows you to:

- **Lower your vulnerability and create strategies to deal with a full range of problems you might encounter.**
- **Move from a reactionary mode to one taking pro-active steps that aid in agency and community healing and helps put you back in control.**
- **Show full transparency (Openness, honesty).**
- **Build networks and relationships before a crisis strikes.**
- **Establish communication channels capable of reaching critical audiences quickly.**
- **Maintain your good reputation. A mishandled crisis can quickly ruin an organization if not handled properly.**

"THE READINESS IS ALL".....Hamlet

Traps to avoid and common mistakes in a crisis:

- **Denial, siege mentality, panic, agency myopia, analysis paralysis, and aggressive defensiveness.**

- **Slow to respond, invisible leadership, no credible spokespersons, limited communication make for permanent image damage for the organization.**
- **Update crisis plans and practice regular simulation exercises. Determine what went right, what went wrong, and how plan can be improved.**

BEFORE THE CRISIS:

Step One: LIST possible crises that could affect you organization by importance.

- **Natural Disasters (hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, etc.)**
- **Manmade Disasters (terrorism, fires, other criminal acts)**
- **Budget Cuts from Funding Sources**
- **Layoffs**
- **Loss of Executive Director**
- **Difficulties Due to Improper Employee Behavior**
- **Lawsuits Against Organization**
- **Inappropriate Reaction by Employee in the Public Eye**

Step Two: GATHER Contact Information. (Separate Agency Plan)

- **Entire Staff Contact Information, including Home and Cell Phone Numbers and all Email Info.**
- **Appoint Crisis Team Members, Assign Responsibilities, and Post Contact Info**
- **List Back-up Team Members, Accountability Partners, and Contact Info**
- **All Board Members' Contact Info**

Step Three: LIST Your Organization's Target Audiences (internal and external).

- **Staff**
- **Board of Directors**
- **Governor and Legislature**
- **Constituents and Grantees**
- **The Public**

Step Four: NAME Your Organization's Head Spokesperson to Handle All Media Relations During the Crisis.

- **Post Contact Info in Prominent Place**
- **Assign Back-up Spokesperson with Contact Info**

Step Five: GATHER Pre-Produced Materials.

- **Your Organization's Key Messages**
- **Customized Press Releases**

- **Talking Points**
- **Fact Sheets, Bios**
- **Checklists and Crisis Drill Scenarios**

Step Six: PRACTICE Periodically.

- **Review Contact Sheets for Updated Info**
- **Review Overall Plan and Discuss Possible Changes**
- **Review Emergency Area Personnel Contact Info**

DURING A CRISIS:

Step One: First Alert

- **Calmly alert Executive Director, Deputy Director and PR Director.**
- **Begin to fill out incident fact sheet.**
- **Inform employees on site that all calls are passed to designated spokesperson.**

Step Two: Collect the Facts

- **Utilize incident fact sheet**
- **Record dates, times, sources, etc.**

Step Three: Assess Situation Quickly and Inform Key Groups

- **Internal audiences are critical – inform staff, Board, Governor’s office, and immediate constituents affected by the crisis.**
- **Continue communications with these audiences regularly.**

Step Four: Create Action Plan/Prepare for Media

- **Be sure media spokesperson has plan.**
- **Keep a list of resources at hand.**
- **Develop talking points.**
- **Start media contact record sheet – date, name, town, phone, email, etc.**
- **DO NOT give out any personal information.**
- **Anticipate media questions, review guidelines, assemble important background literature.**
- **USE the WEB SITE.**

If necessary:

- **Discuss media inquiry coordination with civil authorities involved.**
- **Designate separate telephone lines for incoming and outgoing calls.**
- **Consider using a free phone number with pre-recorded message containing latest factual information.**

AFTER THE CRISIS:

Step One: Procedures for Debriefing: Learning from the Crisis

- **What went well?**
- **What did not go well?**
- **What will be done differently in the future?**
- **Get feedback from all involved in the response effort and prepare for the next crisis.**

Step Two: Recognition is Important

- **Provide recognition both informally during the crisis and more formally after the crisis.**
- **Include those who didn't work on the direct response process.**
- **Thank anyone from outside the organization who contributed to the crisis response.**

Step Three: Celebrate Success and Capitalize on Goodwill

- **At the appropriate time after the crisis, celebrate the hard work done in the response.**
- **Capitalize on the public profile from a job well done.**
- **Follow up with key audiences soon after the crisis ends.**

Step Four: Media Follow-Up

- **Check with media about follow-up stories.**
- **Communicate with media about future stories, especially on milestone dates.**

**Agency Emergency Plan
Mississippi Arts Commission**

Agency: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ **Fax:** _____ **Email:** _____

All levels of government and other response system officials advise being prepared for an emergency and the ability to operate on your own for at least 72 hours.
The following outline and information will help your organization plan and prepare to meet the needs of your staff and your constituents.

Please perform a quick review of this plan every 6 months to ensure it stays current.

Emergency Coordinator: _____

Date Completed: _____

Agency Emergency Plan

1: Preparing Staff for Emergencies:

The following primary positions depend on the scope of the incident and the availability of staff. All of the functions may be assumed by the same single staff person or may be distributed among staff and volunteers, as needed.

- **Management Team:** This is the person(s) who will lead.

Responsible Person: _____ Alternate: _____

Work: _____ Home: _____ Work: _____ Home: _____

Cell: _____ Email: _____ Cell: _____ Email: _____

- **Operations Team:** This person will do the fieldwork.

Responsible Person: _____ Alternate: _____

Work: _____ Home: _____ Work: _____ Home: _____
Cell: _____ Email: _____ Cell: _____ Email: _____

- **Planning Team:** This person will do the planning and keep everyone updated.

Responsible Person: _____ Alternate: _____

Work: _____ Home: _____ Work: _____ Home: _____
Cell: _____ Email: _____ Cell: _____ Email: _____

- **Logistics Team:** This person will get the resources.

Responsible Person: _____ Alternate: _____

Work: _____ Home: _____ Work: _____ Home: _____
Cell: _____ Email: _____ Cell: _____ Email: _____

- **Finance/Administration Team:** This person will track all activities and costs.

Responsible Person: _____ Alternate: _____

Work: _____ Home: _____ Work: _____ Home: _____
Cell: _____ Email: _____ Cell: _____ Email: _____

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General Information:

- **Assign staff the following duties:**
 - 1) Safety and Security for Staff and Facility:**
 - Secure facility for evacuation.
 - Have petty cash (coins) ready for pay phones in case phones are down and post location of nearest pay phones.
 - Post facility evacuation plan in area accessible to all.
 - Keep radio with extra batteries within easy reach.
 - 2) Public Information Officer:**
 - Gather and provide information to all outside media.
 - Monitor website activity and post correct updated information on crisis.
 - Be sure staff has all agency resource information.
 - 3) First Aid Administrator:**
 - Be prepared to administer first aid on staff members, if necessary

Keep current first aid knowledge.

4) Contact Information Update:

Gather and create contact information for all staff members.

Be sure information is posted clearly in office and create individual cards for each staff member.

Gather and create contact information for all necessary outside resources.

5) Constituent Management:

Create list of constituents and contact information.

Send agency contact information to constituents.

Create survey for constituents as to information on their individual needs during a disaster.

List most critical contacts that need to be made for each constituent.

6) Personnel Resource:

Determine staffing requirements for organization's post-crisis response.

Create list of critical staff needed to report to work.

Determine safety and circumstances of staff's family welfare.

Assure that staff is regularly updated on emergency preparedness.

7) Resource Manager:

Create an agency/organization "Go Kit". Include copies of emergency plan, action checklist, phone rosters, copies of vital documents, credit cards, etc.

Post a notice indication where personnel have gone during disaster.

Locate temporary close to workplace, in case of necessary evacuation.

Create a phone list and system for letting authorities, family and friends know where you will be sheltering and keep list updated.

Assign staff person the responsibility of taking head counts periodically.

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8) Financial Resource Administrator:

Organize and be aware of costs of normal agency operations.

Estimate cost increases that might arise from emergencies.

Be familiar with eligibility prerequisites for aid and/or reimbursements from federal or other agencies.

Have all financial documentation as part of "Go Kit".

Take all liquid assets when evacuating, i.e. petty cash, coins.

Have any agency credit card and signature information on hand.

General Information for Ensuring Service Continuation:

- List primary services agency will continue to provide following an emergency.
- List the critical material resources necessary to maintain these operations.
- Research and create list of possible collaborations in order to share resources, maintain operations, and ensure care of those served.
- Organization should clarify what its mission and priorities will be in the aftermath of a disaster or crisis.

Some questions include:

- What are the predictable needs of the constituents in an emergency?
- Will the needs require agency to expand services in the aftermath?
- Will new or different services need to be considered?

Crisis Communication Plan Advice for Directors And Other Decision Makers

1. **Be in front of the story.** Do not let interested parties (particularly the media, but especially investors) chase after you for the facts.
2. **Be proactive, not reactive.** Diffuse potential negative issues, make them less damaging or turn them into positives.

3. **Keep everyone in the loop.** Everyone means everyone, from the Board of Directors to the janitorial staff. Anyone with a professional stake in your corporate well-being needs to be addressed of the situation. It is important for management to keep employees informed before going to the media for morale and to control leaks.
4. **Internal audiences are critical.** They are as critical, if not more so, as external audiences. Your people are your face and voice in the community. They're also your eyes and ears, bringing critical feedback from the outside to your disaster operations. Listen to them.
5. **Do not take a one-size-fits-all approach in your external communications.** Your agency will need to reach out to specific groups that will require individual attention and assurances.
6. **Frame the news in a proper perspective.** Things don't just happen inexplicably. An explanation of the crisis needs to be addressed, and a mature, but spin-free, solution also needs to be presented to show the crisis will be contained and not repeated.
7. **Maintain consistency from start to finish.** After a communications plan is made, stick with it and do not deviate from the message and mission.
8. **Strategies and principles should guide your communication decisions.** Following a strategy gives consistency to your messages and actions and provides a framework for making decisions (especially the tough ones).
9. **Manage issues before they manage you.** If you choose to ignore a potentially bad issue, odds are it will not go away. Better to constantly scan the environment, anticipate the bad stuff, and tell the senior managers. When you do, have action steps and key messages already formulated.
10. **Plan and prepare for worst-case scenarios.** What's the absolute worst thing that could happen? A spokesperson flies off the handle and his quotes end up in the newspaper? Anticipate and be prepared.