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# CRISIS RESPONSE FRAMEWORK

***Purpose: Develop your organization's crisis response approach and communication protocols.***

***Instructions: Use this template for crisis response planning.***

## PART A: IMMEDIATE RESPONSE CHECKLIST (FIRST 15 MINUTES)

***When a crisis occurs, follow this sequence:***

### STEP 1: ASSESS THE SITUATION

- What exactly happened? \_\_\_\_\_
- Is anyone in immediate danger?  Yes  No
- What is the severity?  Minor  Moderate  Major  Critical
- Is this situation still developing?  Yes  No

### STEP 2: ACTIVATE CRISIS TEAM

- Crisis Lead notified: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Method: \_\_\_\_\_
- Operations Lead notified: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Method: \_\_\_\_\_
- Communications Lead notified: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Method: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other key personnel: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Method: \_\_\_\_\_

### STEP 3: GATHER INITIAL FACTS

What do we know FOR CERTAIN right now?

FACTS ONLY (no speculation):

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

What DON'T we know yet?

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## STEP 4: IDENTIFY IMMEDIATE SAFETY CONCERNS

Is evacuation needed?  Yes  No

Do emergency services need to be contacted?  Yes  No

Are there medical concerns?  Yes  No

Are attendees/staff in a safe location?  Yes  No

Immediate safety actions taken:

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## STEP 5: DETERMINE WHO NEEDS TO KNOW NOW

INTERNAL (team members, staff):

Priority 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Notified:  Yes Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Priority 2: \_\_\_\_\_ Notified:  Yes Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Priority 3: \_\_\_\_\_ Notified:  Yes Time: \_\_\_\_\_

EXTERNAL (stakeholders, attendees, partners):

Priority 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Notified:  Yes Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Priority 2: \_\_\_\_\_ Notified:  Yes Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Priority 3: \_\_\_\_\_ Notified:  Yes Time: \_\_\_\_\_

## PART B: CRISIS TEAM ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

**Assign roles *BEFORE* a crisis occurs.**

### CRISIS LEAD

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Backup: \_\_\_\_\_

Responsibilities during crisis:

- Overall crisis coordination
- Final decision-making authority
- Stakeholder relationship management

### COMMUNICATIONS LEAD

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_



Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Backup: \_\_\_\_\_

Responsibilities during crisis:

- All internal and external messaging
- Media relations (if applicable)
- Message approval and distribution

### OPERATIONS LEAD

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Backup: \_\_\_\_\_

Responsibilities during crisis:

- Tactical response coordination
- Vendor/venue management
- Resource allocation

### STAKEHOLDER LIAISON

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Backup: \_\_\_\_\_

Responsibilities during crisis:

- Direct stakeholder communication
- Concern/complaint management
- Relationship preservation

ADDITIONAL ROLE: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Backup: \_\_\_\_\_

Responsibilities during crisis:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## PART C: COMMUNICATION DECISION TREE

### THE THREE KEY QUESTIONS

1. WHAT DO YOU WANT PEOPLE TO KNOW? (Key facts, information, and context they need)

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2. WHAT DO YOU WANT PEOPLE TO FEEL? (The emotional response you're trying to create (reassured, informed, supported, etc.))

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3. WHAT DO YOU WANT PEOPLE TO DO? (Specific actions or next steps you want them to take)

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## PART D: COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS

### WHO NEEDS TO KNOW?

***Check all that apply and note the communication method.***

#### INTERNAL:

- All staff (Method: \_\_\_\_\_)
- Leadership team (Method: \_\_\_\_\_)
- Department heads (Method: \_\_\_\_\_)
- On-site team only (Method: \_\_\_\_\_)

#### EXTERNAL:

- All attendees/participants (Method: \_\_\_\_\_)
- Affected attendees only (Method: \_\_\_\_\_)
- Sponsors/partners (Method: \_\_\_\_\_)
- Vendors (Method: \_\_\_\_\_)
- Media (Method: \_\_\_\_\_)
- General public (Method: \_\_\_\_\_)
- Regulatory bodies (Method: \_\_\_\_\_)

### WHEN DO THEY NEED TO KNOW?



Immediately (within 15 minutes) - Who: \_\_\_\_\_

Hourly updates - Who: \_\_\_\_\_

End of day summary - Who: \_\_\_\_\_

Resolution notification only - Who: \_\_\_\_\_

### HOW WILL WE TELL THEM?

**Primary communication channels:**

Email blast

Text message/SMS

Phone tree

Social media (platforms: \_\_\_\_\_)

Website update

In-person announcement

Traditional media

Mobile app notification

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Message approval process:**

1. Draft created by: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Distributed by: \_\_\_\_\_

## PART E: STAKEHOLDER IMPACT ANALYSIS

**For each key stakeholder group, assess impact and communication priority.**

STAKEHOLDER GROUP: \_\_\_\_\_

Level of impact:  High  Medium  Low

Communication priority:  Immediate  Within 1 hour  Within 4 hours  End of day

Key concerns they'll have:

\_\_\_\_\_



What they need from us:

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STAKEHOLDER GROUP: \_\_\_\_\_

Level of impact:  High  Medium  Low

Communication priority:  Immediate  Within 1 hour  Within 4 hours  End of day

Key concerns they'll have:

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What they need from us:

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STAKEHOLDER GROUP: \_\_\_\_\_

Level of impact:  High  Medium  Low

Communication priority:  Immediate  Within 1 hour  Within 4 hours  End of day

Key concerns they'll have:

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What they need from us:

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## PART F: ANTICIPATORY THINKING

***WHAT COULD GO WRONG NEXT? (Think through second-order effects and cascading consequences)***

If this crisis escalates, what could happen next?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

What decisions need to be made in the next 1 hour?

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What decisions need to be made in the next 4 hours?

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What information is required to make these decisions?

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## PART G: RESOURCE CHECKLIST

***Do we have immediate access to:***

- Emergency contact list (complete and current)
- Crisis communication templates
- Backup venue options
- Alternative vendor contacts
- Insurance policy information
- Legal counsel contact
- Key stakeholder contact information
- Social media account access
- Website update capability
- Mass notification system

Missing resources we need:

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## AFTER THE CRISIS: COMMITMENT TO LEARNING

What worked well in our response?

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What could have been better?

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What changes will we make to our crisis plan?

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When will we schedule our after-action review? Date: \_\_\_\_\_