

Checklist 1. First 48 Hours

First 48 Hours

Critical First Steps After Verification:

Notification:

- Use your crisis plan's notification list to ensure that the chain of command is aware and know that you are involved.
- Ensure that your leadership is aware (especially if it comes from the media and not the EOC) of the emergency and that they know you are involved.
- Give leadership your first assessment of the emergency from a communication perspective and inform them of your next steps. *Remember: Be first, be right, be credible.*

Coordination:

- Contact local, state, federal partners now.
- If there is potential for criminal investigation, contact your FBI counterpart now.
- Secure a spokesperson as designated in the plan.
- Initiate alert notification and call in extra communication staff, per the plan.
- Connect with the EOC—make your presence known.

Media:

- Be first: Provide a statement that your agency is aware of the emergency and is involved in the response. (Use the CERC first statement.)
- Be right: Start monitoring media for misinformation that must be corrected.
- Be credible: Tell the media when and where to get updates from your agency.
- Give facts. Don't speculate. Ensure partners are saying the same thing.

The public:

- Trigger your public information toll-free number operation now if you anticipate that the public will seek reassurance or information directly from your organization. (You may adjust hours of operation and number of call managers as needed.)
- Use your initial media statement as your first message to the public.
- Ensure that your statement expresses empathy and acknowledges public concern about the uncertainty.
- Give the precleared facts you have and refer the public to other information sites as appropriate.

- Remind people that your agency has a process in place to mitigate the crisis.
- Start public call-monitoring to catch trends or rumors now.

Partners/Stakeholders:

- Send a basic statement to partners and stakeholders to let them know you are thinking about them.
- Use prearranged notification systems (preferably e-mail listservs).
- Engage leadership to make important first phone calls, based on your plan, to partners and key stakeholders to let them know that your agency is responding.
- Use the internal communication system (e-mail) to notify employees that their agencies are involved in the response and that updates will follow. Ask for their support.

Resources

- Conduct the crisis risk assessment and implement assignments and hours of operation accordingly. (Use the CERC assessment.)
- Stake out your pre-planned place in the EOC or adjoining area.

Checklist 2. Notification Schedule



Emergency Risk Communication: Immediate Response to Inquiries

By phone to media:

- “We’ve just learned about the situation and are trying to get more complete information now. How can I reach you when I have more information?”
- “All our efforts are directed at bringing the situation under control, so I’m not going to speculate about the cause of the incident.” How can I reach you when I have more information?”
- “I’m not the authority on this subject Let me have XXXX call you right back.”
- “We’re preparing a statement on that now. Can I fax it to you in about two hours?”
- “You may check our web site for background information and I will fax/e-mail you with the time of our next update.”

At incident site or press availability:

Response to Inquiries (you are authorized to give out the following information)

Date: _____ Time: _____ Approved by: _____

This is an evolving emergency and I know that, just like we do, you want as much information as possible right now. While we work to get your questions answered as quickly as possible, I want to tell you what we can confirm right now:

At approximately, _____ (time), a (brief description of what happened)

At this point, we do not know the number of (persons ill, persons exposed, injuries, deaths, etc.).

We have a system (plan, procedure, operation) in place for just such an emergency and we are being assisted by (police, FBI, EOC) as part of that plan.

The situation is (under)(not yet under) control and we are working with (local, State, Federal) authorities to (e.g., contain this situation, determine how this happened, determine what actions may be needed by individuals and the community to prevent this from happening again).

We will continue to gather information and release it to you as soon as possible. I will be back to you within (amount of time, 2 hours or less) to give you an update. As soon as we have more confirmed information, it will be provided. We ask for your patience as we respond to this emergency.

Source: CDC Public Health Training Network satellite and web broadcast *CDC Responds: Risk Communication and Bioterrorism* December 6, 2001, Barbara Reynolds, CDC Crisis Communication Plan, Draft 1999.

Checklist 3. Public Information Emergency Response Call Tracking

Time of call: _____ a.m. p.m.

Nature of call:

- Specific information contained in stock materials:
 - Disease or illness-related
 - Treatment-related
 - Prevention-related
 - Clarify recommendations
 - Current status of the incident
 - Hot topic 1 _____
 - Hot topic 2 _____

- Request for referral:
 - For more health information
 - For medical attention
 - Other _____

- Feedback to agency:
 - Complaint about specific contact with agency
 - Complaint about recommended actions
 - Concern about ability to carry out recommended action
 - Report possible cases or markers (e.g., dead birds for West Nile or increased absences from place of employment)
 - Rumor or misinformation verification (briefly describe)

Outcome of call:

- Calmed caller based on scripted information
- Referred caller to:
 - Health expert outside the department
 - Personal doctor or health care professional
 - Emergency room
 - Red Cross or other nongovernment organization
 - FEMA or state emergency management agency

Action needed:

- None
- Return call to:
- Caller's name: _____ Telephone number: _____ Gender: M F
- Call urgency: Level A ___ Level B ___ Level C ___

Call taken by: _____

Date: _____

Checklist 4. Incident Media Call Triage Sheet

Deadline: ___ 2 hours ___ Today a.m. ___ Today p.m. ___ ASAP ___ Other

Media outlet:

- Local ___ TV ___ Daily/Wire ___ Radio ___ Magazine ___ Other
- Regional
- National

Caller's name: (print first and last) _____

Caller's contact information: Phone(s): _____

Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

Request:

- SME* questions
- Interview (by name request? _____)
- Background/B-roll
- Fact check
- Update
- Return call to press officer

Topic:

- Numbers _____
- Response/Investigation _____
- Health/disease issue/treatment _____
- Hot issue 1 _____
- Hot issue 2 _____
- Other _____

Action needed:

- Return call expected from press officer
- Return call expected from SME

Comments:

PA ** suggested triage priority:

- Level A
- Level B
- Level C

No action needed; call closed by:

- PA answered question
- PA referred to Internet
- PA referred to CIO
- PA referred to outside CDC
- PA other _____

Taken by: _____

* SME = subject matter expert

Time: a.m. _____ p.m. _____

**PA = press assistant

Date: S M T W T F S _____

