



MissionCriticalPartners

Because the Mission Matters

Communicating with Stakeholders During a Crisis

The Basics

OCTOBER 27, 2020

Agenda

- Introduction: Why communication is critical during a crisis
- How to communicate during a crisis:
 - Building a crisis communications team
 - Identifying stakeholders
 - Developing messages
- What's next?
- Key takeaways





Introduction



Why Communication is Critical in a Crisis

- Helps keep stakeholders (internal and external) safe
- Builds trust
- Prevents the spread of misinformation and panic among stakeholders
- Aligns internal and external messages
- Protects reputation

Planning is Key

Having a plan in place helps you:

- Detail the initial steps to take in a crisis
- Define and assign a crisis team and outline roles and responsibilities for members
- Indicate who to contact, how to contact them, and when to contact them
- Provide message development guidance
- Outline and execute training and education necessary for team members to fulfill their responsibilities during a crisis



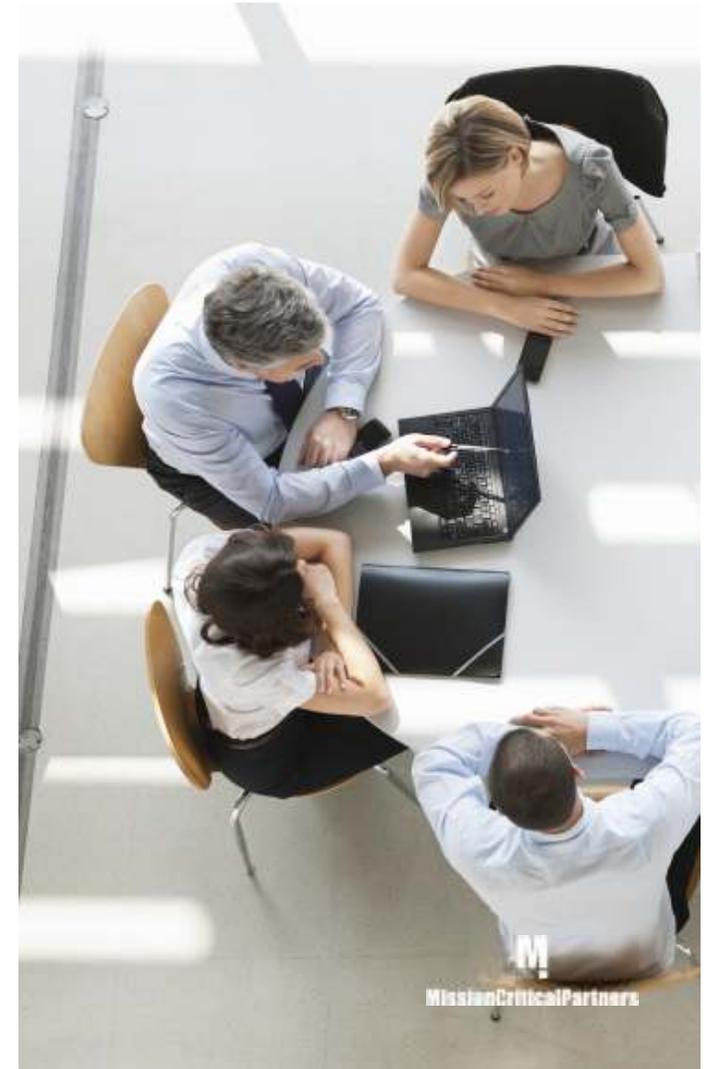
How to Communicate in a Crisis



Building Your Crisis Team

Who to include:

- Agency Director
- Public Information Officer (PIO)
- Public Relations/Communications staff (if applicable)
- Department heads or other leads
- Frontline staff:
 - Telecommunicators
 - Support staff
 - Field staff



Outlining Roles & Responsibilities

Examples include:

- Role: Crisis Team Leader
 - Responsibilities: Coordination of response, message development oversight, scheduling team meetings
- Role: Communications Coordinator
 - Responsibilities: Develops messaging for various stakeholders, supports media relations efforts, works with team leader to coordinate internal and external messaging and efforts
- Role: Media Liaison
 - Responsibilities: Coordinates with media to schedule press events, works with spokesperson to develop media responses
- Role: Staff Liaison
 - Responsibilities: Supports delivery of messages to internal stakeholders, acts as point of contact for internal stakeholder questions, comments, concerns, etc.

How the Team Comes Together

Minnesota Department of Public Safety Division of Emergency Communications Networks		
Role	Responsibilities	Assigned To
Crisis Team Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinates communication response • Oversees message development • Final approval on all publicly disseminated information • Arranges scheduled and emergency team meetings • Oversees broad and specific team functions • Communications with operational teams 	911 Program Manager/911 Technical Engineer
Communications Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assists the team leader with prioritizing duties and handling inquiries • Fulfills all the duties and responsibilities of the CCTL in his/her absence • Works closely with the spokesperson to ensure message accuracy • Supports media relations and social media communications 	DPS ECN PIO
PSAP Liaison	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes, coordinates and initiates contacts with all PSAPs to notify them of updates and information as they become available • Liaison to PSAPs and CCTL <p>[Insert specific other responsibilities as necessary]</p>	911 Program Manager

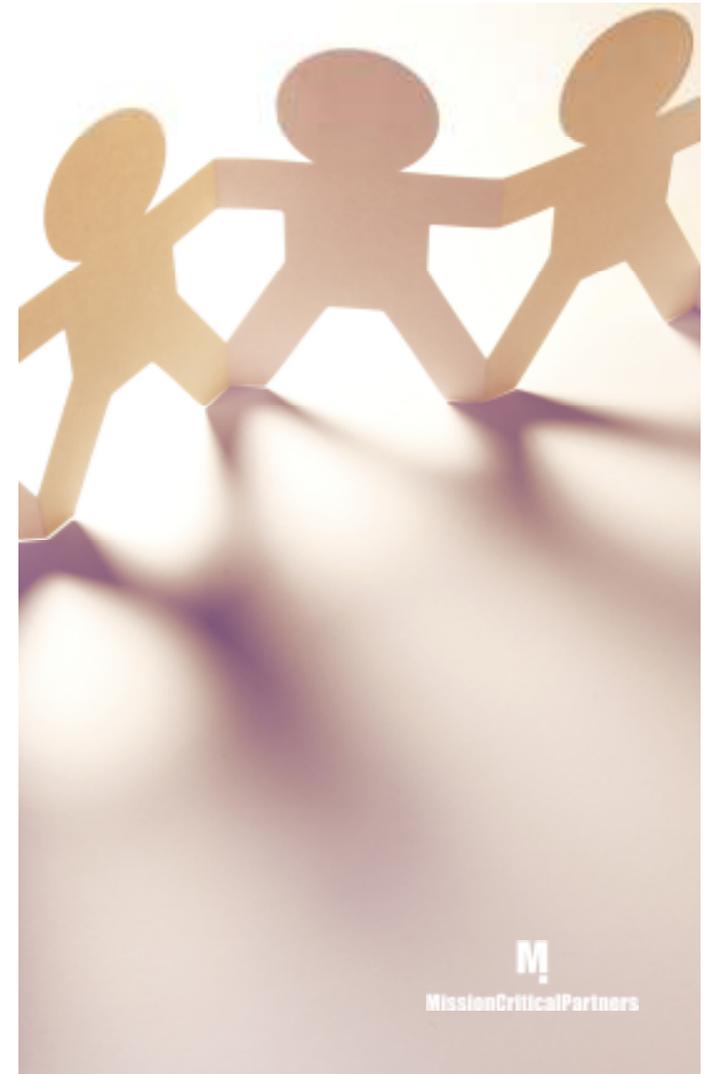
Identifying Stakeholders

Example Stakeholder List	
Internal	Employees
	PSAPs and Backup PSAPs
	Local/State Fire, EMS, Law Enforcement
	Service Providers
	Service Managers (Vendor)
	Governor; other elected officials
External	Media – major outlets, large local outlets
	Media – public broadcasting, multi-lingual
	Public - general
	Public – deaf and hard of hearing
	Public – multi-lingual

Stakeholders and where they fit within this structure will vary based on governance. For example, in Minnesota, PSAPs are the responsibility of the Police Chief or Sheriff, so those audiences need to be included as internal stakeholders

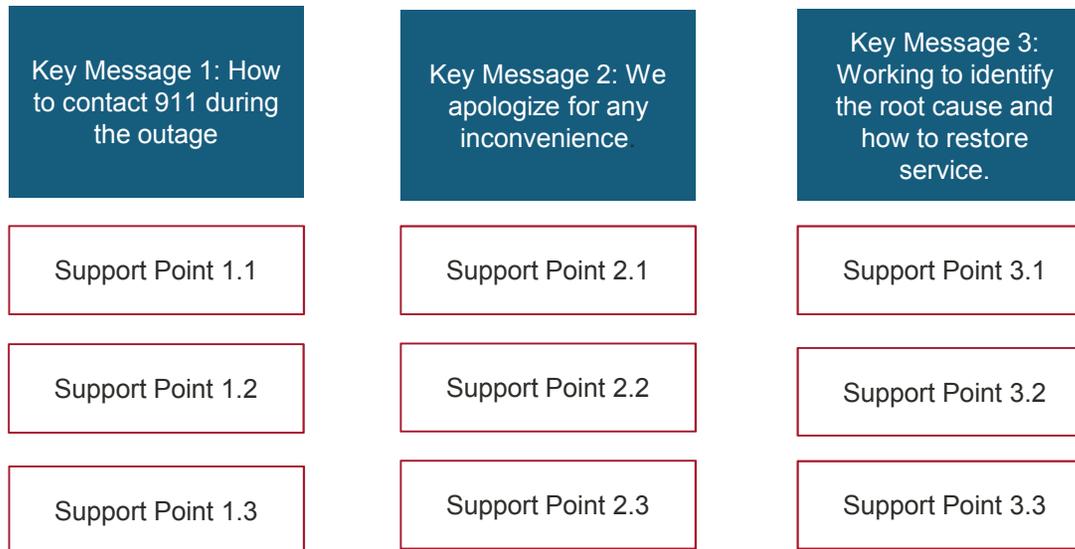
Developing Messages

- Who am I speaking to?
- What are the key points I need to make?
- How often do I need to communicate with this group?
- Where am I speaking to them?
 - Via email
 - Through the media
 - In-person
 - On social media channels



Message Development Example

Scenario: 911 service disruption
Stakeholders: Members of the local community
Concern: Contacting 911 in the event of an emergency



Tips for Message Development & Delivery

- Include development of canned or sample messages as part of the planning process
 - Why? Helps expedite the message development process by giving your agency a chance to develop messaging outside of a crisis; helping to ensure more thorough, complete messaging that can be easily adjusted during a crisis
- Establish a message review and approval process
 - Why? This ensures messaging has been reviewed several times and is appropriate for the audience, fits your agency's values, and is error-free
- Only communicate when you have something to say
 - Why? If you continue to put out messages that do not say anything new it leaves room for stakeholders to make assumptions and you may lose control of the message

Delivery varies by audience, platform, and message (and these are all dependent on the crisis you're dealing with) – There is no one-size-fits-all messaging schedule

Messaging Examples





What's Next?



Keep the Lines of Communication Open

How do you accomplish this?

- Identifying a point of contact, or multiple points of contact, to act as the voice of your agency
- Sharing communications channels, including emails, phone numbers, and/or social media channels in messages to stakeholders
- Encouraging stakeholders to reach out to the point of contact(s) with questions and establishing a return communications timeline
- Continuing to interact and engage with stakeholders outside of a crisis
 - Engage on social media
 - Engage with the community in-person (when possible)

Evaluate & Improve

- Reconvene crisis communications team
- Identify successes within the response
- Discuss weaknesses and/or failures within the plan
- Leverage the results of this discussion to make improvements to the plan
- Socialize and accept plan revisions





Key Takeaways



Key Takeaways

1. Planning is key
2. Build an effective team
3. Develop clear messages
4. Don't overcommunicate
5. Encourage incoming communications
6. Review and improve

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