

Emergency Communications Checklist

Use this checklist to prepare your communications for any emergency

BEFORE THE EMERGENCY

- Identify who will decide how your organization will respond in the face of a crisis.
 - Identify a chain of responsibility for these decisions in the event the designated individual is unable to perform this duty.
- Appoint a spokesperson for presenting these decisions and responses.
 - Consider your executive director, board members, key staff members, or even your top fundraiser.
 - Train this individual for the spotlight.
- Determine your press release writer, be it an internal team member or external hire.
 - Aggregate emergency press contacts.
 - Identify possible locations for a press conference.
 - Prepare any statements that can be written ahead of time.
- Assign a point person for fact gathering as the disaster develops over time.
 - This person should report to the press release writer.
- Designate a media hotline coordinator.
 - This person will manage your social media in the event of a disaster.
 - Identify point people for taking “shifts” on social media monitoring to assist the coordinator.
 - Show your organization’s humanness.
- Train the representative answering phones for your organization on how to respond to incoming questions.
- Run drills. Just as you run fire drills to ensure the physical safety of your staff, run emergency communication drills to ensure your team knows what needs to be handled in order to ensure the safety of your organization’s health and image.

AS SOON AS THE EMERGENCY TAKES PLACE

- Notify law enforcement when applicable and call 911 in the case of an emergency.
- Follow the appropriate safety procedure for said emergency.

SHORTLY FOLLOWING THE EMERGENCY

- Contact the press.
- Set a location for a formal press conference.
- Hold press conference.
 - Address any negative press—fight rumors with facts.
 - Provide all information gathered at that time.
 - Give your plan for gathering additional information and state when you plan to update the public again.
- Update your website, blog, and voicemail with any pertinent information.
- Directly message supporters and segment messaging for donors, recurring givers, sponsors, and volunteers when appropriate.

AFTER THE EMERGENCY

- Follow up with your supporters to thank them for their patience, support, and understanding during a difficult time.
- Hold a final press release to recap events and recovery tactics.
- Hold an internal debriefing to review what could have been done differently to prevent the emergency or more efficiently recovery from it.