

Crisis Response Planning Workbook

How to plan and respond
to a crisis in the workplace

Developed by the



**CONSTRUCTORS
ASSOCIATION
OF WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA**

Place Your Logo Here

What is a Crisis Response Plan?

A guide outlining procedures and protocols to follow in the event of a crisis.

A roadmap for effectively managing and mitigating the impact on the organization's reputation, operations, and stakeholders.

A plan designed to maintain clear and consistent communication while finding a resolution.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Why Your Company Needs a Crisis Response Plan	3
What to Do Before a Crisis Occurs	4
Identify Potential Situations and Crisis Level with Worksheet	4
Identify the Crisis Team Members with Worksheet	5
Designate Spokesperson Worksheet	6
Develop Statement Template Worksheet	7
Prepare a List of Essential Contacts Worksheet	8
When to Act	9
When to Reach Out to a Legal Team and/or Public Relations Firm	9
Rapid Response Communication Actions	10
Incident Journal Worksheet	11
Media Log Worksheet	12
How to Improve with an After Incident Debrief	13

IMPORTANT REMINDER: Be sure to review the details you added to the worksheets quarterly to ensure accuracy over time.

Why Your Company Needs a Crisis Response Plan

The reputation of a construction company plays a pivotal role in its overall success. However, when faced with a crisis, all the hard work put into building that reputation can be swiftly undermined if a crisis is not effectively managed. The resulting negativity can significantly impact the brand, reputation, and revenue.

A well-designed construction crisis response strategy can mitigate the detrimental effects of accidents, construction defects, zoning complications, financial or legal disputes, cyber-security, and other inherent industry risks. All companies need such a plan for the following reasons:



PREPAREDNESS — it is better to be proactive versus reactive



REPUTATION MANAGEMENT — planning helps limit brand damage and loss of confidence in the company and its people



STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATION — determining how and when to communicate in advance helps to limit miscommunication



STATEMENT PREPARATION — limits inaccurate information and manages the message



EMPLOYEE SUPPORT — ensuring details are shared with the right people at the right time



MINIMIZING FINANCIAL IMPACT — the bottom line will be less affected if a plan is developed and executed

What to do Before a Crisis Occurs

It's crucial to prioritize thoughtful responses, especially when your management team faces a crisis. Additionally, there are proactive measures you can implement well in advance. These steps aim to enhance your preparedness and enable you to respond swiftly and effectively when a situation arises.

1 Identify Potential Situations and Crisis Level

Use a crisis-level chart to determine the required communication and involved parties. The chart below categorizes situations into green, yellow, and red levels based on severity. Later in the workbook, the colors will link to the appropriate involved parties at each crisis level.

WORKSHEET: Identify potential crisis situations, ranging from theft to catastrophic loss. On the chart below, note situations in the appropriate space on the left to identify the amount of risk.

GREEN = Limited risk; may be handled by one or a few people

YELLOW = Risk increased; damage potential; handled by a team of people

RED = Acute situation; outside support is likely needed

CRISIS LEVELS

SITUATIONS v	CRISIS LEVELS			
	Potential Crisis	Imminent Crisis	Acute and Manageable Crisis	Acute and Unmanageable Crisis
	⚠	⚠ ⚠		
		⚠ ⚠	⚠ ⚠ ⚠	
			⚠ ⚠ ⚠	⚠ ⚠ ⚠ ⚠
				⚠ ⚠ ⚠ ⚠

2 Identify the Crisis Response Team Members

Determining the people in your organization who will lead the response when a crisis occurs, along with their responsibilities/area of expertise, will not only save time, but help keep all involved focused.

Noting when each individual should be involved will help the process run smoothly. When a crisis occurs, the team's role is to follow the established plan of action, keeping others informed along the way.

WORKSHEET: For each category below, list names, titles, contact information, and areas of expertise (if applicable). Notify each person of their roles and responsibilities per the plan once complete.

Individual responsible for keeping information up-to-date:



- GENERAL MANAGER
- OPERATIONS MANAGER/SUPERINTENDENT/FOREMAN
- SAFETY MANAGER
- MARKETING
- PROJECT MANAGER

Vertical green bar on the left side of the section, followed by seven horizontal lines for listing team members.



- GREEN TEAM MEMBERS +
- SAFETY DIRECTOR
 - HR
 - PR FIRM

Vertical yellow bar on the left side of the section, followed by seven horizontal lines for listing team members.



- GREEN AND YELLOW TEAM MEMBERS +
- CEO/PRESIDENT/OWNER
 - LEGAL COUNSEL
 - FINANCIAL LEADERSHIP

Vertical red bar on the left side of the section, followed by seven horizontal lines for listing team members.

3 Designate Spokespersons

Select one individual as the main spokesperson, with a backup, to serve as the company's representative during the crisis. This would typically be someone other than the owner of the company. In the event a topic expert is needed, you may want to identify a subject matter expert to take the lead.

The spokesperson is responsible for issuing official statements and addressing the media. It is crucial the chosen spokesperson remains composed, possesses media handling expertise, is comfortable facing a camera, and holds a position of authority to inspire credibility.

To ensure the spokesperson is well-prepared for their role, be proactive and provide them with media relations training to equip them with the necessary skills to effectively engage with the media and communicate the company's stance with clarity and professionalism.

Employees must be informed that all media inquiries should be directed to the designated spokesperson.

All involved should refrain from making comments and sharing images on their personal social media accounts regarding the incident.

Identify the key spokesperson:

NAME	TITLE	MOBILE PHONE	EMAIL
------	-------	--------------	-------

Identify the back-up spokesperson:

NAME	TITLE	MOBILE PHONE	EMAIL
------	-------	--------------	-------

Identify subject matter experts you feel comfortable taking the lead (both with internal and external communications), if needed. Note the topic or instance in which this individual(s) would lead communications over the key spokesperson:

SUBJECT MATTER: _____

NAME	TITLE	MOBILE PHONE	EMAIL
------	-------	--------------	-------

SUBJECT MATTER: _____

NAME	TITLE	MOBILE PHONE	EMAIL
------	-------	--------------	-------

4 Develop Statement Templates

Take the time to write a few simple statements to serve as a template when a crisis occurs. These templates can be used to communicate internally to team members or externally to the media. Template statements will save you time and help guide the team during a potentially chaotic time.

Sharing a holding statement is better than stating “no comment”. Ideally, stakeholders need to understand the crisis is being addressed and the company is being transparent.

Example Statements:

We have recently been notified that a INCIDENT TYPE at LOCATION involving WHO occurred today at TIME. The incident is being investigated and more information will be shared at a later time.

At approximately TIME, there was a/an INCIDENT TYPE at LOCATION that is currently being investigated. We are working to determine DAMAGES. At this time, we have confirmed NOTE INFO THAT IS CERTAIN. The safety and well-being of our team members, vendors, and community are our first priority. As more information is available, we will provide updates via METHOD INFO WILL BE SHARED.

Draft a sample template your organization can use in the case of an incident, such as a serious employee injury. (NOTE: Include an empathetic notation and information about contacting family.)

5 Prepare a List of Essential Contacts

After identifying internal stakeholders, note phone numbers and/or emails of external contacts, ranging from emergency support to media contacts.

Make sure to have team members' emergency contact information (family) on hand in case of an emergency.

Police/Fire/EMT 911

Owner/Agencies _____

Public Works/Water _____

Gas _____

Electric _____

OSHA (Local) _____

Health Department _____

Employee Assistance
Program (EAP) _____

Union(s) _____

Poison Control _____

Insurance _____

Public Relations Firm ATLAS MARKETING: Chris Martin | 855.459.8044 | Chris@AtlasStories.com

Legal Firm _____

When to Act

How you respond within the first hour is critical to how a crisis is managed. On the following page, find the **Rapid Response Communications Actions** guide which notes what to do in the first hour through the first week, including how to debrief and learn from the crisis. This tool can act as a guide — make copies and hand it out to others who need to be made aware of how to handle a crisis.

When to reach out to a Legal Team and/or Public Relations Firm

There are some situations in which legal or public relations experts skilled in crisis communications should be consulted. If you do not currently have legal support or a public relations firm, ask CAWP for a recommendation.

If one of these situations were to occur, reach out for added help:



MAJOR ACCIDENTS OR INCIDENTS — this could include major injuries, fatalities, fire, uncontrolled gas line, structural collapse, and substantial property damage



ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES — including water pollution, air quality issues, flooding, and major disruptions to community



SIGNIFICANT PROJECT DELAYS — specifically ones that might affect the larger community

IMMEDIATE

Call 911: Notify authorities

Follow site-specific Emergency Response Plan (if available)

Locate Crisis Response Plan:
ADD LOCATION HERE

Who to call first in the company:
ADD NAME AND PHONE NUMBER HERE

Ensure worker safety:

- Identify immediate danger and secure the area to prevent further accidents or injuries.
- Provide medical attention if applicable.
- Make certain employees are accounted for.
- Designate someone to stay with injured parties at the hospital until loved ones arrive.

Secure the scene:

- Preserve the accident scene, including restricting entry to site and ensuring all refrain from taking and sharing information on social media.
- Identifying main point-of-contact for site communications.
- Cooperate with authorities.

Notify relevant parties:

- Contact the family of an injured worker in a compassionate and sensitive manner.
- Communicate with key stakeholders such as: Project owners, Subcontractors, and Insurers.

Document the incident: Thoroughly document details, including photographs, witness statements, and other relevant information. This information will be crucial for internal analysis and potential legal proceedings. Use the Incident Journal (page 11) to track details.

24 HOURS

Convey simple and accurate information to stakeholders/ media.

“No comment” is not an acceptable response.

If appropriate, speak to the media.

- Develop a holding statement until you have more details, for example — “We are assessing the incident and will share more at a later time.”
- Use a Media Log (page 12) to track who has spoken to the media, what was shared, and when.
- Connect with a public relations firm for advice or to assist in communications efforts.

48 HOURS

Contact CAWP to assist with media/ public relations issues.

Provide support and counseling:

Offer support services, such as grief counseling and mental health support, to affected workers and colleagues who may have witnessed the incident.

FIRST WEEK

Debrief:

- Identify gaps or improvement areas and review safety protocols, procedures, and training.
- Take immediate steps to address deficient areas. Implement necessary changes.
- Review and update Crisis Response Plan as necessary.

INCIDENT JOURNAL

Thoroughly document incident details, including photographs, witness statements, and any other relevant information. This information will be crucial for internal analysis and potential legal proceedings. Use this Incident Journal to track details.

Date	Time	Location
------	------	----------

Incident Details

Individuals Involved

Actions taken and by whom

MEDIA LOG

Use this log to detail all communication exchanges between your organization and the media. Document each interaction chronologically — dates, times, individuals involved, information shared, etc. This comprehensive documentation tool aids in information accountability and accurate tracking and reporting of communication efforts.

Date	Time
-------------	-------------

Date	Time
-------------	-------------

Media Outlet, Contact Name, Contact Info

Media Outlet, Contact Name, Contact Info

Information Shared

Information Shared

Follow-up Required

Follow-up Required

Recorded by _____



How to Improve with an After Incident Debrief

Taking the time for a debrief will help your team to better understand how well the crisis was handled. The following will help ensure process improvements are adjusted to make things run more smoothly, if needed, the next time a crisis arises:



Ask the crisis response team to **IDENTIFY GAPS OR AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT.**



TAKE IMMEDIATE STEPS TO REVIEW DEFICIENT AREAS which may include performing a comprehensive look into safety and risk management protocols, procedures, and training programs.



IMPLEMENT NECESSARY CHANGES TO COMMUNICATIONS, PROCESSES, AND PROCEDURES to prevent similar incidents from occurring in the future.

Debrief Discussion Questions

1. How did the crisis occur and can vulnerabilities in the organization's processes or systems be identified and improved?
2. Were the appropriate people notified in a timely manner?
3. How well did the crisis response team perform — evaluate coordination, decision-making, and communication?
4. Were there any unusual or avoidable challenges faced during the crisis response?
5. How did communication flow to external parties — was messaging clear, accurate, and timely?
6. Were there any instances where decision-makers lacked critical information or authority to make timely choices?
7. Did the crisis response align with the organization's crisis response plan? Are improvements needed?
8. How can the organization improve its overall preparedness for future crises?
9. What steps should be taken after the debriefing meeting?



**CONSTRUCTORS
ASSOCIATION**
OF WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

CAWP is a trade association representing 200+ construction companies in the 33 counties of western Pennsylvania, building roads, bridges, tunnels, airports, dams, and more.

We strive to encourage and assist organizations with retaining fair competition, improving labor conditions, and maintaining proper and friendly relations between contractors, their employees, and the general public.

CAWP.org



This workbook was developed with assistance from Atlas Marketing. For additional help or support in your crisis preparation, please visit: atlasstories.com/crisis-communications

