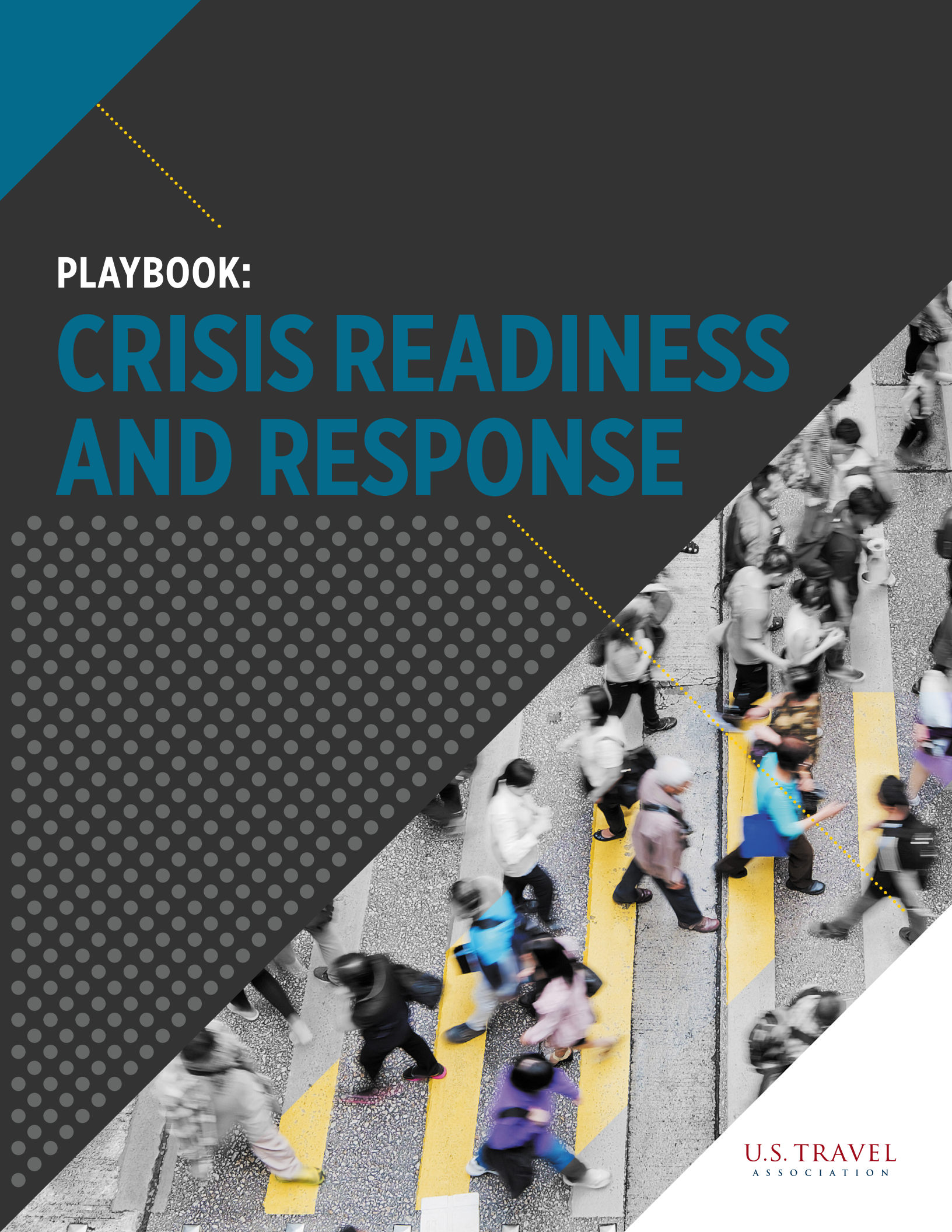


**PLAYBOOK:**

# **CRISIS READINESS AND RESPONSE**

**U.S. TRAVEL  
ASSOCIATION**



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>2</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>PART I: PRE-CRISIS PLANNING</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>PART II: CRISIS RESPONSE</b>
<b>24</b>	<b>PART III: POST-CRISIS RECOVERY AND REVIEW</b>
<b>29</b>	<b>COMPONENTS OF A CRISIS PLAN</b>
	Section I: Creating Your Roster <b>30</b>
	Section II: Preparing and Responding <b>34</b>
	Section III: Recovering and Restoring <b>40</b>
<b>44</b>	<b>APPENDIX</b>
	Interview Best Practices <b>42</b>
	10-Minute Media Training <b>43</b>
	Sample Holding Statements <b>44</b>

# THE FREEDOM TO TRAVEL IS ONE OF THE MANY LIBERTIES WE ENJOY AS AMERICANS.

But we are in a new era. Shifting global landscapes, the rise in nationalism and extremist thought, alongside natural disasters and unexpected challenges, can impact the ability to feel safe when exploring somewhere new. Now more than ever before, travelers need assurances that they will be safe when they are on the road or in the air, visiting a destination or attending an event.

**In this new age, destination leaders have a new responsibility. They must be prepared for the unthinkable—and in a crisis, be ready to step out of their traditional role.** When a community is shaken and a fog of uncertainty makes decision-making most challenging, destination leaders are being called upon to personify the attitudes and resilience of residents, and to be a voice of confidence to visitors and audiences across the country and around the world.

**This playbook is intended to help destination leaders ready themselves, their organizations and staff for such events.**

New security threats are constantly emerging and evolving; and so must our planning, preparation and response. How well we address these concerns and stay ahead of security challenges can have major ramifications for our visitors, our communities, our destinations and our industry for years to come.

Given this new reality, the U.S. Travel Association hosted the Secure Tourism Summit in New York City in April 2017. The summit marked the first time the entire travel industry—from airports, airlines, destination marketing organizations (DMOs) and convention and visitors bureaus (CVBs), to sports venues, lodging, and attractions—convened to discuss strengthening tourism security. Based on our discussions, it was clear attendees wanted to learn more about how to improve their organization's crisis procedures.





The following pages provide a basic overview of how to plan for and respond to a crisis, as well as reassess your organization's emergency protocols and procedures. It is a synthesis of insights and best practices that we have gleaned from interviews and conversations with some of the country's leading travel and tourism destination leaders.

**Our hope is that this playbook will help state tourism offices, DMOs and CVBs strengthen their current crisis plans, provide practical advice, and spur a conversation about how America's destination leaders can ensure the safety and security of all visitors.**

## AMERICANS ARE **STRONGLY CONCERNED** ABOUT POTENTIAL TRAVEL CRISES

- 69%** I would be concerned about traveling to a place where there's been an act of terrorism or a shooting recently.
- 56%** I feel more concerned for my safety and security when I travel now than I did five years ago.
- 48%** Safety and security concerns (e.g., terrorism, shootings) make me less willing to travel.
- 47%** I feel more concerned for my health and well-being when I travel now than I did five years ago.
- 47%** There is not enough flexibility when booking travel to account for unforeseen events like natural disasters, extreme weather and safety and security threats.
- 42%** Health concerns (e.g., Zika virus, flu/disease outbreaks) make me less willing to travel.
- 39%** I worry more now than I did five years ago about getting stranded because of things weather disasters and security threats.
- 38%** The politics of a travel destination affects my decision to go there (e.g. bathroom bills, sanctuary cities, etc.).
- 32%** Natural disasters and extreme weather events make me less willing to travel.



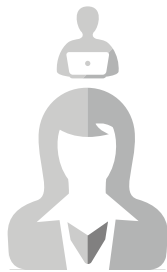


# PART I: PRE-CRISIS PLANNING

When a crisis strikes, many organizations feel overwhelmed. That is why pre-crisis planning—in a time of clear-headed calm—is essential. Thorough planning and preparation can help ensure every front-line employee and organization leader is ready to manage a crisis.

## FORMING A CRISIS MANAGEMENT TEAM

An organization's first task: preparing a crisis plan. Start this work by creating a "Crisis Management Team" (CMT)—the members of your organization who need to be involved in the crisis planning and implementation process.



**There are a few important points to keep in mind when developing the CMT:**

### Keep the group small.

To accelerate decision-making in a crisis, the CMT should be a **small, tight-knit group of senior managers who have special insight into the function, staffing and capabilities of their departments**. A good question to ask when identifying this core management group is:

- ❓ What is the smallest group of people that you can sit around a table while covering the largest swath of the organization's roles and responsibilities?



### Empower the CMT to drive key actions.

In the heat of the moment, there may not be time to obtain approval on essential actions from a board of directors. While the CMT should be required to provide the board with regular updates on its work, **the CMT must have the authority to make decisions and execute them.**

## Focus on operations.

There may be an inclination to fill the crisis management team with senior leaders of the organization or destination leaders—be it local politicians, community leaders, etc. But **the core group should largely be comprised of senior managers who oversee the day-to-day operations of the organization** and can make key decisions during crisis situations, such as when to pull advertisements and shut down digital assets or initiate outreach to local stakeholders and agencies.

- ? Ask, from an operations standpoint, which departments and leaders are absolutely critical?
- While the CMT will lead the crisis response effort, all employees should still be familiar with the crisis plan since many will be called on to help implement.
- In cases where a CMT member is unable to help lead a crisis response, or a key member of the response effort, such as a spokesperson, is unavailable, the CMT must have protocols in place to fill vacancies at a moment's notice.

## Determine proper communications responsibilities.

Ahead of a crisis, CMT members must determine the appropriate communications role they will play in a crisis. In some cases, a DMO might own the communications channels and therefore feel obligated to collect and share new information directly with travelers and the public. But in other cases, it may be more appropriate to defer to government officials and elected leaders, reposting official statements as needed and serving as a channel for official information. **Identifying your organization's communications role ahead of a crisis will save time.**

- Ahead of a crisis, your CMT also needs to have a sense of the kind of messages it will share externally and those it will share internally to staff and employees. These are two distinct audiences and a CMT must think through how to communicate with them and what kind of information is appropriate to share is important.

## Decide who has the final say.

**To ensure decisions get made, the CMT should include a senior member who can have the final say.** This gives the group room to deliberate while ensuring gridlock and indecision are avoided. The team also must determine who will have the final say in instances where the group cannot reach a consensus and the key decision maker is unavailable.



# DEFINING TERMS: WHAT IS A CRISIS THAT DEMANDS YOUR RESPONSE?

The CMT's first assignment: defining what type of crisis your destination should respond to. No two crises are alike. Thinking through a range of potential threats and scenarios provides an invaluable opportunity to fully consider the most appropriate role for the organization to play. Not all crises warrant the same level of response and determining the organization's involvement is a critical first step.

**The following is a short list of potential threats that any destination must be prepared to respond to:**



## Natural disasters

Natural disasters have the potential to bring local economies to a halt. **Natural disasters require destinations to play an active role in information sharing** as well as serving as a resource for local businesses and stranded visitors and residents.



## Public health emergency

Whether it is a bad flu epidemic or some other form of contagion, pandemics can cause panic among residents and travelers alike. In partnering with local **public health officials**, a DMO can play an important role in **delivering a coherent message to visitors on how best to ensure their health and safety** during the emergency.



## Acts of violence/criminal acts

In a criminal event, such as a terrorist attack, the DMO's key responsibility is to **gather and share official information from public officials and law enforcement**. The DMO must also be sensitive to the situation at hand, and it may need to replace scheduled media messages with more appropriate communications. As the city begins to emerge from the fallout from the attack, the DMO may take on more of a leadership role in communicating with the public. This may include assisting city or state officials with message development or helping to spread the message that the destination is back open for business.



## Social unrest or protests

Any event that causes social unrest—be it a sensitive piece of legislation like a travel ban, unruly protests or disruptive boycotts—has the potential to impact a destination's reputation as a safe, welcoming environment. As destination leaders, it is your job to monitor these situations as they occur and **ensure residents and visitors inquiring about the incidents quickly receive informed, accurate responses**.



## Tourist accidents

No destination is ever 100 percent safe. The DMO should **be prepared to field media inquiries about everyday accidents** that involve tourists and express concerns and sympathies for those involved.



# GIVEN THESE TYPES OF THREATS, WHAT CAN YOU AND YOUR TEAM DO TO BE PROACTIVE?

## Map out all potential crisis scenarios.

Each destination will face its own set of challenges. For island and coastal destinations, inclement weather such as hurricanes and tsunamis pose legitimate threats to the region. For other destinations in the American heartland, tornadoes and floods may pose a greater threat. Your CMT should consider a host of situations—from power outages to public health catastrophes—and outline a response for each.

## Questions to consider:

- ❓ What crisis situations has your organization previously faced?
- ❓ What are situations that have not yet occurred but could in the future?
- ❓ Where is your organization most vulnerable?
- ❓ What stakeholders—inside and outside the organization—will you need to contact during a crisis?

## Do your research.

The planning phase is a good opportunity to research other situations DMOs and CVBs have faced to better prepare your own organization. **Analyzing social media posts and media statements that illustrate how other organizations responded in various crises will help inform your own organization's response.**

## BEGIN TO DEVELOP A PLAN

No organization should go without a basic template outlining how staff should respond in crises (find an example for a crisis scenario in Part II. **Here are general guidelines for building the plan.**



### Develop a comprehensive crisis contact list.

In a crisis situation, your team will need to contact stakeholders in and outside the organization. Waiting until the crisis to track down contact information wastes time. **One of the most important aspects of crisis planning is to develop a contact list well in advance—and keep it updated.** This list should be exhaustive and include contact information for all senior staff and employees, board of directors, key public officials (city hall, state and federal officials), emergency offices in the counties and local cities, local and national reporters, law enforcement, local hospitals, foreign consulates, international offices, local business owners, state/regional marketing organizations, business associations such as the chamber of commerce and any PR/advertising agencies the organization regularly works with. It should also be organized by function or specific grouping so it is easy to use and update. Review and update this contact information at least once a month, and don't forget mobile phone numbers. If it is not updated, the list will not be helpful during a crisis.



### Map out the organization's crisis activation plan.

**This plan should include a series of immediate steps that any DMO must take during its initial response to a crisis.** For an example of what a crisis activation plan should include, see Part II.



### Outline a step-by-step crisis response plan.

Now that the organization has engaged in the crisis, it should begin to activate its public response—including gathering and sharing information with key audiences and implementing its public communications strategy.



### Know where the CMT will meet.

In the event of an actual crisis, it may be impossible for all members of your CMT to get to the organization's headquarters for a meeting. **Designate a secure location outside of the typical office environment where the CMT can gather in case it is needed.** Make sure there is an active conference line that CMT members can call into if necessary. CMT members should have the cell phone numbers of their colleagues saved in their phones.



### Craft a holding statement.

As you build your crisis plan, it is good practice to **draft a series of press statements that you can quickly adjust when pressured to respond to a situation.** You may not use the statement, but having a solid draft on hand saves time.



### Identify responsibilities for key staffers.

**Before a crisis happens, your team will need to know which staff members will oversee critical aspects of the response effort.** For example, the organization should identify which employee will be in charge of developing messaging, determine who will conduct outreach to the mayor's office or local police force and who will field questions from the press. You should also determine who will oversee the management of digital, broadcast or other advertising and communications, social media and the organization's website and consider who will contact foreign consulates in case international visitors are impacted by a crisis.



### Pinpoint key audiences.

Identifying stakeholders and key audiences ahead of any crisis is also good practice. This initial list will evolve during a live crisis, but **thinking through who your key audiences are ahead of time—and deciding how you will share your message with them—will help in the moment.**



# BUILD STRONG TIES WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS AT THE STATE, LOCAL AND FEDERAL LEVEL

In the heat of a crisis, having a network of law enforcement officials that you can turn to for support, timely information, and resources is invaluable. It is imperative that your organization builds these relationships ahead of a crisis.

**Here are a few ways your team can get to know law enforcement officials in your area:**



## Learn about your region's "fusion center."

Many communities across the country are served by local fusion centers, which house onsite security analysts whose job is to monitor and gather intelligence on community crime trends and share information with other law enforcement officials. In the wake of 9/11, state and local officials began establishing fusion centers around the country as a way to gather and share intelligence on threats to their regions.<sup>1</sup> Fusion centers partner with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and local law enforcement to assess potential risks and enhance overall security efforts. **Ask local law enforcement whether your region has a fusion center and reach out to make an introduction.**



## Connect with local law enforcement and security professionals.

In many communities, law enforcement professionals meet regularly to share best practices and discuss issues in their areas. Whether it is local law enforcement, emergency management officials or the National Guard, **reaching out to security professionals is a good way to find out how your organizations can partner.**



The FBI's Office of Private Sector is an excellent resource for CVBs and DMOs seeking law enforcement partnerships. Every region has an FBI contact whose job it is to partner with business leaders in the area to clamp down on illicit activity. Not sure where to start? U.S. Travel can assist.

Email [feedback@ustravel.org](mailto:feedback@ustravel.org) for more information.

# EMPLOYEE TRAINING

Practice makes perfect, especially when preparing for a crisis. No organization can ever be fully prepared for a crisis, but there are steps your team can take to ensure employees know what their role is in the event of a crisis and how they should respond.



## Tabletop exercises.

A tabletop exercise is a decision-making discussion among colleagues where a security professional will walk non-security employees through a series of scenarios. The discussion gives employees an opportunity to talk through a scenario and hear how their colleagues may respond. **Tabletop exercises highlight potential security threats, provide an opportunity to discuss how employees can work together and identify what to prioritize in a crisis.**



## Required employee training.

Active shooter incidents and other emergencies have prompted many destination leaders to require specialized training for their employees. **Your employees are voices of your organization, whether or not they are part of your CMT, and they need to be aware of the plan** so they can act in accordance if needed.

Training courses teach proper response and organization protocols.



For some organizations, employee training may take different forms. For example, **some tourism authorities require employees to take part in state emergency management agencies' training seminars and workshops**—another opportunity to network with law enforcement professionals in your area.

# PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

*Here is a sample scenario that could serve as a basis for a tabletop exercise with your department leaders.*

**Scenario:** The organization receives an advisory from public health officials with information about an unknown virus that has emerged in the local community. A local DMO is encouraged to monitor cases among its employees and visitors:

## INTERNAL

- ❓ What message does the DMO need to share with employees internally? Are there any decisions that need to be made or internal procedures that each department leader needs to initiate?
- ❓ What internal preparation needs to happen within each department?
- ❓ What are HR's first steps?
- ❓ Should the head of the CMT convene the other members to discuss the crisis plan and organization's response?

## EXTERNAL

- ❓ What message(s)—if any—should the DMO share with the general public and visitors? And who should take the lead on crafting this message? Who internally will need to review the statement before it is published?
- ❓ What collateral materials—messaging documents, Q&As, briefing books, fact sheets—should the organization prepare or compile to share with reporters, visitors and locals about the outbreak? How will the information be gathered and who should be in charge of collecting it?
- ❓ Who in local, state and federal government should the CMT reach out to for support? Who on staff will own these relationships?



**The DMO receives another advisory from public health officials indicating that the illness—once relegated to a specific area of the destination—has begun to spread into new neighborhoods, including one adjacent to the organization’s headquarters:**

- ❓ How should the DMO’s message evolve to visitors and the public?
- ❓ What instructions should the organization share with employees and visitors? How should these messages differ?
- ❓ What resources should the organization provide employees and visitors?
- ❓ How do the public affairs, HR and communications teams work together in this situation?
- ❓ What decisions and contingency plans will need to be made quickly?



**A couple days later, a few employees call in sick and inform their supervisors that they have just been tested for the ailment and the results came back positive:**

- ❓ What does the message from senior leadership need to be to frontline employees?
- ❓ What should the message be to the public and visitors about the situation within the organization?
- ❓ How do you control rumors and ensure calm among staff?
- ❓ What role should the HR team play in sharing best practices with employees?
- ❓ How do you mitigate the risk to other staff members?

NOTES:

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# PART II: CRISIS RESPONSE

**When a crisis strikes, it may seem like your organization’s response needs to happen all at once. But this is not possible—or advisable.**

Along the way, countless organizations have made missteps in their response that DMO and CVB leaders can learn from—from former BP CEO Tony Hayward’s “I want my life back” comment in 2010 following the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, to the firestorm of criticism directed toward United Airlines CEO Oscar Munoz in 2017 after a passenger was aggressively pulled from a plane. Taking a step-by-step approach will help your team avoid unforced errors.

## CRISIS ACTION PLAN

**The following sample crisis activation plan includes some of the immediate steps that any organization should take when a crisis breaks.**



### Take stock of the situation.

When a crisis first arises, your team will need to quickly find out what happened, who was involved and whether anyone was harmed. In some instances, it may be that your organization does not have a role to play in the response effort.

- ? One of the first questions to answer is whether any of your organization’s employees or their families have been impacted by the incident. **Ensuring employee safety and security must be paramount among your concerns.** Training staff alternates on the crisis plan becomes more important if an affected staff member is part of your CMT.
- **Always verify the events with authorities.** There are hoaxes and false alarms that you do not want to overreact to, only to have to walk back your public statements.
- Information gathering is critically important. **Your organization should have someone on staff who can gather and disseminate up-to-the-minute articles, blogs, tweets and other pieces of information to the rest of the team.** This will ensure the organization can continue to make the most informed decisions.

## Initiate the organization's crisis plan.

If your organization must respond to the crisis, convene the entire CMT to discuss the response and team members' responsibilities.



- There may be pressure from inside your organization to immediately reach out to the media or to respond to media inquiries. However, it is often best to defer to city or state officials to field questions from the media in the immediate aftermath of a crisis. **Focus on amplifying official statements and sharing accurate information with the public as soon as it becomes available.**
- That said, do not underestimate your organization's platform and the important role it can and should play in a response effort. **Whether your organization ultimately decides to respond publicly or not, it must play a role in outreach to the local government and the broader community.** Often, CVBs and DMOs maintain vast networks of members, stakeholders, professionals and visitors that stretch far beyond the reach of local governments. Even if it is just retweeting an official statement from the mayor's office, simple actions will get critical information to key audiences that may not otherwise be reached.

### Summarize key takeaways.

After the initial meeting, the head of the CMT will send around a summary of action items detailing next steps.

### Communicate with direct reports.

Each member of the CMT should then begin to coordinate the response effort with staff members responsible for carrying out next steps. For example, staff members may begin collecting information to share with the public (e.g. road closures, hotel openings) and begin to prepare communications for key stakeholders. **While the CMT may not have finalized an official public statement, it is important that they quickly develop a message that can be shared internally so that all employees are on the same page.** This initial statement may help inform the organization's official response later and build alignment internally.

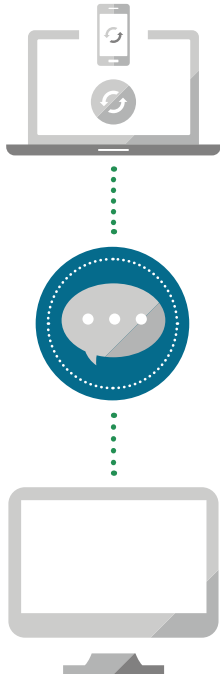
### Remove paid advertisements.

In some crisis scenarios, it will be necessary to quickly pull paid advertisements publicizing the destination. **It is good practice to have a working list of all outside public relations and ad agencies on hand so they can be contacted quickly.**

### Update the staff and crisis communications hotlines.

If your organization has a staff phone hotline or a crisis communications hotline, it is good practice to update the message to ensure employees, local residents and visitors receive the latest information.





## Confirm that the website and email delivery system are working.

In some situations (i.e. inclement weather, power outage, etc.), the organization may lose access to its website or email delivery system. **A member of the CMT should communicate with the organization's IT team to understand the backup plans in case of an outage.** The IT staff should ensure backup options are available.

- **Many DMOs place back-up servers in other locations in the U.S. This is good practice for any organization.** Additionally, your organization should consider adopting a cloud-based storage service like Dropbox so that your team can access files from various locations.



It is always a good idea to keep a running list of key passwords for your website and other tools your team uses. Your crisis plan should indicate where passwords are stored in the event of an emergency.

## Take stock of social media and determine updates to the organization's website.

When a crisis hits, it is often necessary to cease all promotional social media posts about the destination. Instead, the organization's social media should communicate official information from city or state officials.

## Finalize internal and external messaging.

Get approval on external messaging from key stakeholders identified during the pre-crisis planning phase.





## Reach out to international offices.

If your destination draws a lot of foreign visitors, communicating with them may be beneficial. **As the crisis unfolds in the U.S., it is a good opportunity to check in with your international affiliates to learn how the situation is being reported in foreign markets.** The international affiliates may have advice on how to best communicate with that market and what is the most appropriate message.



There are a number of U.S. Travel partners, including Brand USA, that can also provide valuable resources in a crisis. We encourage members to leverage their contacts at both organizations to help facilitate communication with foreign destinations.

## Keep leadership up to speed on CMT activities and decisions.

In the hours and days to come, it is critical for the CMT to communicate regularly with organizational leadership. **Schedule regular meetings to ensure all parties have the latest information.**

## Consider establishing regular “check-in” conference calls with members.

These meetings would give the organization an opportunity to share updated information with local members and other business leaders. While they may no longer be critical once a crisis has passed, regular conference calls could prove valuable in the recovery phase.

**Additionally, organizations should consider sharing regular email updates with members to shine light on the evolving situation and tourism recovery efforts.**

# ACTIVE SHOOTER SITUATION

*A crisis plan should outline some of the key threats facing a destination and provide a step-by-step approach in response to specific situations—from basic questions to ask to outlining which employees should be involved in the response.*

**Setting the Scene:** An active shooter has been identified at a major event in your destination. There are reports of numerous injuries and fatalities at the scene. Photos and videos taken by those at the scene are appearing on social media outlets. The city has halted all mass transportation systems and officials have grounded all flights.

## Activate the Crisis Management Team

- **The CMT leader should immediately call for CMT members to meet and be briefed on the crisis and determine response efforts.**
- There should be a designated meeting space in a safe location listed in the plan where members can gather. The CMT leader should identify an alternative facility if the original location is impacted by the crisis.

## The Organization's Role

- During the early response stage, the organization should gather as much information on the ongoing situation as possible to develop accurate press statements and keep visitors and members informed. In most circumstances, the organization should defer to city leaders as the source of official communications.
- Ensure you are providing accurate information to visitors and that they have access to essential resources, such as evacuation instructions.
- Reach out to member/partner organizations to determine whether their businesses have been impacted.

## Evaluate the Situation

- The organization should confirm the information it has gathered with officials such as the mayor's office, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, local police and hospitals.
- **The organization should determine:**
  - ❓ What is the scale of the situation? How many people have been directly impacted?
  - ❓ Have tourists, staff and community stakeholders been impacted? Have there been any casualties?

- **?** What more can be done to help tourists and member organizations?
- **?** What are the consequences of the crisis likely to be?
- As the CMT and staff gather information from official sources, it is appropriate to begin providing updates on the organization's website and social media feeds.
- **Practical questions will arise, such as:**
  - **?** **Transportation System:** How can tourists get around? What roads are closed?
  - **?** **Hotels:** Are any hotels directly impacted by the incident? Are other hotels nearby accepting customers who have been stranded? Do they have any information on casualties or injured tourists?
  - **?** **How to Help:** What can the community do? DMOs serve as a resource for the community—whether it is providing supplies or hosting a blood drive—DMOs can reinforce that message, even in the hardest of times. Those are the kinds of stories as a destination recovers from a crisis that put it in a positive light and inspire the public to support it.

## Craft a Response

- **The organization must be wary of putting out a statement too soon after a crisis.** But as the crisis begins to be resolved, it may become appropriate for the organization to weigh in and begin answering questions about how the event impacts visitors to the destination.
- The organization's statement should express sympathy with residents who have been most impacted by the attack and offer help to those in need.
- **Develop messaging materials and toolkits that you can share with member organizations, partners, and their press teams.** This will help ensure others use consistent messaging.

## Audience Outreach

- All statements should be placed on the organization's website and posted on social media.
- This is also the right time to reach out directly to reporters with relevant information.

## Reassess the Situation

- In a crisis, the situation on the ground may change by the minute. Maintain regular contact with your member/partner organizations and visitors to ensure their needs are met.
- **As new information is gathered and the situation on the ground evolves, be sure to update your core messages and share with each audience.**



# SOCIAL MEDIA PLAN

**Social media must be an integral part of any organization's or community's crisis response plan.** For example, during Hurricane Harvey in Houston in 2017, many residents had trouble getting through to emergency officials via traditional channels like 911. They turned instead to social media to call for help. Social media channels—like Facebook, Twitter, Reddit and Instagram—became information clearinghouses for essential information and virtual meeting points for people stranded by the storm.<sup>4</sup>

**The following is a template social media plan to provide some guidance on when it is prudent to pull all social media postings and when it is appropriate to resume regular social media.**

## Press Pause.

When a crisis occurs, the social media team should immediately cease all social media activity and wait for further instructions from the CMT.



Release a message on social media indicating that your organization is monitoring the situation and will provide regular updates as it evolves.

## Don't Forget to Pause Scheduled Content.

Take time to review all scheduled social media content and ensure nothing is sent until an appropriate time.

## Adjust Content and Schedule.

In some cases, it will be necessary to reschedule planned social media posts for a later date. In others, it would be wise to completely revise or delete planned social posts.

## Incorporate Social Media into Messaging Strategy.

**Your communications team should draft statements and potential social media posts simultaneously.** This will ensure the messaging is consistent across channels and it will also help your team get its message out more quickly when it is time to release a statement.

## Ensure Staff Social Presence is Appropriate.

Your employees are extensions of your organization and they need to be mindful of that. **They can help reinforce important messages, but they can just as easily undermine the organization's message.** Remind them to post with caution, especially if they have credentials for your social channels.



There are a number of instances where employees have made poor decisions. Take, for example, a tweet by an ad agency employee working with Chrysler in 2011 that used foul language and said disparaging things about the people of Detroit.<sup>5</sup> Or in 2012, when KitchenAid released a tasteless tweet about President Obama's grandmother during a presidential debate.<sup>6</sup>

### Take Action.

During a crisis, use social media to share accurate information with visitors and local businesses. When you are ready to begin communicating on social media, keep a few things in mind:

- When posting information, ensure it is fully consistent with official sources. As a situation unfolds, some items posted on social media may prove to be mere rumors or entirely false. Take care not to repost any information that has not been verified.
- Avoid reposting information from general news and media outlets unless it is verified by trusted sources (“we’re hearing reports” and “sources tell us” do not constitute valid information).
- Refrain from posting travel recommendations or attempting to forecast the outcome of the situation.
- If you receive an inquiry about the situation and the destination’s conditions, refer the person to official statements and materials.

### When to Resume Normal Communications.

This question is more art than science. **The organization can generally resume its regular social media posting when the incident is no longer a dominant topic of conversation, is no longer a prominent headline in the news cycle and adequate time has passed since the initial incident.**



## CRISIS RESPONSE TIPS

Over the years, destinations have gathered countless pieces of advice for dealing with a crisis, including these key tips:



### Consider the ripple effect.

While the CMT serves as a leader during a crisis, other staff members will necessarily be engaged in responding.

- ❓ How do you know which staff members are actually necessary?

If the answer to this question is not immediately clear to you and your team, ask:

- ❓ What are the ripple effects of the crisis?
- ❓ How has it impacted the organization?
- ❓ What departments and staff members have access to essential information that will be needed during the response?

**If you can answer these questions, knowing whom to task with various pieces of the response effort will become clear.**



### Stay on message.

Many crisis communications professionals stress the importance of coordination during any response effort. **Many DMOs host daily public relations calls, which gather all members of a particular group—for example, the PR staff of member companies and organizations—to discuss the crisis at hand and make sure everyone is aligned on messaging.**

Finding ways to stay in regular contact with local law enforcement and public officials is also good practice. Doing so will allow your organization to anticipate official statements and ensure your messaging aligns with these authorities.



### Focus on keeping visitors calm.

Ensure visitors are aware of the situation and know what to expect next. **DMOs have an obligation to tell visitors the truth about the situation, but this must be done in a level-headed manner.** Statements should be straightforward and matter-of-fact. In some cases, it may be good practice to collaborate with other organizations and agencies when developing messaging and statements.

**By collaborating, organizations can serve as a check on one another**—and make sure that neither is distracting from the overall response effort.



### Avoid the phrase “no comment.”

If the organization finds itself fielding questions it is not yet prepared to answer, the spokesperson should avoid saying “no comment.” Alternatives in this situation include:

- **“Our team has just learned of the situation, and we are trying to gather more information.** We will give you an update as soon as we have more to share.”



### Don't delay.

In some instances, organizations have delayed their response to a crisis situation, which has hurt their credibility with the public. Take, for example, credit-reporting firm Equifax, which was widely criticized for waiting six weeks to disclose a data breach to consumers that occurred in the summer of 2017.<sup>7</sup> **Given the nature of the crisis, it may not always be possible to disclose information or speak publicly immediately. But organizations should also consider the risk in waiting too long.**

# PART III: POST-CRISIS RECOVERY AND REVIEW

As the community begins to absorb the shock of a crisis in the days following the event, destinations have an opportunity to help cultivate a sense of community-wide strength and unity.

Given their distinct voice in the community, DMO leaders can help set the tone for the recovery. Destination leaders are well-positioned to send the message: **the destination is safe, businesses are open and visitors are welcome.**



# WHEN TO REENGAGE WITH THE PUBLIC: TIMING IS EVERYTHING

Many destinations will limit their public communications during a crisis, rightly deferring to public officials and law enforcement for official statements, and helping to share official information. This is a wise strategy during an initial outbreak but it should not be indefinite. Eventually, a CVB or DMO should weigh in on the situation.

**?** **But how do you know the timing is right?** How do you know it is appropriate to begin speaking publicly again?

## Here are a few ideas:



### Track the conversation on social media.

After a crisis, many will want to know how to help. Given a natural disaster, violent episode or unfortunate event, many people will turn to social media to ask how they can get involved. **This is an opportunity for the DMO to thank the public for its ongoing concern and share ways they can help**—whether by making donations, giving blood or some other form of charity.



### Don't pretend it didn't happen.

Jumping right back to business as usual will come across as detached or callous. **In many cases, crises become a part of your destination's story and a chance to emerge stronger.** Give yourself a transition period to return to your normal content, with stories, quotes and moments that inspire and remind people of why your destination is great.



### Leverage relationships.

Reaching out to your organization's members unofficially, including local business associations or colleagues in the private sector, will provide a window into the challenges they are facing and what role your organization can play in the recovery effort. **Be sure to also check in with local business leaders outside your sector** and government and emergency management officials to discuss ways you can create new partnerships to improve the overall response effort.

# WHAT TO SAY: GAUGING PUBLIC SENTIMENT AND CRAFTING THE RIGHT MESSAGE

As destinations prepare to relaunch their marketing and communications efforts, knowing what to say, how to say it, and who should say it, is critical. Depending on the crisis, some advertisements and messages may no longer be appropriate. As your team begins to consider new messaging and statements, it is important to **continue to assess the impact of the crisis and calibrate statements based on public sentiment.**

Reaching out to residents and visitors—perhaps even through surveys and message testing—can provide answers to key questions and help inform the destination’s messaging, advertising, social media and public statements in the weeks and months ahead.

**Here are some questions to consider as you reach out to the public:**

- ❓ What do customers and residents think of the destination?
- ❓ What are residents’ and visitors’ top concerns or questions?
- ❓ How has this opinion changed since the incident?
- ❓ What tone do they think local leaders should take?
- ❓ What was the customer’s/resident’s response to the crisis?
- ❓ Who is best to carry that message? Who does the public want to hear from?
- ❓ What do people know already about the crisis and what more do they want to know?
- ❓ What is the best platform to disseminate the message?

**In the wake of local crises, destinations have used answers to these questions to develop constructive ways to encourage visitors to return.**



For example, after Hurricane Irma in the fall of 2017, Miami-Dade launched a tourism campaign called “It’s Not Miami Without You” to combat the misperception that the city was still struggling to recover from the storm. Following the tragic mass shooting at a concert on the Las Vegas strip, the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority released an emotional, uplifting video narrated by tennis star Andre Agassi. The short video underscored the resilience of the city and its people.<sup>9</sup>

**While there is no one “correct” response to a crisis, engaging with residents and taking stock of their concerns and questions will go a long way** in helping the organization develop a compelling response and message that resonates with the public.

## REASSESSING AND IMPROVING THE CRISIS PLAN

Once your organization develops a crisis plan, it should not be placed on the shelf only to be pulled out again the next time the destination faces a serious incident. **A crisis plan should be a living document and updated regularly.** Following are some tips on good crisis plan maintenance.



### Review the plan frequently.

To ensure the plan stays up to date, the organization should identify a core group of staff members responsible for reviewing the plan. **The team should meet a few times a year to analyze the plan,** discuss what they have learned from recent incidents and decide what parts of the plan need to be reconsidered.



### Make sure your plan includes a comprehensive list of contact information.

A yellow circular icon with a white question mark, indicating a reflection or tip. During a crisis, did you speak to any groups or individuals that were not on your original contact list? Now is a good time to add them. Make sure you have someone on staff responsible for updating the contact list.



### Do not develop your plan in a vacuum.

No crisis plan should be developed in isolation. Countless destinations, visitor bureaus, law enforcement officials and corporations have experience developing plans. **Reach out to local partners and ask for their input and feedback on your organization's plan.** Sparking a conversation about planning will lead to greater coordination during an actual crisis.



# THE THREAT ENVIRONMENT IN THE U.S. TODAY IS CONSTANTLY CHANGING.

More than ever, destinations, businesses and public officials must consider a range of potential crises when developing their plans. Given this reality, planning for a crisis can feel like a daunting task. But it doesn't have to be.

As destination leaders, it is our job to ensure that all visitors feel safe when traveling away from home. To do this, it is imperative that we continue to assess our own crisis procedures and find ways to improve. Identifying gaps in your organization's protocols, introducing yourself to a local law enforcement official or even seeking input from other professionals in your field will enhance your response.



We hope this guidebook helps spark a productive conversation among you and your team. U.S. Travel is here to serve as a resource to you. If you would like to discuss your crisis plan with a U.S. Travel staff member, please email us at [feedback@ustravel.org](mailto:feedback@ustravel.org).

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section I: Creating Your Roster	30
Section II: Preparing and Responding	34
Section III: Recovering and Restoring	40
Appendix: Interview Best Practices	42
Appendix: 10-Minute Media Training	43
Appendix: Sample Holding Statements	44
Endnotes	45

**U.S. Travel’s crisis plan or “Red Book” follows the components outlined on the following pages. Should this template be helpful to your organization, please contact [feedback@ustravel.org](mailto:feedback@ustravel.org).**



Remember: Your crisis plan should be accessible at all times—do not put it on a server that can only be accessed in the office: instead, find a cloud-based option and save it directly to your desktop and phone. All Crisis Management Team (CMT) members should have a hard copy in case of an electronics blackout.










# SECTION I: CREATING YOUR ROSTER

*The first part of your plan should detail the employees and contractors who make up your CMT, the logistics for the crisis team and the key external contacts you need to have as a quick reference.*

## THE CRISIS MANAGEMENT TEAM









- ?** *Who is on your CMT? The CEO is an obvious choice, but often the best people for the CMT may not be the most senior. In some cases, you want the “doers” who know the social media passwords or how to publish a press release. Every organization is different, but these teams typically include these titles or representatives from the disciplines outlined below.*

### Identify CMT members and their contact info (including personal cells, home phone numbers, and emails):

	<input type="text"/>	CEO or president
	<input type="text"/>	Second-in-command
	<input type="text"/>	Legal (based on the crisis, you may not need this person in every meeting)
	<input type="text"/>	Public relations and marketing
	<input type="text"/>	Human resources (if employees are directly involved)
	<input type="text"/>	IT (website updates)
	<input type="text"/>	Front-line contacts (receptionist/visitor center representatives who may be fielding calls; lead for sales or member relationships)
	<input type="text"/>	External agency contacts, if applicable
	<input type="text"/>	Members of the convention sales and membership teams

# CRISIS MANAGEMENT TEAM LOGISTICS

## Define key responsibilities:

-  Who has decision-making authority and who is the backup should the primary decision-maker be unavailable? Are there smaller-scale decisions that other members of the CMT are entrusted with making?
-  Who is reaching out to key external contacts like law enforcement, the Emergency Management Office and local government?
-  Who is your lead spokesperson? Do you want to have additional options? (All potential spokespeople should receive media training.)
-  Who is on point for research and information gathering?
-  Who is responsible for handling social channels, website, and any advertising that needs to be paused?
-  Who is drafting your holding statement, talking points, social media posts, and any other materials you should start preparing?
-  Who is liaising with employees to ensure they are safe, their families are safe, and they are aware of the situation?
-  Who is taking notes during CMT meetings? (This may be the furthest thing from your mind at the time, but amidst chaos, it is easy to forget details and important to have someone keeping a record.)

## Set a meeting place for the CMT to convene

*When your CMT needs to get together, the office may not be an option. Before a crisis, identify physical places and ways to meet remotely in case your traditional meeting point is unavailable.*



**In the office**



**Out of the office**

(two options are recommended if accessibility is a challenge)



**Conference line number**

# TRAINING

## Employee Training

*Your employees are representatives of the organization and what they share could have an impact—positively or negatively—on your business. Having a prepared and trained workforce beyond the CMT will allow for more efficient and reliable response.*

### Compile materials for employee training

- ① Quick reference version of your crisis plan (the “Cliff’s Notes”)
- ② Tabletop exercises based on the crisis scenarios your plan has identified
- ③ Expectations of employees during a crisis (personal social media guidelines, dealing with sensitive information, etc.)

## Spokesperson Training

*The media glare is most intense in a crisis situation. Having a prepared spokesperson is vital. Formal media training is strongly recommended, but as part of the crisis plan consider including the following.*

### Compile media training materials

- ① Company mission and values (*your spokesperson should be able to recite this information—these are the talking points you can always fall back on*)
- ② Interview best practices (see appendix)
- ③ 10-minute media training Q&A (see appendix)









# CRITICAL CONTACTS

*These are the people you need to be able to reach at a moment's notice in a crisis.*

*Keep in mind, you may not be reaching out to these contacts yourself, so having up-to-date phone numbers and email addresses is important in a crisis. You want your critical contacts sheet to be at the very front of your plan so it can be accessed quickly.*

## Develop list of key contacts and who is accountable for reaching out to them.

-   Local law enforcement and government agencies
-   Area hospitals
-   FEMA
-   Fusion Center
-   International offices and foreign consulates
-   Board members and partners
-   External agencies and firms (legal, communications, marketing, etc.)
-   Support organizations and nonprofits (Red Cross, shelters, etc.)
-   Relevant elected officials



## SECTION II: PREPARING AND RESPONDING

*A prepared organization is in the best position to handle the worst. While no one can ever be fully ready for a crisis situation, having a strong foundation and practiced fundamentals will make unexpected challenges easier to handle.*

### TARGET AUDIENCES

*You don't want to forget your constituency in the midst of chaos. Identify all the audiences you may want to reach and triage them into primary, secondary and tertiary categories. Assign responsibility within the CMT for reaching each audience.*

#### **Develop list of audiences, how best to reach them (email, social media, etc.), and who is responsible for outreach.**

List of primary audiences (employees, law enforcement/government, members and partners, media, current visitors)

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List of secondary audiences (sponsors, visitors with confirmed travel plans)

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List of tertiary audiences (broader community, prospective visitors)

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# CRISIS MAPPING



**Natural disasters**



**Acts of violence/  
criminal acts**



**Public health emergency**



*What are the scenarios your organization is most likely to face? For each scenario, determine a response plan that follows the principles outlined in the next section and be prepared with the following information and materials.*



**Social unrest or protests**



**Unconfirmed threat**  
(even false alarms can be a crisis)



**Tourist accidents**



# CRISIS RESPONSE STEPS

*The steps below will help you think through what your crisis plan should include. The steps are applicable in several situations, but it is recommended that you use them to map out several scenarios so you are better prepared to respond. Each bullet represents a specific component to consider including in your own plan.*

1

## Alert the CMT to review the situation

*The first person to catch wind of a crisis situation could be scanning Twitter or taking a phone call, so be sure employees are trained on what to do if they suspect a crisis situation may be developing.*

- Key staff: any staff member can flag a potential crisis situation
- Process for alerting the CMT (this must be part of employee training)

2

## Take stock of the situation

*Bring together available members of the CMT and start gathering information.*

- Key staff: CMT
- Meeting location and conference line information for CMT
- Questions for the CMT to review may include:
  - What happened, when and where?
  - Who is involved?
  - How involved should our organization be?
  - What is the current situation and how can we be helpful?
  - Are employees or their families affected?
- Confirming the lay of the land through additional questions helps ensure your answers to the above are as reliable as possible:
  - Do we have all the facts that we need?
  - Are those facts confirmed by law enforcement, government sources or another official source?
  - If not, what were the sources of the information and is the information consistent across several sources?
  - What information are we missing?
- The CMT should come away from the meeting with an idea on what the organization's public message should be. While it can finalize an official statement later, having a message it can share with key staff and other employees can help build alignment internally.

3

## Initiate the crisis plan

*At this point, you are putting your plan in motion. Keep in mind that sometimes the best response is no response, or a wait-and-see approach. Getting multiple viewpoints from the CMT will help make a more informed decision about how to respond.*

- Key staff: CMT
- Draft meeting agenda
  - Run through confirmed information and outstanding questions
  - Discuss the organization's involvement
  - Assign staff responsibilities on next steps
  - Set next meeting or check-in of CMT

4

## Conduct internal outreach

*Your employees are your greatest asset in a crisis. Make sure everyone on the team has awareness of the current situation, where the organization stands, and what their responsibilities are.*

- Key staff functions: CMT scribe; human resources; managers
- Procedure for sharing notes from CMT meeting (share with only CMT, include additional staff, etc.)
- Outreach plan for all staff
  - Phone or text tree if email is down
  - Staff expectations (don't just relay information, be clear about what you expect them to do with it)
  - Attach crisis plan to any outreach so it is at their fingertips as a reference
- Crisis assignments, as determined by CMT and department leaders

5

## Remove or reconsider paid advertisements

*Destination marketing is almost always positive, aspirational, and fun—qualities that will feel tone deaf in a crisis scenario. Avoid becoming a victim of Twitter ire by removing any advertising that contradicts appropriate sentiment.*

- Key staff: marketing
- List of current and planned advertising (digital, TV and radio, print, out of home)
- Contacts for advertising agencies or companies who have ability to update, pause or remove ads

## CRISIS RESPONSE STEPS (CONTINUED)

6

### Update crisis communications hotlines

*If your website or emails are not working, the hotline function takes on more importance. With a small staff, a phone tree or group text is another option. Ensure all the numbers are stored in your phone.*

- Key staff: communications; human resources; receptionist
- Hotline number/email and instructions for updating the hotline
- Draft hotline message for internal and external hotline numbers and main line voicemail
- Draft text for automatic email message (response to inquiries that go to any general inboxes)

7

### Confirm website and email delivery are working

*Many of the crisis response steps are moot if your website or email are down. Ensure all channels are working properly and that the communications you are sending are being received.*

- Key staff: website lead and backup; email lead and backup
- Backup plan in the event office internet, website or email are down

8

### Review website, email and social media channel content

*Your digital profile is where most audiences will see your response first. Ensuring you have timely, appropriate content is important for your brand. Cross-training employees in these areas and ensuring passwords are accessible to more than one person is critical if the lead is unavailable.*

- Key staff: team to scan social channels for updates and new information (recommend more than one person, if possible); web update lead and backup; email update lead and backup
- Action steps for social channels
  - Pause all planned social media activity
  - Based on CMT decision, post acknowledgement message and/or re-post content from official sources
- Action steps for email
  - Verify all scheduled emails are put on hold and reviewed for content
  - Based on CMT, determine what emails should be sent as part of the audience strategy
- Action steps for website
  - Based on CMT, update homepage to reflect situation appropriately

9

## Finalize internal and external messaging

*Do not start messaging from scratch in a crisis. It is much easier to update or edit existing language, even if it is not quite right, than it is to craft something out of nothing in the chaos of the moment.*

- Key staff: CMT lead; spokespersons; communications; marketing
- Draft holding content
  - Media holding statement (see appendix)
  - Social media posts (see appendix)
  - Talking points for spokespersons
  - Website message

10

## Reach out to international offices

*Check in with international offices to see how the situation is being reported in overseas markets. Your contacts there may have advice on how best to communicate with international visitors.*

- Key staff: international sales team leads; communications
- Contact information for international destinations with which your destination has a strong relationship or with large planned delegations, or Brand USA, if applicable
- Messaging that they should share if contacted (based on what is determined above)

11

## Reassess and adjust as necessary

*After the first wave of responding to the crisis has passed, keep track of what worked, what didn't, and what wasn't worth the energy.*

- Key staff: CMT
- Gather the CMT to review the following:
  - ? What new information have we learned and how does it affect what we are doing?
  - ? What is and is not working?
  - ? Are we spending time on the things that matter?
  - ? Should we reallocate staff resources based on changing needs?
  - ? Are we being helpful or adding to noise?

12

## Establish regular check-in calls with members

*These meetings will give your organization a chance to share updated information on the crisis with local members.*

- Key staff: CMT
- This is an opportunity to share real-time updates with members and field questions
- Additionally, organizations should consider sharing regular email updates with members to shine light on the evolving situation and tourism recovery efforts

# SECTION III: RECOVERING AND RESTORING

*After a crisis situation has stabilized, it may feel like your work is done. But destinations play an essential role in the recovery and renewal of their communities. Destinations can tap into a network of visitors who know and love the area to help rebuild. From donating supplies to sharing positive messages, these highly engaged visitors are brand assets that your organization should engage.*

## Immediate Aftermath

List of local nonprofits and charitable organizations that may need volunteer or financial support (*we recommend developing these relationships in advance as part of your crisis mapping*)


### Draft a survey to assess public sentiment:

- ❓ What do customers and residents think of the destination?
- ❓ How has this opinion changed since the incident?
- ❓ What was the customer's/resident's response to the crisis?
- ❓ What do people know already about the crisis and what more do they want to know?
- ❓ What are residents' and visitors' top concerns or questions?
- ❓ What tone do they think local leaders should take?
- ❓ Who is best to carry that message? Who does the public want to hear from?
- ❓ What is the best platform to disseminate the message?



## Performance Assessment

*After the situation has been resolved and the status quo has been restored, take the time to assess, learn, and improve for the future. The steps below will help you hone a process that works for you.*

- 1** **Review your own performance and convene stakeholders** to get their feedback on your organization's response (*ensure this is an open process where people can deliver critical feedback*).

  - How well did you reach your target audiences and what could you do to get to them more effectively?
  - Did your messaging work as intended? Are there elements that were misinterpreted or that resonated well?
  - How has your brand been influenced by the crisis and did your actions improve its perception or have no effect?
- 2** **Analyze available metrics to understand how the public**—and more importantly, target audiences—engaged with your destination during the crisis.

  - Social media metrics
  - Google Analytics
- 3** **Assess media coverage, revise communications materials** in your crisis plan accordingly and run spokespersons through media training again based on what you learned.

  - What did they quote/cite of yours? Was a part of the story you wanted to tell missing? What are the opportunities to communicate better with media in the future?
- 4** **Recognize the efforts of staff** (*members of your team are likely logging long hours and going above and beyond—find a way to show appreciation and recognition of their efforts*).
- 5** **Revise the crisis plan based on experience.**

# INTERVIEW BEST PRACTICES

1

## Focus on the facts—and NEVER lie

If you know the who/what/where/when/why, you have a foundation to work from. The single-most important thing is that you are truthful in your statements. Do not speculate or make assumptions—stick to the available facts.

2

## Be up front if you do not know the answer

In a crisis situation, information is coming in rapidly and things are changing. You are not expected to be an omniscient source. You can always say, “I’m not sure, but we’ll look into it and I’ll get back to you if/when we find out.”

3

## Condense your points

Do your best to speak in soundbites of about six seconds. Use simple, concise language and avoid industry jargon.

4

## Do not fill silence

Silence during interviews is common, particularly if they are over the phone. The reporter may be taking notes or reviewing something before asking the next question. It is not your job to fill that silence. If a reporter has a follow-up question, they will ask you.

5

## Bridge to your key messages if you get stuck

You want to respond to the reporter’s question, but you can always pivot back to your key messages with simple bridging phrases like, “Your question is a good one and reminds me that...” or “The facts remain...” or “This brings me to another point...”

6

## Recognize and avoid “trick” questions

If you are given a finite choice like, “Do you agree with A or B?” you should not feel compelled to choose either answer. The answer is often neither or both, and choosing A or B leaves you in a no-win situation. Similarly, if you are asked to answer a question based on a hypothetical (“What would you do if...”), do not speculate or assume. There is no value in that for your organization. Stay rooted in facts.

7

## Say no to “no comment”

No comment reads as an admission of guilt. Briefly explain why you cannot answer the question (i.e. “the information is still developing, and we aren’t able to comment yet”) and pivot to your key message that is most relevant.

8

## Do not believe in the sanctity of “off the record”

Never assume you are off the record. There are multiple interpretations as to what “off the record” means, and it is not a formal legal protection. If you are speaking as a representative of your organization, always assume your comments will be used.

9

## Mind your tone

Tension is likely going to be high in a crisis scenario. Keep your cool and do not become confrontational.

# 10-MINUTE MEDIA TRAINING

*Use the checklist below as a quick run-through before you do an interview.*



## Check your appearance

**For television interviews, stick to solid colors and minimal jewelry.** Small patterns and stripes can “vibrate” on camera (ties especially), and jewelry can be visually distracting or make noise.



## Review your key messages

**Make sure you have your messaging and facts down cold.** That will allow you to focus on how you are delivering the messages. People tend to remember how you make them feel just as much as the actual information you share.



## Research the reporter/outlet for what they have done on the situation so far

**Go into the interview with awareness of how the reporter or outlet views the issue.**

Brainstorm a few questions you think are likely and consider how they align with your key messages. **Practice your responses with a colleague who is comfortable critiquing your performance.**



If it is a television interview with on-site media (not a remote interview), look at the interviewer (not the camera), and ensure your expression matches the subject matter. Try to avoid fidgeting and speak slowly (nerves cause faster speech).



If it is a phone interview, clear your desk of distractions. Emails popping up in your peripheral vision can cause you to lose focus.

# SAMPLE HOLDING STATEMENTS

*Use the sample holding statements below to help build versions that align with your destination. Your statement does not need to be detailed, but should convey three main points: you are aware; you are investigating; you will communicate information as you are able.*

## Media Holding Statement/Website Copy

Destination Mayberry is aware of the unfolding situation on Main Street. We extend our deepest sympathies to the family and friends of those affected by this incident.

Our staff is coordinating with local law enforcement and the mayor's office to ensure we get reliable, up-to-the-minute information. At this time, the Mayberry Sheriff's Office is leading the investigation and is the best resource for news and updates.

As the situation develops, we will relay further information as we are able and share ways the Destination Mayberry community can help.

*Note: adjust your standard boilerplate if it includes language that could come across as insensitive. For example, you would not want to say "Destination Mayberry is a fun place for families" if there is a crisis unfolding. If you are including boiler language, keep it to strict facts, like "Destination Mayberry hosts 7 million visitors from more than 30 countries annually."*

## Social Holding Statement

Destination Mayberry is aware of the unfolding situation on Main Street and we extend our deepest sympathies to those affected. The Mayberry Sheriff's Office is the best source for news and updates. Follow them @MayberrySheriff.

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