

ICG SpringLoaded

A quick guide to
**Crisis
Communications**

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Introduction

Any incident that could endanger members of the public, employees, loss of property or interruption to business operations, which will attract media interest.

Media interest can include inquiries from reporters / journalists working on newspapers, radio and TV. Also be aware that members of the public may comment, speculate, film, picture or give eye-witness accounts directly through social media - most commonly Facebook and Twitter. Members of the press can use this content.



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Top five tips to communication in a crisis


One: Information is key

Someone close to the operational response should work alongside the press team / agency to provide the latest information.

Updates should be given as soon as they are available at the early stages of a very serious incident and then in 15 to 30 minute intervals thereafter.

The person responsible for these updates should have authority to make decisions and approve written material.





Top five tips to communication in a crisis

Two: Media monitoring

Traditional media is recognised, as newspapers, radio and television - content can appear online very quickly - accompanied by social media posts.

Depending on the severity of the incident and the scope of media interest, your press team / agency should monitor media and provide regular coverage updates.

Top five tips to communication in a crisis

Three: Social Media monitoring

News now has the potential to travel faster and wider than ever before due to social media.

Depending on the nature of the crisis, normal and scheduled social media posts would be suspended until the crisis has been resolved.

It might be necessary and appropriate to 'grey out' the social media profiles to demonstrate consideration and awareness.

Your press team / agency should monitor all conversations on social media and evolve the approach and responses as information comes to light.



Top five tips to communication in a crisis

Four: Working with the media

Facilitating and carefully managing the press as much as possible during a crisis or emergency is paramount to ensuring the outcome is as positive as possible.

Your press team / agency should work closely with the media to manage their requests safely and appropriately.

In some situations, it might be necessary to establish a media area or hold a press conference, venues for different situations should be planned in advance.



Top five tips to communication in a crisis

Five: Looking after the media

Your press team / agency should have built great links with the press and these relationships will help when it comes to reporting during times of crisis.

If the press feels comfortable that they are getting the information they need, and that information is truthful and timely, they are much more likely to take your lead.



Do's and Don'ts in a crisis

Do in a crisis

- ✓ Do ensure the safety of people on site and then contact your press team / agency as soon as possible
- ✓ Do make sure that when talking on any radio system that members of the public (who could also be members of the press) cannot hear details of the conversation
- ✓ Do ensure your wider team does not use any social media to comment on the situation - this applies to both during and after an emergency
- ✓ Do direct any media to your press team / agency or take their contact details and pass them on
- ✓ Be aware the media will talk to the emergency services, if relevant, including, fire, ambulance and police. Your PR team should have longstanding relationships with the press departments at the emergency services and a coordinated response is standard practice

Do's and Don'ts in a crisis

Don't in a crisis

- X** Don't give any details of the incident to any member of the media and ensure other members of staff do the same
- X** Don't immediately assume a defensive stance if the press or members of the public make a negative assumption
- X** Don't speculate in public or in the media or any communication or radio systems you may use about unknown facts
- X** Don't say 'no comment' - it implies guilt and is often just as bad as saying nothing at all
- X** Don't assume that the media is the enemy - they really aren't

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For more information about how
ICG can help with your crisis response
please drop me an email.

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