

## **YMCA Crisis Communication Plan**

At the YMCA we acknowledge that not all risks have the possibility to be crises. However, since crises have the potential to create negative outcomes by disrupting everyday business, we have taken the time to separate minor risks or minor localized disruptions from crisis-producing risks. We have learned that it is the perception of stakeholders that helps define an event as a crisis. Based on this knowledge, we have identified sources for warning signs, collect information related to them, and subsequently analyze the information. After a careful risk assessment we have identified risk factors or weaknesses that could escalate into a crisis situation. Below is the list of possible sources of crises:

- Hostage Situation
- Death in Facility
- Loss of Member Private Information
- Child Abuse Allegations
- Change in Childcare Legislation
- Embezzlement by Senior Staff
- Facility Bombing

We contend that crisis management is important to our organization because it can protect lives, health, and the environment. It can also reduce the crisis life cycle, prevent loss of revenue, limit the reputation damage, and save money. Prevention is the ultimate key to crisis management. But, in the event that any of the aforementioned crises were to arise, the YMCA will follow written communications procedures as outlined in the Crisis Communication Plan.

What makes our communication plan so unique is that we've developed a forward thinking mode. We are constantly planning for the unthinkable by coming out with the most outrageous possibilities and then we refute it. Let's never forget that prevention is not about preventing the incident but preventing the crisis to our organization. When developing our communication plan we've strived to keep it simple, and put people before business. We are ready to manage the message so others don't tell the story for

us (we know we have a extremely small window in which to take control of the narrative). Our goal is to return to business as usual as soon as possible because we are judged by our immediate response.

The essential role of our crisis communication plan is to affect the public opinion process and to be instrumental in establishing and communicating proof that the prevailing truth is not factual or not wholly factual.

We've determined that if the onset of the crisis occurs after office hours, telephone trees have been organized so that each manager is notified, and the manager telephones some employees and they telephone other. Also, we have set up a mass notification system through an automated messaging system that send a message by phone, text message, e-mail, or a combination of these to a preset list of employees. The message is short and it tells them where to go to find additional information, such as phone number to call or internal Intranet site to visit.

As a crisis develops, we will make every effort to keep our employee public apprised of what is occurring at every step. We are set up to use our Intranet to post crisis updates. Since every crisis is different, the communication channel to be used will be based on the type of crisis the organization is facing. A dark site is being developed by IT and it will be activated during a crisis to post updated information of what's happening.

As a corporation, YMCA is aware that it is not immune to crises. In fact, as managers, we are certain that some crises will come with little or no warning, others will offer a great deal of warning. At any rate, we strongly believe we need to be ready to handle crises and lessen the negative impact of it and thereby protect our organization.