

CRISIS COMMUNICATION PLAN

For

**THE TOWN OF STEPHENVILLE
AND ASSOCIATED BAY ST. GEORGE
COMMUNITIES**

January 2014

1. INTRODUCTION	
1.1 Purpose.....	4
1.2 Objective	4
1.3 Use.....	4
1.4 Notification	4
1.5 Crisis Communication Policy.....	4
1.6 Crisis Communication Principles.....	5
2. AUDIENCES	
2.1 General	6
2.2 Internal Audiences	6
2.3 External Audiences.....	6
2.4 General Audience Information Needs	6
2.5 Specific Audience Information Needs	7
3. MEDIA RELATIONS	
3.1 Media Relations Policy.....	8
3.2 Media Relations Guidelines.....	9
3.3 Communications Support	9
3.4 Preparing for a Media Interview.....	10
3.5 Media Contact List	10
4. KEY MESSAGING	
4.1 General Overview	10
4.2 Key Messages.....	10
4.3 Sample Messages.....	11
4.4 Sample News Release.....	12
5. POTENTIAL ISSUES	
5.1 Potential Disasters	12
5.2 Potential Issues	13
6. CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM	
6.1 Purpose.....	13
6.2 Levels of Response	13
6.3 Set Up for Level III Crisis	14
7. SPECIFIC FUNCTIONS	
7.1 Crisis Communication Team	15
7.2 Emergency Operations Center	15
7.3 Site.....	16
7.4 Media Center.....	18
7.5 Call Center.....	19

8. CONTACT LOG	
8.1 Purpose.....	20
8.2 Sample Contact Log.....	21
9. START-UP CHECKLIST OF CONSIDERATIONS	
9.1 Communications Coordinator Start-Up Checklist	21
9.2 Site Information Officer Start-Up Checklist.....	23
9.3 Media Center Team Leader Start-Up Checklist.....	25
9.4 Call Center Team Leader Start-Up Checklist	28
10. POST CRISIS REVIEW	
10.1 Steps to Consider	29
10.2 Post-Crisis Communication Plan Evaluation Form	30
11. CRISIS COMMUNICATION PLAN REVIEW CHART	
11.1 Review Chart.....	30
APPENDIX “A” MEDIA CONTACT LIST	
.....	31
APPENDIX “B” CALL CENTER LOG FORM	
.....	32
APPENDIX “C” CONTACT LOG	
.....	33
APPENDIX “D” POST-CRISIS COMMUNICATION PLAN EVALUATION FORM	
.....	34

Section 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

This plan will ensure the Town of Stephenville and associated Bay St. George Communities has adequate resources in place to quickly and effectively meet the information needs of internal and external audiences in a crisis.

1.2 Objective

- a) To factually assess the situation and determine whether a communications response is warranted.
- b) To assemble a Crisis Communication Team that will make recommendations on appropriate responses.
- c) To implement immediate action to:
 - Identify those parties that should be informed about the situation.
 - Communicate facts about the crisis.
 - Minimize rumours.
 - Restore order and/or confidence.

1.3 Use

This plan is in support of the Town of Stephenville and associated Bay St. George Communities Emergency Plan, and will be used when the Town needs to respond to the information needs and concerns of their stakeholders in a crisis. At all times the crisis communications team will support emergency operations and take a pro-active role with regard to internal and external communications; including public and media relations.

1.4 Notification

When notification of a crisis has occurred, the Mayor in conjunction with the town manager will immediately contact the Communications Coordinator to jointly establish the level of communications support that may be required to assist operations.

1.5 Crisis Communication Policy

1. All crises should be reported to the Mayor and Town Manager immediately.
2. Only the chief spokesperson and back-up spokespeople are authorized to release information to the media and to the public.

3. There should be one designated crisis management lead person, directing and coordinating all aspects of the town's response, including managing the messages and the media. There should also be one designated spokesperson who actually interacts with the media and other inquirers. In some cases, particularly in the event of a "small crisis", the two may be the same person.

4. All comments should be guided by professionalism and transparency, and serve to mitigate the crisis while reinforcing the leadership of the Town of Stephenville and associated Bay St. George Communities

5. "No comment" is never an acceptable response. If an answer is unknown or cannot be immediately answered, make note of the questions, tell the inquirer you will get back with him/her and do so. If the question cannot be answered due to a policy (such as sharing personnel information, etc.) let the inquirer know that.

6. Personnel matters are to remain confidential.

7. When possible, responses should be proactive, responsive, and action-oriented.

8. The Town of Stephenville and associated Bay St. George Communities recognizes the importance of media relations to public trust. In times of crisis, maintaining effective media relationships will be particularly critical in bolstering public confidence in the accounting community as a whole.

1.6 Crisis Communications Principles

- Appoint a spokesperson. The presence of the Mayor/Manager or their designate is an important symbol of leadership and management -- choose when to speak out.
- Express empathy.
- Act quickly, truthfully, responsibly and thoughtfully.
- Show willingness to cooperate.
- Meet the needs of the media -- be available 24 hours if necessary.
- Focus on opportunities the crisis may present -- demonstrate the community's leadership with honesty and ardent assistance.
- Recognize the efforts of those who have responded.
- Follow up when the crisis is over:
 - ✓ Reassure your stakeholders that the Town is a caring and efficient organization.
 - ✓ Get input on what went well, and what could be improved.
 - ✓ Stay positive.
 - ✓ Unite the community.

- ✓ State what went well, and where improvements will be made -- and when.
- ✓ Say thank you to everyone involved.
- ✓ Follow up when improvements have been implemented.

Section 2 AUDIENCES

2.1 General

At all times open lines of communication will be established with internal and external audiences. The type and severity of the crisis will determine which stakeholder audiences are involved.

2.2 Internal Audiences

- Emergency operations personnel.
- First responders.
- Mayor and Council.
- Town staff and contractors.

2.3 External Audiences

- Family members of Town staff.
- Neighboring communities.
- Emergency response and recovery stakeholders (i.e., industry, Canadian Red Cross, regional health care authority, school board(s), airport authority, provincial emergency preparedness organization, other provincial/federal agencies).
- Media.
- General public.
- People directly impacted by the crisis.
- Special interest groups.

2.4 General Audience Information Needs

At the onset of a crisis the following information will need to be communicated to all audiences:

- An incident has occurred.
- Nature, location and time of incident.
- Status of public safety.
- Actions to be taken.
- Actions being taken to manage the crisis.
- How and when further information will be available.
- Where to go for further information.

2.5 Specific Information Needs

In addition to the information needs of all audiences listed in Section 2.4, audiences will require personalized messages as follows:

Audience	Responsibility	Information Needs
Mayor and Council	Communications Coordinator (through the crisis communications team)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential issues that may arise. • Potential media and public interest. • Media and public activities. • Communications strategies and key messages
Stakeholder Communicators (i.e., police, industry, government)	Communications Coordinator (through the crisis communications team)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community's role/responsibility in the crisis. • Potential issues that may impact their organization/clients. • Potential media and public interest. • Key messages & communications strategies. • Potential joint communications strategies. • Immediate or potential support/action required.
Staff	Communications Coordinator (through the crisis communication team)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on staff. • Actions staff must take. • Support required. • Impact on operations.
People directly impacted	Communications Coordinator (through the crisis communications team)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How they can get help. • How they can help themselves. • Safety precautions to take.
Family of people directly impacted	Communications Coordinator (through the Call Center if established)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status of family members. • How they can contact a family members. • Actions they should take. • Reassurances on issues with regard the safety and well being of family members and others who have been impacted.
Media	Communications Coordinator (through the spokesperson and crisis communications team)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How they can help emergency operations. • Safety precautions/actions the public needs to take. • How their information, interviews and picture needs will be met.
General public	Communications Coordinator (through the crisis communications team)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety precautions to take. • How they can help emergency response:

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ stay away from the area impacted. ➤ stay off the phone – keep roads and phone lines available for emergency use. ➤ remain calm. ➤ stay tuned to local media for further information.
--	--	---

Section 3 MEDIA RELATIONS

3.1 Media Relations Policy

At the onset of a crisis, the Mayor will act as the official spokesperson for the community. The official spokesperson will be the only person to speak on the community's overall crisis response and recovery efforts, political, strategic operational decisions and policy issues.

The Mayor, in conjunction with the Town Manager and the Communications Coordinator, will assign key operational personnel to support the spokesperson and speak about matters within their area of expertise. Staff should refrain from speaking to the media on political, strategic operational decisions or policy issues.

In their official emergency response capacity, Town of Stephenville and the associated Bay St. George employees with an emergency response or recovery role (i.e. Fire Chief or designate) may agree to be interviewed by the media provided they only speak about matters within their area of responsibility. At no time should these people speak to the media on political, strategic operational decisions or policy issues.

The Town of Stephenville and the associated Bay St. George employees, who don't have a role in emergency response or recovery efforts, should not speak to the media about the emergency unless they have received clearance through the Communications Coordinator.

Response Personnel...

- May seek advice in advance from the Communications Coordinator if desired or feasible.
- May respond or refer the information request to their superior or the Communications Coordinator.
- Must refer questions that fall outside of their personal experience or expertise to their supervisor, or the Communications Coordinator.

- Must inform the Communications Coordinator of the interview, and questions that fell outside of their area of expertise.
- Must ensure the accuracy of any information provided.
- Must ensure interviews are on the record and for attribution by name/title unless otherwise authorized.
- Must inform the Communications Coordinator of the results of the interview and any speculative questions.

3.2 Media Relations Guidelines

When dealing with the media in an official capacity...

Never

- Respond to media inquiries that fall outside personal experience or expertise, unless otherwise approved.
- Undermine the safety of response personnel or the success of response and recovery operations.
- Speculate about events, incidents, issues or future policy decisions.
- Offer personal opinions.
- Discuss advice given to superiors.

Always

- Seek advice and support from the Communications Coordinator when desired or when in doubt about how to respond.
- Agree to be interviewed only if you personally want to do it.
- Respect the principal of security, policy, the judicial process and laws governing the disclosure of information.

3.3 Communications Support

The Communications Coordinator will support media relations activities as follows:

- Manage and coordinate requests for media interviews.
- Deliver key messages and provide updates to the media.
- Set up media interviews and news briefings with spokesperson/area experts.
- Work with response agencies that have a need to release information to the media about the crisis -- research their position, what they are saying and how joint communication efforts can be managed.
- Brief and prepare personnel for media interviews/briefings.
- Prepare and distribute key messages and communication pieces.

3.4 Preparing for Media Interviews

When possible and appropriate, the Communications Coordinator will prepare Town of Stephenville and the associated Bay St. George personnel for media interviews/briefings as follows:

- Situation update.
- Needs of reporter(s) – story angle, type of reporter, reporter's attitude, questions likely to be asked, other organizations or people the reporter will be interviewing.
- Public's attitudes (general public, stakeholder organizations, special interest groups).
- Potentially tough questions or issues that might come up.
- Key messages.
- Issues to avoid.
- Interview or briefing logistics (time, location, format, and time limit).

3.5 Media Contact List

Refer to Appendix "A"

Section 4 KEY MESSAGEING

4.1 General Overview

Key messages will help the Town of Stephenville and the associated Bay St. George communities effectively communicate to all audiences. Although key messages will change and evolve throughout emergency response and recovery operations, the messages should include:

- The Town's agenda and priorities.
- Fact about what went well.
- Facts that refute negatives.
- Facts that support the Town's story.
- Public Info/ Directives.

4.2 Key Messages

The Crisis Communications Team will develop factual, responsive messages to be used by the Town of Stephenville and the associated Bay St. George communities. Since time is critical in a crisis, you should develop prepared statements and press materials in advance where you can quickly insert the key facts gathered, and share immediately when knowledge about the crisis becomes widely known. As the crisis evolves, you will need to change your

messaging to continually keep your key audiences informed. These messages would include:

- A message of empathy for the impact the crisis has on people or the environment. (This does not mean the Town is taking responsibility for the incident – only showing compassion toward those who have been impacted).
- The Town's first priority is for public safety (include other priorities such as environmental impact).
- We are working cooperatively with partner response agencies (name agencies) to effectively manage the crisis and minimize its impact on people, the environment and our community as a whole.
- Include a message about what is being done to manage the situation.

4.3 Sample Messages

- The Town of Stephenville and the associated Bay St. George communities has an effective emergency response system in place. We have well-trained personnel who have practiced and tested the rollout of the emergency response plan. Our personnel are now doing what they have been trained to do. Everything that can be done will be done.
- An incident like today's affects every member of our staff and our community. On behalf of the Town of Stephenville and the associated Bay St. George communities, I want to express the sincere concern (use words that fit the situation) we're all feeling for what has happened in our community today. We are taking this incident very seriously. We have an effective emergency response system in place, and trained personnel who are working closely with external agencies to minimize the impact of this incident. Please be assured that we are doing everything possible to manage this incident and all its implications.
- First responders are currently evaluating the situation and dealing with the priorities of the incident. Specific details are not yet known or confirmed for release. The community's first concern is for the safety and well being of our first responders, our staff and the general public. We are working with other response agencies to manage the situation and minimize the impact it has on people and the community as a whole.
- The Town of Stephenville and the associated Bay St. George communities is taking a proactive role with regard to the release of information. New information will be released to all interested parties when it becomes available.

Additional messages that:

- Support what is being done to manage the crisis.
- Support what was done in advance of the crisis to reduce its occurrence and impact.
- Reassure the public and help reduce their emotional reaction to the crisis.

- Contain safety information.
- Help emergency response personnel do their job.

4.4 Sample News Release

A (what happened) at (location) involving (who) occurred today at (time). The incident is under investigation and more information is forthcoming.

For instance:

An explosion at 129 Market Street, the main plant for the Acme Toy Company occurred today at 3 p.m. The incident is under investigation and more information is forthcoming.

You could put down a definitive time for the next news conference or release of information if you know it but it is not necessary. You could also add information if it is available such as how many casualty's there are known up to this point or any other pertinent information available. Once again, this information should be definitive and not speculative, verify everything you say. This will help your credibility in the long run.

SECTION 5 POTENTIAL ISSUES

5.1 Potential Disasters

Blizzard or Massive Storm
 Electric Power Black-out
 Flash Flood
 Freezing Ice Storm
 Major Water Main Break
 Plane Crash in Community
 River Flood
 Major Fire
 Transportation- Water/Road
 Blizzard or Massive Storm
 Electric Power Black-out
 Flash Flood
 Freezing Ice Storm
 Major Water Main Break
 Plane Crash in Community
 River Flood
 Major Fire
 Transportation- Water/Road
 Major Frost and Freeze
 Oil Spill

Dangerous Commodities Accident
 Forest or Bush Fire
 Water Shortage
 Water Pollution
 Major Hail Storm
 Blizzard or Massive Storm
 Electric Power Black-out
 Flash Flood
 Freezing Ice Storm
 Major Water Main Break
 Plane Crash in Community
 River Flood
 Major Fire
 Transportation- Water/Road
 Major Frost and Freeze
 Oil Spill
 Dangerous Commodities Accident
 Forest or Bush Fire
 Water Shortage
 Water Pollution

Major Hail Storm
Explosion
Construction

Mine Disaster
Earthquake

5.2 Potential Issues

- Lack of resources/ too many resources (contracted personnel may be needed)
- Staff overloaded (Reception, Public Works)
- Psychological affects on Staff /Community
- Legal action against Town for loss of business, injury or property damage
- Public or community associations' criticism regarding emergency services or Town's response - (not enough action / too much action)
- Proper Emergency Management protocol not followed
- Non Governmental Organization and activists protest

SECTION 6 CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM

6.1 Purpose

- Internal communications.
- External stakeholder notification and coordination.
- Media relations.
- Public notification and inquiry.
- Issues management.
- Media monitoring.
- Maintaining accurate (Communications) records.

6.2 Levels of Communications Response

At the onset of the crisis, the Mayor, in conjunction with the Town Manager and the Communications Coordinator, will determine the potential level of public and media interest in the crisis. At this time, the Communications Coordinator will determine what resources will be required to effectively manage communication issues.

The set up of the crisis communications team will depend on the scale of the crisis, and the anticipated level of public concern and media interest. Only those resources that are needed to effectively respond to the incident will be brought in. All key components of the crisis communications system will need to be implemented in a Level III crisis, where public concern and media interest is extremely high. Additional Communications resources may be necessary to properly manage a crisis (i.e. other municipalities, regions, or contracted agency or services).

Level I

An incident has occurred that does not pose a threat to public safety or the reputation of the community; its elected officials, administration or emergency response personnel.

- Communications needs are on an internal basis.
- There is little or no interest from the public or media.
- The Communications/Marketing Coordinator can manage all internal and external information requests or notifications.

Level II

An incident has occurred that may potentially impact or pose a threat to public safety or the reputation of the community; its elected officials, administration or emergency response personnel.

- There is a threat to public safety.
- A serious injury or fatality has occurred.
- There is a threat or minor disruption to the public or a sector of the public.
- There is moderate interest or concern from the media, general public or other audiences.
- External stakeholder audiences are involved and there is some local or political involvement.
- There may be a question with regard to the community's liability.

Level III

An incident has resulted in multiple injuries or fatalities and has the potential to threaten the community or the reputation of elected officials, administration and emergency response personnel on many levels.

- There is a serious threat to public safety.
- Multiple injuries or fatalities have occurred.
- There is serious economical threat to the community.
- There is high interest from the public, media and many other audiences.
- All levels of political involvement are high.
- The Town's performance or reputation may be in question.

6.3 Level III Set Up

In a Level III crisis, members of the crisis communications team may be required to staff the following key areas:

- Emergency Operations Center
- Site
- Media Center
- Call Center

Additional Communications resources may be necessary to properly manage a level III crisis (i.e. other municipalities, regions, or contracted agency or services).

SECTION 7 SPECIFIC FUNTIONS

7.1 Crisis Communication Team

The Crisis Communication team shall consist of the following:

- i. Chief Administrative Officer – Mayor (Spokeperson)
- ii. Incident Commander - Town Manager
- iii. Site Information Officer – Usually Emergency Services Communications Staff i.e. Police Info Officer
- iv. Communications Coordinator
- v. Media Center Team Leader
- vi. Call Center Team Leader

7.2 Emergency Operations Center

All communication operations will be controlled and coordinated from the Emergency Operations Center, which is located at 125 Carolina Avenue, Stephenville. Which will also Include the media center and the call center.

Staffing

Communications Coordinator and the Crisis Communications Team

Reporting

The Communications Coordinator will report to the Chief Administrative Officer (Mayor) and the Incident Commander (Town Manager), and work closely with all members of the Emergency Response Team and Crisis Communication Team

Communications Coordinator Function

- Manage all communications and reputation management for the community.
- Provide communications support and counsel to the emergency operations team, Mayor, Council and Municipal Control Group.

Communication Coordinator Responsibilities

- Manage all media relations and communications activities.
- Establish open lines of communication and establish coordinated communications strategies with key internal and external stakeholders.
- Gather and assign resources needed to effectively manage the information needs of the crisis.
- Develop and manage the rollout of communications strategies.
- Phase down or implement communications systems and tools as required.
- In support of operations, gather, target, prepare and distribute information to target all audiences.
- Brief and prepare spokespersons.
- Brief media.

- Coordinate and facilitate media briefings and interviews.
- Establish a media monitoring system.
- Correct misinformation and deal with issues as required.
- Coordinate arrangements for VIP visits. (with Mayor's Office Staff)
- Maintain adequate communications records.
- Participate in post-incident debriefings.
- Prepare post-incident communications report.

Emergency Operations Center - Equipment and Supplies for Communications

- 1 laptop computer (with spare batteries)
- 1 Printer
- 1 Fax
- Access to photocopier
- 2 telephones (land-line)
- 2 cellular telephones (spare battery and charger)
- 1 workstation
- Office supplies (binder, paper, pens, pencils, highlighters, stapler, staples, etc.)
- Maps
- Town of Stephenville and associated Bay St. George Communities Emergency Plan
- Town of Stephenville and associated Bay St. George Communities Crisis Communications Plan

7.3 Site

The location of the incident or where media/public interest is high.

Contact

Via cellular phone, two-way radio, fax or e-mail.

Staffing

- Site Information Officer - usually Emergency Services Communications Staff – i.e. Police Info Officer
- If the Emergency Operations Center is operating – Communications Coordinator is at EOC

NOTE: In some cases, a Town designated Media Relations Officer may be required to be on-site to liaise with the Site Information Officer, relaying pertinent information back to the Communications Coordinator in the EOC and deal with site media issues.

Reporting

When media relations support is required at an incident site, the Site Information Officer, or designate, will report to the Incident Commander and work closely with all emergency responders.

Site Information Officer Function

Provide overall media relations' support to first responders at the incident site, and the Communications Coordinator if the Emergency Operations Center is open.

Site Information Officer Responsibilities

- Brief and update media.
- Set up and facilitate media briefings and interviews with first responders.
- In consultation with the Incident Commander and the Communications Coordinator, facilitate the media's needs (i.e., photo opportunities, interviews, logistical support, etc.)
- Update Communications Coordinator on:
 - ✓ media activities
 - ✓ trends in media inquiries or concerns
 - ✓ confirmed information that may be of public or operational interest
 - ✓ critical activities or decisions made at site that may impact communications strategies or key messages
 - ✓ communications support that may be required at site
- Provide media with accreditation.
- Correct misinformation reported by the media.
- Provide input into post-incident communications report.

Site Equipment and Supplies

- Cellular telephone, spare battery and charger
- Access to a remote fax and photocopier through the Command Post Vehicle
- Access to a laptop with email and printing capabilities
- Access a satellite telephones if the cellular network is busy or down (may be obtained through provincial or federal emergency measures organizations)
- Tape recorder, tapes
- PA system, loud-hailer
- Two-way radio system (to communication with the Communications Coordinator in the Emergency Operations Center)
- Maps
- Clipboards, paper, pens, pencils
- Access to tables, chairs, tent/cover, washroom facilities (for site personnel and the media)
- Flashlight and batteries
- Faxed or emailed copies of public information that has been issued

- Town of Stephenville and associated Bay St. George Communities Crisis Communications Plan

7.4 Media Center (If Necessary)

If the Crisis Communications Team determines a Media Center needs to be established, the Media Center Team Leader will staff, set up and manage the center. The Team Leader will report to the Communications Coordinator and will also work closely with the Call Center Team Leader if/when one has been established. The media center will be located in the Emergency Operations Center, which is located at 125 Carolina Avenue, Stephenville.

Media Center Team Leader Function

Provide overall media relations support by ensuring:

- Pertinent information is distributed to internal and external audiences (i.e., news releases, media notices, backgrounders).
- The logistical and briefing needs of the media and spokespersons are met.
- Calls from the media are managed.

Media Center Team Leader Responsibilities

- Room set up and management.
- Brief media on how issues in the Media Center will be managed.
- Respond to media telephone inquiries -- deliver key messages and updates as required. Forward interview requests to the Communications/Marketing Coordinator.
- Direct the media to the appropriate person or external agency that can manage their inquiry.
- In conjunction with the Communications/Marketing Coordinator:
 - ✓ set up media interviews and news briefings.
 - ✓ develop and distribute communication pieces through (i.e., email, web site, voicemail broadcast, Intranet (once established), fax).
- Set up two-way communications link with the Communications Coordinator and the Call Center Team Leader.
- Update Communications Coordinator on:
 - ✓ media activities
 - ✓ trends in public and media inquiries or concerns.
 - ✓ information that may impact operations, communications strategies or key messages
 - ✓ support that may be required.
- Provide strategic communications counsel to the Communications Coordinator as required.

- If requested by the Communications Coordinator, establish a media monitoring system and correct misinformation reported by the media. Report misinformation to the Communications Coordinator and the Team Leader, Call Center.
- Set up and facilitate news briefings as requested by the Communications Coordinator or designate.
- Distribute information released in news conferences to the Communications Coordinator and the Call Center Team Leader.
- Help the media with their technical, logistical and comfort requirements (i.e., washroom facilities, food and beverages).
- Maintain accurate records.

Media Center Equipment and Supplies

- telephones, computers and workstations
- laptop computer(s) with batteries, Internet
- cellular telephones, spare batteries and chargers
- 1 photocopier, 1 fax
- printer(s)
- TV/DVD, AM/FM radio.
- Maps
- Office supplies (binder, paper, pens, pencils, highlighters, markers, stapler, staples, copy paper, etc.)
- Media contact list
- Town of Stephenville and associated Bay St. George Communities Crisis Communications Plan

7.5 Call Center (If Necessary)

When a large volume of calls from the public is expected, the Communications Coordinator will ask the Call Center Team Leader to staff, set up and manage the center. The Team Leader will report to the Communications Coordinator and work closely with the Media Center Team Leader. The call center will be located in the Emergency Operations Center, which is located at 125 Carolina Avenue, Stephenville.

It is important to keep a written copy of all phone calls made to the Call Center using a Call Center Log Form. Refer to Appendix "B" for a sample form.

Call Center Team Leader - Function

Respond, research, re-direct, and return calls from the public.

Call Center Team Leader - Responsibilities

- Room set up and management.
- As instructed by Communications Coordinator, make telephone calls to those who have been directly impacted by the crisis.

- Respond to telephone inquiries -- deliver key messages and updated information that is authorized for release.
- Provide comfort and reassurance to callers -- especially to those in distress.
- Research inquiries that fall within the community's responsibility.
- Return calls.
- Ensure life-threatening calls are quickly passed to the appropriate response agency.
- Re-direct callers to the appropriate contact/organization as required.
- Keep Media Center Team Leader briefed on all trends in public inquiries, activities or developments that may impact communications strategies or key messages.
- Record all calls.
- Provide input into the post-incident communications report.

Call Center Equipment and Supplies

- 2 independent telephones (one for the Team Leader and one for outgoing calls only)
- 6 telephones set up to call forward to the next telephone if the line is busy or there is no answer.
- computers with Internet and email capabilities
- 1 cellular telephone with a spare battery and charger
- 1 printer
- 1 fax
- 1 photocopier
- TV/DVD, AM/FM radio
- Large community map
- Copies of key messages, news release, media advisories, maps and any other material that has been released
- Office supplies (binders, permanent markers, erasable markers, pens, paper, staplers, staples, file folders, highlighters, tacks, masking tape)
- Access to counsel or stress de-briefings
- Town of Stephenville and associated Bay St. George Communities Crisis Communications Plan

SECTION 8 CONTACT LOG

8.1 Purpose

A log should be established to record all telephone calls from the media, public, or other parties inquiring about the crisis. This will help to ensure that the many callbacks required are not overlooked. It will also assist in the post-crisis analysis.

The contact log should contain the following information:

Date | Name, Title, Company and Telephone number of caller | Questions(s) asked | Person responsible for response | Additional follow-up needs

8.2 Sample Contact log

Refer to Appendix "C"

SECTION 9 START-UP CHECKLIST OF CONSIDERATIONS

9.1 Communications Coordinator Start-up Checklist

Upon Notification

- Receive briefing from Chief Administrative Officer on the following:
 - Summary of incident.
 - Key messages.
 - Level of public and media interest anticipated.
 - Information the media may want.
 - Location of incident.
 - How you or the Site Information Officer(s) can gain access to the site(s).
 - How lines of communication will be maintained with the (Chief Administrative Officer). Is the Emergency Operations Center being established? Exchange contact information (voice, cell).
- Discuss the following with the Chief Administrative Officer:
 - Level of crisis -- expected level of public and media interest.
 - Communications support required.
 - Communication strategies. Examples:
 - ✓ internal communications issues
 - ✓ spokesperson
 - ✓ set up of the Call Center/Media Center
 - ✓ media relations support needed at the site
 - ✓ security issues around the public and media
 - ✓ approximate time and location of first media briefing
 - ✓ key messages
 - ✓ where media should park
 - ✓ potential issues that may surface
- Gather and assign staffing resources needed to meet the anticipated level of public and media interest. Brief key players on the situation and establish contact information (voice, cell, fax, email and radio frequency if applicable). Delegate responsibilities as required. Potential staffing components include:

- ✓ Emergency Operations Center
 - ✓ Site
 - ✓ Media Center
 - ✓ Call Center
- Determine how long it will be before the key operational components of the crisis communications system are established.
 - Report to the Emergency Operations Center.

Upon Arrival at Emergency Operations Center and ongoing:

- Receive second briefing from the Chief Administrative Officer. Determine what's new, when the first media briefing can be held and who will be attending.
- Prepare key messages
- Brief spokesperson
- Distribute key messages and open lines of communication with key internal, and external audiences
- Develop communications strategies with external audiences that have a role in response operations. Determine their role, explain your role, and what potential support you may require. Determine joint communications strategies and share key messages.
- Call in or put outside resources on stand-by as required.
- Disclose facts immediately
- Get updates from members of the Emergency Operations Center and the Site Information Officer.
- Confirm with the Chief Administrative Officer, Spokesperson and/or Site Information Officer about the logistics of the first media briefing at site or in the Media Center. Ensure media notices are issued within a reasonable time period so media have time to arrive.
- Before issuing external communication pieces, ensure all members of the crisis communications team are set up and ready to assume their responsibilities. While they set up, prepare communication pieces for distribution. Have the Chief Administrative Officer approve all information before it's released.
 - Internal Information Bulletin.

- News Release.
- Media Notice.
- Determine if additional communications support is required at site or the Media Center. Access security resources through the Emergency Operations Center.
- Work with the Site Information Officer to decide how media relations' issues will be managed at the site.
- Maintain a record of contact information for internal and external stakeholders that need to be kept informed.
- Establish media monitoring services.
- Determine media monitoring reporting requirements (i.e., hourly, daily).
- Receive updates and keep lines of communication open with the Site Information Officer, Team Leader, Media Center and other key internal/external stakeholders.
- Prepare or delegate the preparation of media notices, media backgrounders and news releases.
- Monitor media reports and determine strategies for dealing with contentious issues that may surface in the response or recovery phase of the crisis.
- Think about the next shift. Put staffing resources on stand-by.
- Think about what's next (Joint news releases/briefings on recovery issues, etc.).

9.2 Site Information Officer Start-up Checklist

Upon Notification

- Receive briefing from the Communications Coordinator on the following:
 - Summary of incident.
 - Key messages.
 - Communications strategy.
 - Level of media interest anticipated.
 - Information the media may want.
 - Location of the site.
 - How your access to the site can be obtained.

- Name of Incident Commander if known.
- How lines of communication will be maintained with Communications Coordinator – exchange contact information (radio frequency, cell phone, fax, email).
- How you and the media can access copies of news releases and other information being released. Determine fax, email capabilities at site.
- Discuss the following with the Communications Coordinator with regard to the media:
 - Security issues at site.
 - Parking and access issues
 - Approximate time to target for the first media briefing.
 - Key messages.
 - Site spokesperson.
 - Potential issues that may surface.

Upon arrival and ongoing:

- Introduce yourself to the Incident Commander and confirm the following:
 - Your role -- how you can help them.
 - How media interviews and need for pictures will be managed in a safe and non-intrusive manner. Respect the media's need to get pictures and interviews at the site. Look after the people who have been impacted by the crisis. If the media want to interview people who have been impacted set up the interview with someone who wants to talk to them -- brief this person prior to the interview. Think about pooling reporters if safety and mass media issues become a problem.
 - Emergency responders that can be available to do media interviews.
 - New information.
 - Key messages.
 - If additional media relations support is required.
 - If additional security is required for media at the site.
- Brief media with information that has been authorized for release -- deliver the key messages and helpful messages or directives (i.e., road closures, stay clear from the area).
- Advise the media:
 - Where to gather and WHY.
 - Areas to avoid and WHY.
 - How information needs, interviews, briefings and photo opportunities will be managed and WHY.

- If the above information is not available when the media first arrive, work out the details with the Incident Commander and then advise the media - **FIRST TELL THE MEDIA THAT YOU ARE GOING TO DO THIS.**
- Ask the media what their needs are.
- On a consistent basis, update or consult with the Communications Coordinator on media relations' activities and other pertinent information that may impact communications strategies or key messages.
- Establish regular media briefing times at the site.
- Request additional support from the Communications Coordinator as required.

9.3 Media Center Team Leader Start-up Checklist

Upon Notification:

- Receive initial briefing from Communications Coordinator on the following:
 - Summary of incident.
 - Key messages to be delivered.
 - Level of media interest anticipated.
 - Location of Media Center.
 - How to gain access to the Media Center and where to get logistical support
 - Information the media may want.
 - When the first news briefing may be held and who will attend (if known).
 - Who will facilitate the first news briefing.
 - Communications strategies (i.e., internal communications, key messages, first media briefing set up of the Call Center/Media Center, security issues, parking
 - How lines of communication will be maintained with the Communications Coordinator and the Team Leader, Call Center if established – confirm contact information.
 - Potential issues.
- Gather and assign staffing resources to meet the anticipated level of media interest. Potential staffing resources include:
 - Information Officers
 - Web Master
 - Administrative Support.

- Determine when personnel will assume their responsibilities -- advise Communications Coordinator and Team Leader, Call Center.

Upon Arrival and Ongoing:

- Ensure set up begins as follows:
 - Set up key positions in the following rooms:
 - ✓ Team Leader
 - ✓ Information Officers
 - ✓ Web backup
 - ✓ Media briefing and a work area if required
 - Set up telephones, workstations, fax, printer (power up all equipment and run a test).
 - Media events board (include such information as briefing times, spokesperson(s), (What, When, Who, Where, Why,) and (How, key events, briefing times).
 - Accreditation table.
 - Riser, podium, corporate backdrop, mike system, maps.
 - Tables for refreshments and information that has been released.
 - Chairs for media briefing (leave enough room in front for camera crews).
 - Display signage (Media Center, Media Accreditation, News Releases).
- Receive second briefing from the Communications Coordinator. Determine what's new and advise him/her when the Media Center is set up. Find out:
 - When the first new briefing will be held.
 - Which spokesperson(s) will be attending (get the proper spellings)
 - Who will facilitate the briefing.
 - An estimate number of media that might attend the first briefing.
 - When copies of internal information bulletins, news release, media notices and backgrounders will arrive in the Media Center.
 - Key messages.
- Brief the Communications Coordinator on the set up of the Media Center
- In conjunction with the Communications Coordinator, write media notices as required
- Discuss overall communications strategy and outcome with the Communications Coordinator and Team Leader, Call Center. Ensure staff is well informed about the strategy so a coordinated approach with all audiences is achieved.

- Provide the Communications Coordinator with electronic copies of internal news bulletins, news releases and other information that has been released. Ensure the information is distributed to internal audiences.
 - Direct Staff not to use outside lines and to forward all media calls to Call Center
- Before issuing the public information number to the media, ensure that the Call Center is ready to take calls. Remind everyone to use the appropriate forms to record and track media calls.
- In conjunction with the Communications Coordinator, establish how media interviews and briefings will be managed.
- If the Communications Coordinator has not already done so, establish media monitoring services. Determine media monitoring reporting requirements (i.e., hourly, daily).
- Ensure that the following personnel receive copies of the media monitoring reports, news releases, media backgrounders and media notices. Draw their attention to any misinformation and ensure they correct the misinformation with their audiences:
 - Communications Coordinator – Emergency Operations Center
 - Site Information Officer – Police (if fax or email capabilities are available on Site)
 - Call Center Team Leader
 - Public Inquiry Officers
 - Media Center Team Leader
 - Information Officers
- Prepare Media Relations Officers to take calls from the media – ensure they know the issues and the key messages. Remind them to record all calls.
- Set up media interviews with the Communications Coordinator as required.
- Ensure that media arriving in the center receive accreditation. Brief them on Media Center operations and ask them what they need.
- Facilitate news briefings as requested by the Communications Coordinator.
- Ensure new information released during media briefings is quickly passed to the Call Center Team Leader.

- Through the Communications Coordinator, ensure appropriate food and refreshments are ordered for staff and media working in the Media Center and staff in the Call Center.
- Think about the next shift. How long will the Media Center be open? What, if any additional resources will be required (staffing and logistics). Request additional resources from the Communications Coordinator as required. Put staff on stand-by.
- Determine if the current center will continue to meet the needs of the crisis in the upcoming hours or days. If necessary, make arrangements to change the location.

9.4 Call Center Team Leader - Startup Checklist

Upon Notification

- Receive initial briefing from the Communications Coordinator on the following:
 - Summary of incident.
 - Key messages.
 - Level of public interest anticipated.
 - Information the public may want.
 - Location of incident.
 - Action the public needs to take.
 - Where media should be referred.
 - How lines of communication will be maintained with the Communications Coordinator and the Media Center Team Leader – confirm contact information.
 - Communications strategy.
 - Gather and plug-in analogue telephones, set up workstations and printers (power up all equipment and run a test).
 - Set up event board (or electronic broadcasting capabilities) which outline the five W's, map of area impacted, details on media briefings, spokespersons, key messages, key events or information.
 - Table where resource information can be held (i.e., phone books, contact lists, Town of Stephenville and associated Bay St. George Communities Emergency Plan and Crisis Communications Plan.).
 - Receive briefing from Media Center Team Leader
- Advise the Media Center Team Leader when the Call Center is ready to receive calls. Ensure staff has the key messages, news releases, media notices, maps and any other information being released.

- Brief Public Inquiry Officers as follows:
 - What you expect from them
 - Key messages.
 - How they can get help.
 - That it's ok not to know something – say you don't know, but find out and get back to the caller. Return calls, even if it's just to say the information is still not available.
 - Don't agree with a caller – but express empathy to their situation.
 - Never speculate or give personal opinions.
 - Refer media requests for interviews or information updates to the Media Center.
 - If the media call, give them the information they need with regard to contact information and media briefings.
 - Refer difficult callers to Call Center Team Leader.
 - Refer return calls to Call Center Team Leader if incoming lines are extremely busy.

- Through the Media Center Team Leader, ensure Call Center personnel have appropriate food and refreshments.

- Watch Public Inquiry Officers for signs of emotional stress or fatigue. Seek counsel for them through the Communications Coordinator as required.

- Determine if a second shift will be required. Shifts for Inquiry Officers should only be 4-5 hours in duration.

- Continually update inquiry officers as new information becomes available.

- Update Media Center Team Leader on:
 - activities in the Call Center.
 - trend of questions being received by the public.
 - number of incoming calls.

- Research information that isn't available to operators.

SECTION 10 POST CRISIS REVIEW

10.1 Steps to Consider

1. Secure Loose Ends – Appropriate communications should be made outlining the resolution of the crisis to appropriate audiences. All media contacts should be double checked for completed interaction.

2. Recognition of Heroes – The Crisis Communications Team will work with staff to determine the best and most appropriate means for recognizing the “heroes” involved in the crisis situation.

3. Crisis Communications Review – Re-convene Crisis Communications Team to evaluate response, actions, what didn’t work, what needs to be improved/ revised for the future, etc. by filling out the post-crisis communication plan evaluation form.

4. Media Coverage Assessment – Review coverage. Check for message consistency and saliency. Are there issues that might need further clarification.

5. File and Update – File notes, clips, talking points, communication, etc. into a folder. Revise the crisis communications plan if necessary

10.2 Post-Crisis Communication Plan Evaluation Form

Refer to Appendix “D”

SECTION 11 PLAN REVIEW CHART

11.1 Review Chart

Plan Revision Date	Name of Reviser	Approved By	Notes

NOTE: A plan review chart allows you to keep track of when changes were made, who made the changes, who approved the revisions and any special notes regarding the update.

APPENDIX A MEDIA LIST

Name/Contact	Address	Tel/Fax
<p>The Georgian http://www.thegeorgian.ca/ Editor: Christopher Vaughan Email: editor@thegeorgain.ca</p>	<p>P.O Box 283 Stephenville, NL A2N 2Z4</p>	<p>P: (709)-643-4531 F: (709)-643-5041</p>
<p>The Western Star http://www.thewesternstar.com Email: newsroom@thewesternstar.com Managing Editor: Troy Turner Email: tturner@thewesternstar.com</p>	<p>P.O Box 460 106 West St. Corner Brook, NL A2H 6E7</p>	<p>P: (709)-637-4669 F: (709)-637-4675</p>
<p>The Troubador www.cna.nl.ca/Troubadour/ Managing Editor: Stan Moeller Email: smoeller@cna.nl.ca</p>	<p>P.O Box 5400 Journalism Department Stephenville, NL A2N 2Z6</p>	<p>P: (709)-643-7745 F: (709)-643-5407</p>
<p>CBC-TV www.cbc.ca/nl Email: hereandnow.nl@cbc.ca Managing Director: Denise Wilson Email: denise.wilson@cbc.ca Managing Editor: Marc Riddell Email: marc.riddell@cbc.ca</p>	<p>P.O Box 12010 Station "A" St. John's, NL A1B 3T8</p>	<p>P: (709)-576-5225 F: (709)-576-5234</p>
<p>NTV News http://ntv.ca/ Email: westcoast@ntv.ca</p>	<p>3 Garden Road Corner Brook, NL A2H 4P4</p>	<p>P: (709)-639-1766 F: (709)-639-1762</p>
<p>CFSX-AM, 870 kHz CFCV-FM, 97.9 mHz Station Manager: Katherine Hogan Email: Katherine.hogan@vocm.com</p>	<p>60 West St. Stephenville, NL A2N 1C6</p>	<p>P: (709)-643-2191 F: (709)-643-5025</p>

APPENDIX B CALL CENTER LOG FORM

Check appropriate boxes.

Contact Information		Type Of Caller				Focus of Call			
Name	Phone#	Staff	Staff Family	General Public	Other (specify)	Advice	Inquiry	update	Other (Provide Details)

Calls Taken By: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX C CONTACT LOG

Date	Caller	Topic	Follow Up
	Name: Title: Company: Telephone:		By: Action:
	Name: Title: Company: Telephone:		By: Action:
	Name: Title: Company: Telephone:		By: Action:
	Name: Title: Company: Telephone:		By: Action:
	Name: Title: Company: Telephone:		By: Action:
	Name: Title: Company: Telephone:		By: Action:
	Name: Title: Company: Telephone:		By: Action:
	Name: Title: Company: Telephone:		By: Action:
	Name: Title: Company: Telephone:		By: Action:
	Name: Title: Company: Telephone:		By: Action:

APPENDIX D POST-CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN EVALUATION FORM

Date: Time: Location:

1. Was the crisis anticipated? Circle One: Yes No Some
Explain:

2. Did we follow our Crisis Communication Plan? Circle One:

(Not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (Completely)
Explain:

3. Were the proper stakeholders notified / addressed? Circle One:

(Not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (Completely)
Explain:

4. What communication channels did we use and were they effective?

	Not Effective					Effective				
1. _____	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2. _____	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3. _____	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4. _____	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5. _____	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6. _____	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7. _____	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Continued...

What should we have done differently?

5. What should we change regarding our Crisis Communication Plan?

6. What still needs to be done?

7. How long did it take to recover from our crisis / return to homeostasis, if applicable?

