Communications Plan - Crises and Issues Management

INTRODUCTION
A crisis can be anything from a policy challenge or decision in our organization to a natural disaster in your community. All crises have victims and can affect the reputation of our organization. The first minutes and hours of a crisis are the most critical. It is during this timeframe that public and media scrutiny will be at its peak and communication will be particularly important. This period is when our local council leadership must demonstrate that they are acting responsibly and decisively to resolve the situation. We will coordinate messaging with all involved parties to unify internal and external communications.

CRISIS AND PREPAREDNESS

LEVELS OF PREPAREDNESS PLANNING
Crisis incidents can range from minor—those that generate little to no attention—to severe, that may threaten the council’s reputation and ability to achieve its business and youth service goals.

There are four basic levels of preparedness planning that affect both Erie Shores Council (Council) and the National Council, each of which has the potential to significantly affect the reputation of the Boy Scouts of America. The following outline includes the levels of preparedness and the general actions required of Erie Shores Council and national communications teams.

THE CRISIS TEAM
During a crisis it is important to have identified and engaged a response team – include the board president (Jim Wilson), Scout Executive (Ed Caldwell, cell: 419-704-5561, email: ed.caldwell@scouting.org), and up to three other Scout leaders as necessary. Responsibility of crisis team:

- Update management and support team members
- Recommend action or engage with National Council
- Consider legal, operational, and reputational implications
- Determine the message, audience, and channel(s) of distribution
- Manage the distribution of the message
- Select a BSA spokesperson – Erie Shores Council (Scout Executive) or National Council.

SITUATION EVALUATION
The following are general questions may be used to evaluate the crisis:

- What are the facts about the situation?
- What has the BSA (local/national) done to date? In the past?
- What key stakeholders will be impacted?
- What key messages are prepared for them? (statement, talking points, or Q&A)
- What corrective or remedial actions might be appropriate?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Suggested Erie Shores Council Response</th>
<th>Suggested National Council Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Level 1 | **Warning**                                                              | • Inform the National Council crisis communications team of the situation and any media inquiries they received  
• Discuss strategy with National Council crisis communications team  
• Inform key management of the issue or crisis | • Evaluate the situation  
• Discuss and provide strategic recommendations  
• Draft materials for use by Erie Shores Council, as needed |
|         | The BSA’s reputation is positioned against an event that may impact or require Erie Shores Council to take action  
*Ex. A local volunteer is arrested on youth protection charges* |                                                                                                       |                                                                                                       |
| Level 2 | **Caution**                                                              | • Provide report to the National Council  
• Scout Executive or other key member of Erie Shores Council leadership to serve as spokesperson | • Provide strategic counsel and reactive materials  
• Brief executive, legal, and/or risk management teams |
|         | The BSA’s reputation is put at risk by events that fall outside of the council’s control.  
*Ex. Several Scouts at a camp are isolated for cases of whooping cough.* |                                                                                                       |                                                                                                       |
| Level 3 | **Hazard**                                                               | • Provide regular updates to the National Council.  
• Scout Executive or other key member of Erie Shores Council leadership to serve as spokesperson | • Provide ongoing strategic counsel and reactive media materials  
• Provide regular updates to the executive and legal teams |
|         | The BSA’s reputation is under intense scrutiny by organization members, employees, and/or members of the media  
*Ex. A national media launches a prolonged investigative report on the BSA’s land management practices, profiling a local council’s misuse of resources* |                                                                                                       |                                                                                                       |
| Level 4 | **Severe**                                                               | • Provide updates to the National Council crisis communications team  
• Execute aggressive media relations through support of the National Council  
• Request spokesperson/on-site assistance | • Direct strategy  
• Develop media relations materials  
• Work directly with the executive and legal teams  
• May provide spokesperson/on-site assistance, and engage additional resources as necessary |
|         | The BSA’s reputation is directly challenged and the organization’s ability to achieve its mission is hampered  
*Ex. A tornado strikes a Scout reservation killing four Scouts; or, four adult volunteer leaders are killed at the national jamboree while conducting an activity.* |                                                                                                       |                                                                                                       |
National Council Issue criteria:

- Will this issue effect other Scouting organizations?
- Is national media involved or would they likely become involved?

If Erie Shores Council determines that the National Council should be informed of an issue, the following representatives will serve as point of contact:

**Effie Delimarko**  
Director of Communications, Boy Scouts of America, National Council  
Office: (972) 580-7848  
Mobile: (214) 505-8341  
Email: effie.delimarko@scouting.org

**FleishmanHillard**  
Public Relations Crisis/Media Support  
Crisis Hotline: (855) 870-2178  
Email: PR@scouting.org

**MEDIA INQUIRY RESPONSE PROCEDURE**

Erie Shores Council can refer to the following guidelines for communicating with media and the public for both positive media encounters and in crises:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media Inquiry Procedure*</th>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
<th>Nature of question</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incoming call</td>
<td>Non-media but affiliated with Scouting or a concerned citizen</td>
<td>A general, non-issues oriented question</td>
<td>Direct the call to the appropriate department at Erie Shores Council</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incoming call</td>
<td>The person is with a traditional or digital media outlet</td>
<td>A general, non-issues oriented question</td>
<td>The Scout Executive or communications manager vets the inquiry and replies to the outlet as needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incoming call</td>
<td>The person is with a traditional or digital media outlet</td>
<td>An issue or crisis-oriented question</td>
<td>The Scout Executive or communications manager vets the inquiry and replies to the outlet as needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incoming call</td>
<td>The person will not disclose their affiliation</td>
<td>Treat this individual as if they are a member of the media.</td>
<td>The Scout Executive or communications manager vets the inquiry and replies to the outlet as needed;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>On-site visit</td>
<td>The person is with traditional or digital media</td>
<td>An inquiry of any kind</td>
<td>Employees should inform the media that they are not the appropriate spokesperson and take down the information to pass it on to the director;</td>
</tr>
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</table>


MEDIA INQUIRY LANGUAGE FOR EMPLOYEES

- Only designated Erie Shores Council or National Council spokespersons are authorized to speak to the media on behalf of the organization.
- Incoming calls, if the individual is not with the media, direct the person to the appropriate department.
- If the individual is with the media and asks a general BSA or non-issues-related question, take down their information for the appropriate spokesperson.
- If the individual is with the media and asks about an issue or a crisis, take down their information and provide it to the Scout Executive urgently.
- If a member of the media appears on-site, inform him/her that you are not the appropriate spokesperson and that you will take down their information and provide it to the contact immediately.

MEDIA INQUIRY RESPONSE GUIDELINES

As Erie Shores Council engages in issues and crisis communications or public discussions, the following policies should be kept in mind:

- The BSA does not comment on issues that are not directly related to its programs or its membership, such as political or social debates.
- Due to member confidentiality, the BSA will not provide personal information about minors or adults, except to confirm an individual’s name after it has been released by local, state, or federal authorities. This confirmation will only take place if that individual has an official relationship with the BSA, including youth members, adult volunteer leaders, and personnel.
- The BSA’s public statements follow a pattern to ensure message consistency.
  - First, demonstrate concern and compassion for the people involved. Always provide reassurance that the health and safety of members, volunteers, and professionals is Erie Shores Council’s top priority.
  - Third, address what the BSA is doing to resolve the situation and to ensure an expeditious return to normal operations. The organization will not initially attempt to attribute responsibility for an incident.

LOCAL SPOKESPERSONS

The role of a local spokesperson in a crisis is to effectively deliver the BSA’s core messages with the ultimate goal of resolving the situation fairly and compassionately while preserving integrity and reputation. This applies to communication with all stakeholders, including media, youth members, Scouting parents, adult volunteer leaders, employees, business partners, and the community. The local spokesperson represents Erie Shores Council, BSA and is not speaking on behalf of National BSA.
SOCIAL MEDIA ISSUES MANAGEMENT
During a crisis, online community members may post comments to Erie Shores Council or council-owned property (e.g., Camp Miakonda or Camp Frontier) social media pages, and Erie Shores Council will have to make a decision on whether or not to engage the individual, and, in certain cases, whether to delete the post.

It is advised that Erie Shores Council will post community guidelines or house rules for adding content on the “About” pages of the Council, Camp Miakonda, or Camp Frontier’s Facebook page. Erie Shores Council will state that they appreciate the thoughts provided by the Scouting community and beyond, but that there are some things that may be removed to keep the conversation fair and civil.

HOW TO ENGAGE DIGITAL POSTINGS ON SOCIAL CHANNELS
If the Council decides to reply or engage with an individual on social media, it should treat the individual in much the same way as it might a reporter, using talking points or a statement to help guide a response. Whenever possible, the council should offer to connect with the individual via phone rather than take the conversation online.

ONLINE THREATS
In the event that someone posts a message to a council social page or digital channel that exposes a potential threat to the health and safety of one of the BSA members, present or past, the team will forward that posting to the Scout Executive for review and appropriate action.

EVALUATION
Erie Shores Council will review crisis afterwards to better prepare for future crises. Consider the following questions:

• How did the crisis impact key stakeholders?
• How did the crisis affect the reputation of Erie Shores Council? National Council?
• What was the extent and tone of media coverage surrounding the crisis?
• Are there any apparent misconceptions by the public or media about the organization?
• Are there any lingering concerns?

MEDIA FOLLOW UP [IF NECESSARY]
Focus on providing updates to the media, as necessary, correcting any misconceptions, and addressing any reputational damage. A succinct and informative statement, set of talking points, Q&A, press release, or digital posting—together with media spokespeople—can be used to conduct media outreach.

STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH [IF NECESSARY]
It is important to contact stakeholders to keep them informed of the impact of the crisis and the actions being taken to minimize any potential damages. If needed, follow-up communications to stakeholders should be completed as soon as possible.
**POST-CRISIS REPORT**

Erie Shores Council will consider preparing a report documenting the crisis, its impact, lessons learned, and any process or organizational changes made because of the crisis. The report should be shared with key players in Erie Shores Council and filed for future internal use.

**A CRISIS RESPONSE CHECKLIST**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1 Warning</th>
<th>□ Evaluate the situation, reviewing all relevant information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ Discuss the issue with the authorities or other relevant stakeholders</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ Initiate media and digital monitoring</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ Alert and involve key volunteer leadership and relevant support team members</td>
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<td></td>
<td>□ Develop needed communications materials, including a statement and talking points</td>
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<tr>
<th>Level 2 Caution</th>
<th>□ Approve all communications materials, as needed</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ Work with proper authorities to determine the scope of the situation and to provide ongoing support</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ Direct media requests to the pre-approved spokesperson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ Initiate stakeholder outreach, as necessary</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ Provide regular updates regarding the situation to the national media support team</td>
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<tr>
<th>Level 3 Hazard</th>
<th>□ Establish a communications command center, as necessary</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ Recommend Erie Shores Council, BSA officials—or national representatives—dispatch family or volunteer support teams, as necessary</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ Prepare additional National Council staff to address incoming calls</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ Determine if on-site National Council support is needed</td>
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<tr>
<th>Level 4 Severe</th>
<th>□ Engage a phone response team to address inquiries, as necessary</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ Monitor the situation and release additional statements, as necessary</td>
</tr>
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</table>
EMERGENCY NUMBERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Camp Miakonda</th>
<th>Camp Frontier</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DEVI LBESS SCOUT RESERVATION</strong></td>
<td><strong>PIONEER SCOUT RESERVATION</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EMERGENCY SERVICES</strong></td>
<td><strong>EMERGENCY SERVICES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DIAL 911</strong></td>
<td><strong>DIAL 911</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poison Control</td>
<td>1-800-222-1222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sylvania Twp. Fire</td>
<td>419-882-0022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sylvania Twp. Police</td>
<td>419-882-2055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promedica – Flower Hospital Sylvania, Ohio</td>
<td>419-824-1444</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Contacts**

- Miakonda Ranger: Brandon Bailey | 419-308-7416
- Program Director: Alan Lepard | 419-481-3151
- Camping Director: Chris Reynolds | 419-392-5706
- Frontier Ranger: Jeff Frastaci | 419-392-7928

**Council Staff**

- Scout Executive: Ed Caldwell | 419-704-5561
- Assistant Scout Executive: Andrew Curran | 419-704-1223
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- Assistant Scout Executive: Andrew Curran | 419-704-1223

**Council Officers**

- Council President: Jim Wilson | 419-392-2822
- Council Commissioner: Alan Bernard | 567-218-8722
- VP – Properties: Shawn Chowdhary | 419-367-7900
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If you have any questions about any of the information included in this plan, please contact:

**Effie Delimarko**  
Director of Communications, Boy Scouts of America, National Council  
Office: (972) 580-7848  
Mobile: (214) 505-8341  
Email: effie.delimarko@scouting.org

**FleishmanHillard**  
Public Relations Crisis/Media Support  
Crisis Hotline: (855) 870-2178  
PR@scouting.org

Erie Shores Council  
Executive Board  
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