

# **Visit Cheyenne Emergency Management and Crisis Response Plan**

## **Potential Crises**

Emergency situations that could affect Visit Cheyenne include:

### **Natural Disasters**

- tornadoes
- blizzards
- drought, extreme heat
- fire
- flood
- earthquake
- outbreak of communicable disease
- other phenomena not anticipated

### **External Incidents**

- riots
- acts of terrorism
- hostage situations
- strikes
- explosions, bomb threats
- boycotts
- controversial legislation
- accidents
- crime
- food contamination
- mechanical failure
- chemical spills
- other incidents not anticipated

### **Internal Incidents**

- interruption of service due to staff death or injury
- questionable business practice
- discrimination
- preferential actions
- criminal acts by staff not in the line of duty
- other incidents not anticipated

**Significantly, all the above listed crises do not carry the same likelihood of occurrence. The crisis forecasting attachment will help Visit Cheyenne identify and address those events most likely to impact the organization.**

**Team Members and Roles:** The first step in an emergency situation is to assemble the emergency management team (EMT) to assess the situation and recommend action, if needed. Core members of the team:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Work Number</b>	<b>Home Number</b>	<b>Cell Phone</b>	<b>EMT Role</b>
Domenic Bravo	President/CEO	(307) 778-0179		(307) 287-6555	Approves all messages; Shares info with board, gov't officials, state tourism partners, media, hotel partners. Acts as official spokesperson unless otherwise designated
Jim Walter	VP/Director of Sales & Marketing	(307) 772-7250		(315) 427-5619	Acts as official spokesperson when CEO is unavailable.
Andi Jaspersen	Marketing Manager	(307) 772-7254		(307) 701-0740	Acts as official spokesperson when CEO and Vice Pres are unavailable.

**Procedures**

As soon as an emergency situation develops:

1. Take any immediate steps needed to ensure the safety of staff or others involved.
2. Alert Visit Cheyenne's President/CEO.
3. President alerts Vice President or Marketing Manager who notifies employees.

Once the team is assembled:

1. Complete the Situation Analysis.
2. Reaffirm role of single spokesperson.
3. Write all official messages.
4. Instruct staff that all inquiries must be referred to the designated spokesperson without comment.

**It is vital that all employees be informed that the President serves as Visit Cheyenne's spokesperson and that they know how to refer media or other inquiries to that spokesperson or the Vice President. Each employee should understand that in no case should anyone other than the designated spokesperson make any comments.**

### **Situation Analysis**

The situation analysis is a critical step in the implementation of the Emergency Management and Crisis Response Plan.

### **Fact Finding**

- What do we know about the situation?
- Is this fact or rumor? How is it substantiated?
- To what extent does Visit Cheyenne have control over the situation?
- What is the role of Visit Cheyenne (i.e. How does Visit Cheyenne fit in with other organizations/agencies)?
- In formulating a response, with what partners do we need to coordinate our efforts?

### **News Media**

- Are the news media aware of the situation?
- Does the situation warrant holding a news conference? By Visit Cheyenne or the City of Cheyenne?
- What questions will be asked? Prepare answers.

### **Public Relations Concerns**

- Is there a legal liability for Visit Cheyenne?
- Is there any appearance of wrongdoing, including violation of local, state, or federal laws or regulations?
- Could the reputation of the city be damaged?
- Could the reputation of Visit Cheyenne or its services be damaged?

### **Informing Employees, Other Publics**

- Have all staff, including trolley and Pine Bluffs, been informed and provided company statement?
- Have all volunteers been provided company statement?
- Have all employees been contacted? Don't forget those who are out of town.
- What publics are involved or affected? (Clients, vendors, members, on-site conventions, board, employees, competitors, upcoming conventions, sporting events)
- How can we tailor our message for each public?
- What outside organizations need to be communicated with?
- Which personnel are responsible for dealing with these entities?
- What is each Emergency Management Team member's immediate assignment?
- Coordinate efforts with other groups if the crisis is city-wide.

### **Message Development**

Uncertainty and suddenness are elements present in most crises. Ringing phones, panicking customers, and demanding reporters sometimes tempt an organization to cut corners at this important juncture. **Visit Cheyenne must remain focused on its message throughout the impending disaster or crisis.**

### **Overall Key Message themes for each Visit Cheyenne message**

Visit Cheyenne believes in the vitality of Cheyenne – its leadership and its people.

Cheyenne is so fortunate to have so many incredible visitors and events.

Our visitors/clients are our priority. Delivering quality service is paramount and Cheyenne is fortunate to have a solid reputation for doing so.

### **Creating accurate, honest and consistent messages**

Make certain of the facts (completing the Situation Analysis is one step in this process).

Develop a question-and-answer sheet.

Be candid, forthright, and positive. **Tell the truth.**

Be compassionate but realistic, no matter how bad the news.

Stick to one message.

Be clear and concise. Avoid jargon and ambiguity.

Tailor the message to the audience. What aspect most concerns this group?

Respond quickly and definitely to the negative publicity, when appropriate.

Establish Visit Cheyenne as a reliable, accurate, responsible source of information.

### **Policies and guidelines for working with the media:**

Once members of the EMT have developed the appropriate messages, only the designated spokesperson will release them to the media. The EMT will determine whether or not a news conference needs to be assembled.

The President/CEO will determine and utilize the most appropriate medium to communicate notice of message delivery.

In the event that media show up seeking information and/or interviews, they should be confined to the Cheyenne Depot lobby.

No member of the media should be allowed within the staff areas of Visit Cheyenne offices.

If the crisis is being responded to from a remote location, the EMT will determine the appropriate place for media to gather.

Coordinate efforts with other organizations/agencies as appropriate.

### **Message Delivery**

#### **When Visit Cheyenne is not the appropriate spokesperson:**

During a crisis, members of the media may direct questions to Visit Cheyenne that are most appropriately answered by another organization. Visit Cheyenne might be expected to answer related questions, but should redirect the questions to the appropriate agencies:

Wyoming Office of Homeland Security (Lynn Budd, Director: (307) 777-HOME)

Cheyenne/Laramie County Emergency Management (Jeanine West, Director: (307) 633-4333)

When talking to the media about the crisis, remember the following items:

- Emphasize what is being done to correct the problem or resolve the situation.
- Don't immediately admit fault or spread blame.
- Communicate rapidly to squelch the spread of rumors and misinformation.
- Tell the truth.
- Show concern and compassion. (In a tragedy, express grief, concern and sadness before communicating other key points.)
- Be available to answer inquiries 24 hours a day.
- Don't guess or speculate. If you don't know – say so.
- Make sure all information is 100% accurate.

- Provide updates as they are obtained – and notify media when those updates will be available.
- Be prompt in responding to the media. Don't leave the Visit Cheyenne side of the story out of the first news reports. The next day's stories may be too late to change public opinion.
- Don't let mistakes or misinformation reported in the media go uncorrected.
- Politely correct and challenge all inaccurate and unfair assertions others may be making.
- **Most importantly – don't ever say "No Comment." If you cannot or should not comment, say why.**

**The only three acceptable answers to media inquiries:**

1) I know and I'll tell you.

2) I know, but I can't tell you and here's why. Here is when I hope to be able to share that information \_\_\_\_\_.

3) I don't know, but I'll find out.

**Follow-Up/Evaluation**

Monitor and evaluate news coverage.

Send follow-up letters to advise affected audiences of the outcome of the situation.

Send thank-you notes to colleagues at other organizations who helped the Emergency Management Team.

Debrief the Emergency Management Team to evaluate all decisions and actions taken during the crisis.

Conduct a thorough audit of the process which will include:

- Document what happened and what action was taken.
- Make recommendations for preventing and handling future emergency situations.
- Review Emergency Management Plan to determine its effectiveness and make appropriate changes based on experience.