

Crisis Communications Plan

SEE MONTEREY

INTRODUCTION

The safety and well-being of our visitors and community are of utmost importance to See Monterey. The goal of this Crisis Communications Plan is to help ensure the safety and well-being of all visitors, as well as the hospitality community, by providing accurate information and visible leadership in a timely fashion should crisis arise. In addition, this plan establishes communication protocols to ensure Monterey County visitors, hospitality and community partners are receiving and providing accurate and relevant information related to the crisis.

No two crises are alike, and no destination is immune to disaster or crisis. Preparing for an occurrence is the best way to help offset lasting, negative impacts. It is the goal of See Monterey to respond to emergencies and crises with professionalism, integrity and confidence.

In all crisis situations, See Monterey’s primary focus is to proactively manage communication channels that directly impact current visitors, potential visitors, family and friends of visitors, See Monterey members, group and meeting clients and the media. See Monterey will work with the affected agencies including public services, law enforcement and local governments to develop and manage such communications. When applicable, See Monterey’s secondary focus is to manage communication channels that directly impact residents, relaying resources provided by the hospitality community as well as public services, law enforcement and local governments.

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A. CRISIS SCENARIOS

A crisis is any unfavorable situation with the potential to impact visitation to Monterey County on a wide-scale basis, and/or the potential to generate negative publicity for the county and potentially impact local tourism, hospitality, conference/convention, or film industries.

Two primary types of crises include:

1. Natural Crisis: An emergency caused by the environment, including floods, windstorms, earthquakes, contagious diseases, fires, tsunamis, natural crop/food poisoning, etc.
2. Human-Created Crisis: A situation brought about by human action including a bombing or bomb threat, riot, strike, murder, mass shooting, plane crash, hazardous waste or oil spill, prolonged power outage, controversial ballot measure, etc.

In the event of either type of crisis, the See Monterey Crisis Management Team (CMT) will meet to assess the situation and develop a specific plan for responding to the crisis.

B. CRISIS MANAGEMENT TEAM (CMT)

In the immediate wake of a crisis, See Monterey's President & CEO should be contacted first and apprised of the situation. If necessary and appropriate, he/she will then notify the Board Chair. A determination will then be made by the President & CEO to assemble the CMT at the See Monterey office or an appropriate location immediately. The President & CEO will also act as the liaison to local jurisdiction officials.

The CMT shall include the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and be responsible for the release and flow of all relevant information to industry media; See Monterey team members, stakeholders and clients; state and national tourism offices and international tourism/PR agencies around incidents affecting visitors to the destination and the potential impacts to Monterey County's tourism economy.

The CMT will meet at regular intervals to provide updates on the situation and assess risks and management issues. The CMT can also include See Monterey team members, board members, hospitality community representatives and government officials. Please note that these individuals are liaisons to particular groups or officials; they are not spokespeople for the See Monterey unless noted. If the President & CEO is unavailable to serve as spokesperson, the next CMT member in the list below will take their place.

Core team members:

<u>Title</u>	<u>CMT Role</u>
President & CEO	Spokesperson unless otherwise designated; liaises with Board, Executive Committee and local government officials; makes the final determination on "promote vs. don't" if needed.
VP of Marketing Communications	Works with President & CEO to frame and approve all messaging; directs all CMT work; connects CMT with local

partners and contacts as needed. Second spokesperson if the CEO is unavailable.

Public Relations Director

Works with CEO and VP of Marketing Communications to assess PR ramifications; develops messaging and directs updates for the See Monterey website and social media updates in line with strategy; serves as media contact to share information and coordinate interviews; monitors local, regional and national media coverage and press conferences; engages PR agency resources as needed; creates communications update and Market Situation Report for media and industry partners; manages communication with any media/influencers in-market at time of crisis. Third spokesperson if the CEO and VP of Marketing Communications are not available.

Community Relations Manager

Manages hospitality industry partner outreach to determine industry impact and identify resources available to the community; works in parallel with PR Director to distribute approved messaging and member communication updates; shares information with local jurisdiction partners and community stakeholders; serves as stakeholder contact.

Marketing Manager

Audits current and scheduled advertising and owned content programs and works with VP of Mar Com to determine program and messaging changes; works with PR Director to execute marketing, social media and web crisis strategy; develops recovery campaigns.

Digital Marketing Specialist

Works with Marketing Manager to update the website and owned channels with messaging and info provided by PR Director; monitors county's social media for updates to share as appropriate; monitors social media for visitor sentiment and local resources to share as appropriate.

VP of Operations

Shares information with See Monterey staff; ensures business continuity in IT services and equipment as needed; supports CEP as a conduit of communications with Board and Committee members. Fourth spokesperson if others are unavailable.

VP of Finance & Regulatory Affairs

Works with VP of Operations to ensure business continuity; identifies cash flow for See Monterey to ensure sufficiency;

assists in determining economic impact and related data points caused by the crisis.

VP of Business Development

Works with the Director of Strategic Client Services to share approved messaging and information on the crisis with clients in the destination; contacts and shares messaging with incoming clients; directs strategy for the business development team on the distribution of information.

Director of Strategic Client Services

Assess group/meeting ramifications; provides information to client services team with approved messaging.

CMT Communications Network

If the crisis affects visitors to Monterey County or the health of the tourism economy, the VP of Marketing Communications will direct the CMT, including PR Director and Community Relations Manager, in supporting the lead agency by crafting media statements and communicating proactively with industry media and group/meeting clients. In these cases, See Monterey's partners will be apprised of See Monterey's position and know who at See Monterey media/client calls should be directed. In some crisis events, another entity will take the lead in making decisions and communicating information. In those instances, See Monterey's President & CEO will effectively work with the lead agency and the CMT to potentially craft and ultimately disseminate information to clients, visitors and the hospitality community. See Monterey's PR Director, Director of Stakeholder & Visitor Engagement, Director of Strategic Client Services, Community Relations Manager and others will also refer media, visitors, stakeholders, group clients and industry partners to the designated spokesperson.

Once a designation has been made and an action plan/message points have been developed, copies of the plan with appropriate contact information and spokespersons will be distributed to the following entities:

- See Monterey Staff;
- See Monterey Board of Directors & Committee Members;
- Community partners, including County, jurisdiction and public service partners;
- Hospitality industry partners as appropriate.

C. ACTION PLAN

1. Call together core CMT

Contact the immediate core members of CMT and call a meeting virtually or at a designated location. Unless otherwise noted in the meeting invitation, the designated location is the See Monterey office at 419 Webster Street, Suite 100, Monterey, CA. In the event the See Monterey office is not accessible, virtual meetings will take place.

The CMT will then decide if See Monterey will issue communications to members, community partners,

visitors, and clients. The President & CEO will contact affected local government agencies and establish communication channels.

2. Identify the Spokesperson(s)

Depending upon the nature of the crisis, one to two spokespersons should be identified as the ONLY individuals designated to speak with the public and media. If the crisis is not directly related to tourism, deflect spokesperson assignments to the proper authorities. In most cases, See Monterey will support the local government agency in messaging where needed.

The See Monterey President & CEO is to act as the spokesperson for all events unless the crisis involves the integrity of the President & CEO, or if they are unavailable. In such cases, the spokespeople will be determined as outlined in the Core Team Member descriptions or may be delegated to the See Monterey Board Chair depending on the situation.

The designated spokesperson is to attend the county press conference, as appropriate.

Until the messaging and communications plan is written, be prepared to field questions around the event. These are three types of messages you can share with the media:

- *I know and I can tell you . . .*
- *I know, but I can't tell you and here's why . . .*
- *I don't know, but I'll find out.*

A general statement such as this is appropriate for preliminary inquiries:

See Monterey is aware of the situation and has initiated its crisis communications plan. Our Crisis Management Team is working diligently to understand all aspects of this crisis before providing information to the media, travel and meetings partners, or the community. We are making every effort to evaluate the situation and work with community (or regional as appropriate) leaders as they assess the best course of action. We will provide information as soon as we can regarding this crisis.

3. Identify & Isolate/Fact Finding

The President & CEO will direct the CMT to gather information to determine the magnitude of the situation. In most cases, this can be executed via phone calls or meetings with affected agencies. In other cases, this might include physically scouting parts of the county and reporting on the status of hotels, attractions, public roadways and displaced tourists. The CMT will determine the severity of the situation as well as “what if” scenarios should the crisis compound. The CMT will focus on the area involved, identify unaffected tourism and research/compilation of favorable statistics for ensuing media inquiries.

On a case-by-case basis consideration, the CEO will decide to send a See Monterey rep to join the Emergency Operations Center’s (EOC) Joint Information Center (JIC).

4. **Develop Crisis Action Plan and Message Points**

Upon completion of the fact-finding mission and prior to meeting with the media/public, the President & CEO will direct the CMT in formulating an assessment of the crisis including an action plan. This document will be shared with the See Monterey Board of Directors and include findings from the fact-finding stage and message points.

The President & CEO will direct the VP of Marketing Communications and PR Director in preparing message points, including a Q&A for all sanctioned spokespersons and a communication plan for the distribution of messaging. Contact with the corresponding agency shall be coordinated by the President & CEO and collaboration on messaging to the visiting guests will begin. The spokesperson should convey integrity and demonstrate concern and empathy. Talking points should be fact-driven, concise, consistent and accurate at the time of delivery. These points will serve as the basis for regular updates on the destination.

Using the approved message points, the PR Director will work with the Marketing Manager to direct the social messaging during the crisis. The first 24 hours are critical, and misinformation can spread quickly on social channels. Tone, context, channel, voice and delivery are all important. While emotions are running high, the tone of the message will remain factual but empathetic and link to further information that will be posted on the SeeMonterey.com website.

See Monterey will include crucial messaging in Spanish when available and appropriate.

Message points should:

- Empathize with the victims of the crisis first and foremost without owning the crisis
- Share priorities for See Monterey, to include the safety and quality experience for our visitors
- List accurate facts at the time of delivery
- Identify the exact location with a Google map link, if available
- Provide background on cause/effect at the time of delivery
- Provide an update on immediate steps being taken to abate the crisis and assist victims
- Mitigate damage from false information, media exaggeration, guesswork, negative perceptions
- Establish See Monterey as a reliable source of accurate and responsible information

5. **Alert Tourism Partners**

Once the spokespersons have been identified and message points outlined, the PR Director and Community Relations Manager will alert key tourism partners to alleviate sending any mixed messages. These message points should be sent to partners that may include the County Crisis Communications team, jurisdiction partners, the Monterey County Hospitality Association (MCHA), Monterey County Vintners and Growers Association (MCVGA), Arts Council for Monterey County, Monterey County Film Commission, Monterey County Farm Bureau, Chambers of Commerce, Visit California, San Francisco Travel, Central Coast Tourism Council (CCTC), CalTravel and local and state Visitor Centers.

If applicable, Community Relations Manager will immediately begin local outreach to:

- Collect information on business impact or damage to hotels, members and other tourism-related businesses;
- Request information on evacuation rates or other resources provided by the hospitality community for Monterey County residents.

6. Spread the Word

A separate one-page Market Situation Report (MSR) will be drafted (as needed) by the VP of Marketing Communications and PR Director to provide See Monterey members, stakeholders and agencies with immediate information on the crisis as well as position See Monterey as a proactive partner. This update will include the facts, situation, action plan and crafted message points. It may also include additional resource links, maps, local media coverage and partner websites.

The update may be issued by the lead agency on the current situation analysis and may not need to be issued by See Monterey. This update will be posted on www.SeeMonterey.com, and may be distributed to the following entities:

- See Monterey Staff and Board of Directors, by the VP of Operations;
- See Monterey members, by the Community Relations Manager;
- Hotel general manager/sales staff for distribution to front-line workers, by the Community Relations Manager and VP of Business Development as appropriate;
- Local attractions and transportation services, Community Relations Manager;
- Monterey County partners including Monterey County Hospitality Association, Monterey County Vintners and Growers Association, Arts Council for Monterey County, Monterey County Film Commission, Monterey County Farm Bureau and Chambers of Commerce, by the Community Relations Manager;
- State and Regional industry partners, including Visit California, San Francisco Travel, Central Coast Tourism Council (CCTC) and CalTravel, by the PR Director;
- International tourism partners, including all BRAND USA offices, public relations bureaus under contract with the State of California or See Monterey by the VP of Marketing Communications.

Using the approved message points, the PR Director and Marketing Manager will ensure the dissemination of messaging via social and digital channels, and mass email channels as appropriate, during the crisis.

7. Create a Safety Net

In the event that tourists or area residents are displaced and require food or shelter, the Community Relations Manager will conduct outreach to local hotels and neighboring tourism authorities in an attempt to relocate people in need. In addition, if there is a need to house crisis teams traveling into the area, See Monterey is available and able to assist in locating lodging for these individuals. A simple outreach to hotel partners for those in need is appropriate.

In crisis scenarios, there may or may not be access to the internet or phones. The CMT and See Monterey Board Chair will receive bi-annual printouts of all members including contacts, emails, addresses and phone numbers to use in a crisis.

8. **Visitor Inquiries**

The Community Relations Manager will share messaging with and oversee any See Monterey team members in direct contact with visitors, including front-line staff, for immediate updates, inquiries, or visitor-related questions. See Monterey's main office number as well as its info@seemonterey.com email and online chat function will serve as the main channels for visitor inquiries and will be staffed according to the situation, possibly including evening and weekend coverage.

9. **Halt Marketing and Promotion**

Depending on the nature of the crisis, it is the decision of the President & CEO, supported by the VP of Marketing Communications to immediately pull advertising buys and request a comeback strategy and timeline from the Marketing Communications team and designated advertising agency and public relations agency.

D. MEDIA OUTREACH

To ensure accurate coverage and build bridges for a post-crisis comeback, the media must have a main link to immediate information. PR Director will work with the lead agency's communications team to support the dissemination of information where needed and provide quotes as needed.

Communications should begin with a very empathetic message.

1. **Spokesperson**

Ensure the designated spokespersons are well-versed and up to date with the information, Q&A and possible scenarios.

2. **Media Materials**

A market situation report (MSR) may be issued on the www.SeeMonterey.com website immediately and continued in intervals until the crisis has abated. If applicable, this might include updates on the Travel Alert page, "Media Alert" on pending press conferences, or a "Tourism Update" on the status of hotels, attractions, transportation and infrastructure.

Available distribution channels:

- SeeMonterey.com: The materials should be accessible and visible on the homepage.
- E-Mail Blast: Utilize the email database of all major media outlets, wire services, national TV bureaus and key market newspaper bureaus.
- PR Agencies: Send press releases and updates to public relations agencies contracted by See Monterey and its partners.
- Group Business Development/Tour & Travel Outreach: To ensure the flow of business, outreach to key meeting planners, receptive tour operators, travel agents and publications is imperative. The

Group Business Development team should create a list of upcoming meetings booked two to six months out and provide a market update to meeting planners stating the situation and alerting them that their pending meeting site and if the area has or has not been affected.

3. **Media Conference**

In some cases, it may be appropriate to stage an immediate press conference. See Monterey's role would support the lead agency in hosting a press conference if requested. The strategy behind this might have multiple goals:

- The fact-finding mission is imperative before a conference is staged. Message points should be created for all spokespersons and will differ depending on the situation. See Monterey's role is to help provide useful statistics where possible.
- The spokesperson's message should always be one of sympathy for lives lost or injured, shock at the tragedy at hand and hope for restoring the area and/or situation.
- The second spokesperson should be the one wielding the facts, generally the Chief of Police, Coast Guard or another official.
- The President & CEO would be a spokesperson at this type of conference if updates on the tourism industry are required, including hotels/attractions status, transportation information, etc.

4. **Satellite News Release**

Depending upon the severity of the crisis, a satellite news release can distribute a visual account of the situation that speaks volumes in scenarios such as an earthquake, tsunami or oil spill. This is also effective in dispelling misconceptions. The video news release is a simple three to five-minute-edited segment depicting a spokesperson at different locales throughout the County and must contain a news update to warrant coverage. It can document a positive side of a crisis, a cleanup program or unaffected areas. The feed is then sent via satellite to news stations across the nation for pick-up. This vehicle can also be successful as part of a post-crisis campaign.

5. **Social Media Outreach**

Utilizing materials developed, a similar outreach will be conducted to social media outlets including blogs and websites that serve tourism to Monterey County. The satellite video release can be cross-purposed to YouTube, CNN i-report and a variety of streaming video forums. Photo updates depicting the affected area will be posted with time/date stamps showing actual damage and/or progress, etc.

E. MEDIA MONITORING

1. **Media Coverage**

An ongoing television, print, digital and social media monitoring program will help establish both the short - and long-term action plans relating to the crisis. This can be conducted by the PR Director or their designate in conjunction with Broadcast Monitoring Service and social listening service and reported back to the team. Daily monitoring will help determine:

- Scope: local coverage versus national and international coverage
- Message: The perception or message the media is delivering to the mass public
- Sentiment: Consumer and visitor sentiment

- Reaction: The immediate steps required to offset misconceptions (e.g., freeways closed, beaches covered in oil, tourism areas affected)
- The long-term comeback strategy

2. **Internet Tracking**

Simultaneously, the PR Director or their designate will track all additional articles regarding the incident via the internet to determine the depth of coverage and short - and long-term action plans and report back to the team. This may include any press outreach done by See Monterey to correct messaging/dispel myths. Key message points can be tracked and analyzed as well as pockets of coverage to determine which markets were hardest hit.

3. **Social Media Monitoring**

In conjunction with traditional media monitoring, the Marketing Manager or their designate will also track social media conversations in real-time and report back to the team. If warranted, the VP of Marketing Communications will decide if See Monterey channels should engage in conversations on social media networks to dispel rumors and disseminate information using approved message points and FAQs.

F. LONG-TERM REBOUND

PR Director will communicate regularly with other DMOs and industry partners, including Visit California, CCTC and neighboring areas, to coordinate messages and media strategies. Once the crisis is abated, the PR Director will begin proactively pitching positive stories to regional, national and international media. The VP of Marketing Communications will also develop comprehensive marketing strategies and messages to continue the positive branding of the destination. PR Director will assess if an influencer strategy will be developed to show the real-time situation and recovery.

In addition, the following should be considered in the ongoing effort to re-establish the destination as a safe and desirable travel location:

1. All travel writers who have visited the area in the last six-twelve months should receive a personal invitation to return and evaluate the effect of the crisis.
2. Produce a video highlighting attractions and hotel properties that are not affected. Target local celebrities to complement the President & CEO as spokespersons.
3. Shoot photo and video footage for post-crisis promotions.
4. If applicable, develop bumper (video footage) for any upcoming televised programs that originate in the area.
5. Review current advertising campaigns/marketing programs to determine if messages are appropriate or reevaluate/redefine.
6. Work with other departments and partners to develop new marketing messages and strategies.
7. After the crisis has subsided (1-4 months later, depending on the nature of the crisis), begin advertising strongly in primary markets. Design and purchase advertising in trades and public media concerning the area's status for travelers.
8. Develop post-crisis message points for use during any necessary recovery media FAMs.

9. Provide regular interviews and updates to the media.
10. Proactively keep contacts informed of developments, progress and the long-term impact of the crisis.
11. If the impact to tourism is determined to be long-lasting, incorporate post-crisis outreach into the business plan for at least one year after crisis.

G. DEBRIEF

Debriefing is a critical step in the process. The CMT will look back on the crisis – and define what we did well and what we would do differently. Things to consider should include:

- Were stakeholders notified in a timely and efficient way?
- Were the roles of the various crisis team members generally understood?
- Were the appropriate stakeholders quickly identified and engaged in response to the situation?
- Were the crisis assessment criteria effective in determining the most appropriate and response strategy needed?
- Was the most appropriate spokesperson identified for the response?
- Was all outside/external support brought in and utilized efficiently?
- Was the Crisis Management Team notified quickly enough?

H. TRAINING THE TEAM

Review the Crisis Communications Plan with the CMT. Conduct regular training to ensure each member of the team is well-informed and prepared in the event of a crisis. Conduct an annual simulation or drill with the team to practice and/or discuss the response to a crisis, if necessary.