

# NYC & Company Talks: Crisis Planning 101

Wednesday, July 20, 2016

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## **Plan Now: Ask what can I do now to save time later? Then just start.**

- Identify internal and external audiences and make contact lists.
- Identify all your communication assets that reach each audience.
- Establish a crisis team (should represent management, legal, communications, human resources, and security functions).
- Identify media spokesperson (and train them for media interviews).

## **Communicating in a crisis:**

- Ask “What is the right thing to do?” NOT “What should we say?”
- Media is not your audience: your audience is those who are reached through media.
- Have a social media strategy (who posts/monitors your social media channels in a crisis?).
- Don’t release communications ahead of local police/government authority that has responsibility for public safety.
- Legal counsel must be involved in determining what information is released and in what form.
- Internal communication is external communication.
- All messaging must be coordinated and spoken/sent in one voice.
- Use multiple forms of communication to ensure redundancy and that all your audiences receive your message.

## **Things to avoid:**

- Don’t lie or mislead. Correct unintentional errors immediately.
- Don’t take a bunker mentality.
- Don’t automatically say “no comment” it projects guilt/a problem. There are alternatives such as “We are looking into it and will get back to you” or “We don’t have that information at this time.”
- Don’t fight with the media. Make your case, but don’t fight.

## **Other items to consider:**

- Do you have a designated emergency command center, should it be needed?
  - Room for staff, computers/printers, office supplies, etc.
- Hosting a tele-press conference to update media (several companies offer this kind of service that can be customized for your business, details on AT&T’s offerings can be found [here](#)].

- Choosing the right venue for your update to media (indoors/outdoors; on- or off-property; etc.).

### Sample statements:

- An incident occurred today/last night/etc. There is no threat/danger posed to our community at this time. In coordination with law enforcement/fire department/other officials, we are in the process of investigating the incident. We are providing our full cooperation, and thank law enforcement for its swift response. As always, the safety and security of our visitors/residents/other is our top priority. Further information will be provided as it becomes available.”
- Additional comments: “Concerned relatives may call [NUMBER] to obtain information if they have not been able to reach [THEIR LOVED ONES]. We are in the process of contacting [TO BE DETERMINED] to update them and answer any questions they may have.”

### Other tips:

- Follow public safety/emergency responder entities on social media at all times:
  - NYPD: @NYPDNews
  - FDNY: @FDNY
  - OEM: @NYCOEM
  - City Hall: @NYCMayorsOffice
- Practice: Involve everyone on your crisis communication team in tabletop drills so each team member/department understands their responsibilities.
- Assign staff now to their primary functions, plus a back-up in case staff cannot respond/are on vacation.
- Remember, communication is only one component of a crisis:
  - Safety first – for you, personally, and for all those with whom you engage.
  - Communication follows legal counsel.
  - Consider having a “go bag” ready should you need to leave your office or home suddenly (for more information about NYC Emergency Management’s Ready New York public education campaign, visit their [website](#)).
    - Supplies (cash, clothing, water, flashlight, etc.).
    - Hard copies of contact lists and other important documents should be readily available 24/7.