



ABRIDGED

Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau

Crisis communication plan

OVERVIEW STATEMENT

Imagine you are in an unfamiliar city during an emergency situation. Do you try to go home? Do you stay in your hotel? What does a visitor need to know during a crisis? What information can the Greater Raleigh CVB provide to our hospitality partners that may make a bad situation more tolerable?

The GRCVB crisis communication plan is designed to relay information specific to the needs of visitors and/or our hospitality partners in the event of a crisis. The CVB plan will only take effect when a situation has the potential to be threatening to visitors, to a hospitality partner business or to the Bureau itself.

The plan is also intended to reflect the professionalism and dedication of the staff of the Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau and our commitment to all of our constituents.

We will continue to develop the plan and add new tactics to communicate with our partners and the public as accurately and quickly as possible.

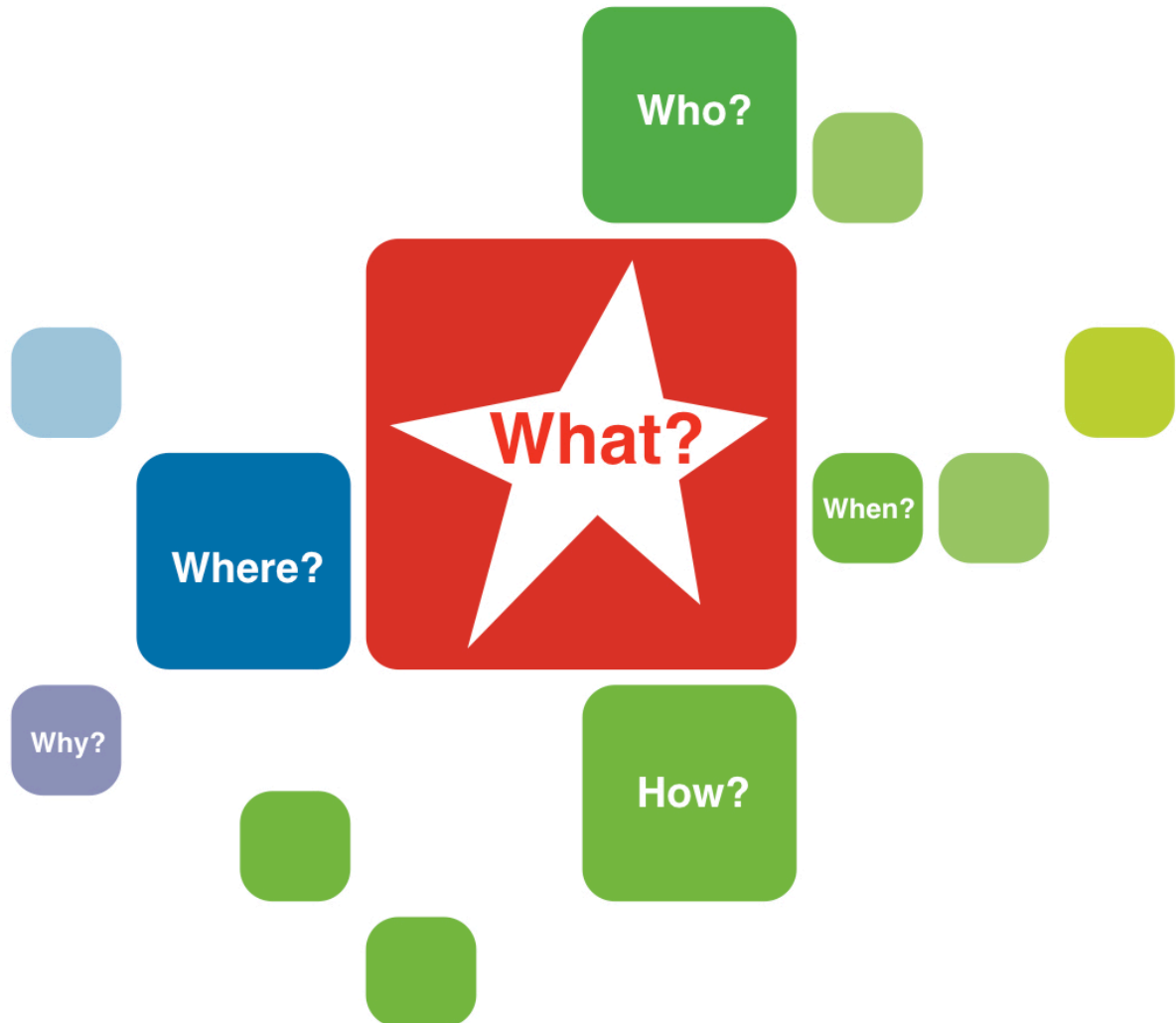
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Approach to this plan

This plan is based on the concept that we can answer many questions about crisis communication ahead of time (the who, when, where, why and how). What we can't know ahead of time is the *what*—the specifics of a crisis event.

However, the staff who have responsibilities for responding in a crisis already know what they are to do, they know where they are to meet, they know what channels they will use for communicating and they know the guiding principles and objectives about the Bureau's communication strategy. The team will do the best job they can to provide pertinent information about the specific crisis situation at hand—when and if it happens.



Overview

PURPOSE

The purpose of the GRCVB's crisis communication plan (CCP) is to:

1. to communicate the Bureau's position or response to a crisis situation in Wake County, particularly one that affects visitors;
2. to serve as a conduit between local emergency management agencies and the hospitality community; to provide visitors with the best counsel about their movements during an emergency situation;
3. to provide a polished, professional and measured "voice," which reflects well on the Bureau as a whole.

GOAL

Our goal is to provide stellar public relations in the event of a crisis to our targeted audiences. To not say too much or too little; to not be alarmist but to not be too casual. To gauge the threat to the health and safety of visitors and the hospitality community and to offer the most measured and appropriate response; to strike the right balance.

"Say the right thing at the right time in the right way."

WHAT THE PLAN IS NOT

The CVB's plan is NOT intended to serve as a source for life-and-death medical communication or immediate safety concerns. We're not trying to take the place of local emergency management personnel.

However we will forward any relevant communication through any and all of our communication channels to those who may be looking to us as a source of information.

This plan is also not intended to serve as response to an issues-oriented, public relations crisis.

Likely scenarios

We know “anything can happen,” and it’s usually the least expected crises that create the most challenges. However, given our location and some of the circumstances surrounding us, here are the most likely scenarios we might face which would require the CCP to be enacted:

- Hurricane
- Tornado
- Mass shooting
- Cyber-attack
- Bombing
- Plane crash
- Crisis at a hotel (e.g., fire, gas leak, carbon monoxide poisoning)
- Injury at an event (e.g., State Fair)

GRCVB crisis communication team

The CVB has appointed seven members of the staff to be the crisis communication team (CCT). If there is a crisis in the Raleigh area, the team will gather, either in the office of the GRCVB, in an alternate location (e.g., the Visitor Information Center) or electronically to make determinations about the course of action and messaging that will be sent from the Bureau.

Several other staff members serve in an advisory capacity (Director of Information Technology and Digital Innovation, Director of Services, hospitality partner liaison) and will be called on if necessary.

CENTRAL LOCATION

The GRCVB Conference Room on the 15th floor of One City Plaza will be used as central location for communication. If the crisis communication plan is enacted, any other uses of the room will be superseded. The secondary location is the Marketing and Communications Department in Suite 210. Another option is the Visitor Information Center.

NIGHTTIME OR OFF-HOURS ALTERNATE

The members of the CCT are all included in an SMS text group, established by IT. If a crisis happens after office-hours, the team will communicate using this group or by phone and/or conference call.

PHONE NUMBERS

Phone numbers for every member of the GRCVB staff are in the iPhone HR app, Bamboo HR.

ENACTING THE PLAN

- Dennis Edwards is the first to enact the plan.
- If he is not available, the responsibility falls to Loren Gold.
- If Loren's not available, Jonathan Freeze enacts the plan.

GRCVB crisis communication team, continued

- Dennis Edwards, President and CEO
- Loren Gold, Executive Vice President
- Jonathan Freeze, Director of Marketing and Communications
- Scott Peacock, Director of Public Relations and International Tourism
- Karen DeSollar, Creative Director (and project manager)
- Derek Allman, Senior Marketing Manager
- Michael Robson, Content Marketing Manager

IN CASE NEEDED

- Julie Brakenbury, Director of Services
- Vimal Vyas, Director of Information Technology and Digital Innovation
- Scott Dupree, Executive Director, Greater Raleigh Sports Alliance
- Jessica Holt, Public Relations Manager

ON STANDBY

- Paula McChristian, Director of Finance and Human Resources
- Malinda Harrell, Director of Sales

Additional staff would be called on an as-need basis.

- CCT (Crisis Communication team) members should **always** have their cell phones with them
- If in a meeting, leave them face up so you can see alert message

SPOKESPERSON

- The spokesperson for the GRCVB will be CEO and president Dennis Edwards.
- If he is not available, Loren Gold, executive vice president.
- If he's not available, Scott Peacock, director of public relations.
- The spokespeople for GRSA are Dennis Edwards and Scott Dupree.

Specific areas of responsibilities of team members

Decision-making: Dennis Edwards and Loren Gold

- Enacting the plan
- Approval of message

Media: Scott Peacock and Jessica Holt

Work with the city and/or county

- Releases
- Media alerts
- News conference
- RDU
- City
- County
- State

Website content: Derek Allman

- Content on homepage/all pages
- Content on visitRaleigh.com/alerts

Social media: Michael Robson

Telephone and technology: Vimal Vyas

Information gathering and confirmation:

- Jonathan Freeze
- Karen DeSollar
- Anyone else available or required

Partner communication:

- Derek Allman
- Andrew Baker

Suspend consumer advertising with agency:

- Jonathan Freeze

Target audiences

The audiences that the Bureau would target (unless necessitated otherwise) are:

VISITORS

- help make decisions about movement
- feed info from local authorities
- connect with appropriate resources

HOSPITALITY COMMUNITY AND PARTNERS

- be a conduit of information from local officials to hotels, restaurants, attractions
- collect property/area status updates from staff

CITY AND COUNTY OFFICIALS

- be in close communication with them so we can know what to be telling visitors/public

MEDIA

- release information as necessary

BUSINESS COMMUNITY

- communicate that the Bureau is an valuable source for information and content

STAFF

- provide guidance to staff about messaging and representing the Bureau-targeted audiences

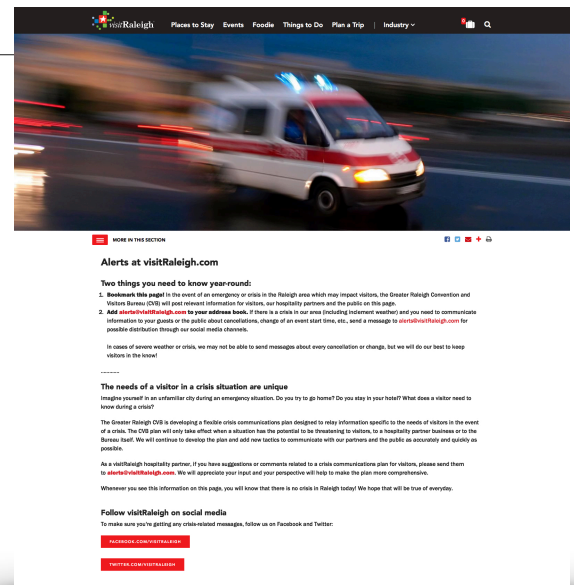
CLIENTS

- for after-the-crisis communication

Channels for communication

VISITRALEIGH.COM

The Bureau has created a permanent page on its website, visitRaleigh.com/alerts, where any messages related to a crisis situation would be posted. The most current information will appear there in a timeline format. Please bookmark this page for information during a crisis event.



SOCIAL MEDIA

Information will also be published through two of visitRaleigh's social media channels: Facebook (facebook.com/visitRaleigh) and Twitter (twitter.com/visitRaleigh). We encourage all of our hospitality partners to follow both of these accounts for updates during a crisis.

GRSA would retweet/repost any of visitRaleigh's messages.

EMAIL

We have established an email address (alerts@visitRaleigh.com) for partners and others to send information to us in a crisis. If you have information that you believe is relevant during a crisis, please use this address to communicate with the Bureau.

If the schedule at your venue has been affected (e.g., closings), send a message to alerts@visitRaleigh.com and we will make every effort to communicate that information through our crisis channels. We can't make promises that we can do that but will use the best judgment that we can at the time.

NEWS MEDIA

For broadcast of messages

PHONE

As necessary

Messaging

- Keep information flow focused; choose 2-3 key messages to send.
- Information has to be verified by at least two sources before we perpetuate it.
- Keep incoming visitors in mind as well as those that are wondering if they should postpone their trips or not.
- Any messaging we do must sound genuine; people can see through "PR speak" in a heartbeat.
- Say nothing self-serving; this is not the time to be marketing. Focus is always on victims and those impacted.
- Anticipate possible questions from publics/audiences and prepare answers to be posted at visitRaleigh.com/alerts.

CORE VALUES

- Our primary concern is for the safety and well-being of visitors.
- GRCVB/Visit Raleigh is comprised of caring people.
- Tragic circumstances do not represent the norm in Raleigh and Wake County.
- The people of Raleigh will overcome whatever difficulties present themselves.
- Visitors' needs are unique.
- GRCVB is a valuable resource for visitors/event attendees in times of crisis.
- It's okay to communicate an appropriate emotional response (anger, tears, sadness, disappointment, etc.).
- Authenticity is key.

OTHER

- If a crisis isn't visitor-related, we may not say very much.
- On the other hand, you can never not communicate; by saying nothing we are saying something.
- Be careful not to leave out anything that should be said.
- Judgment call: our messages are nuanced appropriately but without spin.
- There may be times where it's appropriate to say nothing.
- There may be times it's appropriate to say something dramatic.
- The vast majority of the time, it will be in the middle.

Initial social media verbiage

LINK TO VISITRALEIGH.COM/ALERTS PAGE

Life and death

(e.g., shooting at convention or attraction)

We're aware of the situation at [venue/attraction]. For the most current information, go to visitRaleigh.com/alerts

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We are xxxxxx by the events at xxxxx on date. We offer our deepest sympathies to those who have affected by this tragedy. We are monitoring the situation and will share relevant information as it becomes available.

For the most current information, go to visitRaleigh.com/alerts

Incident at hotel, attraction or restaurant

(e.g., breakout of illness at conference or hotel)

We are aware of the xxxx at the xxx Hotel in Raleigh and are monitoring the situation. For the most current information that we have, please follow our social media channels at facebook.com/visitRaleigh and twitter.com/visitRaleigh. Thank you.

Sample news release

GRCVB Responds to [Event]

{ROUGH}

RALEIGH, N.C. December x, 20xx — The Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau is [xxxx] by the [xxxx] that occurred in Wake County today and particularly by the damage and injuries sustained to the [name of partner].

We are in communication with local law enforcement and emergency management personnel. We know that [hotel] was [e.g., badly damaged] and [first responders are still on the scene.] We're working with local hotels to compile a list of room availability in the area for those who have been displaced by the [event]. Please check [URL] for the most current information.

Please know our hearts go out to all those affected by this incident, visitors and residents alike. As ardent supporters of Wake County's hospitality community, we pledge to do everything we can to help these [e.g., hotels, businesses] rebuild.

Please be watching our social media channels for the most current updates; facebook.com/visitRaleigh and twitter.com/visitRaleigh. Media inquiries should be directed to Director of Public Relations Scott Peacock at speacock@visitRaleigh.com or 614.551.7981.

We will post updates on this page as necessary.

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STATEMENT SHOULD INCLUDE:

- A factual headline
- The date and time
- The location of the incident
- Basic details that have been confirmed
- Actions we are taking that you will be willing to make public
- An expression of compassion or empathy (if appropriate)
- Contact details OR details on further updates

STATEMENT SHOULD NOT INCLUDE:

- Details that are unconfirmed or uncertain
- Any kind of speculation
- A response to unsubstantiated rumors
- The apportioning of blame
- Names of victims in case of death