### **Crisis Communication Manual Template**

**Church Name:**

**Prepared by:**

**Date:**

### **1. Introduction & Purpose**

* **Purpose of This Manual:***This manual is designed to prepare our church to handle any crisis situation with wisdom, clarity, and efficiency, while protecting the people involved and the reputation of our church.  
  The goal is to ensure the safety of individuals, communicate transparently, and maintain trust within our community.*

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### **2. Crisis Communication Team (CCT)**

**Team Members:***List the key individuals who will lead the crisis response. Include job titles, roles, and contact information.*

1. **Crisis Communication Lead:**Name: \_\_\_  
   Role: \_\_\_  
   Contact Info: \_\_\_
2. **Spokesperson(s):**Name: \_\_\_  
   Role: \_\_\_  
   Contact Info: \_\_\_
3. **Backup Spokesperson:**Name: \_\_\_  
   Role: \_\_\_  
   Contact Info: \_\_\_
4. **Media Relations Contact:**Name: \_\_\_  
   Role: \_\_\_  
   Contact Info: \_\_\_
5. **Legal Advisor:**Name: \_\_\_  
   Contact Info: \_\_\_
6. **Elder or Church Leadership Representative:**Name: \_\_\_  
   Contact Info: \_\_\_
7. **Volunteer Coordinator:**Name: \_\_\_  
   Contact Info: \_\_\_
8. **Security & Safety Lead (if applicable):**Name: \_\_\_  
   Contact Info: \_\_\_

### **3. Crisis Communication Chain**

**Communication Levels:***Outline the process for how and when communication will happen in layers. These levels ensure key stakeholders are informed in a timely manner.*

1. **Internal Communication (Staff & Key Volunteers)***When will staff and volunteers be notified? Who will notify them?*Plan: \_\_\_
2. **Elders & Church Leadership***When and how will the elders and church leadership be informed?*Plan: \_\_\_
3. **Congregation Notification***How will the congregation be informed? (Email, text, phone calls, announcements)*Plan: \_\_\_
4. **External Communication (Media & Public)***When will the media be informed? Who will handle inquiries?*Plan: \_\_\_

### **4. Key Crisis Scenarios**

*Identify common crises the church might face and how to handle them. You can add other crises specific to your church as necessary.*

#### **4.1. Scenario: Sexual Misconduct Allegation**

* **Immediate Action:***Who is responsible for gathering initial information and reporting it? What are the legal reporting obligations?*Plan: \_\_\_
* **Public Statement Template:***Use this section to draft a standard response to media or congregational inquiries.***Template:**"We are aware of a situation involving \_\_\_ and are fully cooperating with authorities. We take such allegations very seriously and are committed to providing a safe environment for our congregation."

#### **4.2. Scenario: Financial Misconduct (Embezzlement, Fraud, etc.)**

* **Immediate Action:***How will this be investigated? Who will oversee financial audits?*Plan: \_\_\_
* **Public Statement Template:**"We are conducting an internal review of our financial processes and will update the congregation once we have more information. Our priority is transparency and maintaining trust."

#### **4.3. Scenario: Natural Disaster or Property Damage (Fire, Flood, etc.)**

* **Immediate Action:***Who assesses the damage? When do authorities, insurance, and congregation get notified?*Plan: \_\_\_
* **Public Statement Template:**"We are deeply saddened to report that our [building] has been affected by \_\_\_. We are working with local authorities to assess the damage and will keep everyone informed."

#### **4.4. Scenario: Staff or Leadership Misconduct**

* **Immediate Action:***What process is in place for reviewing the misconduct? How will the staff be involved?*Plan: \_\_\_
* **Public Statement Template:**"After a thorough investigation, we have made the difficult decision regarding \_\_\_. We are committed to accountability and will continue to seek transparency in all we do."

#### **4.5. Scenario: Serious Injury or Death at a Church Event**

* **Immediate Action:***What are the first steps in handling a serious injury or death? How will emergency services and next of kin be notified?*Plan: \_\_\_
* **Public Statement Template:**"Our hearts are heavy as we grieve the loss/injury of \_\_\_. We are in contact with their family and are offering our full support."

### **5. Media Relations Protocol**

**Media Contact Guidelines:***How to handle communication with the media. Only designated individuals should speak on behalf of the church.*

1. **Spokesperson Role:***Only \_\_\_ will speak to the media. Any media inquiries should be directed to this individual.*
2. **Holding Statement (if details are not yet available):  
   Template:**"We are aware of the situation and are currently gathering more information. We will provide an update as soon as we have more details."
3. **Media Response Dos and Don’ts:**
   * Do: Acknowledge the situation and offer empathy.
   * Do: Stick to the facts, avoid speculation.
   * Don’t: Assign blame or speculate about what could happen next.
   * Don’t: Share more information than necessary before facts are confirmed.

### **6. Internal Communication Plan**

**For Staff & Key Volunteers:**

* **Email/Phone Tree Setup:***Use an emergency contact system to notify staff immediately. List key steps for informing staff and key volunteers in a calm and timely manner.*
  + Plan: \_\_\_
* **Internal Messaging Template:  
  Template:**"Dear Team,  
  We want to make you aware of a situation involving \_\_\_. We are currently taking steps to address it and will keep you informed as more details emerge. Please keep this situation confidential and direct any questions to \_\_\_."

### **7. Emergency Contacts List**

**Church Leadership:**

* Name: \_\_\_  
  Phone: \_\_\_  
  Email: \_\_\_

**Legal Counsel:**

* Name: \_\_\_  
  Phone: \_\_\_  
  Email: \_\_\_

**Insurance Company:**

* Contact Name: \_\_\_  
  Policy #: \_\_\_  
  Phone: \_\_\_

**Local Authorities:**

* Police Department: \_\_\_  
  Fire Department: \_\_\_  
  Child Protective Services (if needed): \_\_\_

### **8. Crisis Communication Templates**

1. **General Congregation Announcement Template:  
   Template:**"Dear Church Family,  
   We want to inform you of a situation involving \_\_\_. We are addressing the issue and working to resolve it. Your prayers and understanding are greatly appreciated."
2. **Social Media Statement Template (Short):  
   Template:**"We are currently addressing a situation involving \_\_\_. Please join us in prayer as we work through this matter. We will provide updates as more information is available."

### **9. Post-Crisis Review**

**Debriefing Plan:***After a crisis, the CCT will meet to review the incident and evaluate the response.*

* **Questions to Consider:**
  + What worked well in our communication?
  + What could we have done better?
  + Were all necessary people involved in the process?
  + How did the congregation and media respond?
  + What additional training or resources might we need?

### **10. Annual Review Checklist**

* Review Crisis Communication Team roles and members.
* Update contact information for all team members and partners (legal, insurance, etc.).
* Reevaluate crisis scenarios for relevance (e.g., new risks in the community).
* Ensure all templates (emails, press releases, etc.) are up to date.
* Run a crisis communication drill with staff and leadership.
* Update social media and website access information for emergency use.