



Developing and Implementing a Media Communications Response for Public Entities

The procedure for dealing with a situation or event that becomes public should be explicit in your media management plan.

When a publicized event occurs, these points are critical:

- **Have a plan ready beforehand.** Your plan should be clearly stated and written down.
- **Designate a spokesperson.** Be well prepared and available to meet with the media 24/7. Give updates early and often.
- **Monitor media coverage and social media.** Know what information is already being reported.
- **Be prepared to respond to inaccurate information.** Assume that reporters and key audiences are getting information from other sources.
- **Never mislead your constituents or media.** Always consider all constituents, and be honest and as open as possible.
- **Don't look for a scapegoat.** The priority must always be the successful resolution of an event. The "why" of an incident can be addressed later.



Media Spokesperson Best Practices for Communicating Key Messages

Once you've assessed the situation the media spokesperson should be identified. The spokesperson is the expert – that's why the reporter is calling the spokesperson for the interview.

10 tips for communicating with reporters:

- 1. Come well prepared.** There should be no surprises.
- 2. Role-play with someone beforehand.** Ask questions that may arise, including those that are negative.
- 3. Ensure accuracy.** Be sure to get the facts right to maintain your credibility with the public.
- 4. Be honest, forthcoming, clear and concise.** You don't want to risk generating more negative media coverage.
- 5. Stay on message.** Know what you want the audience to hear and remember.
- 6. Reinforce what you are saying.** Look for ways to bridge back to your key message during the interview.
- 7. Think in sound bites.** This is especially important for segments used by radio and television reporters.
- 8. Be straightforward, pleasant and cooperative.** A person who looks and sounds professional will be less likely to make a negative impression on an audience.
- 9. Think before answering.** If an unreasonable question is asked, politely decline to answer (the audience will understand why).
- 10. Manage your time.** You are under no obligation to continue an interview longer than the time that was agreed upon.

How to Develop a Media Kit

Have a media kit with useful information about your community prepared in advance for the media spokesperson.

5 items to include in a media kit:

1. Fact sheets with statistics and demographics
2. Biographies or historical background
3. Important press articles about your community
4. Statements or summaries of the policy question or event being discussed
5. Contact information



Communication Activation Plan Example

| AUDIENCE | ACTIVITY | KEY MESSAGES |
|-------------------------------|--|--|
| | Initiate an event | N/A |
| N/A | Convene communications team call | N/A |
| N/A | Identify spokespeople | N/A |
| Designated Crisis Team | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email • Phone/text • In-person | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situational assessment • Ongoing updates |
| Employees | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email/IT notifications • Phone/text • In person • Newsletters (if applicable) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situational assessment • Ongoing updates |
| Elected Officials | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email/phone | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situational assessment • Ongoing updates |
| Business Partners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email/phone | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situational assessment • Ongoing updates |
| General Public | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company website • Outgoing phone message • Social media | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situational assessment • Ongoing updates • Resolution of event |
| Media | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company statement • Press release • Spokespeople • Talking points | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situational assessment • Ongoing updates • Resolution of event |

The insurance policies, not this descriptive article, form the contract between the insured and the insurance company. The policies contain limits, exclusions and conditions that are not listed in this article. All coverage is subject to individual underwriting judgments and to state legal and regulatory requirements. This article is provided for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. Policies for this program are issued by one or more insurance companies of Argo Group International Holdings Ltd. Trident Public Risk Solutions is a registered service mark of Argo Group International Holdings Ltd.