**Basic Crisis Response Plan Template and Guide**

**Standard Operating Procedure**

**Crisis anticipation**

The anticipated crisis events that could occur/affect our organisation include:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

**Crisis consequences**

The anticipated consequences of the above crisis events that could occur/affect our organisation include:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

**Determining a crisis**

The CEO and Chairperson will communicate immediately in the event of a potential crisis event being recognised and are delegated to declare an event a ‘crisis’.

If the nature of the crisis event prevents the CEO and/or Chairperson communicating, either is delegated to declare the event a crisis.

A ‘crisis’ declaration should be communicated by the CEO and Chairperson immediately to the board and employees. A ‘crisis declaration’ enacts this procedure and is designed to quickly communicate to all parties the need to fulfil their allocated role in accordance with training and preparedness activities conducted before the crisis.

**Typical key responsibilities in a crisis**

* **Crisis Team Chair** – the person who is capable of leading all personnel during the crisis and will chair the crisis response team (usually the Chairperson or CEO)
* **Activity Log/Recorder** – the person assigned to write down all decisions made or actions implemented so that the crisis team can refer back throughout if required
* **Spokesperson/Media Liaison** – the person with designated authority to speak on behalf of the organisation and communicate approved messages
* **Welfare Officer** – the person who is allocated the role of looking after people (such as organising next of kin, medical support, trauma counselling, and health and safety during the crisis response)
* **Finance Officer** – the person who is designated the responsibility of managing finances/suppliers/payments during the crisis event
* **Operations Officer** – the person who understands (intricately) the facility, equipment onsite, stock, and people capabilities available

The above roles may or may not be required depending on the nature of the crisis.

Additional skills that you may co-opt/contract to assist:

* Lawyer
* Accountant
* Communications Specialist/PR consultant
* Risk Advisor
* Technical Specialist (such as an engineer if the crisis relates to a building collapse or similar)

**In the event of a crisis event occurring and being declared, the crisis response team will immediately convene and will use the following approach to guide its response.**

**Phase One: In the heat of the moment**

Priority will go to:

* Removing people from immediate harm (physical, psychological, social, financial)
* Protecting lives that can be saved, minimising further harm
* Protecting buildings/assets that can be saved, minimising further damage

In many cases, emergency services such as the Police, Civil Defence or NZ Defence Force will be the lead agency for acts of terrorism, crime or natural disaster crisis. The crisis response team will liaise with the lead agency and take direction on any requirements.

There will be no media comment during this initial phase.

**Phase Two: Assessing the new world**

Once a crisis event of any kind has happened, a key challenge is to take stock of the environment and parameters you now need to work within. Many day-to-day assumptions can be instantly lost in a crisis.

A ‘situation room’ session will be conducted with the crisis response team and will:

* Consider the facts of what has transpired
* Identify the stakeholders involved and affected
* Identify known losses (if possible)
* Identify foreseeable further losses if not prevented
* Identify opportunities
* Define the operating environment – who is in charge, what are the rules, what business (if any) can be achieved, and what cannot be achieved
* Develop an action plan to respond to the losses sustained and the identified threats of further losses (such as reputational loss)

**Phase Three: People, reputation and sustainability**

Once the immediate crisis has been responded to and you have had a chance to convene the ‘situation room’, you can now start the process of tactically responding to challenges presented in a crisis. This generally includes:

* The ongoing care and well-being of people. Is everyone located, safe and accessing the support required (such as trauma counselling, medical support etc)?
* The preservation of the organisation’s reputation. Thoughtful and considered comments are made, if appropriate to do so, in the media. It is advisable to prepare a holding statement(s) for the sorts of crisis you have anticipated. In a crisis it can be challenging to think clearly and so having considered what you might say to the media in a non-stressful setting can ensure that in the stress of a crisis you stick to your desired key messages. Reputation also extends to how you engage with all your key stakeholders such as sponsors, funders, families of anyone affected, general public, suppliers etc. A communication plan should be developed to engage each identified stakeholder to convey your key messages.
* The sustainability and re-build of your operations. The world must continue beyond the crisis. A clear plan is needed for how you will run your organisation, gain access to new facilities, replace people if need be, generate revenue, and adjust your operating model to reflect ‘the new world’ post crisis.

**Remember, the key to minimising crisis losses is PLAN, PREPARE and PERFORM.**