



# *Immediate Issue/Crisis Communication Plan*

For additional copies or questions, please contact the BVRC Marketing Team  
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## *Immediate Issue/Crisis Communication Plan*

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## **Introduction: Objective for Plan**

Why do we need an Immediate Issue/Crisis Communication Plan? The objective is to equip BVRC staff with tools to help manage communications during a situation in which the goodwill of the organization is imperiled by events beyond its control, and to provide framework for the internal processes by which situations will be handled.

The Institute for Crisis Management tells us that the sudden crisis (i.e. a physical disaster) occurs in only a small segment of organizations. A smoldering crisis (i.e. corporate accountability) is nearly twice as likely to occur as a sudden crisis.

## **Intervention Phases**

To meet the objective of equipping staff researched and utilized various resources to help develop the following seven important phases to a plan:

- Phase 1      Assessment
- Phase 2      Implementation
- Phase 3      Research Guidance
- Phase 4      Audiences
- Phase 5      Messages
- Phase 6      Media Policies and Procedures
- Phase 7      Evaluation

## **☑ Phase 1: Assessment**

**The first and most important consideration is health, safety and welfare of patrons and staff.** Pending the “issue” or situation, the assessment step might be conducted over a period of several days or weeks. In other cases with more urgency, such as a sudden “crisis”, the assessment may be conducted in a few minutes or hours.

**The second consideration is keeping the management team informed so they can effectively establish the commission’s response and crisis management activities.**

### **Initial Information**

When asked by the internal Response Team, multiple people can be empowered to help answer questions such as Who, What, When, Where, Why and How? A copy the Immediate Response Checklist (see pages 6-7) should be at all phones within BVRC.

Initial information collected by staff is critical, as it will receive the most scrutiny following the crisis or situation.

### **Step 1: Who to alert first**

**Follow Step 1 of Immediate Response Checklist on pages 6-7 for precise steps in making initial contacts.**

**All staff members and commissioners who receive a media inquiry about issues or crises should respond in the following manner and use the prepared Call Log (Appendix C).**

1. Thank the reporter for the inquiry and explain that he or she is not authorized to respond.
2. Forward the call to TBD (**INSERT NAME**), on-site media manager. OR, using the Call Log (Appendix C), ask for the reporter’s name, name of media outlet, telephone number, and the deadline by which he or she needs the information. Forward this information to TBD.
3. Indicate that you will contact an appropriate spokesperson, who will respond as soon as possible.
4. IMMEDIATELY contact TBD and communicate all requested information from the reporter to her.

**Under no circumstances should any staff share details of the situation with the media. Designated Spokesperson (**INSERT NAME**) will do so.** (Note: trained spokespersons include Commissioners (**INSERT NAMES**))

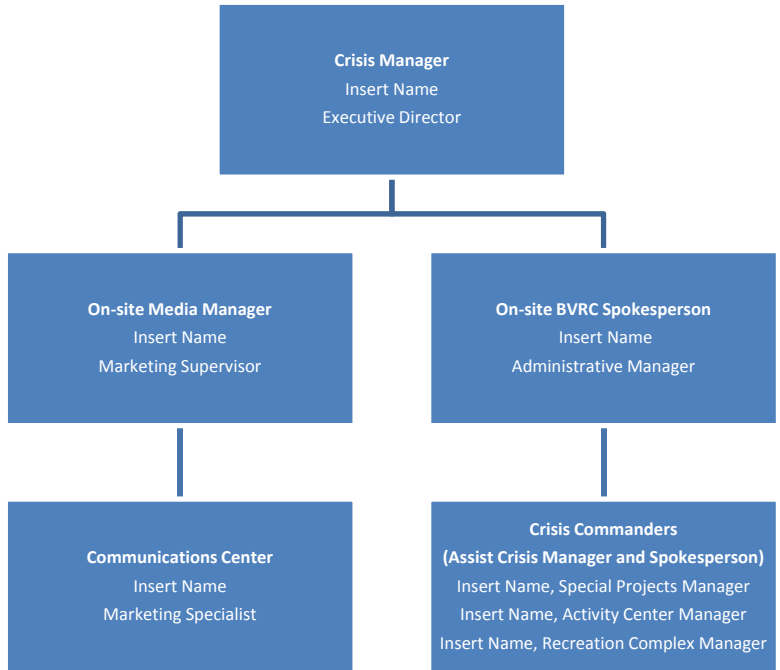
### **Step 2: Activating the Immediate Response Team phone tree**

**Assemble the Immediate Response Team (see next page for organizational chart)**

Pending the nature of the potential issue or crisis, consideration should also be given to inclusion of individuals with expertise in transactions, human relations, operations, IT, programming or legislative affairs.

# BVRC Immediate Response Team

(See Appendix A for complete contact information.)



## Crisis Audit

*The Immediate Response Team will review the threat in the context of the organization's values and determine the following checklist:*

- Which values might be directly affected
- How the perception of the organization might be adversely affected in relation to the values identified
- The stakeholders to whom the value is most important
- Whose perceptions of the organization might be most adversely affected by a report of the situation
- Whether BVRC attorneys need to assist/proceed. (According to one resource, litigation communication requires special treatment and must be prepared in consultation with legal counsel.)

The following is a "crisis audit", listing possible scenarios that BVRC may endure at any time. Each list is in no particular order; certainly other situations may arise beyond this crisis audit.

- ***The worst-case scenarios for BVRC include:***

- On-site death of patron or staff (accidental incident, unplanned medical condition or suicide)
- Staff dies in auto or plane crash (one or more/group)
- Child abused or abducted by BVRC staff, volunteer (coach, event helper, etc.) or patron
- Terrorism
- Natural disaster (major storm damage, lightening or other)
- Hostage situation
- Theft (robbery during hours or embezzlement)
- Criminal hired and causes harm (someone slips through background check or other)
- Organization goes broke
- Computer system completely crashes, system hacked into, and/or confidential info leaked
- Legislative issue with impact on BVRC

- ***A likely crisis for BVRC is:***

- On-site injury to patron or staff
- Assault by disgruntled parent/spectator or staff
- Lawsuit against BVRC (discrimination claim, sexual harassment, or other)
- Facility break-in (after hours)
- Property damage (minor storm damage or vandalism)
- Employee has legal issue
- Drowning or near drowning of participant, spectator or staff

- ***A bizarre/least likely crisis for BVRC is:***

- Disgruntled employee writes Blog or creates hateful Web site
- Staff wins lottery pool and entire department quits
- Flasher/streaker
- Employee or commissioner has legal issue involving public misbehavior

## Phase 2: Implementation

### Immediate Response Checklist

Important: These instructions are for all staff; keep this copy readily available at your phone. Immediate Response Team members should also keep an extra copy and phone numbers at home or in day planner.

#### *Step One – First Alerts*

- Pending nature of incident, call 911 if no one has already then document who called and when.
- Alert **TBD**, Marketing Supervisor at (work) xxx-xxx-xxxx; or (cell/home) xxx.xxx.xxxx. If TBD is not available, contact **(INSERT NAME)**, Admin. Manager at (work) xxx-xxx-xxxx; or (cell) xxx-xxx-xxxx. If it is a holiday and the offices are closed, proceed with calling **TBD**.
- TBD** is to alert **(INSERT NAME)**, Admin. Manager at (work) xxx-xxx-xxxx; or (cell) xxx-xxx-xxxx and **(INSERT NAME)** (work) xxx-xxx-xxxx; or (cell/home) xxx-xxx-xxxx.
- (INSERT NAME)** is to contact **(INSERT NAME)**, Executive Director, at (work) xxx-xxx-xxxx; (cell) xxx-xxx-xxxx; or (home) xxx-xxx-xxxx and the management team.
- TBD** is to contact front desk staff at AC & RC to direct/remind them to forward all media calls to him/her. Under NO circumstances should any staff share details of the incident with the media.
- Staff involved is to complete the Incident/Property Damage/Loss Report (Appendix B) as fully as possible and immediately submit to **(INSERT NAME)**.

#### *Step Two – Immediate Response Team’s Immediate Action Plan*

- After the front desk contacts **TBD**, he/she is to reach **(INSERT NAME)** and **(INSERT NAME)**.
- (INSERT NAME)** is to contact Executive Director and other managers. (Use assistance from Admin. Staff if needed.)
- Immediate Response Team to assess situation and level of impact.
- Connie is to alert all staff/departments and commissioners of situation by phone and/or e-mail.
- Pending situation, the Response Team will notify others, including consultants or agencies assisting BVRC, as well as logistical support (i.e. food, tents, etc.).
- TBD** is to alert front desk staff and communicate to media the time and location of press briefing.

#### *Step Three – Response Team to Get the Facts*

- Gather known facts.
- Verify the nature and scope of incident with Overland Park Police and/or responding emergency agencies.
- Response Team to decide to issue a written statement or to hold a press briefing.
- Determine if injuries and/or fatalities (do not release names).
- Assess public health risk (if any).
- Determine what authorities (City of OP, BVSD, etc.) must/should be consulted.
- Consult with appropriate government and legal authorities (i.e. BVRC attorney).
- Consult immediately with police and/or responding agencies, if any, to coordinate release of information.
- ASAP: Begin to draft message for release to media, using key messages worksheet (see Appendix D).

#### *Step Four – Verify and Keep the Information Moving*



- Time code all information as it arrives.
- Response Team to verify all facts available before releasing.
- Keep the Response Team up-to-date.
- Decide location of press briefing (preferably Classrooms 1 and 2) based on crisis. (See Appendix G).
- (INSERT NAME)** is to update all internal staff/departments and commissioners by phone and/or e-mail.

***Step Five – Prepare for Media (Calls and Visits)***

- TBD/(INSERT NAME)** to start media contact record.
- Brief and rehearse designated media spokesperson. Rehearse what verified information will be made available. Review “Guidelines for Spokesperson” (see Appendix I).
- Response Team to discuss a media inquiry strategy. Review and utilize “What Information Media Will Ask” list (see page 13).
- Response Team to activate pre-arranged media room/area (on or off site). Strategically locate **(INSERT NAME)** exit door to audience’s left of podium per the Media Room Layout recommendations (see Appendix G).
- In one hour or less, get approval from (INSERT NAME) for media statement as handout or release.**
- Designate **(INSERT NAME)** (or **TBD** if he’s not available) to read statements or speak during press briefing.
- TBD** to review guidelines for dealing with the media with **(INSERT NAME)** See “Media Policies and Procedures” (page 12) for more information.

***Step Six – When Reporters Arrive***

- (INSERT NAME)** to ask media for identification and sign in at door.
- Inform reporters of restrictions on movement/photography/filming, pending scene/crisis.
- Within the first hour (ASAP) **(INSERT NAME)** is to proceed with briefing, reading only statement.
- (INSERT NAME)** to end with advising media of time and place of next and future updates, pending crisis.
- TBD** to follow-up on additional media inquiries.
- (INSERT NAME)** to post statement to BVRC web site immediately following press briefing.

***Step Seven – Media Follow-up & On-going Media Relations***

- (INSERT NAME)** to monitor media coverage (use Admin or outside assistance for this, pending media options at AC).
- Assess and correct factual errors.
- TBD** to advise media of any significant new developments.
- TBD** and **(INSERT NAME)** to log all media contacts (use Appendix C).
- Evaluate effectiveness of plan and revise as necessary.

***Step Eight – Follow-up***

- Assess plan and communication (see Appendix J for Issue/Crisis Evaluation Form).

**Response Team Implementation**

When convening, the Response Team should utilize the Immediate Response Checklist form (see pages 6-7) as well as the information below.

### **Implementation Phase Agenda**

Following is a draft of a potential agenda for the first meeting of the BVRC Immediate Response Team:

- Present assessment phase findings and preliminary recommendations.
- Determine need to conduct additional research.
- Locate the Crisis Manager, **(INSERT NAME)**. He will take primary responsibility for managing the crisis response, including ensuring involvement of all crisis team members and timely completion of assigned tasks.
- Discuss and determine Key Messages (see Appendix D) which will serve as the source document for all communications (talking points for face-to-face meetings, letters, memos, news releases, or others as determined to be needed).

### **Response Team: Overview of Primary Roles**

Assign tasks to Response Team members (as follows) in delivering crisis facts and information.

- **(INSERT NAME)**: Gauge the magnitude of the crisis and consider calling for assistance.
- **(INSERT NAME)**: Hold special debriefing meetings to keep entire Immediate Response Team informed.
- **(INSERT NAME)**: Develop a daily fact sheet (use notes you have made). Send e-mails and voice mail messages to staff and commissioners on hourly/daily basis (pending situation). Print e-mails for record of statement and time stamp.
- **(INSERT NAME)/TBD**: Share schedule of news briefings and conferences, along with key messages, with media.
- **(INSERT NAME)**: Use web site for daily updates, FAQ or key messages.
- **(INSERT NAME)**: Send information to parents and participants via broadcast e-mail.
- All Team Members: Make quick notes; your memory will fade. Maintain records of information by keeping a file folder for each day of the crisis (include all fact sheets, news releases, Q&A sheets, letters to patrons, etc.).
- All Team Members: Submit copies of your records to **(INSERT NAME)** immediately following initial closure of situation.

### **☑ Phase 3: Research Guidance**

Research conducted either during the Assessment or Implementation Phases of an issues management or crisis communication situation should ensure that all pertinent information, no matter how minute, is known by the Crisis Manager (**(INSERT NAME)**), the On-site Media Manager (**TBD**) and On-site Spokesperson (**(INSERT NAME)**), as well as the Crisis Commanders (the management team).

#### **Crisis Meeting Agenda**

During an initial briefing about the crisis, the following specific agenda items will be reviewed:

1. Situation report – verifying facts  
*What is the truth?*  
*What are the facts?*  
*What were the warning signs?*
2. Initial response status:  
*What is being done, why, by whom?*  
*How can we resolve the situation?*  
*Did we see it coming?*  
*What could have been done?*  
*What are the public's perceptions?*  
*How do we return to normal?*
3. Short-term response requirements:  
*What must be done in the next several hours and how.*  
*What human and material resources are available or needed.*
4. Short-term communication process:  
*Front desk staff at AC & RC.*  
*Staff, commissioners, patrons and families, etc.*
5. Prepare for hour #2.  
*Next meeting time.*  
*What is shared with public.*

## **☑ Phase 4: Audiences**

An Initial Public Statement (see Appendix E) to the media should be made within one hour or less. Media not on site for the Initial Public Statement should receive it by phone, fax or e-mail or be able to access it on the BVRC web site.

The media will likely find out about a BVRC crisis by police scanners (#1 method), customers, employees, or technology. The media usually finds out about a crisis immediately, often before an organization informs their employees of it. Make certain BVRC employees do not learn of a crisis on the Internet or other outside mechanisms.

Following is a list of key audiences and constituencies that need to be reached in the event of an issue or crisis.

### **Internal**

- Employees (staff, instructors)
- Commissioners
- Patrons, spectators
- Visitors, volunteers
- School District key leaders, communication staff and Board of Education liaisons

### **External**

- Media, including print, TV, radio and internet
- Vendors or other affiliated groups, including organizations BVRC is affiliated with, law firm or other outside consultants, various insurers
- Community at large
- Civic leaders, including chambers or local officials important to BVRC

## **☑ Phase 5: Messages**

All messages, even in the midst of an issue or crisis, should echo the key values and positioning of BVRC. This is more than a desire to demonstrate consistency; this is necessary to communicate the values and positioning central to drive behaviors in every situation.

(See Appendix C and D. Blanks are to be determined/filled in by Response Team following the crisis.)

We know media wants sound bytes for use on-air, and fast. Therefore, the messages do not have to be from the very top (i.e. Crisis Manager or Commission Chairman). The media will want/expect answers, and quickly. If they don't get answers or updates, experience shows they will camp outside the facility, speculate about the the situation on-air, and/or interview staff or patrons exiting the premises.

### **Considerations**

- What must we air?
- What will air only if asked?
- What would we rather not discuss?
- What have we decided not to air?
- Who has been media trained?
  1. Staff: **(INSERT NAME), (INSERT NAME)** and **TBD**
  2. Commissioners: **(INSERT NAMES)**

### **Prepared statements**

BVRC must communicate immediately, or lose the opportunity to control events. A first news release should include at a minimum the 'who, what, when and where' of the situation. (See Appendix E.)

Showing concern for the public and for our employees in our first press interaction starts things in the right direction. If stating, "Our thoughts and prayers are with those involved..." say it like you mean it, or don't say it at all.

As the situation continues, it is important for BVRC to develop a new statement with updated facts and information. These prepared statements can be announced by the spokesperson to the media, read over the phone to reporters, faxed, e-mailed or posted to the BVRC web site. Statements should include definitive information, not speculative, and be verified before distributing. This will help our credibility in the long run.

If known when the next release or news conference will be, that information may be included in the releases. This will help buy time to prepare for the next news conference or release.

## **☑ Phase 6: Media Policies and Procedures**

All inquiries from the media should be referred to the designated On-site BVRC Spokesperson, **(INSERT NAME)**. Working together with **TBD**, the On-site Media Manager, **(INSERT NAME)**, will coordinate internal resources and manage prompt responses to the media inquiries. The Spokesperson should be available 24/7.

(See Appendix C for Call Log form, made available for staff to photo copy and use.)

The Crisis Manager and the Spokesperson then assume the responsibility to respond to the media inquiry in a timely manner, using communications protocol established in previous media training. Follow the “Dos & Don’ts” and important guidelines (see Appendix I) to help prepare for interviews.

## What the Media Will Ask

### Casualties

1. Number killed or injured or who escaped (use caution with initial numbers).
2. Nature of injuries received.
3. Care given to the injured.
4. Disposition of the dead.
5. Prominence of anyone who was killed, injured or escaped injury.
6. How escape was handicapped or cut off.

### Property Damage

1. Description of property.
2. Importance of the property.
3. Other property threatened.
4. Estimated value of loss.
5. Insurance protection.
6. Previous emergencies in the area.

### Causes

1. Testimony of participants.
2. Testimony of witnesses.
3. Testimony of key responders—the crisis management team, police, fire, etc.
4. How crisis/emergency was discovered.
5. Who sounded the alarm.
6. Who summoned aid.
7. Previous indications of danger.

### Rescue and Relief

1. The number of people engaged in rescue and relief operations.
2. Any prominent person in relief crew.
3. Equipment used.
4. Physically disabled persons rescued.
5. Care of destitute and homeless.
6. How the emergency was prevented from spreading.
7. How property was saved.
8. Acts of heroism.

### Description of the crisis or disaster

1. Extent of emergency.
2. Blasts and explosions.
3. Crimes of violence.
4. Attempts at escape or rescue.
5. Duration.
6. Collapse of structures.
7. Color of flames.
8. Extent of spill.

### Accompanying incidents

1. Number of spectators, spectator attitudes and crowd control.
2. Unusual happenings.
3. Anxiety, stress of families, survivors, etc.

## **What the Media Will Ask, *continued***

### **Legal actions**

1. Inquests, coroner's reports.
2. Police follow-up.
3. Insurance company actions.
4. Professional negligence or inaction.
5. Suits stemming from the incident.



**Phase 7: Issue/Crisis Evaluation Information**

So that we can continue preparing and improving, please complete the questions on the Issue/Crisis Evaluation Form (Appendix G).

When completed, please submit the form to **TBD**. Thank you.

## Notifying the Crisis Team

**Important:** Limit to four calls initially (call quickly and move on to next step).

All phone numbers are area code **XXX** unless otherwise listed.

	Office Phone	Cell Phone	Home Phone	Circle & Note Date/Time	
<b>TBD</b> Marketing Supervisor	<b>XXX-XXXX</b>	<b>XXX-XXXX</b>	<b>XXX-XXXX</b> (cell)	Yes D/T	No
<b>(INSERT NAME)</b> Administrative Manager	<b>XXX-XXXX</b>	<b>XXX-XXXX</b>	<b>XXX-XXXX</b>	Yes D/T	No
<b>(INSERT NAME)</b> Executive Director	<b>XXX-XXXX</b>	<b>XXX-XXXX</b>	<b>XXX-XXXX</b>	Yes D/T	No
<b>(INSERT NAME)</b> Marketing Specialist	<b>XXX-XXXX</b>	<b>XXX-XXXX</b>	<b>XXX-XXXX</b> (cell)	Yes D/T	No

### Other Phone Numbers

	Office Phone	Cell Phone	Home Phone	Circle & Note Date/Time	
<b>(INSERT NAME)</b> Activity Center Manager	<b>XXX-XXXX</b>	<b>XXX-XXXX</b>	<b>XXX-XXXX</b>	Yes D/T	No
<b>(INSERT NAME)</b> Rec Complex Manager	<b>XXX-XXXX</b>	<b>XXX-XXXX</b>	<b>XXX-XXXX</b>	Yes D/T	No
<b>(INSERT NAME)</b> Special Projects Mngr.	<b>XXX-XXXX</b>	<b>XXX-XXXX</b>	<b>XXX-XXXX</b>		
<b>(INSERT NAME)</b> BVRC Attorney	<b>XXX-XXXX</b> (direct <b>XXX-XXXX</b> )	<b>XXX-XXXX</b>	<b>XXX-XXXX</b>	Yes D/T	No

### Additional information for **(INSERT NAME)**

Firm: **(INSERT FIRM)**

Best method of contact is office/office message or home

Fax: **XXX-XXX-XXXX**

**(INSERT E-MAIL)**

**Back-up, and/or for HR-related incidences: **(INSERT NAME)**, **XXX-XXX-XXXX**.**

### Other notification

Includes consultants or agencies assisting BVRC, as well as logistical support (i.e. food, tents, etc.)



Incident/Property Damage/Loss Report

Date:

Time:

1. Type of Incident (check those applicable):

Employee Injury

Building Damage

Patron Injury

Property Damage (others)

Inventory/Equipment Damage

Other (specify)

2. Date of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Time of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Location of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Weather Conditions: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Name of Injured: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Name of Witness(es): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Details of incident (how occurred, what was employee/patron doing):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. Was police report made? \_\_\_\_\_ Report #: \_\_\_\_\_

Police Dept: \_\_\_\_\_ Investigating Officer: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Describe the nature and extent of the injury (including body part involved):

11. Describe treatment of injured (first aid, hospital, etc.):

12. If employee, has he/she returned to work? \_\_\_\_\_

13. Estimated cost of damage to property: \_\_\_\_\_

14. Corrective action(s) taken: \_\_\_\_\_

Report Prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Please submit copies of this report to your immediate supervisor and the Administration Manager.

### Call Log – Crisis Management

Time	Person Calling	Organization	Phone #
Callers' Questions:			
My Response:			

Time	Person Calling	Organization	Phone #
Callers' Questions:			
My Response:			

Time	Person Calling	Organization	Phone #
Callers' Questions:			
My Response:			

Time	Person Calling	Organization	Phone #
Callers' Questions:			
My Response:			

### Key Messages Worksheet

Following the Response Team’s initial meeting and research, the Crisis Manager, On-site BVRC Spokesperson and On-site Media Manager will need to develop the two or three Key Messages to be communicated to the public during the issue management/crisis. (These are different from our typical public message.) Utilize assistance from the Crisis Commanders, pending availability of those involved.

**What are the specific key messages for this situation?**

Short, declarative. (“The goal of the organization is \_\_\_\_\_.”)

Next, include the follow-up to that. (“The way we do that is \_\_\_\_\_.”)

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Initial Public Statement

**The organization's first public statement should read as follows:**

“This is what we can confirm at this time:

At approximately \_\_\_\_\_ this morning/afternoon/evening, we experienced:

---

---

---

At this point we cannot provide you with the full details because members of our team are continuing to assess the situation. Our Primary goal(s) is/are to ensure (the safety of everyone), (the security of the facility), (restoration of services).

---

---

and to provide the most accurate information as quickly as possible.

(Optional) We can confirm that damage has occurred to:

---

---

We have requested assistance from:

---

---

We can confirm \_\_\_\_\_ person(s) have been injured.

At this time there is/are \_\_\_\_\_ known fatality(s)

We ask members of the media to stay in touch with us to confirm all facts so the public is assured of the most accurate information we can provide. We will conduct another briefing as soon as possible to provide you with more information

In the meantime, please bear with us.”



(INSERT ADDRESS) phone XXX-XXX-XXXX fax XXX-XXX-XXXX www.bluevalleyrec.org

# News Release

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact: TBD, phone xxx-xxx-xxxx or xxxxxxxx@bluevalleyrec.org

## *For Immediate Release*

Headline Here

OVERLAND PARK, Kan. – At approximately \_\_\_\_\_ this morning/afternoon/evening, the Blue Valley Recreation Commission (BVRC) experienced:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

At this point we cannot provide you with the full details because members of our team are continuing to assess the situation. Our primary goal(s) is/are to ensure (the safety of everyone), (the security of the facility), (restoration of services)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

and to provide the most accurate information as quickly as possible.

(Optional) We can confirm that damage has occurred to:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

We have requested assistance from:

\_\_\_\_\_

(more)

(BVRC news release, continued)

We can confirm \_\_\_\_\_ person(s) have been injured.

At this time there is/are \_\_\_\_\_ known fatality(ies).

We ask members of the media to stay in touch with us to confirm all facts so the public is assured of the most accurate information we can provide. We will conduct another briefing as soon as possible to provide you with more information

In the meantime, please bear with us. Thank you.

# # #

*Blue Valley Recreation Commission celebrates 20 years of providing quality, cost-efficient, recreational programming and facilities that reflect the needs of Blue Valley residents and add value to the community. Blue Valley was named Kansas' Sportstown in October 2003 by Sports Illustrated magazine and the National Recreation and Parks Association. Throughout the year, the commission offers hundreds of youth and adult programs and special events for all ages at a variety of local facilities. For more information about BVRC or to enroll in a BVRC program, please telephone ~~XXX-XXX-XXXX~~ or visit us at [www.bluevalleyrec.org](http://www.bluevalleyrec.org).*



### Media Room Layout

Approximate, possibly use Classrooms 1&2

*Doorway -  
entry/exit for BVRC  
Spokesperson*

Podium

Approx. two rows of chairs for media/reporters

(Extra space in back/on sides or room for cameras and tripods)

Media  
Sign-in

*Doorway - entry/exit  
for Media*



## Guidelines for the Spokesperson

The Interview Process (from CCG media training in 2004 and 2006)

### Rule #1

- The reporter's role is to ask questions.
- Our role is to advance our message.
- We are not there to help the reporter do his job, but to educate them about the *situation* and to *advance our key message pertaining to it*. Reporters we work with on an on-going basis (i.e. Star or Sun beat reporters) should already know basic facts about BVRC.
- An interview is not a conversation.

### Interview guidelines for an emergency:

- Have a designated spokesperson.
- Slow down, gather thoughts.
- Always tell truth.
- Never say, "No comment."
- Think of the value or key point; say it first and say it often. (People tend to remember what they hear first and last.)
- Don't be afraid of pauses; don't feel the need to fill them.
- Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know; I'll find out for you."
- Answer the question the same way every time.
- Release only verified information.
- Escort the news media everywhere on the emergency site.
- Be prepared. Use prepared statements.
- Be alert for traps and journalists' techniques (as covered in training).
- Be respectful of deadlines.
- Information about current or former employees and patrons is ALWAYS confidential. No exception; reporters understand this.
- If a situation doesn't directly involve BVRC, do not comment on it (i.e. construction accident on-site).
- Always inform the Marketing Supervisor when you have been approached by a reporter. Keep accurate records and logs of all inquiries and news coverage.
- Learn media deadlines and try to meet them.
- Provide equal opportunities and facilities for print and electronic media.
- Have a clear idea of what can and cannot be released

## **Guidelines for the Spokesperson, *continued***

### **Television interview tips**

- Solid colored clothing (gray, brown, blue); suits are best; light colored shirts or blouses work well. If possible, avoid stripes, checks or small patterns.
- For TV, use 10-15 second sound bytes to make point; don't ramble.
- Do an audio check; use your regular voice.
- If make-up is offered, use it.
- Sit far back in chair, back erect but lean forward to appear enthusiastic.
- Force yourself to use your hands.
- Remember, TV frames your face so be calm; use high hand gestures if possible.
- Keep eyes on interviewer, not camera.
- Smile and be friendly.

### Issue/Crisis Evaluation Form

Please take a few moments to complete the following questions. Feel free to use the backside for additional space. When finished, please submit this form to **(INSERT NAME)**. Thank you.

1. *What was successful?*

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2. *What process should be improved?*

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3. *What did you learn?*

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4. *Advice for future:*

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## Resources

- Blue Valley School District
- Gerard Braud, of Braud Communications
- International Business Communicators Association
- Kansas Recreation & Park Association Media Handbook
- Meredith College (from Corporate Communications Group)
- Public Relations Society of America