



**WACOSA**  
*WORKS!*

**WACOSA Crisis Management and  
Response Plan**

**Policy and Procedure Manual**

**January, 2018**

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# **WACOSA Crisis Management and Response Plan Policy and Practice**

## **INTRODUCTION:**

The Crisis Management and Response Plan is a basic guide to providing a response system, by WACOSA Administration, to a major crisis or emergency regarding WACOSA. The overall objective is to respond to crisis conditions and manage the process of restoring programs and services. All personnel designated to carry out specific responsibilities are expected to know and understand the policies and procedures outlined in this plan.

## **PURPOSE:**

The Crisis Management and Response Plan is designed to coordinate and deploy WACOSA resources to protect life, property and services during and immediately following a crisis or disturbance regarding WACOSA. It is placed into operation whenever an emergency affecting WACOSA cannot be controlled through routine, daily and normal channels and procedures.

While no crisis is ever the same, a basic plan can accommodate many possible crisis situations. The key goals of WACOSA's Crisis Management and Response Plan are as follows:

- Save and protect lives
- Coordinate communications
- Prevent damage to systems, property and reputation
- Provide/Restore services

## **DEFINITIONS:**

**Crisis or Emergency** - A crisis or emergency is an unplanned event which could negatively impact (including serious damage) clients, employees, WACOSA's reputation or the physical plant, structures or other service areas owned or operated by the organization. Within the context of this policy, the words crisis and emergency (real or perceived) are used interchangeably in reference to any situation that:

- Requires immediate and coordinated action to minimize impact on clients, employees, or WACOSA's services, and/or
- Has a significant impact on the operation or reputation of WACOSA.

**Crisis Management Team (CMT):** WACOSA's Crisis Management Team (CMT) serves at the primary coordinating body for dealing with crises and disasters. The CMT may be convened when a crisis situation or local condition is determined to have the potential to impact the safety or security of clients, employees or to cause a major disruption to WACOSA operations.

## **TYPES AND LEVELS OF CRISIS:**

For purposes of this policy, crises are organized into three levels. Listed below are brief descriptions and examples of each level.

**Level 1 – Limited Crisis.** A limited crisis is any incident, potential or actual, which will not seriously affect the overall operation of WACOSA, but requires some degree of action. In some cases, a limited crisis may be small enough that the affected department/location can effectively resolve the issue. In other cases, assistance from outside sources may be required. While some damage and/or interruption may occur, the conditions are localized and involving the CMT is at the discretion of the Executive Director.

Examples of Level 1 Limited Crises may include, but are not limited to the following: Facilities & Fleet Manager responds to a broken water pipe, vehicles damaged/vandalized, loss of heat or electricity for several hours, or minor chemical or fuel spills.

**Level 2 - Issue-Driven Crisis.** Includes issue driven and/or slowly developing situations that negatively impact WACOSA. The incident may be severe and cause damage and/or interruption to WACOSA operations. A partial or full activation of the Crisis and Management Response Plan is needed.

Examples of Level 2 Issue-Driven crises may include, but are not limited to the following: Client/staff deaths and/or injuries, criminal acts where clients/staff are victimized, and perceived crises. Perceived crises are conditions or situations, often community-based that are perceived as potentially affecting a large number of people. Examples of perceived crisis include perceived unsafe conditions such as rumors of client abuse or contagious diseases.

**Level 3 - Major Crisis.** A Major Crisis is an incident posing major risk to WACOSA staff, clients, visitors, or resources that has caused or has the potential for causing fatalities or injuries and/or major damage. Such an incident is expected to require activation of the Crisis Management and Response Plan and involvement by the CMT in order to provide an immediate emergency response. WACOSA may request assistance from the local city or county, other state agencies or request federal assistance. A Level 3 crisis may develop from incidents beginning at the Level 1 or 2 stages.

Examples of Level 3 Major Crises may include one or a combination of the following perils: active shooter, infectious disease, fire, explosion, severe weather conditions, building collapse, flood, wind, chemical release, city water contamination, major civil disturbance, bomb threat, barricade or hostage situation, or other acts of terrorism.

### **CRISIS MANAGEMENT TEAM (CMT)**

The Executive Director or their designee serves as the Team Leader and Spokesperson of the CMT. The Executive Director or their designee will either consult with or convene the CMT based on the crisis. The CMT will be convened for all Level 3 crises.

Members include:

- Executive Director – Crisis Management Team Leader and Spokesperson
- Sales & Marketing Director
- Director of Finance
- HR Manager/Director
- Development Manager
- Program Director(s)
- Facilities & Fleet Maintenance Manager (when appropriate)

*In the event of a crisis affecting a specific site or program, the Program Manager may be added to the Crisis Management Team. Consultation with the Whitney Senior Center Executive Director will be made at the discretion of WACOSA's Executive Director or their designee, as appropriate.*

The role of WACOSA's CMT during a crisis is to:

- Determine the scope and impact of the incident
- Prioritize emergency actions

- Deploy and coordinate resources and equipment
- Communicate critical information and instructions
- Monitor and reevaluate conditions
- Coordinate with government agencies (e.g., Waite Park/Stearns County, FEMA)
- Implement and monitor recovery operations
- Debrief following the crisis?

The Executive Director will, at their discretion, involve others inside or outside WACOSA, when specific technical expertise is warranted.

## **RESPONSIBILITY AND ACTIVATION**

The Crisis Management and Response Plan is under the control of the Executive Director or their designee, and will be activated for all Level 2 and Level 3 crises. Activating the Crisis Management and Response Plan for Level 1 Crises is at the discretion of the Executive Director or their designee.

## **SINGLE-SOURCE SPOKESPERSON**

All media relations, including social media, will be handled by the Executive Director of WACOSA or their designee. No employee, other than assigned, should speak on behalf of the organization, and must direct any newspaper, television, or radio reporters, parents, guardians, etc. to the Executive Director/designee. Requests for photographs, videotape footage, and so forth should also be directed to the Executive Director/designee.

## **CRITICAL ITEMS OFF-SITE STORAGE PLAN**

The following items will be stored off-site for access during a crisis:

- Crisis Management and Response Plan Policy binder (All Crisis Management Team Members)
  - Critical Contacts Lists
  - Communication Guide
  - Recovery Checklists
  - Data and Record Storage List
  - Transportation Inclement Weather Information
- Crisis Management and Response Plan Flash Drive (Admin Team Only)
  - Organizational Chart
  - Organization ID Numbers
  - Certificate of Exempt Status
  - Board of Directors List
  - Employee Contact Information (*per Sage*)
  - Clients with Additional Contact Information (*per AccStats*)
  - Client List by Case Managers (*per AccStats*)
  - Contract and Individuals Placement business contacts (*per AccStats*)
  - Work Crew Schedules
- Key for Safety Deposit Box (*Exec. Dir.'s home*) (*Fin. Dir. has copy on-site*)
- Building Plans (*Exec. Dir.'s home*)
- Keys for Vans (*Facilities & Fleet Manager's home*)
- Back-up Drives for Network (*Exec. Dir.'s home*)
- Location Videos (*Updated every 3 years*)

## IMPLEMENTATION

The following flowchart highlights the Crisis Management and Response Plan action plan. A detailed explanation of each phase of the plan based on the crisis level follows this chart.

Note: The Crisis Management and Response Plan assumes all safety protocols have been followed in accordance with WACOSA's AWAIR program and as practiced by monthly safety drills.



The steps documented may be done consecutively or, at times, may need to be performed concurrently. Crisis situations are fluid and may require impromptu plan adjustments as the situation unfolds. Speed is essential during each phase of the Crisis Management process, without sacrificing accuracy or due diligence for each of the steps noted in this plan.

**Level 1 – Limited Crisis:** (e.g. broken water pipe, damaged/vandalized vehicle, loss of heat or electricity for several hours, minor chemical or fuel spills, or a minor fire confined to a room.)

**Report:**

1. Executive Director (ED) is alerted regarding the crisis situation, in question. In the absence of the ED, the Program Director will fulfill the responsibilities of the ED.
2. The ED will decide the following:
  - a. If it is necessary to consult with the CMT
  - b. If it is necessary to convene the CMT
3. The situation will be documented on the **Crisis Management Fact Sheet/Log, located on page 13 of this policy**, and submitted it to the ED.

**Response:**

1. The ED or CMT will assess the scope of the crisis.
2. The ED or CMT will determine which of the following communication steps will be performed (refer to Crisis Management Communication Guide in the binder):
  - a. The ED or CMT will detail what will be communicated regarding the crisis to the following (where applicable):
    - Board of Directors
    - Employees
    - Clients, Client's Families and Care Givers
    - Business Customers
    - Media
  - b. The ED in collaboration with the Sales & Marketing Director and other CMT members, as appropriate, will develop appropriate communication methods (e.g. organization emails, memos, departmental briefings, site meetings or email blasts).
  - c. The ED in collaboration with the Sales & Marketing Director, will issue statements internally to WACOSA personnel and clients regarding the situation. Affected employees and clients will be informed about:
    - Changes in operations, schedules, hours etc.
    - Duration of any disruptions related to the crisis
    - Extent of the problem
  - d. If warranted, the ED will call subsequent Crisis Management Team meetings at his/her discretion, as the crisis unfolds/develops to ensure unity of purpose and to respond nimbly to changes, as needed.

**Recovery:**

1. Based on the initial assessment, the ED or CMT will oversee the recovery efforts for the following (refer to Crisis Management Recovery Checklists in the binder):
  - a. Insurance Carrier Notification
  - b. Building and/or Fleet Restoration
  - c. Technology Restoration

- d. Program and Vocational Services Restoration
- e. Other duties will be assigned as the situation warrants
2. The ED or CMT will continuously monitor the crisis situation, making adjustments in the response or recovery process, when necessary.

**Review:**

1. As the crisis situation subsides, the ED or CMT will debrief regarding effectiveness of the response and recovery process of the Crisis Management and Response Plan.
2. Using insights gleaned during debriefing, improvements in the Crisis Management and Response Plan will be made to prevent future issues from occurring, if possible.

**Level 2 Issue Driven Crisis:** (e.g. Client/staff deaths and/or injuries, criminal acts where clients/staff are victimized, and perceived crises.)

**Report:**

1. Executive Director (ED) is alerted regarding the crisis situation, in question. In the absence of the ED, the Program Director will fulfill the responsibilities of the ED.
2. The ED will convene the CMT.
3. The situation will be documented on the **Crisis Management Fact Sheet/Log, located on page 13 of this policy**, and submitted it to the ED.

**Response:**

1. The CMT will assess the crisis situation; what is known and what is being researched related to the issue in question. Research may take the form of interviewing staff or stakeholders or investigating pertinent facts related to the crisis situation at hand. Research notes will be committed to writing on the **Crisis Management Fact Sheet/Log, located on page 13 of this policy**.
2. The ED or CMT will determine which of the following communication steps need to be performed (refer to the Crisis Management Communication Guide in the binder):
  - a. Contact legal counsel to develop a position statement that will be used by WACOSA during the initial stages of the crisis. The legal firm used by WACOSA for such emergencies is Quinlivan & Hughes. As the crisis develops, counsel will amend WACOSA's position statement accordingly. The ED will respond to media and public outlets based upon this statement, without editorializing.
  - b. Detail what will be communicated regarding the crisis to the following:
    - Board of Directors
    - Employees
    - Clients, Client's Families and Care Givers
    - Business Customers
    - County
    - State
    - Public/Media
    - Person(s) injured (if any)
    - Ombudsman (if any injuries have occurred)
  - c. Issue statements internally to all WACOSA personnel and clients before outside organizations.



- d. The CMT will provide talking points to all Administrative Assistant staff at WACOSA. Administrative Assistants will refer all questions that arise to the ED for follow up.
  - e. The ED in collaboration with the Marketing and Communication Manager will develop communications methods, as needed, including organization emails, memos, departmental briefings, site meetings or email blasts.
  - f. To the extent that WACOSA personnel are called upon to comment on the crisis in question, WACOSA staff must not speak on WACOSA's behalf, in spite of pressure to do so by the media or other stakeholders, but must forward the concerns in question for follow up to the ED. Should CMT members be pressed to comment on the crisis at hand, such individuals will only convey information structured within the boundaries of the official position statement drafted by WACOSA's legal counsel.
  - g. WACOSA's ED will move quickly to correct any misrepresentations, factual errors or misquotes expressed by various media outlets. Corrections will be made through WACOSA's legal counsel or public relations agency, at the discretion of the ED, and directed at the entity providing the misleading or false information.
3. In the event of a serious injury of an employee or client while at WACOSA, the ED will assign or perform the following:
    - a. Determine the extent and nature of injuries.
    - b. Learn where the injured party is being taken.
    - c. Call the injured party's family to explain that there has been an accident and that the employee/client has been injured. If injury appears serious, inform the family member that we do not know the full extent of the injuries but we have someone in route to meet the ambulance/transport vehicle at the hospital. **Note: Information cannot be shared with individuals other than family members at the time of the crisis.**
    - d. The ED will select an appropriate employee to go to the injured person's home to lend assistance, if needed. Stay with the family as long as necessary to provide transportation to the hospital, find a babysitter, make calls for the family, etc.
    - e. Keep in contact with the hospital to learn as much about the issue as possible.
  4. In the event of a death of an employee or client while at WACOSA, the ED will assign or perform the following:
    - a. The ED or, in his/her absence, the Program Director, will inform spouse or family member of the accident and select an employee to assist in any manner needed (i.e. making calls, handling arrangements, etc.).
    - b. Designated employees should remain at the home until other family members arrive or as long as they are needed. It is his/her duty to protect the family from calls or visits from the media. Contact should be maintained with a relative or close friend of the spouse or family member through the time of the funeral to ensure all areas area being taken care of.
  5. The Program Director will contact the ombudsman's office in the event of a serious injury or death of a client. (121 7th PI E Ste 420, Saint Paul, MN 55101 · (651) 757-1800) and CARF at 1-800-444-8991.
  6. In the case of a fatality, or when three or more people are hospitalized, the HR Manager/Director will contact Minnesota OSHA at (651) 284-5050, [osha.compliance@state.mn.us](mailto:osha.compliance@state.mn.us).

7. The ED will call subsequent Crisis Management Team meetings at his/her discretion, as the crisis unfolds/develops to ensure unity of purpose and to respond nimbly to changes, as needed.
8. The HR Manager/Director will contact the employee assistance program, Vital WorkLife, to assist as needed.

**Recovery:**

1. Based on the initial assessment, the ED or CMT will assign tasks to the appropriate staff members when applicable (Refer to the Crisis Management Recovery Checklist in the binder):
  - a. Insurance Carrier Notification
  - b. Building and/or Fleet Restoration
  - c. Technology Restoration
  - d. Program and Vocational Services Restoration
  - e. Other duties will be assigned as the situation warrants
2. The ED or CMT will continuously monitor the crisis situation, making adjustments in the response or recovery process, when necessary.

**Review:**

1. As the crisis situation subsides, the ED or CMT will debrief regarding effectiveness of the response and recovery process of the Crisis Management and Response Plan.
2. Using insights gleaned during debriefing, improvements in the Crisis Management and Response Plan will be made to prevent future issues from occurring, if possible.

**Level 3 Major Crisis: (e.g. active shooter, infectious disease, fire, explosion, severe weather conditions, building collapse, flood, etc.)**

**Report:**

1. Executive Director (ED) is alerted regarding the crisis situation, in question. In the absence of the ED, the Program Director will fulfill the responsibilities of the ED.
2. The ED will convene the CMT at WACOSA in Waite Park if possible, otherwise at the home of the Executive Director. The team will refer to the Crisis Management and Response Plan binder.
3. The situation will be documented on the **Crisis Management Fact Sheet/Log, located on page 13 of this policy**, and submitted it to the ED.

**Response:**

1. The CMT will assess the crisis situation; what is known and what is being researched related to the issue in question. Research notes will be committed to writing on the **Crisis Management Fact Sheet/Log, located on page 13 of this policy**.
2. The ED or CMT will determine which of the following communication steps need to be performed (refer to the Crisis Management Communication Guide in the binder):
  - a. Contact legal counsel to develop a position statement that will be used by WACOSA during the initial stages of the crisis. The legal firm used by WACOSA for such emergencies is Quinlivan & Hughes. As the crisis develops, counsel will amend WACOSA's position statement accordingly. The ED will respond to media and public outlets based upon this statement, without editorializing.

- b. Detail what will be communicated regarding the crisis to the following:
    - Board of Directors
    - Employees
    - Clients, Client's Families and Care Givers
    - Business Customers
    - County
    - State
    - Public/Media
    - Person(s) injured (if any)
    - Ombudsman (if any injuries have occurred)
  - c. Issue statements internally to all WACOSA personnel and clients before outside organizations.
  - d. The CMT will provide talking points to all receptionist staff at WACOSA. Receptionists will refer all questions that arise to the ED for follow up.
  - e. The ED in collaboration with the Sales & Marketing Director will develop communications methods, as needed, including organization emails, memos, departmental briefings, site meetings or email blasts.
  - f. To the extent that WACOSA personnel are called upon to comment on the crisis in question, WACOSA staff must not speak on WACOSA's behalf, in spite of pressure to do so by the media or other stakeholders, but must forward the concerns in question for follow up to the ED. Should CMT members be pressed to comment on the crisis at hand, such individuals will only convey information structured within the boundaries of the official position statement drafted by WACOSA's legal counsel.
  - g. WACOSA's ED will move quickly to correct any misrepresentations, factual errors or misquotes expressed by various media outlets. Corrections will be made through WACOSA's legal counsel or public relations agency, at the discretion of the ED, and directed at the entity providing the misleading or false information.
3. In the event of a serious injury of an employee or client while at WACOSA, the ED will assign or perform the following: Script?
- f. Determine the extent and nature of injuries
  - g. Learn where the injured party is being taken
  - h. Call the injured party's family to explain that there has been an accident and that the employee/client has been injured. If injury appears serious, inform the family member that we do not know the full extent of the injuries but we have someone in route to meet the ambulance/transport vehicle at the hospital. **Note: Information cannot be shared with individuals other than family members at the time of the crisis.**
  - i. The ED will select an appropriate employee to go to the injured person's home to lend assistance, if needed. Stay with the family as long as necessary to provide transportation to the hospital, find a babysitter, make calls for the family etc.
  - j. Keep in contact with the hospital to learn as much about the issue as possible.
4. In the event of a death of an employee or client while at WACOSA, the ED will assign or perform the following:
- a. The ED or, in his/her absence, the Program Director, will inform spouse or family member of the accident and select an employee to assist in any manner needed (i.e. making calls, handling arrangements, etc.).

- b. Designated employees should remain at the home until other family members arrive or as long as they are needed. It is his/her duty to protect the family from calls or visits from the media. Contact should be maintained with a relative or close friend of the spouse or family member through the time of the funeral to ensure all areas area being taken care of.
5. The Program Director will contact the ombudsman's office in the event of a serious injury or death of a client. (121 7th PI E Ste 420, Saint Paul, MN 55101 · (651) 757-1800)
6. In the case of a fatality, or when three or more people are hospitalized, the HR Manager/Director will contact Minnesota OSHA at (651) 284-5050, [osha.compliance@state.mn.us](mailto:osha.compliance@state.mn.us).
7. The HR Manager/Director will contact the employee assistance program, Vital WorkLife, to assist as needed.
8. The ED will call subsequent Crisis Management Team meetings at his/her discretion, as the crisis unfolds/develops to ensure unity of purpose and to respond nimbly to changes, as needed.

#### **Recovery:**

1. Based on the initial assessment, the ED or CMT will assign tasks to the appropriate staff members when applicable (Refer to the Crisis Management Recovery Checklist in the binder):
  - a. Insurance Carrier Notification
  - b. Building and/or Fleet Restoration
  - c. Technology Restoration
  - d. Program and Vocational Services Restoration
  - e. Other duties will be assigned as the situation warrants
2. The ED or CMT will continuously monitor the crisis situation, making adjustments in the response or recovery process, when necessary.

#### **Review:**

1. As the crisis situation subsides, the ED or CMT will debrief regarding effectiveness of the response and recovery process of the Crisis Management and Response Plan.
2. Using insights gleaned during debriefing, improvements in the Crisis Management and Response Plan will be made to prevent future issues from occurring, if possible.

#### **ANNUAL CRISIS MANAGEMENT AND RESPONSE PLAN REVIEW:**

Annually, the HR Manager/Director and Administrative Team will review and update the Crisis Management and Response Plan. If changes are made, the Board HR Committee will meet and the Board of Directors will be informed the Crisis Management and Response Plan was revised. The Front Desk (Administrative Assistant) will update the contents of Memory Sticks four-times per year (in PDF formatting) and the Plan Binder contents one-time per year.

## CRISIS MANAGEMENT FACT SHEET/LOG

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

Approximate time/date of event: Time \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Person completing this report: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please print)

### **Basic information**

What happened?

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How did it happen? Cause?

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Where did it happen?

---

How was the incident reported?

---

### **People Involved**

Are all persons accounted for? Y N Explain:

---

---

Was anyone injured or killed? Y N Explain:

---

---

### **Risk Assessment**

How dangerous is the current situation?

---

What is the biggest hazard?

---

---

Is the hazard near people, facilities or other danger zones? Y N

Explain:

---

---

Is there any immediate danger? Evacuation needed? Y N

Explain:

---

---

What's being done to control the situation?

---

---

What teams/emergency personnel/equipment have been dispatched to assist?

---

---

What is being done to monitor the situation?

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Have media or authorities been notified? Y N If yes, which ones?

---

---

How will the incident impact WACOSA's overall operations? Y N

Explain:

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of person completing

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date