

Crisis Management Guidelines

Rotary is a 112-year-old organization with a strong, trusted brand. It is important we continue to protect our brand by minimizing risk. In the event of a crisis situation, we need to be able to respond effectively, keep involved parties and Rotary International informed, and use the media, if engaged, as a liaison to disseminate key messages. The organization's response to a crisis often has more impact on reputation than the event that precipitated the situation.

Should you experience a crisis situation during your year as Club President, take the following actions in the order listed. This list will help you handle the situation in an organized way that will mitigate risk to Rotary's reputation and brand:

1. Give priority attention to the care of the injured. Not all crisis situations will have injured.
2. Secure needed assistance . . . doctor, ambulance, fire, law enforcement.
3. Ensure the safety of persons and property.
4. Contact the current District Governor: _____,
Home: _____ or Cell: _____. In the event that you are unable to reach the District Governor, and it is urgent that you speak with a District representative, _____ will be a back-up contact and may be reached at Home: _____ or Cell: _____. Add these numbers to your contact list in your cell phone for future reference.
5. If the situation involves youth, you should also contact the current District Child Protection Officer: _____,
Home: _____ or Cell: _____ Add these number to your contact list in your cell phone for future reference.
6. Gather the facts before you speak to the District Governor and Child Protection Officer, if youth are involved. Your fact-based detailed report should include who, when, where, what happened, the current state of the crisis, and is media involved. Ensure the District Governor is fully briefed before referring the media to her/him.
7. The official statement you should make to the public or media at this time is:
"We are in the process of gathering the facts related to this matter and I am not in a position to answer questions at this time. We appreciate your interest and concern, and, once we complete our investigation, we will provide an appropriate statement. [If known at the time: Our designated spokesperson with respect to this matter will be _____, who may be reached at _____.]"

continued on next page

8. Keep the following in mind:
 - Do not bury your head in the sand. Pretending the problem does not exist will not make it go away. Be prepared to react quickly.
 - Do not panic. Stay calm and clearly define what has occurred. Avoid blame games or debates. Spend your initial time focused on establishing the nature and extent of the crisis, who it will affect, and what you need to do to manage the situation.
 - Get your facts straight – it is important to be able to demonstrate command of the situation and not to be confused, unclear, or unaware of the facts.
 - In conjunction with the District, help to manage the communication – there should only be one spokesperson with respect to any statements made on the crisis situation. If you are selected to be the point of contact, be prepared to communicate clearly, honestly, and as often as needed. Without clear communication, people will fill the void with rumors and speculation.
 - Be honest in everything you say and do (Remember the Four Way Test).
 - Do not play favorites with media or others. At the appropriate time, communications should be made clearly and concisely to all stakeholders.

9. Helpful reference materials to use in a crisis situation:
 - Rotary Clubs should follow the Rotary International Liability Policy, <https://www.rotary.org/myrotary/en/us-rotary-club-and-district-liability-insurance-program>
 - Active US Rotary clubs and districts are provided with a general liability. Information portal that is a protected website. Your user name and password will be provided to your club through the annual mailing. Insurance Portal's web address is <https://www.locktonportal.com/sites/rotary/resources>
 - Rotary Youth Protection Guide – <https://my.rotary.org/en/document/rotary-youth-protection-guide>
 - The Rotary International Code of Policies – <https://www.rotary.org/en/document/rotary-code-policies>
 - Your District Manual of Procedure may also be helpful.

When the District Governor receives your call, she/he will work with you to determine the severity of the crisis, contact Rotary International and add District Rotarians to the crisis team, as needed. A designated spokesperson will be named to handle future inquiries from Rotary International, the public, or media. At the conclusion of the crisis situation, a written report will be completed and approved by the District Governor for the District's records. Any recommended changes to the Crisis Management Plan will be reviewed for implementation.