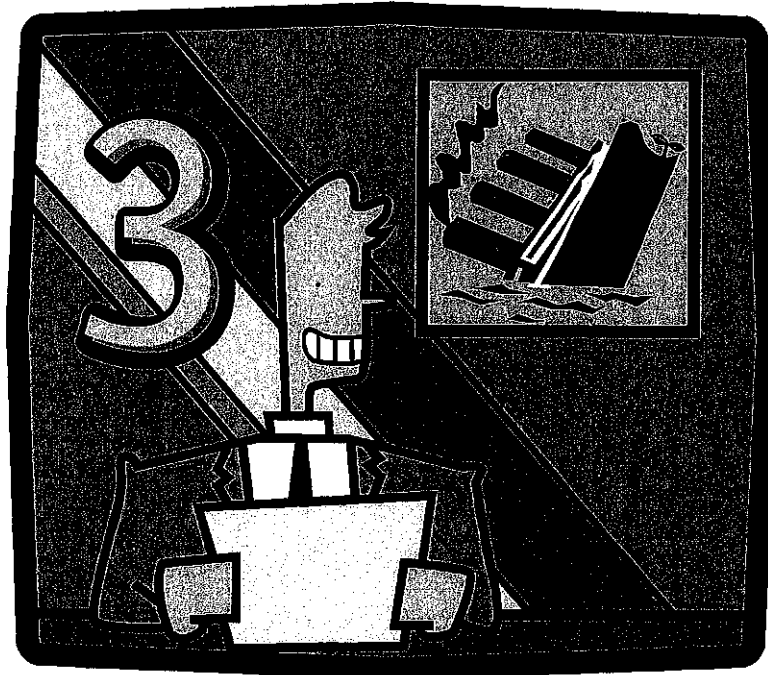


“If it Bleeds...It LEADS!”

Post-Disaster Media Interactions



Handouts:

- **Incident Brief Outline** - A reference to use following a disaster for communicating with employees, the community and the media.
- **Contact Lists** - A list of names, addresses and other contacts within the community, your company and the media.
- **Fact Sheet Outline** - A format for putting together your own media kits, what to include, etc.
- **Notification of a Serious Injury** - What to say to an employee's family when the employee has suffered a serious industrial injury.
- **Death Notification Procedure** - What to say and do to an employee's family when an employee has died at work.

Presented by:

Terry L. Tyson, CMSP
Lehigh Hanson

“If it Bleeds – It Leads” Post-Disaster Media Interactions Incident Brief Outline

Preparing an Incident Brief

To be used to share information internally, to brief employees, for reference in response to media inquiries and calls from neighbors or other community members.

- ◆ Prepare brief written answers to each of the following questions
- ◆ Ask for immediate corporate/upper management clearance of this information. FAX copy to company Community Affairs Manager (or other appropriate management person).

Statement of care/concern (for employees, environment, community, as appropriate)

What happened?

Is there any danger to the community?

What are you doing to contain the danger?

Is the problem under control?

Any injuries or fatalities?

(Do not release names prior to notification of next-of-kin.)

What caused the incident?

(Answer only if the cause is definitely known. Otherwise say, “we’re in the process of searching for the cause – as soon as we know, you’ll know.”)

Statement of care/concern (for employees, environment, community, as appropriate)

Remember: Don’t speculate or guess – just the facts!

"If it Bleeds – It Leads" Post-Disaster Media Interactions

Contact Lists

Media Contacts

- To create a local media list, use a yellow pages directory and look up "newspapers," "radio," and "television" outlets.
- Call and ask who would be most likely to handle news about your site (name and title.) Ask what is the best way to send information to that person (mail, fax, e-mail.)
- Include reporters who have covered your site or similar issues in the past.
- Occasionally you may want to share accomplishments or business news with industry publications such as business journals, trade magazines and association newsletters. Contact information is listed in the publication.

Media contacts change frequently. Watch for changes. CALL TO UPDATE THIS LIST EVERY SIX MONTHS

Local Newspaper(s)

NAME	PHONE	FAX	E-MAIL	ADDRESS
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Publication:
Editor:
Reporter:

Publication:
Editor:
Reporter:

Regional Newspaper(s)

NAME	PHONE	FAX	E-MAIL	ADDRESS
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Publication:
Editor:
Reporter:

Publication:
Editor:
Reporter:

Radio

NAME	PHONE	FAX	E-MAIL	ADDRESS
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Station:
News Director:

Station:
News Director:

"If it Bleeds – It Leads" Post-Disaster Media Interactions

Contact Lists

TV

NAME	PHONE	FAX	E-MAIL	ADDRESS
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Station:
News Director:

Station:
News Director:

Business Journal

NAME	PHONE	FAX	E-MAIL	ADDRESS
------	-------	-----	--------	---------

Publication:
Editor:

Publication:
Editor:

Trade Magazine

NAME	PHONE	FAX	E-MAIL	ADDRESS
------	-------	-----	--------	---------

Publication:
Editor:

Publication:
Editor:

Association Newsletter

NAME	PHONE	FAX	E-MAIL	ADDRESS
------	-------	-----	--------	---------

Publication:
Editor:

"If it Bleeds – It Leads" Post-Disaster Media Interactions Contact Lists

Community Contacts

Based on the nature of the situation, communicate the facts to the appropriate parties:

The facts from our company are always better than rumors. Be honest. Show your concern (not guilt) for those affected.

Family of any fatality

(In person only, never by phone!)

Family of any injured personnel

All site employees

All employees should leave the job site with a brief fact sheet describing the emergency and your response.

The local news media (see media contact list)

Regulatory Contacts:

Follow required notifications procedure

Plant Neighbors:

NAME	PHONE	FAX	E-MAIL
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Residential

Industrial

Government Authorities:

NAME	PHONE	FAX	E-MAIL
------	-------	-----	--------

Mayor/City Manager

County Supervisor/County Commissioner

State Senator

State Representative

U.S. Senators

Congressman

Industry Contacts:

NAME	PHONE	FAX	E-MAIL
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Customers

Suppliers

Other area operators

“If it Bleeds – It Leads” Post-Disaster Media Interactions

CONTACT CARD FORM

Preparing a Media/Emergency Contact Card

- Update staff information on a regular basis.
- These tips are useful for many community inquiries (neighbors, local government, etc.), not only media calls.
- For a specific incident or ongoing issue, keep your brief fact sheet on that topic with this card.
- The following form is designed for a 5.5" x 8.5" card, front and back. It can be reformatted for other sizes as desired.

(SITE NAME _____) COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

Designated Spokesperson (NAME)

Office:

Car:

Home:

Secretary:

Back-up Spokesperson (NAME)

Office:

Car:

Home:

Public Relations Spokesperson (NAME)

Office: 909-635-1826

Car: 909-318-9016

Home: 000-000-0000

Communication Spokesperson

Office: 000-000-0000

Car: 000-000-0000

Home: 000-000-0000

Company Assistance:

Public Relations Counsel

Other

When the media calls:

- ◆ Ask for the reporter's affiliation, telephone and deadline.
- ◆ Ask what the story is about. If the subject is not within your area of expertise, tell the reporter you'll have an appropriate person return the call. Then call that person or Community & Government Affairs office for guidance.
- ◆ If you are qualified to handle the interview, feel free to ask for time to prepare. Return the call promptly.

To prepare for the interview quickly:

Consider the audience you'll be reaching through the reporter. What are their likely concerns? What do they want to know?

- ◆ Make a short list of key points you want to convey.
- ◆ Think about potential questions. How can you convey your key messages while answering the questions.

During the interview:

State the most important facts first. Don't necessarily wait for the reporter to ask the question.

- ◆ Meet your objectives by answering the reporter's questions, then bridging to your key messages.
- ◆ Be honest and factual.
- ◆ Stick to your key points. Don't stray off track.
- ◆ Stay within your area of responsibility. Don't speak beyond your expertise.

Remember:

- ◆ You're the expert. You have the right to convey your key messages.
- ◆ Avoid saying "no comment." If you can't discuss something because it's proprietary or speculative, say so.

- ◆ Whenever you're in the presence of a reporter, assume your comments are ON the record.
- ◆ Correct rumors and misinformation.
- ◆ Avoid flip remarks or debates with reporters.
- ◆ At the end of the interview, try to restate your key message one last time.

After the interview:

- ◆ If you haven't already done so, contact upper management and/or your Public Affairs officer to keep them informed.
- ◆ Keep in mind that reporters will not submit stories for your review.
- ◆ If important new information occurs to you, call the reporter.
- ◆ Never feel that you are alone in dealing with the media. Community & Government Affairs staff is available to assist and advise you.

The overriding message should be:

Your organization works hard to protect people and the environment.

(FOR ALL PHONE ANSWERING STATIONS)

(SITE NAME _____) COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

Designated Spokesperson

Office:
Car:
Home:
Secretary:

Communication Spokesperson

Office: 000-000-0000
Car: 000-000-0000
Home: 000-000-0000

Back-up Spokesperson(s)

Office:
Car:
Home:

Company Assistance:

Public Relations Counsel
Other

Community Relations Spokesperson

Office: 909-635-1826
Car: 909-318-9016
Home: 000-000-0000

When taking a media call...

1. "The person who handles that is:
(NAME AND NUMBER(S)).

Do remain calm, do not become adversarial
Do act promptly
Don't let a media call go unanswered
Don't say anything you don't want repeated
Don't attempt to cover up

If the spokesperson isn't available...

2. "I'm going to do everything I can to get that person for you right now."
3. "To be sure we get the appropriate information for you:
"What is your name/number?"
"What is your organization?"
"What is your topic of interest?"
4. "To be sure we get back to you in time:
"Are you on deadline?"
"When do you need to hear back from us?"

If a member of the press visits your site...

"I'll take you to the person in charge of this project/incident."
"I'll get you in touch with the person in charge of media information right away."

DON'T SAY:

"This property is off-limits to the public."
"You're not allowed in that area."

"If it Bleeds – It Leads" Post-Disaster Media Interactions Fact Sheet Outline

Preparing a site fact sheet

Press releases answer the "who, what, where, when, why" about an event or activity, but reporters appreciate concise background material in writing that gives them facts about the operation to help flesh out their stories. We all have a record of excellence in safety programs, environmental safeguards and community involvement. We produce mineral products that are extremely important to society.

This information should be available to the news media at all times, and especially in the event of a crisis. Your operations deserve more than to be merely identified as the site of an accident.

- Keep the fact sheet available for quick reference for media, phone calls, local officials, tours etc.
- A fact sheet should be no longer than one page (run on to the back side only if absolutely necessary).
- A special project, event or emergency situation may need a separate fact sheet.
- It's a fact sheet. Avoid editorializing with statements like "Residents of Happyville just love living close to the (your facility)." Say, "(Your company name) has implemented extensive operational changes in response to issues raised at a series of neighborhood meetings held by plant management."
- Overriding message should be: **XZY (your organization) works hard to protect people and the environment.**

“If it Bleeds – It Leads” Post-Disaster Media Interactions Fact Sheet Outline

Use the following questions to outline information for your site's fact sheet:

Operations:

- What is produced? How is it used? Is there anything unique about the resource or products?

- Can you link production to local quality of life, significant area projects, etc?

- Give a very brief history of site, ownership, etc.

- What is the number of employees (if significant to the area)?

Environmental/Public Health and Safety Issues:

- Has the company responded to community issues by changing operations or adding mitigations not required by permit?

- What other mitigations are in place *that directly address community concerns?* (Consider traffic, visual screening or lighting, dust/air quality controls, habitat/wildlife/open space issues, noise/blasting.)

- If there has been a publicly recognized problem at the site, what is being done to correct or prevent a recurrence?

- Has the company been recognized for environmental or safety records?

“If it Bleeds – It Leads” Post-Disaster Media Interactions Fact Sheet Outline

- For mining operations: what is planned for reclamation?

Community Relations:

- What is the company's contributions to or involvement in *local organizations and events*? (Do not include affiliations with trade organizations, marketing councils, etc.)

- Has the company been recognized as a good corporate citizen?

Contact information

Site manager, phone number, address

Review your fact sheet information:

Does it follow the rules for all public communications for maintaining and improving public relations?

- Does the information acknowledge the public as a legitimate partner in our business?
- Is the information written in terms clear to anyone outside of your industry? (Do not use technical terms – if unavoidable, provide a brief definition.)
- Does it address the community's specific concerns?
- Does it sound honest, frank and open?
- Can you quote or refer to other credible sources?
- Does it meet the needs of the media by being brief and well-organized?

Notification of a Serious Injury

1. Call the family if the injury is serious or go to the home to notify in person if the injury is critical, life-threatening.
2. Introduce yourself and ask them if they are related to your employee. "Are you the wife of Joe?" Do not ask anything of a child except to ask to speak with an adult. If they are not related, indicate that they were the emergency contact person given by the employee.
3. Tell them that their family member has been involved in a serious accident. Tell them that he/she has been transported to the hospital for treatment. "Joe was involved in an accident today and has been transported to General Hospital."
4. Do not speculate as to the extent of the injury as a doctor is the only person who can adequately assess or advise them of this. If you do know what body part has been injured, you may tell them for example, "Joe was involved in a crane accident and his hand was injured. Doctors are treating him now. I do not know how serious it is."
5. If you are calling, have clear directions of how to get to the hospital from their home. If you are driving, you may provide written directions to them, even if they are following you to the hospital. Use Mapquest.com if desired.
6. Ask them if there is anyone you can contact to help them with children, etc. Offer to contact clergy, friends or other family members who may need to be notified.
7. If they are meeting you there, tell them how to recognize you, "I will be wearing a hardhat, a blue shirt and have a beard."
8. Once there, refrain from providing them any detailed qualitative medical information, since these situations are somewhat fluid. Get them in contact with a nurse or doctor who may know more of the employee's condition.
9. If asked about the accident, be very general as your investigation is still ongoing. "We are investigating what happened exactly, but the crane he was operating toppled. We were able to get to him and get him treatment. Our main concern now is Joe."
10. Assure the family that he is receiving excellent care and that the paramedics made him comfortable on his ride to the hospital.
11. If the condition is serious, it is advised that a company representative stay with the family until the employee is stable and/or able to see his family.
12. Before leaving, provide the family with all of the company personnel who may contact them or who they can contact for further information.
13. Call back the next day. If you have talked to your employee, tell his/her family so and anything your employee might have said or asked for. Reiterate your willingness to assist them in any way possible. Tell them that the insurance company has been contacted and if you know the name and phone number of the insurance adjuster, provide them with that information.
14. Advise the employee and the family that government investigators may contact them. Advise them of the agency and any name you may have.
15. Visit the employee as much as possible to check up on them. If you cannot go in person and the employee can take calls, contact them by phone. Answer any questions they ask.
16. Refrain from speculating as to the cause of the accident until the investigation is complete.
17. Make sure any witnesses have been contacted regarding post-traumatic stresses.

Death Notification Procedure

1. The coroner or medical examiner is absolutely responsible for determining the identity of the deceased.
2. Notify in person. Don't call. Do not take any possessions of the victim to the notification. If there is absolutely no alternative to a phone call, arrange for a professional, neighbor, or a friend to be with the next of kin when the call comes.
3. Take someone with you (for example, someone who was at the scene, human resource staff, clergy). Next of kin have been known to suffer heart attacks when notified. If a large group is to be notified, have a large team of "notifiers".
4. Talk about your reactions to the death with your team member(s) before the notification to enable you to better focus on the family when you arrive. If you know that the family speaks a language other than your own, bring someone along who speaks that language, even a co-worker, to translate.
5. Present credentials and ask to come in.
6. Sit down, ask them to sit down, and be sure you have the nearest next of kin (do not notify siblings before notifying parents or spouse). Never notify a child. Never use a child as a translator.
7. Use the victim's name... *"Are you the wife of Joe?"*
8. Inform simply and directly with warmth and compassion.
 - Do not use expressions like "expired," "passed away," or "we've lost _____."
 - Sample script: *"I'm afraid I have some very bad news for you." Pause a moment to allow them to "prepare." "Joe has been involved in a serious accident and he has died." Pause again. "I am so sorry." Adding your condolence is very important because it expresses feelings rather than facts, and invites them to express their own.*
9. Continue to use the words "dead" or "died" through ongoing conversation. Continue to use the victim's name, not "body" or "the deceased."
10. Do not blame the victim in any way for what happened, even though he/she may have been fully or partially at fault.
11. Do not discount feelings, theirs or yours. Intense reactions are normal. Expect fight, flight, freezing, or other forms of regression. If someone goes into shock have them lie down, elevate their feet, keep them warm, monitor breathing and pulse, and call for medical assistance.
12. Join the survivors in their grief without being overwhelmed by it. Do not use clichés. Helpful remarks are simple, direct, validate, normalize, assure, empower, express concern. *Examples: "I am so sorry." "It's harder than people think." "Most people who have gone through this react similarly to what you are experiencing." "If I were in your situation, I'd feel very <upset, angry, confused, etc.> too."*
13. Answer all questions honestly (requires knowing the facts before you go). Do not give more detail than what is asked for, but be honest in your answers. If you do not know or uncertain in any way of how the death occurred, tell them *"We are still investigating the accident, because we are not sure at this time."* You may want to add, *"When we find out, we will definitely let you know as soon as possible."* But if you do know, tell them honestly but briefly, *"Joe was working on some electrical equipment and was electrocuted."*
14. Offer to make calls, arrange for child care, call clergy, relatives or their employer. Provide them with a list of the calls you make as they will have difficulty remembering what you have told them.
15. Do not leave survivors alone. Arrange for someone to come and wait until they arrive before leaving.
16. When leaving, let him/her or them know you will check back the next day to see how they are doing and if there is anything else you can do for them. Give them your business card or your name and number written on a card for their future use.

17. Call and visit again the next day. If the family does not want you to come, spend sometime on the phone and re-express willingness to answer all questions. They will probably have more questions than when they were first notified.
18. Ask the family if they are ready to receive "Name's" possessions. Honor their wishes. Possessions should be presented neatly in a box and not in a trash bag. Clothing might need to be cleaned thoroughly to eliminate bad odor or stains. When the family receives the items, explain what the box contains and the condition of the items so they will know what to expect when they decide to open it.
19. Attend the funeral if possible. This will mean a great deal to the family.
20. Involve the Human Resources Department or your company's medical benefits coordinator to assist them should family members experience a crisis reaction that is beyond your response capability.
21. Debrief your own personal reactions with caring and qualified disaster mental health personnel on a frequent and regular basis - don't try to carry the emotional pain all by yourself, and don't let your emotions and the stress you naturally experience in empathizing with the bereaved build into a problem for you.

Edited from a curriculum developed by "Mothers Against Drunk Driving" posted on the website of the Nat'l Center for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and other sources.