

# CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

CALIFORNIA STATE LANDS  
PREVENTION FIRST CONFERENCE

SEPTEMBER, 27&28, 2016  
LONG BEACH, CA



# CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

- ▶ FedEx – School Bus Accident
- ▶ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KZBKsJaMirc>
  
- ▶ Walmart –Tracy Morgan
- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sae5lhqV74s>
  
- ▶ Train Derailment in Canada
- ▶ <http://www.weather.com/news/news/north-dakota-oil-by-rail-investigation>

# THE WORK WITH STAKEHOLDERS COMES BEFORE AN INCIDENT

Someone once said:

**You can not plow and  
harvest a field in one  
season.**

# WHAT SHOULD YOU NAME AN INCIDENT

**Don't try to be clever.**

**Your crisis is not an event**

**Event is a music festival or an  
incredible wedding party.**

## STAKEHOLDERS WANT THE RP TO:

- ▶ **Take responsibility**
- ▶ **Do everything they can to remedy the situation quickly.**
- ▶ **Act in a way that shows they care.**

## STAKEHOLDERS WILL LOOK FOR:

- ▶ **How quickly you respond**
- ▶ **How well you respond (the amount of resources brought into the response, the timing and the cleanup job.**
- ▶ **How well you communicate with the stakeholders**

## COMMUNICATE WITH ALL THE STAKEHOLDERS:

- ▶ **The media**
- ▶ **The community**
- ▶ **The elected officials & the agencies**
- ▶ **The NGOs**

## THE MEDIA NEEDS THE STORY:

- ▶ **What happened**
- ▶ **What is happening now**
- ▶ **What is going to happen next**

## THE COMMUNITY NEEDS TO KNOW:

- ▶ **If they are safe**
- ▶ **Who covers their damages and how do they file a claim**
- ▶ **When do things get back to normal**
- ▶ **When can they go back to the impacted areas, open their businesses, go to the Beach, etc.**

## THE ELECTED PEOPLE NEED TO KNOW:

- ▶ **What should they tell their constituents**
- ▶ **Who is responsible**
- ▶ **How can they avoid a repeat**
- ▶ **Who is going to cover the damages of their constituents**

## THE NGOS WANT TO KNOW:

- ▶ What is being done to protect the natural resources
- ▶ What and which natural resources or wildlife has been impacted
- ▶ How long is it going to take to mitigate the environmental impact

# COMMUNICATIONS

- ▶ **How much?**
- ▶ **How often?**
- ▶ **What channels of communication?**

# COMMUNICATIONS

**Depends on duration of response and sensitivity of the community and the environment.**

# COMMUNICATION TOOLS

- ▶ Press releases
- ▶ Fact sheets
- ▶ Updates
- ▶ Community outreach
  - ▶ Door-to door
  - ▶ Town hall
  - ▶ Neighborhood meetings

## COMMUNICATION TOOLS

- ▶ Website
- ▶ Tweeter
- ▶ Facebook
- ▶ All of the above

RESPONDING TO MEDIA  
FIRST RESPONDER'S PRIORITY

- ▶ First responder's priority during an incident is to assess the safety of the environment and the people.

RESPONDING TO MEDIA  
FIRST RESPONDER'S PRIORITY

- ▶ If safe, then is to try minimizing the impact to human life, the environment and property by securing the source of the problem, and mitigating the impact of the incident.

## KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER WHEN SPEAKING TO THE MEDIA

- ▶ **Use common sense**
- ▶ **Don't get pressured to give instant interviews. Ask for some time.**
- ▶ **Take time to answer every question. Count to 5 and use the time to think before answering**

## KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER WHEN SPEAKING TO THE MEDIA

- ▶ **Tell the truth**
- ▶ **Be confident**
- ▶ **Deliver a message**

## KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER WHEN SPEAKING TO THE MEDIA

- ▶ **Speak in simple, non-technical sentences**
- ▶ **Be brief, succinct, specific and accurate**
- ▶ **Give credit to others**

## KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER WHEN SPEAKING TO THE MEDIA

- ▶ **Apologize for the incident and express your sadness**
- ▶ **Stick to the facts**
- ▶ **Don't speculate**

## KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER WHEN SPEAKING TO THE MEDIA

- ▶ **Don't make up answers**
- ▶ **Don't arrive to conclusions or give an opinion**
- ▶ **Don't make commitments you can not deliver**

## LAST THOUGHTS

- ▶ **Don't say things that you need to apologize for later**
- ▶ [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/06/02/bp-ceo-tony-hayward-apologizes-life-back\\_n\\_597966.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/06/02/bp-ceo-tony-hayward-apologizes-life-back_n_597966.html)

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