



# **PA Planning Process -**

## ***Hands-On Crisis Communication Planning***

**2008 PAO Academy**

**Presented by:**

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Squadron PAO**

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# Quotations on Planning

**A goal without a plan is just a wish.**

Antoine de Saint-Exupery *French writer (1900 - 1944)*

**Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men's blood...Make big plans, aim high in hope and work.**

Daniel H. Burnham *US architect & city planner (1846 - 1912)*



# Developing a Crisis Communication Plan

## *STEP 1 - ESTABLISH CRISIS COMMUNICATION TEAM & ROLES*

It's not enough to have names and phone numbers of people who you could call on in a time of crisis. You do need that, of course, but the members of this team need to be 100% on board with pre-assigned, very clear duties and well-defined roles far in advance of any crisis.



## ***Your team members should:***

- **Be experienced CAP officers who have CAP's best interest at heart.**
- **Be willing to undergo training and planning for their individual role.**
- **Be proactive, self-starters who can be trusted to jump into motion quickly, confidently and competently when they are needed.**



## Suggested Roles for each Crisis Communication Team

- *Spokesperson (usually PAO)*
- *Assistant to spokesperson*
- *Command or media center coordinator*
- *Community groups/support liaison*
- *Government/Military liaison*
- *Phone bank workers*
- *Media coverage collector*
- *Scenario planner*
- *Press release & speech writer*
- *Team training coordinator*



## ***STEP 2 - SECURE POSSIBLE LOCATIONS FOR COMMAND/MEDIA CENTER***

**You may be surprised at the massive influx of personnel, media, phone calls, requests and demands that follow a crisis. You will need a central location to use for coordinating all the people and projects that will be convening in your area. You can use this center as a place to hold press briefings, receive updates and/or as a mission base.**



**Your command center location should be:**

- **Available with little-to-no notice.**
- **Already equipped with Internet connections, telephone lines and other appropriate technology.**
- **As centrally located as possible in your city.**



## Action Steps

- 1) Choose at least 2 possible sites for a command & media center.***
- 2) Obtain letters of permission/access from those who normally oversee or use the location stating that the room can be used by your local unit, Wing or Region in the event of a crisis. Be sure these letters include specific information and processes for obtaining entry, setting up hotlines, etc.***
- 3) Maintain communication with your contacts at the location throughout the year so that when a crisis occurs, everyone already knows each other and what to do.***



## **STEP 3 - MAINTAIN UP-TO-DATE CONTACT INFORMATION**

**Aside from having your team, their roles and their contact information in place, it is also imperative that you have a current list of home, work and cell numbers for key officials within CAP and other appropriate parties.**



## Your contact list should:

- Be up to date at all times.
- Be available in printed and electronic formats.
- Already be distributed to key personnel before any crisis occurs.
- Include your local unit, Wing or Region crisis communication team and other local, regional and national CAP officials.
- Include local, state and national emergency and community service personnel.



## Your contact list should (continued):

- Include local media contacts.
- Include command/media center contacts.
- Always have a date label for when it was last updated.
- Always be labeled **//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY//** due to the sensitive nature of the information. Be sure to warn users not to distribute it beyond the crisis communication team!



# Action Steps

- 1) Assign a specific member of your crisis communication team to be in charge of the official contact list.*
- 2) Organize your list by category (team, CAP officials, emergency officials, community service organizations, media, possible command centers, etc.)*
- 3) Be sure to include the pre-assigned roles beside each member of your crisis communication team's contact information.*
- 4) Give printed contact directories to each member of your crisis communication team.*
- 5) Update your list quarterly and other times as appropriate. Double check contact name and information at least quarterly so that when something happens, you are certain you have the correct person at each agency or media outlet.*



## **STEP 4 - ANTICIPATE CRISIS SCENARIOS**

**You and your team should work together to identify potential crises for your local unit, Wing or Region. See Section III of the CAP Public Affairs Crisis Policy for more information about types of crises and ideas for potential scenarios. Think through your potentials carefully and write out at least three that might affect your area. Be sure to include at least one sudden, unpredictable crisis and one smoldering crisis as outlined in the CAP Public Affairs Crisis Policy.**



## **Your crisis scenarios should:**

- **Be as detailed as possible.**
- **Be relevant to your area of the country. (Is your locale subject to floods, wildfires, hurricanes, earthquakes, tornadoes, etc.?)**
- **Include at least one natural disaster or other sudden scenario.**
- **Include a missing pilot or missing person scenario, as these are quite common and occasionally become national stories.**
- **Include at least one smoldering/ongoing/lingering crisis such as impropriety, fraud disclosures, etc.**



# Action Steps

- 1) Think through what type of natural disaster is most likely to affect your local unit, Wing or Region.**
- 2) Write a brief synopsis of events as if the natural disaster you chose has actually already occurred.**
- 3) Next, write a brief paragraph outlining a missing person or missing pilot search as if it is currently underway. Make your scenario as real and as big as possible.**
- 4) Finally, write out a brief narrative as if someone in your local unit, Wing or Region has caused a smoldering crisis. Obviously, you'll want to be careful to use fictional characters here.**



## **STEP 5 - DEVELOP ACTION PLANS FOR YOUR CRISIS SCENARIOS**

**Anticipating a crisis is only part of true preparedness. It's the careful planning for how to respond that will make the difference. Once you've listed out potential scenarios, it's time to develop an action plan for how to respond in each case.**



## **Your crisis scenarios should:**

- **Correspond with each of your pre-determined crisis scenarios.**
- **Include gathering and double-checking the facts.**
- **Convene the crisis communication team as soon as possible.**
- **Establish the command/media center as soon as possible.**
- **Include applicable safety precautions for each situation. (Are you likely to lose electricity, water or phone service? Will people's lives be in danger as you respond?)**
- **Include pre-written press releases that can be easily adapted when/if the scenario comes to fruition.**
- **Include a timeline for response activities as appropriate to each scenario.**



# Action Steps

- 1) Revisit each of the potential crisis scenarios you outlined in step 4 and answer the following questions for each one:***
  - Who is responsible for gathering the initial facts? Who will double-check the facts?***
  - Which of your potential command/media center options is most appropriate for this crisis scenario?***
  - What safety precautions should you consider in the event of such a crisis? Consider safety for all involved (i.e.: CAP personnel, community at large, media, etc.).***



# Action Steps (Continued)

- *What initial press releases will need to be developed so you can respond rapidly to this crisis? Who will write these?*
  - *What are the best methods of communication for a situation like this?*
  - *What will you do if you lose electricity, water or phone service?*
  - *Is there an urgency of time in saving lives? Does one thing need to happen before something else, etc.?*
- 2) Use the answers to the questions above to formulate a plan of action under each of the scenarios you listed in step 4.*



## STEP 6 - COMPILE A CRISIS KIT

You now have several lists compiled and locations secured. You have clear plans of action for potential crises as well as initial press releases that can be used in each situation. All these lists and resources will be invaluable if/when a crisis strikes. It is important to have them all together in one location at all times. You will also want to compile any other items you can identify that will be helpful or needed during a crisis. Remember, the better prepared you are ahead of time, the easier your job will be when a situation arises. Put all the resources you can in one place, clearly labeled “crisis kit.”



## Your crisis kit should include:

- Crisis communication team contact/role list
- Potential command/media centers list
- Complete crisis contact list
- Printed out crisis scenarios & action plans
- Pre-written press releases that can be adapted as appropriate
- Complete local unit, Wing or Region member list
- CD with all of the above lists in electronic format



## Physical response necessities such as:

- Several legal pads
- Pens
- Local, city and state maps
- Press badges
- Sheets of letterhead
- Two-way radios
- Weather gear
- Laptop computer\*
- Cell phone\*
- GPS-enabled device for navigation\*
- Generator\*



## **Crisis Kit (Continued)**

- 1) Assign a member of your crisis communication team to be in charge of maintaining the crisis kit.***
- 2) Review the list above and add any additional items you may need for your particular crisis scenarios.***
- 3) Collect all the items in your list and put them in a safe, secure, easily accessible and well-marked place. Make sure several different members of your team know where the kit is at all times.***
- 4) Compile a content list of items in your crisis kit.***
- 5) This content list becomes part five of your Crisis Communication Plan.***



# Summary of Crisis Communication Plan Development Steps

**STEP 1 – ESTABLISH CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS TEAM & ROLES**

**STEP 2 - SECURE POSSIBLE LOCATIONS FOR COMMAND & MEDIA CENTER**

**STEP 3 – MAINTAIN UP-TO-DATE CONTACT INFORMATION**

**STEP 4 – ANTICIPATE CRISIS SCENARIOS**

**STEP 5 – DEVELOP ACTION PLANS FOR CRISIS SCENARIOS**

**STEP 6 – COMPILE A CRISIS KIT**



# **Crisis Communication Plans**

**The Real World**



# The Dennis Steinbock Mission

June 18 – 20, 2007





# **PA Mission Resources**

CAPR 190-1

**Public Affairs Plan (Mississippi Wing Specific)**

**CRISIS Communication Plan (State of Mississippi Specific)**



# How we executed the PA Mission during the Steinbock Rescue





# Key Players in the PA Mission During the Rescue

**Proactive and Knowledgeable Incident  
Commander**

**Proactive and Knowledgeable Wing Commander  
and Command Staff**

**Wing Public Affairs Officer**

**CAP National Headquarters PA Staff**



# Key PA Resources for the PA Mission

**Cell Phones**

**Portable Laptop Computer**

**Mission Ready Press Release Templates**

**Updated Media Contact Listing  
(Continuity/Resource Book)**

**Knowledge of the Media Culture**



## First Contact with the Media

**Within 1 hour after end of mission, made first contact with *Herald and News* in Klamath Falls, Oregon (hometown of Mr. Steinbock)**

**They had asked for updates during the mission**

**Cell Phone interview between CAP Public Affairs Officer and Steve Miller of *News and Herald*. PAO was in Hilton Head, SC (importance of mobile wireless resources)**

**Asked Steve Miller about deadlines**

**Followed up Phone Conversation with Official News Release for AP Wire. Laptop Computer in Hotel Room with Press Release Template**



## Next Day Media Onslaught

**Press Release from Previous Night was distributed on the AP Wire Service and triggered a national media onslaught.**

**The news of a Pilot that had survived 50 hours in the wilderness after his plane crashed was newsworthy.**

**MSWG Public Affairs Officer spent approximately 6 hours handling media requests during the first day of the media coverage following the successful mission.**



## **Next Day Media Onslaught**

***Spoke with the following Media Representatives:***

***“Inside Edition” – National TV News Magazine***

***WHBQ Fox 13 News – Memphis***

***KATU News 2 – Portland, Oregon***

***WREG TV – Memphis (Conducted extended live interview with Col. Carroll and Col. Smalley)***

***University of Memphis Alumni Association Public Affairs***



## Next Day Media Onslaught (Cont.)

**Maintained Constant Contact with MSWG Command Staff**

**Due to National Media Focus, consulted with CAP National HQ Public Affairs Personnel**

**Reviewed Public Affairs Protocol and National Directives**

**Drafted a Mission Fact Sheet to use as reference for Media Interviews**

**Printed CAP Fact Sheet for General Information**



## Concern Mr. Steinbock and Family

**Amidst the Media Onslaught, we paused to contact Family of Mr. Steinbock to provide vital information to them.**

**The following CAP personnel also contacted the Family:**

**Col. Carroll, MSWG Chaplain Ken Pollock, Oregon Wing Chaplain**

**The Media was requesting interviews with Mr. Steinbock and we acted to protect his privacy**



## Day 2 of Media Onslaught

**Contacted by Representatives of the National TV News Show “Studio B” of Fox News.**

**Scheduled a Live interview with Shephard Smith of “Studio B” for 1545 on Friday Afternoon.**

**Gathered Resources (mission fact sheets, etc.) and Prepared for interview**

**Was pre-empted by Space Shuttle landing and interview was cancelled**



## Day 3 of Media Onslaught

**Contacted by Representatives of the National TV News Show “*Good Morning America*”**

**They requested a live interview with Mr. Steinbock and photos of the crash scene/rescue footage**

**Mr. Steinbock agreed to interview with “*Good Morning America*”**



## Day 4 of Media Onslaught

**Mr. Steinbock was interviewed by the National TV News Show “*Good Morning America*”**

**Gave Credit to Civil Air Patrol for their outstanding work during the rescue, but footage was edited out.**



## The Media Just Wouldn't Quit

**After Initial Media Blitz, there were countless web stories of this rescue. I stopped counting at 50 different websites with references to this story.**



CIVIL AIR PATROL



**Volunteer**

*Everyday Heroes of the U.S. Air Force Auxiliary*

**CAP Wanted to provide Mr. Steinbock with an opportunity to tell his story to the national membership and to the magazine's constituent audiences.**

**MSWG PAO worked with the National HQ PA Staff to publish article for the *CAP Volunteer Magazine*. You can view a copy of this article at:**

**[http://www.cap.gov/documents/CAP\\_Volunteer\\_SeptOct\\_2007\\_hirespdf.pdf](http://www.cap.gov/documents/CAP_Volunteer_SeptOct_2007_hirespdf.pdf)**



## Summary of Media Contacted:

**ABC News (national)**

**CBS News (national)**

**Fox News (national)**

**“Inside Edition”**

**“Good Morning America”**

**“Studio B with Shephard Smith”**

**USA Today**

**WREG-TV (Memphis)**

**WHBQ-TV (Memphis)**

**News and Herald (Klamath Falls, OR)**

**KATU-TV (Portland, OR)**

**University of Memphis Alumni Association**



## **Current Media Projects:**

**Mr. Steinbock has agreed to submit manuscript to a major New York Publishing house for his story.**

**Title of Book, “Miracle in Mississippi”**

**There has been some discussion of a potential movie project.**



# Questions and Answers

