CERC IMMEDIATE RESPONSE CHECKLIST

Steps to take when crisis hits:

1) Verify situation: Determine the magnitude of the event as quickly as possible. Checkpoints:	
	Get the facts.
	What was the source of the information?
	How credible is the information source?
	Was information obtained from additional sources to put event into perspective?
	Is the information consistent with other sources?
	Is the characterization of the event plausible?
	If necessary, was the information clarified through a subject information expert?
2) Conduct notifications: Contact and brief those within and outside your organization who need to know. Have the following been notified and briefed:	
	Appropriate persons in your organization (your core team, senior management group, communication team)?
	Elected officials at all levels?
	Appropriate local and county agencies?
	Appropriate state agencies?
	Appropriate federal agencies?
	Other relevant groups (board members, clients, residents, etc.)?
3) Assess level of crisis: Determine the degree and intensity of the event to determine the communication response? Checkpoints:	
	Has a crisis level (A,B,C,D) been identified that corresponds to the event characteristics?
	Have the hours of operation for the communication team been established?
	Has jurisdiction over information been established?
	Were the specific audience concerns addressed?
	Will federal agencies release information? or will states?
4) Organize assignments: activate your ERC plan. Checkpoints:	
	Do all personnel understand their role and their immediate tasks?
	Were specific assignments given to each team member?
	Have all experts/spokespeople been well-informed?
	Have all staff been briefed and prepared, in case they are approached by the media?

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5) Prepare information and obtain approvals: Get agreement on the information content, develop it, and get it approved for release. Checkpoints:
Have you planned for a timely release?
Has the accuracy of all information been checked?
Does the message show compassion?
Were the specific audience concerns addressed?
Does the message meet the criteria of good message development?
Have you anticipated media questions and developed answers?
Has the message been cleared for release?
6) Release info to public: Decide on the frequency of information release, how it will be done, and who will speak. Checkpoints:
Have you released information as quickly as possible?
Was the same information given to all media at the same time?
Was the information released to other groups as planned? (partners, legislators, special interest groups, etc.)
Was the information released through other channels as planned? (web, 800 #, mailings, meetings, etc.)
7) Monitor, maintain, and make adjustments for the remaining life of the crisis:
Are experts/spokespeople regularly updated and briefed?
Is media coverage being monitored (to determine what messages are still needed, what misinformation needs correcting, and to identify concerns, interests, and needs arising from the crisis as it is being reported)?
Are mechanisms in place to monitor audience feedback (e.g., public information call analysis)?
Who is providing feedback to leadership?

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