



Crisis Management Plan

2018

Purpose

An LSC crisis may occur in a number of different situations including times when the integrity or reputation of Georgia Swimming is threatened by adverse or negative attention; when, in the eyes of the media, general public, or its membership, Georgia Swimming did not react to a given situation in an appropriate or timely manner. During these times, it is vital that Georgia Swimming effectively manages communication through a formal, clearly defined channel in order to mitigate the crisis or any serious negative repercussions while maintaining its reputation of leadership and transparency.

Under nonprofit governance laws, the members of the Georgia Swimming Board of Directors have the duty to exercise a high standard of care in managing the business of the organization. In an emergency, this duty extends to ensuring that the assets of the organization are protected and helping the organization manage its communications with key stakeholders, members, strategic partners, employees, news media, and the community. The board's responsibility prior to a crisis is twofold: (1) to be sure there is a crisis management plan in place and (2) to know and understand its own role in helping the organization through a crisis.

Process

1. Notification
 - a. The Executive Director and General Chair should be immediately notified of any impending or existing crisis by staff and/or board members of Georgia Swimming.
2. Assessment of the Situation
 - a. Upon receiving notification of an impending or existing crisis, the General Chair will assess the situation or appoint a Member of the Georgia Swimming Board of Directors to initiate the assessment. Assessment of the situation will proceed as follows:
 - i. Determine what happened.
 - ii. Determine when and where it happened.
 - iii. Determine who is affected.
 - iv. Identify why it happened and what/who caused it.
 - v. Investigate and assess the reaction to the incident.
 - vi. Determine possible repercussions of the incident.
 - vii. Interview and collect all facts and documents from those affected.
 - viii. Determine when more information might become available.
 - b. Georgia Swimming Board Members should have the General Chair or the appointed Board Member's contact information and supply him/her with any pertinent information related to the crisis as soon as he/she is made aware of it.
3. Activation of the Crisis Communication Team
 - a. Depending on the situation, the General Chair will convene the primary and/or primary & secondary Crisis Communication Team(s) via conference call or in-person meeting.
 - i. The crisis communication team will be alerted by a phone call; use of email is discouraged. It is imperative that the General Chair has up-to-date contact information for all members of the crisis management teams.
 - ii. The General Chair may engage others in the process based on the situation.
 - iii. If necessary, the General Chair will designate a location to serve as the crisis center.
4. Crisis Communication Team
 - a. Before Going Public

- i. Based on information gathered and presented by the General Chair, the Crisis Communication Team will assess the situation, determine the facts, and begin planning.
 - ii. Questions to be answered include:
 - 1. What is the situation?
 - 2. What will happen next?
 - 3. Who on staff/Board needs to be involved?
 - 4. What immediate steps need to be taken?
 - 5. What is known and who already knows it?
 - 6. Is there potential public interest?
 - 7. Who will be affected?
 - 8. What are people feeling – what emotions need to be considered?
 - 9. What information is needed and who beyond Board and staff needs to get it? When will it be available?
 - 10. What should Georgia Swimming do about it? Proactive vs. reactive?
 - 11. What resources are needed to manage the crisis? Is legal or PR counsel needed?
 - iii. The crisis communications team will formulate an appropriate response to the crisis.
 - 1. Determine what can and cannot be said.
 - 2. Develop a factual, responsive message.
 - 3. Construct an appropriate script to be used by the staff, Board Members, etc.
 - iv. The Crisis Communication Team will construct a plan/process and timetable that appropriately address the crisis.
 - 1. Determine if the desired approach should be proactive or reactive.
 - 2. Determine who will deliver the response (usually the trained Spokesperson).
 - 3. Determine how the response should be communicated. For example, constructing a statement to post on the website, email to membership, and/or distribute to the media; holding a news conference; conducting a Spokesperson interview; hybrid approach (combination), etc.
 - 4. Decide to whom the response should be communicated.
 - 5. Develop a timeline for communicating the response.
 - 6. Create an action plan for internal and external communication.
- b. Going Public
- i. The General Chair alerts the key stakeholders.
 - 1. The General Chair establishes communication with the identified stakeholders providing them with background information regarding the situation and the response.
 - 2. The stakeholders are given contact information for the Spokesperson, and other crisis communication team members as needed.
 - ii. The Spokesperson begins external audience outreach as set forth in the Crisis Communication Team's plan.
 - iii. Update the web site as needed.
- c. After Going Public
- i. Continually evaluate the effectiveness of the message as the situation progresses.

- ii. Implement methods for updating both internal and external audiences with new information as it becomes available.
- iii. Distribute post-crisis communications to appropriate audiences.
- d. Post Crisis Review
 - i. Secure Loose Ends
 - 1. Appropriate communications should be made to the appropriate audiences (including Georgia Swimming Board and members) summarizing the resolution of the crisis. Check to be sure interaction with all media contacts has been completed.
 - ii. Review
 - 1. Re-convene the Crisis Communication Team to evaluate the effectiveness of the Crisis Management Plan including the following: planning, response, actions, what worked/didn't work, what procedures should be revised for the future, etc. If appropriate, engage the Board of Directors in this review.
 - iii. File
 - 1. File all notes, video/sound clips, talking points, communications, etc. into an electronic file to be housed permanently with Georgia Swimming. The hard copies of all official documents should also be filed and kept with Georgia Swimming.
 - iv. Update
 - 1. Revise the Crisis Communication Plan to reflect any suggested changes and present to the Georgia Swimming Board of Directors for approval.

Best Practices

1. Avoid waiting out a situation, expecting it to pass without addressing the crisis.
2. Avoid using "No Comment" as a response to crises.
3. Avoid speculation.
4. Return phone calls and emails. Make in-person meetings a priority, if possible.
5. Pay close attention to details.
6. Be honest about what you can and cannot say or share.

Key Positions

Information Officer: General Chair, or designee, as appointed by the General Chair from the Board of Directors. Gathers and confirms information, alert Crisis Communication Team (if necessary), contact appropriate Stakeholders, communicate with USA Swimming.

Crisis Communication Team: Responsible for formulating organization's response, delivery plan, and timetable. Always available and accessible day or night during the time of the crisis.

- Primary Team: Includes the Information Officer, General Chair (if a designee is chosen as the Information Officer in place of the General Chair), Spokesperson, USA Swimming Representative, and Legal Counsel (if necessary).
- Secondary Team: Remaining Members of the Georgia Swimming Executive Committee and Immediate Past General Chair and/or Administrative Vice Chair.
- Situational: Other individuals may be identified collaboratively by the General Chair to serve on the Crisis Communication Team based on their expertise and/or relationship to the situation. This may include Georgia Swimming staff members.

Spokesperson: The person authorized to speak to the news media, public, membership, and Stakeholders during a crisis. Aids in assessing the situation. Typically the General Chair or Executive Director.

Stakeholders: Those members of key constituent groups who have a vested interest in Georgia Swimming. They include:

- USA Swimming
- Georgia Swimming Board of Directors & Staff Members
- Georgia Swimming Members (Clubs, Coaches, Athletes, Non-Athlete Members)
- Parents of Georgia Swimming Member Athletes
- LSC Volunteers (i.e. Committees, etc.)
- Partner Organizations and Sponsors

Key Contacts

Information Officer/General Chair: Steve Potter, 616.915.5280

Administrative Vice Chair: Jamey Myers, 770.634.0303

Executive Director: Vacant