



New England Swimming, Inc.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN

January 1, 2011

Purpose of a Crisis Management/Disaster Recovery Plan

An LSC crisis may occur in a number of different situations including times when the integrity or reputation of New England Swimming is threatened by adverse or negative attention; when, in the eyes of the media, general public, or its membership, New England Swimming did not react to a given situation in an appropriate or timely manner; or when an emergency arises that may threaten the operations of the permanent office of New England Swimming. During these times, it is vital that New England 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. This New England Swimming Crisis Management Plan manages the distribution of critical, often sensitive, information to the media, the public, and its members while the Disaster Recovery Plan is designed to insure business continuity by protecting the LSC from threats to its physical assets and IT-disabling disasters.

The Role of the New England Swimming Board in Crisis Management/Disaster Recovery Planning

Under nonprofit governance laws, the members of the New England 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 insuring 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/disaster recovery plan in place and (2) to know and understand its own role in helping the organization through a crisis.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN

Descriptions of Key Positions:

- Spokesperson: General Chair or Designee - The person authorized to speak to the news media, public, membership, and stakeholders during a crisis.
- Information Officer: Person(s) appointed by the General Chair and approved by the New England Swimming Board of Directors. The commander-in-chief of the crisis communication plan who is charged with conducting the preliminary investigation of the crisis situation by gathering information from all relevant sources.
- Crisis Communication Team: Members of the crisis communication team must be constantly accessible any time of the day or night.
 - A. Primary Team: Spokesperson, Information Officer, General Chair, USA Swimming Representative, and Legal Counsel

- B. Secondary Team: Remaining Members of the New England Swimming Executive Committee – Administrative Vice Chair, Finance Vice Chair, Senior Vice Chair, Age Group Vice Chair, Coaches Representative, Senior Athlete Representative, Technical Planning Chair
 - C. Situational: Other individuals may be identified collaboratively by the General Chair and Information Officer to serve on the crisis communication team based on their expertise and/or relationship to the situation. This may include New England Swimming staff members.
- Stakeholders: Stakeholders are those members of key constituent groups who have a vested interest in New England Swimming. They include:
 - A. USA Swimming
 - B. New England Swimming Board of Directors & Staff Members
 - C. New England Swimming Members - Clubs, Coaches, Athletes, Non-Athletes
 - D. Parents of New England Swimming Member Athletes
 - E. LSC Volunteers (Events, Committees, etc.)
 - F. Partner Organizations and Sponsors
 - H. Media & Public

General Procedures:

- The General Chair, or his/her designee, is responsible for issues management. It is the responsibility of all New England Swimming board and staff members to constantly monitor the LSC and national swimming environments as well as the local, state, and national news coverage of issues or trends that might lead to public relations problems for New England Swimming. Upon becoming aware of the existence of any potentially harmful situation, board and staff members are required to contact the General Chair with as much information and documentation as possible regarding the potential situation. The General Chair or his/her designee, in consultation with selected board members and staff, will immediately create and implement a plan that could include intervention or mediation to help mitigate any impending crisis.
- Realizing that not all crises are preventable, it is the responsibility of the New England Swimming Board of Directors, through the office of the General Chair, to have an appropriate crisis preparation plan in place that includes the education of all board members with respect to that plan and their roles during a crisis.
- The General Chair, or his/her designee, will serve as the Spokesperson in the event of a crisis. If approached, board members should refer all inquiries to the designated Spokesperson
- At its first meeting following the annual New England Swimming House of Delegates, the Board of Directors will review the current LSC crisis management plan to insure that all board members are aware of the procedures and their roles during a crisis. Also at this meeting, the General Chair will bring forth for board approval two recommended appointees to serve as a potential crisis Information Officer for the upcoming year. These appointees must be current members of the New England Swimming Board of Directors, be readily available to lead the investigation of a crisis, be thorough and detail-oriented, and possess the ability to remain calm under pressure.
- Should a crisis arise during the year that requires activation of the New England Swimming crisis management plan, the General Chair will select one of the two approved appointees as the Information Officer for that situation. That selection will be based primarily on the nature of the crisis with respect to both the board position of the selected appointee and his/her relationship to the crisis situation.

Best Practices:

In the event of a crisis, the Board of Directors of New England Swimming will adhere to the following best practices:

1. Crisis prevention is a priority for New England Swimming and is supported by continually maintaining sound business practices and effective internal and external communications.
2. The Board of Directors should budget for and facilitate media training for the designated Spokesperson and staff members to learn strategies to effectively deal with the media during times of crises.
3. New England Swimming board members and staff will remain "calm" and take the "high road" during a time of crisis. It is imperative to remain focused under pressure situations to allow for the best possible handling of the crisis and to insure that the business operations of New England Swimming continue to be carried out efficiently and professionally during the time of any crisis.
4. New England Swimming understands the urgency in getting its message out first. This allows New England Swimming to better control the content and its accuracy as well as stabilizing the situation and solidifying the reputation of New England Swimming. Crisis communication planning must be designed to help manage the first 48 hours of an emergency.
5. After gathering facts to help understand the crisis situation, it is imperative that New England Swimming communicates the right message. Consultation with legal counsel may be necessary to insure that appropriate information is shared at the appropriate time(s).
6. Board members should return phone calls and emails directing the inquirer to the designated Spokesperson. The Spokesperson is responsible for following up with all communications including phone calls and emails. Under no circumstances should a board member provide any information other than the contact information for the Spokesperson when approached.
7. Upon receipt of any information related to the crisis, board members should immediately relay that information to the Information Officer ASAP.
8. Members of the New England Swimming Board of Directors should minimize the use of email communications related to any existing crisis during the activation of the crisis management plan. Private conversations among board members are the preferred method of communication during this time.
9. The Information Officer will share information regarding the crisis with the board members and stakeholders of New England Swimming at the appropriate time.
10. The members of the crisis management team will conduct an annual drill and rehearsal of the crisis management plan.
11. Issues regarding personnel and Board of Review matters are to remain confidential.
12. The New England Swimming office will serve as the permanent repository for all critical New England Swimming documents including annual reports, fact sheets, news releases, etc.

CRISIS COMMUNICATION PLAN

Process:

1. Notification: The General Chair should be immediately notified of any impending or existing crisis by staff and/or board members of New England Swimming.
2. Assessment of the Situation: Upon receiving notification of an impending or existing crisis, the General Chair will either activate an intervention/mediation plan or appoint one of the two approved Information Officers to initiate an investigation.

3. Information Officer: Based on the nature of the crisis, the General Chair will appoint an Information Officer from the two candidates previously approved by the New England Swimming Board of Directors to initiate the investigation. This investigation should include:
 - a. Determine what happened.
 - b. Determine when and where it happened
 - c. Determine who is affected
 - d. Identify why it happened and what/who caused it
 - e. Investigate and assess the reaction to the incident
 - f. Determine possible repercussions of the incident
 - g. Interview and collect all facts and documents from those affected
 - h. Determine when more information might become available

New England Swimming Board Members should have the Information Officer'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.

4. Activation of the Crisis Communication Team: Depending on the situation, the Information Officer will convene the primary and/or primary & secondary crisis communication team(s) via conference call or in-person meeting.
 - a. The crisis communication team will be alerted by a phone call; use of email is discouraged. It is imperative that the Information Officer has up-to-date contact information for all members of the crisis management teams.
 - b. The Information Officer may engage others in the process based on the situation.
 - c. If necessary, the Information Officer will designate a location to serve as the crisis center.
5. Crisis Communication Team: Before Going Public
 - a. Based on information gathered and presented by the Information Officer, the crisis communication team will assess the situation, determine the facts, and begin planning. Questions to be answered include:
 - i. What is the situation? What will happen next?
 - ii. Who on staff needs to be involved?
 - iii. What immediate steps need to be taken?
 - iv. What is known and who already knows it?
 - v. Is there potential public interest?
 - vi. Who will be affected?
 - vii. What are people feeling – what emotions need to be considered?
 - viii. What information is needed and who beyond board and staff needs to get it? When will it be available?
 - ix. What should New England Swimming do about it? Proactive vs. reactive?
 - x. What resources are needed to manage the crisis? Is legal or PR counsel needed?
 - b. The crisis communications team will formulate an appropriate response to the crisis.
 - i. Determine what can and cannot be said
 - ii. Develop a factual, responsive message.
 - iii. Construct an appropriate script to be used by the office, voice mail system, board members, etc.
 - c. The crisis communication team will construct a plan/process and timetable that appropriately address the crisis.
 - i. Determine if the desired approach should be proactive or reactive.
 - ii. Determine who will deliver the response (usually the trained Spokesperson).
 - iii. 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.)
 - iv. Decide to whom the response should be communicated.
 - v. Develop a timeline for communicating the response.
 - vi. Create an action plan for internal and external communication.
- 6. Crisis Communication Team: Going Public
 - a. The Information Officer alerts the key stakeholders.
 - i. The Information Officer establishes communication with the identified stakeholders providing them with background information regarding the situation and the response.
 - ii. The stakeholders are given contact information for the Information Officer, Spokesperson, and other crisis communication team members as needed.
 - b. The Spokesperson begins external audience outreach as set forth in the crisis communication team's plan.
 - c. Update the web site as needed.
- 7. Crisis Communication Team: After Going Public
 - a. Continually evaluate the effectiveness of the message as the situation progresses.
 - b. Implement methods for updating both internal and external audiences with new information as it becomes available.
 - c. Distribute post-crisis communications to appropriate audiences.
- 8. Post Crisis Review
 - a. Secure Loose Ends: Appropriate communications should be made to the appropriate audiences (including New England Swimming Board and members) summarizing the resolution of the crisis. Check to be sure interaction with all media contacts has been completed.
 - b. B. Review: Re-convene the crisis communication team to evaluate the effectiveness of the crisis management plan including the following: planning, response, actions, what worked and didn't work, what procedures should be revised for the future, etc. If appropriate, engage the board of directors in this review.
 - c. File: File all notes, video/sound clips, talking points, communications, etc. into an electronic file to be housed permanently in the New England Swimming office. The hard copies of all official documents should be filed and kept also in the New England Swimming office.
 - d. Update: Revise the crisis communication plan to reflect the any suggested changes and present to the New England Swimming Board of Directors for approval.

DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN

It is imperative that New England Swimming has procedures in place to continue its business in the event of a disaster that causes damage to the permanent office and/or threatens the LSC's IT systems. It is the responsibility of the staff member designated as the office manager, in collaboration with the General Chair, to insure that an effective plan is constructed and communicated to the appropriate staff and board members.

Components of that plan should include the following:

- Maintaining a complete inventory of all the physical assets of New England Swimming. Update databases and spreadsheets annually and record major acquisitions as they occur.
- Maintaining a daily online backup of the office computers, key databases, and financial files. Schedule "drills" every 30 to 60 days to test the procedure to determine if the system can be restored from backup files.
- Storage of copies of all insurance policies, titles, bank account numbers, legal documents, etc. in a safe deposit box or fireproof safe.

- Construction of a facility evacuation plan.
- Establishing procedures that indicate who does what in the event of an office emergency/evacuation.
- Construction of a document that contains emergency contact information for all staff and members of the executive committee to be shared with members of both entities.
- Construction of a directory of emergency resources to have on hand at all times. In addition to the option of calling 911, have contact information for the fire and police departments and the building management/security readily available.
- Establishment of a network of community organizations that could be called upon during specific types of crises particularly if an office evacuation extends over a significant period of time. Consider the range of needs depending on the crisis – supplies, office space, equipment, etc.
- Review/revision of the disaster recovery plan at least once a year with office staff and general chair.

2010-2011 KEY POSITIONS

1. Spokesperson: General Chair or Designee:

- Laura Matuszak, 802-238-9168, <mailto:lmatuszak@smcvt.edu>

2. Information Officers:

- Ray Grant (Admin Vice Chair) 508-336-9982 grant.raymond@comcast.net
- Kathy Dacey (Board of Review Chair) 857-544-9121 Magic_bear@msn.com

3. Crisis Communication Team:

Primary Team

- Spokesperson: Laura Matuszak or Designee
- Information Officers: Ray Grant and Kathy Dacey
- USA Swimming Representative: Pat Hogan or Designee; 719-866-4578; phogan@usaswimming.org
- Legal Counsel: John Morse: 239-395-0106 john.morse@lodgeworks.com

Secondary Team

- Rick Osterberg, Governance Chair, 617-548-8500 rickosterberg@gmail.com
- Carol Healey NES Office, 781-449-0270 newenglandswim@gmail.com
- Arthur Athanas, Financial Vice President, 978-618-2990 aathanas@thebishopcompanyllc.com
- Mariella Allard, Technical Chair, 508-633-8821 mariallard@comcast.net
- Kathy Dacey, Secondary Legal Council 857-544-9121 Magic_bear@msn.com

Situational Staff

- Bob Menck, Official's Chair: 860-463-6563 bmenck@cswg.com
- Matt Craven, Age Group Chair: 508-446-0437 matthewcraven316@hotmail.com,
- Priscilla Davis, Safety Chair: 978-468-3786 PDSwim@comcast.net