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# **Incident Communication Plan Policy**



JANCO ASSOCIATES, INC.

2025



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## Incident Communication Plan

### Overview

To survive an incident such as a business interruption, security breach, or product recall, organizations need more than a successful communication strategy – they need an incident communication plan.

The principles of effective crisis and risk communication are:

- ✦ **Be First:** Crises are time-sensitive. Communicating information quickly is almost always important. For members of the public, the first source of information often becomes the preferred source.

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- ✦ **Promote Action:** Giving people meaningful things to do calms anxiety, helps restore order, and promotes a restored sense of control.
- ✦ **Show Respect:** Respectful communication is particularly important when people feel vulnerable. Respectful communication promotes cooperation and rapport.

### Incident Response Team – Structure

Incident response manager

- ✦ Supervises and prioritizes actions during detection, containment, and recovery from an incident.

Cyber Incident Response Team (CIRT)

- ✦ Offers specialized technical skills to provide the right advice and threat analysis.

Security analysts

- ✦ Supports and works directly with affected resources, implementing and maintaining technical and operational controls.

Threat researchers

- ✦ Provides threat intelligence and context around security incidents, which help identify current and future threats.

Management

- ✦ Brings top-level management buy-in, which is necessary for the provision of resources for incident response planning and execution.

## Objective

The overall objectives of an incident communication plan should be established at the outset. The objectives should be agreed upon, well understood, and publicized. For example, will the primary objective of the communications plan be for communications only to employees, and only during service? Or is it for investors and these? Whatever the management, and widely communicated. The specific communication delivery, frequency, and advance, ENTERPRISE

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- ✚ Protect the effect of a crisis on employees, associates, suppliers, and customers,
- ✚ Reduce the impact of bad publicity, maintain customer service, bolster relations with vendors and
- ✚ Addresses the concerns of other key stakeholders

## Policy

From time to time-critical incidents occur within the life of ENTERPRISE which may have implications beyond the enterprise's internal operations and/ or where it is important employees, associates, suppliers, customers, and other stakeholders need to be informed.

ENTERPRISE employees may interact in several ways with the media.

- ✚ ENTERPRISE wants coverage: Promotion of ENTERPRISE activities or information either through phone contact, written press release, or event coverage.
- ✚ The media wants information: A member of the media is working on a story idea and contacts either an employee or Director Media Communications for information and possibly an interview.
- ✚ Emergencies: A natural crisis occurs and the media and ENTERPRISE are responding to the crisis in the same environment.
- ✚ Unannounced site visit: The media shows up on the site unannounced.
- ✚ Updating social networks, automated news feeds, and internet sites to reflect current and accurate information

The management of ENTERPRISE will ensure that the relevant people within ENTERPRISE are informed of the situation and kept up to date if this is necessary. This may include informing the Chief Executive Officer, the Legal Counsel, and the Communications and Public Relations Manager. In addition to the media, it can also include notifying associates, suppliers, customers, and other stakeholders.

## Guidelines

The individual or team responsible for developing the emergency communications plan should address these factors:

- ✦ **Criteria** - Knowing when to activate a communications plan is critical to its success. Similar to the emergency operations center, for catastrophic events such as major earthquakes or terrorist acts, the decision is straightforward. But the majority of the time events fall into areas that are not so straightforward. Does a power outage warrant activating the communications plan? Or air-conditioning problems? Should the number of employees (or customers) impact be the criteria? Or the length of time, or severity, of

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customers or employees  
ed, while others make it a  
es, it will be a  
tions plan. But in any  
pon, well understood,  
an Incident  
decision-maker that will  
activate the emergency communications plan? I have seen this role go to one of many individuals depending on the company culture and organization. In some companies, it is the CIO, and in others the head of business continuity, or risk management. Still, others use Human Resources or a formal public relations officer. The important element here is to have this role, and several other roles, specified and understood. Other departments such as facilities, legal, and marketing may each have a role to play in carrying out an emergency communication plan. One role often overlooked is the role outside agencies may play, such as local radio and television stations, telephone companies, police, fire, and emergency medical personnel. Broadcast media can be especially effective in getting valuable information out to large numbers of people in a short amount of time.

- ✦ **Logistics** - Logistics refers to the type of technology that will be used for a communications plan. In some cases, this will be IT's responsibility. In some companies, the telecommunications department is separated from IT requiring a close partnership between the two organizations to affect good communications. Regardless of the logistics used, the technology needs to be well-planned, successfully implemented, reliably supported, and publicized to all who will use it.
- ✦ **Publications and Training** - The communications plan needs to be documented in hardcopy and electronic formats. Current employees need to receive training on it, and all new employees should be versed in this plan at the time of hiring. I have seen various types of formats used to remind employees about emergency communications. These include pocket cards, fold-out cards, brochures, and small booklets. One company sends out monthly reminders and helpful hints on the company Intranet to supplement the information on their employees' pocket cards. The team responsible for developing the emergency communications plan needs to specify how this training will be performed, who will conduct it, and how the information will be distributed and kept current.

## Best Practices

### News Conference

- ✦ When you notify the media of news conferences/availabilities, be sure to define what kind of event you are having. News conferences are held to announce something for the first time. Press availabilities are held simply to make individuals available to answer questions or demonstrate something.
- ✦ Don't call unnecessary news conferences/availabilities. If it's not worth their time, the media will only be angered.
- ✦ If holding a news conference, try to tell the media in advance some details of what you will be announcing.
- ✦ 

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- ✦ Decide in advance whether handouts are needed. If the speaker is giving a talk for which there is a text, you may want to wait and hand out material after the talk so the media will stay and listen. However, it's advisable to tell the media you will provide a text of the speech so they are not irritated by having to take unnecessary notes.
- ✦ Check to see what else is happening on campus or in the community before scheduling a press conference.
- ✦ Consider whether you need to let other organizations and agencies know you are having a news conference. (You may wish to invite others to attend or participate in your event.)
- ✦ Decide who will maintain control at the news conference, who will decide where cameras are set up, and who sits where.
- ✦ Try to plan the length of the news conference, but be flexible.
- ✦ Consider the time of the news conference. If you want to make the noon, 6 p.m., or 11 p.m. TV and radio news, you need to allow time for crews to travel and edit tape.
- ✦ If you are going to set restrictions on an event such as limited photo access, try to put the restrictions in writing and communicate to the media at least 24 hours in advance.

## Federal Computer Security Incident Handling Requirements

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) of the US Department of Commerce has a guide on how security incidents should be handled. This publication provides a detailed discussion of the composition, interrelationships with others (before – during – after), and responsibilities of the Incident Response Team.



Establishing an incident response capability should include the following actions:

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- Determining what services, the incident response team should provide
- Staffing and training the incident response team.

...lling and reporting  
...parties regarding incidents

...n between the incident response team and  
...and external (e.g., law enforcement

Organizations should be generally prepared to handle any incident but should focus on being prepared to handle incidents that use common attack vectors.



## Job Description

One (1) detailed job description is included with this policy template. It comes separately in its directory.

Director Media Communications

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## Electronic Forms

Two (2) Electronic forms are included with this policy template. They come separately in their directory.

Incident Communication Contact Form

Pandemic Planning Checklist Form

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### What's New

#### 2025

- Added section structure for the incident response team
- Updated included the job description
- Updated included forms

#### 2024

- Added section on core responsibilities for the incident response team
- Defined overall organizational responsibilities
- Updated included the job description
- Updated included forms

#### 2023

- Added section on responsibilities for cyber-related incidents
- Updated included the job description
- Updated included forms

#### 2022

- Updated included the job description
- Updated included forms

#### 2021

- Updated included the job description
- Updated included forms
- Update the structure of the policy and its appendix components

#### 2020

- Updated to include Pandemic Considerations
- Included Pandemic Planning Checklist From
- Update Director Media Communications job description
- Updated Social Media Communications section
- Added Social Networking Checklist