



**REALTOR<sup>®</sup>  
SAFETY**  
PROGRAM

# REALTOR<sup>®</sup> Safety Program: Association Crisis Communication Checklist

A crisis at your Association can take several forms -- a data breach, a situation involving a member or a weather-related incident, to name a few. Crises can have a serious impact on your Association.

One of the first things your Association should do is create a crisis communication plan that outlines specific framework for a variety of situations to help you prepare for whatever may happen. Being proactive rather than reactive can save you time and effort.

NAR created the following checklist to assist Associations in formulating a crisis communication plan. The checklist is a non-exhaustive list of issues that Associations may wish to consider.

## **Create a crisis communication team**

Determine which staff need to be involved in the process.

Gather as much information as possible. Determine what the issue is, who is affected and how it happened.

Determine what information is going to be shared and with whom. Create messages specific for each audience.

Identify any confidential information that should not be shared outside of the organization or should otherwise be limited to a need-to-know basis.

Determine who needs to be alerted -- the media, your members, local police, Association staff, other Associations, etc. Consider all internal and external stakeholders.

Local Associations should inform their state Association and the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS<sup>®</sup> Media Communications department of the crisis. They may be able to provide additional resources.

Choose a spokesperson and have that person be the primary point of contact.

Meet with the team daily to update messaging, determine new information and reassess original crisis communication plan.

## **Communicating with Members**

Determine which channels are the best ways to communicate directly with members about the situation, such as email, social media, phone calls, etc.

Based on the message the crisis communication team created, communicate directly and as often as necessary with members.

Keep your Association staff and leadership team up-to-date on the situation so they can properly triage phone calls and emails from members.

If possible and as appropriate, post information on the Association's website. Update it often as new information becomes available. You can direct stakeholders to the website for the most up-to-date information.

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## Communicating with the Media

Determine if a statement needs to be released to the media. The level of crisis should determine if statements need to be made at all. Remember, the more statements you release, the more news you are creating.

All statements should come from the Association's spokesperson and be on message.

Never ask for communications with the media to be "off the record" or respond to their questions with "no comment."

Address rumors and provide accurate information. Reduce sensationalism as much as possible.

## Crisis Involving a Specific Member as a Victim

Always be mindful of the specific circumstances involving the member and respect the requests and recommendations of family members and law enforcement officials.

Before releasing a statement about the member, consult the member's family or law enforcement officials.

Ensure any information spread or published is factual and avoid sharing unconfirmed details which could give rise to legal liability.

In the event of a member's death, remove him or her from all Association communications.

## Recovery

Depending on the crisis, communicate to stakeholders how your Association is taking appropriate steps to avoid this issue from occurring again in the future.

Once the crisis has concluded, meet with the crisis communication team to determine what has been learned and update your crisis communication plan accordingly.

Every Association should find the custom crisis communication plan that works for them. The above checklist is not intended to be and does not constitute legal advice, or a substitute for specific legal advice or opinions.