

THE CRISIS MANAGEMENT ORGANIZER™ AND VIOLENCE MANAGEMENT IN YOUR ORGANIZATION:

TOOLS AND RESOURCE GUIDE FOR BUSINESS AND GOVERNMENT



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Introduction:

Now, in the twenty first century, employers and human resource managers must realize that it is no longer business as usual, that it will never be business as usual, and, in fact, there is now a new cost to doing business in America—the cost of countering terrorism. To deny this fact and do nothing can only lead to lower productivity and decreased profitability.

Therefore, business owners and human resource managers can no longer avoid developing and implementing a comprehensive corporate crisis management and response plan. Such a plan must include everything from how to handle workplace violence to how to deal with bomb threats or anthrax scares. Further, these plans must include a mental health component with the goal of maintaining workplace productivity. Traditional employee assistance programs (EAP's or CAP's) cannot be relied upon to provide the type of direction and proactive training required to prepare, maintain, and, to the extent possible, safeguard workers and businesses for the war in which our country is involved. Traditional employee assistance programs have neither the expertise nor the desire to take the financial responsibility for such preparedness. This is the new cost to doing business in America.

How can the development and administration of a crisis management and response plan help maintain worker productivity and counteract the stress reactions? There are three answers to this question. First, by preparing such a plan you are demonstrating to your fellow workers a practical confidence that events, even traumatic events, can be managed. Next, if and when a critical incident occurs you and your fellow workers will be better able to manage the crisis and live through it. Third, and probably most importantly, the crisis management and response plan includes regular and targeted employee training and education. This is what is termed the mental health component. One thing we learned in Oklahoma City after the April 1995 bombing is that knowledge quells fear. Communication is key.

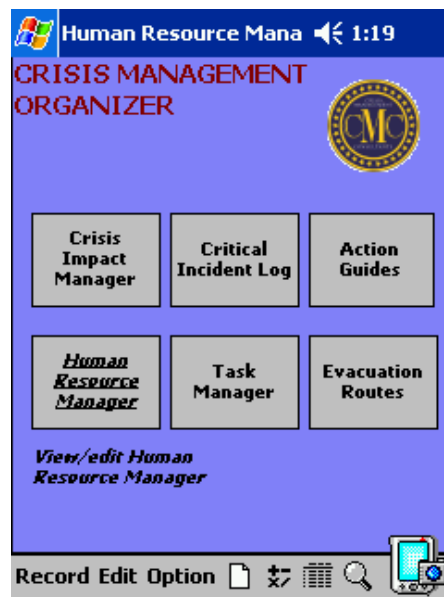
Finally, two of America's strengths reside in our technology and our knowledge. We, at CMC, Inc. have developed new and innovative technologies and techniques that you, the business owner and human resource manager, need. In the following pages will be presented in outline form the steps for developing a comprehensive crisis management and response plan and how to apply the unique tools available from CMC, Inc. to enhance and strengthen your crisis management and response plan.

Tools You Need:

The Crisis Management Organizer™

The Crisis Management Organizer™ is a hand-held based software application for Windows CE devices and a companion MS Access database for desktop and/or laptop computers. These applications are designed to be a tool that helps crisis management professionals keep track of the massive amount of important information that is required to effectively deal with a crisis situation as well as to manage and document the crisis incident as it occurs.

The Crisis Management Organizer™ is made up of six modules: the Human Resource Manager, the Crisis Impact Manager, the Critical Incident Log, the Task Manager, Action Guides, and Evacuation Routes. The first three tables are reproduced in the companion MS Access application.



The Crisis Management Organizer™ hand-held version is designed to be used by members of a designated crisis management team and/or members of other designated specifically-tasked crisis teams.

Thoughtful businesses, schools, hospitals, governmental entities, and first responder organizations, such as police and fire departments, have developed crisis management and response action plans. As a part of these plans these organizations have developed various teams of employees who, in an emergency situation, are tasked to perform various actions.

Many of these organizations have also developed checklists of things to be done in certain types of crises. Furthermore, many of these organizations have developed emergency evacuation plans or routes--whether the evacuation is from an individual building or a group of buildings. Likewise, many of these organizations have obtained and stockpiled various types of materials to be used in emergency situations as well as copied and stored important blueprints of their facility to be used by first responders in times of crises.

The Crisis Management Organizer™ is designed to store, systematize, and rapidly make available this mass of information to key decision making personnel during an emergency situation.

However, it is designed to do much more. A key function of crisis team members is to make decisions, to implement decisions, to monitor the impact of their decisions over time, and to document what occurs. If there are casualties, these impacted individuals need to be documented, accounted for, and next of kin notified. The Crisis Management Organizer™ helps the professional perform these crucial responsibilities in an easy and simple way.

When an emergency occurs experienced crisis management teams will set up a command center. Whether the command center is a school principal's office, a business' parking garage, or a hospital's conference room senior members of the organization's crisis team will settle in to direct and manage the situation. More than likely, in that command center, there will be either a desktop or laptop computer. It is on this centrally located computer that the companion MS Access application is placed and which the various team members' hand-helds are synchronized as needed.

The Workplace Risk of Violence Assessment Questionnaire™

The Workplace Risk of Violence Assessment Questionnaire (WRVAQ) is designed to help you, the human resource director, supervisor, or business manager, gather and focus your knowledge regarding a particular threatening employee or other menacing person (hereinafter termed **Target Person**), and, then, provide that information to Crisis Management Consultants, Inc. in real time via secure internet access. We at CMC analyze this information and then consult with you regarding the Target Person. The purpose of this consultation is to develop a **preliminary** estimate of risk of violence, to judge the need for a more thorough risk of violence evaluation, and/or to develop other recommendations as appropriate for the particular circumstances you, your employees, and/or your business face.

What You Need to Do:

Step 1: Decide to Act

Commit. Without the foresight, guidance, and commitment of motivated leadership nothing of importance can be accomplished.

Step 2: Establish the Crisis Management Team

Second, a crisis management team needs to be selected and prepared. To perform this task a staff skills inventory should be completed, there should be designated staff assignments (teams) during crisis incidents, and there should be an assessment of those employees who need special assistance in evacuations or other crises.

Three Levels of Response

A site Crisis Management Team can be a highly effective organizational unit for dealing with a variety of crises such as accidents, drug overdoses, suicides, and incidents of violence. Crisis Management Teams in a site system can operate at three levels: individual building/office site, executive office, and community response teams. Well-functioning teams at each level provide a network that can take action whenever a crisis arises.

Building/Office Site Level Crisis Management Team

The site-manager usually leads the building-level team, with an alternate leader designated in the site manager's absence. Other members might include representatives from operations, employees, security, finance, legal, and human resources. In addition, the site secretary and site custodian/maintenance specialist can be important members. The team typically has responsibility for the following:

- Establishing a protocol for dealing with crises.
- Establishing a systematic approach for identifying, *referring*, and intervening with employees and staff identified as at-risk for suicide or other *destructive* behaviors.
- Orienting staff to procedures and training to fulfill designated roles, including conducting drills.

- Providing information to employees, staff, and community on Crisis Management referral procedures.
- Providing assistance during a crisis in accordance with designated roles; providing follow-up activities.
- Conducting debriefing at the conclusion of each crisis episode to critique the effectiveness of the building's Crisis Management Plan.
- Conducting periodic reviews and updating of the Crisis Management Plan; conducting related updated staff training.

Executive Office Crisis Network

In addition to Crisis Management Teams at each site building, the crisis network should include a team at the executive office level. This team might include the Chief Executive Officer or someone designated by the Chief Executive Officer, a representative of each site crisis team, administrator(s) for site security and for human resource management. It might also include consultants outside the site system. The executive office crisis network would have responsibility for the following:

- Overseeing and coordinating the building level teams.
- Authorizing resources for areas where they are most needed; for example, providing more counselors/employees to a site whose staff may be overburdened in dealing with a crisis.
- Collecting and disseminating educational materials to sites for training crisis team members and staff.
- Establishing a central library of materials on violence, suicide, and other crisis management issues for use by HR managers, security, and crisis management team members.
- Conducting mock crisis event to test the crisis management procedures.
- Evaluating responses to crises with a report to the Chief Executive Officer and a plan for follow-up.
- Establishing a community support team and encouraging input and support from its members.

Community Support Network

This component of the crisis network includes representatives from community and government agencies. This network might include personnel from mental health and law enforcement agencies, emergency medical personnel, and specialized resources such as domestic violence shelters, rape, runaway, and victim's advocacy services. Sites should maintain periodic contact with community agencies and organizations and invite them to participate in meetings with site Crisis Management Teams.

Expertise needed on a Crisis Management Team

Site manager -- Highest-level executive in the site; carries responsibility for all decisions and actions.

Site manager's assistant or designee -- Important to designate, should a crisis occur during the site manager's absence. Must be someone who commands respect, authority and trust.

Employee member -- Should have respect of co-workers and be a staff member who knows the climate of site and is comfortable being a member of Crisis Management Team.

Security personnel -- Safety of staff and visitors/customers is the first priority when violence occurs.

Site custodian -- Can provide important information on the site's physical plant.

Site nurse -- Can provide information and expertise about physical symptoms of shock; instrumental in coordination of assistance when injuries are involved.

Perform a staff skills survey and assign selected staff to crisis teams.

Form Example: Crisis Management Planning STAFF SKILLS INVENTORY

Name: _____ Room #: _____

Please check any of the following in which you have expertise or training:

Emergency response:

- First aid
- Search & Rescue
- Law Enforcement Source
- CPR
- CB Radio
- Ham Radio
- EMT Debriefing
- Emergency Management
- Critical Incident Stress
- Firefighting
- Other: _____
- Mobile or Cellular Phone, Type: _____
- Bi/multilingual Language(s): _____

Using information gathered in the inventory above, lists such as the following could be developed:

STAFF WITH SKILLS IN MEDICAL CARE

Name	Room #	Training/certification
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BI/MULTILINGUAL STAFF MEMBERS

Name	Room #	Language(s)
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STAFF MEMBERS WITH COMMUNICATIONS TRAINING/EQUIPMENT

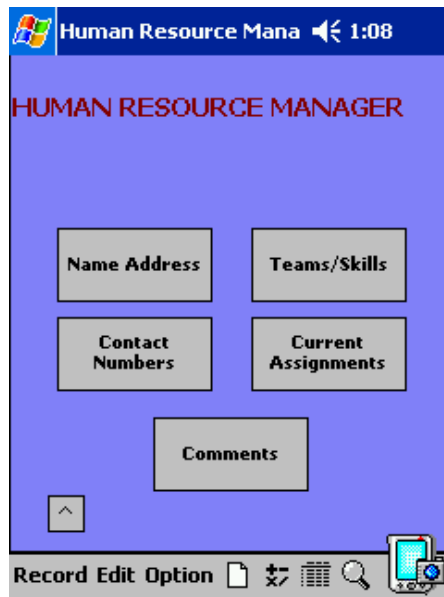
Name	Room #	Training/Equipment
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Form Example: Designation of Staff Assignments/Activity Sites

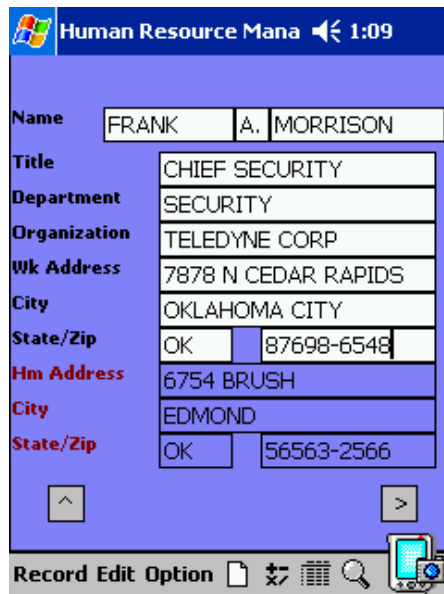
Assignment	Title/Name	Site(s)
Decision Making/Control	1. <i>Site manager</i> 2. <i>Ass't Site manager</i>	
Crisis Team	1. <i>Coordinator</i> 2. <i>Substitute Coord.</i>	
Communications/Notification	1. 2.	
Evacuation and Sheltering	1. 2.	
Staff Accounting and Release	1. 2.	
Building Safety/Security	1. 2.	
Information (Telephone and "Walk-Ins")	1. 2.	
Family Contact	1. 2.	
Coordinate assistance for emergency/medical response	1. 2.	
Support counseling for staff		

The Crisis Management Organizer™ Human Resource Manager Module

The Human Resource Manager module of the Crisis Management Organizer™ is designed to store all pertinent information regarding all relevant personnel and non-personnel who may be important during a crisis situation. After step 2 is complete insert all human resource, team, and skill data into the Human Resource Manager.



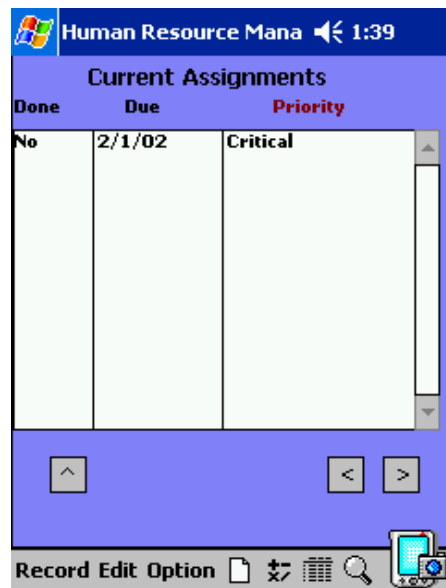
The first views provide an individual's current work and home address, various telephone numbers, and other contact information.



An organization that has properly prepared for a crisis situation will have performed a skills inventory of all personnel and have assigned personnel to appropriate teams. The Human Resource Manager thus has a view where an individual's skills and team assignments are recorded. The most important record in this view is the 1st Team Assignment. This designates an individual's primary team assignment and is used in the Task Manager module. Drop down lists are provided for selecting relevant skills and teams. The user may also type in different designations as required.



The last view in the Human Resource Manager is Current Assignments. This view provides the user with a summary of the individual's current assignments, if any. Information provided is whether the assignment is completed, when it is due, its priority, and a description of the assignment (in the H/PC version).



An important feature of this view is the ability to highlight a particular assignment, then select it, which then jumps the user to the Task Manager that has been filtered to that particular task. Using this feature permits the user to rapidly view the task assigned.

Step 3: Perform Hazards Assessment and Administer a Workplace Violence Questionnaire

Next, the crisis management team needs to perform a hazards assessment. This not only includes an inspection and analysis of the physical plant or facility but also the administration of a worker survey or questionnaire regarding safety concerns of employees. Presently, it is CMC, Inc.'s recommendation that the worker survey be administered twice yearly. It is important that human resource management understand the concerns of their fellow employees so that appropriate training and education can be obtained and provided.

Form Example: EMPLOYEE SECURITY SURVEY

This survey will help detect Security Problems in your building or at an alternate worksite.

Please fill out this form, get your co-workers to fill it out, and review it to see where the potential for major security problems lie.

NAME:

WORK LOCATION:
(IN BUILDING OR ALTERNATE WORKSITE)

1. Does either of these two conditions exist in your building or at your alternate work site?

_____ Work alone during working hours.

_____ No notification given to anyone when you finish work.

Are these conditions a problem? If so, please describe. (For example, Mondays, evenings, daylight savings time.)

2. Do you have any of the following complaints (that may be associated with causing an unsafe worksite)? (Check all that apply.)

_____ Does your workplace have a written policy to follow for addressing general problems?

_____ Does your workplace have a written policy on how to handle a violent client?

_____ When and how to request the assistance of a co-worker.

_____ When and how to request the assistance of police.

_____ What to do about a verbal threat.

_____ What to do about a threat of violence.

_____ What to do about harassment.

_____ Working alone.

_____ Alarm System(s).

_____ Security in and out of building.

_____ Security in parking lot.

_____ Have you been assaulted by a co-worker?

_____ Have incidents of violence ever occurred between your co-workers?

3. Are violence-related incidents worse during shift work, on the road, or in other situations?

Please specify:

4. Where in the building or worksite would a violence-related incident most likely occur?

_____ lounge _____ exits _____ deliveries _____ private offices
_____ parking lot _____ bathroom _____ entrance _____ Other

Other (specify)

5. Have you ever noticed a situation that could lead to a violent incident?

6. Have you missed work because of a potential violent act(s) committed during your course of employment?
7. Do you receive workplace violence related training or assistance of any kind?
8. Has anything happened recently at your worksite that could have led to violence?
9. Can you comment about the situation?
10. Has the number of violent clients increased?

Step 4: Develop Crisis Management "Toolbox"

Fourth, the crisis management team needs to obtain relevant material and supplies. One aspect of meeting this criterion is the development of a crisis management "toolbox". This "toolbox" should be secured in the designated command post location for use by the crisis management team during a critical incident

Form Example: Crisis Management "Toolbox"

The following items are listed as basic for creating and maintaining emergency management kits. The list includes specific items that may save time in implementing a site plan to manage emergencies. Individual sites may need additional items and those should be added to the emergency kit, as well.

- H/PCs and/or P/PCs with Crisis Management Organizer™ software provided to all crisis management team members. **Note: Much of the information discussed below should be placed in the Crisis Management Organizer software program in the Action Guides module.**
- Potential command posts selected and a desktop and/or laptop computer with the Crisis Management Organizer companion software loaded preselected.
- 10 legal pads (5 x 11 and 4 x 5).
- 10 ball point pens (not felt tip and not pencils).
- 10 magic markers.
- 100-200 plain white peel-off stickers (to be used to identify injured patients or adults at the emergency site).

- Name of Crisis Management Team members and responsibilities checklist -- who does what. (In CMO.)
- Staff roster with 1) emergency phone numbers and 2) indicating those with first aid, CPR, and/or EMT training. (In CMO.)
- Floor plan or site map that shows the location of all exits, first aid kits, all telephones and telephone wall jacks, computer locations, and all other devices that may be useful in communication during an emergency. (In CMO.)
- Blueprints of site building(s), including utilities. (In CMO.)
- Map of evacuation route(s). (In CMO.)
- Keys to all doors in the site facility.
- Phone lists: (In CMO.)
 - Community Emergency Numbers
 - ✓ General emergency number - 911
 - ✓ Ambulance
 - ✓ Poison Control Center
 - ✓ Local Hospitals
 - ✓ Police Department/Sheriff/State Police
 - ✓ Fire Department
 - Site Numbers
 - ✓ Extension numbers for site security and other support staff.
 - Other Resource Numbers
 - ✓ Home/work telephone numbers of site volunteers, local clergy, and other resources previously identified.
- List of telephone numbers for the portable telephones used by executive office staff.
- List of FAX lines at the executive offices.
- List of beeper numbers for executive office staff.
- Staff/employee roster including phone numbers for spouses and/or key relatives.
- Master schedule.
- Name tags and sign-in sheet for Crisis Management Team members and community resource people.
- Sample statements/letters for use in notifying staff, patients, and family about crisis incident.

- ❑ Crisis response equipment (such as two-way radios or cellular telephones).

Step 5: Adopt Action Steps and Forms for Reporting and Monitoring Crisis Incidents

Fifth, the crisis management team needs to adopt action-steps and forms for reporting and monitoring crisis incidents. (This information should be kept on a handheld computer device with the ability to synchronize with the command center desktop computers.) Likewise, the crisis management team must develop risk assessment and response level options. More specifically, when an incident occurs there will be a response required at the unit level, building level (exterior or interior), or from outside resources. The nature and severity of the incident will determine the appropriate level of response.

The site crisis management team should assess the circumstances and determine an appropriate risk category. The risk categories should be:

No risk
Low risk
Medium risk
High risk
Imminent danger.

Once the risk level is assigned a decision is made regarding the most appropriate means to handle or address the situation. Examples of response options, ranked according to risk categories, include:

- **No risk/Low risk.**
Deal with the situation in-house through administrative and/or disciplinary options.
Referral to in-house resources, which could include CAP counseling, mental health counseling, and medical assistance or counseling, etc.
- **Low risk.**
Consultation with CMC, Inc. via secure Internet website and completion of the **Workplace Risk of Violence Assessment Questionnaire™**.
Initiate in-house administrative and/or disciplinary options.
- **Medium Risk.**
Administrative suspension of employee and Threat of Violence Consultation with CMC, Inc. (to include completion of the **Workplace Risk of Violence Assessment Questionnaire™**).
Initiate in-house administrative and/or disciplinary options.

- **High Risk.**
Administrative suspension of employee and Threat of Violence Consultation with CMC, Inc. (to include completion of the **Workplace Risk of Violence Assessment Questionnaire™**).
Initiate in-house administrative and/or disciplinary options.
Consultation with security, legal counsel, and local law enforcement.
- **Imminent Danger.**
Consultation with violence consultant, security, legal counsel, and local law enforcement.
Implementation of Emergency Procedures.

The Crisis Management Organizer™ Critical Incident Log Module

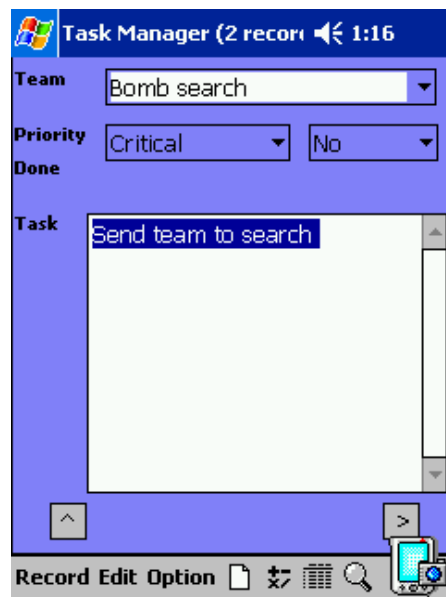
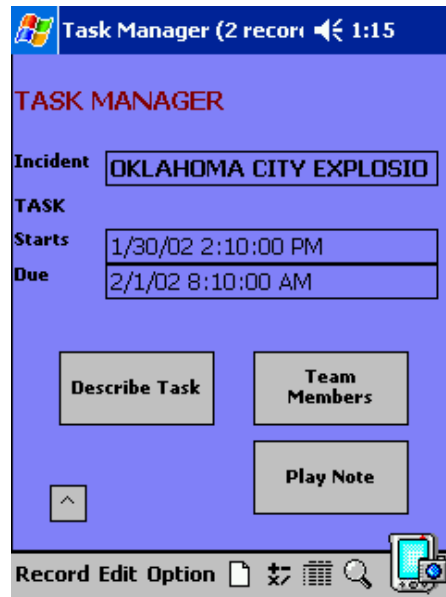
All crisis incidents must be documented. The Critical Incident Log is designed to provide the professional a simple way to keep notes and records of what is and has transpired.

The screenshot shows a software window titled "Critical Incident Log (1)". The interface is blue with red text for "CRITICAL INCIDENT LOG". It contains several input fields: "Date" (1/30/02 2:08:00 PM), "Site" (Oklahoma city), "Author" (Carter), "Ssn" (908-66-7564), and "Team" (BioHazard). A "Record Note" button is located below the fields. At the bottom, there is a taskbar with icons for "Record", "Edit", "Option", and other functions.

The Crisis Management Organizer™ Task Manager Module

The task manager is designed as a sophisticated to do list. The user describes the incident, describes the task, sets a start and due date and time, assigns a priority from

a drop down list, assigns a team, also from a drop down list, and, when appropriate, designates the task as completed.



An important part of the Task Manager is the Team Member view. Once the user assigns a team to a task all members of that team will be displayed in this view along with their work telephone, mobile phone, and pager number (name and work phone on P/PCs). Also, as needed, the user can highlight and select a particular name and the application will then jump the user to that particular individual's Human Resource Manager record. In this way the user can obtain more information about that particular team member such as how many assignments they are currently working on.



The Crisis Management Organizer™ Crisis Impact Manager Module

In crisis situations casualties can occur. The Crisis Impact Manager is designed to track these casualties. The first views provide for recording a casualty's pertinent personal information including work and home address, social security number, telephone numbers, age, sex, etc.



Next, the user records the impact site, date of the injury, type of injury, and whether the casualty is missing or deceased. Then the user records the current location of the

casualty, if known, as well as the name and telephone numbers of a contact person at the location.

The final views records whether or not the impacted person's next of kin has been contacted, by whom, when, the next of kin's name, relationship, address, and other contact information.

Step 6: Develop and Use Action Guides

Sixth, when a crisis incident occurs the crisis management team should be ready to follow and complete specific Action Guides. Action Guides are step-by-step checklists of actions and decisions that have been specially designed and practiced for certain types of critical incidents—such as verbal threat of violence; bomb threat; anthrax exposure; armed intruder; radioactive materials exposure; hostage situation; electrical service, telephone service, and/or utilities disruption, etc.

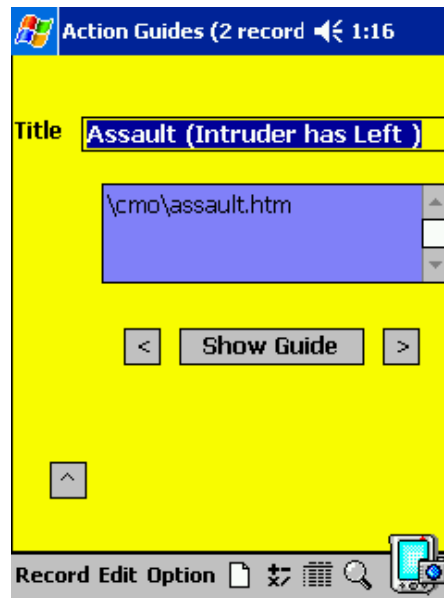
It is recommended that these Action Guides are not only kept in a central location but also provided in specially designed databases compatible with the various handheld or pocket personal computer devices so that crisis management team members have ready access to them.

The Crisis Management Organizer™ Action Guides Module

An important function of the Crisis Management Organizer™ is to provide the user a simple and secure way to access critical check lists and guides for different types of

emergency situations—such as bomb threat, hostage situation, and/or assault by intruder.

Other more mundane list can also be stored in the Action Guide module—such as calling tree lists, check lists for dealing with the media, lists and locations of emergency supplies, etc.



Form Example: Hostage-Taker On Premises and/or Armed/Dangerous Intruder Situations

Checklist:

- Contact the police (911).
- Establish a command post with several telephones available.
- Gather information.
- Use emergency signal to notify all personnel and secure all office areas to prevent intrusion.
- Notify Chief Executive Officer.

- Keep a written log of events.
- Instruct staff to keep all visitors/customers in their present areas, unless otherwise directed by the police (via PA system).
- No site personnel should circulate through building.
- Instruct person answering the phone to direct all information requests to Public Information Office.
- Keep telephone lines open for police use (pay telephones as well).
- Keep maps of the building and grounds available in more than one area of the facility (i.e. Main Office and Custodians' Office).
- Identify individuals familiar with the building to assist the police in locating and isolating the intruder.
- Prepare written memo for staff and families.
- Complete and submit Crisis Team Report.
- Schedule follow-up programs for staff to review security plan.
- Call emergency staff meeting.

Specifics:

1. Contact the Police:

- Hostage-taking or endangering the safety of others are criminal offenses.

2. Establish a Command Post:

- Establish a command post to handle the load of the Crisis Team and to direct the press and concerned members of the community to the Public Information Office.

3. Gather as much detailed information as possible. Try to determine:

- Location, identity, and detailed description of individual.
- Location and description of weapon.
- Any possible background information on individual, including possible reason for having a weapon.

4. Secure All Offices:

- ❑ The more closely contained the intruder can be kept, the less the danger there is to others and the easier it is for the police to apprehend the individual.
- ❑ Use emergency signal to notify staff of the threatening situation and have staff keep visitors/customers in secure offices until all is clear.

5. Notification:

- ❑ The CEO's office should be contacted as soon as possible.
- ❑ The Public Information Office will handle all media and community inquiries.
- ❑ Keep staff well-informed. A Crisis Team member, identified for the site, can effectively deliver information to the other staff members so your time can be used for other actions/decisions.
- ❑ The employees will be able to deal with the situation by being informed of the facts as soon as possible, rather than receiving their "facts" through rumors.
- ❑ The other company sites should be given the basic information as soon as possible since friends/associates will quickly learn of the disturbance.
- ❑ After the crisis is over the Public Information Office may wish to arrange a special press conference to give the media the same information that has been shared with the families.

6. No Personnel Circulating:

- ❑ All staff should be protected from involvement in the crisis wherever possible.

7. Telephone Answerer:

- ❑ Prepare a statement to be read by the individuals who answer the telephones. Instruct them that any further inquiries should be made to the Public Information Office. Give them the telephone number for the caller to call.

8. Keep Phone Lines Open:

- ❑ The police and other public safety personnel will need access to the phones with highest priority. Even the pay phones need to be available to the police.

9. Maps in More Than One Location:

- ❑ Site maps will be most helpful to the police in locating the intruder and planning strategies for the apprehension. More than one area should house current maps in case the intruder has "holed up" in the area where the maps would usually be found.

10. I. D. Persons Familiar with the Facility:

- ❑ Persons familiar with the entire building should be available to discuss the interior room arrangements, etc. These individuals should be available at the chosen site map location away from the scene.

11. Written Memo for Staff:

- As soon as the immediate crisis/danger is over the staff will need to know not only what occurred, but also why you took the action you did.

12. Serious Incident Report:

- Complete and submit Crisis Team Report within twenty-four (24) hours.

13. Follow-up Activities:

- Disaster mental health counselors can provide counseling for staff.

14. Call emergency staff meeting.

Step 7: Develop Evacuation Plans

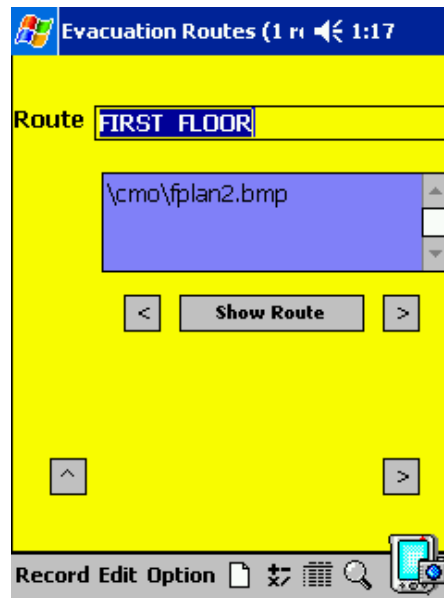
Seventh, the crisis management team should develop appropriate site evacuation plans.

The Crisis Management Organizer™ Evacuation Route Module

The Evacuation Routes module provides the user with the ability to view images and make drawings. In some ways its use is analogous to the Action Guides module.



One important use of this table is to store bitmap images of an organization's building plan, floor by floor. These plans can show evacuation routes, the placement of key emergency equipment, etc. It is also possible to view bitmap images of buildings, people, or whatever is required and thought important.



Step 8: Develop and Maintain Training Programs

Eighth, training and education programs should be developed and maintained. These programs should be designed both to train the crisis management team in how to respond to various crisis incidents but also to educate and prepare the workforce.

Step 9: Plan for Dealing with the Media and Post Crisis Follow-up

Ninth, the crisis management team or a designee should be prepared to deal with the media and a checklist for communicating with the media be adopted and practiced. Finally, thought and training should be put into post crisis follow-up, analysis, and humanitarian response.

Form Example: Checklist for Communicating with Media

Media policy varies from one site system to another. Contact is generally channeled through one person. Most news people are sensitive, open to suggestions and interested in doing a reputable job. When dealing with the media, the following suggestions will promote clear communications:

- ❑ Deal up-front with reporters. Be honest, forthright and establish good communication with the media before problems or a crisis occurs.
- ❑ Do not try to stonewall the media or keep them *from* doing their job.

- ❑ The site manager should decide what to say, define the ground rules, issue a statement, and answer questions within the limits of confidentiality.
- ❑ Identify a single information source.
- ❑ Advise site staff of media procedures.
- ❑ Advise staff of the media policy. Let them know that they do not have to talk, that they can say no.
- ❑ If the crisis is a death, consult with the deceased patient/staff member's family before making any statement. Explain site system policy and assure them that confidential information is being protected.

DURING A CRISIS:

- ❑ Attempt to define the type and extent of the crisis as soon as possible.
- ❑ Inform employees what is happening as soon as possible.
- ❑ Designate that a central source, such as the crisis communications center, coordinate information gathering and dissemination.
- ❑ Instruct all employees to refer all information and questions to communications centers.
- ❑ Remind employees that only designated spokesmen are authorized to talk with news media.
- ❑ Take initiative with news media and let them know what is or is not known about the situation.
- ❑ When communicating, remember to maintain a unified position and uniform message; keep messages concise, clear, and consistent; keep spokesman and alternates briefed.
- ❑ Contact the top administrator or designee to inform him of the current situation, emerging developments, and to clear statements.
- ❑ Delay releasing information until facts are *verified* and the site's position about the crisis is clear.
- ❑ Read all releases from previously prepared and approved statements to avoid danger of ad libbing.
- ❑ Assign sufficient staff to handle phones and seek additional information.
- ❑ Keep a log of all incoming and outgoing calls and personal contacts.
- ❑ Relieve key people from their normal duties so they may focus on the crisis.
- ❑ Express appreciation to all persons who helped handle the crisis.
- ❑ Prepare a general announcement to be given by the site manager or designee. A straightforward sympathetic announcement of loss with a simple statement of condolence is recommended. Also, a statement that more information will be forthcoming when verified can be reassuring to patients and staff.

Rules for Communicating with the Media in Times of Crisis

1. The *primary goal* should be to keep the public informed about the *crisis* while trying to maintain the privacy of patients and staff and ensure as little interruption of the treatment process as possible.
2. As soon as possible, *prepare a written statement* that gives the basic facts clearly and concisely or ask the executive office Community Relations Director to prepare one for you. Two or three minutes spent writing down some specific points is valuable. If there is time, try to anticipate what some of the questions will be and prepare answers. News people will always want to know: who, what, when, where, why, and how. Try them out on your colleagues and see if they have any recurring questions. Use the same facts in dealing with all media so the story is consistent.
3. If news media personnel arrive on campus while patients are in class or treatment, *guide* their *activities* so they will not disrupt the treatment process. The news media can come onto the campus but should not be permitted to enter patient rooms/treatment areas.
4. *Don't presume* to tell a reporter what is or isn't newsworthy. The reporters and their editors make that decision. And never -- absolutely never -- lie to a reporter. Tell the bad news quickly; get it over with. It may be your only chance to set the record straight. It's vital to establish the executive office as the best source for information on the crisis. If the media think you're hiding something, they're likely to dig hard for information from other sources and play the story more sensationally-and perhaps less accurately. Protecting and enhancing the executive office's credibility is important.
5. *Talk conversationally*, or you will inadvertently pitch your voice up and sound strained. If you don't understand the question, say so. Parroting the reporter's question is very dangerous on radio or video tape because the tape can be edited to sound like you concur whether you do or not. Suppose the reporter asks, "How are you handling this terrible shock?" Don't respond, "We are handling this terrible shock by.. ." Instead, respond in your own words to the effect that: "The patients and staff are continuing their usual schedules."
6. *Answer each question and then be silent*. Stick with the statement. Don't embellish it and don't respond to media pressure to chat about it. Just because a TV reporter sticks a microphone in your face or a radio reporter lets the tape run does not mean you have to fill that prolonged silence. Don't worry your pauses will be removed in the editing process. If you are standing for the interview, don't back up, even though the microphone seems to be put down your throat. Plant your feet firmly and stand your ground. Suggest that everyone sit down if you need "space".

7. Remember that *conflict is news*, and reporters often frame their questions to bring out the conflict or emotion in a story. Guard your patients against such intrusions.
8. If a reporter asks *several questions* at once, say something like: "You've asked me several questions here...where would you like me to begin?" If a reporter interrupts you before you've finished your answer, pause, let the reporter finish, and then continue your answer. Don't let the reporter get you off track or tell you when you've finished your answer. However, don't go into lengthy detail or run off with the *interview* either.
9. Don't let a reporter's friendly, sympathetic manner disarm you into giving him/her additional information. Don't assume any chatty comments are "*off the record*" even if you say they are. Keep in mind that the media aren't in business to help you with your communication needs: the media are in business to 1) make money and 2) disseminate news. "News" can be defined as any information of interest to the public.
10. Reporters are under constant *deadlines*, but no deadline is so important that it's worth making an inaccurate statement. If a reporter says he/she has deadline problems, ask how long you have to get the information, and then try to obtain it within that amount of time. Don't put reporters off; they will only get more insistent and abrasive if you do so.
11. It is best not to answer a query with "*No comment.*" Otherwise, the reporters may report you wouldn't answer questions or may interpret for themselves why you aren't answering. Instead, say, "I can't share that information with you right now, but I will call you as soon as I can release it. (And do call them). Or say, "I don't know the answer, but I should have it in an hour. Please call me." If you can't reveal information at all, tell the reporters why. *Examples:* Relatives of an injured staff haven't been notified yet or revealing the identity of a witness would jeopardize an investigation, etc.
12. After you provide the written statement to the media or answer subsequent questions, keep a media *log* of whom you speak to and what you give them, whether it is the basic statement or a subsequent update. This allows you to track which medium received what information.
13. Don't ask a reporter for *editing rights* or to see the *story* for approval before it runs. Most news media have specific policies preventing this. Reporters may well interpret these requests as insults or a slight on their competence. Don't complain to the media if you feel you were treated unfairly. You may simply draw more attention to the crisis. If major story details are inaccurate in a newspaper story, you can ask for a correction. But getting a similar correction in a TV or radio story is more difficult and must involve a giant inaccuracy.

The Community Relations Department/Person should be *updated* on any emergency. The Community Relations Department/Person will assist the executive office or building administration in handling interviews with news media and coordinate the flow of information.