

## **ARTICLE 11 – CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN**

### ***11.1 Purpose of a Crisis Management/Disaster Recovery***

An LSC crisis may occur in a number of different situations including times when the integrity or reputation of Pacific Swimming is threatened by adverse or negative attention; when, in the eyes of the media, general public, or its membership, Pacific 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 offices of Pacific Swimming. During these times, it is vital that Pacific 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 Pacific 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.

### ***11.2 The Role of the Pacific Swimming Board of Directors in Crisis Management/Disaster Recovery Planning***

Under nonprofit governance laws, the members of the Pacific 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.

### ***11.3 Crisis Management Plan***

#### **11.3.1 Descriptions of Key Positions**

1. Spokesperson: General Chair or Designee – The person authorized to speak to the news media, public, membership and stake holders during a crisis.
2. Information Officer(s): Person(s) appointed by the General Chair and approved by the Pacific 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.
3. 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, USA Swimming Representative, Legal Counsel, Office-Membership, and Office-Support.
  - B. Secondary Team: Remaining members of the Pacific Swimming Executive Committee and the Secretary.
  - 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 the Officials Chair, Governance Chair, Diversity Chair, etc.
4. Stakeholders: Stakeholders are those members of key constituent groups who have a vested interest in Pacific Swimming. They include:

- A. USA Swimming
- B. Pacific Swimming Board of Directors and Staff Members
- C. Pacific Swimming Members – Clubs, Coaches, Athletes, Non-Athletes
- D. Parents of Pacific Swimming member athletes
- E. LSC Volunteers (committees, events, etc.)
- F. Partner Organizations and Sponsors
- G. Media and the Public

### **11.3.2 General Procedures**

1. The General Chair, or his/her designee, is responsible for issues management. It is the responsibility of all Pacific 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 Pacific 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.

2. Realizing that not all crises are preventable, it is the responsibility of the Pacific 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.

3. 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.

4. At its first meeting following the fall Pacific Swimming House of Delegates meeting, 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 Pacific Swimming coming year. These appointees must be current members of the Pacific 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.

5. Should a crisis arise during the year that requires activation of the Pacific 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.

### **11.3.3 Best Practices**

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

1. Crisis prevention is a priority for Pacific 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 designed Spokesperson and staff members to learn strategies to effectively deal with the media during times of crisis.

3. Pacific 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 Pacific Swimming continue to be carried out effectively and professionally during any time of crisis.
4. Pacific Swimming understands the urgency in getting its message out first. This allows Pacific Swimming to better control the content and its accuracy, as well as, stabilizing the situation and solidifying the reputation of Pacific 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 Pacific 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 Pacific 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 Pacific Swimming at the appropriate time.
10. Issues regarding personnel and any Board of Review matters are to remain confidential.
11. The Pacific Swimming Office-Support will serve as the permanent repository for all critical Pacific Swimming documents, news releases and fact sheets related to any crisis.

#### **11.3.4 Crisis Management Plan Process**

1. Notification: The General Chair should be immediately notified of any impending or existing crisis by staff and/or board members of Pacific 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 Pacific 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. Pacific 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 Crisis Communication Team: Depending on the situation, the Information Officer will convene the primary and/or primary and 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 team.
- B. The Information Officer may engage others in the process based on the situation.

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.
- B. The crisis communication team will formulate an appropriate response to the crisis.
- C. The crisis communication team will construct a plan/process and timetable that appropriately addresses the crisis.

6. Crisis Communication Team: Going Public

- A. The Information Officer in consultation with the General Chair alerts key stakeholders.
- B. The Spokesperson begins external audience outreach.
- 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 the Pacific Swimming Board of Directors and members) summarizing the resolution of the crisis. Check to be sure interaction with all media contacts has been completed.
- B. File all notes, video/sound clips. Talking points, communications, etc. into an electronic file to be housed permanently with Pacific Swimming Office-Support. The hard copies of all official documents should be filed and kept also with Pacific Swimming Office-Support.
- C. Update and revise the crisis communication plan to reflect any suggested changes and present

to the Pacific Swimming Board of Directors for approval.

- D. Re-convene the crisis communication team to evaluate the effectiveness of the crisis management plan. If appropriate, engage the Board of Directors in this review.

### **11.3.5 Disaster Recovery Plan**

It is imperative that Pacific Swimming has procedures in place to continue its business in the event of a disaster that causes damage to and/or threatens the LSC's IT systems. It is the responsibility of each staff member, in collaboration with the General Chair and the Treasurer, to insure that an effective plan is constructed and communicated. Components of that plan should include the following:

1. Maintain a complete inventory of all physical assets of Pacific Swimming. Update databases and spreadsheets annually and record major acquisitions as they occur.
2. Maintain a daily online backup of the office computers, key databases, and financial files.
3. Storage of copies of all bank account numbers, legal documents, board minutes, committee reports, insurance policies, etc. in a safe and secure place.
4. Construction of a document that contains emergency contact information for all staff and members of the executive committee and secretary to be shared with members of both entities.
5. Establishment of a network of community organizations that could be called upon during specific types of crises.
6. Review and revision of disaster recovery plan at least once a year with office staff and the General Chair and Treasurer.

### **11.4 Key Positions of Primary Communications**

Names and contact information of Key Positions of Primary Communication Team can be found in Policies and Procedures and the Pacific Swimming website.

1. Spokesperson:  
Pacific Swimming General Chair
2. Information Officers:  
Vice Chair Program Operations  
Administrative Review Board Chair
3. Support  
Office Staff - Membership  
Office Staff - Support  
USA Swimming General Counsel  
USA Swimming Representative