

Purdue University

Crisis Communications Plan

Purpose:

A situation can be identified as a **crisis** when the incident or event has a significant impact on the Purdue University community, including visitors. Examples may range from minor to major and may include: severe weather/natural disasters, deaths or serious injuries, fires, crime, power or network outages, protests and/or health issues.

Objective:

This crisis communication plan creates procedures and establishes resources for distributing information appropriately in a timely, accurate, responsible and sensitive way to students, faculty, staff, stakeholders and the general public during a crisis situation. Potential actions will depend on the type of crisis and the level of response needed. Our number one priority is the safety of our students and those on our campus.

NOTE: These communication procedures do not change the way emergencies are reported. Emergencies should be immediately reported by calling Purdue Dispatch at 911.

Constituencies:

Students
Parents
Neighbors
General Public

Faculty
Board of Trustees
Public Officials

Staff
Alumni
News Media

Roles & Responsibilities:

In the event of a crisis or negative news:

Senior Director for News and Information/Spokesperson

The senior director for news and information (or designee) will activate the crisis communication plan and serve as the voice of the university as needed. This person initially will go to the scene/incident command post (ICP). If no single incident command has been established, the senior director for news and information will report to the emergency operations center (EOC). EOC will usually be located in the conference room at PUPD (TERY). The spokesperson should be fully aware of the most updated information regarding the crisis in order to relay that information to coordinators and media. The spokesperson is also responsible for scheduling news conferences and facilitating media availability.

Assistant Vice President for Strategic Communication

The assistant vice president for strategic communication will report to the EOC. If AVP is not available, a designee will attend. AVP of strategic communication, in

consultation with EOC director and vice president for public affairs, ultimately makes the decision on how message/information is released and will advise the spokesperson.

Assistant Director of the University News Service

The assistant director of the university news service, or backup, will coordinate Marketing and Media Office (M&M) activity in consultation with the spokesperson and assistant vice president for strategic communication.

Teams & Responsibilities:

News Media: The spokesperson, with help from the assistant director of the news service and designated news service staff, will field media calls/requests as necessary based on the volume and situation. Consider using the news media to help spread important information. The assistant director of the news service will assign members to write news releases as needed. These should be coordinated with the EOC director.

Web/Social Media: The social media team should be activated immediately, as social media is the fastest way to spread information. Information should also be posted to the campus safety status page/campus emergency page (purdue.edu/ea) and the red banner added to the homepage (purdue.edu) if needed. If a large volume of web traffic is observed or anticipated, a plain text homepage should be established on purdue.edu. The director of digital marketing and the social media manager or their backups will manage this team.

Internal Communications: Responsible for information to staff, faculty and students. This team will provide info as well as updates to need-to-know areas: ODOS, call center, HR, physical facilities, schools/departments, housing/residential life, Greek community, athletics, convocations, provost (academic effects – i.e. classes delayed or canceled). Methods of internal communication could include: Purdue Alert, social media, purdue.edu, campus-wide email, digital signage and/or BoilerTV.

- **NOTE:** The President and “cabinet” (senior executives) will be notified initially by the senior director of environmental health and public safety (EHPS) or designee. The vice president for public affairs or her designee will be the representative to the president.
- An outside crisis call center is available to handle a large volume of calls in the event of a major crisis on campus. If no call center is needed/approved, another option is to contact ITaP Telecommunications Office to record a message for the emergency line and/or university main line.
- Information should also be shared via Campus Communicators Council.

The table below details the types of crises in which certain or all teams may be needed. The senior director for news and information, AVP of strategic communication and assistant director of the news service have the responsibility to activate and/or assign teams based upon the circumstances of the crisis situation.

Crisis:	Teams Needed:	Level of Involvement:
Winter Weather	All	Moderate to High: Depends on the level of impact on campus.
Power Outage	All	Moderate to High: Depends on the level of impact on campus.
Severe Weather	News Media, Social Media, Internal Communications	High
Active Shooter	All	Extremely High
Fire On-Campus	All	High
Fire Off-Campus	News Media, Social Media	Low to Moderate: Depends on severity of fire/ how many students affected.
Homicide	News Media, Social Media (only if on-going threat to public safety), internal communications	High to Extremely High: Depends on circumstances.
Protest	News Media, Internal Communications	Low to Moderate
Large-scale theft	News Media, Internal Communications	Low
Crime Spree	News Media, Internal Communications	Low
Health Issue	All	Moderate to High: Depends on the scale of the health issue.
Student Death	Internal Communications	Depends on circumstances

NOTE: The table above should serve as a guide. Level of response will be dictated by the emergency situation and by the guidance of EHPS officials and the crisis team (Spokesperson, AVP External Relations, AVP Strategic Communications, Asst. Director of the University News Service).

Crisis Communication Resources:

- Internal
 - Purdue Email (general communication, public)
 - NS Server (general location of crisis documents, information)
 - Google Drive (backup cloud location of crisis documents, information)
 - Phone (cell or office – see emergency contact list on server or intranet)
 - “Bridge” conference call line
- External
 - Purdue ALERT (PUPD sends out these emergency messages)
 - Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube)
 - Campus EA page and possibly University website (<http://www.purdue.edu>)
 - Email (campus-wide, students only, staff only, faculty only)
 - *Purdue Today* faculty/staff e-newsletter (special editions can be produced if needed)
 - BoilerTV
 - Crisis Call Center
 - Voicemail recording or emergency info line.
 - All-hazard warning sirens (operated by Purdue Dispatch Center or Tippecanoe County Emergency Management Agency)
 - Digital signage throughout campus
 - Red Cross (“safe and well” website)
 - News Media
 - Local (WLFI, Journal & Courier, The Exponent, WBAA)
 - Regional (Indianapolis)

Reviewed on January 7, 2020