MISSOURI S&T CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Missouri S&T Department of Communications
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This document is available online at http://news.mst.edu/files/crisis.pdf.

This working document is updated periodically by the Missouri S&T Communications staff.

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About the plan

The Missouri S&T Crisis Communication Plan provides policies and procedures for the coordination of communications within the university community, and between the campus, the media and the public in the event of a ***crisis situation***.

A crisis situation is any situation or event that has a major impact on the campus community and/or the broader public. Examples of a crisis situation may include fires, bomb threats, deaths or serious injuries, natural disasters, major crimes or major disruptions of campus operations, such as a campuswide power or network outage. Crisis situations may include police investigations, protests or other situations that require a public response.

A crisis situation may be defined by the Chancellor, University Police, Environmental Health and Safety, the Division of Student Affairs or Information Technology, depending on the nature of the event or situation.

This plan is not intended to change the way emergencies are initially reported. **All emergencies on campus should be reported immediately to 911.**

This plan not only addresses media relations and communications issues, but also includes procedures for the rapid identification of potentially harmful situations and the methods for responding to these situations quickly and effectively. It is the goal of this crisis communications plan to establish guidelines for dealing with a variety of situations, and to ensure that campus officials and communicators are familiar with those procedures and their roles in the event of a crisis. The plan is designed to be used in conjunction with the normal decision-making hierarchy of the university and does not supplant that decision-making process.

During a crisis situation, the Missouri S&T Department of Communications and/or the Missouri S&T Office of Public Relations is the designated unit responsible for coordinating communications with internal and external audiences.

I. Purpose

This plan describes the role of the Department of Communications and the Office of Public Relations in collecting and conveying information to the public and the campus community during or immediately following a crisis or emergency situation. The Department and Office's underlying philosophy of pro-active media relations guides the development of this plan. That philosophy can be summarized in two statements:

> **Crises can be opportunities as well as problems**. They can prompt us to improve our programs and, if we respond appropriately, provide a chance to improve our credibility with the news media and with key publics.
>
> **The Communications Department is an advocate for Missouri S&T in the news media and for the news media inside Missouri S&T.** We are candid and honest with media during a crisis. At the same time, we speak for and protect the legitimate interests of Missouri S&T's students, faculty and staff.

II. Situation

1. Each crisis or emergency will require a unique public and internal information response. The extent of the response will depend on the nature of the crisis.
2. The Communications Department's contacts include print, broadcast and online media, and the department serves as a liaison with other campus units during a crisis.

III. Assumptions

1. **Media relations is critical.** Often the only information the public receives about an emergency is through the news media; therefore, media relations is an essential component of any crisis plan. Timing is critical and a response must be issued as soon as possible with follow-up bulletins, as required.
2. **Social media cannot be ignored.** With the widespread use of online communications systems, rumors can spread quickly via social media and online forums. Therefore, it is critical that responses be issued as quickly as possible via various channels of online communication, including social media networks like Facebook and Twitter, as well as the university website.
3. **Crises are big news.** A crisis situation is big news and is likely to result in more public exposure for the university than dozens of "good news" stories.

IV. Operations

1. General

1. **Coordination by Communications Department.** To ensure that the university's public information response to an emergency is quick, accurate, sensitive and responsible, the Communications Department (Communications) will coordinate campus communications with campus and off-campus media and with the campus community. If necessary, Communications will set up a crisis communication center in its offices, or at an alternate location to be determined by members of the Crisis Communications Team (see IV 2, "Crisis Communications Team," below), to remain open 24 hours a day during the crisis. This is not to be confused with the command post established by the University Police staff in charge of making decisions pertaining to the handling of the crisis itself. (See Missouri S&T's Emergency Operations Plan, "Implementation," available online at http://police.mst.edu/eop/ .)

2. **Chief university official: the Chancellor.** The Chancellor shall serve as the chief university official. If the Chancellor is unavailable, the Provost shall serve as the senior university official. If both the Provost and the Chancellor are unavailable, the Vice Chancellor for Administrative Services shall serve as the senior university official.

3. **Chief spokesperson.** During an emergency, the Director of Communications, Manager of Public Relations or a designated member of the University Crisis Team (see "Crisis Team," below) will serve as the chief spokesperson. Other Communications staff and student assistants will be given name and telephone number of both the Director of Communications and the Manager of Public Relations for referral of media inquiries. All media inquiries shall be directed to the Communications Department, which will coordinate with the chief spokesperson for response.

4. **Technical assistance from IT.** During an emergency, the Director or Assistant Director of Communications, Manager of Public Relations and Manager of Electronic Marketing Communications or their designees will work with a liaison from Information Technology (IT), to be designated by the IT staff on the Crisis Communications Team, to execute communications systems that effectively get the critical messages to various audiences as immediately as possible. The systems may include the university's mass notification system, a phone bank and hotline for handling incoming calls, voicemail messages during the crisis, etc. Members of the Communications staff will assist in staffing the phone bank and responding to calls. If necessary, IT will also prepare communications "kit bags," including mobile phones and two-way communications devices, for use during the crisis.

2. Crisis Communications Team

Depending on the type of crisis, certain key people will work directly with the Department of Communications to facilitate dissemination of information. These people form the Missouri S&T Crisis Communications Team and are listed on the following page. The Crisis Communications Team also serves as an advisory group for the Communications Department and will be convened periodically to review this plan and conduct after-action reviews of high-level crisis situations. The Director of Communications serves as chair of the Crisis Communications Team. The Manager of Public Relations serves as vice chair and will fulfill the responsibilities of chair in the absence of the director.

Missouri S&T Crisis Communications Team

Updated April 2013

Name/Title/Division	***Role***	***Contact Information***
Andrew Careaga Director of Communications University Advancement	Crisis Team Chair Chief Spokesperson	(O) 573-341-4328 (H) 573-341-5258 (cell) 573-578-4420
Mindy Limback Assistant Director of Communications	Chief Spokesperson	(O) 573-341-4268 (H) 573-364-5237 (cell) 573-308-7218
Mary Helen Stoltz Manager, Public Relations	Crisis Team Vice Chair Chief Liaison, Public Relations Chief Spokesperson	(O) 573-341-4966 (H) 573-341-8202 (cell) 573-201-4093 (cell/alt) 573-578-6303
Barb Prewett Assistant to the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs	Chief Liaison, as events pertain to student critical incidents, deaths, advocacy or conduct issues	(O) 573-341-4292 (H) 573-699-4441 (cell) 573-368-9132
Phil Whitefield (interim) Vice Provost for Academic Affairs	Chief Liaison, as events pertain to academic affairs	(O) 573-341-7887 (H) 573-364-1091 (cell) 573-465-7876
Christine Laughlin Chief of Police Administrative Services	Chief Liaison, as events pertain to crime or first-response emergencies (fires, natural disasters, etc.)	(O) 573-341-4300 (cell) 573-201-1699 (cell/alt) 816-665-1448
Letha Young University Police Administrative Services	Alternate Liaison for University Police, as events pertain to crime or first-response emergencies (fires, natural disasters, etc.)	(O) 573-341-4300 or 4332 (H) 573-364-3957 (cell) 573-578-1194
Ray Bono Director of Environmental Health and Safety	Chief Liaison, as events pertain to environmental health and safety emergencies	(O) 573-341-4240 (H) 573-364-5728 (cell) 573-578-0210
John Kean Sports Information Director University Advancement	Chief Liaison, as events pertain to university athletics	(O) 573-341-4140/341-4259 (H) 573-364-9509 (cell) 573-233-6891
Greg Smith Chief Information Officer	Chief Liaison, as events pertain to telecommunications and information technology/security	(O) 573-341-6995 (cell) 503-476-7312
Cheryl McKay Manager, Electronic Marketing Comm University Advancement	Chief Liaison, as events pertain to online/web communications	(O) 573-341-7060 (H) 573-364-4791 (cell) 573-308-5754
Klaus Woelk Professor of Chemistry Faculty Senate Representative	Chief Liaison for faculty	(O) 573-341-4432 (H) 573-426-2221 (cell) 573-368-9847
Ashley Koesterer President, S&T Student Council	Chief Liaison for students and student representative	(O) 573-341-6421 (cell) 314-642-3598
Darlene Ramsay Executive Director Alumni Relations & Advancement Serv	Chief Liaison, as events pertain to alumni relations	(O) 573-341-4584 (cell) 573-308-7457
Krista Limmer President of the Council of Graduate Students	Chief Liaison for graduate students and graduate student representative	(C) 330-475-5161
Wayne Bledsoe General Manager KMST	On-campus media representative	(O) 573-341-4386 (H) 573-368-4044 (cell) 573-465-4044
Karl Lutzen Systems Security Analyst – Principal IT	Chief Liaison, as events pertain to IT security and to campus notification systems	(O) 573-341-6398 (H) 573-364-7658 (cell) 573-647-1062

Missouri S&T Crisis Communications Team (continued)

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Ann Shenethia Manuel Associate Vice Chancellor Human Resource Services, Affirmative Action, Diversity and Inclusion	Chief Liaison, as events pertain to personnel issues, race relations or sexual harassment	(O) 573-341-4241/4246 (local cell) 573-612-8218 (cell) 405-312-6077
Dennis Goodman Director Student Health Services	Chief Liaison, as events pertain to medical emergencies, epidemics, pandemics, student health in general	(O) **573-**341-4284 (cell) 573-308-7386
Cecilia Elmore Director Student Diversity, Outreach and Women's Programs	Chief Liaison, as events pertain to summer camps	(O) 573-341-6798 (H/cell): 573-647-0197
Lynn Stichnote Director Admissions	Chief Liaison, as events pertain to admitted students, accepted students	(O) 573-341-4075 (cell) 573-201-8835
Deanne Jackson Registrar	Chief Liaison as events pertain to students on campus, FERPA guidelines	(O) 573-341-4076 (H) 573-341-8252 (C) 573-578-4380
Laura Stoll Dean Enrollment Management	Chief Liaison, as events pertain to students on campus	(O) 573-341-4081 (H) 573-364-6778 (cell) 573-368-8044
Jeanie Hofer Director International and Cultural Affairs	Chief Liaison, as events pertain to international students and faculty, staff and students abroad	(O) 573-341-4486 (H) 573-729-6105 (cell) 573-247-3797
Kristy Giacomelli Administrative Assistant, Registrar Staff Council Representative	Chief Liaison for staff	(O) 573-341-4088 (cell) 573-247-6269
Rebecca Frisbee Manager of Marketing, Global Learning Staff Council Representative	Chief Liaison for staff	(O) 573-341-4270 (H) 573-729-4866 (C) 573-578-8678
Chris Ramsay Director, SDELC	Chief Liaison, as events pertain to student design teams	(O) 573-341-4621 (H) 573-201-3315 (Cell) 573-466-3549
Bob Phelan Outreach and Communications Manager, SDELC	Liaison, as events pertain to student design teams	(O) 573-341-6782 (H) 573-364-0960 (Cell) 573-201-8080

3. Phases of Response

1. Immediate

1. The Department of Communications and the official spokesperson (either the Director of Communications, the Manager of Public Relations or a designated campus official) will determine if an official statement should be prepared and released. If warranted, they will also develop answers to specific questions that may be asked by the media.

2. The Director of Communications, Manager of Public Relations and/or the spokesperson will brief all Communications staff who are assigned to answer the phone and email; deploy messages via mass notification, email and social networks; and monitor traditional and social media during a crisis situation. Whenever possible, each staff member in the Office of Public Relations will be assigned specific print and broadcast media to serve as the contact person for those media outlets. This will reduce the blitz of calls to several staff members and reduce duplication of effort. Depending on the scope of the event, other members of the Communications Department staff may be called upon to assist.

3. The Communications and Public Relations staff will work with the appropriate campus officials (i.e., police, student affairs, etc.) to obtain basic information (type of crisis/emergency; time of emergency; actions taken; areas and number of people involved; injuries or fatalities; extent of damage) and prepare an official news release. The Director of Communications and/or his or her designate will keep all Communications staff members informed of breaking news to enable them to respond to media inquiries.

4. The Public Relations staff will verify all sources of information.

5. The Communications or Public Relations staff will clear news releases with the chief university official and/or official spokesperson as quickly as possible before releasing to the media.

6. The Communications staff will provide information to various audiences, using various media, depending on the nature of the emergency, as outlined in the table on the following page.

7. The Public Relations staff will log and document all media inquiries on the standard Media Request Log (see Appendix D).

8. In cases involving student injuries or deaths, families will be notified by appropriate personnel before the information is released to the public.

9. Spokesperson will coordinate the release of factual information with local hospitals and other disaster agencies, providing as prompt, accurate and complete information as possible.

COMMUNICATIONS INFORMATION/AUDIENCE MATRIX

During a crisis situation, the Missouri S&T Communications Department employs a number of methods and media to get the word out to key audiences. The emphasis is to first reach internal audiences to ensure our students, faculty and staff are first of all safe and, secondarily, as informed as possible about the situation. Secondary audiences include news media outlets, which can help to communicate messages to the external stakeholders. Depending on the nature of the crisis, however, secondary audiences may have to rely on Missouri S&T's website and social media to obtain information.

The information/audience matrix below shows how the Communications Department communicates during a crisis, based on the type of crisis (high-level, partial, etc.).

Type of crisis (examples)	**Key audiences to reach immediately**	**Primary means of communication**	**Secondary or ongoing means of communication**	**Employee status**
Campuswide high-level crisis (i.e., bomb threat, gunman, power outage, natural disaster disrupting campus, pandemic illness, anything that causes campus closure)	All internal (students, faculty, staff) Parents/families of current students	Warning siren Mass notification (text, cell/office/home phones, email)	Email Website Social media (Facebook and Twitter) Dial-in phone system Media releases Hand-posted signage	Refer to primary or secondary communications Check with supervisor
Partial campus crisis (chemical spill confined to one building, partial power outage, other situation resulting in partial closure, evacuation)	All internal	Alarm system in building Targeted email to those affected Email to all-student (allstu-grp@mst.edu) and all-employees (allemp-grp@mst.edu) lists	Dial-in phone system Campuswide email announcement Website Social media (Facebook and Twitter) Media releases	Refer to primary or secondary communications Check with supervisor
Unscheduled disruptions (network outage, water line break)	All internal	Varies, depending on nature of disruption (i.e., for network outage, dial-in phone system would be used since email or web would not be reliable)	Varies, depending on nature of disruption, and at the discretion of the Communications staff	
Information (crime alerts, planned outages)	All internal	Email to all-student (allstu-grp@mst.edu) and all-employees (allemp-grp@mst.edu) lists (crime alerts); eConnection (for faculty and staff), Student eConnection (for students)	Email	

Communications methods by type of crisis

High-level crisis (bomb threat, active shooter on campus, campus closure)

- Immediate:

  Communications staff will use the campus mass notification system to immediately deploy message via text, cell, email.

  Physical facilities staff will sound the campus warning siren.

- Ongoing:

  Communications will use email, campus website, social media, news releases and dial-in phone system to communicate to campus community (students, faculty, staff) and to the public and the news media.

Partial campus crisis (chemical spill, partial campus power outage)

- Immediate:

  Communications staff will contact campus community via email.

- Ongoing:

  Communications will use email, campus website, social media, news releases and dial-in phone system to communicate to campus community (students, faculty, staff) and to the public and the news media.

Unscheduled disruptions (network outage, water line break)

- Immediate:

  Varies, depending on circumstances. Communications staff may use email to notify campus community and rely on social media and standard media relations practices to communicate externally.

- Ongoing:

  Varies, depending on circumstances. Communications staff may use email to notify campus community and rely on social media and standard media relations practices to communicate externally.

Information (crime alerts, planned outages)

- Immediate:
  Email notification.

- Ongoing:
  Email notification.

3. Phases of response (continued)

2. Ongoing period

In an ongoing crisis, the Communications staff will:

1. Provide, via the news media and on the web, the public and constituents with basic information about an emergency or threatened emergency. (See Appendix B -- Media Relations Reminders.)

2. Provide, via electronic mail, the campus community with basic information about the crisis.

3. If electronic mail services are unavailable, provide announcements to the campus community via public radio station KMST, 88.5 FM, and via Missouri S&T's VoIP phone system.

4. Keep the public, media and constituents informed of the situation and provide advice on what they should or should not do to prevent further damage or loss of life, panic or interference with emergency response efforts. Information will be provided via the Missouri S&T "Alert" website (alert.mst.edu) or dark site, in the event of a network outage, and via news releases to the area media.

5. Keep the public, media and constituents informed of where to seek temporary housing, food, etc.

6. Keep track of all media inquiries using the standard Media Request Log (see Appendix D).

7. Instruct the public on how to obtain further advice or information.

In an ongoing crisis, the Office of Electronic Marketing Communications, in coordination with Information Technology (IT), will establish and maintain a website or sites devoted to providing up-to-date information for the media, students, parents, faculty and staff, and other constituents.

3. Recovery period

The Communications Department will issue media updates for as long as necessary, then scale back activities as warranted. Such updates will be posted online by the Office of Public Relations, with assistance from the Office of Electronic Marketing Communications. Upon termination of the crisis situation, the Director of Communications or Manager of Public Relations will schedule a meeting of all key players to review all actions taken and lessons learned. These will be included in an after-action report to be forwarded to the Chancellor and other appropriate university officials or departments.

V. Organization and Assignment of Responsibilities

1. Organization

    1. The Director of Communications, Manager of Public Relations or his/her designee will coordinate crisis communications with the media and with the internal campus community (students, faculty and staff).

    2. Public Relations staff members, as well as other campus units and staff members, will be called upon for assistance as necessary.

2. Responsibilities

    1. Communications staff will compile and relay official statements to print and broadcast media.

    2. The Director of Communications or Manager of Public Relations, in consultation with the designated senior university official, will determine whether to hold a news conference. If a news conference is held, the Manager of Public Relations will coordinate the logistics, with assistance from the Communications staff and the University Crisis Team. (See Appendix A -- News Conference Guidelines.)

    3. The designated senior university official shall speak at a news conference when a major crisis needs to be announced or when the senior university official wishes to issue updates on the situation.

        1. **News Conference sites, by priority**:
            1. St. Pat's Ballroom, Havener Center (Contact: Havener Center Reservations, 341-4399)
            2. Carver-Turner Room, Havener Center (Contact: Havener Center Reservations, 341-4399)
            3. Silver and Gold Room, Havener Center (Contact: Havener Center Reservations, 341-4399)
            4. Leach Theatre Lobby, Castleman Hall (Contact: Leach Theatre, 341-6985)
            5. Hall of Fame Room, Gale Bullman Multi-Purpose Building (Contact: Missouri S&T Athletics Office, 341-4175)

        2. **Time**: Must be convenient to university personnel but also be early enough for TV media to make their evening news deadlines. If TV media are anticipated, mid-morning (10 a.m. to noon) is best time frame. This consideration is important for maintaining positive relationships with the media.

        3. **Parking**: Request that a traffic control officer be stationed to allow media to park in the appropriate parking lot. Contact: University Police, 341-4300.

3. Media relations

    1. Interviews
    The Director of Communications, Manager of Public Relations or a designated spokesperson from the Crisis Team (see "Crisis Team," Section IV 2) will be available for interviews. Should a reporter contact a member of the crisis team directly, the crisis team member should refer the reporter to the Manager of Public Relations or designated spokesperson.

    2. General observations

Dealings with the media should always be honest and courteous to encourage the media's confidence in and respect for university personnel. Spokespersons' attitudes toward media reflect on the image of the university. Withholding information from the media will generate suspicion and distrust.

VI. Direction and Control

The Manager of Public Relations or his or her designee will direct and approve the work of the Office of Public Relations.

VII. Communications Staff Members

O = Office telephone E = E-mail H = Home telephone C = Cell phone
All area codes are (573)

1. (Primary contact) Mary Helen Stoltz (O) 573-341-4966, (H) 573-341-8202, (E) mhstoltz@mst.edu, (C) 573-201-4093 or (alternate) 573-578-6303

2. (Secondary contact) Andrew Careaga (O) 573-341-4183, (H) 573-341-5258, (E) acareaga@mst.edu, (C) 573-578-4420

3. Mindy Limback (O) 573-341-4268, (H) 573-364-5237, (E) limbackm@mst.edu, (C) 573-308-7218 or (alternate) 573-201-6409

4. Linda Fulps (O) 341-4260, (H) 426-3300, (E) fulpsl@mst.edu, (C) 573-578-1699

5. Peter Ehrhard (O) 341-4269, (E) ehrhardp@mst.edu, (C) 314-973-9145

6. Joyce Jacobs (O) 341-4328, (H) 368-4243, (E) jbeadle@mst.edu , (C) none

7. John Kean (O) 341-4140 or 341-4259 (H) 364-9509, (E) jkean@mst.edu, (C) 573-233-6891

VIII. Updates

This plan will be updated regularly. All members of the Chancellor's Council will be sent the updates.

The core crisis team should be assembled periodically to discuss the plan and any updates. The Director of Communications or the Manager of Public Relations will serve as core team captain and convene these meetings. Results of the meetings and revisions of the plan are to be documented. Copies of this plan should be addressed to all employees listed in the plan and any other personnel who might play a role in the event of a crisis.

APPENDIX A -- News Conference Guidelines

1. When you notify 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. News availabilities are held simply to make individuals available to answer questions or demonstrate something.

2. Don't call unnecessary news conferences/availabilities. If it's not worth their time, the media will only be angered.

3. If holding a news conference, try to tell media in advance some details of what you will be announcing.

4. Gauge the size of your crowd carefully when reserving a room; better to have too much than too little space. Make sure microphones, chairs, lighting and water are in place at least 30 minutes prior to the event.

5. Decide format in advance – who will introduce speakers, who decides when question/answer period ends, and other details.

6. Decide in advance whether handouts are needed. If speaker is giving a talk for which there is a text, you may want to wait and hand out material after the talk so 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.

7. Check to see what else is happening on campus or in the community before scheduling a press conference.

8. 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.)

9. Decide who will maintain control at the news conference, who will decide where cameras are set up, who sits where.

10. Try to plan the length of the news conference, but be flexible.

11. 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.

12. 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.

APPENDIX B -- Media Relations Reminders

1. Always return media calls. The more cooperative you are, the better.

2. Communicate with the media -- talk to them as well as listen to them. During crisis time, you may learn a great deal from the media that can be useful to you in further dealing with the crisis.

3. Avoid antagonizing the media. A short tone at a press conference, during a phone call, or elsewhere can affect your future relationship with an individual or other media who may hear the conversation.

4. Consider establishing a dedicated call-in phone line that will offer information to media or others. Information on news conferences, rumor control information, newly acquired information, can be recorded on voicemail and updated. This is particularly useful when regular phone lines are tied up with calls.

5. Consider how information you release to media may affect other agencies, businesses or individuals. If you say things that may result in media calling other agencies, call those agencies first to warn them of impending calls.

6. When talking to the media, be sure to give credit to other agencies, groups or individuals working on the crisis, including your own staff.

7. Try to be pro-active with new information. Even though things may be frantic; if you acquire new information regarding the crisis, reach out to the media.