

AmTrust Property Zone

Communicating During a Crisis

When an emergency strikes, confusion can follow. Communication is of the utmost importance to keep the situation under control. Unfortunately, figuring out how and what to communicate when you're in the middle of a crisis is no easy task, and delays can make the situation worse. All businesses should create a comprehensive [business continuity plan](#) that includes a crisis communication plan to ensure a successful recovery from any type of disaster.



What is a crisis communication plan?

A crisis communication plan is an important component of every preparedness program. It ensures that you are able to immediately communicate with key audiences during an emergency, even if your physical location is inaccessible.

The Importance of Communicating with Employees

A lot can go wrong if employees aren't kept in the loop when a hurricane, fire or other disaster hits. For example:

- Employees may try to go to work when it is unsafe to do so.
- Employees may not know when to return to work.
- Employees may become dissatisfied with the company.
- Employees may voice frustrations on social media, damaging the company's reputation.

A good crisis communication plan can help your business avoid these types of problems.

Maintain Current Employee Contact Information

Employers should keep current contact information for all employees.

- Include cell phone numbers, email addresses and an emergency contact. Remember that employees may not be reachable at home during a natural disaster that prompts evacuations.
- Keep the contact information readily available. The company's physical location may not be accessible during a crisis, but the contact information should still be accessible. At the same time, cybersecurity and privacy issues must be considered when storing information digitally.
- Update the contact information regularly. Employees may change their phone numbers and email addresses, so this information should be reviewed often.



Who is Your Crisis Communication Coordinator?

Assign one person to be in charge of crisis communications. This person will work with senior management to coordinate the flow of information.

Give Employees a Contact

Communication shouldn't only go one way. Make sure employees have a way to get information during a crisis.

- Establish a communications coordinator who will be in charge of crisis communications.
- Give employees contact information, such as a phone number and email address.

Establish Your Communication Strategy

Businesses have many communication options. Select your main communication strategy or strategies, as well as backup strategies in case there are problems. Let your employees know which communication methods you will be using. These may include:

- Telephone
- Text Message
- Email
- Website
- Employee Portal
- Social Media
- Letters
- Press Release

Other Groups to Involve in Communications

In addition to employees, businesses may need to communicate with a variety of other groups during a crisis. As part of your crisis communication plan, consider the circumstances under which you would need to contact various groups, such as:

- Customers and clients
- Vendors
- Suppliers
- Stakeholders
- Regulatory agencies
- The media
- The community and neighboring businesses



Crisis Communication Checklist

If appropriate, ensure that every communication includes:

- What happened
- When and where it happened
- The severity of the problem
- Who is affected
- How your facilities/products/services are impacted
- How to obtain more information
- Expected next steps

Create Communication Templates

By writing crisis communication templates, you can save time during a crisis and ensure that the right message goes out with the right tone. Different templates may be needed for different events and audiences. A few templates to consider creating include:

- Crisis Is Possible – What's Being Done/Next Steps
- Location Is Closed (Employees)
- Location Is Closed (Customers/Clients)
- Location Is Closed (Vendors/Suppliers)
- Location Is Reopening (Employees)
- Location Is Reopening (Customers/Clients)
- Location Is Reopening (Vendors/Suppliers)
- Updates to Regulatory Agencies
- Updates to Stakeholders
- Press Releases

Sources:

<https://www.ready.gov/business/implementation/crisis>

For additional information and resources on this topic and other safety and risk management subjects be sure to visit the Loss Control section on our website:

www.amtrustfinancial.com/loss-control

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