

HEADQUARTERS
CIVIL AIR PATROL, MINNESOTA WING
United States Air Force Auxiliary
6275 Crossman Lane
Inver Grove Heights, MN 55076

29 January 2013

Crisis Communication Plan

Applicability:

This Crisis Communications Plan, required by CAPR 190-1 to be prepared annually, applies to the Minnesota Wing Headquarters. It is the responsibility of the Wing Commander to be familiar with this plan and use it as a guide for wing public affairs staff in developing and obtaining approval of subordinate unit plans.

This plan does not override normal command functions or decisions of incident command staff; however, its contents should be part of their training.

This plan supports the CAP Public Affairs Crisis Policy as published on the National CAP Website.

Link: http://www.capmembers.com/cap_national_hq/public_affairs/public_affairs_crisis_policy/

Purpose:

- Ensure the flow of accurate and timely information to wing leadership, staff, the media and the public during a crisis.
- Provide the media with a reasonable level of access per CAP regulations and policy.
- Make it possible for public affairs staff to develop unified messages in a crisis.
- Minimize unnecessary damage to the integrity and reputation of CAP.
- Counteract inaccurate criticism by providing accurate and honest information.

A crisis situation is defined as any situation deemed by wing staff as having a major impact on the wing, on CAP as an organization and on the public. Examples of a crisis situation may include incidents at CAP activities involving serious injury and/or loss of life, terrorism, a member death, natural disasters, major crimes or major disruptions of operations. Crisis situations may include police investigations or other situations that require a public response.

This plan is not intended to change the way emergencies are initially reported. All applicable CAP regulations will be followed in these initial and subsequent reports.

It is the goal of this crisis communications plan to establish guidelines for dealing with a variety of situations, and to ensure that leaders and communicators are familiar with those procedures and their roles in the event of a crisis. The plan is intended to be used in conjunction with the normal decision-making hierarchy of the wing and does not supplant that decision-making process.

Each crisis or emergency will require a unique public information response. The extent of the response will depend on the nature of the crisis.

Assumptions:

It is almost always the WRONG decision to withhold comment during a crisis situation. Doing this allows other entities to portray Civil Air Patrol in ways that may be inaccurate and unflattering. Rather, carefully crafted comments, provided early in the crisis and updated regularly, portray CAP as the responsible, professional service organization it is, whatever the specific crisis situation may be.

Often the only information the public receives about an emergency is through the media. Therefore, media relations are 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.

Misinformation and misperception can spread quickly via email, blogs and online forums. Therefore, it is critical that responses be issued as quickly as possible via these various channels of online communication.

A crisis situation could be big news and is likely to result in more public exposure for the wing than dozens of stories delivering “good news.”

Crisis Communications Response:

Any crisis situation deemed by any member or PA at any echelon to bear the potential for having a major impact on CAP as an organization must be reported to the Crisis Team.

As spokesman for the CCT, the MN Wing PA or PA’s designee (or the Public Information Officer of a mission) will then convey the information to

1. Mission Incident Commander, if incident occurs during an approved mission, who will contact
 - National Operations Center
2. Minnesota Wing Commander (or his designee at the time) will contact
 - NCR Commander
3. NCR CAP PA officer
4. National CAP PA officer
5. Group and/or Squadron Commander for the member or incident in question.

The MN WG PA officer will determine if an official statement should be prepared and/or released after consulting with MN Wing Commander and Regional and National PA officers.

Basic information to provide the Crisis team upon notification are

- Nature of crisis
- Date
- Time
- Action
- Number/names of people, injuries or fatalities
- Extent of damage
-

Crisis Team actions

- Verify all sources of information
- Keep PA informed of new info
- Establish who will be the media contact

PA actions

- Brief staff, commanders on crisis information and who is the media contact
- Clear press releases with Wing Commander and National PA officer before released to media
- Establish three (3) talking points for media contact appropriate to the nature of crisis
- Log all inquires and contacts on ICS 214 Mission Log
- Work with the media
- Keep Crisis Team and CO informed.
- Conduct the debriefing and prepare the after-crisis, Crisis Team and PA report to the Wing Commander and crisis other staff

MN Wing Crisis Communications Team (CCT):

Membership of the 2012 MN Wing CCT consists of the following members:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Duty Assignment/Team Role</i>	<i>Contact Information</i>
Colonel Brent Halweg	MN Wing, Commander	Cell: (612) 964-6776 Home: (952) 937-3535 cc@mncap.org
Mr. George Supan	MN Wing, Administrator	Office:(651) 291-0462 Cell: (612) 910-4375 gsupan@mncap.org Office
Lt Col Clark Carlson	Vice Commander	Home: (612) 963-1352 cv@mncap.org
Maj Jared Scribner	Chief of Staff	Cell: (612) 743-4241 jscribner@mncap.org
Lt Col Kevin Dunlevy	Legal	Cell: (612) 963-9046 Work: (612) 436-0020 kevind@bdmnlaw.com
Lt Col Larry Brockshus	Safety Officer	Home: (952) 892-0054 Cell: (952) 237-3665 brockshus1@msn.com lbrocksh@sowashco.k12.mn.us
Maj Joseph Bradfield	Public Affairs Officer	Cell: (507) 360-1774 Work: (507) 945-0100 jfbradfield@gmail.com

It is the Wing Commander's expectation that crisis situations will be resolved and worked at the Wing level. However, National PA needs to know of the crisis. The Wing's CCT and its members are available as consultants as needed and appropriate. The Wing Commander makes final decisions after advice from the CCT.

When the scope of the incident reaches beyond a wing's borders or capabilities, the Region CCT will assume control of the situation as directed by the Region Commander:

Col Robert Todd

NCR Commander

Cell: (402) 672-8769

Home: (402) 332-3924

bltodd@radiks.net

Crisis Center: It is expected that crisis teams will work virtually through e-mail, phones and conference calls. If the need exists to set up a crisis center, commanders are expected to use their best judgment as to location, size and scope of activities. The Region PA will be consulted prior to standing up a crisis center.

Crisis Materials: The PA is assigned the task of maintaining materials to assist in the management of a crisis. As a minimum the wing's public affairs staff will maintain the following materials (which may be kept electronically):

- This plan and the plans of the subordinate units
- Roster of the team
- Contact information for all Squadron Commanders, relevant wing staff members
- Media list (from most current online sources)
- CAP Fact Sheets, to include locally produced fact sheets on each squadron

Spokesperson: Squadron, Group and Wing PAs are the spokespeople for their respective organization and will be expected to work with local media. Other CAP members will give information about the crisis to the media only when authorized by the commander or PA.

Bear in mind that media seeking information from CAP during a crisis will often turn first to the Wing Public Affairs Officer, whose contact information is given on the Minnesota Wing website, even if he or she is not the PIO. Therefore, the Wing PAO must always be informed who is currently PIO and what statements have been released to the media in order to maintain public confidence in CAP public relations and convey professionalism.

Non-public affairs members should respectfully refer media representatives to the PA (or PIO during a mission), to the crisis center or to the designated crisis spokesperson. When the crisis primarily affects a subordinate unit, the wing commander and PA are available to assist units and can serve as a local spokesperson as needed.

Electronic Resources: Email and Web messages can be an important and expedient way for CAP to inform the public during a crisis.

Press releases during a mission must be approved by the Incident Commander and/or National HQ or 1st Air Force, depending on the mission.

External information to be provided to the media should be placed on the wing website and/or appropriate subordinate unit websites, concurrently with the release of information to the media.

The PA will provide internal information to members about the crisis using email and other channels as appropriate.

Electronic communications must be approved in advance by the Squadron, Group, Wing

respectively.

Multiple Crisis Communication Teams:

Should a crisis have high severity or affect a large geographic area, Crisis Communications Teams (CCT) may be activated at multiple levels of the organization. The PA at each level should coordinate promptly with higher headquarters when a CCT has been activated. When a determination is made as to which level of the organization is the PRIMARY source for media information, other CCTs should provide support and be prepared to reinforce the same messages if contacted by the media.

Phases of Response

Immediate: The wing commander and the wing PA will determine if an official statement should be prepared and released. If warranted, they and the CCT will develop answers to specific questions that may be asked by the media and provided in the media statement (release). In some cases, it may be appropriate for CAP to make an initial announcement of an accident or incident. In others, it may be better to wait and "see if the media notices."

Regardless, if representatives of the media inquire, CAP should make a prompt response and never answer, "No comment."

Messages regarding injuries or fatalities (confirmed by proper Authorities) should NEVER be made public without verification that family members have been notified.

The Commander and PA should continue to work with local media. Tell the truth. Speak favorably regarding the strengths of CAP and of CAP's training and safety programs, including specialized review/training for working with cadets and flying CAP aircraft.

Key Tasks

- The public affairs staff will obtain basic information including type of crisis/emergency, time of emergency, actions taken, areas and number of people involved, injuries or fatalities and extent of damage.
- The public affairs staff will verify all sources of information.
- The PA will clear news releases with the Commander as soon as possible before releasing to the media.
- The PA will log and document all media inquiries.

Ongoing Period: During a crisis the PA (with help from the CCT) will:

- Provide the public with basic information and updates about the crisis via news media and on the web.
- Provide the membership basic information about the crisis via electronic mail or other means such as radio.
- Insure that all copies of all updates are concurrently sent to higher headquarters.
- Log all inquiries and responses.
- Instruct the public on how to obtain further advice or information.

Recovery Period:

- The PA will issue media updates as long as necessary, then scale back activities as warranted.

- Upon termination of the crisis situation, the PA will schedule a meeting of all key players to complete and After Action Report.
- Forward the After Action Report to the commander and other appropriate leaders and/or departments, and to HHQ Public Affairs.

Updates: This plan will be reviewed and updated every year in the month of January and June. The Commander will convene meetings for the CCT to assist with the Crisis Communication Plan review, interacting periodically to discuss the plan and any updates. Results of the meetings and revisions of the plan are to be documented and filed with the plan. Copies of this plan should be addressed to all members listed in the plan and any other personnel who might play a role in the event of a crisis.

Training: Wing CCT members will be required to review the Crisis Communication Plan during the month of January. After viewing the presentation, the member will acknowledge to the wing PA via email that the member has reviewed the presentation. A compiled register will be filed with the plan and record of plan review/updates.

BRENT E. HALWEG, Lieutenant Colonel, CAP
Commander

DISTRIBUTION: 1 Each (Electronic)

MN Wing Administrator
MNWG/PA
NCR/PA
NHQ/PA (File)

RECORD OF REVIEW:

Review Date	Commander's Initials
29 January 2012	BEH

APPENDIX A: CAP Leadership/MIO/PA Talking Points

Fatalities or serious injuries sustained by CAP members.

Adapt these general talking points as appropriate to the specific accident or incident. In many cases, the primary comments in bold will be all that needs to be said. Add the rest of the information only if asked.

1. Our hearts go out to the families of the members involved, and to all of the CAP members in _____ [*where the members are from*] _____ who work hard to serve their state and country with a professional level of skill, even though they are volunteers.

2. CAP has an outstanding Flying Safety Record – about one third of the number of accidents in the general aviation community per 100,000 hours flown.

Additional information, only if asked to elaborate:

When you consider that CAP's missions are typically flown only 1,000 feet above the ground, leaving little time to react in an emergency situation, CAP's low accident rate is even more significant. Though CAP flies in a high-risk environment, one of the reasons our accident rate is so low is because we have successfully used ORM or operational risk management—a technique developed by the Air Force safety community and eagerly adopted by CAP.

- CAP's 2011 accident rate of only .98 per 100,000 flying hours demonstrated CAP pilots was more than 6 times better than the rate for General Aviation overall.
- The low accident rate is due to continuous proficiency training. Every one of our pilots takes a flight safety check at least annually, and they are evaluated on their skills for flying mission profiles biennially.
- We have a safety education program whereby both aircrew and non-aircrew are briefed on safety issues during monthly safety meetings.
- Also, every CAP wing is given an evaluation on its ability to perform search and rescue / disaster relief missions biennially.

3. CAP aircrews are absolute professionals and highly trained in all aspects of aerial search and rescue [including mountain flying techniques].

Additional information, only if asked to elaborate: Aerial search and rescue is clearly a demanding mission, given the requirement to fly typically only 1,000 feet above the ground. However, our aircrew members fully understand the dangers associated with SAR missions and train hard to minimize them, but they consider their duties to be critical. Over the years, CAP has been credited with saving on average about 75 lives annually.

4. Civil Air Patrol maintains its aircraft rigorously to standards that meet or exceed FAA standards. The maintenance is timely, thorough and carried out by FAA-certified mechanics CAP-wide. Bottom line—CAP maintenance policies are stricter or as strict as general aviation standards in America, with greater emphasis placed on regular aircraft inspections throughout the fleet.

5. There is no way I could speculate on what may have caused this to happen. I am sure it

will be the subject of an official investigation.

Additional information, if asked to elaborate: Do NOT be trapped into discussing possible or hypothetical causes or explanations for what happened. Rather, go back to point #1—the investigation WILL happen, and meanwhile, our big concern is for the families and fellow members of the people killed/injured.

Note:

Do not feel that you must rush an answer. If you have to pause 10 seconds after the question is asked to formulate your answer, no problem. Remember that TV stations, in particular, will probably only use 10 or 15 seconds worth of your actual words, anyway.

APPENDIX B: Pocket Information Card

The following information can be printed and carried in your pocket as a reminder of actions to take should the Crisis Plan need to be activated.

Front side

CAP Minnesota Wing—Crisis Communication Plan

- A crisis is any CAP situation deemed by a member or any PAO as having a major impact on CAP as an organization and or the public must be reported to the Crisis Team.
- PA: Consult with Regional and National PA to determine if an official statement should be prepared and/or released.
- PA: Inform Crisis team.
- CCT: Obtain basic information. Crisis, date, time, action, number/names of people, injuries or fatalities, extent of damage.
- CCT: Verify all sources of information.
- CCT: keep PA informed of new info.
- CCT: Establish who (PA) will be the media contact.
- PA: Brief staff, commanders on crisis information and who is the media contact.
- PA: Clear press releases with WG Commander and National PA before release to media.
- PA: Establish 3 talking points.
- PA (media contact): Log all inquires and contacts on ICS 214 Mission Log.
- PA: Work with the media.
- PA: Keep Crisis Team and CC informed.
- PA: Debrief. After Action Report, Crisis Team & PA report to Wing/CC & staff.

Back side

Minnesota Wing Crisis Communication Team

Col Brent Halweg MNWG/CC	(612) 964-6776 or xxx-xxx-xxxx
Lt Col Dave Odette MNWG/CV	(618) 689-8173 or (218) 681-7729
Mr. George Supan MNWG/WA	(651) 291-0462
Maj Jared Scribner MNWG/CS	(612) 743-4241
Lt Col Kevin Dunlevy MNWG/JA	(612) 963-9046 or (612) 436-0020
Lt Col Larry Brockshus MNWG/SE	(952) 892-0054 or (952) 237-3665
Maj Joe Bradfield MNWG/PA	(507) 360-1774 or (507) 945-0100

My unit's Crisis Team

APPENDIX C: CAP Leadership/MIO/PA Talking Points:

CAP members accused of sexual misconduct

Adapt these general talking points as appropriate to the specific situation.

1. The status of the accused is:
 - No longer a member
 - Suspended
 - Other
2. No complaint has been filed with CAP adult or child or any family member (assuming this is true).
3. The CAP Cadet Protection Program ensures that more than one adult member is always present on activities with our youth members, and in particular our rules prohibit private one-on-one interaction between individual youth and adult members.

Notes:

In a media interview, always find ways to come back to these points.

If the reporter asks you about your feelings or emotions, dodge the question. "My feelings and emotions are that I am glad that CAP has procedures in place to prevent inappropriate contact from taking place."

Avoid repeating back the words the reporter uses in asking the question.

For example a reporter might ask, "Would you say that CAP was lucky that there were no problems with this person?"

If you repeat "was lucky," either to say CAP was lucky, or to say, "No, I wouldn't say CAP was lucky," you are allowing the reporter to put words in your mouth that may then be quoted.

Avoid answering hypothetical questions.

Do not feel that you must rush an answer. If you have to pause 10 seconds after the question is asked to formulate your answer, no problem. Remember that they will probably only use 10 to 15 seconds worth of your actual words, anyway.