

Crisis Playbook



What to Do in the First 24 Hours of a Crisis !!!

Purpose: Provide a rapid-response framework for organizations and communities to manage any type of crisis within the first 24 hours.

Phase 1: Initial Response (First 1–2 Hours)

1. Ensure Immediate Safety

- ☐ Secure the area and remove individuals from danger.
- ☐ Provide first aid, shelter, or emergency services as needed.
- ☐ Contact emergency responders (fire, police, etc.).

2. Activate Crisis Team

- ☐ Notify and convene internal crisis team or leadership.
- ☐ Assign roles: Communications, Logistics, Safety, Liaison, etc.
- ☐ Begin incident documentation.

3. Assess Scope and Impact

- ☐ What happened? Where? When? Who is affected?
- ☐ How many people are impacted?
- ☐ Are operations disrupted? What resources are needed?

Phase 2: Stabilization (Hours 2–6)

4. Communicate Internally

- ☐ Share a brief internal update: what is known, what's being done.
- ☐ Reassure staff, volunteers, or community members.
- ☐ Emphasize calm, transparency, and unified messaging.

5. Communicate Externally (if needed)

- ☐ Designate a spokesperson.
- ☐ Prepare a short public statement (facts only, no speculation).
- ☐ Monitor media/social media for misinformation and correct it.
- ☐ Inform partners/stakeholders.

6. Begin Support Services

- ☐ Provide access to mental health or grief support if needed.
- ☐ Ensure basic needs: water, food, shelter, security.
- ☐ Identify vulnerable groups needing extra care.

Phase 3: Coordination (Hours 6–24)

7. Coordinate with External Agencies

- ☐ Connect with public health, emergency services, housing, etc.
- ☐ Request or coordinate additional resources.
- ☐ Share situational reports.

8. Continue Documentation

- ☐ Log decisions, actions, and communications.
- ☐ Document injuries, damage, and responses.
- ☐ Collect witness reports if relevant.

9. Begin Recovery Planning

- ☐ Identify next 48–72-hour needs.
- ☐ Assess building/service safety for continued use.
- ☐ Determine when/if to resume services or operations.

Leadership Reminders

- Stay visible and calm; people look to leaders for cues.
- Communicate often, even if little new info is available.
- Avoid blame—focus on safety, facts, and compassion.
- Debrief your crisis team every 8–12 hours.

Caution: *Use professional judgment and organizational protocols in determining appropriate actions.*

Disclaimer

This playbook is a general guide and does not constitute legal, medical, or emergency management advice. Organizations and communities should adapt it based on their local laws, regulations, and operational procedures. Always defer to emergency authorities, licensed professionals, and official protocols during critical incidents. Use of this document is at the user's own discretion and risk.

