



# **ROTARY DISTRICT 7090**

## **CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN**

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Updated annually every April

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NOTE TO READER: This is a draft as of April 2023 and once ratified this page will be completed. Please read this for content and not set up. Make general notes and provide feedback to Dave Alexander at [econiagara@gmail.com](mailto:econiagara@gmail.com).

April 15 – District Council meeting – motion to approve the report. Determine next steps including training – PETS, District Conference, DTA, as well as RLI and other sessions.

July 1 – Updating of contacts into the 23/24 Rotary Year

<b>District 7090 Crisis Management Team Members</b>		
		Cell Phone Number
District Governor	Lisa Bishop	
Vice Governor	Frank Adamson	
Immediate Past District Governor	Anne Bermingham	
District Governor-Elect	Scott Marcin	
District Governor-Nominee	Dave Alexander	
Ad Hoc Committee Members	Shall be appointed members in good standing of clubs in District 7090 who have experience in the noted crisis	
District Abuse and Protection Chair		
Youth Protection Officer	Mike Taylor	
Legal Advisor		
Financial Advisor		
Public Image Chair	Dave Schulz	
Communications Chair		
Incident Spokesperson		
<b><u>Rotary International Resources for Crisis Management Team</u></b>		
RI Director		
Club & District Support		
Assistant Club & District Support		
Chief Public Image Officer		
Risk Manager		
Youth Programs Manager		
Rotary Insurance Broker		
Insurance and Risk Management Information		

This plan has been assembled from similar Rotary documents and non-Rotary sources. It is with thanks that these templates and materials are readily available. Member clubs and non-Rotarian groups should consider developing their own crisis and communications plan, including seeking professional advice. Rotary is not responsible for your use of any information in this plan.

## Summary

In case you are in a crisis or an emergency and are reading this document for the first time this page summarizes the key information you need to know. Skip to the media-related appendix – the last section – if you need to read up on crisis communications.

If this is an emergency hopefully you have contacted 911 and have EMS on the way, rendered first aid, and made your situation safe. You need to realize that you are in a leadership position and can reduce harm by providing clear, measured guidance. Call the District 7090 Crisis Management Team (CMT) using the grid on the previous page in order you see the names present until you get someone live. Explain the situation and you will begin to activate the Rotary CMT response.

If you have time, keep reading. It is best to read this document when it is not an emergency and use it as a blueprint to ensure it is current, applicable, and tailored to your unique situation. As a Rotarian, it is recommended that you have your own personal learning plan and this area could be one of the themes. You should ask if your club has a similar crisis management plan, including local contact information, especially if a crisis emerges at or within your club and community. If needed contact your president. They have received awareness and training on this plan.

It is always wise to prepare for emergencies as well as de-risk your programs with diligence, thoughtfulness, feedback, and thoroughness. A theme in being prepared is to look at the trends and evidence which will guide you in your decision-making. Another aspect is to embrace the development of a diverse team with equally diverse and supportive skills. As a leader, there may also be aspects of living through an emergency or crisis that will burnish your own skills and representation.

This document does not cover all scenarios, but does provide some help to you. As Rotarians, we help clubs and communities all over the world. In case where you need help, Rotarians will be there for you.

District 7090 Social Media – make sure you link up with these contacts:

<https://www.facebook.com/RotaryDistrict7090/>

<https://twitter.com/Rotary7090>

<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/2665233>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdjrtEU3xOikLRZ1JrKtjA>

<https://www.instagram.com/rotary7090>

<https://www.snapchat.com/add/rotary7090>

Use the following # and @ as identifiers in your posts: #Rotary7090, @Rotary7090, #TagtheSpirit, #Rotary, #PeopleofAction, #Rotaryinternational. Develop or use specific incident social media identifiers. Use identifiers from other responders.

Depending on the nature of the emergency you may need to be signed in to the District Clubrunner account and/or myRotary.org to access documents, contact information, or reports.

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## Introduction

Tragedy and crisis can strike at any time. These can include:

1. Violent crime, a traffic accident, a youth protection issue, or a simple case of bad judgment;
2. Personnel, workplace, or organizational crisis;
3. Human crisis where there is malevolence or confrontation;
4. A crisis involving technology such as ransomware, power failure, or breakage;
5. Financial crisis;
6. Natural disasters such as hurricanes, earthquakes, floods; or
7. Events caused by an action or inaction of a Rotarian or non-Rotarian that may lead to a situation that places a Rotary club officer or board member, an entire club, the District Governor or other Rotarians in a situation that requires their utmost and immediate attention.

A crisis can be internal to Rotary – a District or a Club – or it can be external such as a community issue or with a partner organization. Additionally, a crisis can be acute and immediate, or one that is rather slow-moving. When such an event occurs, it is important to have a plan in place that can be followed to ensure that the matter is handled with the utmost care, being sure that those involved in the incident are kept safe, that communication with those who need to know is completed quickly, accurately, and professionally; and that other actions are taken swiftly and professionally when needed.

Those that study crises often mention risk and suggest ways to de-risk situations. There is a formula though which may help. Risk = Harm + Outrage. The harm part is measurable and manageable. In certain crises, there is a degree of outrage. This is not measurable, nor immediately manageable. Sometimes outrage is part of the cathartic human reaction to harm. What is needed is not control, but ways to allow outrage, often very emotional, to occur. This is best done through the communications process where care and support can be provided.

Additionally, in our internet-driven information age, written, audio, and video content can be transmitted in a matter of seconds, which makes it important that when a crisis erupts, our Rotary District responds with a clear message, presented honestly, and in a timely manner. Furthermore, some may require quick and to-the-point information. This document attempts to be thorough, especially in the hope that you can read this in advance of a crisis.

There are five P's of crisis management:

1. Predict
2. Prevent
3. Prepare
4. Perform, and
5. Post-Action and Assessment

Use the above list to check your planning, your reviews, and when addressing a crisis at its start. Within a crisis there are four stages:

1. Pre-crisis stage. This first stage occurs before the crisis itself hits and has all the factors converging to cause the crisis. The warning signs may be evident to some. Depending on the conditions a risk assessment could be done.

2. Crisis stage (acute phase). This is the point that the organization starts to notice the first signs of a crisis unfolding.
3. Response stage (chronic phase).
4. Post-crisis stage (resolution phase). This includes recovery, whether this means rebuilding or coping with the result of the crisis.

Have your team understand these steps and if you have time use these stages to guide your response. Ensure that teammates are assigned roles including making notes for review later.

This plan is written as a requirement for District 7090 in compliance with Rotary International direction. As a secondary audience, clubs can refer to this plan to develop their own version. At times, Rotarians may read this information as it applies to them and their club, but it is principally a District document.

This material is complex, detailed, and requires considerable forethought, coordinated actions within a crisis, and the temperament to follow through and improve the plan. It has been laid out as much as possible in bullet points to clarify the information, plus the communications and media components are put into an appendix. You are welcome to provide comments on the material, including making format suggestions to make this document's use that much easier.

### **What Constitutes a Crisis?**

A 'crisis' for the purposes of implementing the Rotary District 7090 Crisis Management Plan (CMP) is an unanticipated, unusual event or occurrence arising out of, or closely related to, a Rotary Club project, event, or program that results in, or is likely to result in, physical or psychological harm, serious injury, or death to a participant, or that is or can be detrimental to the public image of Rotary. Examples including death or injury stemming either from natural disasters impacting a Rotary project, event, or program (such as fire, flood or earthquake) human-caused (such as accidental or intentional mass casualty event). A 'crisis' can include suspected illegal activities where the victim or suspected perpetrator is a Rotarian, a Rotary club, or the District; or other event that involves a Rotarian, a Rotary club, or the District that impacts persons or property in a substantial, negative manner. As painful as a crisis may be, we have to talk plainly about the realities of a crisis so that we can best plan to predict and prevent harm, prepare for scenarios, and perform well during a crisis.

These events may, but not necessarily, involve youth involved in Rotary functions and activities, such as RYLA students, Interactors, Rotary Youth Exchange students, etc. and participants. Such youth programs have carefully designed youth protection. District 7090's *Youth Protection, Abuse and Harassment Prevention Policy* takes precedence over this plan and is to be followed prior to implementing this plan, although every effort should be made to provide simultaneous notification of the crisis to the District Governor.

Stewardship for this plan rests with the District Governor and District Council and in turn, the working aspects and updates is supported by the District Governance Committee and its District Abuse and Protection Subcommittee. There may be consultation with other leaders and their committees in the District.

In an assessment of a crisis, there are varying degrees of harm. Managers of a crisis need to de-escalate a crisis through measured actions, appropriate intervention, and application of training. Based on the situation a crisis can be grouped into four levels or stages:

1. The highest level of crisis. This requires all Rotarians trained in crisis management to be available. This can be a severe and immediate danger to Rotarians, partners, stakeholders, and the community. Examples of this level of a crisis include violence, misconduct, or a situation where emergency and crisis management professionals are required. The crisis can also be deemed an acute existential threat to the well-being of a club and its activities. This kind of crisis involves some kind of alert, or getting people out of harm's way. A crisis in this area may force or require Rotary into a supportive role during or in the aftermath of an emergency. In the case of violence and harassment, there are Rotary International policies and training, plus policies at the District 7090 level to provide detail and support to a situation. In the case of malfeasance or other issues that contravene District and club by-laws, there are consequences that escalate in severity in order to manage the crisis. This kind of crisis needs legal (and perhaps accounting) support. Those who find themselves in this kind of fiduciary situation are advised to immediately document their circumstances.
2. This level of crisis is a moderate risk or impact on Rotary in the District and those we work with in the community. Examples of this level of crisis include public awareness of a situation that could harm the reputation of Rotary and its work. Another example might be the cancellation of an event or activity which has some financial risks and harm to Rotary's reputation. An interesting perspective is that there may be a Level 1 crisis in another District and our District can work with others to provide aid and support. In that case, the response may need to be immediate, but coordinated with a larger group of Rotary and non-Rotary stakeholders.
3. This type of crisis poses both long-term risks to the operations of District 7090 and its clubs or structural challenges that are tinderbox issues in the community. Examples of instances of this kind of crisis can be found in continued challenges for not being able to fill in for executive vacancies or leaves of absence, not having adequate support for key positions where an incident of poor health has taken that Rotarian out of performing that role, or dealing with negative group culture issues as change occurs. Another good example of this type of crisis is managing District and club operations through a pandemic. These types of crises may present opportunities for innovation and new projects as well. Another way of looking at this level of crisis is to ask whether a situation could have been prevented in the first place and seek to work back through the problem to either engage with those responsible or determine if there needs to be a shift or change in the community. Solutions in this area may require tapping into assistance, support, and training from others in the Rotary family.
4. A crisis in this area tends to be a bigger version of day-to-day issues that may need extra effort to be fully resolved or addressed. It may be called a gap or a challenge. Those in the crisis should reach out to fellow Rotarians and partners to create a 'hot team' to address this gap and persist until the crisis is abated or resolved.

Regardless of the type of crisis, there is convening power within Rotary. We can bring people together to provide leadership where necessary, and support where we are able. Furthermore, we can bring key stakeholders together for conversations and even practice actual crisis response scenarios so that when

an actual emergency or situation happens we are more prepared to render aid. After a crisis, Rotary can play a role in helping heal the community and support those in need over the long term.

### **Purpose of this Policy**

In the event of a 'crisis' it is imperative to operate pursuant to established guidelines to ensure the communication of accurate, timely, and consistent information to Rotarians and the public, and to provide for the immediate care and protection of all individuals involved in the situation, as well as their families.

It is always the policy of District 7090 to deliver the highest level of transparency and cooperation consistent with applicable law and government policy.

### **Policy Scope and Parameters**

1. The District Governor currently in office is the only officer of Rotary International (RI) in the District. As such, he or she is the main contact between the District and RI and between the District and the Club event or activity manager of the Rotary activity involved when a crisis occurs.
2. The District Governor holds final responsibility for crisis management in District 7090. In the absence of the District Governor, or in the case of his or her inability to act, then, the following individuals, in the order listed, shall hold final responsibility:
  - a. Vice Governor
  - b. The Immediate Past District Governor
  - c. The District Governor-Elect
  - d. The District Governor-Nominee
3. The District Governor shall annually appoint a Crisis Management Team as part of the District Leadership Team to provide support and guidance as needed.
4. Only the District Governor or his/her designate as set forth in item 2 above, has the authority to activate the Crisis Management Team, or involve individual members of the team, when required.
5. An individual Rotary club president or designee will represent an individual club if the incident so requires, as requested by the District Governor.

### **Crisis Management Team**

To provide support and guidance as needed, a Crisis Management Team (CMT) will be established annually as part of the District Leadership Team. The core CMT shall be composed of:

1. The District Governor as Chair
2. Vice Governor
3. The Immediate Past District Governor
4. The District Governor-Elect
5. District Governor- Nominee



Depending on the nature of the crisis, the CMT may include any or all of the following as determined by the District Governor:

6. District Youth Protection Officer
7. An attorney at law who is familiar with local law and can give immediate advice including confidentiality, potential legal action, and liability.
8. The District Public Image Chair
9. The District Communications Chair
10. The District website administrator who may be needed to post materials online and support the coordination of social media posts.
11. An Incident Spokesperson who serves as liaison to the media, who may or may not be the District Communications or Public Image Chair. A subset of the CMT related to communications and media – Media Contact Team – should be listed. For more information: **SEE THE COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA RELATED APPENDIX**
12. The Treasurer of the District

In addition, others may be asked to serve on the CMT for a specific incident as required and determined by the District Governor:

13. The Assistant Governor of the Area of the incident, especially if the incident reported happens in a distant community where local Rotary District Leadership presence is important
14. The chair of the committee responsible for the activity where the incident originated, if applicable
15. Individuals or companies at the request of the District Governor

Each person will need to understand their role in this internal-to-Rotary CMT function. Other stakeholders related to the crisis may have their own crisis management team and plan so there may need to be a measured degree of interaction between the two (or more) groups.

### **Crisis Management Team Education**

On an annual basis, the members of the CMT need to formally review the CMP, updating it for changes and experiences. This includes:

1. All members named to the CMT should be familiar with the most recent edition of Rotary International's [Media Crisis Handbook, 515-EN-\(507\)](#) and the Rotary Youth Protection Guide 775-EN-(2), District 7090's Youth Exchange policies and procedures, Vulnerable Sector Protection Policy, and the Abuse and Harassment Prevention Policy. You may need to log in to rotary.org, myRotary, or another site first to access these documents.
2. All members of the Media Contact Team should undergo media relations training available through Rotary International. The Spokesperson should be drawn from this group. Awareness of the CMP needs to be provided at President Elect Training.
3. A seminar can be offered with the District Assembly training session. This includes any cross-training with youth program staff and the District's Youth Protection and Abuse and Harassment Prevention Policy.

4. Content and changes reviewed and discussed at the District Governance Committee.
5. An annual update, at minimum, at a District Council meeting.
6. These resources, including a recording of any educational seminars, can be hosted on the District website so that individual Rotarians can learn about the CMP. A feedback feature should be provided in newsletters, social media, and any updates or notes accompanied by where the CMP is hosted on the district site.

### **If a Crisis Develops**

As the following points are presented it is useful to think of ‘what would I do’ in a crisis. It is useful when first reading this CMP to have a way to take notes, especially if these notes can be used to improve this document. Diligence and training are key parts of your preparation prior to any form of communication, role, and leadership during a crisis. If you are *in the crisis* right now, being able to have materials ready to document the concerns or issues will help you formulate your responses and stewardship later on. In some cases, it will be necessary to run through scenarios that will allow you to better prepare for when an actual crisis happens.

Earlier in this plan ‘outrage’ was mentioned. This aspect of a crisis is often unpredictable or even not controllable, but it should be anticipated and discussed early in the response so that key spokespeople can prepare.

Security for an event may be a concern. Managers of an event should work with the partners and stakeholders to discuss equipment and personnel needs (if any) and do a ‘walk and talk’ of a few basic scenarios in case an emergency or accident happens. The lead manager should have all the appropriate paperwork and permits for the event, including 24/7 contact information, and this should include a review of these items by the president of the club or chair of the committee. Some events may need to have certain guarantees for vendors, or that bad weather may play a role. Therefore, these contingencies need to be accounted for, including cancellation insurance or indemnification in some form of Rotary. During and after a crisis security may also be an issue for consideration.

In our time, social media has allowed people to document and record some crises. This is not a bad thing, but you must determine your role in the crisis, often as the crisis evolves around you. Video and audio, as well as social media posts may get online quickly, giving little time to react, plus this material can be online permanently. In the case of a social media-driven crisis as it affects you, your Club, and your colleagues in the District, it would be useful to find time to discuss plausible situations and what you might do. You also have to consider that social media posts can be put up and taken down. If there is a concern, make sure you make a copy of sensitive, defamatory, or alarming material.

The first step in managing a crisis is to alert those responsible and assess the crisis. Notifying and activating the CMT as soon as possible is the leading step. In a crisis it will be stressful, there will be times when there will be challenges in coping with the crisis, and any intervention may not be effective as the crisis changes or evolves. You must realize this if you are to have an effective role in maintaining your leadership role in a situation. This will require you to be flexible, communicative, and supportive of colleagues. This approach will be tested in a crisis especially if there is a significant threat to the

organization, if the crisis is a surprise, or if there is a short period of time to act. Here are suggested steps to consider in the active crisis stage:

1. The Rotary club president or other Rotarian who becomes aware of a crisis shall first determine if appropriate authorities have been called into action, such as law enforcement, medical emergency, or fire responders. It may be common sense that first responders be called to anyone involved in an acute crisis. These trained professionals and those that are part of the immediate follow-up agencies have experience, knowledge, and situational awareness. These people include trauma specialists, grief counselors, and other professionals whose role is to address some aspects of the crisis and post-crisis events. Rotary indeed has a role, but in some cases may need to observe and assess the situation for that opportunity to be involved. In advance, you and your club can be informed of these services – their needs, your expected behavior, and examples where community service clubs have helped. At the District level, this is emerging as part of officer training. Furthermore, Rotary can play a role in ensuring that the crisis does not happen again, that the crisis is minimized, or that the community is better prepared for the next time.
2. As the crisis emerges those involved should make continual assessments and begin to document the situation. This will be important as the debrief will require continuity and a review of the facts and the process for changes and updates. This includes noting successes, learnings, and shortcomings. Depending on the situation, this information may need to be contained and some information may not be shared. The goal of the CMT is to work towards resolving the issue. There should be situational awareness of at least the following questions:
  - a. What happened or what is happening?
  - b. What is the type, scale, scope, and severity of the incident or crisis?
  - c. Where and when? When did we first learn about the incident? What do we know now?
  - d. Who is/was affected? Do we have their contact information? Where are they now?
  - e. Who is involved? Who knows what we don't know?
  - f. What is the impact/likely impact?
  - g. Is there any immediate danger?
  - h. Do we understand the entire issue?
  - i. Do we need technical or legal assistance?
  - j. Are we responding with familiar ways of coping or do we need to generate and explore alternatives (do we have the time to do this)?
  - k. What logistics do we need to put into place (such as needing a space for a nerve center, needed contacts, meetings, vehicles, press releases, etc.)?
3. In the case of a club-level crisis the lead Rotarian, if not the club president, immediately contacts and consults with the District Governor. If the District Governor is not available, contact the next person on the CMT list in the order listed. All youth program staff shall follow the detailed reporting procedures of the District's *Youth Protection, Abuse, and Harassment Prevention Policy* before or while contacting the District Governor. Every effort should be made to simultaneously notify the District Governor.
4. The District Governor or designee determines the need to consult the CMT and decides if the team or certain members of the team should be activated. The District Governor has sole discretion and authority to determine which members of the team if any, should be activated. A

key decision point is to start first at the club level or determine if this affects more than one club or is a District-wide event. Also in this determination is whether the crisis is internal to Rotary or involves other partners, stakeholders, or the community.

5. The District Governor will notify members of the CMT that he/she has chosen to activate the CMT in response to a crisis.
6. The District Governor will confirm that law enforcement has been contacted, and if applicable, engage others not already involved.
7. In situations requiring law enforcement or other emergency service involvement, the CMT will cooperate with public authorities in all respects and follow the direction of responsible public officials.
8. The District Governor will consult with the CMT on whether the matter requires notification of the District insurer.
9. The District Governor will contact Rotary International and the current Rotary International Director for District 7090.
10. The District Governor will designate an Incident Spokesperson if there is not one already so designated. This should be someone who is on top of the issue, communicates well, and is comfortable interacting with the media.
11. The District Governor will direct the Spokesperson to prepare a statement that accurately states the facts, expresses Rotary's position, and conveys the appropriate tone (sympathy, apology, commitment, etc.) and develop key messages to help the Spokesperson convey Rotary's position consistently and accurately. The Spokesperson will develop a set of 'talking points' to be used as a reference by the Media Contact Team to keep messages simple and focused. The Spokesperson will update the statement and talking points as needed.
12. The District Governor will ask affected club presidents (in coordination with their Assistant Governors) to communicate appropriate and approved information to their clubs and instruct all Rotary club members to refer press inquiries to the Spokesperson.
13. Experience with social media will be important. While maintaining control of the narrative some may want to provide some financial support or make donations of material. Therefore, being able to guide donors and funders to a landing page will be important. In advance of a crisis, the District can determine the logistics and updates of a suitable crowdfunding page as well as other ways of guiding financial support and donations to those affected.
14. The District Governor may communicate with Assistant Governors, District Leadership Team members, clubs and/or individual Rotarians as needed.
15. The District Governor will notify Rotary International and the Rotary International Director of significant changes in the crisis and media involvement.
16. The District Governor will seek further assistance from Rotary International regarding media inquiries as needed.
17. After the fact the District Governor will lead Rotarians in a self-review of how the situation was handled and present these findings to District Council.

What happens if the crisis is Club specific, but the ramifications could impact the District or Rotary in general?

1. The Club President should determine whether the crisis or dispute goes beyond the Club and cannot be handled using the official procedures for arbitration and mediation as outlined in Article 16 of the Standard Rotary Club Constitution. District Governors do not have the authority to make decisions for the Club or to be a 'judge' in Club disputes. If it is a dispute amongst club members a number of steps can be taken. First, ensure that all affected have the opportunity to provide statements, information, and evidence. It is best to avoid disputes with preparation and facts. A club may experience a crisis of culture or direction which may be, for example, a clash between long-standing members and new members. It is often wise to find common ground, listen carefully, and use the Four Way Test to resolve disputes. Another consideration is to find a neutral party who can remain objective, but has access to any information needed in order to provide support and direction. Indeed, the club can also consider developing its own crisis management plan in advance of a dispute or crisis. The club may go further in having speakers or hosting a workshop where scenarios can be discussed. Furthermore, if the dispute is somewhat long-standing, it can be teased out during strategic planning. Having a strategic plan ensures that all members can have their say in what the club does in the year and years ahead. An administrative component of a strategic plan is to ensure that the responsible officers of the club have access to all corporate documents, financial records, and related signing authority on all accounts. This includes fiduciary oversight and control of any and all accounts or initiatives that the club manages or has members serving as officers. This allows for the continuity for the accounts and proper control of records.
2. Sometimes a dispute or crisis cannot be resolved internally. The Club President should notify the District Governor immediately if there are wider implications of the dispute or crisis. If the issue is indeed an emergency or an acute crisis the Club President may need quick assistance from their executive and skilled members to prioritize and focus on the issues at hand.
3. The District Governor will negotiate with the Club President on who should be the Spokesperson during the crisis. It is best to have options so if there are several candidates, one can be in the clear lead role and another assigned as a backup, especially if there needs to be consultations as well as relief due to other demands.
4. The Club President and Spokesperson should work with the District Crisis Management Team especially if the club does not have a crisis management plan or believes their training in that plan is lacking.
5. All Club members should be briefed on the crisis and requested not to talk to the media and to direct all inquiries through the Club spokesperson or the spokesperson of the District Crisis Management Team.
6. The District Crisis Management Team, through the District Governor, will be available to provide advice and support to the Club President and spokesperson.
7. Gather all facts and keep an accurate record of all events, secure and assemble related paperwork, and create an inventory of all communications, including social media.

Clubs are encouraged to develop their own crisis management plan. The Club President and executive can frame out and guide this process and include the suggested following steps:

1. Identify past disputes and crises (the club may need to ensure that any in-camera items remain sealed).

2. Review relevant club policies and ensure they are brought up to date. There are checklists and documents available to clubs to consider many issues, including crisis management planning as well as other items. Determine if these are needed for any current or planned activities. Also, ensure that a few members are familiar with insurance-related policies. As it applies, District 7090 is a bi-national organization there are two sets of insurance: one for Americans and one for Canadians. Any questions in this regard should be directed to the District 7090 Governance Committee.
3. Evaluate skills within the Rotary Club to determine who may fill certain roles within a crisis. One aspect is to determine who has first aid and CPR training, plus whether it is current or not. This may be an opportunity to train members in this area. Furthermore, at some events, it may be necessary to have a Safety Officer. Much like the Sergeant at Arms role, this person or team is charged with safety issues and to de-risk the issue or event. All club members and guests need to know that they must follow the direction of this person.
4. At events, and preferably before, members, guests, stakeholders, and partners may need to discuss some administrative issues like signing waivers and providing insurance. Another document, depending on the nature of the event, is a service or rental contract. Club officers need to consider whether there is a part of the contract that deals with a crisis or not. Furthermore, in regard to waivers, it is useful for a club to have a standard waiver form. Some stakeholders, schools, for example, have waivers for participants in events and activities. An attendee list, perhaps a sign-in list, may also be useful. The event organizer may need to consider these issues as part of event planning. Check the District 7090 Governance Committee page for a sample waiver. Similarly, a volunteer registration form is available.
5. Determine if there needs to be crisis management training. It may be a reasonable contingency that several people are trained for specific roles as availability and circumstance may not make everyone available.
6. Draft and then approve a CMP. Commit to reviewing and updating the CMP annually.
7. At the board or executive level, run through some scenarios to test and inform the plan. Consider taking this to a membership meeting where it can be discussed more broadly and have a way to record feedback for CMP improvements. If there are people and organizations in the community who could speak at a meeting on this topic that may be an opportunity to show leadership. Indeed, some community stakeholders and agencies may want to tap into the resources of local service clubs during a crisis. In that case, where Rotary is not the subject of the crisis, the network of the club can bring help, support, and resources to a tragedy.
8. Your Rotary club has significant convening power to bring together crisis management professionals to have individual or panel discussions and engage with a range of stakeholders on taking action. This advance work provides opportunities to feature other aspects of Rotary and generate goodwill, and perhaps memberships, in your community.
9. Consider inviting key stakeholders and partners into a conversation regarding your CMP including running through some cases or scenarios where all need to describe the relevant steps and actions.

## **Allegations against a Rotarian not related to Rotary**

When it is brought to the attention of the club that a Rotarian has allegedly committed conduct not related to Rotary (whether charged with a criminal offense or not) which has the potential to bring Rotary into question or disrepute, the Rotary club president or other Rotarians who become aware of a crisis shall immediately contact and consult with the District Governor.

As a rule, while everyone likes to gossip, members of Rotary should remember the Four Way Test and adhere to the principles of natural justice. In that regard, the following principles apply:

1. Do not discuss with other members until such time as you have spoken with the individual in question.
2. Obtain their position with respect to the alleged conduct. Do not discuss the matter with anyone further in the club than is necessary.
3. If the alleged conduct has already been disseminated amongst members of the club generally, then the individual may want the opportunity to put his or her side or respond to the allegations to the club, although in doing so not to be defamatory about the person who made the original allegations.
4. Rotary should avoid becoming embroiled in defamation claims for circulating defamatory material. This could be dealt with on an individual-by-individual basis, as some people may not want the allegations to spread further.
5. If the person has been charged with a criminal offense you may not immediately seek to do so, but you could ask the member to stand down from any leadership roles until such time as the matter is resolved, but you may wish to keep the individual as a member on the basis that under Canadian or American law you are innocent until proven guilty.
6. If the person is ultimately, following a trial or by virtue of a guilty plea, convicted of the offense, the executive of the club could decide to have them removed from the club altogether.
7. In exercising this power, the club executive (or board) would take into regard the nature of the offense and the impact on the reputation of the Rotary club and Rotary more widely.

## **What happens at the end of a crisis?**

1. Immediately following the crisis period assemble and organize the notes, materials, and communications (emails, texts, letters, files, screenshots, social media posts, etc.) with the aim to put them into a file. Construct an index. A leader in this crisis may want to assign the role of this function to a volunteer or team whose sole role it is to lead the District (or club) through the aftermath. Make a record of items in the media and across social media as much as possible. Note that there may be letters to the press and further social media posts. In some cases, it may be necessary to instruct all involved in the crisis to refrain from commenting on social media. This material can be shared by the CMT, but not shared with others until such time it is deemed necessary.
2. A written report and presentation may be necessary.
3. Additional follow-up matters will be directed and monitored by the District Governor and the District Governor executive (Chain).

4. Within one month of the completion of the crisis the District Governor will meet with the District CMT to evaluate the effectiveness of the management of the crisis and to make changes to any procedures in the CMP that prove necessary.
5. There may need to be an external evaluator process for the CMT to provide objectivity and clarity.
6. The Governance Committee, in coordination with other assets in the District, can be used as a channel in formulating a report and providing any recommendations to District Council. From there, whether it is internal and/or external, these results should be communicated in a clear and thorough manner.
7. Rotary International may require an after-action process and report.

### **Updating the Crisis Management Plan**

It is important to review the CMP regularly. The plan shall be updated as follows:

1. Annually prior to the start of the new Rotary year through the Governance Committee and the first District Council meeting of the year. Every year, each person named in the contacts will have to sign off that they have read the plan and know their role in preparation for the mid-year changeover.
2. Materials, including social media and other tools, and the organization of this information may be improved or added to include links or other media that informs the use, training, and layout of this plan.
3. Following any changes to leadership or other youth protection policies.
4. As a result of recommendations from a debriefing following a resolved crisis, a crisis simulation, or a narrowly avoided crisis.
5. Keeping current: Updating social media and EMS contacts and news alerts, gathering links and contact information of partners, and reviewing general contact information on ClubRunner are good administrative practices.
6. Upon direction from Rotary International (including from myRotary) and any other relevant incident or crisis that informs the plan.

### **A Final Note**

Remember: Clubs, District committees, and individuals are NOT to handle any crisis alone! Do not do it! Ask for help. District 7090 and Rotary International have trained responders who can relieve you of the worry of facing the media when your attention is needed to deal with the actual crisis. For the most part, the District Governor shall decide the most appropriate course of action. Contact your District Governor as soon as you think a possible crisis is developing or has developed.

When you intervene in a crisis there are opportunities for awareness and even for some to experience catharsis, especially in setting the tone for the duration of the response in the early hours. Being supportive, and providing context, focus, and guidance are useful qualities in a crisis. Rotary can also help mobilize resources, create order in a chaotic and fluid situation, and provide an element of



protection in certain cases. As Rotarians, we do this well in helping with emergencies and long-standing poverty in other parts of our country or the world – in helping out another District. But we should also consider what we would do if we were in that affected District. How would we seek aid from other Districts, clubs, and Rotarians?

Once the crisis has ended, the District Governor and the Crisis Management Team should assess the handling of the crisis and recommend changes in procedure to improve future crisis management. With the start of each new club year on July 1st, the District Administrative Secretary will adjust or add to the list of the CMT, the appropriate names and contact information as directed by the District Governor. There are available guides and forms, internally or externally, for this aspect of analyzing a crisis.

The District has a strategic plan. Most clubs have strategic plans. Some of the crises are management and personal in nature. As part of the strategic planning process, the District commits to using feedback and evidence to mitigate crises as well as avoid duplicating similar crises in the future through applying best practices in visioning, planning, and leadership development. Internal systems of communication will continue to be improved to support managing issues during the crisis and to store material that will be useful during non-crisis periods. Additionally, in preparation for a crisis, each committee of the District will to the best of its abilities assess its role during and after a crisis.

From a personal care perspective, mental health is an emerging concern. While plenty of resources have been devoted to this area already, it is not a bad thing to talk about this openly. When a crisis happens on top of pre-existing stresses, there is a role for Rotary to play in helping, but also healing.

## Appendix I: Additional Resources

The following is a selection of materials that can support and guide crisis management planning. Tap into the professional and career resources of the District Rotarians. Readers are welcome to send articles, notes, links, and expand on these resources for continual improvement of the CMP to the District's Governance Committee for review:

Books – a search for books on crisis management can provide a good list. Check to see if your local library has a selection or can get these materials from an interlibrary loan. Key search terms include:

1. Risk management and harm reduction. This includes exploring the materials Rotary has in promoting peace.
2. Disasters: hunger, homelessness, poverty, clean water, community economic development
3. Crisis management, emergency management, crisis communication
4. Violence, abuse, burnout, suicide, death and dying, PTSD, etc.
5. Equanimity
6. Healthy communities: preparedness, mental health, mediation, intervention, first aid, etc.
7. You can add other modifying words in an advanced search like 'a guide to'.

Magazines – professional magazines may be available or sometimes general publications have articles related to crisis management. Here are a few resources targeted specifically toward the sector:

1. Crisis Response Journal - <https://www.crisis-response.com/>
2. Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management - <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/14685973>
3. Disaster Recovery Journal – drj.com
4. Harvard Business Review - <https://hbr.org/topic/subject/crisis-management>
5. International Journal of Crisis Response and Management - <https://www.igi-global.com/journal/international-journal-crisis-response-management/235689>
6. Talbot Runhof - <https://www.talbotrunhof.com/en/us/magazine/magazine/crisis-management/>
7. ReliefWeb - <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/journal-no-3-2021-disasters-and-crisis-management>
8. The Journal of Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention - <https://www.hogrefe.com/us/journal/crisis>

Blogs – often found on meta sites like open.spotify.com or other

1. TheCrisisCast.com
2. Managing Uncertainty Podcast on bryghtpath.com
3. Rockdovesolutions.com
4. Managementhelp.org – Free Management Library – search crisis management
5. Bernstein Crisis Management – bernsteincrisismanagement.com
6. Inverroy Crisis Management – inverroycrisismanagement.com
7. PR News – prnewsonline.com
8. Theconversation.com – crisis management search
9. Entrepreneur.com – crisis management search
10. Crisiscommunications.com – Hennes Communications

11. [Blogs.deloitte.co.uk/crisisandresilience](https://blogs.deloitte.co.uk/crisisandresilience)
12. [Glean.info/category/crisis-management](https://glean.info/category/crisis-management)

#### On-line materials

1. General searches using key words in this document can unearth interesting materials, especially if the resources are in your District.
2. Some agencies and organizations have crisis management trainers and professionals on staff. Consider doing interviews with these people or have them present to your club. You may want to consider convening a panel for the community to talk about issues of concern that may not be reported in the media. If there are evident risks in the District more work can be done in preparation for an 'if not, but when' type of risk.
3. Follow some of the buzzwords. For example, searching Twitter for #HorizonScanning or some other # to reveal an interesting community.
4. Some conferences feature crisis management as a component including conferences held by the professionals who show up at emergencies. There may even be trade shows that provide interesting opportunities. Indeed, there is an International Conference on Crisis Management and Analysis run by [waset.org](http://waset.org)
5. The International Rescue Committee tracks the top crises in the world. See [rescue.org](http://rescue.org). Indeed, Rotary Action Groups and other groups of Rotarians track and respond to emergencies and crises.
6. Training in crisis management can be developed internally. It can also be borrowed and adapted from other sources. Some Districts in Rotary may have advanced skills in managing a crisis. There are also online courses that are available through apps and services.

## **Appendix II: District 7090 related materials**

The following documents are available to support the CMP:

1. Abuse and Harassment Prevention Policy
2. District 7090 Disaster Response Manual
3. Club Disaster Resources Survey
4. Club Disaster Skillset Inventory
5. Disaster Recall Phone Relief Template
6. Preparedness Program Mission Statement
7. Youth-related materials
  - a. Rotary Youth Protection Guide 775-EN-(2)
  - b. District 7090's Youth Exchange policies and procedures
8. Rotary International
  - a. Media Crisis Handbook, 515-EN-(507)
  - b. RI Crisis Management Support Team – contact information
9. Vulnerable Sector Protection Policy
10. District 7090 Crisis Management Plan training presentation

## Appendix III: Communications and Media

Use the following information can be used for communicating in a crisis and to prepare for and interact with the media. This is a 'pull out' section as it relates to being assigned the Spokesperson role or included on the Media Contact Team.

### What to do when speaking to the media

In preparation to speak to members of the media, many clubs have their own contact list of the local press, radio, TV, and other news sources. The club should assign annual (or regular) updates of this list to a member. The list should include cell and email, plus social media handles for each member of the press. It is okay to ask for a moment for you to get some materials to write down any notes and record the conversation.

1. Who is calling and their details:
  - a. What media outlet or organization do they represent
  - b. Their direct contact details
  - c. Their credentials
  - d. What they want to know
  - e. When their deadline is
2. Focus on the key messages given by the District Crisis Management Team.
  - a. Limit the key communication to 2 or 3 statements. Repeat and rephrase as necessary.
  - b. Be completely honest and sure of what you are saying.
  - c. Release as much information as you can in a statement rather than making 'off-the-cuff statements'.
  - d. If you do not want something reported, do not say it!
3. Answering questions
  - a. Acknowledge any concerns.
  - b. Explain that you are investigating causes and doing what you can address the situation.
  - c. Remain pleasant and as accommodating as possible.
4. In general
  - a. Be organized before you communicate with the media.
  - b. Speak in short, simple sentences. Each statement has the potential to be a headline tomorrow.
  - c. Strengthen your main message. Consider whether a short personal story is relevant and/or supportive. The situation is not about you.
  - d. Emphasize Rotary is cooperating fully if there is an inquiry.
  - e. Conveying genuine sincerity and empathy is important. Demonstrate positive voice tone and body language. It is okay to show emotions such as sympathy, concern, understanding, or regret – whatever emotion is appropriate.
  - f. Discuss wording before releasing any statements: Depending on the situation do not validate any claim or agree with speculation of a legal outcome.

- g. Social Media Posts: Never comment on a social media post or blog about a sensitive issue related to someone's reputation or situation that would heighten the risk to Rotary.
  - h. While much can be said about social media, its use in a crisis is a double-edged sword.
  - i. Determine if there are former Rotarians as part of the crisis.
  - j. There may be links to additional resources that emerge during a crisis. Ensure that you have access to a backup manual or binder of media-related information in the case of power outages.
5. At the end, thank the journalist and offer to be available for any follow-up.
  6. Monitor the media coverage of the crisis. If facts are misrepresented, inform the media through a polite call or letter to the Editor.
  7. In a crisis there are resources that are available to you. The District website can host a press release and important messages. Consult with the CMT regarding guiding any public input or comments. There are some who may start a crowd fundraising initiative online. Find a way to coordinate where that link may be housed.

### **What not to do when speaking to the media**

1. Never respond with 'No comment'. If you cannot answer a particular question, then explain why. For example: 'Sorry, but that matter is now part of an official investigation'.
2. Never refuse to speak to the Press
3. Do not ignore or delay the media as it can contribute to negative speculation.
4. Do not panic. Listen carefully to questions. Take a pause if needed. Asking for clarification is ok.
5. Never ever make any 'off the record' comments. The interview is not over until the journalist leaves or hangs up. Do not make any inappropriate comments as there may be a 'hot mike' nearby or someone may pick up what you are saying from their cell phone.
6. Do not speculate or give opinions – stick to the key facts.
7. Avoid mentioning or responding to rumors.
8. Avoid Rotary jargon and acronyms.
9. Do not repeat the negative part of a question. Change to a positive.
  - a. Example question: Did the Club fail to provide adequate checks on the host parents of the exchange student?
  - b. Response: The safety of our exchange students is of the highest priority.
10. Never cover up or make excuses.
11. Avoid coming across as defensive, nervous, or hostile.

### **If the Media Contacts You First**

If a Rotary club president, event or activity chair, or some other Rotarian is contacted by the media, please keep the following guidelines in mind:

1. Our goal is to have an organized media response through the Spokesperson. Follow the protocols set out above. Do not issue a statement or make any comment to the media other

than referring them to the Spokesperson. Ignoring the media can contribute to unnecessary speculation, but it is the responsibility of the Spokesperson to communicate the facts and positions of Rotary to the media.

2. For purposes of District 7090's CMP, 'media' includes, but is not limited to, the following:
  - i. Traditional print media such as newspapers
  - ii. Broadcast media such as television and streaming
  - iii. Social media platforms
3. Online sources such as bloggers. This may include an untrained citizen journalist who captures an event through photographs, video, or recordings capable of putting visual, audio, and text online from the site of a 'crisis'.
4. The District Governor and the Spokesperson will designate a Media Resource Team who will assist the Spokesperson in interacting with the media. This will enable the Spokesperson to divide the workload among several team members in such areas as identified in Section 1.a., above. Each team member may have one area designated to follow and report to the Spokesperson, such as local news, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc., allowing the District Governor and the Spokesperson to maintain control of messages propagating on social media.
5. The contact information for the Spokesperson will be provided to anyone reasonably anticipated to be contacted by the media. Information should be accompanied by instructions to refer all inquiries to the Spokesperson in a cooperative and transparent manner that avoids a response limited to 'no comment'. The Spokesperson may refer an inquiry to a member of the Media Resource Team.
6. Any Rotarian contacted by the media shall refer the inquiring media representative to the District Governor or the Spokesperson, without comment. Immediately contact the District Governor or designate, even if in doubt of the urgency or importance of the matter. Let those responsible make the decisions as to urgency and importance.
7. If you need time to confirm or determine the District Governor or Spokesperson's contact information, tell the reporter you or a Rotary representative will call back promptly, take down their contact information, and immediately contact the District Governor or Spokesperson.
8. Before use, the statement prepared by the Spokesperson should be reviewed by Rotary International Public Image and Press Relations staff.
9. The District Governor and/or Spokesperson will be completely honest and truthful, will not say anything he/she is unsure of, and will not cover up or make excuses.
10. The District Governor and Spokesperson will represent Rotary. When they speak, they ARE Rotary. No personal observations or speculations will be issued.
11. Monitor the media's local coverage of the issue for accuracy and tone. If Rotary is misrepresented, let the Spokesperson know. He/she will convey the concern to the District Governor for action if needed.
12. Remember that nothing said to the media is 'off the record'.

### **What do other Rotary members do if contacted by the media**

Sometimes the media is looking to assemble quotes and comments to confirm a story. All Rotarians should have a basic familiarity at the club level with what to do when contacted by the media. It may

also be the case that a member of the media is a member of a club, or that they are a participant in an event or issue. Ensure you are listening carefully for probative or leading questions. It is ok to ask the media person if they are working on a story. In this case, remember the Four Way Test, but also limit your response using the following guidelines:

1. Assure the person you are speaking to that you will pass the inquiries on to an informed spokesperson who will contact them as soon as possible. In some cases, you may be able to provide an immediate introduction. Consider that there may be a press conference where you can recommend that person to attend.
2. Try not to be drawn into a conversation about the crisis.
3. Do not give personal opinions on the information presented to you by the media. Seek to determine if there is a press release and related points and provide them with that information.
4. Contact the Club President about the matter.