



District 5450 Crisis Communication and Management Policy

Effective June 2025

District 5450 Crisis Communication and Management Policy

To be reviewed, understood, and implemented by all Club Presidents, Leaders, Committee Chairs, and members of the District 5450 Leadership Team.

Purpose and Scope

This policy provides a framework for Rotary Clubs within District 5450 to effectively manage and communicate during crisis situations.

Overview

Crisis communication and response in District 5450 is led by the District Governor and the designated District Public Spokesperson.

Introduction

Crises may occur unexpectedly and may involve Club officers, members, entire Clubs, or program participants. Examples of crises include:

- Traffic accidents
- Acts of violence
- Youth protection concerns

- Natural disasters (e.g., floods, earthquakes)
- Allegations of misconduct or criminal behavior
- Arrests

A clear, coordinated response is essential. Our goals are to:

- Ensure the safety and well-being of everyone involved
- Communicate promptly, consistently, and professionally
- Protect Rotary's reputation and public trust
- Minimize harm to individuals and the organization
- Clearly communicate and initiate Rotary International and District 5450's Youth and At-Risk Protection Policies which apply to all youth-related programs, including Rotary Youth Exchange, RYLA, Interact, and Club-sponsored initiatives.
- Maintain a safe environment for youth and vulnerable individuals while upholding a zero-tolerance policy for any form of abuse or harassment.

What Constitutes a Crisis?

A crisis is defined as any unplanned event connected to a Rotarian or Rotary activity that:

- Results in, or could result in, serious physical or emotional harm
- Threatens the reputation or credibility of Rotary

Examples include:

- Serious injury or death during a Rotary event
- Criminal allegations involving Rotarians
- Natural or human-caused disasters affecting Rotary programs
- Youth-related incidents involving safety or misconduct

If a Crisis Occurs

1. **Do not manage the situation alone.** Use the resources available through the District and Rotary International.
2. **If youth are involved**, immediately follow the program - specific reporting procedures.
3. **Notify District leadership.** The Club President or the first Rotarian aware of the situation must contact the District Governor or District Operations Manager without delay.

4. The **District Governor will convene a response team**, which may include:
 - Club President
 - Committee chairs
 - Legal counsel or social workers
 - The District Disaster Response Committee
 - The District Public Spokesperson
 - Rotary International staff
 5. **Cooperate fully with emergency services and law enforcement.**
 6. **Designate a Club liaison** to provide consistent updates to the District Governor.
 7. **All media inquiries** must be referred to the District Public Spokesperson. Club members must not speak to the press.
 8. **Maintain confidentiality.** Do not share names or identifying details.
 9. **Public Statements** will be drafted and approved by the District Governor in consultation with Rotary International and the District Public Spokesperson.
 10. **For incidents likely to attract media attention, immediately contact the Rotary International Media Relations Division:** Tel: 312-375-0872 or Email: michael.vandam@rotary.org
 11. **The District Governor will notify Rotary International Legal within the required timeframe.**
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When the Media Contacts You

If you are contacted by the media:

- **Do not make any statements.** Refer all inquiries to the District Public Spokesperson.
 - Notify the District Governor immediately, even if you are unsure of the situation's severity.
 - Let reporters know that a response will be provided through appropriate Rotary representative.
 - Never release names, speculate, or share opinions.
 - **Do not post or comment on social media about the incident or individuals involved.**
 - Remember: nothing is ever "off the record."
 - The District Governor and District Public Spokesperson will monitor and respond to media coverage as needed.
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Final Notes

No Club, committee, or individual should navigate a crisis alone. District 5450 and Rotary International have experienced leaders and resources to help guide Clubs through challenging situations.

Your role during a crisis is to stabilize the local situation while maintaining close coordination with District leadership. Always contact the District Governor or District Operations Manager immediately if a crisis arises.