

BARTON
PUBLIC RELATIONS

CRISIS COMMUNICATION PLAN

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INTRODUCTION

This crisis communication plan is supplemental to Barton’s [“Emergency Operations Plan” \(EOP\)](#). It will guide the Crisis Communications Team on the proper course of action, depending on the nature of an emergency.

Please place this document and the EOP in multiple easy-to-access locations like your car, home and office. It might be wise to bookmark the campus safety website or keep a digital copy on your smartphone or other device as well.

Please familiarize yourself with Barton’s emergency procedures in this plan and the Emergency Operations Plan.

Potential crises and this plan will be reviewed in detail and updated annually at the beginning of the fiscal year, or more frequently if changes are needed.

PURPOSE & OBJECTIVE

Purpose

To provide accurate, complete and timely information to the public and the media in the event of a crisis. Communications will seek to restore and maintain a positive image of Barton among its publics. Communications with the media or other publics should be open, honest and frequent.

Objective

To be seen in the news media as a community-focused organization that genuinely cares about its employees, students and stakeholders. Barton Community College values and protects students, faculty and staff above all else, and will exhaust all measures to ensure their well-being.

QUICK GUIDE

In the event of a crisis or emergency, the EOP states that the Director of Public Relations must be contacted. That will set in motion the following steps:

1. Director will decide severity of crisis and extent to which communication must occur.
 - A Level 1 emergency requires minimal staff, likely only the Director of Public Relations and/or PR Specialist. Crises of this nature are not likely to require media notification, but a Crisis Communication Team member should be standing by.
 - A Level 2 emergency requires at least the Director of Public Relations and PR Specialist to respond. Most of these emergencies will require communication with the media, though select cases will be handled internally, leaving the CCT to damage control. More staff can be engaged if the crisis escalates.
 - A Level 3 emergency requires the full CCT to engage.

[Refer to page 11 of EOP for Emergency Levels]

2. Director will assemble the appropriate members of the Crisis Communication Team and determine spokesperson, which in almost all occasions should be the President. The President and Director of Public Relations may designate an alternate spokesperson.
3. The EOP and Crisis Communication Plan are reviewed and emergency notification options are determined and implemented if necessary, including RAVE notifications. Front desk operators should also work with CCT to craft standard messages.
4. In most crises requiring media notification, a news release and “quick facts” sheet should be written and delivered within one hour of Director being notified. At this time, an update to the website at the webpage created for sharing information related to the crisis, and posts to social media should also be considered, providing the same basic information as in the release. If deemed necessary, Coordinator of Video can shoot video and upload to news media or potentially stream live. A press conference may also be scheduled. Direct all inquiries to visit the webpage created for sharing information related to the crisis for updates.
5. The CCT fields calls and responds to online comments and emails. In the attached template or excel file in the CRISIS INFO folder, each call should be documented, including name of caller, inquiries and if the problem was resolved. Keywords on social media should be monitored as well to keep track of the general tone surrounding the crisis.
6. PR Specialist or designated writer begins work on collecting more information for a second release to be issued, usually within two hours of the previous release.
7. CCT uses any available time to review the Crisis Communication Plan and discuss the best messages and avenues for keeping individuals safe and/or protecting and repairing Barton’s image, depending on the severity of the crisis and progress toward a resolution.

COMMUNICATION TEAM, CCT CONTROL ROOM, EQUIPMENT/SUPPLIES

Communication Team

The Crisis Communication Team will be composed of the following. The order implies who will serve as leader in event that not all are present.

Brandon Steinert

- Director of Public Relations (lead) [REDACTED] o: (620) 792-9307

Joe Vinduska

- PR & Social Media Specialist (back-up lead) o: (620) 792-9309 [REDACTED]

Julie Munden

- Video Coordinator [REDACTED] o: (620) 792-9305

Samantha Stueder

- Web Content Strategist o: (620) 792-9354 [REDACTED]

Tana Cooper

- Director of Admissions o: (620) 792-9241 [REDACTED]

Sasha Larson

- Switchboard Operator (Admissions) o: (620) 792-9286

Larissa Graham

- Child Development Center o: (620) 786-1131 [REDACTED]

Connie Wagner

- Graphic Designer o: (620) 786-7402 [REDACTED]

Maggie Harris

- Communications Strategist o: (620) 792-9312 [REDACTED]

CCT Control Room

The control room will ideally be the Public Relations Department offices at C-129.

Back up locations:

Administration Building
1025 Main Street, Great Bend
Camp Aldrich Dining & Events Center

If locations are inaccessible or unusable, see page 12 of the [Emergency Operations Plan](#).

Equipment/Supplies

The control rooms already contain the necessary equipment. However, if a new control room has to be established this is a basic rundown of what is needed:

- Computers
- Internet access
- Flashlights
- Walkie-talkies
- Contact lists
- Pens/pencils/paper
- Copy machine
- Television(s) with major news networks
- Copy of the Emergency Operations Plan
- Ample food
- Cameras
- Extension cords & a generator and/or a power pack
- Copies of college policies & procedures

KEY PUBLICS TO CONSIDER

Board of Trustees

Administrators

Employees

County Commission & The Local City Councils

Area School Boards

Community Leaders (civic groups)

Stakeholders (General Public, Taxpayers & Community Members)

Students (On Campus, Online, Commuting)

Vendors & Suppliers

Bissell Point Residents

Competitors (Perhaps a Source of Assistance)

Legal Representation

Local & State News Media

Chambers of Commerce

Education Center Administrators (forts)

Education Consortium Members (forts)

Parents of children at the Child Development Center

Foundation Board of Directors

Law Enforcement & EMS

NOTIFYING PUBLICS

The following are the preferred methods for reaching each of the aforementioned publics, along with the party or parties responsible for reaching them.

Director of Public Relations:

Crisis Communication Team

Phone; Text

Administrators + Board of Trustees + Education Center Administrators

Email Via President's Staff List; Phone; Text

Foundation Board of Directors

Email

Local & State News Media

Email; Phone

Public Relations Specialist:

County Commission & The Local City Councils

Email; Phone

Area School Boards

Email; Phone

Community Leaders (civic groups)

Email; Phone; Meeting Attendance

Stakeholders (General Public, Taxpayers & Community Members)

Paid Social Media; News Media; Barton Website

Director of Admissions:

Students (on campus, online or commuting)

Social Media; Email; Bulk Text; Campus Intercom; Barton Website

Employees

Email; Bulk Text; Campus Intercom

Director of Child Development Center:

Parents of CDC children

Social media; Phone; Email

To be designated by Director at time of crisis if necessary:

Vendors & Suppliers

Bissell Point Residents

Competitors (Perhaps a Source of Assistance)

Legal Representation

Chambers of Commerce

Chambers of Commerce

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

AMBULANCE: 911

AMERICAN RED CROSS: 800-784-3272

BARTON COUNTY HEALTH DEPT: (620) 793-1902

BARTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE: (620) 793-1876

BARTON COUNTY YARDS (Streets, roads, etc.): (620) 793-1816

BOMB SQUAD: 911

CLARA BARTON HOSPITAL: (620) 653-2114

ELLINWOOD DISTRICT HOSPITAL: (620) 564-2548

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY: 800-424-8802

UKHS Great Bend Campus: (620) 792-8833

GREAT BEND FIRE & EMS: 911

HAYS MEDICAL CENTER: 785-623-5000

HUTCHINSON HOSPITAL: (620) 665-2000

KANSAS DEPT OF HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT: 785-296-1500

KANSAS DEPT OF HUMAN SERVICES: 785-296-3959

KANSAS EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY: 785-274-1911

KBI: 800-512-7463

KANSAS HIGHWAY PATROL: 785-296-6800

LARNED CORRECTIONAL MENTAL HEALTH FACILITY: (620) 285-6249

POISON CONTROL: 800-222-1222

SALINA REGIONAL HEALTH CENTER: 785-452-7000

UKHS Medical Pavilion: (620) 792-6503

UTILITIES: ELECTRIC (Midwest): (620) 792-1301

GAS (Kansas Gas Service): 888-482-4950

KEY MEDIA, MEDIA SPOKESPERSON, OTHER SPOKESPERSONS

Key Media

Media lists will be maintained by the Public Relations Department. The lists are currently viewable via an Outlook contacts group.

Media Spokesperson

The media spokesperson will depend upon the crisis. However, for most major crises, the most appropriate spokesperson should be the President, unless the President and Director of Public Relations decide to designate an alternate spokesperson to make the message more relevant or credible depending on the crisis.

Prior to any statements, the spokesperson should be briefed and prepared and should rehearse. The Director will instruct the spokesperson on the most likely questions that will be encountered.

If there are potential legal ramifications, legal counsel should be sought before drafting of a statement.

Other Spokespersons

Representatives from the following organizations may also be considered depending on the scope of the crisis (i.e. community colleges in general rather than Barton-specific.)

- Barton County Health Department
- Kansas Board of Regents
- Local Law Enforcement / Emergency Response Personnel
- Local Government Officials
- School Boards
- Involved Business Owners (advisory board members, etc.)
- Education Center Administrators (forts)
- Legal Counsel - Randy Henry
- KSU Research & Extension

KEY MESSAGES

Remember the 5Ws & H. Who, what, when, where, why and how.

The Director of Public Relations will work with the spokesperson on drafting key statements that can be used to answer likely questions from the media.

For catastrophic crises, among the first questions asked will be related to number of injuries or deaths, the amount of damage done in terms of dollars and how we have responded to the situation.

While all messages should state only what is known, *it is particularly important to stick to the facts* with the first messages released. This is where misinformation has the most potential to be spread among our publics. Only say what is known - do not speculate!

Our priority will always be the health and safety of those affected by a crisis, and our message should reflect this genuine concern for others.

That doesn't mean we should say nothing. Here is a short list of what we should say:

- Our message should be concise, explaining what we know, and that we are gathering the facts about what we don't know.
- We should explain how and when more information will be disseminated. If possible, a regularly scheduled update should be provided, regardless of whether there is any new information.
- When new information becomes available, we should determine whether it is yet appropriate to notify the media. [See page 19 of EOP.](#)
- Barton does not release names of deceased. We refer media to local authorities.
- Mention the place the public can go to find more information.
- Use plain English - cut out any jargon.

The Director of Public Relations will provide a **quick-reference sheet** to contain the following:

- 3-5 of the most likely questions
- List of "quick facts"
- 3-5 pre-formatted messages
- Issues to avoid and/or address
- Tips on working with specific reporter(s) conducting the interview

TRICK QUESTIONS

During a press conference or interview, reporters may intentionally or unknowingly ask trick questions. From loaded to leading, trick questions come in a variety of types.

“Off the record” - There is no such thing as “off the record.”

Some reporters may go off topic and assume a variety of answers they will try to get you to subtly and accidentally confirm. Beware of “Isn’t it true...” and “Don’t you know...” and “If this had happened elsewhere or at a different time...”

These are usually the beginnings to trick questions. Stick to the facts. Call out reporters on being off topic if necessary. They won’t be offended and you will appear more competent.

Speculative questions:

“If x had happened, what would you have done.”

- Fortunately, that didn’t happen, so let’s please keep the questions germane.

Leading questions:

“You do agree that Barton was at fault, right?”

- My opinion is not what is important right now. Please keep questions focused on gathering facts.

Naive questions:

“What exactly does Barton do?”

- We’re here to discuss the incident. For the sake of time, you can find basic information about Barton, see the website or contact the public relations department.

Good-bye questions:

- These sound innocent, and come after an interview. Be careful how you answer. Anything you say is on the record.

WEBSITE

Keeping information front-and-center on the relevant Barton website(s) is an effective way of informing our publics, who will likely visit our site for updates.

1. The relevant Barton website(s) should be immediately updated with the initial news release on the home page.
2. The online news release should be updated regularly. Other releases should not replace it, simply update the contents of the page.
3. If deaths or injuries have occurred, provide a place where people who are unharmed can check in to say they are OK where family and friends can look them up. A Google Form might be a quick way to set this up. That way the names can be sorted alphabetically and the public can view names as they are entered in real-time.
4. For crises affecting the entire institution, all Barton's websites should be updated in this fashion with a link to the information, but the news release should still remain on one page.
5. As soon as possible, if determined necessary, a video statement from the President should be placed on the home page and wherever else possible (embedded in the news release page, etc.) This will involve guidance from the Video Coordinator.

MONITORING & PRODROMES

Monitoring

At least one individual should be dedicated to monitoring chatter about the issue.

Effective monitoring includes:

- Social Media mentions.
- Flipping through television channels.
- Google News-searching the college's name and keywords associated with the crisis.
- Checking the local news websites as follows:
 - Great Bend Tribune
 - Ellinwood Leader
 - Hoisington Dispatch
 - Larned Tiller & Toiler
 - Lyons News
 - KSN/KWCH and other major Kansas and national news networks
 - Great Bend Post
- Listening to the local radio stations.

A report of findings should be generated as new information is available. The individual responsible for monitoring should record findings throughout the process, including elements as follows:

- time.
- nature of the message.
- where the information was published.

Prodromes

Prodromes are the warning signs that a crisis may occur.

Due to confidentiality needs and the specificity of some previous occurrences, prodromes are not provided publicly and are discussed as they arise throughout the year by the CCT.

NEWS RELEASE & FOLLOW-UP NEWS RELEASE

News Release

The initial news release should be released within an hour of the Director of Public Relations receiving notice of a crisis. It should contain the following information:

- What - Tell what happened.
- Who - Explain who was involved. Provide information on whether individuals have been hospitalized for any reason. Names are not to be released by Barton. They may be used if released by local authorities first.
- When - List the time the crisis occurred and when emergency teams arrived and which ones responded. Include a time stamp on the news release.
- Where - Provide an address.
- Explain that Barton is regrouping to focus on keeping people safe and contain the damage.
- If sensitive information is at play, contact legal counsel and leave out such information for the time being.
- Avoid jargon. Keep it simple.

Follow-Up News Release

The follow-up news release should be released within two hours after the initial release. It should contain the following information:

- A repeat of the information sent previously.
- Updates to any numbers regarding those injured, safe or evacuated.
- Quotes from the President or other administrator regarding the crisis and our immediate next step. Good practice is generally to thank emergency response personnel if all has gone well.

CLOSURE, EVALUATION, CRISES INVENTORY

Closure

When the crisis is determined to be over or nearing an end, consider the following actions and determine if they are appropriate:

- Paid advertising containing an apology or final details.
- Putting apology/final details on all communication channels.
- Final statement to media.
- Video apology/final details on home page.
- Explain in apology/final details how future incidents will be handled/prevented.

Evaluation

The following should take place within 24 hours of the end of a crisis:

- Compile the reports from monitoring media and phone calls.
- Determine effectiveness and whether CCT response could have been better.
- Review list of publics and key media to determine if any should be added.
- Report findings when Emergency Response Team holds a debrief session as mandated by the [Emergency Operations Plan](#).

Crises Inventory

An inventory of likely crises to consider for planning purposes is maintained in a private folder by the Public Relations & Marketing Department. It is to be reviewed each year when this document is updated."

MEDIA LISTS & OUTREACH SITES

Media Lists

Barton County Media: [REDACTED]

Fort Riley Media: [REDACTED]

Fort Leavenworth Media: [REDACTED]

Outreach Sites

The Forts and Grandview Plaza are referenced throughout the document. While the unique needs of each constitute their own special responses, this document has been adjusted to serve as a useful guide regardless of location. We will follow the lead of the education consortium directors at the respective forts.

Fort Riley and Grandview Plaza Crisis Leader: Dean of Military Academic Services

Kurt Teal: o: (866) 457-2828 [REDACTED]

Fort Leavenworth Crisis Leader: Director of Fort Leavenworth Learning Services

Erika Jenkins Moss: o: (855) 509-3375

