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**CANTERBURY DISASTER  
SALVAGE TEAM**

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# **Emergency Planning and Crisis Management**



Written by ERCM.org

Emergency management can be defined as “the strategy and processes deployed to protect vital assets from risks associated by natural or man-made disasters or catastrophes.” Assets can be either living things such as people and plants, or non-living things such as buildings, cultures, and economic systems. For identification purposes, the emergency management process is divided into four fields. Those four fields are:

- **Risk reduction**
- **Resource preparation**
- **Response to the event**
- **Limitation of further damage**

In an organization, the person charged with emergency management is typically someone at the executive level. A successful emergency management plan usually hinges on a number of issues being handled effectively.

To mitigate risk, steps are put in place to eliminate or reduce damage. Some structural mitigation resources could be levees to prevent flooding. An example of a non-structural mitigation resource would be to designate an area as a flood plain. Before any risk reduction can take place, risks must be identified and evaluated.

To prepare for a disaster, emergency management professionals develop plans to manage risks. They, of course, must be prepared to put these plans into immediate action when necessary. Some common resource preparation methods are:

**Create easily understandable communication plans**

- **Develop and implement training for emergency services**
- **Design appropriate evacuation plans and designate emergency shelters**
- **Stockpile an inventory**
- **Maintain disaster supplies**
- **Develop a network of trained and untrained volunteers to assist in times of emergency**

It is just as important to have personal preparedness in the event of a disaster. This can include constructing shelters, installing back-up power, water, and sewage services, and rehearsing evacuation procedures. For most individuals and families, personal preparedness should include the creation of a stockpile of food and water. In addition, medicine, flashlights, candles, and money should be on hand. Valuable items and important documents should also be secured. The third part of a good emergency management plan is the response phase. This part can be difficult as it often includes the mobilization of first responders and emergency equipment. In most natural disasters, first responders are most likely to be policemen, firemen, and emergency medical technicians. If the crisis is the result of an act of terrorism, the military will respond. For both natural and man-made disasters, specialist rescue teams may assist. Whenever possible, mock disasters can be staged to pinpoint areas of weakness in an emergency plan. This allows the manager to develop workable strategies. In any emergency, quick response is critical. Search and rescue efforts should commence immediately.

# ESTABLISHING A STRONG CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN

We cannot avoid natural or man-made disasters, but we can prepare for them. The best preparation is to have a thorough crisis management plan in place. Solid crisis management plans should deal with issues which threaten the safety of individuals and property. The scope of a crisis management plan should be limitless and include procedures to deal with:

- **Natural disasters**
- **Criminal activities**
- **Workplace violence**
- **Fire**
- **Accidents**
- **Medical emergencies**
- **Outbreaks of disease or infections**
- **Acts of war and terrorism**

For any and all of these situations, the protection of human life and health is the main objective. Following that, measures to insure the protection and preservation of assets should be taken. A good crisis management plan states clearly the goals, objectives, and responsibilities of each member of the team.

For a crisis, a plan should be developed consisting of skills and techniques required to identify, assess, understand, and cope with a serious situation. Attention should be paid to actions that

need to take place as soon as the crisis first occurs.

Crisis management generally consists of:

- **Response methods to both real and perceived crises.**
- **Establishment of scenarios that constitute a crisis and appropriate response mechanisms.**
- **Communication that is necessary during the response phase of emergencies.**

It has never been more critical for businesses and organizations to develop a comprehensive crisis management plan. Some crises are so severe that businesses and organizations must temporarily cease all activities. In these cases, a crisis management plan is essential to insure the viability of the organization. Even in the midst of a crisis, it is often possible for businesses and organizations to carry on with their business. While carrying out the day-to-day functions, these organizations need to have a plan for damage recovery. A plan must be in place to develop new routines and procedures when necessary.

A crisis management plan should address the following three phases:

- **A crisis management team should be aware of the signs of impending danger. While every scenario cannot be foreseen, a comprehensive plan to diagnose impending trouble is critical.**
- **Dangers can come from natural or man-made causes.**

- **Strategies should be in place to insure the safety of life and property and then to resume operations as quickly as possible.**
- **Individuals must be trained to implement and monitor the crisis management plan.**

To have an effective crisis management plan, an organization should have an effective crisis management leader. Leadership during, or in the aftermath of, a crisis reflects the company's leadership and goals. That leader should have the ability to:

1. **Build an environment of trust**
2. **Identify the organization's vulnerabilities**
3. **Make quick and sound decisions**
4. **Be willing to take courageous action**
5. **Learn from the disaster in order to effect change**

A thorough crisis management plan can not only save lives, it can save companies. In any disaster, the saving of human lives must always be the first priority. Securing the organization's tangible and non-tangible assets is secondary, but monumentally important to the viability of any organization.

### **Touring workshop of rebuild facilities in Christchurch DST's 2013 workshop**

A coach tour was organised by the Canterbury Disaster Salvage Team to visit some key rebuild initiatives in Christchurch. Participants came from all around New Zealand to be amazed. We would like to thank all the wonderful speakers in producing an excellent and very illuminating workshop.

Sites included:

#### **Riccarton House**



#### **Christchurch City Council's Heritage Store**





## Arts Centre of Christchurch



## Airforce Recovery Centre



Images provided care of Christchurch  
City Libraries

# **Notice!!!!!!!!!!**

# **Be Prepared**

**Next Workshop**

**Two Day Workshop**

**Day 1**

**Earthquake restraints and safe storage**

**Day 2**

**Preventive measures in the event of flooding**



**Date, Venue and Cost to be advised in June**