

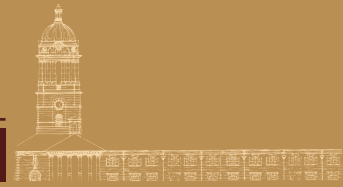
CHAPTER 7

CRISIS MANAGEMENT



government
communications

Department:
Government Communication and Information System
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



CRISIS MANAGEMENT

7.1. Handling a communication crisis

Since we may not be able to prevent crises all the time, there are a few things we can do once it has arisen:

7.1.1. Five steps to an effective crisis communication strategy

- **Create a crisis communication plan ahead of time**

- Anticipate the crisis; think and talk about what might happen and how it can be effectively managed. Develop response strategies that can be implemented when a crisis occurs. Establish communication protocols.

- **Designate a crisis management team**

- Determine and train spokespeople.
- Address issues of empowerment and the chain of command.
- Monitor and keep communication lines open between internal staff.

- **Manage the message and the media**

- What is the issue? Define the nature of the crisis.
- What is your message? Keep the message clear and consistent.
- Anticipate and meet the needs of the media.

- **Communicate early and often**

- Be proactive rather than reactive.
- Decide on communication methods (press conference, in-person briefing, phone, fax, etc.). Release prepared statements and collateral material to the media.

- **Identify and prioritise key audiences and channels of communication**

- Who are the audiences who matter most to your department?
- Know what type of information each audience is seeking and keep them informed promptly; notify employees, key constituents, grantees, law-makers, etc.

See Appendix 16.1