



*Park District of Oak Park*

# **Crisis Management & Communication Plan**



**PARK  
DISTRICT  
OF OAK PARK**

**Approved 12/18/2014**

## Table of Contents

What Is a Crisis?	2
Chain of Responsibility – Crisis Team Leader	2
Chain of Responsibility - Park District Spokesperson	2
Legal Representation in times of Crisis	3
Protecting an Investigation	3
Emergency Response Steps	4
General Action Steps to Consider When a Crisis Occurs	5
Crisis Information Gathering - Questions to Consider	7
Members of the Crisis Team and Their Roles	8
Executive Director Duties (Official Spokesperson, Crisis Team Leader)	8
Communications & Marketing Staff Duties	8
Superintendents of Recreation and Revenue Facilities Duties	9
Superintendent of Buildings & Grounds Duties	9
Management Staff Duties	9
Director of Human Resources and Safety Coordinator Duties	10
Customer Service Staff Duties	10
Spokesperson Duties	11
Role of Board Members	12
Role of Employees in Dealing with the News Media	12
Media Relations Plan	12
Continuing Operations Considerations	13
Appendix A - Sample Initial Press Release	14
Appendix B - Emergency Phone List	15
Appendix C - Statements of Admission and Social Media	17
Appendix D - Sample Chain of Custody Document	18
Appendix E - Crisis Management Plan Acknowledgment of Receipt Form	19

## Park District of Oak Park

### Crisis Management and Communication Plan

#### Definition of Crisis

A crisis is a serious incident such as an accidental drowning, serious injury, allegation of child abuse, severe vehicle accident, criminal act, or similarly serious incident that will generate intense public or media focus, whether immediately or within a short period of time.

#### Chain of Responsibility – Crisis Team Leader

It is critical for employees to understand their respective roles in the event of a crisis. Every serious incident must be reported immediately because of its nature and because of the importance of proper responses and communications related to the incident. By reporting immediately, an employee will have assisted in the proper implementation of the Park District's emergency response plan.

The Park District has appointed the Executive Director as the Crisis Team Leader. All serious incidents must be reported immediately to the Crisis Team Leader. The Crisis Team Leader, in conjunction with senior management staff, will activate the Crisis Management Plan and coordinate the crisis response. If the Crisis Team Leader is not available, then a serious incident must be communicated immediately to the first available member of the senior management staff, in the order they are designated below.

A serious incident should never be reported by voice mail, text, social media, or e-mail because time may be of the essence. Every report should be made personally.

The following is the Crisis Team Leader Chain of Command:

1. Crisis Team Leader (Executive Director)
2. Superintendent of Revenue Facilities
3. Superintendent of Recreation
4. Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds
5. Director of Finance

#### Chain of Responsibility – Park District Spokesperson

The Park District has established specific responsibility for communications after the report of a serious incident and during a crisis. All responsibility lies with the Park District Spokesperson. The Spokesperson is responsible for making, or determining who will make, all communications and statements (written and oral) to affected persons and the media on behalf of the Park District. The Spokesperson also is responsible for deciding on, and coordinating, dissemination of information via social media and the Park District website. No employee should undertake any communications about a serious incident or during a crisis without specific coordination with the Spokesperson. And every employee who receives a request for information or inquiry from any source should direct that request or inquiry to the Spokesperson.

No formal statements about a serious incident or during a crisis should be made until the circumstances have been reviewed by the Park District's General Counsel or legal representatives of the Park District Risk Management Agency ("PDRMA").

The following is a Chain of Responsibility for the Spokesperson. The order of this list may change depending on the nature of the incident, so all employees should check with the Crisis Team Leader first:

1. Crisis Team Leader (Executive Director)
2. Superintendent of Revenue Facilities
3. Superintendent of Recreation
4. Director of Marketing and Customer Service

## **Legal Representation in times of Crisis**

After any serious incident and during any crisis, the Park District will have to manage a variety of issues, demands, and responses. One of the most important actions to complete during the initial crisis-response period is to immediately call the Park District's General Counsel and PDRMA regardless of the day or the time of day. Legal advice may be critical in response to a serious incident and during a crisis, as events unfold quickly. Contacting legal counsel will help in undertaking a full and proper response, communicating with police and other officials, responding to victims and others involved in the incident, conducting the appropriate investigations, counseling the crisis management team and the Board of Commissioners, and establishing attorney/client privilege over critical communications and other sensitive matters. For these reasons, General Counsel and PDRMA representatives are an essential part of the Park District crisis management team.

Once an employee has reported to the Crisis Team Leader or senior management staff, they will contact the legal representatives. If for any reason an employee cannot make such a report, then the employee should contact, regardless of the day or time or day, General Counsel Mark Burkland at (708) 383-7831 and PDRMA at (630) 769-0332.

## **Protecting an Investigation**

It is critical for the Park District not to accept or assume responsibility or liability related to any incident at any time before all facts are fully known and confirmed and advice has been received from PDRMA and General Counsel.

There is a critical difference between acknowledging the seriousness of an incident and admitting responsibility, fault, or liability for what has occurred. All Park District representatives should always act quickly to help protect the health and safety of victims and the public. But Park District representatives should not make any determinations of responsibility, fault, or liability. There is no need to do so and doing so without a full understanding of the facts and circumstances may be a serious error.

It is sometimes very difficult to exercise restraint and caution when faced with questions from insistent media representatives and anxious residents. It is critical, however, to not speak prematurely about critical matters. All Park District representatives should remember at all times to respond to questions only by referring the questioner to the Spokesperson.

PDRMA's legal counsel must be part of the investigative process, all public response, and overall coordination of communications for any serious incident. PDRMA's role is to establish, maintain and protect confidentiality and attorney-client privilege, as well as to help Park District employees avoid making comments and statements that may unnecessarily and wrongfully expose the Park District to potential liability or unwarranted public scrutiny.

When confidentiality is established through attorney-client privilege, then the communications between the Park District and its attorneys can be kept confidential. Because there is confidentiality, Park District representatives can make full and frank disclosures to their attorneys who then can better provide useful advice and effective representation. However, when statements are made outside of the scope of attorney-client privilege, then those statements may become subject to public disclosure via the Freedom of Information Act, a court-issued subpoena, and discovery in litigation.

Unprotected communications sometimes may contain inaccurate or incomplete information or admissions that others can use against the speaker and the Park District.

## **Emergency Response Steps**

### **1. Begin Emergency Response**

Immediately respond to any serious incident by contacting the appropriate police, fire, or paramedic personnel as needed. Implement the on-site emergency response plan. This may include administering first aid prior to the arrival of paramedics, securing an area, or taking other necessary actions to control the site and minimize further injury or loss. Advise other on-site staff that an emergency exists and seek their assistance in controlling the site or helping others to remain calm.

### **2. Notify Crisis Team Leader / Assemble Crisis Team**

At the earliest opportunity, notify the Crisis Team Leader or the appropriate senior management staff so that they can assemble the Crisis Team. Make certain one of these persons knows what is happening.

### **3. Contact General Counsel and PDRMA**

Call Mark Burkland at (708) 383-7831 and PDRMA at (630) 769-0332. Meanwhile, do not give any statement, request a written statement, prepare a written statement, prepare any report, or make any communications orally or in writing (on any medium) until legal counsel has responded.

When advising police or other emergency responders, tell them without hesitation all the facts they need to know. But do not undertake to investigate, make statements, hypothesize, or otherwise communicate beyond the facts and other critical-need matters.

Everything you say, do, write, tweet, e-mail, IM, post, or otherwise communicate may be made public. Some things may be misinterpreted or otherwise presented incorrectly and what you say may contain errors or oversights if you say it without full knowledge of the facts and circumstances. Do not put yourself or the Park District in jeopardy by engaging in that unnecessary conduct.

It is perfectly appropriate to cooperate fully with an investigation but to first consult with a legal representative. If you are asked why you are required to consult legal counsel, your legitimate response is: "The Park District wants to provide its full cooperation but also wants to protect its legal rights."

### **4. Prepare a Preliminary Accident/Incident Report**

Prepare a preliminary Accident/Incident Report using PDRMA's Accident/Incident Report Form. Do not use any other form, even if it is a Park District form. Always provide a brief, objective,

and factual account of the incident. Never include any personal opinions as to fault or other unknowns.

Never release any Accident/Incident Report to any third party (including any investigating police) without first consulting PDRMA's legal counsel and General Counsel and obtaining authorization from PDRMA.

Every written account, description, or supplemental report of an incident (including electronic) should have the following language at the top of the document:

*THIS DOCUMENT IS AN ATTORNEY-CLIENT PRIVILEGED COMMUNICATION  
PREPARED FOR, AND AT THE REQUEST OF, LEGAL COUNSEL.*

When directed by General Counsel or PDRMA legal counsel, communications (e-mail, fax, and all others) should always contain the above phrase in the subject heading of the communication and should be directed to an attorney. Do not send any privileged or confidential documents, or any draft documents, to any recipient other than the Park District's legal representatives.

5. Consult Legal Counsel before Requesting or Preparing Witness Statements

Do not request or prepare any witness or employee statements without first consulting with General Counsel or PDRMA's counsel. Preparing a proper statement requires skill and experience to avoid incomplete, inaccurate, or misleading results. For non-employee witnesses to an incident, get only their personal contact information and a brief oral account of the incident.

When General Counsel or PDRMA asks the Park District to document a witness account, always insert the following language at the top of the summary:

*THIS DOCUMENT IS AN ATTORNEY-CLIENT PRIVILEGED COMMUNICATION  
PREPARED FOR, AND AT THE REQUEST OF, LEGAL COUNSEL.*

6. PDRMA will Lead Internal Investigation

PDRMA's in-house legal counsel or a PDRMA-assigned outside counsel will conduct any Park District internal confidential investigation. By doing so, all related communications likely will be subject to attorney-client privilege and protected.

## **General Action Steps to Consider When a Crisis Occurs**

The Crisis Team Leader should use the following steps as a guide to manage a crisis and make decisions:

1. When a serious incident occurs, the first responsibility of the Crisis Team is to take all necessary and appropriate actions to minimize further injury and risk to persons and to minimize further loss. The health and safety needs of a person is always the top priority.
2. The Crisis Team should obtain, compile, monitor, and verify the accuracy of incoming information. It is very important to document all incoming events and information in chronological order to assess and address the crisis accurately. The team must verify and review new and incoming information against past and known information. The team needs the available information to be compiled accurately in order to make well-informed decisions.

3. Because Park District staff will feel the emotional and physical impact of a serious incident, the Crisis Team should be reassuring to the staff so the process of information gathering can begin. Staff members exhibiting signs of unusual stress or an inability to attend to their duties effectively should be relieved of their duties and directed to a designated area for relief. Staff members directly involved in the incident should remain on duty until the decision is made as to whether or not to conduct post-incident interviews under the direction of the General Counsel or PDRMA legal staff.
4. The Crisis Team should consider moving staff members directly involved in the incident to a more private location if the environment is stressful or media is present. The team should provide transportation for staff members to a secure facility for evaluation of their physical and emotional well-being and debriefing and interviewing.
5. The Crisis Team Leader should notify parents of minor staff members immediately as to the location of their children. As parents arrive they should be given immediate access to their children and be told they may remain with their children at all times regardless of interviews, investigations, or any other circumstances.
6. The Crisis Team should meet in a secure facility. From this location the team should consolidate fact finding, coordination, and communications with emergency response agencies, PDRMA, General Counsel, EMS, local police, key staff, and the media.
7. The Crisis Team should communicate to all Park District staff that a crisis exists and that all relevant information should be communicated immediately to the team. The Crisis Team Leader should identify the Spokesperson and reinforce with staff to direct all media inquiries to the Spokesperson.
8. The Crisis Team Leader and legal counsel should direct staff actions, coordinate information gathering, coordinate with outside groups, interface with emergency responders, communicate with staff and the public, and provide direction on needed resources.
9. The Crisis Team Leader or Spokesperson should inform the Park District Board President about the situation and then notify all other board members. Board members should be reminded not to make any public comments regarding the incident.
10. The Crisis Team should identify all staff directly involved in the incident as soon as possible so that legal counsel and the Crisis Team Leader can interview them.
11. The Crisis Team Leader should assign staff to monitor (and record if possible) television news reports, social media sites, local blogs, radio stations, and other media outlets to determine what information about the crisis is available to the public.
12. The Crisis Team Leader should assign a staff member to verify the accuracy of information as it becomes known. Legal counsel and the team will rely on this information to respond to the crisis, prepare a media relations plan, address public concerns, determine the scope and nature of investigative action, and attend to the needs of victims, staff, relatives, and other affected parties.
13. The Crisis Team Leader should assign one or more staff members as a communications team to answer and document all incoming telephone calls, e-mail, and other

communications to keep the team informed. Only the Spokesperson should speak to the media on behalf of the Park District. The communications team should advise the Crisis Team about important communications. If possible, the communications team should have a script from which to read when answering inquiries.

14. The Crisis Team should develop a crisis communications strategy working with legal counsel, including the following steps:
  - a. Obtain legal counsel approval of all public communications.
  - b. Identify the newsworthiness of the incident and how the media is reporting it.
  - c. Communicate with staff informing them of the crisis and that all statements shall come from the agency spokesperson.
  - d. Reassure the community and manage public relations.
  - e. Verify the accuracy and availability of information.
  - f. Limit initial contact with the media to a written press release.
  - g. Debrief and prepare the Spokesperson.
  - h. Determine the manner and means of addressing the media (*i.e.* off-camera or on-camera).
  - i. Limit on-camera responses to the Spokesperson reading a written statement. The Spokesperson should never admit or address fault or liability, so it is critical to coordinate all media response with legal counsel.

The Crisis Team should regularly reassess the need to address the media.

### **Crisis Information Gathering – Questions to Consider**

The Crisis Team may use the following list of questions as a checklist for gathering information and making decisions:

1. Is the emergency response portion of the crisis complete or ongoing?
2. Has the Park District notified its General Counsel and PDRMA?
3. Have all families of the victims and other affected person been notified? (Have these communications been coordinated with the police?)
4. Have all proper authorities been notified including police, fire, poison control, EPA, public health officials, utility companies, among others?
5. Have all Crisis Team members been notified and gathered? Does the team need to establish a crisis center? If so, where?
6. Has the Crisis Team notified The Board President and Board members?
7. What is the status of the internal investigation process?
8. Is there an investigation being conducted by a third party, such as police, fire, EPA, OSHA, a private investigator, a aquatic certification entity, or others?



9. Has the Crisis Team been provided contact information for all potential staff and non-staff witnesses?
10. Has the immediate threat of harm to persons or loss of property been eliminated? Has the Crisis Team assured the public of this?
11. Has the Spokesperson contacted media to tell them the Park District will provide information once facts have been gathered and verified? Have onsite media been made reasonably comfortable and provided with electrical power, computer access, and administrative support services?
12. Is a formal written press statement appropriate or necessary?
13. Has the Park District fully expressed its concern, its continuing efforts, and its compassion for victims and other affected persons?
14. Has the Spokesperson been updated with current information and thoroughly prepared?
15. Have any false, misleading, or inaccurate statements been made or reported by the media that should be corrected or balanced by facts?
16. Are there any visual images (of any kind from any source) of the incident or post-incident damages or losses?
17. Should the Employee Assistant Program (“EAP”) or other support services be made available to Park District Board and staff members? Should Park District staff be provided a group EAP meeting in addition to individual counseling?

## **Members of the Crisis Team and Their Roles**

### **1. Executive Director Duties (Crisis Team Leader)**

The Park District Executive Director acts as the official Crisis Team leader and as Spokesperson unless the Executive Director designates another person for those positions. The Executive Director, working with legal counsel, is responsible for the overall coordination of the Crisis Management Plan.

The Executive Director or designated legal counsel is the primary representative of the Park District throughout the crisis.

### **2. Communications and Marketing Staff Duties**

- Coordinate and draft communications under direction of Crisis Team with legal input.
- Compile a list of local television, radio, and newspaper telephone numbers and contacts, if known.
- Distribute information through media channels as directed.
- Manage the communications team in monitoring media outlets, including social media, to track crisis reporting.

- Update the Park District website, whether to provide information or exhibit a lower profile, as necessary and appropriate based on the sensitivity of the incident. Provide information proactively through the website to communicate with the public.
- Identify and manage all communication channels including e-mail address lists, mailing lists, website, and social media.
- Keep Park District staff and Board members informed and updated on facts and developments. Staff members may need reassurance or a better understanding of the incident. Staff members also may need to be reminded of the restrictions on communications and proper responses to inquiries.
- Establish a centralized media center, as directed by the Crisis Team Leader.

### 3. Superintendents of Recreation and Revenue Facilities Duties

The Superintendents of Recreation and Revenue Facilities will coordinate the information and activities associated with their operations as directed by the Crisis Team. Duties may include:

- Coordinate the processing and verification of departmental policies, procedures, training, records, etc.
- Provide information concerning any applicable contracts, affiliate groups and independent contractors the agency uses.
- Communicate with staff concerning agency policies on not sharing any information about the incident or making comments to people outside the Park District.
- Determine if any affected staff needs EAP assistance or other support services.
- Reschedule planned programs and activities as necessary and locate alternative programming sites or cancel programs if appropriate. Communicate all program changes to affected staff and the public.

### 4. Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds Duties

The Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds coordinates the information and activities associated with department operations as directed by the Crisis Team. Duties may include:

- Provide the Crisis Team with access to necessary buildings, facilities and staff resources.
- Coordinate needed services with the Oak Park police department, utility companies, and other agencies as needed.
- Secure the incident location and authorize access only to approved personnel.
- Provide the Crisis Team with information about applicable contracts, affiliate groups, and contractors used by the Park District.
- Communicate with Park District staff concerning policies on not sharing any information or making comments about the incident.
- Determine if any staff need EAP assistance or other support services.

### 5. Management Staff Duties

Park District management staff may need to assist the Executive Director, General Counsel, Spokesperson, Superintendents, Crisis Team, Safety Coordinator, PDRMA, and clerical staff. Assignments may include:

- Provide specific information about a program or facility.

- Compile and verify facts and information and formulate appropriate responses to questions and concerns.
- Communicate with Park District staff concerning policies on not sharing any information or making comments about the incident.
- Assist the Spokesperson in responding to inquiries, as directed.
- Monitor media outlets.
- Identify alternative programming sites as necessary.

6. Director of Human Resources and Safety Coordinator Duties

- Assist PDRMA staff and PDRMA consultants during the investigative process.
- Coordinate identification of witnesses and gather personal and professional contact information.
- Take photographs or recordings, and preserve evidence, as directed by legal counsel.
- Secure evidence and release evidence only after approval by legal counsel, using a chain-of-custody document. (See Appendix D.)
- Contact the necessary governmental agencies depending on the circumstances of the incident, when applicable, for examples: The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency after a chemical spill, the Illinois Department of Labor after the death of an employee, or the Illinois Department of Public Health.
- Obtain, compile, or present pertinent safety documentation or practices conducted by the Park District.
- Complete the PDRMA Accident/Incident Report Form (and not any other internal reporting form) and have General Counsel and PDRMA legal counsel review it and send it to PDRMA within 24 hours after the incident.
- Gather employee statements in a narrative format to supplement the accident report form and as directed by legal counsel.
- Obtain any pertinent contracts, waivers, training records, certifications, or similar documentation.
- Contact EAP or other support services to inform them of the crisis and possible need for services.
- Review the incident and, if applicable, recommend and implement measures to minimize future similar incidents.

7. Customer Service Staff Duties

- Work with Marketing Director and Customer Service (if applicable) to screen telephone calls, e-mail, website, and social media inquiries.
- Screen reporters, family members or others who may arrive unannounced at the administration building. Obtain the following information from them and keep a log:
  - Name.
  - Title and organization.
  - Name of newspaper or radio, or television station, if applicable.

- Telephone number.
  - E-mail address.
  - Reporter's deadline if applicable.
  - Nature of the inquiry.
- If a reporter, photographer, attorney, investigator, or victim's family appears in person at the administrative office or another location, obtain the above information and immediately contact the Crisis Team Leader and Spokesperson.
  - Limit all responses to inquiries to the official information pre-approved by the Crisis Team for distribution. If possible, use a script.

#### 8. Spokesperson Duties

The role of the Spokesperson is to represent the agency as the liaison to the media and third parties. At the direction of the Crisis Team, the Spokesperson presents official, accurate, and pre-approved information to the media on behalf of the Park District. Although the Park District is not obligated to share information with the media, it is often advisable to provide a statement, even before it is requested, acknowledging the incident and expressing sympathy for the family and others involved.

Park District communications should never include a "no comment" statement. Such a statement leads to a misinterpretation, speculation, and innuendo and prompts the media to find other information sources that may be unreliable or have hidden agendas. The Park District, with legal counsel, may provide a written press release including the following:

- Acknowledge the incident.
- Express compassion and support for victims and their families.
- Explain that it is premature to provide details pending further investigation.
- Describe rescue and safety efforts.
- Emphasize that the matter is under investigation and that the Park District is fully cooperating with other agencies.
- Assure the public that the Park District will provide additional facts as they become known.

The Spokesperson should have in-depth knowledge of the organization, be well spoken and professional, and be comfortable and confident in the role as Spokesperson. Pre-crisis training through exercises such as mock press conferences is a valuable exercise to prepare the Spokesperson for a future crisis situation.

On behalf of the Park District and Crisis Team, the Spokesperson presents factual information in a means and manner directed by the Crisis Team. If the Park District determines a press conference or in-person interview is necessary, then the Spokesperson should begin by reading a prepared statement that accurately presents the Park District's response to the crisis. This allows the Park District to list points proactively for the media to know, even if reporters do not ask the Spokesperson questions that would elicit that information.

The Spokesperson should not answer any questions for which verified facts are not available. In such a situation, the Spokesperson can say:

*We all must respect the pending investigation, and it is premature to address this question/issue at this time. I certainly do not want to provide any inaccurate or misleading information inadvertently. Of course, as facts become known and verified, we will revisit this question/issue.*

In addition, the Spokesperson should never:

- Release victim information until family members are notified.
- Speculate on liability, damage, costs, causes, or any similar matters until verified and reviewed by legal counsel.
- Fix blame on others or be misleading or ambiguous.
- Speak off the record.

### **Role of Board Members**

Board members may have a high level of concern about a crisis and thus may feel obligated to speak to the media, victims and families, or the public. Despite good intentions, these actions may inadvertently compromise the Park District's reputation and ability to minimize potential liability exposure. With that in mind, Board members are strongly advised not to make any statements to the news media or any third party without prior consultation and approval from legal counsel. The General Counsel or PDRMA legal counsel can speak with Board members about the crisis and related legal and liability issues.

### **Role of Employees in Dealing with the News Media**

All Park District staff must recognize their roles in a crisis. They must understand it is the Park District's policy and expectation that any information released comes from the Spokesperson. All staff members should know, as soon as possible, the contact information of the Spokesperson.

Staff members must know and understand the following guideline:

1. They are not required to give an interview and are not authorized to give an interview, If they are asked to give an interview, they should direct the person to the Spokesperson. They can say: "I'm sorry. I'm not the best person to answer that question. You should contact our Executive Director, who can assist you."
2. It is acceptable to not know the answer to a question. Simply say, "I don't know," and direct the person to the Spokesperson.
3. Never say "No comment." Instead say "Please understand that I am not the best person to discuss this event. I would not want to provide inaccurate or incomplete information unintentionally. You should direct your inquiry to our Executive Director." Provide reporters with the Executive Director's name and telephone number.
4. Never make an "off-the-record" statement.

### **Media Relations Plan**

Through direction of the Crisis Team and legal counsel, the Spokesperson coordinates all interaction with the media and any outside requests for information. The Crisis Team decides

the time, place and means of sharing information with the media and/or responding to media requests, with advice of legal counsel.

The Park District should show that it is a willing partner in sharing information and that it is committed to cooperating with the media. However, the Park District must also be very clear that it will not share any information until legal counsel verifies and reviews it.

Do not make promises to reporters. Tell them you will share information when it is available for the public.

Monitor all news and social media to determine how the crisis is being reported. Determine whether reports are objective and accurate. When necessary, prepare and distribute accurate information to balance any serious false statements.

Always prepare an initial written press release and consider posting it on your website or on other social media channels.

### **Continuing Operations Considerations**

- Evaluate staff readiness – The Crisis Team Leader will meet with supervisors of employees directly involved in the incident to determine if they are ready to resume duties. If not, does the agency have enough resources to continue operating with non-involved staff?
- Reopen the Site – A gradual reopening of the incident site will be considered to keep staff from becoming overwhelmed following the incident. A supervisor will be available when reopening a site involved in a crisis event to answer any questions from the public so as not to distract the staff.
- Communicate with the public – The Park District will set a date to reopen when staff is ready. Shorter hours or limiting public participation in programs for a period of time will be considered. Inform the public and patrons that staff evaluations and other readiness training was completed prior to reopening.
- Communicate with outside groups/users – The Park District will consider suspending out-of-the-ordinary programming activities, special events or large-group facility use for a period of time.

## Appendix A - Sample Initial Press Release

The Park District has been informed that on (date of crisis) at approximately \_\_\_\_\_(identify time), the following occurred:

(briefly describe crisis)

At this time, we have not had the chance to [substantiate / confirm] the specific facts and circumstances surrounding this event. We are currently investigating this matter in full cooperation with: (identify other investigative agencies)

Out of respect for the investigative process and in fairness to the persons involved, we are unable to provide further details at this time. However, we are committed to providing additional facts as they become known and confirmed. In the interim, anyone wishing to provide or request further information should contact (identify Spokesperson) at (phone number). We are also providing up-dated information on our Park District website at [www.pdop.org](http://www.pdop.org).

## Appendix B - Emergency Phone List

This page contains confidential information that will only be shared with individuals on the Crisis Management Team.



This page contains confidential information that will only be shared with individuals on the Crisis Management Team.

## Appendix C - Statements of Admission and Social Media

(to be read or otherwise communicated to staff by senior management)

When a terrible incident like this one has occurred, it is important to remind everyone of the Park District's communication policy. It is critical to the Park District's reputation that all communications be accurate, appropriate, and properly attributed. Only those employees who are specifically authorized may speak on behalf of the Park District. In this matter, Executive Director Jan Arnold has been designated the Spokesperson.

All staff members are expected to refer all media inquiries to Jan. If someone from the media contacts you, your simple and appropriate response should be: "Please understand that Executive Director Jan Arnold has been designated as the Park District's Spokesperson. Please direct your inquiries to her." You should then end the conversation.

All staff members should be very cautious in discussing the incident with family members, friends, residents, and other third parties. Your communications may be inaccurate, misunderstood, misperceived, or result in rumors that can negatively impact the image of the Park District and our staff, and compromise our ability to defend potential litigation.

While the Park District recognizes and respects the right of staff members to use social networking, personal websites, texting, and other forms of communications, only those staff members officially designated by the Park District have the authorization to speak on behalf of the Park District.

It is important to keep in mind that this matter is currently under investigation. Many facts remain unknown, and there is significant information that has yet to be confirmed. Please be careful to avoid disclosing any information that may compromise the investigation, is confidential, or may violate privacy rights or privacy perceptions.

Show proper consideration and respect to coworkers, the victims, our residents, and others.

We strongly recommend you do not use social media to discuss the incident because it is easy to make a mistake that could hurt you and the Park District. Your knowledge or perceptions may be incomplete, or your representations may be inaccurate or misunderstood, or you may inadvertently violate attorney/client privilege or privacy rights. These things could later be used against you and the Park District.

The Park District and its Employee Assistance Program provider are available to you if you should need help coping with the incident. Please see any manager if you have questions about this policy.

## Appendix D - Sample Chain of Custody Document

Chain of custody documents are important from a legal perspective in that it documents the movement and location of physical evidence from the time it is obtained until the time it is presented in court. A chain of custody document should be used when physical evidence as part of an investigation is placed in secure storage and/or provided to another person or organization. It is important to document the chain of custody so that it reflects the care provided in handling important physical evidence when stored or transferred to indicate its condition and that it was not physically altered while in the care of any individual.

*(Provide a brief title of the incident (for example: Rehm Pool swimming incident June 19, 2018))*

By: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_, 2013

*(Insert steps to acquire and securely store an object, device, or other evidence.)* [For example:: John Doe gave me a screwdriver at Rehm Pool at approximately 11:00 a.m. on June 19, 2018. I gave the screwdriver to PDRMA attorney Ed Dutton, the Director of Claims and Legal Services, at the PDRMA office at approximately 12:30 p.m. on the same day. The screwdriver was yellow, with a straight blade, about 6 inches long, and showed heavy use with scratches and a faded handle.]

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: June 19, 2018.  
Ed Dutton, PDRMA

On June 19, 2018, at approximately 1:15 p.m. Ed Dutton provided the screwdriver to Eric Hohenstein, PDRMA Claims Supervisor, who removed the screwdriver from its storage container for the purpose of photographing it and placing an identifying sticker on it. The screwdriver was returned to its original container and securely stored at the PDRMA office.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_, 2018  
Eric Hohenstein, PDRMA

## Appendix E - Crisis Management Plan

### Acknowledgment of Receipt Form

The Park District of Oak Park Crisis Management Plan supplements the many safety policies and procedures already in place at the Park District. As an employee, I am expected to read this document thoroughly and return this completed acknowledgment of receipt form which will be placed in my personnel file.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of employee:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_