



+ **Jim Satterfield**

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FIRESTORM

At **Church Mutual**, we take great pride in protecting the greater good. In today's changing landscape, unfortunate events can happen. That's why we partner with **Firestorm**, a nationally recognized leader in crisis management, helping clients minimize disaster exposure and plan for a crisis.

COMMUNICATING DURING A CRISIS

IN THE EVENT OF A CRISIS, WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

Determine who is in charge. CEO? Board member? That person must give clear direction.

Ask yourself "why" five times before every communication. "Why now?" "Why contact the media?"

Know that most of what you learn in the first 24 hours will be wrong or factually incorrect.

Document media calls, but do not return the calls.

Make sure all employees know there is only one spokesperson. Provide employees (who are not spokespersons) a talking point: "I am not an authorized spokesperson for the company. I would be happy to take your information and pass it on."

Anticipate, in the event of injuries/fatality/criminal act, that first responders will take control of scene.

Determine who will interface with first responders.

Stick to themes, home bases and message maps.

- + **We will not be defined by this event.**
- + **We will invent the future.**
- + **We will embrace the victims.**

Develop a "victim" strategy. The victim's family has a huge impact on the overall consequences your organization will suffer.

- + **Appoint** 24/7 family representatives. Have backups.
- + **Clear** all communications with the victim's family, whenever possible. If the family does not want you to discuss the situation, that gives you basis for not releasing early communications.

IN THE EVENT OF A CRISIS, WHAT SHOULD YOU AVOID?

DON'T talk through the media or communicate through a third party. Communicate directly.

DON'T give phone numbers, dates or times. Don't fall into a numbers game.

DON'T put anything in writing. Meet face to face or telephonically if possible. (This recommendation does not apply to life-safety situations.)

DON'T explain. When you are explaining, you are losing.

DON'T forget someone important (donor, regulator, shareholder). Identify ALL constituents.

DON'T turn over any documents/computers (to law enforcement, etc.) until directed by counsel.

DON'T take ownership of someone else's grief.

DON'T characterize someone else's feelings or what the loss must mean to that family.

DON'T talk about how the loss/incident makes you feel. No word you choose will measure up to what the family would expect you to say. Instead, focus on the family: "Our thoughts and prayers are with the family."

Don't reply to anything on social media, at least initially.

PROTECTING
THE GREATER
GOOD.

