

Holding Statements

When a crisis hits, it's important that an organization is prepared to answer questions. The initial step in communicating with the outside world is to develop a holding statement in lieu of just saying "no comment". A holding statement is designed for use immediately after a crisis breaks and can be written before hand during the Crisis Team brainstorming session. The purpose of the holding statement is to buy time until more facts can be determined. A typical holding statement might read like:

Our highest priority is the safety of those who have been impacted by the incident. We're working quickly to assure that our employees and our neighbors are out of harm's way. We will provide an update to the media and through social media such as Facebook and Twitter once we've had time to fully assess the situation.

Key Message Points

After the holding statement has been made it's time to shape the overall message. Some key points to remember when shaping the message are:

- Show compassion for the effected parties.
- Only provide factual information.
- Don't speculate as to what may have caused the event.
- Keep the message as simple as possible.
- The message should be targeted for the specific audience.
- Ask for patience and time to gather facts.
- Let the media and public know when to expect more information.

Core Values

Communicating your organizations core values is important when shaping your message. Try an include statements similar to:

- We strive to operate with the highest integrity and as good stewards.
- We are committed to safety of our employees, customers and communities we operate in.
- We strive for 100% compliance by 100% of our employees, 100% of the time.
- We are committed to the community, this is our home too.