GEORGIA CREDIT UNION

Affiliates

Creating Your Crisis Plan

Starting Out

- **Sell the idea.** The hardest job is to sell top managers on their need for a plan. Brainstorm with them about the most likely crises you could have. Ask them to assess how prepared you are to handle such a crisis.

- **Build your team.** Once you've sold the idea, work with management to start mobilizing and training a response team that will be responsible for coordinating communications with each of your various publics (board of directors, employees, members, GCUA, media, etc.) in the event of a crisis.

- **Assign tasks.** Your plan must list who performs each step. Be clear who has responsibility. Have backups for when staff are out or unavailable to perform their assigned tasks.

- **Consider all possible scenarios.** After Sept. 11, 2001, nothing should be considered impossible or too far-fetched.

Your Plan Should Include

- List of crisis team and how to contact them.

- Evacuation procedures and how to confirm that everyone is out of the building.

- Procedures for responding to a crisis

- Phone number for staff to call for updates.

- Telephone tree(s) for each department showing which employees will contact others.

- Multiple communication systems. Don't rely on just one. In some situations, you may need to rely on wireless communications between staff and first responders (law enforcement, paramedics, hazardous waste officials, etc.).

- Back up plan for important documents and files. Note where these are kept and who has access to them.

- Secondary location where you will continue operations if you can't return to your building.

- Procedures for updating your Web site throughout the crisis.

- Talking points or key messages for predetermined crises or disasters.

- Make sure your staff knows the actions and steps they'll need to take. During a crisis they won't have time to look in a manual. Review your plan with all employees and provide a one-page action check list.

View a more comprehensive [Disaster Preparedness & Response Checklist](#).

Testing Your Plan

- Don't keep your plan a secret. Use an intranet Web site to distribute information to employees. Provide periodic training for employees, even if they've heard it all before.

- Arrange for training and conduct simulations to include all staff and management. All crisis team members need media and crisis training and regular refreshers. Constantly assess new potential problems.

- Establish separate points of contact for employees, media, customers, and others to call for information on the situation.

- Determine who will make final decisions when you are releasing sensitive information. Have each team review previous communications involving their publics. Look for strengths, weaknesses, and ways to improve relations. Begin working on those improvements.

- Be sure the crisis teams know how to reach their key contacts at all times. Make sure they have day and night telephone numbers for both primary and secondary contacts, and keep those lists up-to-date.