

General Aviation

Airport Marketing & Public Relations Guide

**General Aviation Committee
Airport Marketing and Public Relations Subcommittee
American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE)**

**Kenneth G. Moen, A.A.E.
Sarah Ferrara, C.M.
Casey Boatman, C.M.
Corey Hanlon
Deborah Smith, MPIO
Darci Neuzil
Andrew Martz, C.M.**

General Aviation Airport Marketing & PR Guide

The purpose of the AAAE General Aviation Airport Marketing & Public Relations Guide is to provide GA airport managers with a ready-to-use tool.

The goal of the AAAE GA Community Relations and Marketing Subcommittee General Aviation, Public Relations is not to reinvent the excellent work done by the Airport Cooperative Research Program's (ACRP) Report 28, "Marketing Guidebook for Small Airports," but to distill the salient points in the report and to provide links to relevant sections of the ACRP report to allow for a deeper dive by an airport manager as desired.

The subcommittee also included fillable .PDFs by topic, allowing airport managers to create a marketing plan, write a press release, prepare a social media strategy, and if necessary, handle crisis communications during an emergency. This guide is designed to be a living document and available for download from the on-line AAAE GA HUB.

*Photo: Snowfall at Denver's Centennial Airport.
Photo provided by Deborah Smith, MPIO.*

*Special thanks to the members of the
AAAE General Aviation, Public Relations and Marketing
Subcommittee:*

- Chair- Kenneth G. Moen, A.A.E., Airport Manager, Carson City Airport
- Casey Boatman, C.M., Acting Director of Properties & Contracts, Spokane Airports
- Sarah Ferrara, C.M., Aviation Planning and Outreach Coordinator, Scottsdale Airport
- Deborah Grigsby Smith, MPIO, Media and Communications Manager, Arapahoe County Public Airport Authority
- Corey Hanlon, Manager of Communications & Government Relations, DM Airports, LLC
 - Andrew Martz, C.M., Assistant Airport Manager AIC, Eugene Airport
 - Darci Neuzil, Deputy Director, Addison Airport

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PHOTO CREDITS

**Front Cover: Busy autumn at Renton Municipal Airport.
Photo taken by Ryan Hubbard,
Auburn Municipal Airport**

**Table of Contents: General Aviation photos. Photos
provided by contributing airports.**

**Back Cover: Sunset against the Air Traffic Control Tower at
Addison Airport. Photo provided by Darci Neuzil.**



Seven steps to creating a marketing plan

The best marketing plans are simple and clear. Planning and forethought are the key elements to crafting a plan.

There are seven steps in the creation of a marketing plan. This template should help guide you through writing your marketing plan. But, for more in depth information refer to the ACRP Marketing Guidebook for Small Airports links for background or more specific details – not to mention examples from airports.

A marketing plan addresses the who, what, where when, why and how.

Once you are ready to create a marketing plan, use this template. The first steps are the planning phases of the plan, followed by the implementation phase of the plan. Take your time to brainstorm and think through these steps.

1. Define goals, objectives and action items (3-5)
<https://www.nap.edu/read/14353/chapter/3#11>

Goals – general statements about what an airport wants and expects to accomplish

Write a short description about what you are trying to achieve with this marketing plan

2. Conduct SWOT analysis and assess resources
<https://www.nap.edu/read/14353/chapter/3#17>

Objectives – realistic and measurable targets established to evaluate and track progress

What are your objectives? Try to make these as specific as possible. Write SMART objectives.

- **S:** What is specific about the goal?
- **M:** Is the goal measurable? How will it be determined that the goal has been achieved?
- **A:** Is the goal achievable?
- **R:** Is the goal realistic to performance expectations or professional development?
- **T:** Is the goal time-bound? When will this goal be accomplished?

3. Revise goals and objectives_

<https://www.nap.edu/read/14353/chapter/3#33>

Actions – specific activities that support achievement of an objective
(Exhibit 3.2)

Exhibit 4.8 SWOT Summary Worksheet - <https://www.nap.edu/read/14353/chapter/3#28>

3a. Identify key dates or other opportunities

<https://www.nap.edu/read/14353/chapter/3#29>

4. Audience/Message/Action_

<https://www.nap.edu/read/14353/chapter/3#34>

Know your audience – how do you reach them

Define your target audience. Describe these groups of people as specifically as possible.

Message - Your marketing message should be consistent with any airport identity or branding that is in place. Keep message crisp.

<https://www.nap.edu/read/14353/chapter/3#35>

5. Marketing Tools_

<https://www.nap.edu/read/14353/chapter/3#40>

Select tools to deliver message to the audience. Refer to the matrix in Exhibit 6.5

(<https://www.nap.edu/read/14353/chapter/3#46>) which shows how the marketing tools rank in terms of cost and effectiveness. List tools that you may utilize.

Include an assessment of staffing and financial resources – Who is going to help and how much of a budget do you have for this plan?

<https://www.nap.edu/read/14353/chapter/3#28>

6. Execute the plan!_

<https://www.nap.edu/read/14353/chapter/3#57>

7. Evaluate/Measure success – Are we meeting the goals and objectives we set out in our marketing plan?

<https://www.nap.edu/read/14353/chapter/3#59>

Airport SWOT Analysis

INTERNAL FACTORS (include your resources and experience)

STRENGTHS (+)

Qualities Airport has in fulfilling its mission

WEAKNESSES (-)

What prevents Airport from accomplishing its mission/achieving full potential

EXTERNAL FACTORS (forces and factors we don't control)

OPPORTUNITIES (+)

External elements that Airport could use to its advantage

THREATS (-)

External elements in the environment that could cause trouble for Airport

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Community relations play a vital role in ensuring good associations with local neighbors, businesses and public officials, and help others better understand our airports.

Community relations means selling the benefits of your airport to the surrounding communities to improve the image of the airport. It is important for airports to include community relations and outreach as an integral part of operating your airport.

Every community is unique. Show your community that your airport shares the same values and vision. Let them know how airports connect rural areas to urban areas, while bringing new jobs, businesses and opportunities. Share the economic impact advantages your airport brings.

Tell your story

- Show how your airport helps the community and contributes to the region
- Increase positive awareness of the airport and the numerous benefits
- Attend public meetings to promote a positive image and visibility for your airport
- Provide information about your airport at local business functions

FMI: <https://www.nap.edu/read/14353/chapter/4#69>

Find your support

- Enhance communications and relationships with elected officials and agencies that impact the airport
- Participate in events to provide a positive community relationship
- Partner with the local Chamber (pancake breakfasts, barbeques, award dinners)
- Support local education-gain grassroots support by helping your local schools.

Plan an event

- Open the front door of your airport and welcome the community
- Host a special event at your airport showcasing the facilities and airport users
- Involve and invite local officials to participate in aviation meetings
- Invite elected officials to airport related conferences

<https://www.nap.edu/read/14353/chapter/4#80>

Use your social media tools

- Use your airport website and social media channels to stay in touch with your business and local community, and provide avenues for interaction and feedback.

Effective community outreach takes time and effort. It may take years as it involves building trust and credibility. Your airport can become a part of the community by reaching out to the public and forming alliances, cultivating relationships and becoming a resource.

Working with the Media

Working with local media can be a valuable community involvement tool. Prepare yourself with a plan, maintain good connections with the media, and assist when available. You can cultivate good relationships with members of the media. Offer a tour of the airport, or an interview detailing the history of the airport. Provide information on how the airport benefits the local residents, and any upcoming new airport developments. Pitch your ideas to media representatives and so they can share your stories and successes with the community.

- Offer reporters interesting stories about the airport
 - Become an industry resource for local reporters
 - Assign a staff member to be the airport spokesperson
 - Be available and prepared to provide answers
 - Avoid industry jargon and acronyms
 - Do not speculate, always be honest
 - Always assume that everything you say will be quoted
 - Remember that nothing is “off the record”
 - Develop a photo file and have interesting airport photos available
 - Develop some quotes or statistics about your airport
 - Notify the appropriate official if you talk with a reporter or expect a negative story
- FMI: <https://www.nap.edu/read/14353/chapter/4#77>

Press releases

Press releases, or news releases are one way to get news to the surrounding community. Press releases briefly describe the details of an upcoming event. Use press releases sparingly, and only when you have major news events. Use a headline that grabs their attention and summarizes the story.

Remember the details

- Submit facts only, and attribute quotes as appropriate
- Be aware of the deadlines
- Distribute releases to all publications simultaneously
- Draft with the most important to least important subject order
- Keep release as brief as possible
- Double space and leave wide margins
- Start the copy one-third of the way down the first page
- Use basic font and spell check
- Always include your contact information
- Use “For Immediate Release” or the date to be releases
- End the page with “more” to indicated additional pages
- Use ### to indicate the end of the story
- Use key words and include your airport logo

FMI: <https://www.nap.edu/read/14353/chapter/4#72>

Sample Press Release

(Airport Logo)

(Date)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact :

Name and Number E-mail

SUBJECT: Topic Description (4 or 5 words)

PARAGRAPH 1 (Brief detail about the topic of the press release)

PARAGRAPH 2 (Additional details on the topic, human interest elements in the topic)

(Your release should be limited to 500 words)

###

Sample Press Release Worksheet

<p data-bbox="207 575 516 604">FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE</p> <p data-bbox="207 695 311 724">Contact:</p> <div data-bbox="321 695 683 835" style="border: 1px solid black; width: 223px; height: 67px;"></div> <div data-bbox="1177 510 1416 567" style="border: 1px solid black; width: 147px; height: 27px; float: right;"></div>

Social Media – The Basics

1. Why?

The impacts of social media touches on almost every aspect of our daily lives. The rise in social media usage by the public means that participation is no longer an option; it's a necessity. With a majority of audiences actively using social media, we need to meet our audience where they are. Social media does not work in a silo, so it is important to understand that social media is most effective when it's messages and content support and reinforce other channels. Coordinated messages across channels allow users to carry on a continuous conversation with their audience over time.

2. What does it take to do social media well?

Before you start organizing the details of using social media, it is important that you take the time to understand your audience. Who are they? What do they care about?

Things to DO:

- Create clear goals (Raise community awareness about the airport)
- Produce enough relevant, quality content (Photos of unique aircraft, visitors, milestones, events)
- Understand the social platforms and sites your audience prefers
- Equip your other channels with the ability to share
- Commit to making every campaign social
- Track metrics to get insights about your social media campaigns
 - Use hashtags (#)

Things NOT to DO:

- Don't go in without goals. You need to establish your objectives, goals, and ways to measure success.
- Don't just brag or sell. Endless self-promotion will alienate your audience and irritate existing customers.
- Don't overlook measuring your ROI (return on investment). There are concrete ways to measure your impact. (i.e. Increase number of "friends", "likes" or attendance at events.)
- Don't assume every social media site is good for your business. Social media requires you to actively engage with your audience and can become a resource drain if you're on too many channels.
- Don't create a presence on a social site and then abandon it. Creating a presence means finding and building engagement with your audience. (Social media takes time and resources to be successful)

3. Available Platforms (Subject to change almost constantly!)

- Facebook: Has over 2 billion users and allows users to see your content in a “safe” environment
- Instagram: Has over 1 billion users and is owned by Facebook. Good to use for events, contests, and positive events.
- YouTube: Has almost 2 billion users and you can tag video content so that users will find it easily
- Twitter: Has over 300 million users and allows for “breaking news” to spark immediate reactions
- LinkedIn: Has over 450 million users and allows companies to create pages that attract business interest.
- Pinterest: A virtual scrapbook for sharing visual content.
- Snapchat: Messaging App great for telling a “story” or narrative.
- (It is easy to overcommit. Start slow and build up)

4. So you are online, what now?

Keep track of followers, engagements, and impressions for each of your posts. Also note how many new users you are attracting over time. Doing these measurements can help you start to learn your ROI, whether that be your time or actual monetary investments. For important campaigns, some platforms offer opportunities to boost or “bring to the front” your posts. These will require monetary investment, so depending on your budget these should be saved for only critical messaging.

- Hootsuite is a particle tool, reasonable cost and you can track analytics for Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn all in one place – approximately \$120.00 per year.

Check your channels often! In today’s environment users expect quick responses. Most channels will allow you to receive alerts when people post on your channel. Be careful though that you allow yourself to “have a life” away from professional channels as you can burn out. Keep your goals at the forefront and engage at an appropriate level.

- Pictures of snow plowing operations and other weather highlights and events
- Open House or airport event “Save-the-Date”
- Perhaps include some “This day in Aviation History” stuff
- EAA, CAP & other chapter/club meetings
- Promote Food Trucks Days
- Aircraft Spotter Photo Contest

Always try to respond to negative comments or questions immediately. Being the first response can often diffuse an issue before other people start adding fuel to the fire. When possible, take hard conversations off social media to private chats or email.

Diffuse negative comments quickly, but always stay on message. Don’t take anything personally and never engage emotionally with trolls. Once you go down that path it is almost impossible to find a place of resolution. Know that some users will never be satisfied, and if you don’t return the negative energy, they will almost always move on to something else.

(Trolling is defined as creating discord on the Internet by starting quarrels or upsetting people by posting inflammatory or off-topic messages in an online community. Basically, a social media troll is someone who purposely says something controversial in order to get a rise out of other users.)

Be comfortable allowing an unhappy person to have the last word, even if it is negative or insulting. Once you have engaged, and given your message/response, move to monitoring the situation instead of engaging more. This can be hard at first but is critical to social media diffusion.

More information can be found here:

[Understanding the Value of Social Media at Airports for Customer Engagement](#)

CRISIS COMMUNICATION

Crisis Communications, much like community relations, plays a vital role in building and ensuring beneficial associations with local neighbors, businesses, and public officials, and helps others better understand the benefits of an Airport.

Community relations is, essentially, selling the benefits of your airport to the surrounding communities to improve the image of the Airport. Crisis communications is about protecting that image during an emergency or other events that place the airport under public scrutiny.

What is crisis communication

Crisis communication, as defined by scholars, is a branch of the public relations profession that is focused on the protection and defense of an individual, company, or organization facing a public challenge to its reputation (Barrera, 2014). The communication scholar Timothy Coombs defines crisis as "the perception of an unpredictable event that threatens important expectancies of stakeholders and can seriously impact an organization's performance and generate negative outcomes" and crisis communication as "the collection, processing, and dissemination of information required to address a crisis situation."

It's essential to understand that an airport crisis may not always involve an aircraft accident. One of the best places to explore what types of crisis incidents may occur at the airport is by reviewing the airport's Emergency Action Plan. By reading through the different scenarios and how various departments or individuals respond can help the airport develop a plan to communicate safety and operational information accurately when needed.

Crisis defined

A crisis, simply put, **is any event that disrupts normal operations or may place the airport, its leadership, and employees in the light of public scrutiny.**

Three categories of incidents represent the risks and vulnerabilities that a crisis communications plan will most often fall into three specific categories:

Emergencies – Incidents that threaten human life, safety, health, property, or the environment. Examples might include:

- Aircraft accident
- Structural fires
- Hazardous materials spill or leakage
- Bomb threats
- Active shooter/threat
- Sabotage
- Hijacking
- Public health issues (toilets, water, air conditioning), emerging infectious diseases (Ebola, SARS, MERS)
- Organized strike or picket lines
- Acts of terror

Interruption to Normal Operations – Incidents that interrupt normal airport operations, traffic, or other activities essential to the mission. Examples might include:

- Airport closures
- Strike, protests or civil unrest
- Public health issues (toilets, water, air conditioning), emerging infectious diseases (Ebola, SARS, MERS)
- Critical utility outages
- Demonstrations or unlawful occupations
- IT system failures or disruptions
- Data breaches
- Cybersecurity and ransomware attacks
- Severe storms
- Natural disaster

Emerging / Reputational Issues – Situations of growing controversy or adverse climate that threaten the reputation, organizational, legal, or financial stability of the airport. Examples might include:

- Questionable stewardship of public resources
- Indirect repercussions from tenant misconduct or actions (i.e., restaurant food poisoning)
- Criminal activities or perceived illegal activities
- Social or community concerns such as property rights, noise, and zoning
- Safety or the perceived safety of tenants, airport users, and public
- Any situation involving a high-profile or celebrity personality

Purpose

The primary purpose of a crisis communication plan is to identify and document the process the airport will use to deliver specific information and support in the event of a crisis, such as those listed above.

Objectives of the Plan

To assess a variety of potential crises on the airport; determine whether an official response is warranted.

To implement immediate action to:

- Identify specific stakeholders to be informed, how and when they are to be informed
- Communicate accurate facts and next steps about the situation
- Protect the privacy and dignity of family members and victims as permitted by law
- Minimize rumors and correct inaccuracies
- Restore order, normal operations, as well as stakeholder confidence in the airport

The Airport Crisis Communication Policy

The airport must be committed to providing accurate, timely, appropriate, and useful information to all airport stakeholders. Effective and well-timed communication during a crisis can preserve, enhance, and

even strengthen the reputation of the airport within the community. While each tenant may have a communication priority at a time of crisis, consistency in external communication across the airport is vital.

Guiding Principals for Crisis Communications

During an airport crisis, all communications and communicators should strive to be accessible, transparent, prompt, compassionate, honest, and informative. Messaging should be clear, concise, and aligned with airport goals and values.

It is crucial **to tell as much information as possible and appropriate, tell it fast, and tell the truth.** It is easy to not return phone calls from stakeholders and media, but delays in answering queries, even if the answer is “I don’t know,” will open the doors for speculation and informal sources to lead the narrative. **“I don’t know” is an honest and acceptable answer in the event of an active and fluid crisis.**

Unlike wine, bad news does not get better with age.

About Social Media

Social media has changed how we receive news and information. The airport must step out in front of the conversation and identify itself as an official source. If the airport doesn’t guide and direct the discussion about the crisis, then others will. Remember, almost everyone that comes through the airport has access to social media and the ability to contact airport stakeholders—and the media—directly and instantly.

Simply having a social media account for a GA airport is not enough to turn the tide when needed. Airport social media accounts must be nurtured and maintained to grow the audience and build an authentic and trusted voice.

While there are several other ways to push out information during a crisis, social media is perhaps the most efficient and cost-effective way to lead the media and stakeholder narrative. However, it’s difficult to quickly drive that narrative if the airport hasn’t established a substantial following.

Long before a crisis occurs, create social media channels, and build a robust audience. Building an audience during a crisis is not advisable.

At a minimum, **Facebook** and **Twitter** accounts should be created. Facebook permits for more robust posts, to include text from press releases. Although limited to 280 characters, Twitter does support links to web pages, documents, and associated images. Twitter is among the preferred methods to reach local, regional, and national media. Facebook tends to appeal to older demographics and the more casual social media user.

Steady-state content to keep the audience engaged may be created in advance, by using a simple Word template (see appendix). Cut and paste posts and then schedule them to post on specific days. This effort builds the airport’s audience and helps stakeholders and the community identify the social media accounts as official airport channels. It also helps support the efforts of tenants and other airport

stakeholders. While airport social media accounts should never speak on behalf of a tenant, they can most certainly help amplify tenant voices and tenant successes.

On the other hand, airport social media accounts should proactively follow critical social media channels to support situational awareness during a crisis, and an insight into what is being said about the airport—a valuable tool during an emergency.

Invest the time to build an audience—and follow the accounts that may have value to the airport, such as:

- Local police and county sheriff
- Local fire department and county/state or county office of emergency management
- Board of County Commissioners, and local elected officials such as the mayor, governmental and regulatory bodies at the local, state and federal level
- Local Chapters of American Red Cross, Civil Air Patrol
- All local newspapers, television and radio stations to include reporters' individual accounts
- National Weather Service, and local television meteorologists
- Airport tenants (FBOs, on-Airport restaurants)
- Local Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development Groups
- Airport associations such as AAAE or NBAA, to include regional chapters.
- Local HAM Radio, AARES, Civil Air Patrol and volunteer SAR organizations
- Airport or Airport Board of Commissioners, if applicable

Scope

The Crisis Communications Plan establishes the process to manage consistent and effective communications across all airport stakeholders, including:

- Employees and their family members
- Current and prospective tenants and airport users
- Governmental and regulatory bodies at the local, state and federal level
- Media – traditional print and broadcast as well as social media and other online publications
- Airport or Airport Board of Commissioners
- Industry and community

Terminology

A standard set of terminology is throughout the crisis communications plan, and a related list of vocabulary spelled out in the first few pages. This example is from Centennial Airport (KAPA). Use this as a starting point or create something customized. Localize the acronyms and terminology to a specific airport. These terms include:

ACPAA	Arapahoe County Public Airport Authority
AIM	Airport Incident Manager
ARC	American Red Cross
ARFF	Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting
ATC	Air Traffic Control
ATCT	Air Traffic Control Tower
CAP	Civil Air Patrol
CCP	Crisis Communications Plan
CCT	Crisis Communications Team
CDPHE	Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
DEA	Drug Enforcement Agency
ELT	Emergency Locator Transmitter
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FFRC	Friends and Family Reception Center
FSDO	Flight Standards District Office
IC	Incident Commander
ICP	Incident Command Post
ICS	Incident Command System
JIS/JIC	Joint Information System/Joint Information Center
NIMS	National Incident Management System
NTSB	National Transportation Safety Board
PIO	Public Information Officer
POC	Point of Contact
POCC	Pacific Operations Control Center (FAA's)
ROC	FAA's Regional Operations Center
RY/RWY	Runway
SSI	Security Sensitive Information
TSA	Transportation Security Administration
TWY	Taxiway

Response Phases

It's important to understand that while the duration of a crisis may vary, response phases stay somewhat consistent. There's an initial response, a continuous period of operation, and a recovery period. Understand and plan how the airport will respond and support a crisis before it happens. If the airport does not have a Public Information Officer, determine who will act as the spokesperson and if (and when) official statements are to be prepared, coordinated, and released. If warranted, this individual should also work with airport staff, stakeholders—and legal counsel, if necessary—to develop responses to specific questions that may be asked by the media and the community.

NOTE: Please see associated checklists in the back.

Incident Crisis Communications Planning Guide (major incident)

Incident Time	Incident Activity	Airport Actions
First Hour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incident • First official reports • Unconfirmed facts and rumors • First social media reports • First media reports • Potential live TV reports • Public has an immediate need for information and possible health or safety instructions • Media has an immediate need for facts, information and subject-matter experts • Media reports with witnesses • Media reports with family members • Potential incident video • Unconfirmed casualty reports • Road closures • Interruptions in Airport operations • Potential voluntary or directed evacuations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AIM is notified of incident • PIO is notified of incident • PIO establishes contact with other agency PIOs if necessary (ARFF, NTSB, FAA) and tenant spokespersons, if necessary • Determine if Airport statement is warranted • Joint Information System (JIS) established, if necessary • Preliminary information is pushed out via social media, with instructions for updates • PIO/PIOs prepare initial statements for media, if appropriate • Media monitoring begins
First Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing heavy media coverage • Media questions build as social media and local media interview witnesses, family members • Response and recovery continues • Continuing victim and family coverage in media • Arrival of additional supporting local Law Enforcement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Airport and other agencies continue to focus on response, protective measures and reassurance. Messaging should include deterrent measures, preparedness and disaster assistance, if necessary • Internal/employee/stakeholder communications activated • PIOs continue to coordinate messages push information out, and set up regular press briefings as needed • Dark Web* launched, information updated and pushed out by social media • PIOs coordinate imagery, video and graphics as appropriate • Media monitoring continues

Incident Time	Incident Activity	Airport Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrival of supporting federal resources such as NTSB, FAA, NTSB • Arrival of supporting family and victim resources such as American Red Cross • Questions from media regarding why the incident happened and begins to speculate on potential related incidents nationwide 	
First Week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response and recovery continues • Potential diminishing media coverage • Continuing victim and family coverage • Family and victim assistance continues • PIOs continue support with appropriate communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Airport and other agencies continue to focus on response, protective measures and reassurance. Messaging should include deterrent measures, preparedness and disaster assistance, if necessary • Daily briefing routine continues in coordination with other agencies, local authorities, and tenant • Subject matter experts will continue to be made available • Web pages and social media continue to be updated • PIOs (or JIS/JIC) continue to distribute statistical information, graphics, video and photos as appropriate. • Media monitoring continues
Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media coverage begins to diminish • Potential formal investigations • Emphasis on victims, families, cause of the incident, and effectiveness of response and recovery • Identification of personal stores, feature pieces • Impact of the incident on business, reputation, individuals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Airport and other agencies continue to focus on recovery, support, and assistance to victims and those affected • Spokespersons, PIOs continue to provide briefings as necessary. • PIOs (JIS/JIC) continue to document information and release as appropriate • Media files archived • Individuals identified for recognition

*NOTE: * A “dark web” is a collection of unpublished web pages prepared in advance of an emergency. They are not viewable by the public but are made readily accessible once a crisis occurs. These web pages can be made in advance and include emergency information, such as location of family resources, media resources, and instructions for staging, support organizations such as the American Red Cross, local faith-based organizations, and other important community information. The idea is to be able to quickly publish a well-researched and polished emergency information page as soon as possible after the incident, if appropriate.*

Appendix A: Key Stakeholders

- Airport Board of Commissioners
- Airport customers
- Airport employees
- Executive team
- Friends and family of injured/victims
- Tenant and airport users
- Legal representatives
- Government and elected officials
- Community leaders
- Suppliers and vendors
- Media
- Noise Roundtable
- Surrounding neighborhoods and communities

Appendix B: Crisis Communications Checklist

Safety – Ensure the safety of all persons and then call 911, if necessary.

(Note: This checklist should be used as a guideline to develop duties specific to the airport. Additional responsibilities are included, as necessary. Each incident will be different and will require flexibility and adjustments as the situation unfolds.

- Notify the AIM (Airport Incident Manager) immediately.
- Notify the Airport PIO as soon as possible (within 15 minutes).

Phase I, Information (within 30 minutes)

- Airport PIO collects necessary incident information for initial media contact
- Initiate reach-back support to fire/Law Enforcement, affected tenant(s), other stakeholders
- PIO identifies lead agency if other than Airport
- Joint Information System established

Phase II, Deploy (within 1 hour, at least)

- If not already on the scene, PIO travels to the incident location.
- PIO collects details, RELEASABLE photos and pushes information out on social media.
- PIO assembles key messages and updates MEDIA pages on the website, if necessary
- Media monitoring begins (monitor social media, and news for incorrect information)

Phase III, Employment (first 24 hours on-site)

- PIO will place media relations liaison at designated Incident Press Area, and have Airport front desk begin using media checklist
- PIO determines whether or not to launch dark web pages
- Media monitoring continues
- PIO coordinates with other agencies to establish consistent messaging
- PIO schedules and prepares statements for the initial press briefing
- PIO preps executive team members for external communication with media and other stakeholders.
- PIO determines if onsite pressroom is necessary, and where
- Ensure victims, families receive updates **before the media**
- Determine if fact sheets have been distributed; if not, make available to stakeholders
- Develop site-specific Q&A sheet
- Secure sign language and foreign language translators, if needed
- PIO or designee works with HR staff to inform employees, if appropriate

Phase IV, Sustained Coverage (24+ hours)

- PIO coordinates continued press briefings
- PIO or designee updates dark web pages, if published
- Media monitoring continues
- PIO determines whether or not additional PIO support is needed

Initial Incident Worksheet

Date/time incident occurred:

1. What is the current situation? (Basic facts as to What is known. Acknowledge the obvious, but do not speculate):

2. If aircraft crash:

Make:

Model:

- Arriving
- Departing
- Taxiing/Other

Which direction?

Are injuries known/unknown?

What will happen next during this crisis?

- Who on staff should be involved?
- What immediate steps should be taken at this time?
- What is known and who knows it, at this time?
- Is there a potential public interest? Does the issue have traction or the potential to have traction? Media blip?
- Who is/will be affected by this incident?
- What are people feeling – what are the public emotional considerations?
- What information is needed and who, beyond airport staff, needs to get it? When will it be available?
- What should the airport do about it? Proactive vs. Reactive? Contact or refer to another organization?
- What CAN and CAN'T be said? What are the airport's privacy policies?
- Is legal or PR counsel needed? If PR counsel is required, who will authorize?
- Who will communicate responses? (PIO, other responding agency, NTSB?)
- How will the official response be communicated?
- Who will notify the airport board of commissioners, city, county other elected stakeholders? (Always inform the chain of command before making a major public statement)

Incident-specific communication guidance sheets

GUIDANCE: AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT ON AIRPORT PROPERTY

General Communication Issues

Airport Communication role:

- Communicate facts of accident (plane type, injury/non-injury)
- Communicate preparation for and response to the accident
- Communicate concern and support for victims/injured/families
- Communicate the accident's impact on airport operations

AIRPORT Coordination with/referrals to outside agencies:

- **Your Fire Rescue**
 - Communicate incident response
- **NTSB/FAA/FBI/LAW ENFORCEMENT**
 - Communicate investigation status and refer to the appropriate entity
 - Affected tenant, if appropriate
 - Joint information plan

Communication goals:

- Airport is a responsible airport that puts safety first
- Airport responded quickly and competently

Key Messages:**Key Message #1**

Our hearts go out to victims and their families. We are working closely with the Red Cross, the County Victim's Assistance and local clergy to provide a private and comfortable area to await information. Those of us in the general aviation field know this industry is a small, tight-knit family and anytime an accident of this degree occurs, it affects us all on a profound and personal level.

Key Message#2

The airport is also working closely with first responders and Law Enforcement to ensure the safety and security of the accident scene and expedite equipment and resources needed, now, to prevent further harm and preserve property.

- The NTSB/FSDO has been notified and a team is enroute.
- We are currently attending to the needs of the victims and their families.

Key Message #3

There is no higher priority than the safety of our staff, tenants, and those who use the airport. Among [Tailor message to your airport] in the nation, (the airport's name) sees [Tailor message to your airport] operations per day without incident. The airport's history speaks to nearly half a century of experience as general aviation professionals dedicated to enriching the lives of its customers and stakeholders through safe, secure and efficient operations.

Five likely questions:

- What caused the accident?
- Nature of injuries, casualties?
- Could this accident have been prevented?
- How many accidents have happened at your airport in the past five years?
- Did the aircraft originate from your airport and are you at fault?

COMMUNICATION WITH TARGET AUDIENCES

- **Community communication goals:**
 - Community feels airport responded quickly and appropriately
 - Community feels airport remains a safe and efficient facility
 - Community understands impact of accident on operations

Key Message Draft:

Incident-specific communication guidance sheets

GUIDANCE: AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT OFF AIRPORT PROPERTY

General Communication Issues

Airport Communication role:

- Communicate facts of accident (plane type, injury/non-injury)
- Communicate preparation for and response to the accident
- Communicate concern and support for victims/injured/families
- Communicate the accident's impact on airport operations

Airport Coordination with/referrals to outside agencies:

- **Your Fire Rescue**
 - Communicate incident response
- **NTSB/FAA/FBI/Law Enforcement**
 - Communicate investigation status and refer to the appropriate entity
- **Affected tenant, if appropriate**
 - Joint information plan

Communication goals:

- Airport is a responsible airport that puts safety first
- Airport responded quickly and competently
- Airport is working to support family members and connect them with the resources they need at this difficult time
- Airport is cooperating with law enforcement, FAA, NTSB

Key Messages:

Key Message #1

Our hearts go out to victims and their families. Those of us in the general aviation field know this industry is a small, tight-knit family, and anytime an accident of this degree occurs, it affects us all on a profound and personal level. We are working with (Red Cross or your airport's designee) to comfort and support friends and family members of the victims and/or injured)

Key Message#2

Airport's policy is to cooperate fully with local law enforcement, as well as, the National Transportation Safety Board/FSDO in matters relating to aircraft based or serviced out of this facility. If asked, the airport will assist these agencies transparently, and to the best of its ability.

Key Message #3

There is no higher priority than the safety of our staff, tenants, and those who use the airport. Among the busiest general aviation airports in the nation, (The airport's name) Airport sees [Tailor message to your airport] operations per day without incident. [Tailor message to your airport].

Five likely questions:

- What caused the accident?
- Nature of injuries, casualties?
- Could this accident have been prevented?
- How many accidents have happened at the airport in the past five years?
- Did the aircraft originate from the airport?

COMMUNICATION WITH TARGET AUDIENCES

- **Community communication goals:**
 - Community feels airport responded appropriately
 - Community feels airport remains a safe and efficient facility
 - Community understands impact of accident on operations

Key Message Draft:

Incident-specific communication guidance sheets

GUIDANCE: STRUCTURAL FIRE

General Communication Issues

Airport Communication role:

- Communicate facts of accident (type of fire/type of structure, injury/non-injury)
- Communicate preparation for and response to the accident
- Communicate concern and support for victims/injured/families, if applicable
- Communicate the accident's impact on airport operations
- Communicate next steps

Airport Coordination with/referrals to outside agencies:

- **Your Fire Rescue**
 - Communicate incident response
- **FBI/Law Enforcement**
 - Communicate investigation (if suspected arson) status and refer to the appropriate entity
- **Affected tenant, if appropriate**
 - Joint information plan

Communication goals:

- Airport is a responsible airport that puts safety first
- Airport responded quickly and competently
- Ensure community and neighboring tenants of safety/incident has been contained/controlled
- Push out safety/evacuation information if necessary

Key Messages:

Key Message#1

The airport is working closely with first responders to ensure the safety and security of the accident scene and expedite equipment and resources needed now to prevent further harm and preserve property.

- Emergency responders from (name) Fire Rescue Authority are on scene.
- The airport is assisting (name) where appropriate, attending to the needs of tenants (and victims, if appropriate.)

Key Message #2

Although the incident will be thoroughly investigated, (name) Airport has already taken measures to review current policy and procedures relating to this incident to ensure we are doing everything in our power to ensure a safe and secure place to do business.

Key Message #3

(Name) Airport and (Name) Fire Rescue Authority have had a strong partnership for more than XX years. We believe that partnership—along with consistent training—helped personnel to work quickly, minimizing damage, injury, and loss of life. [Tailor response to incident casualties].

Five likely questions:

- What caused the fire?
- Nature of injuries, casualties?
- Could this accident have been prevented?
- Are other buildings affected/jeopardized?
- Dollar amount of damage?

COMMUNICATION WITH TARGET AUDIENCES

- **Community communication goals:**
 - Community and tenants aware of safety information/evacuation information if necessary
 - Community and tenants feel airport responded appropriately
 - Community and tenants feels airport remains a safe and efficient facility
 - Community understands impact of accident on operations

Key Message Draft:

Incident-specific communication guidance sheets

GUIDANCE: SEVERE STORM DAMAGE

General Communication Issues

Airport Communication role:

- Communicate facts of storm damage (type of fire/type of structure, injury/non-injury and if aircraft involved)
- Communicate preparation for and response to the storm
- Communicate concern and support for victims/injured/families
- Communicate the storm's impact on Airport operations

Airport Coordination with/referrals to outside agencies:

- **Your Fire Rescue**
 - Communicate incident response
- **Law Enforcement**
 - Communicate road closure, if any, status and refer to the appropriate entity

Communication goals:

- Airport is a responsible airport that puts safety first
- Airport responded quickly and competently
- Ensure community and neighboring tenants of safety/incident has/has not been contained/controlled
- Push out safety/evacuation/road closure information if necessary

Key Messages:

Key Message#1

(Name) Airport is working closely with first responders and Law Enforcement to ensure the safety and security of tenants, employees and Airport users and to expedite equipment and resources needed at this time to prevent harm and preserve property.

Key Message#2

Airport operations [have/have not been] affected by this storm. [If so, detail how operations have been affected. Do not detail damages or estimate return to normal operations, unless cleared AND verified by AIM or operations.]

Key Message #3

You can do your part by following instructions from local Law Enforcement and emergency response personnel.

Five likely questions:

- What caused the damage (wind, hail, tornado, flood, snow?)
- Nature of injuries, casualties, structural loss, aircraft damage?
- Which buildings, tenants have been affected?
- Are other buildings affected/jeopardized?
- Dollar amount of damage?

COMMUNICATION WITH TARGET AUDIENCES

- **Community communication goals:**
 - Community and tenants aware of safety information/evacuation information if necessary
 - Community feels safe
 - Community and tenants feel airport responded appropriately
 - Community and tenants feels airport remains a safe and efficient facility
 - Community understands impact of accident on operations

Key Message Draft:

Incident-specific communication guidance sheets

GUIDANCE: HAZARDOUS MATERIALS/SPILL

General Communication Issues

Airport Communication role:

- Communicate facts of spill (type of type of spill/general location, injury/non-injury and if aircraft involved)
- Communicate preparation for and response to the incident
- Communicate the spill's impact on public health/safety and Airport operations

Airport Coordination with/referrals to outside agencies:

- **Your Fire Rescue/Public Health/EPA**
 - Communicate safety precautions/evacuation information
 - Communicate incident response
- **Law Enforcement**
 - Communicate road closures, if any, status and refer to the appropriate entity

Communication goals:

- Airport is a responsible airport that puts safety first
- Airport responded quickly and competently with specialized equipment and expertise
- Ensure community and neighboring tenants of safety/incident has/has not been contained/controlled
- Push out safety/evacuation/public health/road closure information if necessary
- Airport role in helping protect the environment

Key Messages:

Key Message#1

We are working to contain this [spill] and resolve the situation as quickly and as safely as possible. Trained HAZMAT specialists from (name) Fire Rescue [OTHER ENTITIES] are on scene. (Defer questions and statements regarding types of equipment to fire PIO/Public Health questions should be deferred to Public Health)

Key Message #2

(Name) Airport’s proactive spill prevention and control plan strives to balance environmental risks with airport user requirements. While no program can prevent every [spill/contamination], this incident raises awareness and validates the importance of our long-term partnerships with local first responders, public health, and environmental experts.

Key Message #3

You can do your part by following instructions from local Law Enforcement and emergency response personnel.

Five likely questions:

- What caused the spill? (truck, aircraft, cargo)
- What is the spill and is it hazardous? (fuel, chemical)
- Which buildings, tenants have been affected and are there any injuries, deaths?
- Could the spill have been prevented?
- Who is responsible?

COMMUNICATION WITH TARGET AUDIENCES

- **Community communication goals:**
 - Community and tenants aware of safety information/evacuation information if necessary
 - Community and tenants feel airport responded appropriately
 - Community and tenants feels airport remains a safe and efficient facility
 - Community understands impact of accident on operations

Key Message Draft:

Incident-specific communication guidance sheets

GUIDANCE: PUBLIC HEALTH INCIDENT ON AIRPORT

General Communication Issues

Airport Communication role:

- Communicate facts of incident (Confirm incident, basic information, refer to the Public Health Department if appropriate)
- Communicate preparation for and response to the incident
- Communicate the incident's impact on public health/safety and airport operations

AIRPORT Coordination with/referrals to outside agencies:

- **Your Fire Rescue/Public Health/EPA**
 - Communicate safety precautions/evacuation information
 - Communicate incident response
- **Law Enforcement**
 - Communicate road closures, if any, status and refer to the appropriate entity
- **Affected tenant, if appropriate**
 - Joint information plan

Communication goals:

- Airport is a responsible airport that puts safety first
- Emphasize strong partnerships with Public Health/EPA
- Airport responded quickly and competently with specialized equipment and expertise
- Ensure community and neighboring tenants of safety/incident has /has not been contained/controlled
- Push out safety/evacuation/public health/road closure information if necessary
- Protect privacy of any individuals/tenants involved/affected as appropriate

Key Messages:

Key Message #1

The safety and security of Airport users and employees is our primary concern. Your Airport will continue to work closely with [CDC/PUBLIC HEALTH/FIRE RESCUE/TSA] and other governmental agencies to ensure proper protocols and procedures are followed.

Key Message#2

We are working with public health experts to identify/contain and resolve the situation as quickly as possible. We (or the tenant) are working closely with public health experts. (Defer questions and statements regarding types of equipment to FIRE PIO and questions regarding public health to PUBLIC HEALTH/CDC)

Key Message #3

You can do your part by following instructions from local law enforcement and emergency response personnel.

Five likely questions:

- What caused the public health incident? (spill, water contamination, foodborne, infectious disease)
- What is the public health incident and is it infectious, deadly? How widespread?
- Which buildings, tenants, communities have been affected?
- Could the public health incident have been prevented?
- Is the airport responsible?

COMMUNICATION WITH TARGET AUDIENCES

- **Community communication goals:**
 - Community and tenants aware of safety information/evacuation information if necessary
 - Community and tenants feel airport responded appropriately
 - Community and tenants feels airport remains a safe and efficient facility
 - Community understands impact of accident on operations

Key Message Draft:

Incident-specific communication guidance sheets

GUIDANCE: BOMB THREAT

General Communication Issues
<p>Airport Communication role:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communicate safety/evacuation information as quickly as possible• Communicate appropriate facts of incident (Confirm incident, basic information, refer to LAW ENFORCEMENT/FBI/TSA)• Communicate preparation for and response to the incident• Communicate the incident's impact on safety and Airport operations
<p>AIRPORT Coordination with/referrals to outside agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your Fire Rescue/LAW ENFORCEMENT/FBI/TSA/FAA<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Communicate safety precautions/evacuation information○ Communicate incident response• LAW ENFORCEMENT<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Communicate road closures, if any, status and refer to the appropriate entity• Affected tenant, if appropriate<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Joint information plan
<p>Communication goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Airport is a responsible airport that puts safety and security first• Emphasize strong partnerships with local, state and Law Enforcement officials• Airport responded quickly and competently in concert with Law Enforcement• Ensure community and neighboring tenants of safety/incident is/has been contained/controlled• Push out safety/evacuation/road closure information if necessary• Protect privacy of any individuals/tenants/victims involved/affected

Key Messages:

Key Message #1

The safety and security of our employees, tenants, and community is our top priority. We take all threats seriously and respond swiftly and appropriately.

Key Message#2

Airport is working closely with first responders and law enforcement to ensure the safety and security of the scene and expedite equipment and resources needed to prevent harm and preserve property.

Key Message#3

Please follow the instructions of first responders and law enforcement. Important information will be made available as soon as possible.

Key Message#4

Monitor local news and social media for information.

Five likely questions:

- Where is/was the bomb threat? (building, aircraft, open area)
- What kind of bomb/device?
- Which buildings, tenants, communities have been affected?
- Could this have been prevented?
- How was the threat discovered? (bystander, called-in)

COMMUNICATION WITH TARGET AUDIENCES

- **Community communication goals:**
 - Community and tenants aware of safety information/evacuation information if necessary
 - Community and tenants feel airport responded appropriately
 - Community and tenants feels airport remains a safe and efficient facility
 - Community understands impact of accident on operations

Key Message Draft:

Incident-specific communication guidance sheets

GUIDANCE: SABOTAGE

General Communication Issues
<p>Airport Communication role:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communicate safety/evacuation information as quickly as possible• Communicate appropriate facts of incident (Confirm incident, basic information, refer to LAW ENFORCEMENT/FBI/TSA if appropriate)• Communicate preparation for and response to the incident• Communicate the incident's impact on safety and Airport operations
<p>Airport Coordination with/referrals to outside agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your Fire Rescue/LAW ENFORCEMENT/FBI/TSA/FAA<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Communicate safety precautions/evacuation information○ Communicate incident response• LAW ENFORCEMENT<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Communicate road closures, if any, status and refer to the appropriate entity• Affected tenant, if appropriate<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Joint information plan
<p>Communication goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Airport is a responsible airport that puts safety first• Emphasize strong partnerships with local, state and law enforcement officials• Airport responded quickly and competently in concert with law enforcement• Ensure community and neighboring tenants of safety/incident is/has been contained/controlled• Push out safety/evacuation/road closure information if necessary• Protect the privacy of any individuals/tenants involved/affected

Key Messages:

Key Message #1

The safety of our employees, tenants, and community is our top priority. Our hearts go out to those affected by this incident. Those of us in the general aviation field know this industry is a small, tight-knit family and anytime an incident of this degree occurs, it affects us all on a profound and personal level.

Key Message#2

Airport is working closely with first responders and Law Enforcement to ensure the safety and security of the scene and expedite equipment and resources needed to prevent harm and preserve property.

Key Message#3

Although the incident is still under investigation, airport is cooperating, fully, with local [local/state/federal] Law Enforcement agencies.

Key Message#4

We want to assure our community, tenants, and airport users, that despite this tragic incident, (Name) Airport remains a safe and secure place to do business.

Five likely questions:

- Where is/was the sabotage, and what happened? (building, aircraft, open area)
- Who is responsible? (random, employee, tenant employee, FAA, terrorist?)
- Which buildings, tenants, communities have been affected, and are there any injuries, deaths?
- Could the incident have been prevented?
- What measures are used to preven this from happening in the future? (can be divided between airport and affected tenant)

COMMUNICATION WITH TARGET AUDIENCES

- **Community communication goals:**
 - Community and tenants aware of safety information/evacuation information if necessary
 - Community and tenants feel airport responded appropriately
 - Community and tenants feels airport remains a safe and efficient facility
 - Community understands impact of accident on operations

Key Message Draft:

Incident-specific communication guidance sheets

GUIDANCE: HIJACKING

General Communication Issues
<p>Airport Communication role:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communicate safety/evacuation information as quickly as possible• Communicate appropriate facts of incident (Confirm incident, basic information, refer to LAW ENFORCEMENT/FBI/TSA/FAA)• Communicate preparation for and response to the incident• Communicate the incident's impact on public safety and Airport operations
<p>Airport Coordination with/referrals to outside agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• (Name)Fire Rescue/LAW ENFORCEMENT/FBI/TSA/FAA<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Communicate safety precautions/evacuation information○ Communicate incident response• LAW ENFORCEMENT<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Communicate road closures, if any, status and refer to the appropriate entity• Affected tenant, if appropriate<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Joint information plan
<p>Communication goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Airport is a responsible airport that puts safety and security first• Emphasize strong partnerships with local, state and Law Enforcement officials• Airport responded quickly and competently in concert with Law Enforcement• Ensure community and neighboring tenants of safety/incident is/has been contained/controlled• Push out safety/evacuation/road closure information if necessary• Protect privacy of any individuals/tenants involved/affected

Key Messages:

Key Message #1

There is no higher priority than the safety and security of Your Airport, tenants, and airport users.

Key Message#2

Airport is offering full cooperation to law enforcement and federal agencies to identify/resolve/investigate the incident.

Five likely questions:

- Where is/was the hijacker/highjacked aircraft? (hangar, departed, holding, en route)
- What kind of aircraft?
- Is this terrorism-related?
- How many people on board and where are they going? Any injuries, deaths?
- How was the threat discovered? (bystander, called-in, hijacker direct message)

COMMUNICATION WITH TARGET AUDIENCES

• **Community communication goals:**

- Community and tenants aware of safety information/evacuation information if necessary
- Community and tenants feel airport responded appropriately
- Community and tenants feels airport remains a safe and efficient facility
- Community understands impact of accident on operations

Key Message Draft:

Incident-specific communication guidance sheets

GUIDANCE: POWER UTILITY FAILURE

General Communication Issues
<p>Airport Communication role:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communicate safety/evacuation/affected area information as quickly as possible• Communicate appropriate facts of incident (Confirm incident, basic information, refer to LAW ENFORCEMENT/FBI/TSA/FAA)• Communicate preparation for and response to the incident• Communicate the incident's impact on public safety and Airport operations
<p>Airport Coordination with/referrals to outside agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• (Name) Fire Rescue<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Communicate safety precautions/evacuation information○ Communicate incident response• Utility Company<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Status of affected areas, restoration plan• LAW ENFORCEMENT<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Communicate road closures, if any, status and refer to appropriate entity• Affected tenants, if appropriate<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Joint information plan if large enough outage
<p>Communication goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Airport is a responsible airport that puts safety and security first• Emphasize strong partnerships with utility company• Airport responded quickly and competently in concert with Law Enforcement• Ensure community and neighboring tenants of safety/incident is/has been contained/controlled• Push out safety/evacuation/road closure information if necessary

Key Messages:

Key Message#1

(Name) Airport is working closely with [Energy/Water Company/Gas Company] to restore [power/water/gas] to those affected on the Airport as quickly as possible.

Key Message#2

Airport Operations, as well as Air Traffic Control Tower [have/have not] been affected. [If affected, explain how].

Key Message#3

Back-up generators are in place and currently powering operations in the control tower and on RYW XX, XX, XX.

Five likely questions:

- What kind of outage?
- Who is affected?
- What caused the outage, and is there a safety concern? (gas line break)
- How are airport operations affected, and is the airport closed?
- When will utilities be restored?

COMMUNICATION WITH TARGET AUDIENCES

- **Community communication goals:**
 - Community and tenants aware of safety information/evacuation information if necessary
 - Community and tenants feel airport responded appropriately
 - Community and tenants feels airport remains a safe and efficient facility
 - Community understands impact of accident on operations

Key Message Draft:

Incident-specific communication guidance sheets

GUIDANCE: ACTIVE SHOOTER/ACTIVE THREAT

General Communication Issues
<p>Airport Communication role:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communicate safety/evacuation/affected area information as quickly as possible• Communicate appropriate facts of incident (Confirm incident, basic information, refer to LAW ENFORCEMENT/FBI/TSA/FAA)• Communicate preparation for and response to the incident• Communicate the incident’s impact on public safety and Airport operations
<p>Airport Coordination with/referrals to outside agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• (Name) Fire Rescue<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Communicate safety precautions/evacuation information○ Communicate incident response• LAW ENFORCEMENT/FBI/FAA/TSA<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Communicate road closures, if any, status and refer to the appropriate entity• Affected tenants, if appropriate<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Joint information plan if large enough outage
<p>Communication goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Airport is a responsible airport that puts safety and security first• Emphasize strong partnerships with law enforcement and layered security• Airport responded quickly and competently in concert with law enforcement• Ensure community and neighboring tenants of safety/incident is/has been contained/controlled• Push out safety/evacuation/road closure information if necessary

Key Messages:

Key Message #1

Our hearts go out to the victims and their families. Those of us in the general aviation field know this industry is a small, tight-knit family and anytime an incident of this degree occurs, it affects us all on a profound and personal level.

Key Message #2

Working closely with Law Enforcement and emergency responders to address the needs of aircraft operates, passengers and employees.

Key Message #3

The Airport [has/has not] suspended operations, at this time, [if suspended, explain]

Key Message #4

In the meantime, along with our law enforcement partners, we will go step-by-step, methodically, through the airport to ensure it is secure before reopening. (use if operations suspended)

Five likely questions:

- Do we know who the shooter/threat is? (employee, terrorism, random act)
- Number of victims? Injured?
- Motive?
- How are airport operations affected, and is the airport closed? When will it reopen?
- Could this have been prevented?

COMMUNICATION WITH TARGET AUDIENCES

- **Community communication goals:**
 - Community and tenants aware of safety information/evacuation information if necessary
 - Community and tenants feel airport responded appropriately
 - Community and tenants feels airport remains a safe and efficient facility
 - Community understands impact of accident on operations

Key Message Draft:

Incident-specific communication guidance sheets

GUIDANCE: EMPLOYEE/FINANCIAL IMPROPRIETY

General Communication Issues

Airport Communication role:

- Communicate confirmation regarding the impropriety as quickly as possible
- Communicate releasable facts of incident (Confirm, investigation in progress)
- Communicate preparation for and response to the incident
- Communicate the incident's impact on public safety and Airport operations
- Preserve community and stakeholder trust in Airport management and staff

Airport Coordination with/referrals to outside agencies:

- **LAW ENFORCEMENT/FBI/FAA/TSA**
 - Communicate road closures, if any, status and refer to appropriate entity
- **Affected tenants, if appropriate**
 - Joint information plan

Communication goals:

- Airport is a financially responsible airport that values integrity of employees
- Airport responded quickly and competently in concert with law enforcement/policy
- Ensure community and tenants of safety/incident is/has been contained/controlled
- Ensure community/stakeholders of thorough investigation and accountability.
- Protect "protected information" such as HIPPA, Privacy Act Information, as possible without compromising transparency.

Key Messages:

Key Message #1

For almost XX years, the general aviation community has entrusted this airport to the (Name) Board or County Airport Authority. We take our obligation to earning and maintaining that trust very seriously.

Key Message#2

(Name) Airport is deeply saddened by these allegations. It is a deep disappointment on a very personal level for all of us when one of our own is called into question on such serious charges.

Key Message#3

We offer our full support and cooperation to [local, state and federal agencies] investigating this case.

Five likely questions:

- What is the extent of the impropriety?
- Extent of the impropriety? (dollar amount, number of victims)
- Motive?
- How are airport operations/financial stability/reputation affected?
- Could this have been prevented?

COMMUNICATION WITH TARGET AUDIENCES

- **Community communication goals:**
 - Community and tenants feel airport responded appropriately
 - Community and tenants feels airport remains a financially stable and trusted facility to do business
 - Community assured of total, thorough accountability

Key Message Draft:

Appendix D: Family and Victim Assistance

Keeping family and victims informed about the situation is a critical component of crisis communications and should be viewed as a priority. It's also crucial that family members receive information before releasing it to the media. Unfortunately, social media makes this challenging because many passengers, airport tenant employees, plane spotters, and passerbys share information, images, and video quickly on social media. Be prepared to assist family members with

When working with family members:

Logistics

- Establish a site for family members. The location should be:
 - Coordinated with the airport
 - Away from the incident scene
 - Away from media staging areas
 - Easily accessible to the family members, but not general public
 - As comfortable as possible

- Coordinate with local not-for-profit response agencies/organizations to assist with:
 - Food (Red Cross, Salvation Army)
 - Beverages (No alcohol)
 - Counseling using local resources from mental health association, vetted faith-based organizations

- Select a quiet facility with:
 - Adequate parking and security
 - Toilet and other comfort facilities
 - Comfortable seating and access to those in wheelchairs or with physical challenges
 - Private consultation room

Communication

- Appoint a family liaison from the airport to assist/support/coordinate family communication and response.
 - Liaison should be trained
 - Liaison should be familiar with airport layout and staff

- Work with NTSB, Coroner, law enforcement, or other outside agency to coordinate family communication.

- Establish protocols for releasing updates to family liaison and authenticating information.
NOTE: Family members should ALWAYS receive updates before the media or VIPs.

Ensure clergy/counselors are available to be onsite when making announcements, especially those involving injury, fatality, or uncertainty. However, clergy/ counselors should **never be assigned the sole responsibility of conveying information about the crisis to family members without working with law enforcement or coroner.**

- When communicating with family members always:
- Make sure information is VERIFIED and accurate.
 - Coordinate information with NTSB, law enforcement, coroner, or other invested agency.
 - Ensure updates are provided to family members before making or releasing any announcements to the media.
 - Be prepared to handle difficult questions regarding who was at fault, who is to blame, compensation, lawsuits, timelines, etc.
 - Anticipate these types of questions in advance, develop messages and coordinate through your airport's proper channels before release and providing updates.

Appendix E: Working with the Media

The media play an essential role in informing the community and will do their job with or without your help. Depending on the level and duration of the crisis, especially one involving the fate of multiple individuals, or level of notoriety, the number of media representatives can reach 100 or more on-site and numerous requests for information will be forthcoming and voluminous.

The most important media will be your **local reporters (community newspaper, radio and TV)**. **Local reporters are vested in the community and will be where employees, their families and other community members turn for information.** Local reporters are more likely to have embedded news sources within your local government and can access sources more quickly than more prominent media outlets. The regional wire service reporter will play a big role in how the event is covered nationally. As a result, the communications team should work most closely with these members of the media.

Regularly scheduled press briefings that include representatives from all vital agencies and organizations are an efficient way to inform the media. By having representatives from each agency together in one place, questions may be directed to the appropriate authority or subject matter expert. Social media channels should be immediately engaged.

Media coverage of recent crisis events in the U.S. and elsewhere tend to follow a similar pattern

- The nature of the incident;
- What are the recuse efforts (if appropriate);
- The operational records (safety, financial, etc.);
- Who is responsible (the company, regulatory officials, etc.);
- The background and political activities of the Executive Director, CEO, senior management or employees directly involved
- Be prepared to address these lines of questions—including choosing whether to address questions about senior management or not

When thinking about how to best work with the media, keep the following in mind:

Logistics

- Establish a site for the media quickly – or they will establish a place. Airport location will most likely be the (Location Name) Room or FBO conference room. In any case, location should be:
 - Coordinated with SMFRA and NTSB, if applicable
 - Away from the incident area
 - Away from the family and VIP location

- Easily accessible
- As comfortable as possible

Select a facility with:

- Comfortable seating
- Parking with enough space for satellite trucks
- Private consultation room (if possible)
- Security – have the media check-in when they arrive and ensure they have media credentials, identification
- Toilet and other comfort facilities

Select a facility with:

- Podium with microphone, or clip to attach additional mics
- Chairs or stools

Additional needs:

- Internet access
- Copy machine and paper
- Adequate electrical outlets and power strips
- Coffee/water/cookies
- Audio/visual capabilities for PowerPoint
- Masking tape
- Notepaper/pens
- Ample parking for news trucks

Communication

PIO will appoint a **media liaison** to address logistics and media needs

PIO will appoint a media liaison to coordinate **family communication and response**

Work with NTSB to coordinate all messaging

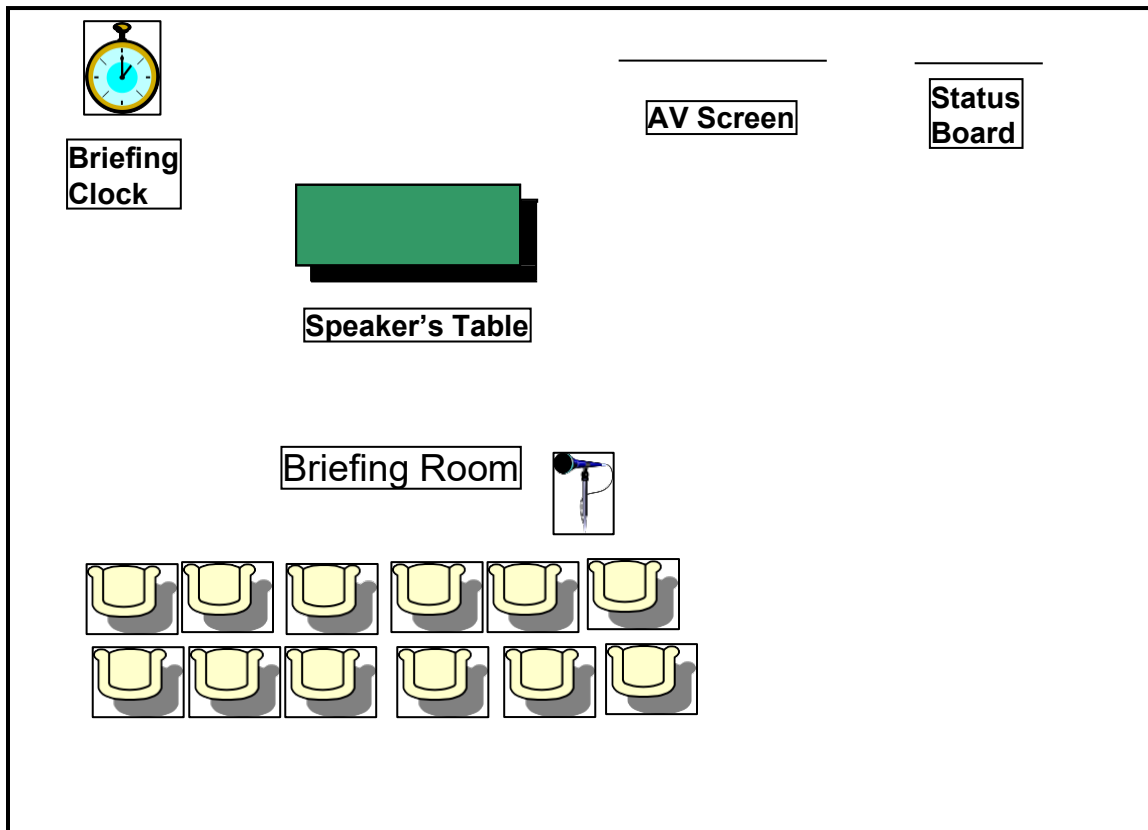
Leverage press briefings to ensure that all media receive the same information at the same time.

If you set a time for a media briefing – keep it! Even if you do not have new information, it is important to provide the media with an up-to-date statement.

Communication Aids

- Current airport and area maps (sanitized for security-sensitive areas)
- Graphics depicting airport operations
- Stock photographs of the airport
- Fact sheets about the airport, airport operations, history, safety record. Include names, titles and job responsibilities or professional qualifications of individuals who will be briefing the media.
- Glossary of specialized acronyms or terms

Appendix F: Media Room Setup Example



Appendix G: Using the Web

Importance of Using the Airport Web Site (www.YourAirport.com)

Web sites have become a go-to source for information in times of emergency – not only for the media, but also for employees, family members and the community at large. The web allows information to be updated quickly and is a forum for the company's stance on the situation.

During an emergency it may be difficult to find time to develop an online format for emergency information. **Developing a “dark site” prior to an emergency can assist in limiting the amount of work that has to be done in-event.**

Launching Airport Dark Site

A dark site is a Web site that is prepared in advance of an emergency but is not viewable regularly. The site (or pages) can be made readily accessible and published once a crisis occurs.

A dark site should look similar to the company Web site for brand consistency so that it can either replace the main page of the company site temporarily or linked to from the main site.

Your airport's dark site houses:

- Fact sheets specifically for crisis use
- Airport information, history, statistics, etc.
- Airport maps approved for public release
- Airport photos approved for public release
- Airport diagrams approved for public release
- Placeholder for crisis specific messages
- References to other Web sites that could provide additional information, such as www.NTSB.gov.

Make sure all information is up-to-date before making the site live.

Team members working with PIO can refer to this information as necessary:

- FAA, NTSB reports and accidents over the past 10 years
- Airport minimum standard guidelines
- Safety procedures
- Annual financial reports for the past five years as cleared by CFO.

- Company employee list and background checks (not published, but available)
- Executive biographies (Executive Director, Board Members)
- Airport maps and location information cleared for public release
- Airport fact sheet
- Economic impact facts
- Stock photos

Appendix H: Crisis Inquiry Log

Caller:

Media Employee/Family Public Board/Stakeholder Other

Date:

Time of Call:

Organization:

Phone number:

Email:

Inquiry:

Deadline:

Person taking call:



Reply made by:

Date/Time:

Reply:

Appendix I: Subject Matter Experts

Area of Expertise	Name/Title	Organization	Contact Information
Airport/Aircraft Safety			Office: Cell: Home: E-mail:
Legal/Labor Law			Office: Cell: Home: E-mail:
Crisis and Risk Communications			Office: Cell: Home: E-mail:
Human Resources/Family Liaison			Office: Cell: Home: E-mail:
Executive Staff			Office: Cell: Home: E-mail:
Airport Operations			Office: Cell: Home: E-mail:

Environmental			Office: Cell: Home: E-mail:
Security			Office: Cell: Home: E-mail:

Appendix J: Industry Experts

Company	Name	Title	Contact Information
Airport/Aircraft Safety			Office: Cell: Home: Fax: E-mail:
Environmental			Office: Cell: Home: Fax: E-mail:
Crisis and Risk Communications			Office: Cell: Home: Fax: E-mail:
Statistics			Office: Cell: Home: Fax: E-mail:

Appendix K: Stakeholders and Resources

Company	Name	Title	Contact Information
Family Assistance/ Counseling			Office: Cell: Home: Fax: E-mail:
Food Service			Office: Cell: Home: Fax: E-mail:
Emergency IT/ Communications Equipment			Office: Cell: Home: Fax: E-mail:
Private Security Providers			Office: Cell: Home: Fax: E-mail:

About Holding Statements:

Holding statements can help you better position your airport during a crisis or emergency. When things happen fast, it's easy to feel in over your head. By quickly releasing a holding statement, you let your public and stakeholders know that you're on it and will provide more information as it becomes available. These statements will "HOLD" the media, and buy you a bit of breathing room to better prepare once you've had a chance to gather more information. Releasing a holding statement is preferred to "no comment."

HOLDING STATEMENT: EMPATHY STATEMENT

For Immediate Release

Contact:
[NAME]
[TITLE]
[PHONE NUMBER]
[E-Mail]

[INCIDENT] AT (Name) AIRPORT

The following statement was released (date/time) by [Name, title, and name of operation] following the [short description of incident]:

[Location]: "As a close-knit airport family, we understand the concerns, fears, and questions you may have about the [incident – crash, accident, etc.] that occurred [time frame – this morning, afternoon, today, yesterday, etc.]. Anytime there is a loss within the aviation community, it affects us, too, on a very deep and personal level. Our thoughts and prayers are with [THE INJURED/VICTIMS] and their families, and all of us here at [AIRPORT] join me in offering our [PRAYERS/SYMPATHIES.]

"At this time, [AIRPORT] is working closely with [FIRST RESPONDERS, LAW ENFORCEMENT/OTHER AGENCY] to assist them in [action: determine what happened, conduct a rescue operation, etc.]."

"There is no higher priority for us than the safety, security and well-being of [those effected: employees, employees' families, community/neighbors]."

"As more information becomes available, updates will be provided through our website, www.YourAirport.com, and regular media briefings. "

FOR ASSIGNMENT EDITORS: Members of the press should meet at the Press Incident Area located in the southeast corner of the main parking lot, located at XXXX and XXXX Street.

Media should remain in the **Press Incident Area** and wait for the PIO, unless otherwise directed. As information becomes available, updates, as well as press briefing schedules, will be announced through the following web and social media channels:

www.YourAirport.com

Twitter: @FlyYourAirport

Media with live trucks should come prepared. No cable throws, J-Boxes or power outlets are available at the Press Incident Area at this time. There is no charge for parking, however, media wishing to remain overnight should inform the PIO. Live trucks, microwave and satellite vehicles must not block roadways or otherwise restrict traffic flow in the lot.

During emergencies or incidents, news helicopters may not be allowed to land on Airport property without prior authorization from the FAA.

Note for Media: Media briefings will be held at [Location] at [Time – specific time, or general, i.e., every hour on the hour, etc.].

Sample Press Release Worksheet

<p data-bbox="207 575 516 604">FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE</p> <p data-bbox="207 695 310 724">Contact:</p> <div data-bbox="321 695 683 835" style="border: 1px solid black; width: 223px; height: 67px; margin-left: 10px;"></div> <div data-bbox="1177 510 1416 567" style="border: 1px solid black; width: 147px; height: 27px; margin-left: 500px;"></div>

HOLDING STATEMENT: FATALITY

For Immediate Release

Contact:
[NAME]
[TITLE]
[PHONE NUMBER]
[E-Mail]

YOUR AIRPORT EXTENDS CONDOLENCES TO FAMILY OF FATALLY INJURED EMPLOYEE

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. - (Jan. XX, 2013) "Our thoughts and prayers are with the family of [Name of employee], who was fatally injured today at Your Airport. [First name of employee] was a valuable member of our team, and we will miss him/her," [Name and title of a senior person at company, e.g., Executive Director, Operations Manager] said today.

[Last name of employee] was fatally injured [approximate time of day, e.g., this morning] while [brief description of event, e.g., performing a routine preventative maintenance.] During the procedure, EMPLOYEE was trapped between the truck and a wall in the maintenance shop. [Description of assistance provided on site, e.g., CPR was started on site], and [Last name of employee] was transported by [how transported and to where], where he/she [any steps taken at hospital, e.g., underwent surgery and later] was pronounced dead.

Your County Airport Authority (ACPAA) was immediately notified of the incident, and will conduct a thorough investigation. "All of us hope to learn from this, and our own analysis of this tragic event, so we can make the necessary modifications to reach our goal of zero accidents and fatalities," [Last name of company official] added.

[Last name], has served [a length of tenure] at the Airport. He/she is survived by his [description of survivors].

[Description of any funeral, memorial details should go here]

Sample Press Release Worksheet

<p data-bbox="207 575 516 604">FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE</p> <p data-bbox="207 695 310 724">Contact:</p> <div data-bbox="321 695 683 835" style="border: 1px solid black; width: 223px; height: 67px; margin-left: 10px;"></div> <div data-bbox="1177 510 1416 567" style="border: 1px solid black; width: 147px; height: 27px; margin-left: 711px;"></div>

Appendix P: Frequently Asked Questions

The 77 Most Frequently Asked Questions by Media Following Crisis Incidents

Recent research conducted by the *Center for Risk Communication* and other groups indicates that questions and concerns raised by stakeholders in emergencies can be identified in advance.

This is an excellent resource for identifying potential questions for which message maps should be developed. Journalists are likely to ask six questions in a crisis (who, what, where, when, why, how) that relate to three broad topics:

1. What happened?

2. What caused it to happen?

3. What does it mean?

Specific questions include:

1. What is your name and title?
2. What are your job responsibilities?
3. What are your qualifications?
4. Can you tell us what happened?
5. When did it happen?
6. Where did it happen?
7. Who was harmed?
8. How many people were harmed?
9. Are those that were harmed receiving help?
10. How certain are you about this information?
11. How are those who were harmed receiving help and what kind of help?
12. Is the situation under control?
13. How certain are you that the situation is under control?
14. Is there any immediate danger?
15. What is being done in response to what happened?
16. Who is in charge?
17. What can we expect next?
18. What are you advising people to do?
19. How long will it be before the situation returns to normal?
20. What help has been requested or offered from others?
21. What responses have you received?
22. Can you be specific about the types of harm that occurred?
23. What are the names of those that were harmed?
24. Can we talk to them?
25. How much damage occurred?
26. What other damage may have occurred?
27. How certain are you?
28. How much damage do you expect?
29. What are you doing now?
30. Who else is involved in the response?
31. Why did this happen?
32. What was the cause?
33. Did you have any forewarning that this might happen?
34. Why wasn't this prevented from happening?
35. What else can go wrong?
36. If you are not sure of the cause, what is your best guess?
37. Who caused this to happen?
38. Who is to blame?
39. Could this have been avoided?
40. Do you think those involved handled the situation well enough?

41. When did your response to this begin?
42. When were you notified that something had happened?
43. Who is conducting the investigation?
44. What are you going to do after the investigation?
45. What have you found out so far?
46. Why was more not done to prevent this from happening?
47. What is your personal opinion?
48. What are you telling your own family?
49. Are all those involved in agreement?
50. Are people over reacting?
51. Which laws are applicable?
52. Has anyone broken the law?
53. How certain are you?
54. Has anyone made mistakes?
55. How certain are you?
56. Have you told us everything you know?
57. What are you not telling us?
58. What effects will this have on the people involved?
59. What precautionary measures were taken?
60. Do you accept responsibility for what happened?
61. Has this ever happened before?
62. Can this happen elsewhere?
63. What is the worst case scenario?
64. What lessons were learned?
65. Were those lessons implemented?
66. What can be done to prevent this from happening again?
67. What would you like to say to those harmed, and to their families?
68. Is there any continuing the danger?
69. Are people out of danger? Are people safe?
70. Will there be an inconvenience to employees or to the public?
71. How much will all this cost?
72. Are you able and willing to pay the costs?
73. Who else will pay the costs?
74. When will we find out more?
75. What steps need to be taken to avoid a similar event?
76. Have these steps already been taken? If not, why not?
77. What does this all mean?

Appendix Q: Message Approval Form

Crisis:

- Message Map/Statement
- Press Release
- Other: _____
- Letter
- Web site/Social Media

Approval Timeline:

- 0-30 Minutes
- 2- 5 Hours
- 2-3 Days
- 30 Minutes- 2 Hours
- 1 Day
- _____

Please Check For:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Approval:

- Approved as is
- Approved with minor changes
- NOT APPROVED**, make changes and resubmit

Approved By:

Signature:

Date:

Time:

Appendix R: Emergency External Audience Notification

Audience	Messenger	Means	Information release time frame (Major or emerging major crisis)
Clergy	Family and Victim Assistance Rep, Red Cross	Phone call or visit in person	0-3 hours (Contact only if crisis involves injury or death)
Current and potential stakeholders			As determined
Elected officials	Executive Director	Phone call from airport director followed up with an email	0-1 hour (if affected) 1-3 hours (potentially affected)
Local and state fire/EMS	OPERATIONS	Phone call In-person	0-1 hour
Media: local, regional and national	Public Information Officer	Social media, press releases, phone interviews, in-person interviews	0-1 hour
NTSB/FAA	OPERATIONS	Phone call Conference call In-person	0-1 hour – All levels (Follow operations closely. They report within 15 minutes.)
Partners, customers, tenants	Executive Director, Director of Administration	Phone call followed up by e-mail if specific details.	0-1 hour (if affected) 1-3 hours (potentially affected)
Public	Public Information Officer	Through the media, official statements and Web site updates	0-2 hours

Sample Press Release Worksheet

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Appendix S: Script for Switchboard Personnel

Sample Questions:

Q. Hi, this is (a media person, from a media organization) I've heard that (an incident) took place, and that (the result was this), can you confirm that it's true?

Q. Who can I speak to about (an incident) that took place in (a place)?

Q. Can I speak to your communications person please, I'm a journalist?

Q. Do you know anything about (an incident) that took place in (a place)?... I'm trying to get some answers and I can't get hold of anybody.

If this happens, on receiving a call from the media do say:

All media queries are being handled by [airport Public Information Officer] or [the National Transportation Safety Board.] May I take your name and the organization you're calling from, and I will try to redirect your call?

Please follow us on Twitter @FlyYour for photos, information, and media staging instructions.

**Airport Contact
(NAME) Fire Rescue Contact
(Name) Law Enforcement Contact**

**Office of NTSB Public Affairs: 202-314-6100
FAA Operations: 425-227-2015/2000**

(If the call can be transferred to a member of the department, do so and advise them of the nature of the call)

In the event that you cannot redirect the call:

I'm sorry but the line is busy/I'm unable to contact [name of individual]. Please may I take your contact details and an overview of the information you require and I will pass on the message. Someone will return your call shortly.

(The information should be logged and forwarded to the PIO or designate in writing. Use the Crisis Inquiry Form located in Appendix H.)

If pressed for information:

All media queries are handled by [airport Public Information Officer/designate] or [the National Transportation Safety Board.] I'm happy to take all your details and an overview of the information you require. I assure you I will pass the message to a Public Information Officer and someone will return your call as soon as possible. While you're waiting, you can find up-to-date information on our website at www.YourAirport.com.

Please follow us on Twitter @FlyYour for photos, information, and media staging instructions.

In the event of a face-to-face inquiry:

All media queries are being handled by [the airport Public Information Officer] or [the National Transportation Safety Board.] May I take your name or business card and put you in touch with someone who can respond to your questions?

If a general statement or update is available, this information will be shared:

There will be a [press conference/announcement] later today. May I take your contact details and when the time and location are confirmed, someone will contact you with all the relevant information? While you're waiting, you can find up-to-date information on our website at (Insert your Airport's URL Address)

Please follow us on Twitter @FlyYour for photos, information and media staging instructions.

Note some journalists may not identify themselves immediately and ask to speak to the Executive Director or someone from a particular department. Therefore, during a crisis, one should always establish who the person is and what their inquiry is about, before providing information to them or sending them directly to the Executive Director.

Key Message Draft

Appendix T: Employee social media policy during a crisis

Everyone within (Name) Airport is potentially a spokesperson. This applies particularly to employees who use social media channels to keep in touch with friends and contacts around the world. Employees who identify their connection to the company (for example, on their LinkedIn profile, or Facebook page), may be tracked down and “friended” by journalists or other interested parties (for example, lawyers) after an accident.

These new “friends” can then access photo albums and read comments by them or by other work colleagues in their network.

While it is not the intent of this policy to prevent employees from using social media channels in their personal time, it is important that employees adhere to the following guidelines regarding communication about the workplace, particularly during times of crisis:

- Social media accounts established by the PIO are **the only official airport accounts**.
- **The posting of photographs or videos taken on airport premises in the course of duties during a crisis is discouraged** unless directed or approved by the PIO or airport designated authority.
- The posting of **comments or engaging in online discussions on social media sites relating to the the airport, or about senior executives, supervisors, board members, colleagues or tenants *during a crisis* is also discouraged**.

Key Message Draft

General Aviation Airport Marketing & PR Guide

Contributing Airports

