Towards Sustainable Mining

Crisis Management and Communications Planning Protocol

Minerals Council of Australia

TSM

CRISIS MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING PROTOCOL

A Tool for Assessing Crisis Management and Communications Planning Performance

Purpose

The purpose of the assessment protocol is to provide guidance to the member companies in completing their evaluation of crisis management and communications planning against TSM indicators. The assessment protocol sets out the general expectations of MCA for crisis management and communications planning by its member companies in support of the TSM initiative.

As with any assessment of a management system, professional judgment is required in assessing the degree of implementation of a system indicator and the quality of management processes and intervention.

Application of this protocol will therefore require a level of expertise in auditing and systems assessment as well as knowledge of and experience in the practice of crisis management and communications planning, including relevant regulatory regimes and requirements. This assessment protocol provides an indicator of the level of implementation of crisis management planning in support of the TSM initiative and is not, in itself, a guarantee of the effectiveness of crisis management planning activities.

Performance Indicators

Three performance indicators have been established:

- **Crisis management and communications preparedness** – Member companies must have in place a crisis management and communications plan.

- **Review** – Member companies will regularly review and update their crisis management and communications plan to ensure it remains responsive to the needs of the company and its operations, properly reflects risks associated with the company's operations and reflects best practices within the industry.

- **Training** – Crisis management training, including the use of appropriate crisis simulation exercises, will be conducted annually.

The assessor is required to determine whether the criteria of each indicator are met by the company and operating facilities, providing a *Yes/No* answer for each indicator. All criteria must be met for a particular indicator to assign a Yes rating. Where a performance element or indicator is not relevant, an assessment of N/A should be assigned.

Corporate and Facility-Level Assessments

For crisis management and communications planning, companies are asked to provide an assessment for each indicator for their corporate office, as well as for each of their Australian operating facilities. Guidance on an effective overall corporate crisis plan is outlined in the Mining Association of Canada's (MAC) *Crisis Management and Communications Planning Reference Guide**, which includes the establishment of local or site-specific crisis teams to support the overall corporate management of crises. The protocols have been designed so that companies can assess the status of crisis management and communications planning at both corporate and facility levels. This approach enables companies to identify strengths and weaknesses within their organisations.

* These guidelines provide a useful reference but are not to be used as a source of additional criteria.

INDICATOR 1: CRISIS MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS PREPAREDNESS

Requirement

Companies must have in place a crisis management and communications plan.

Assessment Criteria – Corporate

Through interview and review of documentation, determine that:

- The CEO has endorsed and demonstrated support for crisis management and communications planning.

- Credible threats and risks have been identified for the company, and protocols are established to address them.

- The results of these evaluations have been shared between corporate and operations levels.

- A Corporate Crisis Management Team has been established, with defined roles and responsibilities.

- A notification mechanism is in place to activate the Corporate Crisis Management Team in the event of a crisis.

- A media spokesperson has been assigned and trained.

- The Crisis Management and Communications Plan is a controlled document.

- All Corporate Crisis Management Team members have been provided with the plan and key contact list.

- A crisis control centre has been established and equipped.

- Key media contact and telephone log sheets have been prepared.

- Mechanisms to alert employees to a crisis and its developments have been established.

- Contact information for key stakeholders relevant to the credible threats and risks has been prepared.

Assessment Criteria – Facility

Through interview and review of documentation, determine that:

- Credible threats and risks have been identified, and protocols are established to address them.

- The results of these evaluations have been shared with the corporate office.

- A Local Crisis Management Team has been established, with defined roles and responsibilities.

- A notification mechanism is in place to activate the Local Crisis Management Team in the event of a crisis.

- A media spokesperson has been assigned and trained.

- The Local Crisis Management and Communications Plan is a controlled document.

- All Local Crisis Management Team members have been provided with the plan and key contact list.

- A crisis control centre has been established and equipped.

- Key media contact and telephone log sheets have been prepared.

- Mechanisms to alert employees to a crisis and its developments have been established.

- Contact information for key local stakeholders relevant to the credible threats and risks has been prepared.

- The facility meets annually with senior members of the local emergency response authorities (where they exist).

INDICATOR 2: REVIEW

Requirement

Member companies will review and update their crisis management and communications plan to ensure it remains responsive to the needs of the company and its operations, properly reflects risks associated with the company's operations and reflects best practice within the industry.

Assessment Criteria – Corporate

Through interview and review of documentation, determine that:

- The Corporate Crisis Management and Communications Plan is regularly reviewed and updated:

    – When there is a change of personnel of those associated with the implementation of the crisis management plan

    – When there is a change in the business (e.g., a new mine) and/or

    – Every 18–24 months.

- The mechanism to notify the crisis management team is tested at least twice per year.

- Mechanisms to alert employees to a crisis and its developments are tested at least once per year.

- Processes exist to ensure that new crisis team members are familiarised with the plan within two months of joining the team.

Assessment Criteria – Facility

Through interview and review of documentation, determine that:

- Local crisis management and communications plans are regularly reviewed and updated:

    – When there is a change of personnel of those associated with the implementation of the crisis management and communications plan and/or

    – Every 18–24 months.

- The mechanism to notify the crisis management team is tested at least twice per year.

- Mechanisms to alert employees to a crisis and its developments are tested at least once per year.

- The facility's plan is shared with the corporate office.

- Processes exist to ensure that new crisis team members are familiarised with the plan within two months of joining the team.

INDICATOR 3: TRAINING

Requirement

Crisis management training, including the use of appropriate crisis simulation exercises, will be conducted annually.

Assessment Criteria

> **Corporate**
>
> **Through interview and review of documentation, determine that:**
>
> - 'Tabletop' crisis simulation exercises are conducted annually.
>
> **Facility**
>
> **Through interview and review of documentation, determine that:**
>
> - 'Tabletop' crisis simulation exercises are conducted annually.
>
> - A full crisis simulation is conducted every three years.

APPENDIX 1: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Protocol-Specific Guidance

1. What is a crisis?

A 'crisis' is defined as a sudden event that may significantly affect the company's ability to carry out its business.

It is important to distinguish between an emergency that can and should be handled by local management in accordance with its Emergency Response plans and a crisis that requires corporate and senior management involvement and action.

A crisis may exist or be developing if:

- The emergency poses a significant threat to the public or employees.

- The emergency provokes government scrutiny.

- You no longer have full control of the situation – other agencies are taking charge.

- The situation has caused national or international media interest.

- The situation is likely to escalate, and there is no immediate resolution in sight.

- The corporation's reputation may be damaged, or there is a threat to the bottom line or share value.

- Incidents that are subject to crisis management may include:

  - Industrial emergencies such as accidents resulting in critical injury or property damage, fire, building collapse, mine cave-ins, flooding, explosions, power failure, freeze-up and water loss

  - Natural disasters such as floods, mudslides, tsunamis, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, fires or volcanoes, which may jeopardise personal safety or commercial operations and severely disrupt routine commercial transportation and communications links with the affected locations

  - Medical emergencies in jurisdictions where quality medical care is either remote or entirely lacking

  - Accidental releases of materials such as tailings dam failure or major chemical spills, which could significantly impact the environment or health and safety of affected persons

  - Missing person incidents related to criminal or non-criminal circumstances

  - Political and security risks such as kidnaps, extortions, bomb threats, bombings, political or civil unrest, illegal detention by local authorities and insurgent or guerrilla activity

  - Any other unexpected event that might threaten the safety of the company, contractor employees, the local community or damage the reputation of the company.

2. Does a shared network facility, such as a SharePoint site, constitute a sharing of the credible threats and risks evaluation?

Yes, placing a document containing the identification of credible threats and risks on a shared network facility, such as a SharePoint site, is a suitable way to share these evaluations between the facility and corporate office if some form of notification is sent to the accountable person at the receiving end.

3. What constitutes a controlled document?

A controlled document has tracking capabilities that help to ensure employees always have the most current document available. This means that there is a process in place to revise and approve the document, and out-of-date versions are destroyed or withdrawn from circulation and replaced. Document control necessitates a process to keep track of issued documents. This record-keeping process will ensure that the latest revision is always sent out to replace every copy of the previous version.

A process to ensure a document is controlled can either be based on physical paper documents or electronic documents. In the case of electronic documents, it is acceptable that the process only extends to the point at which a document is printed and, once printed, that document is no longer considered controlled.

4. What is a 'tabletop' crisis management exercise?

A tabletop or round-table exercise is a useful, cost-effective tool for honing crisis management and communications skills and for helping the crisis management team identify any weaknesses or gaps in their crisis management planning.

Working from a schedule of events, a facilitator offers the crisis team or management group a series of situations to be analysed and discussed before decisions are made and actions are taken. Pressure is exerted through the ever-increasing complexity and frequency of problems, with the facilitation team raising issues from the perspectives of outside audiences.

Different types of crisis management planning exercises, including full-blown crisis simulations, are described in Section 8 of MAC's Guidelines for Corporate Crisis Management and Communications Planning. Many communications and public affairs firms offer services in crisis management and communications training.

5. How do I assess a facility with a new crisis plan that has not yet completed a full crisis simulation exercise?

A facility with a new plan has three years in which to plan and carry out a full crisis simulation exercise. So long as the new plan has been tested through tabletop exercises, the assessor may respond 'yes' to this indicator.

6. Can a real-life crisis meet the requirement for a test of the crisis management and communications plan?

Yes, a real-life crisis can meet the requirement for a test of the crisis management and communications plan if the plan was implemented in response to the crisis and, following the crisis, the team met to review the plan's implementation as well as identify lessons learned and the need for any modifications to the plan. The results of this review must be documented.

7. Does an annual tabletop exercise have to address the entire facility?

No, it is not a requirement that the annual tabletop exercise has to address the entire facility. Rather, one would expect that tabletop exercises should test different situations and different parts of the business so that, over time, the entire crisis plan is tested and honed.

8. How can a company with a corporate structure that stations its management employees all over the world meet the intent of the requirement to have a crisis room established and equipped?

Recognising that a crisis room may not be appropriate for some corporate offices that are not centralised, a company can still attain a 'yes' for indicator 1 if there is a formal process for bringing the corporate crisis team together virtually using technology.

9. For companies headquartered outside of Australia, who should endorse and demonstrate support for crisis management and communications planning?

For companies headquartered outside of Australia, the most senior in-country executive should be the one to endorse and demonstrate support for crisis management and communications planning.

10. How is a facility defined for TSM reporting purposes?

Flexibility is provided in determining what constitutes a facility for the purposes of meeting TSM reporting requirements. Where appropriate, companies may wish to take an aggregated approach to individual activities (e.g. due to close proximity or connected operations). The definition of a facility should be consistent across all TSM protocols.

APPENDIX 2: CRISIS MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING CHECKLIST

SELF ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

Facility Name:		**Company Name:**	
Assessed By:		**Date Submitted:**	

Supporting Documentation / Evidence:	
NAME OF DOCUMENT	**LOCATION**

Interviewees:			
NAME	**POSITION**	**NAME**	**POSITION**

CORPORATE INDICATOR 1: CRISIS MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS PREPAREDNESS

	QUESTION	Y	N	DESCRIPTION & EVIDENCE
Indicator 1	1. Has the CEO endorsed and demonstrated support for crisis management and communications planning?			
	2. Have credible threats and risks been identified for the company and protocols established to address them?			
	3. Have the results of these evaluations been shared between corporate and operations levels?			
	4. Has a Corporate Crisis Management Team been established, with defined roles and responsibilities?			
	5. Is there a notification mechanism in place to activate the Corporate Crisis Management Team in the event of a crisis?			
	6. Has a media spokesperson been assigned and trained?			
	7. Is the Crisis Management and Communications Plan a controlled document?			

	QUESTION	Y	N	DESCRIPTION & EVIDENCE
Indicator 1	8. Have all Corporate Crisis Management Team members been provided the plan and key contact list?			
	9. Has a crisis control centre been established and equipped?			
	10. Have key media contact and telephone log sheets been prepared?			
	11. Have mechanisms to alert employees to a crisis and its developments been established?			
	12. Has contact information for key stakeholders relevant to the credible threats been prepared?			
	If you have answered "Yes" to all of the questions, assign a "Yes" for this indicator. Otherwise, assign a "No".			
	ASSESSED CORPORATE PERFORMANCE FOR INDICATOR 1		Y / N:	

CORPORATE INDICATOR 2: REVIEW

	QUESTION	Y	N	DESCRIPTION & EVIDENCE
Indicator 2	1. Is the Corporate Crisis Management and Communications Plan regularly reviewed and updated:			
	a. when there is a change of personnel of those associated with implementation of the crisis management and communications plan?			
	b. when there is a change in business (e.g., a new mine)? AND/OR			
	c. every 18-24 months?			
	2. Is the mechanism to notify the crisis management team tested at least twice per year?			
	3. Are mechanisms to alert employees to a crisis and its developments tested at least once per year			
	4. Do processes exist to ensure that new crisis team members are familiarised with the plan within two months of joining the team			
	If you have answered "Yes" to all of the questions, assign a "Yes" for this indicator. Otherwise, assign a "No".			
	ASSESSED CORPORATE PERFORMANCE FOR INDICATOR 2		**Y / N:**	

CORPORATE INDICATOR 3: TRAINING

	QUESTION	Y	N	DESCRIPTION & EVIDENCE
Indicator 3	1. Are 'tabletop' crisis simulations exercises conducted annually			
	If you have answered "Yes" to all of the questions, assign a "Yes" for this indicator. Otherwise, assign a "No".			
	ASSESSED CORPORATE PERFORMANCE FOR INDICATOR 3	**Y / N:**		

FACILITY INDICATOR 1: CRISIS MANAGEMENT PREPAREDNESS

	QUESTION	Y	N	DESCRIPTION & EVIDENCE
Indicator 1	1. Have credible threats and risks been identified for the company and protocols established to address them?			
	2. Have the results of these evaluations been shared with the corporate office?			
	3. Has a Local Crisis Management Team been established, with defined roles and responsibilities?			
	4. Is there a notification mechanism in place to activate the Local Crisis Management Team in the event of a crisis?			
	5. Has a media spokesperson been assigned and trained?			
	6. Is the Local Crisis Management and Communications Plan a controlled document?			
	7. Have all Local Crisis Management Team members been provided the plan and key contact list?			

	QUESTION	Y	N	DESCRIPTION & EVIDENCE
Indicator 1	8. Has a crisis control centre been established and equipped?			
	9. Have key media contact and telephone log sheets been prepared?			
	10. Have mechanisms to alert employees to a crisis and its developments been established?			
	11. Has contact information for key stakeholders relevant to the credible threats been prepared?			
	12. Does the facility meet annually with senior members of the local emergency response authorities (where they exist)?			
	If you have answered "Yes" to all of the questions, assign a "Yes" for this indicator. Otherwise, assign a "No".			
	ASSESSED FACILITY PERFORMANCE FOR INDICATOR 1	Y / N:		

FACILITY INDICATOR 2: REVIEW

	QUESTION	Y	N	DESCRIPTION & EVIDENCE
Indicator 2	1. Is the Local Crisis Management and Communications Plan regularly reviewed and updated when there is:			
	a. a change of personnel of those associated with implementation of the crisis management and communications plan? AND/OR			
	b. every 18-24 months?			
	2. Is the mechanism to notify the crisis management team tested at least twice per year?			
	3. Are mechanisms to alert employees to a crisis and its developments tested at least once per year			
	4. Is the facility's plan shared with the corporate office?			
	5. Do processes exist to ensure that new crisis team members are familiarised with the plan within two months of joining the team			
	If you have answered "Yes" to all of the questions, assign a "Yes" for this indicator. Otherwise, assign a "No".			
	ASSESSED FACILITY PERFORMANCE FOR INDICATOR 2		**Y / N:**	

FACILITY INDICATOR 3: TRAINING

	QUESTION	Y	N	DESCRIPTION & EVIDENCE
Indicator 3	1. Are 'tabletop' crisis simulations exercises conducted annually			
	2. Is a full crisis simulation conducted every three (3) years?			
	If you have answered "Yes" to all of the questions, assign a "Yes" for this indicator. Otherwise, assign a "No".			
	ASSESSED FACILITY PERFORMANCE FOR INDICATOR 3	**Y / N:**		