

# FIRST-HOUR EMERGENCY CHECKLIST

Customize the following checklist to align with your agency plans and procedures for emergency communication.

## Emergency Contact Phone Numbers

Even if this information is in your work phone, make sure staff have a printed updated copy of this checklist (in case of power outage) and a digital version for reference.

**Supervisor name:** Supervisor phone number

**Internal distribution/notification list:** Type and location (phone tree, email distribution list, etc)

**911 dispatch center:** Phone number

**Emergency manager name:** Phone number (cell and work)

**Duty officer:** Phone number (cell and work)

**Fire Chief name:** phone number (cell and work)

**Police Chief name:** Phone number (cell and work)

**Sheriff name:** Phone number (cell and work)

## 0 to 15 minutes after the event

### 1a. Research the incident – Internal

When notified of an emergency, confirm verified information about what happened. Contact [Identify specific individuals from the list above here: 911 dispatch center, emergency manager, fire chief, police chief, sheriff] and ask the following questions:

- What happened?
- When did it happen/Is it still happening?
- Where is it happening?
- Is it in one location or multiple locations? Is the incident moving (e.g. a flood)?
- What first responders are on scene or headed to the scene? What is their ETA for arrival?
- What agency or agency is/will be in charge?
- What are the current known impacts? (Road closure, injured people, etc.)
- What are first responders' next steps?
- Who has been notified? (Internal staff, elected officials, mutual aid, Red Cross, etc.)
- Who is the main point of contact for incident information?
- Is media on scene? If yes, who? If not, is there a safe staging location for media (and where is it)?

## 0 to 15 minutes after the event

### 1b. Research the incident – External

After collecting verified information from internal sources, search social media for bystander or media reports. **NOTE:** This can be done concurrently with step 1a if you have multiple communications staffers. Be clear in assigning roles: One person should make contact internally while another researches social media.

- Twitter – Keyword search
- Twitter – Local media
- Twitter – Geocode search
- Facebook – Keyword search
- Facebook – Local media
- Facebook – Local community groups
- Snapchat – Snapmap (<https://map.snapchat.com/>)
- Instagram – Keyword or location search
- Local media websites

## 0 to 15 minutes after the event

### 1c. Post holding statement and/or initial verified information

After collecting verified information from internal sources OR while waiting for verified information, post one or more holding statements to your agency social media pages and/or website. Customize the fields below to identify and prioritize where holding statements should be posted.

- Holding statement posted to website
- Holding statement posted to [INSERT SOCIAL PLATFORM]
- Holding statement posted to [INSERT SOCIAL PLATFORM]
- Holding statement posted to [INSERT SOCIAL PLATFORM]

## 15 to 30 minutes after the event

### 2. Manage up

Follow [INSERT NAME/TITLE OF EMERGENCY PLAN HERE] and contact the following individuals (NOTE: If your emergency plans require more immediate supervisor notification, adjust the timing/location of this section as needed):

- Immediate supervisor name, phone number, email
- Department supervisor name, phone number, email
- Elected or appointed agency director name, phone number, email

**Note:** As part of managing up, you should determine how many additional Public Information Officers or support staff are needed in the JIC/EOC based on the type, scale, and nature of the emergency.

## 15 to 30 minutes after the event

### 3a. Draft key messages

After researching and collecting verified information, based on [INSERT NAME/TITLE OF EMERGENCY PLAN HERE] draft key messages for internal and external distribution that answer the following questions:

- What is happening
- Where is it happening
- Who/what is impacted
- How long is it expected to last
- What actions [AGENCY OR RESPONDER] is taking
- What actions residents/drivers/organizations should take
- Where to find to additional/updated information

## 30 to 45 minutes after the event

### 3b. Approve & disseminate key messages

Obtain approval for and disseminate key messages based on [INSERT NAME/TITLE OF EMERGENCY PLAN HERE]. Ensure messages are translated/interpreted as needed based on community needs:

- Get key messages approved by [INSERT NAME/TITLE OF APPROVAL AUTHORITY (e.g. Incident Commander, duty officer, etc.)]
- Translate messages into [INSERT LANGUAGES HERE]
  - Translation/Interpretation source: [INSERT NAME/TITLE/CONTACT INFO FOR TRANSLATOR/INTERPRETER]
- Disseminate key messages in the following order:
  - [INSERT FIRST LOCATION TO SHARE/POST KEY MESSAGE – e.g. @Agency Twitter account]
  - [INSERT SECOND LOCATION TO SHARE/POST KEY MESSAGE – e.g. Agency Website]
  - [INSERT THIRD LOCATION TO SHARE/POST KEY MESSAGE – e.g. Reverse 911 account]
  - [INSERT FOURTH LOCATION TO SHARE/POST KEY MESSAGE – e.g. @Agency Facebook account]
  - [INSERT FIFTH LOCATION TO SHARE/POST KEY MESSAGE – e.g. Internal staff email]

## 45 to 60 minutes after the event

### 4a. Collect updated incident information - Internal

Contact [Identify specific individuals from the contact list here: 911 dispatch center, emergency manager, fire chief, police chief, sheriff] and obtain updated information about the incident:

- What has changed since the incident started?
- Is the incident still happening or is it over?
- What agencies are now on scene? How many responders are on scene?
- What/Which agency/agencies are in charge?
- What are the current impacts?
- Are evacuations necessary and/or happening?
- What are the next steps in the response and/or recovery?
- Who is the main point of contact for incident information?
- What do responders need the public to do or not do?

## 45 to 60 minutes after the event

### 4b. Social Listening - External

Search and listen on social media for bystander or media reports about the incident, including photos, videos, rumors, or misinformation. **NOTE:** This can be done concurrently with step 4a if you have multiple communications staffers. Be clear in assigning roles and tasks to avoid duplication of effort.

- Twitter – Keyword search
- Twitter – Local media
- Twitter – Geocode search
- Facebook – Keyword search
- Facebook – Local media
- Facebook – Local community groups
- Snapchat – Snapmap (<https://map.snapchat.com/>)
- Instagram – Keyword or location search
- Local media websites
- Information/questions received by agency call-takers (if active)