Wildcat Shooting Club - Emergency Prevention and Management Plan

Introduction:

Since its inception in 2001, the USA high school clay target league (League) has prided itself on providing a safe and fun environment for youth to participate and grow in competitive shooting sports. The League can boast an impressive safety record (zero reported injuries and no gun-free school violations) that compares positively with nearly any other high school sport.

Clear, decisive, and timely communication is important in any emergency situation, and having an established plan will help the organization successfully navigate its way through an emergency situation. Without a plan, the suddenness of an emergency presents reputation risks to the team or League that could jeopardize its ability to continue to offer a safe and fun environment for youth to learn about and participate in shooting sports.

Plan Objectives

- Identify potential risks for the team.
- Identify mitigation steps to address potential risks.
- Develop an emergency communication structure for the team with defined responsibilities and processes.
- Define what success looks like after an emergency management situation for the team.

Defining emergencies for the team:

Not all incidents that disrupt a team event, or negatively impact a team participant, should be considered an emergency. Every youth activity faces challenges – dealing with injuries, accidents and youthful mistakes are a part of the maturation process, both for participants and the sponsoring organizations themselves.

An emergency is an incident that:

1. Significantly disrupts a team event or operations.
2. Has the potential to harm the team's reputation and therefore relationships with other key stakeholders (sponsors, League, school districts etc.); and
3. Consumes team resources (staff or financial) enough to impact operations or an event or the organization itself.

Not all incidents will warrant the full implementation of the emergency plan, but knowing the plan and key steps involved in handling and resolving an emergency will also help identify and manage less important incidents.

We have identified a list of possible scenarios that should be considered high-risk situations for the team. These are divided into two categories, **event** and **non-event** incidents:

Event Incidents – Highest Risk

- Injury or death at a team event
  - This includes an incident at a team event which impacts a participant, coach, spectator, event official or member of the public.
- Gun theft.
- Severe weather.

Non-Event Incidents – Varied Risks

- Violent acts committed by team participants outside of an event or practice.
- Organizational financial mismanagement.
- Impropriety from a team representative.
- Hearing loss issues claimed by a student after participating in an event.
- A student athlete is expelled or suspended for bringing a gun and/or ammunition to school.

Emergency Team			
Name	**Name**	**24-hour Contact**	**Primary Responsibilities**
Situation Leader	Micah Drake	913-594-6181	- Lead on-site decision maker - Decides severity of Emergency - Provides direction for all team members - Serves as lead of internal communications - Serves as secondary media spokesperson - Assigns the appropriate person to notify external audiences of issues *KEY CONCERN: Is the Situation Leader given the authority to make quick decisions?*
Assistant Situation Leader	Graham Sharp	913-461-6895	- Assists Situation Leader - Serves as the primary source of current information for all members of the Emergency Team *KEY CONCERN: Is the Assistant Situation Leader freed from other responsibilities so they can focus on information gathering and delivery?*
Communications Coordinator	Micah Drake	913-594-6181	- Coordinates media statements and press events - Serves as the lead media spokesperson - Shares information with key external stakeholders *KEY CONCERN: Does the Communications Coordinator have enough information to understand what can be shared, and what can't be shared, with external audiences?*
Assistant Communications Coordinator	Graham Sharp	913-461-6895	- Assists Communications Coordinator, particularly with key external stakeholders - In the absence of an Assistant Situation Leader, takes on those responsibilities - Monitor external conversations via Internet and social media *KEY CONCERN: Are the Communications Coordinator and the Assistant Communications Coordinator sharing the same messages?*

Team Coaches and Gun Club Staff	Each will be asked to understand that they have a role during an incident that will vary by event		- Account for participants - Secure and account for each team's firearms - Take control of team shooting ranges - Manage crowd issues - Inform leadership of issues, emerging information *KEY CONCERN: Will each person understand, in advance, that they will have a role to play?*

The Situation Leader (note description on page 3) will make an assessment after an incident of whether emergency protocol needs to be implemented. This decision will be made quickly, erring on the side of protecting participant safety and enforcing local laws.

This plan addresses the specific steps the League will take if an emergency emerges, or an incident occurs that has a high likelihood of becoming an emergency. The plan can also provide some guidance for dealing with incidents that do not rise to the level of an emergency.

Emergency Communication Team:

In the event of an emergency, the Emergency Team will take the lead on gathering information, initial response, communicating with key stakeholders and resolving the issue. Regardless of an event related or non-event related emergency, the Emergency Team will maintain the same roles and responsibilities.

Emergency Management Action Steps:

Emergency management is most effective when organizations follow a clear protocol. While the Situation Leader must have the authority to manage issues as they evolve, most crises will follow a predictable pattern.

Information is the fuel that powers effective emergency management. Organizations that are shut out from needed information make mistakes in triage, messaging and ultimately solving the emergency.

Step 1**: Determine the type and severity of the emergency.**

- As soon as an incident is discovered, the Situation Leader should be notified. The Situation Leader will identify the nature of the incident and determine the initial response.
- If an incident is not considered an emergency, actions may still need to be taken. However, it is unlikely that the entire Emergency Team will be employed, and internal and external messaging will be limited to those directly impacted by the incident.
    - Example: *There is a misfire at a shooting station during an event, but no damage is done, and no one is hurt* – In this case, the Situation Leader should be made aware of the situation and shooting at that site should be stopped for a period of time to ensure that safety is restored. The Situation Leader can work with the on-site safety lead to resume the event.

Assuming that the incident is an emergency …

Step 2**: Convene the Emergency Team and make an initial assessment.**

- If the Situation Leader determines that the emergency protocol is needed, the Emergency Team will be immediately notified.
- The Emergency Team should assess the information immediately available to determine what actions have taken place and the status of the site:
    - In an event scenario: Are there injuries or deaths? If so, are the procedures for notifying the family being followed?

- Is the site secure? Has the event been stopped, and firearms secured?
    - Have the appropriate authorities been notified (police, fire, EMTs)?
    - Is the media aware of the incident? If so, is there someone ready to manage them?
    - Is external assistance needed to handle this emergency?
    - Of the information compiled, what is fact? What is a reasonable inference? What is assumed, but not known?
    - What else do we need to learn?

Non-event emergency: It is likely that members of the Emergency Team will be at different locations and not at the emergency site. A phone conference line should be established for team members to readily access each other, with updated meetings scheduled at regular intervals.

***Step 3*: Formal information gathering.**

- Based on that initial assessment, the Situation Leader works with all members of the Emergency Team to gather more information about the emergency.
- The Assistant Situation Leader is responsible for compiling, assessing, and sharing all information that will inform decision-making during the emergency. This information must continually flow to other members of the team, particularly when external communications begin.
    - At all times, information continues to be assessed based on the following criteria: What is fact? What is a reasonable inference? What is assumed, but not known? What else do we need to learn?

Non-event emergency: Information gathering, and flow will be more cumbersome. While prompt external communication is critical, it should only begin once a clear information channel has been created and the Emergency Team is confident that all public statements are fact-based.

***Step 4:* Initial response**

- As initial information is gathered, the Emergency Team will begin to implement internal and external communications.
- A statement should be prepared for the media and members of the public. If public safety officials oversee the scene, the site leader for the public safety team should approve this statement. However, the statement is not intended to replace the role that the public safety team is playing – this is a team-focused statement.
- At this point, the Emergency Team will have fewer answers than the media has questions, so the communication should be personal but short, communicating (as much as possible):
    - How the incident was discovered.
    - All known information about the incident is appropriate to share with the public.
    - How the Emergency is being managed.
    - When another update will occur.
- As practical, all media contact should be in the form of personal press briefings rather than individual interviews.
- The Assistant Communications Coordinator should begin monitoring key Internet sites and social media for discussion about the emergency.
- Coaches and team members, and parents should be informed of the information provided in the media statement.
- At this point, key external stakeholders need to be informed of the existence of the emergency, with follow-up calls later in the day.

Non-event emergency: Unlike a emergency at a team event, it is likely that public statements concerning a non-event emergency will first be made electronically or via phone, as the spokesperson will not have immediate access to the site where media have gathered.

Step 5: **Triage and solutions**

- At this point, the emergency may be no more than 10 or 15 minutes old. The Situation Leader needs to assess whether the incident itself is over, and which steps are required to immediately correct the emergency.
  - In some situations, this step will be implemented solely by public safety officials. However, the team must look for opportunities to assist the public safety team, as well as address issues that are unique to the event. For example: at what point are activities suspended or cancelled? How do people leave the premises in an orderly manner? How do teams and participants obtain updates on the emergency?
- If the Situation Leader needs to take independent steps to correct the emergency, information must continue to flow to the remainder of the Emergency Team.

Step 6: **Ongoing communication**

- Within a short amount of time, the urgency of the incident that led to the Emergency will pass. This doesn't end the emergency management – Emergency Team members will receive new information, and understand the evolution of the emergency, more quickly than other stakeholders. Personal contact becomes more important as different audiences perceive they are receiving different information (or at a different rate) than other audiences.
  - Nature abhors a vacuum, and the information vacuum is one of the most powerful. Others will step up and communicate about your emergency, whether they have accurate information or not. No organization has been accused of over-communicating to key stakeholders during an emergency, assuming that the communication is consistent and fact-based.
- During this time, the communications coordinator should assess secondary resources that can assist ongoing communication, including: web site(s), social media, and engaging allies with access to broad digital audiences.
- The pace of communication will not change until the emergency has been resolved and has become a manageable reputation issue.

Step 7**: Ending the emergency.**

- As the emergency reaches an end, internal and external audiences need to hear the League that the incident has been addressed. This is a critical step in reputation management – no emergency should fade out of consciousness without a clear end point.
- The final communication should include:
  - Any new information about the origin of the emergency.
  - How the team addressed the emergency.
  - The impact of the emergency (injuries, etc.).
  - Any steps that team will take to address/prevent the issue in the future.

Step 8**: Review execution of the Emergency Plan and make improvements.**

- Objectively evaluate success and room for improvement.

Emergency Management Action Plan

EVENT EMERGENCY
- **Injury or death at an event**
- **Gun theft at an event**
- **Severe weather incident during an event**

NON-EVENT EMERGENCY
- **Violent act committed by a participant, coach or alumni.**
- **Organization financial mismanagement**
- **Impropriety by student, coach, or staff**
- **Suspension/expulsion of an athlete for bringing a gun and/or ammunition on school grounds.**

EMERGENCY TEAM ACTION STEPS

1. Determine the type and severity of the emergency.
- Situation Leader assesses the situation and determines initial response.
  - *Emergency vs. non-emergency*
  - *Event or non-event emergency*

2. Convene Emergency Team and make initial assessment.
- Analyze current intelligence.
  - *What's the status of the site/situation?*
  - *What actions have taken place?*
  - *Do we need external assistance in handling this situation?*
  - *What's the solution to the emergency?*
- Information is assessed on:
  - *What is fact?*
  - *What is a reasonable inference?*
  - *What is assumed, but not known?*
  - *What else do we need to learn?*

3. Formal information gathering
- Situation Leader directs all Emergency Team members to gather more information about the emergency.
- Assistant Situation Leader compiles, assesses and shares all information that will inform decision making with the rest of the Emergency Team.

4. Initial response
- Emergency Team begins to implement internal and external communications.
- Initial statement is prepared for the media.
- Internal stakeholders informed of facts in the media statement.
- External stakeholders are informed of the emergency, follow up is provided as situation develops.
- Begin tracking external discussion.

Internal
- Staff
- Team coaches
- Volunteers
- Board of Directors
- Families

External
- Emergency personnel (Police, Fire, EMT)
- Event leaders/partners (Gun club/range staff and leaders)
- Community partners (*School district officials, other team coaches)*
- Sponsors and supporters
- Media

5. Triage and solutions
- Assess if incident is over, and the steps to immediately correct the Emergency.
- Public safety may be leading this role, but team can assist for issues unique to the event. For example:
  - *At what point are activities suspended or cancelled?*
  - *How do teams and participants get updates on the emergency?*

6. Ongoing communication
- Initial urgency will subside.
- Emergency Team members will receive new information and need to assess and share it with other stakeholders timely and accurately.
- Communications Coordinator should assess secondary resources that can assist ongoing communication.
  - *Websites, social media, or engaging allies with access to broad audiences.*
- Pace of communication should remain consistent until the emergency has been resolved and has become a manageable reputation issue.

7. Ending the emergency
- Close the loop. Communicate that the incident has been addressed.
- Final communication should include:
  - *Any new information about the origin of the emergency*
  - *How the team addressed the emergency*
  - *The impact of the emergency (injuries, etc.)*
  - *Any steps taken to address or prevent the issue in the future.*

8. Review execution of the Emergency Plan and make improvements.
- Compare against original goals and Emergency Plan objectives.

EMERGENCY SITUATION
- **Convene an in-person meeting of the Emergency Team.**
- **Follow Emergency Team action steps.**
- **Ensure that the appropriate authorities have been notified.**
- **Ensure that families have been notified (if necessary).**
- **Provide on-site resources, including communications staff as needed. (event)**
- **Secure the event-site; determine if additional security personnel are needed. (event)**

NOT A EMERGENCY
- **Notify on-site personnel. (event)**
- **Determine if any security or follow up actions are needed on site. (event)**
- **Make decisions regarding what statements, if any, will be made available to the media and internal audiences.**

Key Stakeholders:

As the emergency develops, an important component of the communication plan is outreach with key team external stakeholders, including:

External Resources:

The team may also have relationships with external partners that serve specialized advisory roles to the organization. In an emergency, these partners can be relied upon to help the organization in a variety of capacities (e. g. legal, public relations, financial management etc.).

The decision to utilize external resources will be made by the Emergency Team. The team should have an emergency management discussion with each of these partners in advance of an emergency to develop an understanding of roles and responsibilities.

Prevention:

The best Emergency Management Plan is the version that takes all reasonable steps to prevent emergencies from occurring. In the case of team, we have taken the following steps to understand and reduce the risk of significant incidents:

1. We require all participants to complete state firearm safety certification, as well as receive individualized training from coaches who are similarly certified.

2. Instruction for student participants focuses first on firearm safety, followed by shooting technique. We have found that our students are the best enforcers of proper safety procedures for their peers.

3. All team events are staffed with safety officials to ensure that participants and spectators are following proper safety procedures.

4. We follow school and League rules regarding student eligibility, including those covering drug and alcohol use.

5. All gun clubs are required to have an emergency contact plan, with phone numbers available for immediate use if an incident occurs.

6. Each participant is instructed in the proper procedure for loading and unloading firearms, and no firearm is transported on-site unless it is unloaded. Our event locations are required to provide proper space for managing firearms when not in use.

7. Both a coach and a Range Safety Officer are required to be present when a student is participating at an event.

8. Each registered student athlete is provided an accident insurance policy and each registered coach and volunteer is provided a liability insurance policy from the League. There is no cost to the student, coaches, or volunteers for this insurance.