

## 1. Introduction

A crisis is a disaster, catastrophe, emergency, calamity, or predicament that would adversely affect the day-to-day operations of Van Elle. By their nature, a crisis or disaster can occur without pre-emption therefore it is important that we maintain processes which will effect the rapid recovery of the business in a controlled and managed manner.

Typical examples include

- Fatality / major injuries
- Epidemic / Pandemic
- Prohibition Notices served by the HSE.
- Major fire / structural damage at one of our premises which would adversely impact the business
- Environmental
- Name erosion / slander
- National fuel shortage
- Crisis within a major supplier particularly where our activities rely on a product from a single source.

The following factors are considered key to the successful management and recovery from an event:

- **Leadership** – the plan will identify who will take responsibility in the event of a crisis. It will also be clear which members of the management team will take the lead in the event of designated team members not being available.
- **Timeliness** – it will be crucial that live-saving decisions are prioritised, and that actions are taken decisively. It must be accepted that decisions will need to be taken in light of the available information, and not necessarily wait for the clearest picture as one would want to do under normal circumstances
- **Organisation and planning** – it is impossible to define an exact plan to fit each unknown circumstance, however, it is crucial to identify a robust but flexible template to work to in the event of a disaster.
- **Communication** – Clear, concise, written and verbal communication to necessary stakeholders will be critical. The manual contains guidelines as to the type and content of communication, which may be required.

## 2. Stakeholders and Audiences

Depending on the crisis the appropriate means of communication will be decided on at the time.

All communications with stakeholders will come from a single source of authorised information. This will enable the company to maintain integrity & consistency of information.

The business should endeavour to contact those customers and suppliers immediately affected as quickly as possible. Our service to our customers and meeting those demands is of paramount importance and should be monitored at all times

**Name erosion / adverse publicity** should be avoided by carrying out actions to either eliminate the cause or reduce the impact, by careful press releases etc.

Statements should be pre-written and concentrate on a first response basis and should not be speculative in any way. Any spokesperson should not be drawn into further comments.

Directors will ensure that all staff understand the communication process in the event of an incident. This will include the need to:

- Report to their line manager;
- Speak to official bodies with management involvement;
- Refrain from speaking to external people (i.e. the press, members of the public or other third party etc.) without prior agreement from a Director.

This instruction will not cover those with an over-riding legal authority – police, HSE, EA, etc. – although a Director should be contacted to ensure proper legal advice is available before entering any interview under caution.

It is critical that employees are communicated to effectively and regularly throughout the recovery period. The chain of control and command should ensure all employees impacted understand any changes in management, in place of work and roles/responsibilities.

After the crisis, it is important to publicise to all staff & stakeholders that it is now “Business as Usual”. Consideration shall be given to issuing a statement to key stakeholders of the “professional” manner in which the company handled the crisis to breed confidence in the organisation.

### 3. Contingency Plans

Selected members of staff (depending on the nature of the crisis) would gather at one of the locations to discuss the implications, the short term and long term effects, the various ways forward, communications with the rest of the business and stakeholders, and if required to issue press statements.

Appropriate actions will then be implemented to control the situation and if required to minimise the damage likely to be caused to the business.

For example,

- In the event of a **Fatality / Major Injury**, we shall review the known details of the events leading to the fatality and would then formulate the plan. The plan will differ, dependent on the circumstances, the role and employment of the individual(s).
- **Prohibition Notice** (cease of work activities) In the first instance, attempt to resolve the issues surrounding the notice and endeavour to implement procedures to allow the notice to be lifted immediately.

An example of a possible agenda for action is given below in a format to allow a direction, a train of thought and to produce a formula for appropriate actions:

## Stage 1: Immediate (Emergency Response & within a few days)

### Recovery Phase:

Regain or salvage assets that would otherwise have been permanently lost

- Human: safe evacuation of personnel & visitors in the quickest and most practicable means
- Information: essential and private & confidential documents and software.
- Physical: primary utility facilities such as power supply, water, gas and communication services
- Financial
- Valuable assets (if practicable)

### Assessment Phase:

- Identify responsibilities / timescales. Consider the three main aspects of the business during a crisis, these being:
  - Managing the incident – dealing with the operational aspects of the crisis
  - Communications- with both internal & external audiences
  - “Business as Usual” – for those areas of the organisation that remain unaffected by the situation
- Identify type & severity of damage;
- Identify potential impact (consequences of the damage);
- HOW LONG will it take to resume operations?
- **Adequacy of Resources:**
  - **Human** - competent & trained staff at strategic and operational levels; availability of specialised assistance (lawyer, accountant, recruitment & selection, cleaning & restoration, security etc.)
  - **Physical** - Office space, equipment & supplies, Furniture & fittings, , Communications
  - **Informational** - Legal (insurance, etc.), Personnel documents (PAYE, NIC, records), Sales & Marketing
  - **Financial** - Adequacy of working capital, Legal implications / any price sensitive values
- Communications Channels:
  - Initiate internal and external communications (HSE, Environment Agency, Insurances, utilities etc.)
  - Appointment of staff to assist regulatory bodies with statutory investigation
  - Agree confidentiality
  - Identify stakeholders
  - Set a priority order for communicating during an incident
  - Identify the most effective ways of communicating with them.

## Stage 2: Short term (1 week onwards)

### Fallback (short term measures):

- Logistical, commercial and political criteria used to decide how/where the business will be resumed
- Allocation of resources & reinstatement of critical business processes – identification & prioritisation between processes
  - Essential for business continuity
  - Important for business continuity
  - Non-essential for business continuity
- Discuss and agree first actions
- Set times for follow up actions if required
- Physical move to alternative premises
- Contractual agreements with 3rd parties to conduct undertake work on behalf of the company

## Stage 3: Medium – Long term (1 month onwards)

### Investigation & Inquiry:

- Basic & underlying causes of crisis
- Costs & losses
- Lessons for future
- Further liaison with regulatory bodies

### Business Resumption:

- Continue with operations
- Preparation for additional visits from regulatory bodies, loss adjusters
- Re-assess corporate / financial health
- Review impact of the incident & whether the organisation is recovering
- Impact on reputation
- Legal threats
- Any positive outcomes?

*Mark Cutler*

Signed

Mark Cutler - Chief Executive Officer

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