

Success criteria SC1

By: Chief Fishery Officer

To: Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority
– 4 September 2015

Subject: CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: to discuss the development of a crisis management plan

Background

As part of ongoing officer training key senior officers attended a media course run by the Press Association. One of the recommendations of the course was that it would be prudent for KEIFCA to develop a crisis management plan. The difficulty in developing such a plan is that by its very nature a crisis is unforeseen and as such it is difficult to specifically plan for. In the light of this it is suggested that KEIFCA adopt a generic protocol that helps facilitate a swift and appropriate plan by setting out a template of response whilst not being prescriptive as to that response. The tragedy of the Morecombe Bay cockle picking deaths and the relationship with what is now North Western IFCA is example of the potential use of such a plan.

The aims of the plan are to:

- manage the crisis
- maintain business continuity by securing the IFCA's infrastructure and facilities
- return the IFCA to normal business operations as soon as possible
- protect KEIFCA's reputation

1) Form a standing crisis management team

It is suggested that the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Chief Officer and Assistant Chief Officer would make up the core of such a team. Specialist skill sets such as legal advice and media relations, depending on the nature of the crisis might be sort from Kent County Council (funds to acquire such advice would be taken

from reserves). The office manager would be asked to attend to keep a record key actions and advice regarding to Health & Safety issues.

Every effort would be made to communicate with all members of the team (phone, text, email etc) and to try and hold a face-to-face meeting as quickly as possible, ideally at an IFCA office. The team would where possible try and establish the facts of the incident and develop a plan as to how KEIFCA should respond to any event. The plan would lay out the key actions need to be taken by the Authority, the person responsible for the action and the time and resource needed.

2) Develop a crisis plan/response

The crisis management team would be responsible for the immediate handling of the crisis, or potential crisis, and for co-ordinating the IFCA's response. Their objectives would be to establish the extent of the problem and ensure correct information is provided to all parties involved. The crisis management team would subsequently establish immediate response strategies and tactics, deploy appropriate resources and initiate emergency responses if needed. It would also maintain effective communication with those potentially affected by the crisis as well as external communication with other agencies and the media.

If the incident is of serious regional or national significance and was an inter-agency issue (Marine Coastguard Agency, Police, Environment Agency, Marine Management Organisation etc) the team would muster at the relevant headquarters/offices and follow the procedure of the lead organisation.

The key list of objectives for the crisis management team will be to:

- confirm there is a crisis
- determine the scope and impact of the crisis
- develop a strategy to deal with the immediate impact of the crisis
- prioritise immediate actions. Minimise further damage/harm
- allocate individual and/or group responsibilities for implementing action
- deploy resources and equipment
- communicate information, advice and instructions
- monitor and re-evaluate conditions

3) Set up an incident log

The team would set up a log of key meetings, conversations and actions. A log should also be established to record all telephone calls from the media or other parties inquiring about the crisis. This will help to ensure that the many call backs required are not overlooked. It will also assist in the post-crisis analysis.

The contact log should contain the following information:

- Date
- Name of caller
- Questions(s) asked
- Telephone number
- Person responsible for response
- Additional follow-up needs

4) Appoint a spokesperson / allocate roles

The team would designate a spokesperson who would represent the Authority (depending on the issue different members of the team might be better placed to perform this role). The team would also designate a lead for interagency communication and coordination as well as an internal organisation lead.

5) Prepare a press statement/ engage with the press

The team would then identify the key messages and tone regarding the incident and prepare a press statement (if necessary arrange a press conference). Every effort would be made to try and establish lines of communication with the media as quickly as possible.

As well as print and broadcast media outlets, statements issued would be sent to online media, via our twitter feed, e-bulletin and would be visible on the KEIFCA website.

6) Inform and possibly muster KEIFCA staff

All KEIFCA staff would be contacted and briefed as to the incident and the actions taken by KEIFCA. If required (e.g. to answer phones, undertake key work etc) key staff or in some cases all staff would be asked to come to work.

7) Inform Authority members and possibly arrange an Authority meeting

All KEIFCA members would be contacted and briefed as to the incident. If required (e.g. making an emergency byelaw) an Authority meeting would be arranged as quickly as possible.

8) Post-Crisis Analysis – monitor and review actions

After the specific crisis has abated the crisis management team would then develop a monitoring plan to assess medium and long-term commitment and resource. At an appropriate time a review of the response would be undertaken and reported at an Authority meeting.

Recommendations

1. The Authority agrees the crisis management plan.
2. The crisis management team attend a training course where key skills can be practiced.
3. After training the crisis management team will run a trial scenario and once finished have a review of scenario and if necessary update the crisis management plan.