Chapter 8

EMS
SUPERVISOR
PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE

Managing a Crisis

Objectives

- Explain the relationship between risk and crisis.

- Discuss the components and implementation of an injury prevention program.

- Describe how to anticipate a crisis.

- Discuss how to create a crisis management plan.

Objectives

- Identify and describe the steps in managing a crisis.
- Discuss the effects that crisis events have on an organization.

Introduction

- Crisis management is part of every EMS officer's responsibilities and affects four of the five business priorities (5 BPs):
  - People
  - Strategic objectives
  - Financial management objectives
  - Culture of quality

Introduction

- A crisis can be caused by numerous situations; for example:
  - A natural disaster
  - A medical emergency
  - Not meeting a deadline
  - An event that is negatively affecting your organization
  - Economic difficulty

Introduction

- The EMS officer may not see a crisis looming on the horizon, but the organization will be better prepared to address and manage the crisis if there is:
  - A crisis plan in place
  - The organization or division adopts an anticipatory (and not reactionary) stance

Introduction

- Every organization will have differences in:
    - Its organizational structure
    - The roles and responsibilities assigned to each EMS officer
    - The elements included in a crisis management action plan
- A managing EMS officer would likely be called upon either to manage or to assist with the resolution of internal or external crises.

Introduction

- This chapter focuses primarily on managing administrative crises, as the primary duties of the managing EMS officer are administrative.

- It highlights the importance of having a crisis management action plan and identifies some key points when confronting a crisis.

- Understanding the importance of managing risks and crises is critical to the EMS officer.

Understanding Risk and Crisis

- As an EMS officer, you must be prepared to manage internal and external risks and crises.

- Risks are processes, systems, stakeholder activities, and other business activities that may turn into crises if not monitored or managed appropriately.

Understanding Risk and Crisis

- An internal risk is one that originates within the organization, whereas an external risk is one that originates outside the organization.

- If not managed appropriately, either type of risk has the potential to become a crisis.

- A crisis is a situation that poses a serious threat to a single customer, a community, or the organization and its stakeholders.

Understanding Risk and Crisis

- Examples of internal risks include the following:
  - Doing business with a vendor that does not have a good reputation
  - Opting not to purchase the extended warranty when purchasing ambulance units
  - Implementing priority dispatching for all 911 requests for service
  - Purchasing nonessential equipment with budget reserve dollars
  - Reducing staffing by closing an EMS station during nonpeak hours

Understanding Risk and Crisis

- Examples of external risks include the following:
  - Market competition
  - Crews being exposed to communicable diseases
  - Events that pose safety challenges for the rescuers

Understanding Risk and Crisis

- Having a plan to monitor and manage risks before they become crises must be a priority for the EMS officer, and every effort must be made to anticipate a crisis before it occurs.

- As an EMS officer, you should actively look for those operational and administrative risks.

- Do not wait for a crisis to occur to begin preparing a crisis management plan.

Understanding Risk and Crisis

- A crisis poses a challenge to those being affected by it as well as those attempting to mitigate the crisis.

- Such an event:
  - Can be caused by internal or external stakeholders
  - Can be triggered by natural, human-made, market, or technological forces that pose a direct threat to customers, community, the organization, or the organization's stakeholders

Understanding Risk and Crisis

- Examples of internal crises include:
  - Line-of-duty deaths or injuries
  - Internal stakeholder layoffs
  - Budget cuts resulting in a reduction of service
  - An audit finding of noncompliance with legislative mandates

Understanding Risk and Crisis

- Examples of external crises include:
  - Mass-casualty incidents
  - Vehicle accidents involving an ambulance
  - A protected health information (PHI) security breach
  - Natural disasters

Understanding Risk and Crisis

- Regardless of its size and origin, each crisis requires immediate attention.
- The first priority must be:
  - Providing for the safety of all involved in the incident
  - Ensuring that customers are being appropriately supported
  - Rapidly obtaining the necessary resources
  - Resolving the crisis as soon as possible
  - Preventing any negative publicity directed toward the organization as a result of the incident

Anticipating a Crisis

- You may not be able to stop a crisis from happening.
- Nevertheless, you, your team, and the organization will be better prepared in managing the crisis if you:
  - Thoroughly understand the internal and external business activities within your area of responsibility
  - Remain alert to anticipating a crisis before it happens

Crises Without Warning

- You may not know when a crisis is on the horizon and how it will affect your customers, community, organization, and stakeholders.

- Events that occur without warning may include:

  - Multiple-casualty crashes involving a mass transit bus or a commercial airliner

  - An active shooter event

  - Unfunded mandate placed on the organization

Crises Without Warning

- For both internal and external crises, instilling a culture of preparedness and ensuring that all team members understand their role before a crisis happens will be critical.

- It is not a question of *if* a crisis will occur under your watch, but rather *when.*

Crises Without Warning

- Having a basic systematic approach that can be used to manage internal and external crises when they erupt without warning signs is critical so an effective response can be implemented immediately.

Crises Without Warning

- The organization's members must know their fundamental duties when a crisis occurs within the organization as well as during a large and complex emergency.

Crises Without Warning

- As an EMS officer, you must expect that crisis situations will surround you, and you may have no time to prepare for them.

- Therefore, how you have prepared in advance and how you manage the incident will play a major role in determining the outcome.

Crises with Warning

- Some situations, though they may lead to a crisis, still allow organizational leaders enough time to prepare for making a specific response.
- Examples of such situations include:
  - The threat of an impending hurricane
  - A winter storm
  - A volcanic eruption
  - Heavy rain with the potential for severe flooding
  - A mass gathering
  - A pandemic

Crises with Warning

- Many crisis situations that emerge with warning create cyclical threats on a regular basis.

- Because these situations are more likely to yield a crisis, EMS, fire, and police organizations will be well versed in the management protocol for them and will have a crisis management plan already in place.

Crises with Warning

- Ideally, an initial crisis management plan will be in place well before a threat arises, and that plan should be flexible enough to realign the response to meet the needs of the specific crisis.

- No organization should wait for a crisis to occur before beginning its management preparations.

Crises with Warning

- Organizational leaders must make it a priority to anticipate organizational crisis situations before a crisis strikes.

- This can be done by assessing the immediate organizational risks and determining the potential hazards that might turn a risk into a crisis.

Crises with Warning

- Sometimes risks will be readily evident.

- In such situations, organizational leaders have time to assess the external risks and hazards and to make the appropriate decisions to avoid a crisis situation.

Crises with Warning

- An example of an anticipated internal crisis is a situation in which most of the organization's revenue is obtained through user insurance payments and county-wide taxes, but the current economy is unstable and healthcare reform is being introduced.

Crises with Warning

- These examples outline risks that, if not effectively managed and routinely monitored, can potentially turn into crises.

- Focusing on those key risk areas and understanding which hazards create the potential for a crisis event must be a priority to avoid a crisis.

Crises with Warning

- The EMS officer must make every attempt to routinely:
  - Evaluate internal and external risks and hazards
  - Monitor organizational processes and systems
  - Analyze customer feedback
  - Determine areas of potential risk
  - Review data and performance outcomes regarding impending crises
  - Ask organizational employees where they see potential risks and hazards
  - Research what other organizations are doing to prepare for crises

Crises with Warning

- In addition, the EMS officer must make a point to review organizational spokes that have the greatest risk of becoming a crisis; for example:
  - Operations
  - Logistics
  - Dispatch
  - Budget support
  - Fleet
  - Customers

Limiting Risk to Personnel

- Injury prevention and personnel safety are key components in preparing for—and potentially preventing—a crisis.

- Therefore, organizational leaders must conduct risk assessments to ensure the safety of their personnel and those they serve.

Limiting Risk to Personnel

- In addition to the impact to life and property, there is also the financial impact associated with employee injury.

- Creating and implementing an injury prevention and safety program within your organization must be a priority and it must start with the leadership team.

Limiting Risk to Personnel

- To create an injury prevention and safety program, organizational leaders must first conduct a workplace risk assessment.

Limiting Risk to Personnel

- The following steps will help with the workplace assessment:
  - Review any preexisting injury prevention and safety plan.
  - Review specific injury prevention policies, procedures, and forms and any risk assessment documents.
  - Collect data such as:
    - Recent inspections
    - Recent injuries
    - Workers' compensation
    - How often training was conducted and which training topics were covered

Limiting Risk to Personnel

- Steps that will help with the workplace assessment (continued):
  - Visit office workstations and remote sites to get input from employees regarding their preparedness to deal with unsafe situations.
  - Review any documentation pertaining to:
    - Injury prevention or safety inspections at work stations
    - Department vehicles
    - Employee and visitor common areas
    - Lunch rooms and cafeterias
    - Conference centers
    - Other areas that are considered high traffic areas or where employees congregate

Limiting Risk to Personnel

- Injury prevention must be part of the organization's culture and must be driven by the organization's leadership team.
- The organizational leaders must show a commitment to injury prevention and safety by:
  - Participating in injury prevention drills
  - Attending injury prevention classes
  - Visiting workstations
  - Asking employees for feedback about injury prevention

Limiting Risk to Personnel

- An injury prevention and safety program consists of numerous key activities that must be ongoing.

- For an injury prevention plan to be successful, it must be clearly written in an accessible format and must be supported by policies and procedures.

Limiting Risk to Personnel

- Essential components of an injury prevention and safety plan:
  – Perform any safety activities mandated by state or federal occupational safety and health officials.
  – Conduct safety meetings with new and senior employees on a regular basis.
  – Conduct routine drills (at least twice a year) and have employees assume their assigned roles while working through hazardous scenarios.
  – Create and implement an Organizational Hazard Assessment Form specific to worksite, office, and prehospital environments.

Limiting Risk to Personnel

- Essential components of an injury prevention and safety plan (cont.):
  - Ensure non-public safety employees know how to detect:
    - Unsafe situations such as electrical hazards
    - Fire safety hazards, such as blocking exits with storage equipment
    - Inappropriate storage and use of flammable material
  - Ensure all non-EMS employees are trained in basic first aid and how to use a fire extinguisher.
  - Establish a building evacuation map.
  - Provide the necessary equipment to protect the rescuer and render assistance to other employees.

Limiting Risk to Personnel

- Essential components of an injury prevention and safety plan (cont.):
  - Designate an on-scene and administrative safety officer.
  - Determine how and when to conduct a post-accident or near-miss analysis, document all findings, and report the findings to the appropriate officials.
  - Practice proper lifting techniques.
  - Provide continuous injury prevention and safety training and resources across the organization.
  - Create a safety committee.

Limiting Risk to Personnel

- Employees must be provided with the necessary tools and training to support an injury prevention environment.

- If a hazard is observed, it must be reported and corrected immediately.

Limiting Risk to Personnel

- Injury prevention and safety practices must be an ongoing event.
- Therefore, incentives should be provided to those individuals who actively participate and follow the injury prevention and safety policies and procedures.
- The best approach to an injury prevention and safety program is to promote the importance of using safe practices before an injury occurs.

Creating a Crisis Management Plan

- Having a crisis management plan in place before a crisis occurs is critical because:
  - It provides the necessary framework to manage the incident.
  - It allows for a rapid deployment of activities necessary to mitigate the crisis.

Creating a Crisis Management Plan

- The content of the plan must be simple and straightforward enough for everyone to understand during a crisis and must be easily accessible for any team member's use.

- Remember, however, that any plan must be tailored to the organization's specific operational capabilities.

Creating a Crisis Management Plan

- The plan may be created and published in a booklet form or as a standard operating guideline (SOG).

- The organization's leaders may also choose to make quick-reference crisis management materials readily available at every employee's workstation.

Courtesy of Brevard County Board of County Commissioners.

Creating a Crisis Management Plan

Figure 8-1 Sample quick-reference crisis management guide.

Creating a Crisis Management Plan

- Crisis management does not end with the development of the plan, however.

- The organization must practice, on a regular basis, how to use that plan, and every team member must be familiar with his or her role during a crisis so less uncertainty will occur when an actual crisis occurs.

Creating a Crisis Management Plan

- The organization's leadership must be prepared to manage both administrative and operational crises.

- They may choose to have separate plans for internal and external crises, or they may create a single plan that addresses both.

Creating a Crisis Management Plan

- Key activities that should always be considered when creating a crisis management plan:
    - Include a well-coordinated and comprehensive approach to prevent duplication of work and resources and to promote safety throughout the incident.
    - Establish an incident command system (ICS) either upon arrival at the scene (external crisis) or upon being notified of an impending crisis event (internal crisis).
    - Share the crisis plan with internal and/or external stakeholders as soon as possible.

Creating a Crisis Management Plan

- Key activities that should always be considered when creating a crisis management plan (cont.):
    - Ensure that the necessary resources are available.
    - Ensure that the plan is easy to use and includes simple process flow charts.
    - Include the big picture of the organization and the root cause of the crisis.
    - Assign a spokesperson to disseminate information pertaining to the crisis (ideally in place before the crisis occurs).
    - Include the organization's expected outcomes when dealing with internal and external crises.

Creating a Crisis Management Plan

- Key activities that should always be considered when creating a crisis management plan (cont.):
  - Include protocols for postincident analysis and critical incident stress debriefing (CISD).
  - Specify how the leadership team and those involved in mitigating the crisis will communicate with each other.
  - Prepare for a crisis before it occurs.
  - Determine which team members will be involved in managing the crisis, and define those team members' responsibilities.
  - Routinely evaluate the plan.

Creating a Crisis Management Plan

- Key activities that should always be considered when creating a crisis management plan (cont.):
  - Consider internal posting of an emergency index at each team member's workstation.
  - Stress the importance of ensuring and working in a safe environment by:
    - Promoting situational awareness
    - Injury prevention
    - Containing the crisis
    - Isolating the crisis
    - Mitigating the hazard before it spreads
  - Include input from the team members.

Creating a Crisis Management Plan

- Effective written and verbal communication is essential among all members of the organization, especially during a crisis.

Creating a Crisis Management Plan

- Although EMS and other public safety personnel routinely train and may have actively participated in crisis situations, administrative staff members may not have the same experience.

- Consequently, the plan must be:
  - Comprehensive
  - Clear to understand
  - Concise in its instructions
  - Easy to follow

Creating a Crisis Management Plan

- For the crisis action plan to be effective, the following actions are essential:
  - Obtaining input from the management crisis team
  - Practicing how to manage a crisis situation with all staff members
  - Ensuring that all members understand their roles during an emergency

Creating a Crisis Management Plan

- It is not enough to put the plan down on paper and store it on a shelf.

- Instead, every member assigned to the crisis management team must:
    - Participate in preparing for crises
    - Discuss his or her role during a crisis

Creating a Crisis Management Plan

- It often takes a real crisis for an organization to realize that it is not adequately prepared to manage a crisis.

- In any case, it is beneficial for the organization to be proactive and anticipatory rather than reactionary.

Creating a Crisis Management Plan

- There will certainly be differences when managing different crises, as no two crises are the same and the demands will be different.

- The leadership team will need to adjust the response accordingly to mitigate the crisis.

Creating a Crisis Management Plan

- Nevertheless, effective crisis management all starts with a plan and the assurance that every organizational member understands his or her responsibilities before a crisis occurs.

Planning for an Internal Crisis

- Internal crisis events may not require the same resources or multijurisdictional personnel support as large and complex external crisis situations do.

- Therefore, organizational leaders may opt to develop a crisis management plan intended exclusively for internal crisis management.

Jones EMS Department
CRISIS MANAGEMENT PREPAREDNESS PLAN

DIVISION: Operations	SUBJECT: CRISIS MANAGEMENT PREPAREDNESS PLAN (INTERNAL)	SOP# TBD

Purpose: To ensure a consistent approach to **internal** organization crisis management by establishing a crisis action preparedness plan.

Types of Crises: Examples of internal crisis situations that may be encountered by the Jones EMS Department or specific to one of the department's functional workgroups:
— Disruption of EMS service delivery
— Disruption of office resources (IT, power outage, damage to office building)
— Workplace violence
— Legal action taken toward the agency
— Media reports of poor EMS service delivery by Jones EMS
— Sexual harassment by department employee
— Being investigated for billing fraud

Priorities: To gather as much information as possible pertaining to the incident, determine the risk or crisis, prevent or resolve the risk or crisis to stakeholders and organization quickly.
— What happened?
— Which activity is causing the crisis?
— Are there any injuries or fatalities?
— Is the crisis still active?
— If there is an immediate threat to life and property, has 911 been notified?
— If there is no immediate threat to life and property, has the leadership or crisis management coordinator been notified?

1. **Response Checklist:** To establish a thorough and systematic approach to managing internal crisis situations. *External crises such as disasters or large-scale emergency incidents will be managed as dictated by the organization's standard operating procedures specific to the incident and direction of the on-scene incident commander.*

If Internal Risk or Crisis Poses a Life Threat
  A. Get to safety
  B. Report the incident to 911
  C. Assist victims
  D. Conduct an accountability check for employees

If Internal Risk or Crisis Poses No Life Threat
  A. Perform a risk-crisis assessment
    a. What is the probability of the risk becoming a crisis within 24–72 hours?
        Low—Moderate—High
    b. What is the probability that the crisis will cause life threats to internal and/or external stakeholders?
        Low—Moderate—High
    c. What is the probability that the crisis will affect the organization and prevent it from doing business?
        Low—Moderate—High

2. **Roles and Responsibilities**
  A. Incident Officer (managing to executive officer level)
    a. Establish a member of the leadership team as the incident officer.
    b. Determine the goal, objective, strategy, and tactical approach to mitigate the crisis.
    c. Ensure that the risk or crisis is being addressed.
    d. Ensure support team members are involved with mitigating the crisis.
    e. Be transparent and honest when discussing the situation with stakeholders.
    f. Be available to meet with the community and discuss the crisis once it is no longer a threat to the organization or the community.
    g. Request feedback from stakeholders once the crisis has been resolved.
  B. Crisis Management Coordinator (entry level to managing officer level)
    a. Support the crisis incident officer.
    b. Coordinate the strategic and tactical response to mitigate the crisis by the crisis management team.
    c. Coordinate logistical support.
    d. Coordinate duties between functional workgroups when mitigating the crisis.
  C. Crisis Management Team (organization team members)
    a. Provide the tactical response to mitigate the internal crisis.
    b. Assist staff members in resuming business operations.
    c. Communicate with and assist stakeholders by answering questions.
    d. Notify and work with family members of injured employees.
  D. Public Information Officer
    a. Coordinate the release of information with senior leadership.
    b. Determine who is affected by the crisis and who the target audience is.
    c. Keep the message clear and simple to follow.
    d. Organize press conferences.
    e. Disseminate press releases.
    f. Be available for media interviews.
    g. Document the event and record all activities used to mitigate the crisis.

Planning for an Internal Crisis

Figure 8-2 Example of an internal crisis management preparedness plan. *(continues)*

3. **Communication:** Ensure a consistent and effective medium of communication during a crisis situation.
   A. Face-to-face
   B. E-mail
   C. Text
   D. Social media
   E. Portable, mobile, or base station radio

4. **Stakeholders:** Provide the necessary information and direction to key stakeholders and those who are affected by the crisis situation.
   A. Internal
      a. Agency functional workgroups
      b. Field crews
      c. City or county elected officials
   B. External
      a. Community members
      b. Vendors
      c. Customers
      d. State EMS office
      e. Local hospitals

5. **Resources:** Ensure that resources are available and aligned to appropriately manage and mitigate the crisis.
   A. Have a predetermined operation center that can be accessible during crisis situations and provides access to:
      a. Telephone
      b. Computers/Internet
      c. Fax and copy machine
      d. Overhead projector
      e. Conference call capabilities
      f. Erase boards
      g. Office supplies
   B. Identify the necessary equipment or actions needed to resolve the crisis.
   C. Determine how to get the equipment and crisis team to the location of the crisis.

6. **Definitions:** Provide consistent terminology and definitions when mitigating a crisis situation.
   A. Crisis: A situation that poses a serious threat to a single customer, a community, or the organization and its stakeholders.
   B. Crisis review audit: An inspection of the organization's current operational risks, processes, systems, weaknesses, and threats.
   C. Risk: A process, system, stakeholder activity, and other business activity that may turn into a crisis if not monitored or managed appropriately.
   D. Stakeholder: A person or a group that has a professional or financial investment in something such as an organization or business. There can be both internal and external stakeholders.

   E. After-action report: A document that is created after an incident occurs and often includes a snapshot summary of the incident, the goals and objectives in managing the incident, performance outcomes, lessons learned, and actions taken to better prepare for future crisis situations.

7. **Postincident Review:** A postincident review shall be conducted after every response to a crisis.

8. **Update Plan:** Ensure that the plan is updated and risk assessments are ongoing.
   A. Risk assessments must be performed
      a. When updating the plan
      b. Post crisis
      c. When a risk has been identified
   B. The plan must be reviewed annually and after an incident.
   C. Update forms used during a crisis situation
      a. Emergency employee contact list
      b. List of functional workgroup resources
      c. Lessons Learned form
      d. Risk or Crisis Assessment form
      e. Mitigation Activity form
      f. Press Release form
      g. Operational Activity and Incident Action Plan form (primarily used during external crisis situations)

9. **Training:** Ensure that all members of the organization are well informed as to the appropriate procedures and actions to be taken when encountering a crisis situation by participating in:
   A. Functional exercises: Scenario based; teams have an opportunity for decision making and activity by participating in hands-on evolutions with local functional workgroups.
   B. Full-scale exercises: Scenario based; teams have an opportunity for decision making and activity by participating in hands-on evolutions involving state or federal agencies.
   C. Table-top exercises: A facilitated training exercise where activities take place without hands-on evolutions. Table-top exercises are designed to evaluate the organization's approach to decision making and policies pertinent to the scenario. The exercise is usually held in a classroom setting.
   D. All office staff personnel should receive crisis response training annually to include overview of the plan and new updates.

10. **References:** Provide direction in seeking additional information to remedy and support the actions to mitigate the crisis.
    A. Standard operating guidelines and procedures
    B. Policies
    C. Bulletins
    D. Protocols
    E. Emergency management plan
    F. Mission statement
    G. Strategic plan
    H. Finance

Planning for an Internal Crisis

Figure 8-2 Example of an internal crisis management preparedness plan. (*continued*)

Planning for an Internal Crisis

- When attempting to manage an internal organizational crisis, it is beneficial to use principles similar to those applied when managing an external crisis.

Planning for an External Crisis

- EMS and other public safety personnel are proficient in working with and managing external crises.

- EMS personnel are taught to execute the organization's adopted mass-casualty incident (MCI) plan, active shooter plan, and other crisis management plans, and they understand their role before such a crisis occurs.

Jones EMS Department
MASS-CASUALTY INCIDENT PLAN

DIVISION: Operations	SUBJECT: Mass-Casualty Incidents	SOG# 123

Purpose: To provide procedures for the identification and handling of mass-casualty incidents.

Guideline: This mass-casualty incident (MCI) procedure is to be used for any incident when the number of injured exceeds the capabilities of the first-arriving units to efficiently triage, treat, and transport the victims. For Jones EMS Department, this MCI procedure will be initiated on all incidents involving five or more victims.

A. **Responsibilities of Command**
1. Remove endangered persons and treat the injured.
2. Stabilize the incident and provide for life safety.
3. Ensure that the functions of extrication, triage, treatment, and transportation are established as needed and carried out.
4. Conserve property and preserve evidence.
5. Provide for the ongoing safety, accountability, and welfare of all emergency service personnel throughout the entire incident.

B. **Response:** When an MCI is determined, the incident commander should request the necessary resources needed to mitigate the situation. The following response levels should be considered the minimum resources required to manage a specific number of victims. The *Florida Incident Field Operations Guide* (FOG) was a reference for this SOG.
1. The MCI alarm assignment will be:
   a. One district chief
   b. Division chief of EMS or designee
   c. A safety officer
   d. Two engine or truck companies (whichever is closest)
   e. Two transport-capable rescues or closest ambulance units
2. Level 1 MCI (5–10 victims, minor MCI)
   a. Minimum response of one MCI alarm.
   b. Dispatch will notify the assistant chief of operations or designee.
   c. Dispatch will notify the EMS division chief.
   d. One safety officer will be assigned to the scene.
   e. Dispatch will issue a staff page.
   f. Jones EMS Communication Center will notify the closest hospitals in the general area of the MCI and the regional trauma center.
   g. Jones EMS Communication Center will notify the on-duty PIO.

3. Level 2 MCI (11–20 victims, minor MCI)
   a. Minimum response of two MCI alarms.
   b. Dispatch will notify the assistant chief of operations.
   c. Dispatch will notify the EMS division chief.
   d. One district chief will be assigned to the scene.
   e. Dispatch will issue a staff page.
   f. One safety officer will be assigned to the scene.
   g. Jones EMS Communication Center will notify all hospitals in the general area and the regional trauma center.
   h. Jones EMS Communication Center will page the EMS medical directors.
   i. Jones EMS Communication Center will notify SCATS.
   j. Jones EMS Communication Center will notify the on-duty PIO.
4. Level 3 MCI (21–99 victims, major MCI) = FOG Level 3
   a. Minimum response of three MCI alarms.
   b. Additional alarms or units should be requested as the situation dictates. Contact Jones EMS Office of Emergency Management (OEM) for special resources. Consider two to three climate-controlled buses to hold, treat, and transport Green-level victims.
   c. Dispatch will notify the assistant chief of operations or designee.
   d. Dispatch will notify the EMS division chief.
   e. Dispatch will issue a staff page.
   f. Two or more safety officers will be assigned to the scene.
   g. Jones EMS Communication Center will notify all area hospitals, regional trauma center, and any additional facilities in the region if indicated.
   h. Jones EMS Communication Center will notify the EMS medical directors for possible response and assistance.
   i. Jones EMS Communication Center will notify SCATS.
   j. Jones EMS Communication Center will notify the on-duty PIO.
5. Level 4 MCI (100–999 victims or more, major MCI)
   a. Minimum response of three MCI alarms.
   b. Additional alarms or units should be requested as the situation dictates. Contact Jones EMS Office of Emergency Management (OEM) for special resources. Consider two to three climate-controlled buses to hold, treat, and transport Green-level victims.
   c. Dispatch will notify the assistant chief of operations or designee.
   d. Dispatch will notify the EMS division chief.
   e. Dispatch will issue a staff page.
   f. Two or more safety officers will be assigned to the scene.
   g. Jones EMS Communication Center will notify all area hospitals, regional trauma center, and any additional facilities in the region if indicated.
   h. Jones EMS Communication Center will notify the EMS medical directors for possible response and assistance.

Planning for an External Crisis

Figure 8-3 Example of an external small- to large-scale incident response crisis plan, specific to a mass-casualty incident response. *(continues)*

i. Jones EMS Communication Center will notify SCATS.

j. Jones EMS Communication Center will notify the on-duty PIO.

k. Notify the OEM for the purpose of requesting local, regional, and possibly state resources up to and including USAR teams, the Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS), and other special teams or resources if indicated.

6. Level 5 MCI (1000 victims or more, major MCI)

   a. Minimum response of three MCI alarms.

   b. Additional alarms or units should be requested as the situation dictates. Contact Jones EMS Office of Emergency Management (OEM) for special resources. Consider two to three climate-controlled buses to hold, treat, and transport Green-level victims.

   c. Dispatch will notify the assistant chief of operations or designee.

   d. Dispatch will notify the EMS division chief.

   e. Dispatch will issue a staff page.

   f. Two or more safety officers will be assigned to the scene.

   g. Jones EMS Communication Center will notify all area hospitals, regional trauma center, and any additional facilities in the region if indicated.

   h. Jones EMS Communication Center will notify the EMS medical directors for possible response and assistance.

   i. Jones EMS Communication Center will notify SCATS.

   j. Jones EMS Communication Center will notify the on-duty PIO.

   k. Notify the OEM for the purpose of requesting local, regional, and possibly state resources up to and including USAR teams, the Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS), and other special teams or resources if indicated.

C. **First-Arriving Officer:** Assumes command and implements those sections of EOP 1.0 through 5.0 appropriate to the incident, including announcing the location of the command post.

   1. Perform a size-up to include:

      a. The number of victims involved in the incident.

      b. Safety concerns (e.g., hazardous materials, fires, collapse hazards).

   2. If the numbers of sick or injured exceed the capabilities of the first-arriving units to efficiently manage the scene, command should declare an MCI, designate the "Level MCI," and request additional resources early.

   3. Designate a triage, treatment, and transport group.

   4. Designate a Level II staging area for:

      a. Engines, trucks, and rescues (not for transport), or other resources.

      b. A separate staging area for transport vehicles (for patient transport only) where they can enter and depart the scene readily and safely.

      c. As additional units arrive, command will establish divisions/groups and assign personnel to the following areas if necessary:

         i. EMS branch

         ii. Triage group

iii. Treatment group

iv. Transport group

5. Additional assignments should be made or divisions/groups established based on the complexity of the incident. These may include, but are not limited to:

   a. Staging group

   b. Landing zone (LZ)

   c. Extrication group

   d. Hazardous materials group

   e. Safety officer

   f. Rehabilitation (rehab) group

   g. Critical incident stress debriefing (CISD)

   h. New medical designations

6. Treatment capability (T-Cap), ambulance capability (A-Cap)

   a. Command, EMS, and transport groups must know the area hospital's ability to accept and treat victims (T-Cap).

   b. During any MCI, Jones EMS Communication Center will contact all hospitals in the area to obtain their T-Cap information.

   c. In the case of a large incident that may require many transport vehicles, Jones EMS Communication Center will poll other agencies for their ambulance capability. The A-Cap will provide Jones EMS Communication Center with the number of vehicles that each agency has available to respond.

D. **Divisions and Groups**

   1. Triage group:

      a. Use the radio designation "triage group."

      b. Organize the triage team to begin the initial triaging of victims using triage tags. Consider a team of two personnel per 10 victims.

      c. Jones EMS will use triage tags for any incident with five or more victims.

      d. During the initial triage phase, use the START (Simple Triage and Rapid Transport) system for adult victims and JumpStart triage system, if available, for children age 8 or younger.

      e. Some agencies may initially use colored ribbons to identify the severity of victims, not triage tags. The ribbon colors coincide with the colors on the triage tags used by Jones EMS.

      f. Affix a triage tag to each victim in a visible location (around the neck if possible); remove only enough of the lower portion of the colored tag necessary to identify the condition of the victim. Retain the torn-off portion of the tag, and deliver it to the triage group supervisor for tracking.

      g. Advise command as soon as possible of the total number and category of Red, Yellow, Green, and Black victims.

      h. Coordinate with the treatment group to ensure that victims are moved to the appropriate treatment area in the priority of their injuries and/or illness (i.e., Red category victims are moved before Green category victims).

Planning for an External Crisis

Figure 8-3 Example of an external small- to large-scale incident response crisis plan, specific to a mass-casualty incident response. *(continues)*

i. Ensure that all areas around the scene have been checked for potential victims, walking wounded, ejected victims, and other individuals, and that all victims have been triaged.

j. Report to command upon completion of duties for further assignments when triage is completed.

2. Treatment group:

a. Use the radio designation "treatment group."

b. Assign a person to assist with the documentation.

c. Establish a centralized treatment area or areas.

d. Ensure that all victims are re-triaged upon arrival to the treatment area utilizing a secondary exam, and then document the assessment findings on the triage tag.

e. Personnel assigned to treatment areas that assess or treat victims will document pertinent findings on the triage tag.

f. All victims in treatment areas must be monitored and constantly re-triaged, as their conditions may change, creating the need to move them to another treatment area.

g. Ensure that adequate equipment and personnel are available to effectively treat the victims.

h. Considerations for a treatment area:

i. Think big; make sure the treatment area selected will accommodate all the victims and personnel.

ii. Consider weather, safety, and possible hazardous materials needs (e.g., decontamination, runoff, wind direction).

iii. Designate an entrance and exit to each treatment area for good access and to aid in victim movement.

iv. On large-scale incidents, divide the treatment area into three distinct and separate areas based on triage priorities: Red, Yellow, and Green. Colored flags or tarps will be used to mark each treatment area.

v. The immediate care (Red) area must be closest to the transport area to facilitate rapid departure; the delayed care (Yellow) area will be the next closest area to the transport area; and the minor care (Green) area should be farthest away and well removed from the Yellow and Red areas to eliminate roaming Green victims from interfering with patient care.

vi. Communicate with the transport groups to coordinate transport of the appropriate patients.

3. Transport group:

a. Use the radio designation "transport group."

b. Designate an area where transport units can enter and depart the scene safely. Also consider the need for an air transport area (LZ) with easy access if indicated.

c. Maintain a "transport group log."

d. Assign a documentation aide with a second radio to assist with the log and communications.

e. Establish continuous contact with Jones EMS Communication Center to determine the T-Cap of area hospitals and the A-Cap of other transport agencies. Use an approved tactical channel assigned by Jones EMS Communication Center.

f. Coordinate transport of victims from the treatment areas.

g. Communicate with the LZ regarding the number of patients to be transported by air.

h. When vehicles are prepared to transport victims, the transport group or their aide will contact Jones EMS Communication Center and supply them with the following information:

i. The transporting radio ID number.

ii. The number of patients going to a specific facility.

iii. Their priority (Red, Yellow, or Green).

iv. If any Green patients are immobilized on backboards, the receiving facility must be notified.

v. The transporting vehicle should not contact the receiving facility directly unless there is a change in patient condition or further medical control is required.

E. References

1. State *Field Operations Guide* (FOG)

Planning for an External Crisis

Figure 8-3 Example of an external small- to large-scale incident response crisis plan, specific to a mass-casualty incident response. (*continued*)

Planning for an External Crisis

- National Incident Management System
  - When dealing with public safety and nonpublic safety crisis situations, organizations may choose to use the National Incident Management System (NIMS) as part of their crisis management plan.
  - NIMS provides a standardized framework for managing an incident.
  - The use of NIMS, which is integrated with the National Response Plan (NRP), assists responders in preparing for and managing crisis situations occurring at the local, state, and national levels.

Planning for an External Crisis

- National Incident Management System
  - Although NIMS is not a response plan, it can be used as the foundation for developing a coordinated and organized approach to a crisis.
  - The primary goal in using NIMS is to ensure that EMS and other public safety organizations implement a standard incident command system (ICS) to achieve a positive outcome.

Planning for an External Crisis

- National Incident Management System
  - ICS:
    - Is a basic command structure for the organization
    - Specifies coordination of tasks between the incident commander (IC) and the section chiefs or functional workgroups and personnel on scene
    - Promotes effective communication regarding how the scene will be managed
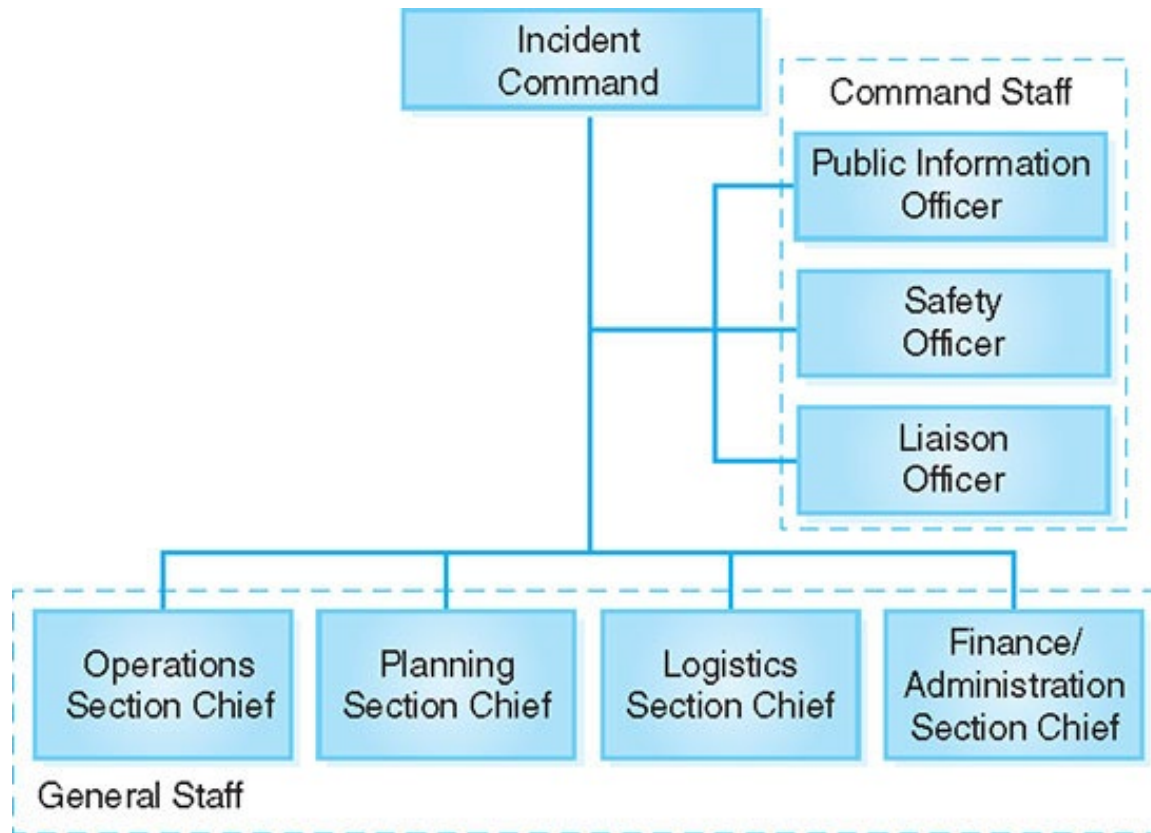
Planning for an External Crisis

- National Incident Management System
  - ICS existed well before NIMS was created, having originated after a series of California wildfires occurred in the 1970s.
  - NIMS was introduced by the federal government after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, with the goal of creating a standardized ICS, thereby achieving effective coordination, collaboration, communication, and interoperability among organizations on the scene of multijurisdictional crisis events.

Planning for an External Crisis

- National Incident Management System
  - As an incident grows and additional responders and resources are dispatched to assist with operations there, a coordinated approach is needed to align the necessary personnel and equipment resources and manage the scene.
  - It is imperative to consolidate all agencies involved in the response of a crisis situation under one organized, unified command structure.

Planning for an External Crisis

- National Incident Management System
  - During a moderate- to large-scale incident, multiple agencies will respond to the scene.
  - Rather than each of these agencies working independently, the ICS calls for the senior commanding officer for each agency to unify and establish a single command center.
  - When there are at least two commanding officers from different organizations working together and sharing command authority as one command center, the situation is referred to as unified command.

Planning for an External Crisis

Figure 8-4 Incident command system structure.

Planning for an External Crisis

- National Incident Management System
  - In addition to the necessary personnel, certain elements will be required in managing an incident with the ICS.
  - The first is an incident command post (ICP) or emergency operations center (EOC).
  - At this central location, the leadership team can confer and determine how best to execute the organization's crisis management plan and address the current crisis.

Planning for an External Crisis

- National Incident Management System
  - Once the plan is approved by the IC, it is formalized into an incident action plan (IAP) and shared with personnel involved in the incident.
  - The IAP may be updated every 8, 12, or 24 hours, or as needed to meet the needs of the operation.

Planning for an External Crisis

- National Incident Management System
  - It is within the ICS where detailed objectives and IAPs are created to appropriately manage the crisis.
  - As an EMS officer, you can incorporate incident command and other crisis management courses into the organization's educational plan so that personnel will be better prepared when asked to use these skills.
  - Every member of the organization, but especially those in leadership roles, must attend NIMS training to learn how to manage risks and crises should they occur.

Managing the Crisis

- When determining how best to manage an internal or external crisis, it all starts with having a well-designed and thorough crisis management plan in place.

- Being able to anticipate, identify, manage, and monitor organizational risks and hazards is as important as managing a crisis.

Managing the Crisis

- Management of a crisis should follow these basic steps:
  - Avoid the crisis.
  - Confirm the crisis.
  - Implement the crisis management plan.
  - Contain the crisis.
  - Resolve the crisis.
  - Conduct a post-crisis analysis.

Avoid the Crisis

- Although handling a crisis well is an important skill, it is much better to avoid the crisis in the first place, if at all possible.

- When attempting to avoid a crisis, make it a point to conduct crisis review audits— inspections of the organization's current operational risks, processes, systems, weaknesses, and threats.

Avoid the Crisis

- Using SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis to identify specific risks and potential crisis situations will be extremely valuable in attempting to avoid a crisis.

- During such an analysis, the EMS officer and the crisis management team can review the organization's weaknesses and threats to identify and manage any potential risks or a crisis brewing on the horizon.

Avoid the Crisis

- After completing the SWOT analysis and determining the areas of risk that are most likely to lead to crisis events, the EMS officer or other organizational leaders must prioritize the activities taken in response to the results from most severe to least severe.

- This will set a priority for which risks should be monitored, managed, or eliminated first.

Avoid the Crisis

- Furthermore, in an attempt to avoid a crisis, the EMS officer must make it a priority to receive input from organizational team members, the crisis team, and organizational leaders.

- This will allow for a "big picture" approach and will assist in identifying key areas that might otherwise be missed within a specific functional workgroup or the organization as a whole.

Confirm the Crisis

- Confirming the crisis is important because it provides the "go/no go" decision-making point for implementation of the crisis management plan.

- There is a delicate balance between anticipating a crisis and jumping to conclusions before a crisis event is confirmed.

Confirm the Crisis

- You should not hold off on activating the crisis management plan if there will be a delay in confirming the crisis.

- You can always discontinue the activation of the crisis plan and immediate response.

Confirm the Crisis

- Crisis confirmation hinges on the answer to the following question:
  - Does the event threaten harm to one or more individuals, the community, the organization, and/or the organization's stakeholders?
- Once that question has been answered, you must:
  - Determine the hazards that are the root cause of the crisis
  - Begin mitigating the situation

Implement a Crisis Management Plan

- Crises can occur at every level of the organization, and the EMS officer must be able to rapidly assess the situation to determine:
  - Whether the crisis is internal or external
  - The root cause of the crisis
  - The impact the crisis will have on external stakeholders, the community, the organization, and internal stakeholders
  - The appropriate crisis plan to mitigate the situation

Implement a Crisis Management Plan

- Management of each crisis event will be different.

- The goal of every crisis plan is the same, however: to provide easy-to-follow information for rapid deployment during a crisis.

Implement a Crisis Management Plan

- For example, there is no need to deploy public safety units or to establish a command system for an internal computer network failure.

- Although this situation can be extremely frustrating and may keep projects from being completed in time, it does not pose any immediate risk to life or property.

Implement a Crisis Management Plan

- Now consider the example of an ambulance accidentally hitting a pedestrian on the way to an emergency.

- Although it is also an internal crisis, this event poses different challenges to the EMS organization.

Implement a Crisis Management Plan

- The organization will need to:
  - Address its response policy
  - Answer questions about the driver
  - Attend to the victim and his or her family members
  - Deal with negative publicity
  - Conduct an investigation to determine any legal ramifications
  - Offer support to the ambulance crew

Implement a Crisis Management Plan

- The network failure and the ambulance incident are two very different internal crisis events, but both can be managed from the same basic crisis management plan.

Implement a Crisis Management Plan

- The EMS officer must consider using the same initial crisis management efforts when managing an external crisis.

- These basic crisis management activities serve as the fundamental framework of both internal and external crisis management:
  - Ensure safety for all personnel.
  - Account for all personnel.
  - Determine the immediate impact zone and ramifications.

Implement a Crisis Management Plan

- Basic crisis management activities (cont.):
  - Attempt to determine the root cause of the crisis and hazards.
  - Ensure that resources are requested immediately.
  - Prepare to deploy the crisis management goals, objectives, strategy, and tactics.
  - Establish the ICS as needed.
  - Brief the PIO.

Implement a Crisis Management Plan

- Basic crisis management activities (cont.):
  - Determine how the organization will communicate with internal and external stakeholders.
  - If the crisis is the result of the organization's action and has impacted life or property, be upfront and transparent with those who are affected by the incident.

Implement a Crisis Management Plan

- Basic crisis management activities (cont.):
  - Take control by demonstrating a command presence, working with team members, and collaborating with other organizations to achieve resolution of the crisis.
  - Provide support for personnel if the crisis event has resulted in an extended operation.

Implement a Crisis Management Plan

- These activities help determine the best approach for mitigating the crisis.
- The leadership team is responsible for making sure that these crisis management activities take place as part of the strategic planning process, training, and postincident review.
- In doing so, they will ensure that:
  - The plan is up-to-date
  - Organizational members are well informed

Implement a Crisis Management Plan

- In a crisis situation, time will be critical—and there will be no time to play catch-up if the crisis is not addressed promptly.

- Take care of all those involved in the crisis.

- As the EMS officer, you will be expected to provide answers, especially during a crisis situation.

Contain the Crisis

- After initially implementing the crisis management plan, the EMS officer (or, in large events, the IC) must immediately work on:
  - Containing the crisis
  - Preventing it from causing more damage

Contain the Crisis

- In a crisis situation, the EMS officer should:
  - Request resources immediately and as needed to contain the crisis
  - Allow the team to do the work they have been trained to do
  - Not be afraid to ask for help or input from other organizations and from colleagues who have experienced similar incidents

Contain the Crisis

- The EMS officer should acknowledge that he or she will need to rely on the team.

- This does not remove any of the responsibility of being in charge, but as the managerial leader you have to trust your people, especially if you are unfamiliar with certain aspects of the operation.

- Surround yourself with talented team members and let them do their jobs, especially during crisis situations.

Resolve the Crisis

- Bringing closure to a crisis begins with:
  - Taking a snapshot of the crisis
  - Noting the events, actions, and outcomes
  - Ensuring that every detail has been addressed and resolution has been accomplished

Resolve the Crisis

- As the situation evolves, the EMS officer must ask whether the crisis is still a crisis.

- If an unstable condition still exists and has the potential to harm individuals, the community, or the organization, it is still a crisis.

Resolve the Crisis

- Questions to consider when determining whether the crisis has been resolved and what to do during this phase:
  - Does the crisis still pose a threat to the organization, internal and external customers, or the community?
  - Is the crisis still active in one or more areas?
  - Are all team members accounted for?
  - Is the leadership team available to answer questions?
  - Are there legal concerns?

Conduct a Post-Crisis Analysis

- Depending on the crisis, an investigation may follow the crisis resolution.

- When an organization is responsible for a crisis, an internal investigation is required.

- Organizational leaders must ensure transparency in their investigation if the crisis negatively impacted customers and the community.

Conduct a Post-Crisis Analysis

- This transparency can be facilitated by enlisting nonorganizational members to become part of the investigative team, so that the results will be impartial and unbiased.

- Acknowledge when your organization makes a mistake.

- This willingness to admit fault demonstrates to customers and the community that the organization is doing its best to care for its customers.

Conduct a Post-Crisis Analysis

- After a large incident, an after-action report must be completed.

- It is typically created by the crisis management team or someone designated by the team who was involved in the overall operation.

Conduct a Post-Crisis Analysis

- This report must answer a series of key questions:
  - What happened?
  - What went right?
  - What went wrong?
  - What can be improved upon?

Conduct a Post-Crisis Analysis

- Learn from the experience of the crisis and how it was managed.

- Review the actions of the crisis management team and the content of any SOGs.

- Making adjustments in these areas is more easily done when a crisis is fresh in your mind.

Effects of Crisis on the Organization

- It is not enough just to manage and contain the crisis at hand.

- There may be additional, related issues that can turn into crises if they are not handled quickly.

Effects of Crisis on the Organization

- Keep your eyes open during a crisis, and you will see that there is more going on beyond the original crisis that needs to be remedied.

- If negative allegations are made, you will need to deal with them immediately.

- In the era of social media, once a negative message begins to gain traction, it will be difficult to contain.

Effects of Crisis on the Organization

- If a crisis situation is handled well, however, it can be a boon to the organization.

- An efficiently mitigated crisis can improve or reinforce an organization's reputation and brand.

- It can also improve confidence and teamwork in the organization's personnel who have brought a crisis situation to a successful resolution.