

## 6 CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

The primary aim of Riyadh Air's Crisis Communications strategy is to mitigate and minimize any actual or potential adverse impact of a crisis on the airline's image, reputation, and business continuity. At the core of such a strategy is the understanding that mitigation should always be accomplished honestly, ethically and with the appropriate degree of care and compassion.

Corporate Communications (including any contracted Public Relation (PR) agencies/reputation consultant) need to be very familiar with the contents and requirements of this document and must also be aware of the various roles and responsibilities which they will almost certainly be called upon to perform - in the event of a catastrophic aircraft accident (or similar) directly or indirectly involving Riyadh Air.

Furthermore, the world-wide and real time nature of Riyadh Air operations means that emergency communications operations cannot be the sole responsibility of the corporate communications department at Riyadh Air. Such responsibility (to an appropriate, delegated and closely controlled degree), extends to all locations of the airline's network - and to nominating people at such locations. The airline's management shall ensure that all such nominated persons at all such locations are competent, proficient, and appropriately resourced in this matter.

## 6.2 CRISIS COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The primary aim of the Riyadh Air Crisis Communication Strategy in responding to a catastrophic aircraft accident or major incident is to mitigate and minimize any actual or potential adverse impact of an emergency on Riyadh Air's image, reputation, and business continuity. by ensuring that the company is perceived as handling the incident with control, competence, care, compassion, and honesty. This will be achieved by:

1. Competently and quickly providing and updating accurate, authoritative, and appropriate levels of information to the media, employees, victims and associated families, relatives, and friends together with other appropriate stakeholders.
2. Providing PR advice to colleagues within the company (or associated closely with Riyadh Air e.g. contracted PR Agents; company representatives at airports etc.), to assist them in the overall handling of the incident or issue.
3. Providing an initial (holding) press release as soon as possible post emergency occurrence within one hour or less.
4. Following release of the initial (holding) press release, updated information should be subsequently given out at regular intervals as soon as possible - with press releases expected to be issued around every hour or two (and possibly at even shorter intervals) during the early phase of a major emergency.
5. Press conferences will generally be arranged jointly (if appropriate and depending on where the emergency has taken place) with relevant airport authorities, police, other emergency services, government level agencies etc. with the aim of having the first press conference within two to three hours of accident occurrence.
6. Riyadh Air may need to hold the first press conference alone if other parties involved will not be in a position to participate at that time but as a minimum, such parties should at least be consulted prior to such action, if practicable to do so.
7. Where appropriate, at least one member of the Communication Team (possibly more depending on circumstances) will deploy as part of the Go Team - and will then be responsible for overseeing Riyadh Air's 'local' (on-site) emergency communications response operation.
8. Suitably trained and selected company spokespersons, of sufficient seniority and / or experience and with the appropriate 'skills', will normally be the 'face and voice' of Riyadh Air at 'home country' press conferences; media interviews; public meetings etc.
9. Media interviews (via TV, radio, telephone etc.) will be arranged on an 'as required / as requested' basis.

# EMERGENCY RESPONSE MANUAL

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10. It is important to bear in mind that media interest in any catastrophic aircraft accident will be global and not just limited to the country/countries where Riyadh Air Office and / or the accident site are located.
11. A vital contribution to successful emergency communications will be effective use of the internet. Following a catastrophic aircraft accident, the normal Riyadh Air website(s) will probably be converted to a pre-planned / pre-prepared 'Dark Site'. This site will be constantly updated with the latest press releases, essential information for public and media use in contacting the airline, a selection of fact sheets, FAQs etc.
12. The use of 'social communications' / social networking / social media etc. will play a vital role in the Emergency Communication Strategy.

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## 6.3 PREPARING THE CRISIS COMMUNICATION PLAN (CCP)

### 6.3.1 Step 1 – Selection of Personnel

1. Select appropriate personnel who are aware of the scope of the Crisis Communication Plan.
2. Ensure they are trained with respect to Riyadh Air requirements.
3. Always select a minimum of two personal for a particular responsibility to ensure availability at any time.

### 6.3.2 Step 2 – Develop Suitable Press Release Templates

1. Template should be developed and documented.
2. Template should cover a wide variety of scenarios.
3. Get pre-approval on template from the Riyadh Air management.

### 6.3.3 Step 3– Develop The Online Communication Strategy

Pre-plan resources for effective and efficient use of the company website, including the dark site and social media like Facebook, Twitter LinkedIn, Instagram etc.

### 6.3.4 Step 4 – Nomination of Company Spokespersons

1. Identify and put together a team of senior executives able to carry out the role of “airline spoke personal” at the time of any emergency.
2. It is desirable that the CEO and/or the Head of Marketing be a part of this team.
3. Staff with appropriate attitudes and abilities should be considered.

### 6.3.5 Step 5 – Training and Validation

1. All the staff identified for the Crisis Communication Team should be trained.
2. Ensure that the recurrency of the training is implemented.
3. Document all the training records.

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### 6.4 MEDIA COMMUNICATION COORDINATOR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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## 6.4 MEDIA COMMUNICATION COORDINATOR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### 6.4.1 General (Preliminary Stage)

1. Ability to react immediately to an emergency situation message 24 / 7.
2. Establish own internal emergency alerting and activation system.
3. Prepare, document, and maintain Crisis Communications Plan.
4. Resource, establish and equip a 'fit for purpose' Media Coordination Centre.
5. Establish a pool of appropriately trained spokespersons.
6. Develop templates for press releases / statements.
7. Pre-prepare appropriate 'fast facts and FAQs.
8. Ensure viability, stability, and capacity of web servers to be used for 'dark site'.
9. Establish a 'social networking' capability e.g. Twitter, LinkedIn,, Facebook etc.

### 6.4.2 SPECIFIC (DURING ACTUAL CRISIS OR EXERCISE)

1. Once informed by CMT activate the Crisis Communications Plan and provide expert advice and support to CMT.
2. Initiate and maintain press release writing (and other written communications) tasks.
3. Initiate, maintain and prioritize communications with 'family, relatives, and friends.
4. Initiate and maintain external (media) communications (Including operation of a 'press office' to take / make calls from / to the media).
5. Initiate and maintain external and internal communications - other appropriate stakeholders.
6. Initiate and manage on-line content (including use of dark site).
7. Initiate and manage social networking / media / communications.
8. Ensure strict co-ordination and consistency across all types of emergency communications.
9. Provide media / press / on-line monitoring function.
10. Provide, advise, and support spokesperson(s).
11. Nominate and dispatch representative to GO Team.
12. Deploy and direct use of contracted third parties for public relations activities.
13. Arrange for translation / interpretation services - as required.

## 6.5 WEB SITE MANAGEMENT – DARK SITE

### 6.5.1 CONTENTS

This is a special site which can be activated almost immediately (within minutes) after notification of an accident and replaces the normal home page on the website. The “dark site” should only be activated in the event of an accident with fatalities.

The instructions for activation of Dark site comes from the CMT to the Media Communication Coordinator (MCC).

The “dark site” should be branded very simply, without any of the colorful logos or images which normally appear on the home page. It should display the latest statement on the situation. Previous statements should be archived and available via a link.

It is designed in such a way that passengers will be able to click through a link to reach the standard home page so they can continue to make online bookings or access other information.

However, all images will be removed from the home page after an accident – for example photos of smiling cabin crew, or promotions involving the route flown by the aircraft involved.

Riyadh Air dark site should contain the following:

1. Pre-approved and emergency related messaging and information such as press release, official statements, appropriate photographs, images, and Link to video of statements made by the CEO or other senior executives.
2. Background information, including Riyadh Air’s response till date.
3. Frequently asked questions (FAQs) / fast facts.
4. Most importantly, update information to those directly affected by the emergency. The latter point generally includes publishing details of contact information (Toll free number), where families, relatives and friends of aircraft accident victims can call to speak to real person who should be able to assist.

### 6.5.2 Updating and Deactivation

1. The website must be updated at regular intervals, especially in the initial stages of the emergency. It must however be ensured, that all information posted on the website is authorized and error free.
2. Passenger manifest and crew name will be posted only after the families have been personally informed and this has been confirmed Head of CMT.
3. The dark site can be de-activated and normal site resumed at any time after the emergency has been controlled and public / media interest has subsided.



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4. This would normally happen three to four days after the event, but normal websites should contain a hyperlink leading back to the dark site, which would continue to be updated for as long as required.

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