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**Communications**

**plan**



Who to communicate with and how to communicate[[1]](#footnote-1)

**Effective communication is essential at all stages of a** **disaster or crisis**: before, during and after. It is important to keep volunteers, staff, members and parents/guardians informed about the potential impact on your club, any closures, reopening timelines and measures being taken to prevent future emergencies or crises.

**Identify the various stakeholders** your club may need to communicate with throughout the course of a disaster. **Use social media platforms and your website** to disseminate information widely. Whenever feasible, engage in face-to-face conversations or phone calls with volunteers, staff or members who may be directly affected by the disaster’s repercussions on your club. **Once your club is operational again, employ creative methods**, such as videos, photos and promotions, **to spread the message.**

Below, you will find a template designed to help you determine who you need to communicate with and the most effective ways to reach them.

| **Stakeholder** | **Communication methods** | **Notes** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Volunteers and staff |  |  |
| Members and parents/guardians |  |  |
| Suppliers or distributors |  |  |
| Banks and insurers |  |  |
| Governing body or association |  |  |
| [Add other stakeholders as relevant] |  |  |

Remember, people want to help you recover so it is important to communicate and let them know what they can do to provide support.

Communication cascades[[2]](#footnote-2)

**A communication cascade is a structured and systematic approach to disseminating information** within a club or a group. It involves relaying information from the top level of the hierarchy (e.g. management committee) down through various layers, **ultimately reaching all relevant individuals**.The process is called a cascade because the **flow of information resembles a waterfall, with messages trickling down from one level to the next**.

The communication cascade is used to **ensure that consistent and accurate information reaches all members of a club in a timely manner**. It helps prevent miscommunication, confusion and the spread of misinformation.

Communication cascades example

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Cascade no. | Responsible parties | Communications actions |
| *1.* | *Disaster Resilience Working Group Chair* | *Receive weather alert update and advise working group* |
| *2* | *Volunteers lead* | *Advise all members and request assistance* |
| *3.* | *Evacuations lead* | *Contact coaches and managers via SMS* |
| *4.* | *Communications lead* | *Post on social media pages* |

Communication cascade template

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Cascade no. | Responsible parties | Communications actions |
| 1. |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |
| 3. |  |  |
| 4. |  |  |
| 5. |  |  |

Suggested messaging[[3]](#footnote-3)

Before a severe weather event - suggested messaging

* We value all of our members and will keep you updated as best we can
* We are well prepared for events like this and have activated our response plan
* Our club will close from (provide details) until it is safe to return and resume operations
* Please stay safe and follow emergency services advice

For clubs responsible for volunteers, staff, members and parents/guardians during an event, provide regular updates and advise them to prepare an emergency kit:

* It is recommended that you prepare an emergency kit including: water in sealed containers; canned food to last three days; can opener; medications; toiletry supplies; torch; mobile phone charger and portable power pack for charging phones; face masks

During a severe weather event - suggested messaging

For clubs responsible for members or guests during a disaster, advise them how to stay safe and where to go if evacuation is required.

* For more information and weather updates please visit (provide details)
* If you are in a life threatening or dangerous situation or require emergency assistance, phone 000 immediately
* Please follow the advice of emergency authorities at all times

After a severe weather event - suggested messaging

Initial recovery

* We have been following authorities’ advice and plan to reopen our club as soon as it is safe to do so
* We wish all of our members a safe recovery

Later recovery

* We are now open and ready to welcome all our members back
* Please be patient with us as we work to resume full operations
* You can continue to contact us on: (provide details)

Keep in mind, this messaging is a suggestion. Tailor the wording to suit your audience.

Bank, utility provider and insurance claim tips – communicating post emergency

Bank tips

* Contact your bank
* Ask your bank about financial hardship options, for example:
  + changing loan terms
  + temporarily pausing or reducing repayments
  + deferring repayments and interest payments (all missed payments and interest will still need to be repaid)
  + waiving or pausing fees and charges
  + consolidating your debt
  + finance to help cover cashflow shortages
  + deferring upcoming credit card payments
  + increasing emergency credit card limits
  + waiving early termination penalties to access term deposits
* Provide loan details (account name and number, payment amounts) and an overview of your financial situation
* Request a hardship variation by using the [sample letter generator](https://financialrights.org.au/sample-letter/letter-requesting-hardship-variation-on-a-consumer-loan-or-lease/) from the Financial Rights Legal Centre to send to your bank
* Your bank must advise you within 21 days about your hardship request. If you can’t negotiate a variation, you can:
  + contact the bank’s internal dispute resolution team
  + visit the [Australian Financial Complaints Authority (AFCA)](https://www.afca.org.au/make-a-complaint) or phone 1800 931 678 to make a complaint, and get free advice and independent dispute resolution

Utility provider tips

* Contact your utility provider’s hardship team
* Ask about hardship payment options for your electricity, gas, phone or water bills following a disaster or emergency

Insurance claim tips

* Contact your club’s SLO
  + Facility insurance can be part of affiliated club’s insurance policy
* Contact your local Council
  + Regardless of who insures the building (the club or Council), Council’s should be aware of claims regarding their community assets

Other disasters

* See [small business disaster hub checklists](https://www.publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/small-business-crisis-hub-resources/resource/9d9bf5cc-0180-429d-8180-805e9f5bd749)

1. Queensland Government. (n.d.). Small business disaster hub. Business Queensland. Retrieved 29 March 2023, from <https://www.business.qld.gov.au/running-business/natural-disaster/disaster-hub/small-business> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Papa, M. J., Daniels, T. D., & Spiker, B. K. (2007). Organizational Communication: Perspectives and Trends (5th ed.). Sage Publications, Inc. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Queensland Government. (n.d.). Small business disaster hub. Business Queensland. Retrieved 29 March 2023, from <https://www.business.qld.gov.au/running-business/natural-disaster/disaster-hub/small-business> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)