

The risk of a crisis or controversial situation is a reality at every Special Olympics event. The likelihood of illness or serious injury to athletes, volunteers or spectators, lost or missing athletes or family members, extreme weather conditions, fire, natural disasters or other emergency situation should be considered by all participants whenever engaged in a Special Olympics activity.

Responding To A Crisis

The challenges in dealing with a crisis situation are several:

- Remaining calm and keeping others calm;
- Keeping perspective and dealing with the crisis effectively;
- Coordinating internal communication and speaking with one voice;
- Avoiding the temptation to withhold information in order to protect the organization.

A well-defined crisis communication plan enables us to manage the present situation, avoid further crisis or controversy, and maintain a positive, professional image.

Crisis Management Team

Special Olympics Washington has identified a Crisis Management Team, consisting of the Chief Executive Officer, Vice President, Sports & Program, Chief Operation Officer, Chair of the Board of Directors, Games Chair, and a legal advisor.

All public communication regarding crisis situations, especially communication with media, will come from members of this team. Under no circumstances should anyone else make any statement to the media regarding a crisis situation. Any inquiries by media or others should be directed to a member of the Crisis Management Team.

Please note that this policy deals with public communication during a crisis, not such things as personal safety or evacuation issues. As coaches or key volunteers, your first priority is to act in the interest of any persons at your venue who are affected or potentially affected by the situation at hand.

In most cases, your first contact should be with venue managers, medical personnel or Special Olympics staff on site.

Whom Do You Call?

In case of an actual crisis situation, after medical personnel have been called to the scene, one of the following individuals should be contacted immediately. (Attempt to contact in the order listed.)

John Borgognoni

V-P, Sports & Program

206.334.0340

The above individuals will contact members of the Crisis Management Team, and they will determine the appropriate course of action, prepare a statement and designate a spokesperson to respond to media inquiries.