



Watauga Humane Society Crisis Communication Plan

Crisis Communication Plan Team
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Tested: _____

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Purpose*

The Watauga Humane Society's crisis communication plan includes a detailed outline of roles, responsibilities and protocols that will be essential to the organization during a crisis. In a crisis, the most crucial priority is the health and safety of the animals that live in the shelter, as well as our staff and volunteers.

Although, any crisis will require its own unique set of specifications, and it's impossible to plan for every situation, this plan will attempt to supply essential information such as locations, contacts, and procedures that will allow the organization to respond as effectively as possible. Some possible crises that could affect the Watauga Humane Society include fire, weather damage, disease outbreak, shelter overpopulation, lawsuit, and loss of funding.

1.2 *Objectives*

- To ensure health and safety of sheltered animals
- To ensure health and safety of employees and volunteers
- To ensure that both animals and people have essential tools and supplies
- To communicate quickly and effectively to all key publics and officials
- To work with local media to efficiently relay correct and important information
- To keep the community updated and as informed as possible

1.3 *Possible consequences*

If this crisis plan is not put into place or is not followed correctly, the result could be lack of general preparedness or lack of supplies, as well as the endangerment of animals, staff, volunteers or even fatality.

2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

By signing this statement, I verify that I have read this crisis communication plan and am prepared to put it into effect.

President and CEO

(Signature and date)

Vice President and CFO

(Signature and date)

Crisis Team Signatures

(Signature and date)

Vice President

(Signature and date)

Office Manager

(Signature and date)

3. REHEARSAL DATES

The crisis communication plan should be discussed twice a year every six months. There should be one thorough walkthrough of the plan at the beginning of February and one brief walkthrough at the beginning of August.

4. CRISIS TEAM

Laurie Vierheller, Executive Director

Main Spokesperson

Phone: 828-264-7865

Email: director1.whs@gmail.com

Charles Duke, Board President

Crisis Management Director

Phone: 828-265-4558

Email: whs.duke1945@gmail.com

Christy Watson, Adoption Center Manager

Crisis Management Assistance

Phone: 828-773-2646

Email: acmanager1981@gmail.com

Gilda Gordon, Administrative Support

Crisis Management Assistance and Main Writer

Phone: 828-773-4075

Email: asstwataugahumanesociety@gmail.com

5. KEY PUBLICS

1. Board members (Enabling Publics)
2. Staff/employees (Functional Publics)
3. Volunteers (Functional Publics)
4. Donors & investors (Enabling Publics)
5. Local media (Diffused Publics)
6. Associated businesses (Normative Publics)
7. Community members (Diffused Publics)

6. NOTIFYING PUBLICS

In the event of a crisis, the following publics should be contacted in the manner indicated in the chart. The chain of command should either come from the Board Director down to staff and community or rise up from staff to the director to the community.

Public	Phone	Email	Social Media	Newsletter	Bulletin Board	Personal Visit	News Release
Executive Director	X	X				X	
Board members	X	X				X	
Staff/employees	X	X	X		X	X	
Donors/investors		X	X	X			X
Local media	X		X			X	X
Electronic media			X			X	X
Associated Businesses	X	X	X			X	
Community members	X	X	X			X	
Other		X	X				

7. EMERGENCY PERSONNEL

Watauga Police Department 1500 Blowing Rock Rd Boone, NC 28607 Media Relations: 828-268-6900 Fax: 828-268-6919 Hours: 24/7	Animal Emergency & Pet Care Clinic 1710 NC-105 Boone, NC 28607 Communications: 828-268-2833 http://www.boonevet.net/ Hours: 24/7
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<p>Watauga Fire Department 721 W King St Boone, NC 28607 Main Line: 828-268-6180 Fire Station 1: 828-268-6190 Hours: 24/7</p>	<p>Watauga Animal Control Department 672 Landfill Road Boone, NC 28607 Communications: 828-262-1672 http://www.wataugacounty.org/ Hours: M-F 8am - 4:30pm</p>
<p>Watauga Medical Center 336 Deerfield Road Boone, NC 28607 Dept. Info: 828-262-4100 https://www.apprhs.org/ Hours: 24/7</p>	<p>Animal Medical Center of Boone 1582 Old 421 S Boone, NC 28607 Communications: 828-264-7007 Hours: M-T, TH-F 7:30am - 5:30pm, W 7:30am – 1pm, 8am - 12pm</p>

8. KEY MEDIA CONTACTS

<p>Watauga Democrat 474 Industrial Park Drive Boone, NC 28607 Phone: 828-264-6397 Email: web@mountaintimes.com http://www.wataugademocrat.com/</p>	<p>High Country Press 1600 Highway 105 Boone, NC 28607 Phone: 828-264-2262 Fax: 828-264-2254 Editor email: ken@highcountrypress.com http://www.hcpres.com/</p>
<p>Mountain Television Network (MTN18) 643 Greenway Road Boone, NC 28607 Phone: 828-262-0990 www.mtn18.com</p>	<p>WATA High Country Radio 738 Blowing Rock Road Boone, NC 28607 Phone: 828-264-2411 Fax: 828 264-2412 http://www.wataradio.com/contactus.html</p>

9. RELATED/AFFECTED ORGANIZATIONS

1. Bare Bones Boutique

2670 Old US 421 South
Boone, NC 28604
Phone: 828-264-7339

2. Rutherwood Baptist Church

Don Hayes Road
Boone, NC 28604
Phone: 828-264-5319

3. Not Half Bad Consignment Thrift

2447 Old 421 South
Boone, North Carolina 28604
Phone: 828-719-8238

10. CRISIS CONTROL CENTER

The main crisis control center will be located in the Education Room at the Watauga Humane Society if the building is still accessible. If not, then the county should be called to see if there is an available government meeting space under their partnership. As a last resort Blue Ridge Electric may have an available meeting room with permission.

11. EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES

- Medical supplies (Disease outbreak and Weather Damage)
- Animal medicine (Disease outbreak and Weather Damage)
- Vet care (Disease Outbreak, Shelter Overpopulation, Loss of Funding, and Weather Damage)
- Pet food (Shelter Overpopulation and Weather Damage)
- Cots (Disease Outbreak, Shelter Overpopulation, Loss of Funding, and Weather Damage)
- Portable generators (Disease Outbreak, Loss of Funding, and Weather Damage)
- Emergency foster homes (Disease Outbreak, Shelter Overpopulation, Loss of Funding, and Weather Damage)
- Volunteers (Disease Outbreak, Shelter Overpopulation, Loss of Funding, and Weather Damage)
- Legal Representatives and County officials (Loss of Funding, Weather Damage, Lawsuit)

12. DOCUMENTS

Example News Release

For Immediate Release

Date _____

Contact: _____
(name/phone number)

Disease Outbreak at Watauga Humane Society

On _____ (date) at _____ (time) an outbreak of _____ (illness) was confirmed and diagnosed by assisting veterinarians of _____ (vet clinic name) at The Watauga Humane Society. There have been ____ (number of deaths) deaths and _____ (number sick) confirmed cases of _____ (type of illness). Additional information will be released on _____ (date) by _____ (time) on their website regarding the status of the animals.

Remembrance ceremonies will be held at _____ (name of park or tranquil place for ceremony) on _____ (date) at _____ (time). Any pre-scheduled adoption procedures will resume once the outbreak has been contained and all animals checked for _____ (illness) for treatment. For additional information, contact _____ (crisis communication team leader).

Employee Contact Information

Name	Title	Phone		Email
Christy Church	Cattery Manager	123-123-1234	F T	example@gmail.com
Chris Eklund	Kennel Manager	123-123-1234	F T	example@gmail.com
Gilda Gordon	Admin. Support	123-123-1234	F T	example@gmail.com
Laurie Vierheller	Executive Director	123-123-1234	F T	example@gmail.com
Ashlee Yepez	Animal Care Social Media	123-123-1234	P T	example@gmail.com
Ryan Mesa	Animal Care	123-123-1234	P T	example@gmail.com
Elizabeth Presnell	Animal Care	123-123-1234	P T	example@gmail.com
Jasmine Wagner	Animal Care	123-123-1234	P T	example@gmail.com
Elizabeth Justice	Animal Care	123-123-1234	P T	example@gmail.com
Jude Bevan	Volunteer Coordinator	123-123-1234	P T	example@gmail.com
Raegan Helms	Animal Care	123-123-1234	P T	example@gmail.com
Tammy Arbogast	Medical Tech	123-123-1234	P T	example@gmail.com
Christy Watson	Adoption Center Mgr	123-123-1234	F T	example@gmail.com

Kaitlyn Arnold	Animal Care	123-123-1234	P T	example@gmail.com
Alex West	Animal Care	123-123-1234	P T	example@gmail.com

13. KEY MESSAGES

We have experienced a disease outbreak within our shelter. The safety of our animals, staff and volunteers are our biggest concern at this time.

We are experiencing high volumes of animal intake and low adoption numbers, resulting in overpopulation. The health and safety of our current animals are our first priority.

Our shelter has experienced damage from a _____ (fire/weather disaster/etc). The health and safety of our animals, staff and volunteers are our biggest concern at this time.

We are currently experiencing financial problems due to low funding. The health and safety of our current animals continues to be our first priority.

In regards to our current crisis situation, we urge you to visit our website and social media pages to find out more information.

14. WEBSITE

Example Web News Release:

Recently, Watauga Humane Society has encountered an outbreak of _____ (illness listed here) and is doing everything in its power to ensure the health and safety of all animals and employees. In our efforts to do so we ask that our visitors and volunteers remain at home until a veterinary deems the outbreak has been contained and treated. If your _____ (type of animal vulnerable) has visited the Watauga Humane Society recently, we urge that you have your _____ (pet type) checked for _____ (illness here) in order to combat the spread of _____ (type of illness).

We will continue releasing information on our website and social media as we receive it in order to keep the public informed. Additional information on _____ (type of illness) can be found here. [http://\(insert helpful medical link here\)](http://(insert helpful medical link here)). We appreciate our community support and the concerns by the community for all the animals. At this time there has been ___ recorded deaths and ___ diagnosed with _____ (illness). Remembrance ceremonies of those lost will be held on _____ (date) at _____ (name of park for ceremony) park. We continue to

encourage the community to reach out through phone (828-264-7865), though email (director1.whs@gmail.com), or through social media.

In Memory of: (Names of animals that died here)

15. SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/WataugaHumaneSociety>

<https://www.facebook.com/WataugaHumaneSocietyDiamondDogs>

<https://www.facebook.com/BareBonesBoutiqueThriftShop>

These are the current Facebook pages related to the Watauga Humane Society. They should be monitored and updated first in the event of a crisis.

Twitter

<https://twitter.com/WataugaHumane>

The Watauga Humane Society's Twitter account should also be updated with a key message in the event of a crisis.

Instagram

<https://instagram.com/wataugahumanesociety/>

It would be wise to also monitor and update pictures related to crisis situations; i.e. Pictures of volunteers helping animals to show that action is being taken, to show appreciation of helpers, and to show care for the animals.

Watauga Democrat

<http://www.wataugademocrat.com/>

The Watauga Democrat is the first news coverage site one should monitor due to their popularity and local relevancy.

High Country Press

<http://www.hcpress.com/>

This is another popular local news coverage team in the area and would be one of the first teams on the scene of a crisis.

WASU Radio

<http://wasuradio.com/>

The local university radio may inform students of a crisis at Watauga Humane Society due to many student volunteers.

YikYak App

<http://www.yikyakapp.com/>

YikYak has proven to be a popular tool to monitor underground local news in college towns. From everything to roadblocks to gossip.

WBTV 3 Regional News Charlotte

<http://www.wbtv.com/>

Since we do not have many television stations directed specifically for Boone, it would be best to look at regional television news coverage station's websites.

Mountain Television Network 18 News

<https://www.facebook.com/MTN18NEWS>

A television news station located here in Boone; This would most likely be the first news team to get the report on a local crisis.

WSOCTV News Channel 9 Charlotte

<http://www.wsoc.tv.com/s/news/community/watauga/>

This is another news station covering Watauga news headquartered in Charlotte. It claims it is one of the most popular news stations in Charlotte.

16. TRICK QUESTIONS

Disease Outbreak

- What was the cause of the disease outbreak?
 - We are currently investigating the origins of the outbreak and will release that information by the end of the week.
- How could you have prevented the disease from spreading?
 - We have strict procedures once there is evidence for a disease outbreak and we are taking the necessary steps to quarantine sick animals.
- How many animal lives were lost?
 - We are still collecting the data but as of right now ___ (number of animals lost) have passed away and we have memorial services plans in process.
- How are you going to take steps to prevent other crises like this in the future?
 - We are always updating our crisis communication plan and continue working on our partnerships with local veterinary clinics to keep our animals up-to-date on all shots and for routine shelter check-ups.

Shelter overpopulation

- How many animals are currently living at your shelter?
 - ___ (number of animals living at shelter) are currently being cared for at the shelter.
- Do you know why there has been a decrease in animal adoptions?
 - Animal adoptions can be affected by multiple factors. Animal adoption is a long-term commitment and many prospective owners fail to take that responsibility seriously.
- How are you going to continue to take in animals from animal control if you are running out of space?
 - We do our best to serve the community and are required by law required to take in all animals. With the help of our amazing volunteers we are able to care for all animals both in and out of the shelter.

Weather Damage

- Were any animals or people hurt when the damage occurred?
 - ___ (number of animals injured or lost) have been hurt/lost during the disaster. We have an animal evacuation plan and followed our procedures and to save the remaining ___ (number saved) lives.
- How are you going to cover the cost of repairs?
 - We rely heavily on the help of the local community for donations through both adoption and voluntarily. We also can ask help from the county.
- Had you prepared for [the bad weather] beforehand?

- We are always prepared for disaster and again followed our procedures to mitigate any damage caused by the storm/fire.

Loss of Funding

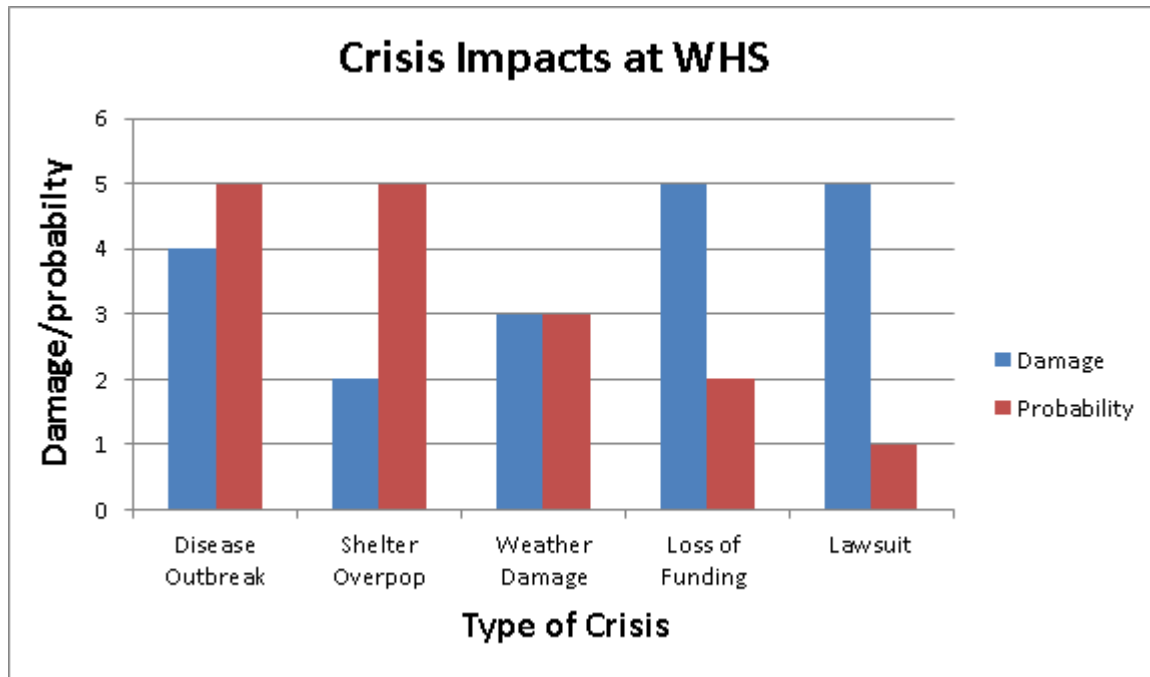
- How are you going to continue paying off your loan for the shelter?
 - We know that it is always a battle to find funds for the shelter but the costs of the animal's health and safety always comes first.
- How are you going to attempt to increase funding?
 - We hope to raise awareness in the community and ask the community to help in any way they can.
- Is there a possibility that the shelter would be closed down?
 - We will do everything in our power to keep the animals here before having to designate foster homes with volunteers.
- If the shelter is closed down, what would happen to the animals?
 - The animals always come first; therefore we would again have foster homes designated within the staff and outreach to the community.

Lawsuit

- Were you aware that [the person suing] was displeased with your organization?
 - The animals and our community is our first priority. We strive to create meaningful relationships between people and animals. We go out of our way to care for the health and safety of both people and animals.
- If you were aware, what steps did you take in addressing this person's concerns?
 - Many of us were/were not aware of this issue and couldn't have/could have addressed it any differently/differently. We are aware of the situation and we want to correct the issue, as well as, mitigate anything like this in the future.

17. PRODROMES

18.1 Crisis Inventory and Results



18.2 Warning Signs of a Possible Crisis

Disease Outbreak

- Abnormal symptoms in animals
- Certain patterns of sickness in animals
- Abnormal amount of deaths

Shelter overpopulation

- Sudden rise in animal intake
- Sudden decrease in animal adoptions
- Not enough pet food or supplies for animals

Weather Damage

- Severe weather
- Lightning strike
- Power surges or outages

Loss of Funding

- Decrease in donations
- Decrease in adoptions
- Lack of community involvement at events

Lawsuit

- Unsatisfied customer
- Disgruntled employee

18. OTHER RELATED URLS*Watauga County*

This is a valuable resource as the WHS is connected to the county.

<http://www.wataugacounty.org/main/>

Crisis Prevention Training

This website can help employees and staff become certified in crisis management.

<https://training.fema.gov/>

National Animal Rescue and Sheltering Coalition

This organization can help in the event of animal evacuation.

<http://narsc.net/>

Disaster Preparedness for the Humane Society of the United States

A national humane society program that educates on weather disaster relief for animals.

http://www.humanesociety.org/about/departments/disaster_preparedness.html

Weather Disaster Preparedness

More information on animal shelters in the case of a weather disaster.

<http://www.animalsheltering.org/resources/all-topics/disaster-preparedness-and-response.html?referrer=https://www.google.com/>

American Humane Association

Another national humane organization that has valuable information on crisis management related to animals.

<http://www.americanhumane.org/animals/professional-resources/for-emergency-management-professionals/disaster-preparedness.html?referrer=https://www.google.com/>

Employee Suicide Prevention

In the case that any employee is coping with a personal crisis and is contemplating suicide.

<http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

Veterinary Public Health

A national effort towards combating disease outbreaks for animals.

<http://epi.publichealth.nc.gov/cd/diseases/vph.html>

Center for Disease Control Pet Shelters

Another resource about disease control in animal shelters.

<http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/petprotect.asp>

Spokane Falls Example Disaster Preparedness for Pets

An example of crisis planning and management from Spokane Falls, WA.

http://www.spokanefalls.edu/College/Security/_docs/Pets.pdf

American Veterinary Medical Association North Carolina Disaster Preparedness

Helpful tips from AVMA of NC on Disaster Preparation.

<https://www.avma.org/KB/Resources/Reference/disaster/Pages/Disaster-Preparedness-North-Carolina.aspx>

USDA Animal Emergency Disaster Training

Another helpful site on disaster training for employees and tips.

<https://awic.nal.usda.gov/companion-animals/emergencies-and-disaster-planning>

USDA Animal Care Emergency Program Information

Lists multiple support programs for shelters in the case of an emergency.

https://www.aphis.usda.gov/wps/portal/aphis/ourfocus/animalwelfare!/ut/p/a1/04_Sj9CPykssy0xPLMnMz0vMAfGjzOK9_D2MDJ0MjDzd3V2dDDz93HwCzL29jAyCzYAKIvEo8DYITr-zu6OHibmPgYGBiYWRgaeLk4eLuaWvgYGnGXH6DXAARwNC-sP1o_AqAfkArACfE8EK8LihIDc0NMIg0xMAwhVB1g!/?1dmy&urile=wcm%3apath%3a%2FAPHIS_Content_Library%2FSA_Our_Focus%2FSA_Animal_Welfare%2FSA_EP%2F

19. EVALUATION FORM

Evaluation Assessment Form

After a crisis, the following steps will be followed to ensure that The Watauga Humane Society is better prepared for the future. This evaluation determines what went well and what went wrong during the crisis. It covers all aspects of the crisis, including media relations, community relations, and the crisis management team's performance. It is vital to evaluate the company's CCP while the crisis is still fresh in employee's minds. Thinking about all aspects of the crisis will help determine what we can do better next time. All employees should receive a copy of an evaluation form and return a completed evaluation to Laurie Vierheller following completion.

These reports are anonymous.

Date: _____ Time: _____ Initial Report: _____ Update: _____

Describe the incident (i.e., disease outbreak, injury, fire, storm, lawsuit, shelter overpopulation, financial issue):

Indicate when the incident occurred and when crisis personnel first responded:

Describe which crisis groups responded:

Indicate where the incident occurred (building, office location, east or west side of building, outside area, etc.):

Describe the work performed in the building(s) where the incident occurred (i.e. office duties, electrical work, operational duties, etc.):

Estimate the number of employees and animals evacuated:

Estimate the number of employees or animals injured, nature of their injuries (to clarify misleading reports), and where they are being examined/treated (i.e., on-site medical, local hospital/veterinary):

Describe what was done to mitigate the emergency:

Describe what should be done differently in the future:

Rate the effectiveness of the crisis communication plan, as well as, the execution of the plan:

For the communication crisis team only:

Please evaluate the following aspects of the crisis response:

1. Media relations:

- a. Were there areas in which we could have received better or more positive coverage of our company?

- b. Would the coverage have been better if we had taken more time to build strong media relationships before the crisis?

- c. Additional thoughts?

2. Community relations:

- a. Did the community act favorably to how we handled the crisis? If not, what can we do to build better community relations (i.e., public service donations or activities)?

- b. Additional thoughts?

3. Crisis management team:

- a. Did all team members perform well under pressure?

- b. Were there certain members who should have been put “behind the scenes” or on the “front lines” (speaking to media, etc.)?

- c. Should any members be replaced by others should another crisis occur?

- d. Was the crisis control room properly stocked?

- e. Was there anything missing that needs to be ordered or created?

- f. Additional thoughts?