

# Heart of Virginia Council Crisis Communications Plan

## June 2024

### Introduction

A crisis can be anything from a policy challenge or decision in our organization to a natural disaster in our community. All crises have victims and can affect the reputation of our organization. The first minutes and hours of a crisis are the most critical. It is during this timeframe that public and media scrutiny will be at its peak and communication will be particularly important. This period is when the Heart of Virginia Council (HOVC) must demonstrate that we are acting responsibly and decisively to resolve the situation. We will coordinate messaging with all involved parties to unify internal and external communications.

### Education

At least one time per year, the HOVC Board of Directors and staff will be provided with an update on crisis communications. The main purpose of this is to familiarize the interested parties with the chain of command for replying during a crisis. That chain of command is explained below.

At least one time per year, select HOVC Board members and staff will conduct an exercise to simulate a crisis and walk through necessary steps to address the crisis.

### The Crisis Team

During a crisis, the HOVC response team will be engaged:

- George McGovern, Scout Executive (770-468-5600)
- Damian Klute, Board Chair (614-205-4181)
- Paul Kreckman, Council Commissioner (804-338-5698)
- Bill Givler, VP of Program & Communication (804-204-2614)

Crisis Team Responsibilities:

- Update management and support team members
- Recommend action or engage with National Council
- Consider legal, operational, and reputational implications
- Determine the message, its audience, and channel(s) of distribution
- Select/Notify BSA spokesperson:

#### **Scott Armstrong**

Director: National Media Relations and Government Affairs  
Boy Scouts of America, National Council  
Mobile: (315) 439-6139  
Email: Scott.Armstrong@Scouting.org

Key Communications Points:

- Be open and transparent

- Establish a positive relationship with media
- Safety is always first
- Be prepared
- HOVC will never release the names of youth
- In the event you are approached by media:
  - Be friendly
  - Don't say "no comment"
    - Instead, offer to connect the media with the appropriate individuals (the HOVC Crisis Team) for more details
  - Remember everything is quotable
  - Buy yourself time
    - Instead of immediately responding, offer to return their call in a reasonable amount of time
  - Notify the appropriate team members

### **Key Stakeholder Outreach**

In a crisis, it is important to simultaneously engage various stakeholders, including key volunteers, professionals, and the media to keep them informed of the impact the crisis might have or has had on the organization and the actions that are currently being taken to minimize any potential damage.

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