Crisis Communication Policy

A crisis is an unexpected situation or incident posing potential or actual harm to the SOKS reputation and viability. Information or misinformation about any incident that could have a negative impact on the image of SOKS can lead to a crisis situation. While it is not always possible to anticipate or prevent a crisis, the following crisis communication plan will be in place to assist at all levels of the organization.

Dealing With The Crisis

The key to dealing with a crisis and minimizing the effects are:

- Prepare for the unexpected
- Take immediate action when the crisis occurs
- Communicate well with all identified individuals
- Deal with the situation in a calm and factual manner

Step 1 – Notification of SOKS

In case of an emergency, determine whether proper authorities have been notified (police, fire department, rescue squad) before contacting SOKS. The first priority is to prevent further injury and give necessary treatment to individuals who are injured.

In the event of a “crisis” immediately contact:

John Lair, President/CEO  
913-236-9290 ext 104  
cell-913-333-7800

or, if John is unavailable,

Chris Burt, COO  
913-236-9290 ext 107  
cell-785-760-3519

John or Chris will notify appropriate designates in the field.
Step 2 – Fact Gathering

The facts will be gathered from all involved volunteers, etc. for the preparation of an official statement. Under no circumstances should a volunteer attempt to answer questions from the media before the facts are gathered. If questioned, the reply should be:

“A statement will be released by Special Olympics Kansas after the organization has gathered all the facts and had time to review the situation.”

Misinformation and rumors can be extremely damaging to the program. Don’t speculate without facts.

Step 3 – Informing the Media

Materials and media releases will be prepared and distributed to the appropriate parties. SOKS staff will work directly with the Region in developing all media materials. Document all media contact. In order for SOKS to provide timely, accurate and consistent information to the public, no one other than John Lair or their designate should discuss the crisis with media representatives. All questions from the media should be directed and answered by John or their designate.

Step 4 – Insurance

Necessary insurance information and incident report forms will be completed by the involved parties.

Step 5 – Crisis follow-up

Following a crisis, it is important for those involved to evaluate the situation to assure that all information is known. This allows SOKS to determine any possible changes that might be utilized to prevent the crisis from occurring again and to assure the facts remain consistent.