

# 4 CRISIS COMMUNICATION LESSONS LEARNED

## FROM TEXAS WINTER STORM URI

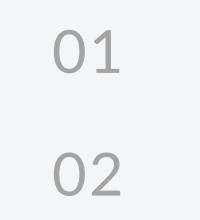
If a blizzard, extreme freeze, icy roads, or other weather event impacts your physical location, results in a power or other outage, or impacts travel for on site employees, how can you best communicate with your team? As we have seen in recent months, it is critical to be prepared and have a crisis communication plan when these major events occur.

Here are 4 lessons to learn from previous winter weather events, surveyed from current communication professionals who navigated Texas Winter Storm Uri.

### NUMBER ONE

## EARLY AND THOROUGH PREPARATION really is key

Review and update your crisis plan and relevant communication drafts yearly. Gather updated recipient data more often.



#### SAMPLE PLAN

- 01 Identify your triggers to deploy messaging.
- 02 Ensure you have accurate contact information for customers, employees, vendors, etc.
- 03 Provide educational tips on how to react to a crisis.
- 04 Prepare your communication subjects and messages in advance and be sure to gather all pertinent data.
- 05 Always have a secondary WiFi connection and alternate battery source so you can deploy messaging.
- 06 Always have an alternate point of contact should your communications manager become a victim to the weather.

*"We include all functions (operations, maintenance, EHS, human resources, procurement, etc.), which in addition to management alignment is key."*

Nicole Peterson, Hexion

### NUMBER TWO

## PRACTICE CRISIS SCENARIOS

Having a plan is critical, and rehearsing it will make it even stronger.



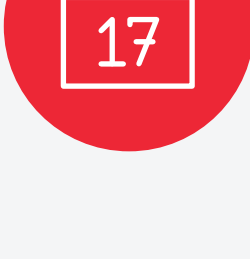
#### TEST YOUR EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS PLANS TO IDENTIFY GAPS

- Who will send notifications and through what channels?
- What audience segments need communication?
- What will the messages say?
- Does this system perform as expected?

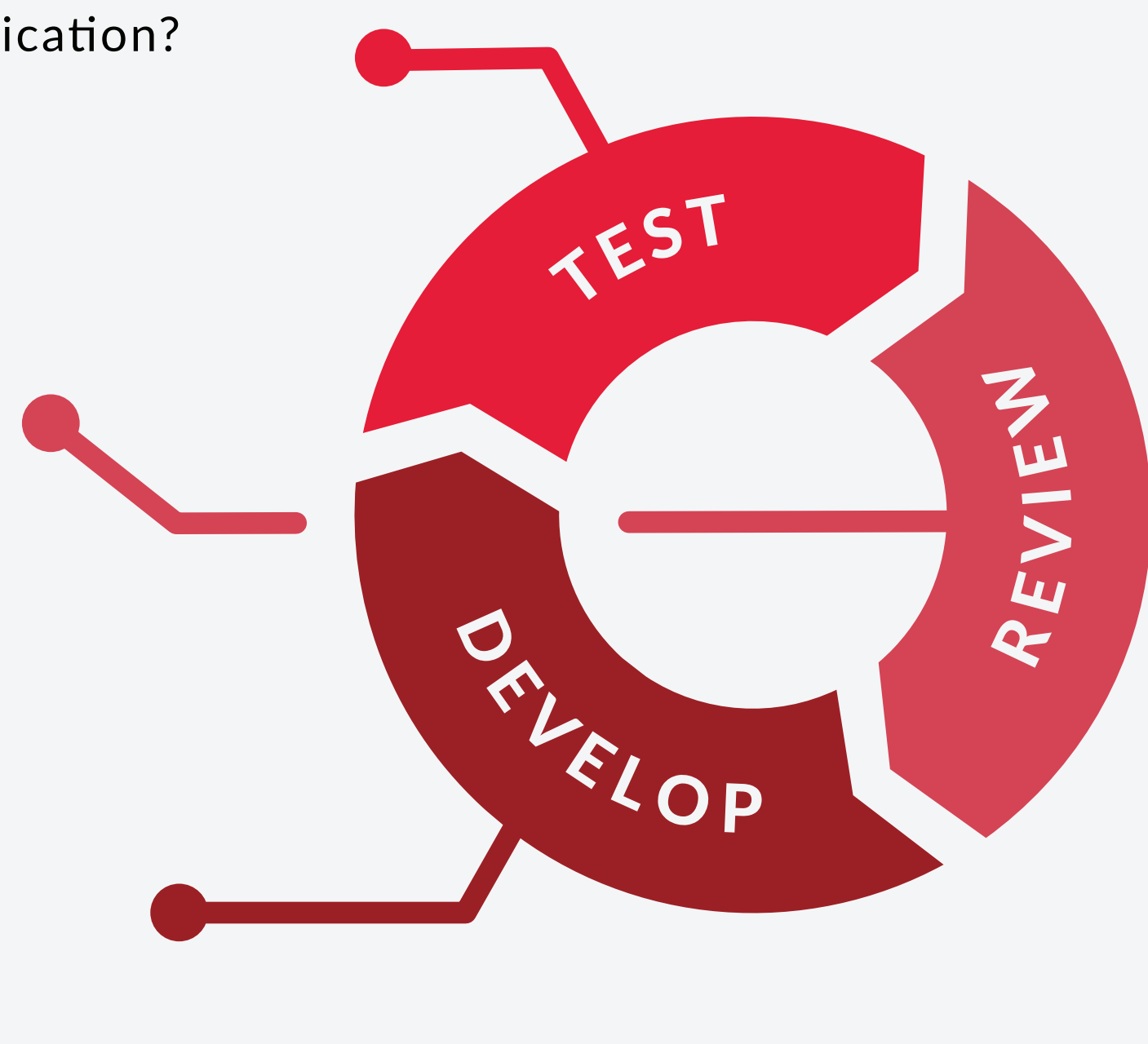


#### REVIEW AFTER PRACTICING AND MAKE PLANS TO IMPROVE

Based on what you learn, be flexible and creative with resources, responses and processes to ensure a solid plan.



#### DEVELOP A CADENCE FOR RUNNING PRACTICES AND TESTS



### NUMBER THREE

## COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY, THROUGH MULTIPLE CHANNELS

#### CONSTANT & CLEAR

Send constant, clear and honest communication to keep everyone up to speed as the situation develops.

#### HONEST, EMPATHETIC, ALIGNED

A cornerstone of good communication is considering your audience and crafting messages that are sensitive to the situation and convey your brand values.

#### USE MULTI-CHANNEL COMMUNICATION

The current workforce is more dispersed, and during an emergency normal modes of communication might not be reliable. This is especially true in a weather event when the Internet and power are disrupted.

*"People need multiple channels of communication, especially when they don't have access to their primary one. During the freeze, we sent out emails, text messages, made phone calls, and posted Facebook notifications. Texting both our residents and our employees was very effective."*

Nieomi King, Fort Hood Family Housing



EMAIL



TEXT AND VOICE CALL



TEAMS MESSAGE, ETC

### NUMBER FOUR

## MONITOR & RESPOND

It is not enough to simply send messages; the next step is to observe employees' reactions and responses.

To gather information from the field in real-time:

ASK FOR AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT

SEND OUT A POLL OR SURVEY

FOLLOW UP WITH ONE-TO-ONE COMMUNICATION WHEN NECESSARY

Planning for a crisis like extreme winter weather is easy to postpone. However, this is exactly the time to prepare. A thorough plan that includes practicing, drafting communications for multiple channels, and a method for monitoring and following up will ensure that your teams are safe and feel confident in leadership's response.

*"Conditions were changing rapidly and that meant that VIA needed a way to quickly get information out to our employees. The RedFlag mass notification software helped us communicate to all of our employees during Uri, even getting messages to the cell phones of our employees when their homes were without power."*

Steve Young, VIA Metropolitan Transit



## WANT TO LEARN MORE?

You can easily deliver action oriented notifications to groups of any size via text, voice, email and more.

Visit

[Pocketstop.com/RedFlag](https://pocketstop.com/RedFlag)

Request your demo today.