

# The Ski Company

# Crisis Management

In conditions of uncertainty, there is a need to incorporate contingencies for the unexpected.



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# What constitutes an emergency situation?

Definitions of an emergency situation vary from company to company.

Situations which could constitute an emergency situation include:

- Aircraft crash, hijacking or terrorist bomb situation
- Building fire or collapse
- Coach, car, train, boat or other transport related incident
- Civil unrest, war, riots, terrorist action, strikes, political or industrial action
- Natural disasters such as avalanches, earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, tsunamis, violent storms, volcanic eruptions
- Serious and widespread medical epidemic or health hazard, such as H1N1, Norovirus outbreaks, Cryptosporidium
- Any other accident or incident resulting in death or injury.

Customer health related issues and medical cases, which may be handled as a matter of routine, have been excluded from this guide.



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# Emergency Response

## Crisis manager

- 1 Assumes control.
- 2 Allocates tasks to crisis team.
- 3 Informs legal team and insurers.

## Incident Location Representative

Provides updates to Crisis Manager.  
Incident log update.  
Liases with Consular officials.  
Compiles on site client details.  
Arranges hospital attendance.

## Public Relations

Management of media information.  
Preparation of press statement.  
Maintains log of journalist contact and response.

## Client Liason

Responds to public / relative calls.  
Liase with authorities.

## Company Staff Update

Collection of information from staff on the ground.  
Production of updates to keep all staff informed.



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## **Planning for an emergency situation**

In order for us to ensure that our business is fully prepared to manage an emergency situation, here is a short evaluation to establish the key risks associated with our business, and the critical functions, departments, divisions and/or individuals within the business, who will be involved in managing emergency situations.

### **The Ski Company**

The Ski Company is a London based tour operator providing winter sports holidays in Switzerland, Austria and Italy.

### **Management**

Gerald Shirt is the business owner and has ultimate responsibility for crisis and emergency management.

Gerald Shirt is the business owner and will have responsibility for managing emergency situations.

When Gerald Shirt is not available, Oliver Jeffery or Emma Duncan-Millicheap are back up.

### **Finance**

The business has not set limits on the funds that can be put aside for managing emergency situations.

Gerald Shirt, Oliver Jeffery and Emma Duncan-Millicheap have the authority to sign off budgets at short notice.

### **Human resources**

The main office represents all departments within the business and will need to be involved in any incident that occurs.

Gerald Shirt, Oliver Jeffery and Emma Duncan-Millicheap have many years of experience in

the industry (over 70 years between them) and with the business, therefore, they will be the best persons to deal with the crisis management situations. In addition, Rebecca Witting, has superb language skills (fluent French and Italian) and is an excellent asset to assist with communication at a local level.

### **Communications**

If the main office is not staffed, senior staff are contactable 24 hours a day; Gerald Shirt, Oliver Jeffery and Emma Duncan-Millicheap.

Gerald Shirt is the owner of the business, he is the main spokesperson and will also manage the media in the event of a crisis.

### **Logistics**

Our main office may not be staffed in the winter so another location will be nominated as the central point in an emergency situation.

All the resources in the Ski Company can be made available in the event of a crisis.

Other than the aforementioned main persons, other members of staff will be on hand to ensure business continuity and that the business is able to manage the crisis and maintain normal business practices.



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## Controlling the incident

When an emergency situation takes place, circumstances will almost certainly dictate that immediate action should be taken. Investigations regarding how the incident or crisis occurred should follow as soon as possible, but after the event.

Staff will be briefed to ensure they know what our core messages are at each stage.

Under no circumstances should anything be said by an employee which may amount to an admission that the incident had been caused, or contributed to, by some fault on the part of the company or employees, agents or suppliers.

All related incident reports, logs and original paperwork connected with the incident are considered to be evidence, which will be required by a number of outside agencies should insurance and litigation matters arise.

Taking full control of the incident and distribution of information is crucial. This can only be achieved by having appropriate procedures in place, which are updated regularly, having trained staff both in the resort and at your company headquarters, and, for handling agents and suppliers that are utilised for in-resort services, to be fully conversant in the role that they will play.

### Emergency response team

You should activate your emergency response team. Example lines of reporting and areas of responsibility for all staff involved in the incident are illustrated in the flow charts overleaf. These can be scaled up or down and adapted to suit the size and scale of the incident.

As a small businesses with limited human resources it may be necessary to draft in external crisis management services and a public relations representative to help manage the process, such as certain services offered by ABTA; this will allow other areas of the business to provide normal operational and business services. Services such as this are offered b

**Contact Details for all of the above are available later in this document.**



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# Managing the emergency situation

## Outline framework

The following information outlines a broad framework which may be adopted in the event of an emergency.

1. As soon as we are notified of an incident, the person who receives the information should complete an incident report form (usually the duty office or operations team member). They will inform our crisis manager.

2. An incident log will be set up immediately and maintained throughout the entire emergency.

3. In the unlikely event that Gerald Shirt is not available, the crisis manager will in most cases be the person most able, qualified and trained to handle such an incident. All staff, both at the crisis location and company head office, should be aware who the appointed crisis manager is.

4. The crisis manager will set up the crisis management team and call in the necessary staff to manage all further communications both internally and externally.

5. The crisis manager will also contact ABTA's destination services team ([destinations@abta.co.uk](mailto:destinations@abta.co.uk)), your company's own legal advisers, and the insurance and public liability companies, to advise them of the emergency situation.

6. If the incident is in a resort other than Crans-Montana, the crisis manager should also be in contact with the local resort team.

7. Communications will be made much easier using the emergency contact list which details direct office lines, mobile numbers and home numbers (**see contact sheet**).

8. It may be possible or even necessary to make arrangements for the a telephone number and/or office/s to be manned 24 hours.

9. The company website will provide succinct information regarding the incident and this information should be kept updated until the incident is closed.

10. The relevant staff members will also be contactable so that information can be accessed.

11. A full list will be obtained of all customers involved in the incident

Depending on the scale of the incident, if appropriate, record cards for each customer will be created from our reservation lists. These record cards will be updated with full details on individuals who received treatment, and regular updates on their progress if injured.

12. The insurance cover held by each customer involved will need to be established.

13. Depending on the incident type, hotels, departure and arrival airports and officials of the airline carrier will be informed.

14. If not already involved in the incident, overseas staff will be briefed

15. We will ensure that all staff are provided with a briefing note detailing the incident and actions being taken. Thereafter, regular briefing note updates should be provided throughout the incident. These briefing documents should include the briefing note number and the date and time it was issued. At the close of the incident the final briefing note should state "final update – incident closed".

16. Arrangements may need to be made to send relatives to the location of the incident. If



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we are funding this process, it is essential that we establish the parameters of the costs we will be covering with the relatives e.g. return flights, hotel accommodation, board basis and transfers. This will help avoid any unnecessary confusion and discussions over reimbursements of expenses at a later stage.

17. Depending on the incident type, arrangements may need to be made to send doctors or counsellors to the location of the incident. Different countries may have restrictions relating to this point; prior research will be invaluable.

18. In the event of fatalities, under no circumstances should the business notify the next of kin. The local police station will be able to assist in communicating to next of kin details of this nature.

19. The crisis management team will, if appropriate, make arrangements for uninjured customers, some may wish to continue with their holiday, others may wish to return home immediately



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## **Incident log**

Each team (or allocated person) who is part of emergency response team model reporting to the crisis manager should keep an ongoing detailed log of actions and conversations that have taken place. This should be updated as developments occur, not at the end of each shift or each day.

When the incident is closed, the original log sheets of each team should be filed together in a central file compiled by the crisis manager. We may consider scanning copies of all documentation and saving them in electronic form.

## **Incident location team (or representative)**

Staff or appointed representative in situ at the time of the incident will assume immediate authority for informing the business at head office and activating the emergency procedure.

Immediate action will include informing local authorities, e.g. police, medical authorities and the local Consulate.

A person will need to be designated as the incident location team leader. They will usually be the most senior person closest to the scene of the incident, or someone sent to fulfil this role from head office.

## **The incident location representative should then:**

- Seek further details of the incident; including how and why it happened
- Compile a list of all customers involved in the incident, their condition and current location
- Be available by telephone at all times in order

to be contactable by the authorities and your business

- Refrain from making any public statements about the incident without prior approval of the crisis manager or public relations team (or person)
- Arrange to visit the injured in hospital and to obtain the necessary documentation from the medical authorities, e.g. death certificates, certificates indicating how the injured may travel home, and case histories including x-rays if possible, in consultation with customers' insurers.
- Obtain receipts for all expenditure connected with the incident which may be required for insurance purposes.
- Maintain a detailed log of all action taken and all conversations held.



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## **Customer information team** **(or representative)**

The allocated representative will compile full details of every customer involved in the incident.

From the moment the public becomes aware of the incident, relatives and friends will want further information, that telephone lines are always available.

If a death or deaths have occurred, then every effort should be made to ensure that next of kin are informed by official police sources. A policy will be established as to whether or not names are released to the press (sometimes this will be on consultation with next of kin, once police have advised them of the fatality). Experience has shown that for distressed relatives, press attention can be extremely unwelcome, but is almost inevitable once names are released.

**The team or allocated representative will also have to be briefed to deal with questions around:**

- The cause of the incident
- The arrangements being made to repatriate the injured or to take next of kin to the location
- Where the incident has occurred
- Insurance cover
- Compensation and liability issues
- Previous instances of such incidents
- How the incident will be prevented from recurring in the future.

Clearly many of these questions can't be answered at this stage and the team or allocated representative should not attempt to do so. Their brief should contain likely questions and suggested answers.

Each resort with customers involved in the incident needs to be informed. This can be done by the customer information team or representative. If, due to the scale of the incident, this is impractical, then information can be published by ABTA in a Destination Services Bulletin and within the Member section of the ABTA website. Only details of the incident would be published with a request that agents contact your business for further details. Customer names would not be published.

In some circumstances it may be appropriate to offer counselling to customers involved in the incident or their relatives. As an ABTA Member you have free 24/7 access to the helpline service offered by the Centre for Crisis Psychology (CCP) who will provide you with advice on appropriate counselling for those involved. Details for the CCP can be found in the Post Incident Management section



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## **Public relations team** **(or representative)**

In an emergency situation, press and media enquiries will flood in from the moment the incident has occurred. For that reason it is essential that clear lines of responsibility are established and communicated. The ABTA destinations services team will be advised.

One person will have overall responsibility for liaison with the PR staff. Reporting lines for approval of statements and other activity should be clearly understood, and a senior staff member will sign off each statement. A person will be nominated as a spokesperson. No other employee, agent or supplier will be authorised to speak to the press on any incident of an emergency nature.

We will maintain a log of all calls received and information given.

An immediate statement will be issued to clarify the known details of the incident. Additional statements should be issued when further accurate information becomes available. This has the dual benefit of demonstrating that your business is the authoritative source of accurate information, and deals only with reliable information.

**When information is available, further statements will be issued and include details on:**

1. What has happened?
2. Where and when?
3. Number of people involved and their condition.
4. What's happening now?
5. What's expected to happen next?
6. What relatives/friends should do?
7. Emergency hotline telephone number.
8. Time of next anticipated statement.

Names of customers involved should not be given to the press until they're unequivocally confirmed and steps have been taken to notify next of kin via the police, and the next of kin have authorised release of the names.

As the situation develops, regular statements should be issued to update the media.

The press representative maybe be extremely busy during the emergency with taking calls from local and national press, radio and television, arranging interviews and updating information.

It should be remembered that once the emergency is over the story may continue, or be resurrected some months later. Any good news associated with the emergency should be used if and when appropriate to re-establish confidence in your business and its public profile.



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## The role of ABTA in an emergency

The role of ABTA in the case of a destination crisis or emergency situation affecting Members is to coordinate information between official bodies, the tour operators and travel agents concerned. ABTA will also coordinate information and provide assistance if needed, and publicly issue an industry-wide or ABTA view if appropriate.

In some cases, the first official notification of an incident that may affect the travel industry as a whole is from ABTA – for example in the case of natural disasters, infectious diseases or civil unrest. The ABTA destination services team monitor world events and liaise with governments and authorities. When events of this nature occur, the ABTA destination services team is alerted and will prepare a Destinations Bulletin or send an ABTA emergency text alert to Members who have registered for this service, and the ABTA crisis response team. It is therefore essential that your business has subscribed to receive these services. Contact [destinations@abta.co.uk](mailto:destinations@abta.co.uk) providing the following information:

- Contact names and job title
- Company name • Company's ABTA number
- Email address
- Contact number.

In the event of an emergency situation affecting one Member, whilst the management of the situation is the responsibility of the member concerned, the destination services team can provide assistance and advice where appropriate and signpost the business to specialist organisations that can provide further assistance. They will coordinate ABTA's statements with the Member involved in the incident.

If your organisation is involved in an emergency situation (one that affects only your business or those that impact your business and the wider industry) the crisis manager from the your emergency response team handling the incident

should inform the ABTA destination services team immediately by email, providing as much information possible, including:

1. Details of the incident.
2. Where and when it occurred.
3. Number of customers involved and their condition.
4. Staff welfare.
5. Whether the Foreign Office global response team has been advised.
6. Emergency hotline number for customers.
7. What relatives/friends should do?
8. Details of support and assistance required (if appropriate).
9. Copy of your press statement.
10. Contact details of the crisis manager.

A member of the destination services team is available on a 24 hour basis and can be contacted by emailing [destinations@abta.co.uk](mailto:destinations@abta.co.uk).

When advised of an incident, the destinations services team will notify the ABTA's internal crisis team of the details and the actions being taken. The media invariably contact the ABTA communications team as part of their research on an emerging crisis news story and presentation of the facts in an effective and constructive way is enhanced if ABTA is fully briefed. ABTA will not comment directly on the incident or the action being taken by a particular travel provider. Our comments will be confined to the overall implications, the protection and rights of the holidaymaker, and general information on relevant subjects.

In addition to calls from travel agents and journalists, members of the public ring ABTA either for information regarding passengers involved in the incident, or for reassurance about the resort, the carrier or the travel provider involved. It is essential that we are kept up-to-date with your organisations core messages and press statements. The ABTA team will update the ABTA website with details of the incident with a link to your official statement.



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# Post incident management

Following the incident, when the need for daily administration of the emergency situation is over, the crisis manager should collate all data from each of the information teams.

The original log sheets of each team, copies of the briefing notes, press statements, customer record cards together with all other pertinent material should be filed in a central file compiled by the crisis manager.

We will make electronic copies of all relevant documentation.

Where changes of travel advice have affected your programmes, it is recommended to keep copies of the various Foreign and Commonwealth Office travel advice or ABTA Destination Services Bulletins to identify when the advice changed.



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## **Customer care**

Crisis and emergency incidents affect people in different ways, it may be appropriate to consider writing to each customer who was involved in the incident when they're safely home and once the incident is over, expressing the regret of the company that their holiday has been marred in this way. This should be considered on a case by case, incident by incident basis.

## **Destination support**

In certain circumstances it may be appropriate for your business to express thanks to local authorities, tourism officials, hospitals, particular organisations or even individuals whose contribution in managing and supporting the incident was particularly helpful or whose actions may have saved lives or prevented unnecessary distress.

## **Team support**

Your team members are an integral part of managing crisis and emergency situations. It is essential that their efforts are recognised not just those involved in the incident, but those who have been operating 'the business as usual' part of your organisation. However when team members have been dealing with a crisis or emergency situation, in particular those involved in the incident directly, once the incident is over they may display signs of stress or post incident trauma. It is essential that consideration be given to providing all team members involved with specialist counselling. All ABTA Members have free 24/7 access to the helpline offered by CCP – the Centre for Crisis Psychology. Depending on the scale and type of incident, CCP will be able to advise you on the most appropriate service that could be offered to those involved.

## **Review of emergency procedures**

As soon as possible afterwards, the crisis manager should conduct a de-brief of the incident and the emergency procedures to establish what worked well, what could have been handled differently and any key learning points.

Your business's emergency procedures should be updated accordingly and any alterations to the established procedure should be dated and allocated the latest version number and be issued to all staff and business partners with clear instructions that the document supersedes the version currently in circulation.

## **The Centre for Crisis Psychology**

The Centre for Crisis Psychology (CCP) is the leading provider of trauma response and psychological services to the travel industry. For over 20 years, CCP has helped businesses demonstrate their duty of care and moral responsibilities by responding to more than 5,000 incidents. Over 1,500 of these have been in the travel industry.

In agreement with CCP, all ABTA Members have free 24/7 access to the CCP telephone helpline. This provides advice on how resort-based and UK-based staff can effectively support customers and staff in the aftermath of traumatic or tragic events, both overseas and in the UK.

This service also gives any ABTA Member easy access to CCP's trauma response services. These services include highly experienced full-time trauma consultants who can travel wherever their services are required, and a 24/7 telephone-based counselling service.

To use the ABTA free helpline or to access the trauma response services, call the CCP 24 hour helpline on 0800 005 3700.



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# Important Contact Information

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