

	Gasóga na hÉireann/Scouting Ireland			
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<b>Scouting Ireland – Crisis Management Procedure Guidelines</b>				

This document outlines the necessary steps to be taken by Scouting Ireland in the event of occurrence of a crisis.

The focus of this procedure is the support and welfare of our Scouts, Scouters and Scouting Ireland as a whole.

The definition of a “crisis” for the purposes of this document and procedure is the occurrence of an extra-ordinary event which requires the immediate reaction of the Association and which could not be attended to by an officer of the Association as it falls outside that officers usual operational remit or where an officer determines that it would be inappropriate for him/her to react given the extra-ordinary nature of the event and where reaction is required before the next scheduled meeting of the National Management Committee or National team for Policy Implementation and Co-ordination.

The Chief Executive Officer, in conjunction with the Chief Scout or the National Secretary are tasked to manage the crisis/critical incident pending the notification of the crisis. This process also involves the briefing of the Communications Commissioner in respect of the crisis.

### **Types of Crisis**

Most crises scenarios from a Scouting Ireland perspective are likely to centre on the safety of a Scout(s) (young person or young people), the safety of a Scouter(s) (adult leader or leaders) or an occurrence at a particular event or location involving one or more of the above.

### **Some likely crises could be the following:**

- A Scout or Scouter is seriously or fatally injured whilst on a Scout activity
- A large group of Scouts and Scouters injured whilst on an activity (i.e.; lost in the mountains or involved in a coach accident)
- Serious damage due to accident or vandalism to a local or national scouting facility (i.e.; fire or arson)
- A Scouter or other member of Scouting Ireland is charged with and/or convicted of a serious offence
- A public person, elected official or other high profile person publicly criticising Scouting Ireland for some (unspecified here) reason

A crisis may be notified to Scouting Ireland in many ways, (eg: contact from a member, a parent/guardian, media, etc.....). This contact may include notification of an accident, incident, complaint, etc.... to the CEO or to a senior volunteer member (eg. the Chief Commissioner) by parties both within and outside the organisation.

## **Crisis Management Team**

The standing Crisis Management Team consists of The Chief Scout, National Secretary, Communications Commissioner and the Chief Executive Officer. Other persons may be appointed to this team at the decision of the standing team.

The Crisis Management Team may also include or involve the person or persons within the association who have been involved in the crisis from the beginning (eg. a Group Leader, County Commissioner, Provincial Commissioner, Programme Commissioner, etc...)

Where the crisis concerns international events the International Commissioner should be a member of the standing team.

The team will have the authority to delegate the operational management of the response to a crisis/critical incident to members of the professional staff/relevant volunteers, that said the ultimate decision making authority in respect of a "crisis" remains with the "Crisis Management Team" as defined.

The management of any crisis, especially the support of those members of Scouting Ireland involved in such a crisis, is underpinned by the principles of prevention, preparation, response, recovery and mitigation.

## **Communications**

In line with existing policy communications both within and without Scouting Ireland are the responsibility of the Communications Commissioner and their team. This remains the same in the event of a "crisis".

So for example where the media contact either the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or the Communications Commissioner at short notice and require immediate comment, the CEO or Communications Commissioner may need to use their knowledge of association policy to provide some preliminary comment in advance of consultation with the Crisis Management Team.

Ultimately the response to a crisis involves the provision to interested parties with communications that are factual, prompt and give a correct portrayal of Scouting Ireland as a nationally organised, professionally run, young person centred association that makes a significant and sustained contribution to Irelands young people and to society in general.

Whilst damage limitation is part of a crisis management strategy, false information or lack of disclosure of important relevant information when specifically asked is not and could and usually does, cause further upset to our members, their families, as well as damage to the organisation.

## **Action to take in the event of a Crisis**

If a "crisis" occurs within or involving a Group, or a County, the Group Leader or County Commissioner should contact National Office and request to speak to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or other member of the Professional Staff. National Office will advise the Crisis

Management Team and other volunteers as soon as possible including the relevant County Commissioner and Provincial Commissioner.

If a crisis occurs at National Level it should be reported to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or other member of the Professional Staff. National Office will advise the Crisis Management Team and other appropriate volunteers as soon as possible.

In each case, it's really up to the person in-charge to make a judgement on what constitutes a "crisis" and how best to get the support they need. In most cases, this will mean talking to their support network (line manager) e.g. in the case of a Group Leader, speaking to the County Commissioner.

As all individual crises have different characteristics and will thus require different responses within very different time frames and possibly to different publics, this document is a guide as to how best to address likely scenarios however the definitive plan must be developed if and when a crisis occurs.

### **Essential Information**

The effective management of and response to any crisis requires two fundamentals accurate, coherent information delivered in a timely and prompt manner. This will allow those tasked to manage and response in a prompt, professional manner to the crisis itself, especially to those members of Scouting Ireland directly effected or impacted by to such a crisis.