



Crisis Communications : Ulp!



Crisis Communications : Ulp!

## MCC anthrax scare found to be a hoax FBI continues investigation after office evacuation

AKRON, Pa.—A suspicious letter brought the nationwide anthrax scare into Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) headquarters in Akron, but the white powder in the envelope has been determined to be harmless.

"We are delighted to receive the good word from the Akron Borough Police about the letter," says Bruce McCrae, MCC director of administration and resources. "This means all of our workers, in particular our mail clerk and others in the mail room, are safe and healthy."

akron Borough Police Chief J. Herbert Board told MCC Dec. 3 that tests on the letter were negative for anthrax or any other harmful substance.

On Nov. 28, MCC mail clerk Agatha Redekop opened a letter in the MCC mail room and was exposed to a white powder. Redekop followed procedures implemented since the anthrax crisis began following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, and law enforcement—including the FBI—and emergency services officials were called to the scene. The building, one of four MCC-related offices in Akron and where 70 people work, was evacuated and the ventilation systems shut down. The office reopened the next day, but the mail room was sealed and mail handling moved to another MCC facility until test results were received.

The handwritten letter read in part: "Have



A suspicious letter with a white powder forced the evacuation of this Mennonite Central Committee office building in Akron, Pa., on Nov. 28. But test results reported on Dec. 3 said the powder was not anthrax or any other harmful substance.

you taken your penicillin lately? Death to America. Israel is death." The envelope had no return address, although the postmark indicated Richmond, Va.

The letter was taken for testing to a Pennsylvania Department of Health facility in Lionville. The FBI is continuing to investigate the source of the letter.

"The incident led to several rather tense days of waiting for the results," McCrae says. "While we have always hoped for the best, we were prepared for the worst as well."

The MCC mail room, located in the agency office building on 12th Street, serves three other buildings in Akron—MCC U.S. headquarters, Mennonite Disaster Service headquarters and warehouse—plus the Ten Thousand Villages store and MCC material resources center, both in nearby Ephrata, and two Mennonite-related businesses in Ephrata.

But only the one office building, which houses MCC overseas programs and support services, was evacuated because the mail had not yet been distributed to the other facilities when the suspicious letter was discovered.

"The mail room staff followed the proper procedures," McCrae says, "and will continue all necessary precautions in the future."  
—MCC News Service with Rich Prokein

While we have always hoped for the best, we were prepared for the worst as well.  
—Bruce McCrae

### New program at EMU to focus on trauma

HARRISONBURG, Va.—In the aftermath of the Sept. 11 tragedy, Church World Service (CWS) and Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) in Harrisonburg have announced a training program to equip religious leaders in congregations affected by trauma.

The two-year program, which is expected to begin in early 2002 and will be based at EMU, will provide monthly five-day training courses for 500 clergy in New York and elsewhere in the country, as well as for clergy from outside the United States whose countries have experienced trauma. The program is meant to complement one-day trainings already being offered in New York.

The curriculum will address trauma and healing as well as an introduction to justice, security and peace building.

"In the aftermath of Sept. 11, the need for equipping religious leaders to respond to community, societal or global crises is once again being highlighted," says Rick Aschberger, director of the CWS Emergency Response Program and an EMU alumnus.



Been there too many times

**BAD THINGS HAPPEN**

**EVEN TO GOOD PEOPLE  
AND ORGANIZATIONS**

Helio Fred Garcia, Logos Institute for Crisis Management  
and Executive Leadership

New York University; Columbia University

# Crisis Response

=

## What We Do

+

## What We Say

Helio Fred Garcia, Logos Institute for Crisis Management  
and Executive Leadership

New York University; Columbia University

# **FOUNDATIONAL STRATEGY IN CRISIS**

**A timely demonstration that you care**

**The persistent demonstration that you still  
care**

**for as long as the expectation exists**

Helio Fred Garcia, Logos Institute for Crisis Management  
and Executive Leadership

New York University; Columbia University



Helio Fred Garcia, Logos Institute for Crisis Management  
and Executive Leadership

New York University; Columbia University

# **THE RIGHT QUESTION**

**What would reasonable people  
appropriately expect a  
responsible organization to do in  
this situation?**

Helio Fred Garcia, Logos Institute for Crisis Management  
and Executive Leadership

New York University; Columbia University



---

**1 Acknowledge**

Express awareness of the event or issue.

---

**2 Empathy**

Express empathy if there are victims or potential victims.

---

**3 Values**

Express what the organization cares about.

---

**4 Approach/Actions**

Describe how you will address the crisis and the specific steps already taken in response to the event or issue.

---

**5 Commitment**

Outline planned next steps for the organization and potential next steps for stakeholders.

---

Helio Fred Garcia, Logos Institute for Crisis Management  
and Executive Leadership

New York University; Columbia University

**Guided by Joy**  
**Guided by Compassion**  
**Guided by Integrity**  
**Guided by Stewardship**  
**Guided by Community**





## THE FOUR-QUESTION TEST



Will those who matter to us expect us to do or say something now?



Will silence be seen either as indifference to the harm the crisis is causing, or as an affirmation of guilt?



Are others speaking about us now, shaping the perception of us among those who matter to us?



If we wait, will we lose the ability to influence the outcome?



**If the answer to any one of these questions is yes, respond effectively now.**

Helio Fred Garcia, Logos Institute for Crisis Management  
and Executive Leadership

New York University; Columbia University

1. You Have More Control in a Crisis Than You May Think
2. Trust is Based on Fulfillment of Expectations
3. Common Expectation is That You Care
4. First Mover Advantage/Golden Hour
5. Show You Care Quickly
6. Continue to Show You Care

Helio Fred Garcia, Logos Institute for Crisis Management  
and Executive Leadership

New York University; Columbia University



Stop doing what is causing harm



Say you're sorry



Don't do it again



Make it better

The Ubiquity of Information  
+  
Social Media  
=  
Perpetual State of Crisis

Nick Ashooh Senior Director, Corporate and  
Executive Communication, APCO Worldwide

## What do you know?

- Is the information/source reliable?
- Victim or culprit?
- Who is affected or harmed?
- How serious is the damage?
- Who knows?
- Is it containable?
- What is the "news value" ?
- Will it break and fade, or accelerate and scale?
- What is the duty to disclose (cultural, ethical or legal)?
- Do you have the resources to respond or will you need help?

Nick Ashooh Senior Director, Corporate and  
Executive Communication, APCO Worldwide

PLANNING: HAVE A CRISIS  
COMMUNICATION PLAN IN  
PLACE AND DRILL IT  
REGULARLY

Nick Ashooh Senior Director, Corporate and  
Executive Communication, APCO Worldwide





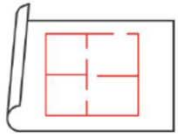
Nov 16<sup>th</sup> 2017. Barclay Friends Retirement Community Fire

# LANDIS HOMES INCIDENT COMMAND

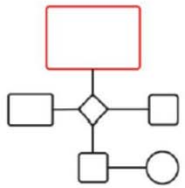
DATE CREATED: JULY, 2017

DEVELOPED BY: EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE

# Key Takeaways



Thorough planning eliminates as many decisions as possible under stress and prevents creating your own crisis



Control the things you can control, manage those you cannot through a documented processes and protocols



Embrace and commit to a predictable way to think through your options and provide counsel when plans change

1. Most executives direct response by assessing risk
2. Facts no longer carry the day
3. Response must drive highest levels
4. Empathy and care can be trained and measured

Mike Fernandez US CEO, Burson-Marsteller

Elise Eberwein EVP, People and Communications, American Airlines

**1 CRISIS ANALYSIS**

- 1A DEFINE THE CRISIS
- 1B PRIORITIZE SCENARIOS
- 1C UNDERSTAND STAKEHOLDERS
- 1D GATHER ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**2 CRISIS ACTION**

- 2A SET ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS
- 2B DEVELOP STRATEGIES
- 2C DETERMINE TACTICS
- 2D EXECUTE + EVALUATE

**3 CRISIS COMMUNICATION**

- 3A SET COMMUNICATION GOALS
- 3B DEVELOP STRATEGIES
- 3C DRAFT MESSAGES
- 3D SPECIFY AUDIENCES
- 3E DETERMINE TACTICS
- 3F EXECUTE + EVALUATE



Helio Fred Garcia, Logos Institute for Crisis Management  
and Executive Leadership

New York University; Columbia University

# Plan for most likely – minor, major and critical

- Identify what matters most to stakeholders and what's likely to damage reputation.
- Elevate those issues before they become a crisis.
- Be an outside-in voice.

Pattie Kushner

Vice President, Global Corporate Communications and Brand, LabCorp

# Conversation