



More than meets the skies

INTRODUCTION

You've been asked to submit a Public Relations Plan and a Crisis Communication Plan for your local unit, Wing or Region. For some, this may feel like a daunting task. But you will see through this workbook that it is actually a simple, orderly process. **YOU ARE REALLY JUST PUTTING DOWN ON PAPER WHAT YOU ARE ALREADY DOING. AND, IN THE PROCESS, YOU ARE INCLUDING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FROM THE NATIONAL MARKETING PLAN THAT WILL COMPLEMENT THE GOALS YOU HAVE IN MIND!** As a CAP Public Affairs Officer, you already practice public relations for your group on a regular basis. This workbook is designed to help you organize what you are doing into a "plan" format.

In order to meet the requirements set forth in CAP Regulation 190-1, you must produce a Public Relations Plan and a Crisis Communication Plan. Follow the steps in this workbook, and you will have both!

HELPFUL HINTS

If you are able, answer these questions on a computer so you can save your work and come back to it later. Typing them will also make it much easier to copy and paste your answers at the end to make one seamless document.

Follow these steps in the order they appear. Each one builds off the last.

The samples that follow each section are completely fictitious and do not reflect any particular local unit, Wing or Region. Samples are all in blue. Use them if you'd like, but they are simply there to guide your thinking as you make your individual plan. Do not feel that your plan needs to look exactly like the samples. They are merely some typical examples so you can see how an actual plan might come together using this workbook.



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WRITING YOUR PUBLIC RELATIONS PLAN

STEP 1- WRITE A SITUATION ANALYSIS

A situation analysis will help you develop goals and objectives to improve your efforts and address problems or weak areas within your unit's public relations program.

Your situation analysis should:

- Provide background information about your local unit, Wing or Region.
- Describe your local unit, Wing or Region's public affairs efforts to promote itself and the mission of Civil Air Patrol.
- Explore internal/external problems or weak areas within your local unit, Wing or Region that can be addressed through public affairs efforts.



- 1) When did your local unit, Wing or Region begin?*
- 2) How many members are currently in your local unit, Wing or Region?*
- 3) What are some of the key strengths of your local unit, Wing or Region?*
- 4) What are some of the key weaknesses you see in your local unit Wing or Region?*
- 5) Concerning Public Affairs, what has been done within your local unit, Wing or Region to fulfill the mission of the Public Affairs program?*
- 6) Have you been in the newspaper or on television? If yes, tell how the coverage came about. If no, explain reasons why not.*
- 7) What can be done in the coming year to improve your Public Affairs efforts?*
- 8) How well known are you in the community?*
- 9) Describe your reputation as a local unit, Wing or Region with audiences outside of CAP.*
- 10) Describe your reputation as a local unit, Wing or Region within CAP.*

Review your answers to the preceding questions. Based on the information you have provided, write a few paragraphs summarizing all your answers. This will serve as the situation analysis for your Public Relations Plan. You will use this situation analysis to complete the next step.



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WRITING YOUR PUBLIC RELATIONS PLAN



SITUATION ANALYSIS The Anytown unit of CAP was established in 1998 and currently has 33 senior members and 25 cadets. One of the key strengths of our unit is the faithful participation of our members in chapter meetings. There is a great level of commitment and respect among members. Another strength is that even when we don't have specific missions to perform, our members are careful to stay up-to-date with their training and flying hours.

While the commitment level of our members is great, one of our weaknesses is that we haven't gotten very many new members in recent years. Members just don't seem motivated to get other folks to join. Also, many members seem to think that the Public Affairs Officer is the only person who is involved in Public Relations. They don't realize that they are also great PR advocates.

During the past year, the unit has been more successful in promoting itself and CAP's overall mission. We started doing more acts of service in the community, and this has garnered positive local media and community attention. We send out a press release and photos to all the local radio and TV stations whenever we have a big community service project. The press release always has a quote from the people we help and from our Unit Commander. It really hasn't been hard to get our name in the paper. In fact, we've been featured in 5 different stories in the *Anytown Chronicle* over the past year, and the TV station even featured us a couple times too.

One thing we want to do better next year, though, is to get better media coverage of our cadet training exercises and of the official missions we're performing for Civil Air Patrol. We also see more opportunities for public speaking, getting into schools and other ways to get our name out in front of the general public more often.

The people who know us in our community think very highly of our unit. But the vast majority of people in our local area do not know who we are or what we do. Our reputation is not a bad one at all; it's just almost a non-issue. We hope to remedy that in the coming year.

Our reputation within CAP is strong. We are diligent in sending clippings and story ideas to National Headquarters, and we plan to participate in the Public Affairs Officer Academy next year.



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WRITING YOUR PUBLIC RELATIONS PLAN

STEP 2 - ESTABLISH A SET OF OBJECTIVES

A good situation analysis opens the doors for efficient planning. All you have to do is capitalize on strengths and improve upon weaknesses. Based on the successes of past public relations efforts and the opportunities your local unit, Wing or Region may be facing, write a few realistic objectives that you feel can be accomplished in a year.

Remember to make your objectives specific to the public relations efforts of your local unit, Wing or Region. Try to have at least 3 objectives.

Your objectives should:

- Be broad plans for what you want to accomplish.
- Be specific to your local unit, Wing or Region.
- Support the overall mission of CAP.
- Go hand-in-hand with the National Marketing Plan.



- 1) Look back at your key strength. What can you do to either make that even stronger or use it to take your Public Affairs efforts to a new level?*
- 2) Review your key weakness. What can your Public Affairs efforts do to improve that area of weakness?*
- 3) Look over the National Marketing Plan objectives. Are there any that apply to your local unit, Wing or Region? (The answer to this is "yes!") List those here. They then become your own objectives on the local level and not just a generalized national effort.*



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WRITING YOUR PUBLIC RELATIONS PLAN



OBJECTIVES

Think it out: (Key strength: members are so faithful in meeting attendance and happy to be a part of CAP...)

OBJECTIVE I: Encourage members to tell their friends about how wonderful CAP is and to consider themselves Public Relations advocates.

Think it out: (Key perceived weakness: the community doesn't know who we are or what we do...)

OBJECTIVE II: Garner greater awareness among our local community about who CAP is and what we do.

Think it out: (National Marketing Plan component: one compelling message across the country...)

OBJECTIVE III: Strengthen national marketing efforts by using the new positioning line in all our meetings and materials.



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WRITING YOUR PUBLIC RELATIONS PLAN

STEP 3 - ESTABLISH GOALS FOR EACH OBJECTIVE

Your goals will consist of specific, measurable plans for how to accomplish the broader objectives that you just wrote. Think of the objectives as the motivation or reasoning behind what you want to do in Public Affairs next year. And think of the goals as the “nuts-and-bolts” part of exactly how you plan to do it.

You will need at least one goal for each objective, and more wherever appropriate.

Your goals should:

- Have specific plans for how you will accomplish each objective.
- Have specific plans for how you will accomplish each objective.
- Contain a measurement for success.
- Complement the goals and objectives of the National Marketing Plan.



- 1) Refer back to Objective I. How can you make that objective a reality? What specific program or initiative can you do to make it happen?*
- 2) When will this take place? When will it be completed?*
- 3) How will you know when you've been successful?*
- 4) Does this fit in with the National Marketing Plan objectives and goals?*

Once you've answered questions 1-4 for Objective I, use your answers to form one sentence, which in turn becomes the goal for that objective. Then repeat these questions for each subsequent objective.



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WRITING YOUR PUBLIC RELATIONS PLAN



GOALS

Think it out: (Objective I was to encourage current members to get friends to join. How can you do that?)

GOAL 1 FOR OBJECTIVE I: Host a “bring-a-friend” event in the Spring and Fall that highlights CAP and all the benefits and opportunities of membership, resulting in a 5% gain in members over the course of the year.

GOAL 2 FOR OBJECTIVE I: Sponsor a year-long contest among current members to see who can bring in the most new members, resulting in a 5% gain in overall membership over the next year.

Think it out: (Objective II was to garner greater awareness in the community. How can you do that?)

GOAL 1 FOR OBJECTIVE II: Partner with our local Volunteer & Information Center here in Anytown to do four community service projects over the next year with accompanying press releases acquiring at least 3 mentions in the local media.

GOAL 2 FOR OBJECTIVE II: Meet with the News Director at the leading TV station, Ms. Di Rector of WANY here in Anytown, at least twice during the year to introduce myself and then several months later as a follow up resulting in a personal relationship and contact information swap with this major media influencer.

GOAL 3 FOR OBJECTIVE II: Have our Public Affairs Officer, Commander or other member speak at a school or civic event at least three times during the coming year with accompanying press releases acquiring at least 1 mention in the local media.

Think it out: (Objective III was to use the new positioning line in support of national marketing efforts. How can you do that?)

GOAL 1 FOR OBJECTIVE III: Place the new positioning line at the bottom of my email signature, in all press releases and on all internal communications throughout the year.



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WRITING YOUR PUBLIC RELATIONS PLAN

STEP 4 - DEVELOP A PLAN OF ACTION - STRATEGIES

The Objectives and Goals that you have just written will be the guide for your Public Affairs efforts in the coming year. Now all you need to do is write out the very specific planning details about who will be responsible for what part of each goal.

This strategy section is where you can fill in any remaining details of planning. You can include as many or as few strategies for each goal as you deem necessary.

Your strategies should:

- Clear up any details for fully planning out Public Affairs initiatives for the coming year.
- Be the most specific of all categories in this plan.
- Contain a measurement for success.
- Carefully list out roles and expectations for everyone involved in the effort.



- 1) Refer back to each goal. What details will need to be taken care of in order to make that goal a reality?*
- 2) Who are the players that will need to be involved in order to make each goal happen?*
- 3) What will be their specific, individual roles and responsibilities?*

Repeat these questions for each goal under each objective.



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WRITING YOUR PUBLIC RELATIONS PLAN



GOALS

Think it out: (Goal 1 for Objective I was to host a “bring a friend” event in the Spring and Fall. What all needs to happen in order for that to be a reality?)

STRATEGY 1 FOR GOAL 1 FOR OBJECTIVE I: The Spring Bring-A-Friend event will take place at Anytown Country Club on April 17, 2008. The following senior members have assumed leadership roles in bringing it together:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Role</u>	<u>Phone</u>
Jill Warren	Location & AV	777.777.7777
Joe Smith	Decorations	555.555.5555
John Garcia	Entertainment	444.444.4444
Ben Howard	Food	333.333.3333
Dave Anderson	Advertising/PR	222.222.2222

STRATEGY 2 FOR GOAL 1 FOR OBJECTIVE II: The Fall Bring-A-Friend event will take place at John Smith’s country home on October 18, 2008. The following cadets have assumed leadership roles in bringing it together:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Role</u>	<u>Phone</u>
Jill Warren	Location & AV	777.777.7777
Joe Smith	Decorations	555.555.5555
John Garcia	Entertainment	444.444.4444
Ben Howard	Food	333.333.3333
Dave Anderson	Advertising/PR	222.222.2222

Think it out: (Goal 2 for Objective I was to sponsor a contest among members to bring in new members. What are the details of the contest?)

STRATEGY 1 FOR GOAL 2 FOR OBJECTIVE I: Chris Baldwin will keep a running track of people who bring in new members throughout the year and will give updates every month. Anytown Regional Airport has agreed to donate either 2 hours of flying lessons or a 2-hour aircraft rental as the prize. The winner will be announced at the 2008 Christmas party.

Think it out: (Goal 1 for Objective II was to partner with the local Volunteer & Information Center to do community service projects and get media coverage of those. What are the details of these projects? Who is involved?)

STRATEGY 1 FOR GOAL 1 FOR OBJECTIVE II: The contact person for Anytown’s local Volunteer & Information Center is Rebecca Wang. Her phone number is 888.888.8888. The Anytown CAP Unit Public Affairs Officer will meet with her on January 9, 2008 to discuss potential projects for the year ahead.

STRATEGY 2 FOR GOAL 1 FOR OBJECTIVE II: The Anytown CAP Unit has agreed to wear our blue uniforms as we serve the community. Allen Green will take photographs as we work, and the Public Affairs officer will send the best photos with cut lines as part of the press release for each act of service.



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WRITING YOUR PUBLIC RELATIONS PLAN



GOALS

Think it out: (Goal 2 for Objective II was to meet with the local news director at least twice in the year and establish a relationship with him/her. How can you make that happen?)

STRATEGY 1 FOR GOAL 2 FOR OBJECTIVE II: Ms. Di Rector, of TV station WANY has agreed to meet with our Anytown CAP Unit Public Affairs Officer on February 4, 2008 at 9:00am.

Think it out: (Goal 3 for Objective II was to speak at schools or civic groups at least three times during the coming year and to garner media coverage from those speeches. Who all needs to be involved in order to make this happen?)

STRATEGY 1 FOR GOAL 3 FOR OBJECTIVE II: Our unit will initiate a “Speaking Out” program to connect members who are willing to speak on our behalf with groups who will allow us to share. Tim Conner will coordinate and direct this initiative. The following members have agreed to participate. They have been trained and equipped with the CAP PowerPoint and are willing to speak.

<u>Name / Phone</u>	<u>Days/Times of Availability</u>	<u>Preference</u>
Maj. Smith • 555.555.5555	Thursday nights & weekends	N/A
Bill George • 444.444.4444	Any time night or day	Schools
Matt Pete • 333.333.3333	Evenings	Lion’s Club
Amy Dent • 222.222.2222	Any day, no evenings	N/A

Think it out: (Goal 1 for Objective III was to include the new positioning line on all things CAP. What further details can be developed?)

STRATEGY 1 FOR GOAL 1 FOR OBJECTIVE III: Dean Whatley has agreed to head up the new positioning line effort. He will be reminding us all year about including it in our CAP vocabulary and communications.



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WRITING YOUR PUBLIC RELATIONS PLAN

STEP 5 - EVALUATE YOUR PLAN'S EFFECTIVENESS

No plan is complete without an expressed means of measuring the success or failure of its initiatives. That's what this section is designed to do. This part should be very easy to put together because you included a means of measurement in each goal.

All you need to do now is collect all those measurements and put them in one place. Then at the end of the year you can easily evaluate what worked well and what could've been better. This will be tremendously helpful as you prepare next year's plan!

Your evaluation should:

- Be reflective of the expressed goals.
- Not point fingers or cast blame, but rather be a learning tool for the benefit of all.



- 1) Refer back to each goal, and make a comprehensive list of evaluations for each one.*
- 2) After individual goals have been evaluated, review the year's Public Affairs performance as a whole. Write up a brief paragraph about what went well and what needs improvement. (This may be the start of your situation analysis for next year's plan!)*



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WRITING YOUR PUBLIC RELATIONS PLAN



EVALUATION The Spring Bring-A-Friend party was a smashing success. Twenty CAP officers came, each with a friend, for a total present of 40. This event resulted in 10 new members. The Fall Bring-A-Friend party was also a great success. Fifteen cadets came, each with a friend, for a total present of 30. Five guests signed up to be cadets. The two events combined to produce 15 new members for the Anytown Unit of CAP, bringing us well over our goal of a 5% increase in membership.

The year-long contest for members to bring in new folks did not go so well. Members did not seem motivated by the prize, and they lost interest quickly at the beginning of the year. In fact, we got zero new members through this contest.

We were able to do four community service projects with our local Volunteer & Information Center. Working with them was a breeze; they did all the planning and we just showed up and worked. All four times we were able to garner local press coverage. And working together like that really created lasting bonds among our members.

The Public Affairs Officer met with Ms. Rector at the beginning of the year. She was very helpful and gladly met later in November to talk about doing a feature story on us.

The “Speak Out” program started strong in the beginning of the year. Several members signed up to be a part of the initiative. But as time went along, interest fell by the wayside for some reason, partly just because everyone is so busy. We did easily meet our goal of three times during the year, but we could’ve done much more. Unfortunately, we did not garner any media attention from our speaking engagements. This is an area that might need more work next year.

The new positioning line is now part of our vocabulary here at the Anytown Unit. In fact, it doesn’t even seem “new” anymore. Everyone is used to it now, and we love it.

As a whole, our Public Relations efforts for the year were very streamlined and successful. We are able to clearly identify the programs and initiatives that worked and didn’t work, and we feel like we already have a good jump on next year’s planning.



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WRITING YOUR PUBLIC RELATIONS PLAN

STEP 6 - PUT THE PIECES TOGETHER

Now all the work is done for your local unit, Wing or Region Public Relations Plan. The only thing left to do is to put it all together in one place.

Your Public Relations Plan should be arranged in the following order:

- Situation Analysis
- Each objective followed by goals and strategies for that objective
- Evaluation



- 1) Copy and paste your situation analysis and enter a page break.*
- 2) Copy and paste your first objective.*
- 3) Under that objective, copy and paste the corresponding goals.*
- 4) Under each goal, copy and paste the corresponding strategies.*
- 5) Copy and paste your evaluation measures.*



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SAMPLE PUBLIC RELATIONS PLAN



SITUATION ANALYSIS The Anytown unit of CAP was established in 1998 and currently has 33 senior members and 25 cadets. One of the key strengths of our unit is the faithful participation of our members in chapter meetings. There is a great level of commitment and respect among members. Another strength is that even when we don't have specific missions to perform, our members are careful to stay up-to-date with their training and flying hours.

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During the past year, the unit has been more successful in promoting itself and CAP's overall mission. We started doing more acts of service in the community, and this has garnered positive local media and community attention. We send out a press release and photos to all the local radio and TV stations whenever we have a big community service project. The press release always has a quote from the people we help and from our Unit Commander. It really hasn't been hard to get our name in the paper. In fact, we've been featured in 5 different stories in the *Anytown Chronicle* over the past year, and the TV station even featured us a couple times too.

One thing we want to do better next year, though, is to get better media coverage of our cadet training exercises and of the official missions we're performing for Civil Air Patrol. We also see more opportunities for public speaking, getting into schools and other ways to get our name out in front of the general public more often.

The people who know us in our community think very highly of our unit. But the vast majority of people in our local area do not know who we are or what we do. Our reputation is not a bad one at all; it's just almost a non-issue. We hope to remedy that in the coming year.

Our reputation within CAP is strong. We are diligent in sending clippings and story ideas to National Headquarters, and we plan to participate in the Public Affairs Officer Academy next year.



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SAMPLE PUBLIC RELATIONS PLAN



OBJECTIVE I ENCOURAGE MEMBERS TO TELL THEIR FRIENDS ABOUT HOW WONDERFUL CAP IS AND TO CONSIDER THEMSELVES PUBLIC RELATIONS ADVOCATES.

GOAL 1 Host a “bring-a-friend” event in the Spring and Fall that highlights CAP and all the benefits and opportunities of membership, resulting in a 5% gain in members over the course of the year.

Strategy 1: The Spring Bring-A-Friend event will take place at Anytown Country Club on April 17, 2008. The following senior members have assumed leadership roles in bringing it together:

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Strategy 2: The Fall Bring-A-Friend event will take place at John Smith’s country home on October 18, 2008. The following cadets have assumed leadership roles in bringing it together:

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GOAL 2 Sponsor a year-long contest among current members to see who can bring in the most number of new members, resulting in a 5% gain in overall membership over the next year.

Strategy 1: Chris Baldwin will keep a running track of people who bring in new members throughout the year and will give updates every month. Anytown Regional Airport has agreed to donate either 2 hours of flying lessons or a 2-hour aircraft rental as the prize. The winner will be announced at the 2008 Christmas party.



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SAMPLE PUBLIC RELATIONS PLAN



OBJECTIVE II GARNER GREATER AWARENESS AMONG OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY ABOUT WHO CAP IS AND WHAT WE DO.

GOAL 1 Partner with our local Volunteer & Information Center here in Anytown to do four community service projects over the next year with accompanying press releases acquiring at least 3 mentions in the local media.

Strategy 1: The contact person for Anytown’s local Volunteer & Information Center is Rebecca Wang. Her phone number is 888.888.8888. The Anytown CAP Unit Public Affairs Officer will meet with her on January 9, 2008 to discuss potential projects for the year ahead.

Strategy 2: The Anytown CAP Unit has agreed to wear our blue uniforms as we serve the community. Allen Green will take photographs as we work, and the Public Affairs officer will send the best photos with cut lines as part of the press release for each act of service.

GOAL 2 Meet with the News Director at the leading TV station, Ms. Di Rector of WANY here in Anytown, at least twice during the year to introduce myself and then several months later as a follow up resulting in a personal relationship and contact information swap with this major media influencer.

Strategy 1: Ms. Di Rector, of TV station WANY has agreed to meet with our Anytown CAP Unit Public Affairs Officer on February 4, 2008 at 9:00am.

GOAL 3 Have our Public Affairs Officer, Commander or other member speak at a school or civic event at least three times during the coming year with accompanying press releases acquiring at least 1 mention in the local media.

Strategy 1: Our unit will initiate a “Speaking Out” program to connect members who are willing to speak on our behalf with groups who will allow us to share. Tim Conner will coordinate and direct this initiative. The following members have agreed to participate. They have been trained and equipped with the CAP PowerPoint and are willing to speak.

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SAMPLE PUBLIC RELATIONS PLAN



OBJECTIVE III STRENGTHEN NATIONAL MARKETING EFFORTS BY USING THE NEW POSITIONING LINE IN ALL OUR MEETINGS AND MATERIALS.

GOAL 1 Place the new positioning line at the bottom of my email signature, in all press releases and on all internal communications throughout the year.

Strategy 1: Dean Whatley has agreed to head up the new positioning line effort. He will be reminding us all year about including it in our CAP vocabulary and communications.

EVALUATION The Spring Bring-A-Friend party was a smashing success. Twenty CAP officers came, each with a friend, for a total present of 40. This event resulted in 10 new members. The Fall Bring-A-Friend party was also a great success. Fifteen cadets came, each with a friend, for a total present of 30. Five guests signed up to be cadets. The two events combined to produce 15 new members for the Anytown Unit of CAP, bringing us well over our goal of a 5% increase in membership.

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WRITING YOUR CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

STEP 1 - ESTABLISH CRISIS COMMUNICATION TEAM & ROLES

It's not enough to have names and phone numbers of people who you could call on in a time of crisis. You do need that, of course, but the members of this team need to be 100% on board with pre-assigned, very clear duties and well-defined roles far in advance of any crisis.

Your team members should:

- Be experienced CAP officers who have CAP's best interest at heart.
- Be willing to undergo training and planning for their individual role.
- Be proactive, self-starters who can be trusted to jump into motion quickly, confidently and competently when they are needed.

Your roles should:

- Be very specific and non-overlapping.
- Reflect the types of crisis scenarios your local unit, Wing or Region may experience.
- Leave no doubt as to who is in charge of what part of a crisis plan in action.



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WRITING YOUR CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN



1) Brainstorm with the members of your local unit, Wing or Region. Are there any obvious people who should be on your team? Anyone with prior PR or crisis management experience? Anyone already well known and/or well respected in your community? Recruit them to be on your team. List members below.

2) Think through all the various roles that need to be filled on your team, and make a list. Consider the following examples: (These are only suggestions. Develop the team that best suits you and your particular local unit, Wing or Region.)

- *Spokesperson (usually PAO)*
- *Assistant to spokesperson*
- *Command or media center coordinator*
- *Community groups/support liaison*
- *Government/Military liaison*
- *Phone bank workers*
- *Media coverage collector*
- *Scenario planner*
- *Press release & speech writer*
- *Team training coordinator*

3) Write a brief paragraph below each of your defined roles further explaining what the person in that role will be responsible for and to whom he/she will answer.

4) Put the people listed out in number 1 together with the roles listed in number 2. Make a master list that has the person's name, contact information, role and description all in one place.

This list becomes part one of your Crisis Communication Plan.



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WRITING YOUR CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

STEP 2 - SECURE POSSIBLE LOCATIONS FOR COMMAND/MEDIA CENTER

You may be surprised at the massive influx of personnel, media, phone calls, requests and demands that follow a crisis. You will need a central location to use for coordinating all the people and projects that will be convening in your area. You can use this center as a place to hold press briefings, receive updates and/or as a mission base.

Your command center location should be:

- Available with little-to-no notice.
- Already equipped with Internet connections, telephone lines and other appropriate technology.
- As centrally located as possible in your city.



- 1) Choose at least 2 possible sites for a command/media center.*
- 2) Obtain letters of permission/access from those who normally oversee or use the location stating that the room can be used by your local unit, Wing or Region in the event of a crisis. Be sure these letters include specific information and processes for obtaining entry, setting up hotlines, etc.*
- 3) Maintain communication with your contacts at the location throughout the year so that when a crisis occurs, everyone already knows each other and what to do.*

The list of potential command/media centers, the letters of permission/access and contact information for each site becomes part two of your Crisis Communication Plan.

Your Crisis Communication Plan now has the following sections:

- 1) Crisis Communication Team Contact & Role List
- 2) Command/Media Center Locations



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WRITING YOUR CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

STEP 3 - MAINTAIN UP-TO-DATE CONTACT INFORMATION

Aside from having your team, their roles and their contact information in place, it is also imperative that you have a current list of home, work and cell numbers for key officials within CAP and other appropriate parties.

Your contact list should:

- Be up to date at all times.
- Be available in printed and electronic formats.
- Already be distributed to key personnel before any crisis occurs.
- Include your local unit, Wing or Region crisis communication team and other local, regional and national CAP officials.
- Include local, state and national emergency and community service personnel.
- Include local media contacts.
- Include command/media center contacts.
- Always have a date label for when it was last updated.
- Always be labeled //FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY// due to the sensitive nature of the information. Be sure to warn users not to distribute it beyond the crisis communication team!



- 1) Assign a specific member of your crisis communication team to be in charge of the official contact list.*
- 2) Organize your list by category (team, CAP officials, emergency officials, community service organizations, media, possible command centers, etc.)*
- 3) Be sure to include the pre-assigned roles beside each member of your crisis communication team's contact information.*
- 4) Give printed contact directories to each member of your crisis communication team.*
- 5) Update your list quarterly and other times as appropriate. Double check contact name and information at least quarterly so that when something happens, you are certain you have the correct person at each agency or media outlet.*

The finished contact list, organized by category, becomes part three of your Crisis Communication Plan.

Your Crisis Communication Plan now has the following sections:

- 1) Crisis Communication Team Contact & Role List
- 2) Command/Media Center Locations
- 3) Complete Crisis Contact List



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WRITING YOUR CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

STEP 4 - ANTICIPATE CRISIS SCENARIOS

You and your team should work together to identify potential crises for your local unit, Wing or Region. See Section III of the CAP Public Affairs Crisis Policy for more information about types of crises and ideas for potential scenarios. Think through your potentials carefully and write out at least three that might affect your area. Be sure to include at least one sudden, unpredictable crisis and one smoldering crisis as outlined in the CAP Public Affairs Crisis Policy.

Your crisis scenarios should:

- Be as detailed as possible.
- Be relevant to your area of the country. (Is your locale subject to floods, wildfires, hurricanes, earthquakes, tornadoes, etc.?)
- Include at least one natural disaster or other sudden scenario.
- Include a missing pilot or missing person scenario, as these are quite common and occasionally become national stories.
- Include at least one smoldering/ongoing/lingering crisis such as impropriety, fraud disclosures, etc.



- 1) Think through what type of natural disaster is most likely to affect your local unit, Wing or Region.*
- 2) Write a brief synopsis of events as if the natural disaster you chose has actually already occurred.*
- 3) Next, write a brief paragraph outlining a missing person or missing pilot search as if it is currently underway. Make your scenario as real and as big as possible.*
- 4) Finally, write out a brief narrative as if someone in your local unit, Wing or Region has caused a smoldering crisis. Obviously, you'll want to be careful to use fictional characters here.*

These crisis scenario paragraphs become part four of your Crisis Communication Plan.

Your Crisis Communication Plan now has the following sections:

- 1) Crisis Communication Team Contact & Role List
- 2) Command/Media Center Locations
- 3) Complete Crisis Contact List
- 4) Crisis Scenarios



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WRITING YOUR CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

STEP 5 - DEVELOP ACTION PLANS FOR YOUR CRISIS SCENARIOS

Anticipating a crisis is only part of true preparedness. It's the careful planning for how to respond that will make the difference. Once you've listed out potential scenarios, it's time to develop an action plan for how to respond in each case.

Your crisis scenarios should:

- Correspond with each of your pre-determined crisis scenarios.
- Include gathering and double-checking the facts.
- Convene the crisis communication team as soon as possible.
- Establish the command/media center as soon as possible.
- Include applicable safety precautions for each situation. (Are you likely to lose electricity, water or phone service? Will people's lives be in danger as you respond?)
- Include pre-written press releases that can be easily adapted when/if the scenario comes to fruition.
- Include a timeline for response activities as appropriate to each scenario.



1) Revisit each of the potential crisis scenarios you outlined in step 4 and answer the following questions for each one:

- *Who is responsible for gathering the initial facts? Who will double-check the facts?*
- *Which of your potential command/media center options is most appropriate for this crisis scenario?*
- *What safety precautions should you consider in the event of such a crisis? Consider safety for all involved (i.e.: CAP personnel, community at large, media, etc.).*
- *What initial press releases will need to be developed so you can respond rapidly to this crisis? Who will write these?*
- *What are the best methods of communication for a situation like this?*
- *What will you do if you lose electricity, water or phone service?*
- *Is there an urgency of time in saving lives? Does one thing need to happen before something else, etc.?*

2) Use the answers to the questions above to formulate a plan of action under each of the scenarios you listed in step 4.

These action plans will be incorporated into step 4 of your Crisis Communication Plan.

Your Crisis Communication Plan now has the following sections:

- 1) Crisis Communication Team Contact & Role List
- 2) Command/Media Center Locations
- 3) Complete Crisis Contact List
- 4) Crisis Scenarios & Action Plans for Response



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WRITING YOUR CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

STEP 6 - COMPILE A CRISIS KIT

You now have several lists compiled and locations secured. You have clear plans of action for potential crises as well as initial press releases that can be used in each situation. All these lists and resources will be invaluable if/when a crisis strikes. It is important to have them all together in one location at all times. You will also want to compile any other items you can identify that will be helpful or needed during a crisis. Remember, the better prepared you are ahead of time, the easier your job will be when a situation arises. Put all the resources you can in one place, clearly labeled “crisis kit.”

Your crisis kit should include:

- Crisis communication team contact/role list
- Potential command/media centers list
- Complete crisis contact list
- Printed out crisis scenarios & action plans for response
- Pre-written press releases that can be adapted as appropriate
- Complete local unit, Wing or Region member list
- CD with all of the above lists in electronic format
- Physical response necessities such as:
 - Several legal pads
 - Pens
 - Local, city and state maps
 - Press badges
 - Sheets of letterhead
 - Two-way radios
 - Weather gear
 - Laptop computer*
 - Cell phone*
 - GPS-enabled device for navigation*
 - Generator*

**Some items may be too big or costly to be stored for the sole purpose of a crisis kit. If these items are not physically included in the kit, then include specific directions and processes for obtaining them quickly when they are needed.*



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WRITING YOUR CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN



- 1) Assign a member of your crisis communication team to be in charge of maintaining the crisis kit.*
- 2) Review the list above and add any additional items you may need for your particular crisis scenarios.*
- 3) Collect all the items in your list and put them in a safe, secure, easily accessible and well-marked place. Make sure several different members of your team know where the kit is at all times.*
- 4) Compile a content list of items in your crisis kit.*
- 5) This content list becomes part five of your Crisis Communication Plan.*

This content list becomes part five of your Crisis Communication Plan.

Your Crisis Communication Plan is now complete. Simply cut and paste the following sections into one document for your local unit, Wing or Region:

- 1) Crisis Communication Team Contact & Role List
- 2) Command/Media Center Locations
- 3) Complete Crisis Contact List
- 4) Crisis Scenarios & Action Plans for Response
- 5) Crisis Kit Content List



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