

INDUSTRY CRISIS PLANNING

considerations

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ABOUT THE RESTAURANT INDUSTRY CRISIS PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

This document is designed to assist the RLPSA members in creating internal crisis planning procedures. This tool is not, nor is it intended to be, an industry standard and may not be suitable for use by all restaurant companies. Please note that the content is meant to serve as considerations that should be modified by the end user to incorporate each organization's individual needs.

This tool is not an exhaustive list of factors to be considered when creating crisis planning procedures. Additional considerations include but are not limited to:

- Internal protocols already in place. For example, some organizations have their internal media contact protocols to follow in case of emergencies.
- Source of intel and how it will be shared.
- Frequency of restaurant drills.
- The role of restaurant leadership and their decision-making authority.
- Guidance on how to report escalation.
- Procedures for a technology outage.
- First aid protocols.
- Etc.

For anyone considering using this tool, or a version of it, it is recommended that they review it with their legal counsel and have them assist to maintain coherence with internal guidelines.

Acknowledgments

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SECURITY

ACTIVE ASSAILANT

An active assailant is an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area. In most cases, active assailants use firearm(s) and there is no pattern or method to their selection of victims.

ACTIVE ASSAILANT INSIDE THE RESTAURANT

This plan is intended to provide staff with considerations on how to respond to an active assailant event. In the event that an active shooter is in the building, self-preservation is the best personal plan. Run/get out is the best-case scenario and hiding is second. Fighting/acting is a last case resort.

- **RUN/GET OUT**- Evacuate yourself, staff and customers, if it is safe to do so.
 - Use the closest path of egress.
 - Leave your belongings behind.
 - Familiarize yourself with the evacuation routes from all points of egress.
 - Direct customers and others to exit if possible.
 - It is a person's option to assist others, however, do not move injured people.
 - Prevent individuals from entering an area where the active shooter may be.
- **HIDE/COVER UP** - If it is not safe to evacuate, hide, seek available cover, and stay hidden. If safe to do so, take staff and customers to a secure area like a back room, supply closet, or locked restroom. Once inside the secured area, block or barricade the entrance to that location.
 - Silence your cell phone.
 - Stay silent.
 - If at any point it becomes safe to evacuate, leave the restaurant.
- **FIGHT/ACT** - As a last resort, if you believe your life is in imminent danger: take action! Attempt to interrupt the assailant by acting with physical aggression. Take any means you feel necessary. Homeland Security advises you to:
 - Act as aggressively as possible
 - Throw items
 - Yell

- Improvise weapons
 - Commit to your actions - do not stop until the threat ends.
- CALL OUT** - If it is safe to do so, call 911. Detail the situation. If you are unable to speak, leave the line open.

ACTIVE ASSAILANT OUTSIDE OF THE RESTAURANT

- LOCK UP** - If it is safe to do so, lock all store doors.
- HIDE/COVER UP** - Hide, seek available cover, and stay hidden. Stay away from windows and exterior doors. If safe to do so, take staff and customers to a secure area like a back room, supply closet, or locked restroom. Once secure, block or barricade the entrance to that location.
- KEEP SAFE** - Stay inside your store, unless instructed to evacuate by the police. Do not open the door for anyone that is not the Police.
- CALL OUT** - If it is safe to do so, call 911. Detail the situation.
- GET OUT** - Follow all instructions given to you by the Police.
 - You may be requested to exit your area with your hands above your head.
 - You may be told to leave all bags and packages in the store.

WHEN LAW ENFORCEMENT ARRIVE

- Remain calm and follow officers' instructions.
- Put down any items in your hands (i.e., bags, jackets).
- Immediately raise your hands and spread fingers.
- Keep hands visible at all times.
- Avoid making quick movements toward officers such as holding on to them for safety.
- Avoid pointing, screaming, or yelling.
- Do not stop to ask officers for help or direction when evacuating, just proceed in the direction from which officers are entering the premises.

ROBBERY

Robbery is the crime of taking or attempting to take something by force or threat of force. Take no action that would jeopardize your safety or the safety of others. Don't be a hero.

DURING A ROBBERY

- Comply with the demands of the robber.
- Do not make sudden moves.
- Tell the robber ahead of time anything that is happening or is going to happen:
 - That you are reaching into the cash drawer.
 - That there are people in the back room that might be coming out.
- Make a detailed mental description of the robber.
- Do not attempt to apprehend the robber.
- Do not follow the robber or leave the restaurant immediately after the robber leave.
- Only if it is safe to do so, attempt to get the license plate number, vehicle description without following the robber, or any other relevant information.

AFTER A ROBBERY

- Lock the doors.
- Call the police immediately (911).
- Stay calm and reassure others who may have witnessed or been involved in the incident.
- Do not touch any areas that the perpetrator may have touched.
- Cooperate with the police investigation.
- Make detailed notes regarding the robber and the incident:
 - Description/appearance (tattoos, peculiarities, scars, prominent features)
 - Exact words used
 - Car(s) driven
 - License plates
 - Direction of travel
- Ask customers to stay as witnesses if they are willing.

TELEPHONE BOMB THREAT

A bomb threat is a declaration—spoken, written, or otherwise communicated—indicating that an explosive device has been placed or will be detonated in a particular location. A bomb threat typically involves a warning that a bomb or explosive device is present and will cause harm or property damage if not addressed.

- Remain calm, keep the caller on the line for as long as possible.
- If possible, write a note to a coworker to call the police or, as soon as the caller hangs up, call them yourself from a different phone.
- Do not hang up, even if the caller does. There is potential for the call to be traced by the police.
- Listen carefully. Try to keep the caller talking to learn more information.
- Ask the caller as many of the following questions as possible and write down the answers:
 - Where is the bomb located?
 - When will it go off?
 - What kind of a bomb is it?
 - What will make it explode?
 - Did you place the bomb?
 - Why are you going to do this?
 - What is your name?
 - Would you like to speak to someone else?
- Write down as much of the following information as you can:
 - Time of the call
 - If a number shows on the phone display, write it down.
 - Tone of the voice/does the caller have an accent and if so, what type?
 - Does the caller have a male or female sounding voice?
 - Is there any background noise?
 - Caller's estimated age
 - The caller's voice (soft/loud/deep/raspy/accent/lisp/stutter, etc.)
 - The caller's demeanor (calm/angry/excited/laughing/crying, etc.)
 - The caller's language/vocabulary (excellent/good/poor/incoherent, etc.)
 - Any keywords (words only used by your organization, etc.) that are used?
- Evacuate the store if advised to do so by the police.
- Follow any instructions from the police.

WRITTEN BOMB THREAT, SUSPICIOUS PACKAGE, DEVICE, OBJECT

A suspicious package is any unattended or unusual item such as a box, bag, or container that appears out of place, shows signs of tampering or potential hazards, or raises concerns due to its contents, origin, placement, or other observable abnormalities. Such packages warrant careful assessment and handling because they might contain explosives, hazardous materials, or other threats to health and safety.

- Remain calm
- Save the threat document (if applicable) and handle it as little as possible (to avoid damaging evidence).
- Do not approach, touch, move, smell, shake, or handle the package.
- Leave the area where the package is located.
- Call 911.
- Evacuate the premises if advised to do so by the police.
- Follow any instructions from the police.

BURGLARY

Burglary (also called breaking and entering) is an illegal entry into premises for the purpose of committing an offense. Respond to a burglary in the following way:

- If you arrive to open your restaurant, and a door or window is unsecured or broken, always have awareness of the possibility of an intrusion.
- Do not enter the restaurant at that time.
- Do not disturb any evidence such as fingerprints, broken glass, etc.
- Call the Police (911) immediately from a cell phone, or a phone outside of the restaurant.
 - Provide your description, the vehicle you are in, and move a safe distance away from the restaurant.
- After the Police have determined it is safe to enter, survey the store and determine what appears to be missing/damaged/contaminated.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

OSHA's definition of workplace violence is any act or threat of physical violence, harassment, intimidation, or other threatening behavior that occurs at the work site. It ranges from threats and verbal abuse to physical assaults and even homicide. It can affect and involve employees or customers.

- ❑ Pay attention to conversations among customers or associates that may become hostile and escalate into a verbal altercation or physical assault.
- ❑ Speak to involved parties in a calm tone in an effort to deescalate the situation.
- ❑ If aggressive behavior continues, a physical assault takes place or a weapon is brandished, remove yourself and others from the situation and contact police immediately.

LOITERING

Loitering at a business is when someone is present without permission and doesn't intend to do business.

- Politely ask involved parties to leave the premises, if it is safe to do so.
- Do not engage in a physical or verbal altercation.

If they refuse to leave, or you are uncomfortable speaking to the person, immediately contact the police to have the person or group removed from the premises.

CIVIL UNREST

Peaceful demonstrations and protests that abide by the law, are not civil unrest. Civil unrest is typically a gathering of people, in reaction to an event, that causes a public disturbance. Civil unrest can involve damage to property or injury to others.

OUTSIDE THE RESTAURANT

If unrest turns to violence, flash mobs or looting, safety is your first course of action. Follow these processes if a flash mob is close by but not yet inside of the store:

1. Lock all doors immediately to prevent entry but do not lock doors if the flash mob is actively trying to get into the store.
2. Immediately call 911.
3. Alert customers and staff of the potential emergency.
4. If necessary, determine if you need to move yourself, staff, and customers to a secure area in the store.

INSIDE THE RESTAURANT

If the flash mob is already in the store:

1. Immediately call 911.
2. Avoid physical contact with flash mob.
3. Do not try to apprehend or stop a flash mob – you are more important than anything anyone may try to take from the store.
4. Alert customers and staff of the emergency.

5. Do not lock entrance doors while flash mob is in store.
6. Use judgment to determine if you need to move yourself, staff and customers to a secure area in the store or if you need to leave store to seek safety.
7. Secure the store only after the flash mob has left store

SOCIAL MEDIA CRISIS

A social media crisis occurs when a post, video, or comment about a restaurant spreads rapidly online and has the potential to damage the brand, reputation, operations, or safety of employees and guests.

This may include:

- Viral customer complaints
- Videos of incidents inside the restaurant
- Allegations of discrimination, misconduct, or unsafe conditions
- Threats or coordinated online harassment

Do not respond emotionally or independently online. Follow company procedures and report immediately.

DURING A SOCIAL MEDIA CRISIS

- Do not post or comment about the situation online. Employees should never respond publicly from personal or company accounts unless authorized.
- Immediately notify management. Alert your manager or corporate contact if you become aware of a viral post, video, or online complaint.
- Preserve information. Take screenshots of relevant posts, comments, usernames, and timestamps.
- Avoid engaging with the person posting the content. Do not argue, debate, or attempt to “correct the record” online.
- Document the incident internally. Document what occurred in the restaurant, including employees involved, time of incident, and any witnesses.
- Secure relevant evidence. Notify management to preserve CCTV footage and internal reports related to the incident.
- Maintain professionalism with guests. Continue normal operations and avoid discussing the situation with customers.
- Direct all media or external inquiries to authorized leadership/teams.
- Follow company communication protocols. Only designated corporate representatives should issue public statements.
- Cooperate with any internal review or investigation as directed by your organization.
- Provide factual documentation of the incident, including: ▪ Timeline of events ▪ Employees involved ▪ Customer interactions ▪ Security footage references ▪ Any prior related incidents
- Monitor for safety concerns. Alert management and/or local law enforcement authorities if online comments include threats toward staff or the location.

AFTER A SOCIAL MEDIA CRISIS

Participate in post-incident review and training. Identify lessons learned and ways to improve response.

Continue to protect guest and employee privacy. Do not share internal details publicly.

REMEMBER

One viral video can shape public perception in minutes. A calm, coordinated response protects employees, guests, and the brand.

Acts of God/Natural Disasters/Weather

Inclement weather could come in many forms including heavy winds, rain, flooding, snow, ice or hail. A “watch” generally means conditions are possible for a severe weather event occur (with minutes or up to a day or two). A “warning” means severe weather is developing or already occurring in the area. Below are general considerations for some common inclement weather events.

EARTHQUAKE

IN THE EVENT OF AN EARTHQUAKE

- Avoid dangerous areas such as glass, windows, power lines, trees, etc.
- Drop, cover, and hold on
 - Drop to your knees.
 - Cover your head and neck with your arms.
- If there is a sturdy table, crawl underneath it.
- If no shelter is around, crawl next to an interior wall away from any windows/glass.
- If there is a table, hold onto it with one hand and be ready to move with it if it moves.
- If there is no table, hold onto your head and neck with both arms and hands.
- Expect aftershocks and be cautious.
- Inspect yourself to make sure you are not hurt and help others if you have training.
- If it is safe to do so, carefully evacuate yourself, staff, and customers.
- Watch for any potential hazards such as fallen items, damaged electrical lines, appliances, fires, etc.
- Do not light any matches or lighters.
- If you are trapped, protect your mouth, nose, and eyes from debris and make noise to be heard – send a text and/or bang on a wall.
- Do not re-enter the building at that time.
- Work with the Emergency Responders (or property management) to determine if, and when, it is safe to re-enter the building.

HURRICANE

Preparing the Store for Closure Checklist

Leadership's responsibility 24 to 48 hours prior:

- Monitor weather updates.
- Consider preprinting copies of the current schedule and employee contact list (including updated cell phone numbers and emergency contact information). Keep one copy at the store and one with the GM.
- Consider sharing relevant information across leadership.
- Print relevant information such as Power Outage Checklist.
- Let the employees know to stay in close contact with the GM regarding schedule changes and available shifts.
- Ensure bank runs are made both days prior to the anticipated impact of the storm.
 - This will help limit the amount of cash in the safe.
- Work with your facilities team to determine if flood barriers or window boards need to be installed.
- Account for your employees.
- Take appropriate measures to prevent losses of food and inventory.

Leadership's responsibility the day of.

- Secure all cash (including the cash draw funds) in the safe and confirm it is locked. Cover the safe with a trash bag in case of roof leaks.
- Move all refrigerated product into the walk-in coolers.
- Place a trash bag over the POS in case of roof leaks.
- Turn off kitchen equipment (e.g., grill and fryers)
- Turn off gas supply to all kitchen appliances and water heater
- If partial or full power interruption has occurred, shut off all breakers except for the walk-in, freezer, and store alarm. Ensure freezer door and walk-in door are both firmly closed.
- Remove and secure all exterior patio furniture.
- Post, "Closed Due to Storm" sign on entry door(s).
- Ensure all employees clock out before leaving - no one should remain in the store
- Set the alarm, lock all doors, and confirm all are secure before leaving.

Post Hurricane

- Contact employees to find out their status. Communicate any staff needs to DM.

- Refer to your internal re-entry procedures following evacuation prior to re-entering the store.

TORNADO

TORNADO WATCH

A “tornado watch” means that based on certain conditions, there is a possibility that a specific weather event might occur but has not yet formed. A “tornado watch” alerts the public that they need to pay close attention to the weather, just to be safe.

- Leadership should monitor the situation.
- Leadership should be prepared to take immediate action should the situation escalate into warning or an actual event.
- Take the first aid kit to the safe location, continue to monitor local weather conditions.

TORNADO WARNING

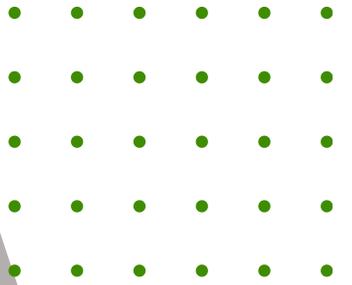
A “tornado warning” means that a tornado is present and moving in the area where the warning has been posted.

- Everyone should take immediate shelter during a tornado warning.
- If possible, move everyone to the designated safe location, such as the walk-in or restrooms, staying away from glass windows, mirrors and doors.
- If not possible, everyone should seek shelter indoors and crouch under something sturdy.
- Take the first aid kit to the safe location, continue to monitor local weather conditions.
- Follow your organization’s guidelines on where to seek refuge, how to secure physical structure, etc.
- Make sure the warning has expired before assuming operations.

AFTER A TORNADO

- Wait for an official all-clear from local authorities before leaving the shelter or safe area.
- Inspect yourself to make sure you are not hurt and help others.
- If it is safe to do so, carefully evacuate yourself, and Customers.
- Watch for any potential hazards such as fallen items, damaged electrical lines, appliances, fires, etc.
- Do not light any matches or lighters.

- If you are trapped:
 - Protect your mouth, nose, and eyes from debris
 - Make noise to be heard - send a text or bang on a wall
- Notify emergency personnel and your leadership of any individuals who are not accounted for.
- Leadership should work with the Emergency Responders and property management to determine if and when it is safe to re-enter the building



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