FROM RISK, TO ISSUE, TO CRISIS: IS YOUR PROGRAM PREPARED?

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Risk to Issue

The **PMBOK®** Guide describes **risk** as, “an uncertain event or condition, that if it occurs, has a positive or negative effect on a project's objective.”

An **issue** is defined as “a relevant event that has happened, was not planned, and requires action”.

Both are managed through structured processes to ensure the risk or issue is managed to its conclusion. But what about a crisis?
What is a Crisis?

A major catastrophic event, or series of escalating events, that threatens the strategic objectives, reputation, or viability of the program or project.
Began as issues but became a crisis when:

- Objectives were not met,
- Reputation severely damaged,
- Viability of the organization threatened.
Does My Program Need Crisis Management?

Do I have any risks that:

• If realized, could jeopardize life and limb?
• If realized, would break the law?
• If realized, would jeopardize the reputation of the organization?
How is a Crisis Different from Business as Usual?

**Business as Usual**

- Information is from established sources of known quality
- Biases and experience typically work to your advantage
- Cause and effect of decisions are more predictable
- Expected actions are prescriptive and roles are defined

**During a Crisis**

- Information is **fragmented** and may be incomplete
- Biases and experience may mislead; the situation may require **new ways of thinking**
- Decisions are **high-stakes** and **uncertain**
- Actions may be **unprecedented** and roles can be fluid
Crisis Management Plan and Process

*Crisis Management does not:*
• Replace any existing response plans or duplicate any processes.

*Crisis Management does:*
• Provide an overarching framework for managing crises,
• Codify the process to anticipate, prepare for, respond to, recover from, and learn from major disruptions,
• Identify existing response plans and describe the integration points with these plans.

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Crisis Management Team

2020 Census Program
Crisis Management Team

- Field Directorate Representative: Tim Olson, Backup: Jamey Christy
- Chief Information Office (CIO) Representative: Kevin Smith, Backup: Skip Bailey
- Log Keeper
- Crisis Management Support Team
- Ad Hoc Representatives (including, but not limited to):
  - Department of Commerce
  - Finance & Budget
  - Legal
  - Health & Safety
  - Security
  - Chief Administrative Officer
  - Continuity of Operations
  - Policy Coordination Office
  - Crisis Advisors

2020 Census Program Crisis Leader (ADDC):
- AI Fontenot, Backup: Michael Thieme

Communications Directorate Representative:
- Ali Ahmad, Backup: Stephen Buckner

Decennial Directorate Systems Representative:
- Michael Thieme, Backup: Luis Cano

Decennial Directorate Operations Representative:
- Deb Stempowski, Backup: Jennifer Reichert
Crisis Management Activities

**Convene**

Convene Crisis Team to address disruption based on an alert from information management capability

**Assess**

Assess impact, decide whether to declare a crisis, develop Executive’s Intent, and elevate for approval
What Does Executive’s Intent Look Like?

“It’s our responsibility to eliminate this risk – we own it, and we know how to do it.”

“Be completely transparent during a cyber breach.”

“There will not be another attack on US soil.”

“[We will] not take actions that consciously contribute to the spread of the COVID-19 virus, while fulfilling our constitutional mandate to conduct a complete, accurate, and on-time Census.”
Crisis Management Activities

- **Convene**
  Convene Crisis Team to address disruption based on an alert from information management capability

- **Assess**
  Assess impact, decide whether to declare a crisis, develop Executive’s Intent, and elevate for approval

- **Respond**
  Disseminate Executive’s Intent, manage organizational response, and inform stakeholders

- **Reframe**
  Reframe the crisis, revise Executive’s Intent based on continual reassessment

- **Transition**
  Evaluate recovery plans, transition to recovery, and restore operations

- **Stand Down**
  Stand down Crisis Team, initiate after action review, and incorporate lessons learned
Training Exercises

- Include all members of the organization who may be involved in the crisis management lifecycle.

- Exercises should increase in complexity, beginning with tabletop exercises that walk through scenarios in a scripted environment and gradually advancing to more interactive simulations that mimic real-life events.
Questions??