



**MENGO HOSPITAL**

# **Media and Public Relations Communications Policy**

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# PREAMBLE

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This document is cognizant of the fact that Mengo aspires to be the lead provider of healthcare services and the Centre of excellence for quality, holistic Medical Education and research.

As a transparent, accountable and Christ Centred Organization, Mengo Hospital believes that communication is critical in achieving the short, medium and long term objectives.

This Communication policy sets forth the ideal and practical policies of Mengo Hospital regarding how information is disseminated both internally and externally.

It is also a blue print on how the Hospital representatives would interact with stakeholders, clients, media, regulators and other clusters that influence the running of the Hospital.

The policy applies to all Mengo Hospital employees, directors, consultants, and contractors.

This document is part of, and shall run in tandem with, the comprehensive Human Resource Manual.

***It is the policy of Mengo Hospital to:***

Engage citizens, ideally through a two - way dialogue, about the Hospital's policies, programs, services and initiatives.

Consult and inform stakeholders when establishing or developing priorities, policies, programs and services in a timely, accurate and consistent manner.

Ensure that Mengo Staff and Consultants are visible, accessible and responsive to the citizens they serve.

Anticipate the needs of the Community, Consultants and Administration for timely and relevant information.

Engage in a proactive communications program that uses a variety of formats and resources to accommodate diverse needs.

## Purpose:

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The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines to facilitate effective communications amongst Mengo Hospital personnel, Consultants, the general public and the media so they can understand and be aware of Mengo Hospital's issues, policy decisions and services.

The guidelines support the development of an organizational framework to coordinate actions that provide channels for input and feedback.

## Scope:

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The objectives of the corporate communications function are to:

- Coordinate communications activities across the organization so that we are working towards shared communication expectations, in support of Consultants' wider strategic objectives.
- Provide support and advice to ensure that the Public Relations Office activities are of a high quality, effective and that messaging is factual and consistent.

**Effective Date: July 01, 2018**

**Revised Date: September 01, 2018**

# Definitions

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**Briefing Notes:** A brief, factual written summary of information for Members of Consultants or Officials of the Mengo Hospital.

**Consultation:** To seek advice or information. This may, where warranted, involve a formal consultation process designed to seek the views of citizens and community stakeholders or the public at large, including collecting and analyzing public input and feedback.

**Crisis:** A situation, present or future, or major issue that may disrupt service or impact on public trust in the Mengo Hospital Brand.

**Emergency:** An unusual situation that requires prompt action to limit damage to persons, property or the environment.

**Media:** Representatives of the print and electronic Media.

**Media Advisory:** A notice to the media to announce an upcoming Media event such as a news conference, a special meeting of MengoStakeholders, a medical drive or a photo shoot opportunity.

**Media Backgrounder:** A document or set of materials that provides technical information or historical background and, when used, generally accompanies a Media Release or Media Advisory or Corporate Report.

**Media Conference:** A meeting of News Media representatives arranged for the purpose of making a statement, announcement or replying to questions from the Media.

**Media Liaison:** A communicator who facilitates Media relations and communication between the News Media and the appropriate spokesperson.

**Media Release:** A factual written summary of information issued to the Media for the purpose of making a statement or announcement or replying to questions from the Media.

**Outside Boards and Agencies:** Organizations recognized by the Hospital through the Budget process as an outside board or agency.

**Plain Language:** Effective communication that is clear, concise, relevant and easy to understand.

**Public Events:** An event arranged by the Mengo Hospital directly, or in partnership, to release information, raise awareness, or to celebrate a medical milestone. Some of the most common include: award presentations, dedication ceremony, ground breaking, official opening, program launch, ribbon cutting, donation drive, major announcements.

**Public Service Announcement:** A brief factual written summary to draw attention to an event, program or resources offered to the public.

**Public Statement:** A statement made verbally or in writing by spokespersons or Medical employees to the Media, collectively or individually.

**Stakeholder:** Any individual, group of individuals, elected representative or organization with a specific stake or interest in the outcome of a decision.

**Confidentiality:** In all communications, spokespersons and departments must comply with all legislated requirements regarding access and disclosure of information.

**Copyright:** Departments must comply with the Copyright Act to ensure the ownership rights associated with works subject to copyright are fully respected in all communications. Departments must maintain a record of authorizations to use copyright material.

**Visual Identity:** A clear and consistent visual identity assists the public in recognizing and accessing the policies, programs, services and initiatives of the Mengo. To present a strong, unified, consistent identity, corporate communications will develop and update a Mengo of Pitt Meadows Visual Identity Manual. The corporate logo is to be displayed on all applications, regardless of medium, for external and internal use. Use of the logo outside the Hospital must be pre-approved.

# Roles and Responsibilities

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## **Medical Director :**

The Medical Director is the Hospital's chief spokesperson, explaining Hospital's policies, priorities and decisions to the public.

## **Administration:**

- The Deputy Medical Director is the chief administrative spokesperson..
- Requests for interviews should be referred to the Communications Department to arrange with either the Medical Director or DMD..

## **Coordination:**

The DMD's Office through the Public Relations Office is responsible for strategic communication and coordination of the flow of information to the Media and the public, with the exception of public safety issues.

The Public Relations Office, in partnership with Information Systems and with input from departments, manages the overall look and feel of the Hospital's website and central sections.

The Public Relations Office will meet regularly with senior management to discuss major issues to facilitate communication planning.

Mengo Hospital releases information through their respective Public Information Officers and conduct their own Media relations.

# Prohibitions:

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## Procedures and Guidelines

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### Guidelines :

#### External Channels Informing Clients:

Information on the Hospital's policies, programs, services and initiatives should be generally available to the public in a variety of formats, subject to the available resources.

#### *Guidelines for Departments are as follows:*

1. Information is provided to the public by trained and knowledgeable staff.
2. Service is timely, courteous and efficient.
3. When information is unavailable, a prompt and clear explanation is provided.
4. Information in all formats is well identified as being from Mengo Hospital in accordance with the Visual Identity program. Published information is provided in Plain Language.
6. A record of any published information is maintained and the published information includes the publication date.
7. Information is available on the standard of service a department provides, including timelines for response to inquiries, mail and complaints.
8. Information is available for review or on the website where it is needed by a citizen to use a service for which they are eligible, to inform clients of risk(s) to health and safety, or to explain a major new policy, program, service or initiative.
9. Copies of material may be subject to Fees and Charges incorporated into various by-laws.

#### Media Relations:

The Media plays an important role in providing information to the public on matters of Medical interest.

Media inquiries, whether by phone, e-mail, letter, or in person, should be addressed promptly to accommodate publication or broadcast deadlines, wherever possible.

Public Relations Office and/or departmental communicators ensure that Media requests, particularly for interviews or technical information, are directed to knowledgeable staff designated as spokesperson(s) for their department or division.

### ***Guidelines for Departments are as follows:***

1. Respect the authority and responsibility of Mengo Management Team, who's Members are entitled to learn about proposed policy initiatives or major new programs, services or initiatives before information about them is released to the Media.
2. Consult with Public Relations office when preparing campaigns or strategies that require participation by the Medical Director or Members of Management, or when preparing a response to a Media inquiry that could have implications for the Medical Director or Members of Management.
3. Keep confidential information that is related to matters before the courts, in closed Consultations or under the jurisdiction of another authority such as the Police.

### **Crisis Communications :**

In a crisis, coordinated communication must be used to maintain or restore confidence. Departments must advise the DMD's Office and Public Relations Office as soon as they identify an event or situation occurring in or affecting their department that may attract widespread interest to the Media. Communications staff will contact the DMD's Office and coordinate a response including designating a spokesperson after consultation with the DMD's Office and the appropriate department. Remember, the official spokesperson of the hospital is the Medical Director (or otherwise any persons with delegated responsibility from the office of the MD).

### **Emergency Communications:**

Mengo Hospital Emergency Plan details the protocol for Emergency Media communications. (Read through the copy)

### **Public Events & Announcements:**

Public Events are arranged to communicate about major developments or to release information that is new and important to medical services, programs and initiatives and especially to public health, safety and essential services.

### **Guidelines for the corporate**

#### ***Communications/special events function are as follows:***

1. Determine whether the MengoHospital will arrange, or participate in an event, or announcement and the extent of that involvement.
2. Prepare a Public Event or Media Conference Plan to ensure well-managed communication. The plan should take into account appropriate recognition of partners and funders. Such recognition may include use of partner or funder corporate names and logos.
3. Provide in advance an agenda or copy of the Public Event or News Conference Plan and Briefing Notes to Consultants representative(s) taking part, together with an advance copy of

any Media Advisory, Release or Backgrounder.

4. Coordinate participation through Public Relations Office when multiple departments, community partners, and/or other levels of government are involved, or as requested by the Medical Director or DMD.

### **Website, Internet/Social Media & Electronic Communication:**

The Internet and other electronic communication are important tools, which allow 24-hour access to information and support two-way communication.

#### ***Guidelines for Departments are as follows:***

1. Make publications of interest to citizens that are widely distributed in paper copy available on the website as soon as possible after distribution to the public.
2. Incorporate mechanisms for receiving and acknowledging public inquiries and feedback.
3. Maintain a record of information posted to the Hospital's website/social media prior to changes.
4. Establish ongoing updates and regular reviews of departmental pages and sub-sites so that information on policies, programs, services, initiatives and related third-party links is accurate and easy to understand.
5. Adhere to and follow standards for the look and feel of the Hospital's website/social sites, links to Third Party Sites.

This type of link [www.mengohospital.org](http://www.mengohospital.org), which will generally open a new browser, is provided for the convenience of the visitor.

The Hospital will only provide links to external sites if the content enhances the service or information provided by the Mengo Hospital. Links from, advertising on, groups in the community directory and Management of information are all covered under MengoPartnership Policy.

The inclusion of the link does not imply endorsement by the Mengo Hospital and the MengoHospital accepts no responsibility for the content found on any third party website. Links are subject to the approval of appropriate department and may be removed without notice at the discretion of the department.

Factors affecting approval or removal may include business case considerations, an assessment of the needs of the intended audience, the relevance to the Mengo or appropriate department and technical or legal considerations.

## **Consultations:**

Open and effective communication is the key to successful public consultations. Guidelines for Departments are as follows:

1. Inform citizens and stakeholders about opportunities to participate in public consultation and citizen engagement processes (such as surveys, Church or town hall meetings and committees). This may be done through the Hospital's website, Reports to Citizens, letters of invitation, posted notices, notices to the Media, advertising and other formats normally used by departments.
2. Clearly identify public information materials as being from the Mengo Hospital.
3. Inform participants, in summary form, of the results of the public consultation and outcomes. This may be done through the Hospital's website, reports to Citizens, letters, posted notices, notices to the Media, advertising and other formats normally used by departments.
4. Collaborate with the Public Relations Office which provides support and advice to management staff who plan, implement and evaluate public consultation processes. Public Relations Office and/or departmental communicators prepare and help to implement communication plans and strategies.
5. Prepare Public Consultation plans for any significant changes in service levels, notify Consultants in advance of the Consultation plan and report back to Consultants on the results.

## **Internal Communication :**

### ***Guidelines for Departments are as follows:***

1. In order to assure quality service that meets the needs of the community, it is necessary to have trained and knowledgeable staff providing information services to the public.
2. Service provided should be timely, courteous, fair, efficient and offered with regard for the privacy, convenience and needs of the public.
3. A variety of new and traditional methods of communication are used to fulfill the needs of the public including multiple formats to accommodate persons with disabilities or where English is the second language, wherever practical.
4. Information is available on standards of service the Hospital provides to the public, including timelines for responding to inquiries, mail and complaints.
5. Opportunities are available for the public to provide feedback on major policies, services and initiatives and that feedback is carefully considered in reviews to help make improvements.
6. Useful, timely, accurate, clear consistent and complete information is provided to the public.

## **Plain Language :**

### ***Guidelines for Departments are as follows:***

1. Ensure clarity and consistency of information, plain language and proper grammar usage.
2. Use an appropriate and standard type style with a font size of 12 or larger for ease of reading, wherever possible. (Refer to Mengo Hospital Creative Identity)
3. Use bold text to highlight key points.
4. Have adequate white space and ample margins.
5. Use graphics to accompany text wherever possible.
6. Avoid writing far above a grade seven level.
7. Use simple words where feasible. If a technical term or acronym is used, ensure that a definition is provided.
8. Instructions should be positive rather than negative
9. Where possible and practical, have a member of the intended audience review and comment on a draft version.

## **Internal Stakeholders :**

Open, two-way communication, between Management and Administration and among Directors/Supervisors and Employees is vital to the effective operation of the Hospital and to achieve our Mission and Goals.

Internal communication is an integral part of any Public Relations Office Plan.

Within our Hospital we have committed to an open/honest culture; open door policies; no retribution for bringing issues forward and an environment that encourages employees to learn about and contribute to the broader hospital not just the department they work in.

Mengo Hospital recognizes that employees are ambassadors for the Mengo Brand and, as such, will attempt to provide employees with basic information to respond to general public issues while they are out in the community.

## **Management & Administration:**

Corporate Reports are the formal means of communication between Administration and Management. Clear, concise, relevant reports provide Members of Management with the information they need to make decisions on municipal policies, programs, services and initiatives.

Members of Management bring forward items for the Committee Agendas in accordance with the Procedural Guidelines.

Public announcements must be distributed concurrently to Members of Management, except in urgent situations affecting public health, safety or danger to persons or property, where every attempt will be made to distribute as soon as possible after distribution to the Media.

### **Enquiries or Inquiries :**

Enquiries or inquiries, whether by phone, e-mail, letter, or in person, must be addressed promptly and the Office of the Deputy Medical Director – it manages all informal/formal inquiries.

All reports to Management will be signed off by the Deputy Medical Director. The primary point of contact between Management and the administration is through the Office of the Deputy Medical Director.

For informal inquiries, Directors are available to ensure that information requests, particularly for technical information, are directed to knowledgeable staff designated as a spokesperson for their department or division.

Where the nature and scope of the inquiry is unclear, or a conclusive response is not brief and direct, departments should seek clarification by responding to the Management using the same method of communication.

Where an inquiry is expected to involve detailed research on information that is not generally available, this may be referred to a more formal inquiry process and may require a reply or resolution by all of Management.

Where a response is provided to an inquiry that is expected to attract media attention or become part of a Committee Agenda, the response shall be provided to all Members of Management.

### **Directors/Supervisors & Employees:**

Effective internal communication is a shared management responsibility, led by the DMD and Directors with support from the Public Relations Office.

Directors and supervisors must communicate with employees openly, often and, wherever possible, before information is made public.

To inform and engage employees, a variety of formats must be used, as appropriate and as resources permit, to reach the diverse audience across the Hospital.

This may include the Hospital's Intranet, a mix of published materials including but not limited to memoranda, notices, employee newsletters, electronic bulletins, oral presentations and staff meetings.

The needs of all employees should be considered including outside workers who may not have access to electronic information.

To ensure consistency and effective use of corporate communication channels and formats, departments should consult Corporate Communications for support and advice before undertaking corporate-wide communication initiatives.

# Crisis Communications Guide

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## **Purpose of the Plan:**

This crisis communication plan provides policies and procedures for the co-ordination of communications within the hospital, and between the hospital and any applicable outside agencies (e.g. - the media, regulatory agencies, clients, suppliers, stakeholders (board of directors, shareholders, unions) and the public) in the event of an emergency or controversial issue. Emergencies may include fires, medical threats, natural disasters, or major crimes. Controversial issues may include police investigations, protests or other situations that demand a public response.

This plan not only addresses media relations and communications issues, but also includes procedures for the rapid assessment of potentially harmful situations and the methods for responding to these situations quickly and effectively.

It is the goal of this crisis communications plan to establish guidelines for dealing with a variety of situations, and to ensure that staff and communicators are familiar with those procedures and their roles in the event of a crisis. The plan is designed to be used in conjunction with the normal decision-making hierarchy of the organization and does not supplant that decision-making process.

## **Plan Objectives:**

1. To factually assess the situation and determine whether a communications response is warranted.
2. To assemble a Crisis Communication Team that will make recommendations on appropriate responses.
3. To implement immediate action to:
  - Identify those parties that should be informed about the situation.
  - Communicate facts about the crisis.
  - Minimize rumours.
  - Restore order and/or confidence.

## **Readiness Preparation:**

Inventory of potential crisis and public relations vulnerabilities

Makeup of the Crisis Management team

Team Assignments and Responsibilities

Location of the Emergency Operations Centre(s)>

Event anticipation dry runs

**Response:**

This section documents how the Hospital will respond to an event or incident. Subsections should include:

- Assessment Procedures
- Designation of a Spokesperson or Spokespersons
- Internal Communications
- External Communications
- Rumour Control
- Response Activity Checklist>

**Follow Up:**

This section documents communications protocols within the organization and with outside agencies as well, including relationships with the media, both after the event, and before. Provisions for assessing and documenting the nature and severity of the incident are also documented in this section.

- Follow up information, Thank You Letters, Etc.
- Rumour Control
- Post-mortem Meeting(s)
- Plan Update>

## Appendix A: Contact Log

A log should be established to record all telephone calls from the media or other parties inquiring about the crisis. This will help to ensure that the many callbacks required are not overlooked. It will also assist in the post-crisis analysis.

The contact log should contain the following information:

Date | Name, Title, Company and Telephone number of caller | Questions(s) asked | Person responsible for response | Additional follow-up needs>

Date	Caller	Topic	Follow Up
	Name: Title: Company: Telephone:		By: Action:

## **Appendix B: Emergency Operations Centre**

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<This section provides detailed information for each EOC location. For each EOC state the location, directions on how to locate, physical layout and supplies required.>

## Appendix C: Sample Scripts

This section contain some pre-formatted press release or press conference scripts which can be used or modified quickly during initial incident response, during the on-going crisis and follow up.

### Sample News Release:

A \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ involving \_\_\_\_\_

occurred today at \_\_\_\_\_. The incident is under investigation and more information is forthcoming.

A (what happened) at (location) involving (who) occurred today at (time). The incident is under investigation and more information is forthcoming.

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For instance:

An explosion at Cathedral Avenue, the main avenue for the hospital occurred today at 3 p.m. The incident is under investigation and more information is forthcoming.

### Additional Notes:

You could put down a definitive time for the next news conference or release of information if you know it but it is not necessary. This will not solve the problems, but may buy you enough time to prepare for the next news conference or release.

You could also add information if it is available such as how many casualty's there are known up to this point or any other pertinent information available. Once again, this information should be definitive and not speculative, verify everything you say. This will help your credibility in the long run.

## Appendix D: News Conference Guidelines

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This section documents guidelines for conducting a news conference. For example:

1. When you notify media of news conferences/availabilities, be sure to define what kind of event you are having. News conferences are held to announce something for the first time. Press availabilities are held simply to make individuals available to answer questions or demonstrate something.
2. Don't call unnecessary news conferences/availabilities. If it's not worth their time, the media will only be angered.
3. If holding a news conference, try to tell media in advance some details of what you will be announcing.
4. Gauge the size of your crowd carefully when reserving a room; better to have too much than too little space. Make sure microphones, chairs, lighting and water are in place at least 30 minutes prior to the event.
5. Decide format in advance -- who will introduce speakers, who decides when question/answer period ends, and other details.
6. Decide in advance whether handouts are needed. If speaker is giving a talk for which there is a text, you may want to wait and hand out material after the talk so media will stay and listen. However, it's advisable to tell the media you will provide a text of the speech so they are not irritated by having to take unnecessary notes.
7. Check to see what else is happening in your organization or in the community before scheduling a press conference.
8. Consider whether you need to let other organizations and agencies know you are having a news conference. (You may wish to invite others to attend or participate in your event.)
9. Decide who will maintain control at the news conference, who will decide where cameras are set up, who sits where.
10. Try to plan the length of the news conference, but be flexible.
11. Consider the time of the news conference. If you want to make the noon, 6 p.m. or 11 p.m. TV and radio news, you need to allow time for crews to travel and edit tape.
12. If you are going to set restrictions on an event such as limited photo access, try to put the restrictions in writing and communicate to the media at least 24 hours in advance.
13. Understand the mind of the media you are contacting for the story.

## **Appendix E: Media Relations Reminders**

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*This section documents guidelines for dealing with the media.*

### **In General:**

1. Always return media calls. The more co-operative you appear, the better.
2. Communicate with the media -- talk to them as well as listen to them. During crisis time, you may learn a great deal from the media that can be useful to you in further dealing with the crisis.
3. Avoid antagonizing the media. A short tone at a press conference, during a phone call, or elsewhere can affect your future relationship with an individual or other media who may hear the conversation.
4. Consider establishing a dedicated call-in phone line that will offer information to media or others. Information on news conferences, rumour control information, newly acquired information, can be placed on a tape that can be updated. This is particularly useful when regular phone lines are tied up with calls.
5. Consider how information you release to media may affect other agencies, businesses or individuals. If you say things that may result in media calling other agencies, call those agencies first to warn them of impending calls.
6. When talking to the media, be sure to give credit to other agencies, groups or individuals working on the crisis, including your own staff.
7. Try to be pro-active with new information. Even those things may be frantic; if you acquire new information regarding the crisis, reach out to the media.
8. Be honest. Don't make false or misleading statements.

### **Handling Media Interviews:**

#### ***How to prepare for Broadcast Interviews***

- Prepare "talking paper" on primary points you want to make.
- Anticipate questions--prepare responses.
- Practice answering questions.
- Cover controversial areas ahead of time.
- Know who will be interviewing you, if possible.

- Determine how much time is available.
- Audiences often remember impressions, not facts.

### **Do's and Don'ts During the Interview process:**

- Do build bridges.
- Do use specifics.
- Do use analogies.
- Do use contrasts, comparisons.
- Do be enthusiastic/animated.
- Do be your casual likable self.
- Do be a listener.
- Do be cool.
- Do be correct.
- Do be anecdotal.
- If you don't have the answer or can't answer, do admit it and move on to another topic.
- Don't fall for that "A or B" dilemma.
- Don't accept "what if" questions.
- Don't accept "laundry list" questions.
- Don't go off the record.
- Don't think you have to answer every question.
- Don't speak for someone else --beware of the absent-party trap.

### **How to handle yourself during a TV talk show interview:**

- Talk "over " lavalier microphone.
- Audio check-- use regular voice.
- If makeup is offered, use it.
- Sit far back in the chair, back erect...but lean forward to appear enthusiastic and force yourself to use hands.
- Remember... TV will frame your face--be calm, use high hand gestures, if possible.
- Keep eyes on interviewer-- not on camera.
- Smile, be friendly.

### **Tips on appearance:**

- Avoid wearing pronounced strips, checks or small patterns.
- Grey, brown, blue or mixed colored suits/dresses are best.
- Grey, light-blue, off-white or pastel shirts or blouses are best.
- Avoid having hair cut right before interview.

### **How to respond during a newspaper interview:**

- Obtain advanced knowledge of interview topics.
- Make sure you are prepared in detail; print reporters are often more knowledgeable than broadcast reporters and may ask more detailed questions.
- Begin the interview by making your point in statement by making your major points in statement form.
- Try to maintain control of the interview .
- Don't let reporter wear you down.
- Set a time limit in advance.
- Don't let so relaxed that you say something you wish you hadn't.
- Avoid jargon or professional expressions.
- Reporter may repeat self in different ways to gain information you may no want to give.
- Don't answer inappropriate questions; simply say it is "not an appropriate topic for you to address at this time," or "it's proprietary" for example.
- Be prepared for interruptions with questions...it is legitimate for reporters to do that.
- Do not speak "off the record."
- Remember, the interview lasts as long as a reporter is there.

### **After the interview**

- You can ask to check technical points, but do not ask to see advance copy of the story.
- Never try to go over reporter's head to stop a story.
- Do not send gifts to reporters--it is considered unethical for them to accept them.

## Exercise Log

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*This section logs the date, type of exercise and any pertinent comments each time the plan is exercised.*

Date	Type of Exercise	Comments

*Prepared by:*



**CrownEnd**  
Media Group

+256 772522755 | +256 755 294466  
[info@crowndmedia.com](mailto:info@crowndmedia.com) | [www.crowndmedia.com](http://www.crowndmedia.com)