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Crisis management – Guidance and good practice

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Foreword

Publishing information

This British Standard is published by BSI Standards Limited, under licence from The British Standards Institution, and came into effect on 31 May 2014. It was prepared by Technical Committee SSM/1, *Societal security management*. A list of organizations represented on this committee can be obtained on request to its secretary.

Supersession

This British Standard is based on PAS 200:2011, which is withdrawn.

Use of this document

As a guide, this British Standard takes the form of guidance and recommendations. It should not be quoted as if it were a specification or a code of practice and claims of compliance cannot be made to it.

Presentational conventions

The guidance in this standard is presented in roman (i.e. upright) type. Any recommendations are expressed in sentences in which the principal auxiliary verb is "should".

Commentary, explanation and general informative material is presented in smaller italic type, and does not constitute a normative element.

Contractual and legal considerations

This publication does not purport to include all the necessary provisions of a contract. Users are responsible for its correct application.

Compliance with a British Standard cannot confer immunity from legal obligations.

Introduction

This British Standard sets out the principles and good practice for the provision of a crisis management response, delivered by the top management of any organization of any size in the public or private sector. The intention of the standard is to aid the design and/or ongoing development of an organization's crisis management capability.

The standard is intended for:

- a) top management with strategic responsibilities for the delivery of a crisis management capability; and
- b) those responsible for implementing the crisis plans and structures and for maintaining and testing the procedures associated with the capability, who operate under the direction of, and within policy guidelines, of top management.

The standard provides guidance for:

- 1) understanding the context and challenges of crisis management;
- 2) developing the organization's crisis management capability through planning and training;
- 3) recognizing the complexities facing a crisis team in action; and
- 4) communicating successfully during a crisis.

The standard has close links with other standards and documents, published and in preparation, including those on:

- i) business continuity (BS ISO 22301);
- ii) resilience (BS 65000);
- iii) information security (BS ISO/IEC 27001, BS ISO/IEC 27002 and BS ISO/IEC 27032);
- iv) exercising and testing (PD 25666).

The standard is not set out as a specification, recognizing that crisis management varies from organization to organization and sector to sector. The standard is concerned chiefly with the principles behind crisis management and the development of the necessary capabilities that are applicable to any size of organization.

A capability to manage crises is one aspect of a more resilient organization, where resilience is the ability of the organization to endure and continue through all manner of disruptive challenges, and to adapt as required to a changing operating environment. Resilience requires effective crisis management, which needs to be understood, developed, applied and validated in the context of the range of other relevant disciplines that include, amongst others, risk management, business continuity management and security management.

The capability to manage crises cannot simply be deferred until an organization is hit by a crisis, in the hope that it will never happen. It requires a forward-looking, systematic approach that creates a structure and processes, trains people to work within them, and is evaluated and developed in a continuous, purposeful and rigorous way. The development of a crisis management capability needs to be a regular activity that is proportionate to an organization's size and capacity.

1 Scope

This British Standard gives guidance on crisis management to help the top management of an organization to plan, establish, operate, maintain and improve a crisis management capability. It is intended for any organization regardless of location, size, type, industry or sector.

2 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this British Standard, the following terms and definitions apply.

2.1 business continuity

capability of the organization to continue delivery of products or services at acceptable predefined levels following disruptive incident

[SOURCE: BS ISO 22301:2012, 3.3]

2.2 business continuity management

holistic management process that identifies potential threats to an organization and the impacts to business operations those threats, if realized, might cause, and which provides a framework for building organizational resilience with the capability of an effective response that safeguards the interests of its key stakeholders, reputation, brand and value-creating activities

[SOURCE: BS ISO 22301:2012, 3.4]

2.3 media communications management

pro-active engagement with the media to ensure that:

- a) accurate information is provided;
- b) coverage in the media, including social media, is monitored to assess positive and negative stories; and
- c) action is taken to provide accurate counterbalancing information where the organization's reputation is being damaged

2.4 crisis

abnormal and unstable situation that threatens the organization's strategic objectives, reputation or viability

2.5 crisis management

development and application of the organizational capability to deal with crises

NOTE See Figure 1 for a general framework for crisis management.

2.6 incident

adverse event that might cause disruption, loss or emergency, but which does not meet the organization's criteria for, or definition of, a crisis

2.7 interested party

person or organization that can affect, be affected by, or perceive themselves to be affected by a decision or activity

[SOURCE: BS EN ISO 9000:2005, 3.3.7]

NOTE Often referred to as "stakeholder".

2.8 risk management

coordinated activities to direct and control an organization with regard to risk

[SOURCE: ISO Guide 73:2009, 2.1]