

ANNEX IX - FEI Crisis Management Plan

CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION

This document is intended to prepare you for “instant action” when a Crisis, such as a serious injury or death of either rider or horse, occurs at your event. It is designed as a quick reference to setting up your Team before the competition starts, a guide to procedures and to help with issuing initial statements and logging detail.

It is intended to supplement any national procedures. There may be varying national requirements to report injuries/fatalities that are not covered in this document.

2. TELEPHONE NUMBERS

It is essential that the OC prepares a list of all required telephone numbers to be attached to Crisis Management Plan distributed to all concerned.

(List should include numbers of:

- Event and Secretary’s Office
- Press Officer & Press Centre (fax & Tel)
- Stable Manager
- Hospital Liaison
- Local Police
- Landowner/host
- NF
- Insurance company
- Stable office
- Accident & Emergency Dept at hospital
- Health & Safety Dept or similar
- local Coroner’s Office)

3. ACTION AT A FENCE

1. Screens around accident while any treatment is taking place; fence repair has screens.
2. Take rider into ambulance as soon as possible and get the course cleared so that the competition can resume.
3. Fence repair to find water/shavings/dust to put on ground if necessary.
4. Fence judges to be replaced and taken to events operation centre where they will be required to write independent statements. If there are a couple of experienced equestrian people who witnessed the accident, have them come to make statements as well.
5. The fence judges may need counseling or assistance following a serious accident, even some months later.
6. The public address announcer should inform the public that there is a hold up on the course due to an accident, but not go into any details. If an accident does not prove to be as serious as at first thought, the announcer must tell the public that the horse &/or rider are for instance going back to the stables.

4. REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE GROUND JURY

Before the Cross-country Test starts, the President of Ground Jury (specifically representing the FEI) must nominate a Committee to investigate circumstances and report to FEI. (see Annex VIII).

5. CRISIS MANAGEMENT TEAM (CMT)

1. Head of team - to co-ordinate crisis management. Ideally a person with specific knowledge of the event. If this is the event organiser, then appoint a deputy to continue running the event. Either the Head of team or the Assistant Head ideally should have legal expertise of the national laws or an additional person should be appointed
2. Chief Medical Officer of the event
3. Chief FEI Veterinary Delegate
4. Assistant head - to support head and help obtain information. Preferably a senior person with (wider knowledge of the sport, if appropriate).
5. Press officer** to liaise and advise on all statements to the media
6. Secretary/typist
7. Runner plus, possibly, additional staff to man telephones – Hospital liaison
8. A liaison person in the stable area to answer all questions relating to an accident.
9. Hospital/event liaison person
10. TD as soon as he/she can be available

NB: The CMT can only include those who can be spared from the direct running of the event in order to manage the situation.

** if not in the operations centre at all times, the press officer should be on call. All statements to the press should be made either by

- 1) Head of Team
- 2) Press Officer...and no one else.

6. EQUIPMENT

The following should be available or easily accessed:

- telephones and note pads
- file, for notes of all telephone calls, copies of press releases (including drafts)
- list of international telephone numbers
- list of emergency telephone numbers
- radios x 5 - on separate net to normal traffic (this may not always be practical)
- word processor or typewriter
- photocopier
- fax machine
- tape recorder and tapes
- other general office equipment
- TV monitor and video recorder
- press release paper
- list of accredited press
- copies of the programme
- relevant rider and/or horse biographies (if not available, a copy of entry form)
- up-to-date list of scores, including fence analysis
- previous year's results
- history of event, including numbers of previous fatalities
- general facts and figures
- tea and coffee making facilities

NB1: microphone and speakers may be required in the venue selected for the Press Conference

NB2: Rider information and contact names and numbers – this is the most difficult information to obtain, particularly contact number for foreign riders. OC must obtain Information from the entry form or ask the rider to complete of a form on arrival (either NFs of Chef d'Equipes as appropriate should be made responsible for providing this information).

7. OPERATIONS CENTRE

Find a private location, preferably close to the press office and one where it is impossible to be overheard. Telephone landlines necessary. If necessary, post security on the door. Use the list headed “Equipment” as a guide to the equipment and paperwork you need on hand.

NB: keep a record of all events, including telephone calls and questions and answers in the press conference. Use telephones only; switch radios off as these can be overheard.

8. IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

1. The press officer should:

- issue a holding statement, approved by the parties mentioned above (see Media Draft A). Use only this holding statement in dealing with telephone enquiries; avoid being drawn into long telephone conversations, but offer to “fax the full press statement once it is prepared.
- announce press conference on the press room notice board and by word of mouth. The press conference will normally take place after the last horse has finished the cross country test.
- secure relevant rider/horse biography and photocopy for distribution to CMT
- in the case of a horse fatality, establish if rider, owner, Chef d’Equipe are willing/able to meet the press, but only if they are going to be positive

NB: avoid being too optimistic over start time for press conference.

In case of human fatality:

2. The Police should be notified immediately by the CMT

- they will contact next of kin (see above note two of “Equipment” above in regard contact numbers) and confirm this to CMT
- they will compile witness statements
- if they wish to inspect the fence, a senior event official must accompany them

NB: brief them not to charge around with sirens blaring and lights flashing

3. The CMT should alert any essential contacts to crisis (eg: landowner, FEI officials, NF officials)

4. The CMT should dispatch a representative (with mobile phone) to hospital to:

- be a direct link with CMT. It is rare for a person to be pronounced dead before arrival at hospital, and CMT will need this information as soon as possible
- arrange help with the immediate problems of the rider’s family and/or team/friends and/or horse owner, such as looking after the horse, driving the lorry and so forth

5. gather information and establish the facts. Use **Form A** as the basis for your research

9. PREPARE PRESS STATEMENT

Follow **Media Draft B** wherever possible, filling in the information relevant to your case. Once drafted:

- read it most carefully, in particular to check that you have not inadvertently made any admission of liability
- obtain approval from senior internal personnel (eg: sponsor, landowner, vet etc.) but resist the temptation to make wholesale changes to the basic format. Keep it short:
- ensure all other essential contacts (see earlier) are aware of its contents
- ensure spokesperson’s name and contact number appear at the bottom.

Again, avoid being drawn into long telephone conversations; offer to “fax the statement”.

10. HOLD PRESS CONFERENCE

Assemble the media in the press office or another secure environment; if necessary, post security on the door. Arrange a podium (however informal) and microphone if necessary to ensure that you will be heard. The media must be addressed by the head of the CMT, but arrange for additional personnel able to answer technical questions - eg: doctor, vet, course builder, technical delegate, steward - to be near the front. Make it as brief as possible, outlining this format at the outset:

- the statement will be read
- questions will be taken
- personal interviews will be arranged (preference to be given to equestrian media).

While the press conference is under way, note names of journalists attending.

11. DISTRIBUTE PRESS STATEMENT

In addition to its distribution at the press conference, the statement should also go to:

- non-attending equestrian press
- news editors of national and relevant regional daily newspapers
- editors of relevant regional weekly newspapers
- news editors of national and relevant regional radio and TV stations
- local police and emergency services
- the event's legal and insurance advisers
- the event venue and sponsor
- local authorities
- animal and welfare organisations

12. DE-BRIEF

Before dispersing, the CMT should hold an internal de-brief to confirm in everyone's minds precisely what happened and to arrange how to progress. Agree a spokesperson to deal with the FEI, plus any other subsequent enquiries, and prepare a complete dossier for the FEI, including all relevant paperwork.

Form A - Information to be established**1. Rider or public fatality/serious injury**

Mr/Mrs/Miss _____ Name _____

First name _____ Age _____ Nationality _____

From where? _____

Based where? _____

married? Yes _____ No _____

children? Yes _____ No _____ if Yes, how many? _____

2. Horse

Name _____ Age _____ gelding - mare - stallion

Owner _____

3. Additional information

Vet attending _____

Doctor(s) attending _____

Fence judge(s) _____

4. Nature of incident

time occurred _____

fence number/area (eg: grandstand) _____

what happened? (fact, not hearsay) _____

how many injured? _____

5. Injuries

rider _____

horse _____

member of public _____

6. How is incident being handled?

hospital name _____

7. Have witness statements been taken? _____**8. Background**

how many horses had cleared fence prior to incident? _____

had this rider cleared the fence earlier on another horse? _____

how many completed the course? _____

how many first timers had completed the course prior to the incident? _____

how many riders had retired? _____

9. Other consequences - NB: not for media publication

cause _____

whose fault _____
any breach of safety? _____

check whether the rider has won any prizes on another horse - it could prevent embarrassment at the prize-giving

j) prognosis

if injuries, what is result? _____

Media draft A - Initial response or holding statement

- **written**

The organisers are investigating the facts surrounding the incident. As soon as these are available, a full statement will be issued and a press conference held.

- **verbal**

I/we do not have the full detail of the circumstances surrounding the incident. As soon as these are available, a full statement will be issued.

- **on the death of a rider**

A rider has suffered fatal injuries and has been taken to hospital. Further information will follow. The next of kin must be informed before any statement.

NB: Replies, either written or verbal, should be:

- calm
- objective
- clear and factual
- brief
- responsible and concerned

Media draft B - Press statement and subsequent press releases to be structured as follows:

1. Public or rider fatality

It is with the deepest regret that we announce that Mr/Mrs/Miss (first and last names) suffered a fatal accident while competing/spectating at _____ Horse Trials in _____ (country) at _____ am/pm on _____ (date). _____ (first name), aged _____ - from _____ (home town) was/was not married, with _____ children. _____'s (first name) horse _____, owned by _____, a _____-year-old gelding/mare/stallion _____ (description of incident, eg: stumbled and fell over the rails at fence 15). _____ (first name) eg: was thrown off the horse which, in falling, struck the rider's head, causing fatal injuries).

2. the press may ask about the dimensions of the fence at which the accident happened. This information should not be divulged. A member of the press may measure the fence incorrectly and dispute your measurements. A suggested reply to avoid this is:

- All fences on the course are within the dimensions specified in the rules and no details will be discussed before the Coroner's Inquest.
- Try to avoid saying how many horses had successfully jumped the fence before the accident (it smacks of a whitewash) but be prepared for a question and work out how many.

3. **A standard paragraph** should be included, along the lines of one of these:

"At every FEI event, the maximum consideration is given to the safety and welfare of horses and competitors".

- "Mr/Mrs/Miss _____ (President of the Ground Jury) said: On behalf of the whole sport, I would like to extend our deepest sympathy to _____'s (first name) family."

OR

- "On the extremely rare occasions a rider suffers a fatal accident at a Horse Trial; it is a tragic loss. The thoughts and prayers of eventing people all over the world are with her/his family at this sad time."

4. Horse fatality

It is with great sadness that we announce that _____ (horse's name), ridden by _____ and owned by _____ was humanely destroyed/put down as a result of a fatal accident while competing at _____ Event in _____ (country) at _____ am/pm, _____ on _____ (date). _____ (horse's name), a _____-year-old gelding/mare/stallion _____ (description of incident and injury, eg: stumbled and fell over the rails at fence 15 and suffered a broken back.)

Again, do not mention the dimensions of the fence.

OFFICIAL Event Organiser's PAPER

Draft Example

Issued by XYZ Event Organiser at (time)

It is with deepest regret that we announce that (rider) suffered a fatal accident whilst competing at (the XYZ) Three Day Event in (country) on (day, date). (rider name) (age) from (town, county, country) was single/married.

(name) was riding (owner's) (horse), (age), (gelding/stallion/mare). The incident occurred at fence (number). There was a doctor in attendance at the time of the fall and a full paramedic team was present within moments (or similar information.) (name) was taken to the (name of hospital, (town) where he was declared dead on arrival.

The (landowner), the Organisers of the XYZ Event and (title of sponsor if they wish) would like to extend their deepest sympathy to (full name) family.

ENDS

(date)

For further information contact: telephone number(s)

Sample questions and answers

1. Cruelty

Q - There is a gathering opinion that these events are cruel to horses. Do you agree?

A - At every FEI event, the maximum consideration is given to the safety and welfare of both horse and rider.

2. Bad weather

Q - Do you think the event should have been stopped (sooner) because of the weather?

A - Conditions are constantly monitored by the Ground Jury*, a panel of internationally recognized judges. Had the members of the Ground Jury considered that the conditions were not safe, they would have made the decision to halt the event with the utmost speed.

*Steward & Technical Advisor at smaller events

3. Money

Q - Isn't it fair to say you are more interested in the gate receipts than the animals' welfare?

A - No, it isn't fair to say that - extensive insurance policies taken out before the event cover all aspects of income, including gate receipts.

4. Danger

Q - Doesn't this incident prove that the sport is too dangerous?

A - Eventing is a challenge to the combined skills of both the horse and rider. To meet those challenges successfully requires the same input of patience and talent that is needed in any other walk of life.

Q - Aren't the obstacles too dangerous? Isn't it time they were made less severe?

A - The obstacles are designed to present a fair challenge of skills. Experience course designers set out to ask realistic questions of horse and rider.

5. Request for detail

Q - What exactly happened out there? What caused the incident?

A - I don't have the full details. You will need to take to the event director/organizer, who I understand will make a full statement soon.

6. Briefing of riders

At the riders' briefing, they should be told simply how to cope with approaches by the media in adverse situations. A suggested response might be:

I cannot comment at the moment, but I understand all the facts are being gathered for a for a press statement by the event director/organizer.