



*Critical First Steps After Verification:*

**Notification:**

- Use your crisis plan's notification list to ensure that the chain of command is aware and know that you are involved.
- Ensure that your leadership is aware (especially if it comes from the media and not the EOC) of the emergency and that they know you are involved.
- Give leadership your first assessment of the emergency from a communication perspective and inform them of your next steps. *Remember: Be first, be right, be credible.*

**Coordination:**

- Contact local, state, federal partners now.
- If there is potential for criminal investigation, contact your FBI counterpart now.
- Secure a spokesperson as designated in the plan.
- Initiate alert notification and call in extra communication staff, per the plan.
- Connect with the EOC—make your presence known.

**Media:**

- Be first: Provide a statement that your agency is aware of the emergency and is involved in the response. (Use the CERC first statement.)
- Be right: Start monitoring media for misinformation that must be corrected.
- Be credible: Tell the media when and where to get updates from your agency.
- Give facts. Don't speculate. Ensure partners are saying the same thing.





**The public:**

- Trigger your public information toll-free number operation now if you anticipate that the public will seek reassurance or information directly from your organization. (You may adjust hours of operation and number of call managers as needed.)
- Use your initial media statement as your first message to the public.
- Ensure that your statement expresses empathy and acknowledges public concern about the uncertainty.
- Give the precleared facts you have and refer the public to other information sites as appropriate.
- Remind people that your agency has a process in place to mitigate the crisis.
- Start public call-monitoring to catch trends or rumors now.

**Partners/Stakeholders:**

- Send a basic statement to partners and stakeholders to let them know you are thinking about them.
- Use prearranged notification systems (preferably e-mail listservs).
- Engage leadership to make important first phone calls, based on your plan, to partners and key stakeholders to let them know that your agency is responding.
- Use the internal communication system (e-mail) to notify employees that their agencies are involved in the response and that updates will follow. Ask for their support.

**Resources**

- Conduct the crisis risk assessment and implement assignments and hours of operation accordingly. (Use the CERC assessment.)
- Stake out your pre-planned place in the EOC or adjoining area.

