

SDLN Emergency Communication Plan

2010

In the event of a system failure the South Dakota Library Network (SDLN) must immediately deliver accurate information to member libraries. In particular, member libraries will need to know the current status of the effected system(s), the components or modules affected, and the expected time frame of the outage. (When an announcement is first made, unknown is an acceptable time frame.) While the immediate focus of staff should be resolving the problem, as soon as possible member libraries should be informed of the cause(s) of the disruption, the plan for addressing the situation, and any other pertinent information.

The Executive Director /Associate Director or their designee should serve as the primary spokesperson(s) for SDLN. The Executive Director /Associate Director should consult with other SDLN staff concerning message content and timing to deliver situation updates and technical or detailed information.

Suggested Procedures during a system failure:

- The Executive Director and SDLN staff should gather all available information and receive regular briefings on the situation. If an event occurs during an evening, weekend, or holiday, the Executive Director/Associate Director/Designee should be immediately notified and receive periodic updates.
- In each event, one technical person to be point person with any consultants or external resources.
- The Executive Director/Associate Director/Designee should notify the SDLN community of the situation as quickly as possibly using e-mail. If e-mail is not functioning, the Network's emergency phone system plan should be used. If neither of these are possible, the Chair of the Advisory Committee, the State Librarian, and/or the Board of Regents Office should be notified and asked to coordinate communications.
- There should be regular updates until the system is restored. During operating hours, 7:00 am – 10:00 pm central time, updates should be provided hourly. If the situation persists overnight, one SDLN staff member will be expected to come in before 7:00 AM central time to ascertain status of the system and to send an update to member libraries across the state. If necessary, staff should communicate with all SDLN members. Specifically, staff should seek feedback which may help with problem solving.

During the event all inquiries, including those from member libraries, should be directed to the Executive Director/Associate Director. Staff will be dedicated to solving the problems.

As soon as possible after the failure, the Executive Director or Designee shall make a general statement about what happened, future plans, etc.

A review of the event will be held no later than one week after the situation is resolved and the system is fully functional. The Executive Director/Associate Director will evaluate process and keep records for future use, noting problems, inadequacies, and difficulties during the crisis. A brief summary will be provided to the Executive Committee and circulated to member libraries.

CRISIS INFORMATION TIPS

Dealing with a crisis requires a number of virtues including patience, understanding, knowledge and tact.

The most important aspect of dealing with the situation is accomplished long before a crisis begins. Effective response will depend on the following:

1. Timely response to questions or requests
2. Effective utilization of available resources, both internal and external
3. Clear definition of roles and responsibilities of individual staff members and departments
4. Carefully planned communications with all interested parties
5. Periodic re-evaluation and update of this plan to incorporate administrative and organizational changes, as well as other changes which need to be considered in the plan.

Crisis communication points:

- An emergency or a disaster may occur at any time of the day, night, weekend, or holiday, with little or no warning.
- The succession of events in an emergency is not predictable, and therefore, published support and operational plans will serve only as a guide and checklist, and may require field modification in order to meet the requirements of the emergency.
- Anticipate questions – (always the 5Ws (who, what, where, when, and why; potential impact; and then other expected inquiries).
- Acknowledge the problem or situation. Tell the truth.
- Develop two or three messages and keep your message simple.
- Always return calls and be accessible.
- Be cooperative, cordial, and helpful.
- Avoid saying no comment; it makes you appear defensive. It is better to say you don't know and will try to find out.
- Do not speculate.
- Give credit to other agencies, groups, or individuals who are involved.