

CRISIS:

a major event that threatens to harm an organization, its stakeholders, or the general public.

**COUNCIL OF MUNICIPAL
COURT JUDGES**

Phone: 404-651-6325

The open flow of communication between your court and the Council is critical during a time of crisis.

YOU KNOW YOU HAVE A CRISIS WHEN:

Your phone starts ringing off the hook or your email inbox begins to fill.

If you anticipate something will become a crisis, begin preparing for what you can say before you get that first call. This is your opportunity, as a public servant, to educate people about your court and the judicial branch.

Crisis Management

Stay calm.

Stay calm. When a crisis occurs, reporters are assigned the story at the last minute and are trying to learn as much as they can under a very tight deadline. Even though they demand quick information from you, ask them if you can get back to them by their deadline.

Gather the facts.

Gather the facts. Take notes on what the reporter has told you about the crisis. He or she may ask some preliminary questions and may want immediate reaction from you. Remember that **everything you say to a reporter should be treated as “on the record.”** Ask for the reporter’s deadline and tell the reporter someone will call them back before the deadline. Avoid saying “no comment.”

Get help from your Public Information Officer to respond appropriately.

Get help from your Public Information Officer to respond appropriately. Contact your city’s Public Information Officer or Media Relations Specialist. If your city does not have a Public Information Officer or Media Relations Specialist, seek help from the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) or contact the Judicial Council/Administrative Office of the Courts (JC/AOC) at 404-651-6325.

Either way, **contact someone with experience in media relations to help you respond appropriately.**

Contact the Council IMMEDIATELY.

Contact the Council IMMEDIATELY. Contact the Council of Municipal Court Judges immediately after receiving a media inquiry in a crisis situation. Share the following information with the Council:

- reporter’s name,
- media outlet’s name,
- reporter’s contact information,
- reporter’s deadline day and time, and
- reporter’s questions.

Monitor the situation.

Monitor the situation. Immediately share new information you learn regarding the crisis and media inquiries with your media relations expert and the Council of Municipal Court Judges.