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English Version

Crisis management - Guidance for developing a strategic capability

Gestion de crise - Recommandations pour le développement d'une capacité stratégique

Krisenmanagement - Strategische Lösung

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European foreword

This document (CEN/TS 17091:2018) has been prepared by Technical Committee CEN/TC 391 “Societal and Citizen Security”, the secretariat of which is held by NEN.

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Introduction

Crises are the most serious challenge facing any organization. A crisis is an inherently abnormal, unstable and complex situation that represents a threat to the strategic objectives, reputation and, ultimately, the existence of an organization.

Crises present organizations with complex and difficult challenges that may have profound and far-reaching consequences. These consequences can be very damaging, especially where it is perceived that the organization failed to prepare for, manage or recover from a crisis. There is a risk of significant damage to reputation, and possibly of the collapse of the business and its operations. In short, crises are of potentially existential significance to an organization.

This technical specification sets out the principles and good practice for the provision of a crisis management response, delivered by strategic decision makers of any organization of any size in the public or private sector. The intention of this technical specification is to aid the design and ongoing development of an organization's crisis management capability.

In a general sense, a capability is a demonstrable ability to perform a function, under specified conditions, to defined levels. Capability is bounded by assumptions and expectations, and an organization should be able to ensure its capability within those parameters. In this technical specification, a crisis management capability should include the following aspects:

- physical (e.g. equipment, facilities and logistics);
- intellectual (e.g. doctrine, concepts and procedures);
- structural (e.g. organization, relationships and linkages); and
- human (e.g. selection, training and education).

This technical specification has close links with other disciplines such as organizational resilience, information security, emergency management, incident management, risk management, business continuity management, and security. Recognizing that crisis management varies from organization to organization and sector to sector, this technical specification provides the principles behind crisis management and the development of the necessary capabilities that are applicable to any size of organization.

The ability 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, security management and crisis communication.

The ability to manage crises cannot simply be deferred until an organization is hit by a crisis. An organization should take every opportunity to practice their crisis response protocols in order to ensure the most effective transition to crisis management status in the event that an actual crisis situation is triggered. 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 document provides guidance on good practice for crisis management to help the strategic decision makers of an organization to plan, implement, establish, operate, monitor, review, maintain and continually improve a crisis management capability. It is intended for any organization regardless of location, size, type, industry, structure, or sector. While it is important to be aware of human and cultural factors as they can cause stress when working as individuals and as part of groups, it is not the purpose of this document to examine aspects of these areas in detail.

This document provides guidance for:

- understanding the context and challenges of crisis management;
- developing an organization's crisis management capability through preparedness (see 5.5);
- recognizing the complexities facing a crisis team in action;
- communicating successfully during a crisis; and
- reviewing and learning.

NOTE 1 For further information on organizational resilience, see ISO 22316.

This technical specification is intended for management with strategic responsibilities for the delivery of a crisis management capability. It is for those who operate under the direction and within policy of top management in:

- implementing the crisis plans and structures; and
- maintaining and assuring the procedures associated with the capability.

It is not intended for emergency and incident response - these require the application of operational procedures whereas crisis management relies on an adaptive, agile, and flexible strategic response (see 4.3).

It does not cover interoperability or command and control or business continuity management systems.

NOTE 2 For more information on interoperability and command and control, see ISO 22320. For more information on business continuity management systems, please see EN ISO 22301.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

3 Terms and definitions

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

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>
- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <http://www.iso.org/obp>