



Duluth Amateur Hockey Association

Crisis Management Plan

Prepared by Drew Smith

**Created November 2, 2023**

In conjunction with the Northern Arizona University Crisis Communication Class



**November 2, 2023**

Dear Executive Director Bob Nygaard, Duluth Amateur Hockey Association Staff, Board Members, and Community Members:

Per your request, attached is the Crisis Management Plan for the Duluth Amateur Hockey Association (DAHA). The purpose of this plan is to examine past crises and current risks of DAHA. I spent two years interning for the association from 2020-2022, which included seasons during the COVID-19 pandemic.

DAHA's mission statement is "to provide a safe and positive environment for all youth in the Duluth community to participate and excel through the sport of hockey while instilling eight character values: integrity, commitment, courage, honor, hard work, sportsmanship, teamwork, and dedication." Using the slogan "America's Outdoor Hockey Capital" with the prominence of outdoor rinks in the City of Duluth, I strongly believe this plan will meet the needs of DAHA in the event of a crisis or mitigate a crisis.

This plan will focus on the event of a fire or disaster. Original research from the Peterson Arena fire in 2004 will be used in this plan. The plan will include key publics, media contacts, and contacts at other organizations. As this is an external review of the organization, it is important to know that not every situation or scenario will be covered in this plan. I encourage DAHA to update this plan regularly or reach out for a review.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Drew Smith

Crisis Management Consultant, Northern Arizona University

## **PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES**

### **PURPOSE:**

- To effectively handle crises such as fire or disaster at a DAHA-owned or rented facility
- Share relevant information with the media when appropriate
- Provide a swift response to our team, board members, and the community
- Provide key contact information for DAHA Staff, Executive Board, Duluth Media, and other key stakeholders

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- Remain committed to our players and our community
- Ensure our players get ice time should a fire or disaster ever hit
- Be open and communicative during a crisis
- Have resources readily available

## **KEY PUBLICS**

- DAHA Staff (Executive Director, Executive Office Manager and Staff)
- DAHA Board Members
- DAHA Coaches
- Heritage Center Office Staff
- Duluth East and Duluth Denfeld High School Hockey Programs
- City Officials
- Insurance Providers
- Duluth Media

## **NOTIFYING PUBLICS**

- DAHA Staff Members
- Executive Board
- Duluth Media

## **CRISIS COMMUNICATION TEAM ROLES**

- Executive Director – makes decisions swiftly that do not require full board approval and serves as the spokesperson
- Executive Office Manager – write all press releases and communication materials
- Board President – make decisions in conjunction with the team
- Board Members – make major decisions and be kept in the loop

## **SPOKESPERSON/MEDIA/PRESS CONFERENCES**

The Executive Director should serve as the spokesperson when addressing the media. During the crisis, the Executive Director should provide regular updates via a press conference. The messaging can be similar to a press release. Other staff or board members should be invited to comment on the situation when they are involved, with permission from the Executive Director.

### **Tips and Tricks**

- Provide as much information about the situation as possible, but don't offer personal information about the matter (ie. names injured without consent from the family).

- If you don't know the answer, be honest and upfront and share that. Offer contact information (physical address, phone number, email) where you or the media member can follow up.
- Do not make any new decisions at the press conference.
- Provide the best contact information where the media can follow up.
- Provide information on when the next update will be given.

Press conferences should generally take place at the Heritage Center Lobby. I would recommend that DAHA has access to a lectern, microphone/sound system. \*AMSOIL Arena also has a press conference room that is always set up, which can be used as a backup location.

- Do not schedule a press conference on a Friday or Saturday after 4 p.m., unless you are trying to hide something. University of Minnesota Duluth Hockey takes priority during this time of year (October-March).

### **INTERNAL MEDIA CHANNELS**

DAHA utilizes duluthhockey.com and @duluthhockey on Facebook and Twitter. I recommend that DAHA utilize these media tools in a crisis. The Executive Director should take care of managing social media, while the Executive Office Manager should update the website and create written materials.

### **COMMAND CENTER**

The Essentia Duluth Heritage Center (EDHC) should serve as the primary command center. EDHC has access to lots of available multifunctional space including conference rooms.

### **EDHC KEY CONTACTS**

#### **Steve Kirk - General Manager**

Phone: 218-623-7434

E-mail: [steve@essentiaduluthheritagecenter.com](mailto:steve@essentiaduluthheritagecenter.com)

#### **Troy Sager - Arena Manager**

Phone: 218-464-1711 ext. 112

E-mail: [troy@essentiaduluthheritagecenter.com](mailto:troy@essentiaduluthheritagecenter.com)

\*AMSOIL Arena/Duluth Entertainment Convention Center can serve as a secondary command center if DAHA needs a bigger space.

### **DECC KEY CONTACTS**

#### **Daniel Hartman, Executive Director**

218-722-5573 | [dhartman@decc.org](mailto:dhartman@decc.org)

#### **Mary Sullivan, DECC Director of Events**

Phone: 218-623-1206 | [msullivan@decc.org](mailto:msullivan@decc.org)

*\*Space here must be rented and will cost an additional fee.*

### PRE-GATHERED INFORMATION

I would recommend that DAHA adds player rosters, reports (injury/building inspections), ice schedules and insurance policies, and recent board meeting minutes to a binder with this information.

### EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

- Three copies of this plan
- First Aid Kit
- EDHC/DAHA lectern
- Microphone and speakers
- Chairs
- Cell phones

### DULUTH MEDIA CONTACTS

Compiled by the University of Minnesota Duluth Athletic Department (updated Oct 2023)

Duluth News Tribune	<a href="mailto:sports@duluthnews.com">sports@duluthnews.com</a>	218-723-5317
Northern News Now (KBJR 6/CBS 3)	<a href="mailto:sports@northernnewsnow.com">sports@northernnewsnow.com</a>	218-720-6213
MY9 Sports	<a href="mailto:thansen@kbjr6.com">thansen@kbjr6.com</a>	
WDIO	<a href="mailto:sports@wdio.com">sports@wdio.com</a>	218-728-8930
Fox 21	<a href="mailto:sports@kqdsfox21.tv">sports@kqdsfox21.tv</a>	218-727-6864

Duluth Amateur Hockey Association Staff, Key Contacts, and Board Members  
*Outside parties should contact staff in blue*

Name	Position	Phone
<a href="#">Bob Nygaard</a>	Executive Director	DAHA Office (218) 728-8000
<a href="#">Clare Markley</a>	Executive Office Manager	Call Office
<a href="#">Don Olson</a>	Player Development Director	Call Office

<b>Ryan Sandefer</b>	<b>President, Glen Avon Rep</b>	<b>218-590-0864</b>
<b>David Moline</b>	<b>Vice President, Portman Representative</b>	<b>218-428-8432</b>
<b>Bill Whiteside</b>	<b>Treasurer, East Representative</b>	<b>218-590-5436</b>
<b>Kevin Chick</b>	<b>Secretary, At-Large Rep</b>	<b>218-310-8629</b>
<b>Lynden Medlin</b>	<b>East Representative</b>	<b>(218) 343-5030</b>
<b>Sonny Bedgone</b>	<b>Congdon Representative</b>	
<b>Jacub Kaliszewski</b>	<b>Icebreaker Representative</b>	<b>(651) 307-3111</b>
<b>Jacquelyn Messer</b>	<b>Woodland Representative</b>	
<b>Casey Kudler</b>	<b>At Large</b>	<b>(727) 501-3416</b>
<b>Bryan Bjonskaas</b>	<b>Gary Morgan Park Representative</b>	
<b>Kelly Lapcinski</b>	<b>Denfeld Representative</b>	<b>218-390-0986</b>
<b>Ethan Ault</b>	<b>West Representative</b>	<b>218-340-0504</b>
<b>Rolf Flaig</b>	<b>West Representative</b>	<b>218-461-2525</b>
<b>Cory Goldsworthy</b>	<b>At Large</b>	<b>218-391-9843</b>
<b>Matt Mathias</b>	<b>At Large</b>	<b>218-310-0509</b>
<b>Justin Finke</b>	<b>Piedmont Representative</b>	<b>218-269-4387</b>
<b>Blaine Hunter</b>	<b>East Rink Representative</b>	

<b>Nathan Weber</b>	<b>Duluth Heights Representative</b>	
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**OUTSIDE CONTACTS**

<b>Shari Olson</b>	<b>Minnesota Hockey District 11</b>	<b>shariolsonmn@gmail.com</b>
<b>Hermantown Contacts</b>		
<b>Marty Olson</b>	<b>President</b>	<b>Phone: 218-591-4735</b>
<b>Nate Hooper</b>	<b>Ice Scheduling Manager</b>	<b>Phone: 218-348-9203</b>

**RISKS AND CRISIS SCENARIOS**

***Disaster (Fire/Flood/Warm Weather)***

An explosion in 2004 burnt down Peterson Arena, one of the two community rinks in the City of Duluth. An accident like this would be a risk for DAHA as all hockey rinks use Zambonis (or an ice resurfacer). An electric ice resurfacer would be recommended or regular routine maintenance and inspection of Zambonis would be recommended as these machines have a high purchase cost.

When Petersen Arena burned down, other community associations offered to lend DAHA ice time at their rinks. While this was a nice gesture by the Northland community (commonly referred to as cities in Northern Minnesota) it may not be guaranteed if something similar happened. A huge advantage from 2004 to 2023 is the addition of Essentia Duluth Heritage Center (which was built to replace Peterson Arena) and the addition of AMSOIL Arena, which provides the city with two more sheets of ice. In the event a scenario like this occurs again, Duluth is prepared with two more ice rinks – but ice time is still stretched.

DAHA should also work with local schools to allow students to skip class (as during the day will be the easiest time to get ice availability at the last minute) – as ice time is scheduled many

months in advance before and after school. DAHA could also contact the University of Minnesota Duluth Hockey teams, as they frequently have ice booked but don't always use it.

As DAHA utilizes outdoor rinks, warm weather could cause a conflict of not having outdoor ice available. If this situation happens, the plan above could also be implemented to find more ice time.

### **PROMDOMES (EARLY WARNING SIGNS)**

- Smaller fires in the arena
- Missing routine checks (DAHA implemented by "Zamboni" vendors)
- Zamboni recalls
- Forecast for Warm Weather

### **PRESS CONFERENCE SCRIPT**

Thank you all for being here today. On Tuesday, October 10, at 8:15 PM local time, the Duluth Amateur Hockey Association became aware of a Zamboni explosion that burned down Fryberger Arena, located at 3211 Allendale Ave, Duluth, MN 55803.

At this time, we believe that the fire was caused by a faulty propane tank on an ice resurfer.

We believe that the arena is a total loss. Our insurance provider will be on-site on Thursday to complete a comprehensive assessment. Players and community members who had items in the arena are welcome to come back on Friday to see if they are able to salvage their belongings. Please note, players will not be allowed to go into the arena. Items and bags will be brought out to the North Parking Lot.

We are currently conducting an investigation and our first priority is the safety of players, coaches, and staff is of our utmost importance. Procuring ice time is our second priority. We have already heard from Hermantown, Cloquet, and North Shore associations, and they have generously offered us ice time in their spaces, free of charge. We sincerely thank all who helped with this.

We will provide our next update from the North Parking Lot at Fryberger Arena on Friday at 11 am.

At this time, we will open it up for a couple of questions to the media. Please state your name and organization first.

### **TOUGH QUESTIONS**

The Duluth Media is committed to its craft. They will ask tough questions and expect honest and detailed answers. Here are some possible tough questions and sample answers. The Duluth News Tribune is known to ask the toughest questions. They will be at the press conference.

**This is the second time in nearly 20 years a rink managed by DAHA has burnt down due to a Zamboni. Who is going to pay for this?**

Answer: DAHA and the City of Duluth have an insurance policy that covers accidents like these.

**Were the Zambonis not checked for quality assurance at any point during the day?**

Answer: Fryberger Arena has strict quality assurance checks. To our knowledge, nothing was missed.

**Why was the Zamboni left unattended?**

Answer: This will be a part of our investigation.

**Has the rink manager been relieved of his/her duties yet?**

Answer: A decision has not been made yet. This will also be a part of our investigation.

**How many people were in the arena at the time it caught on fire?**

Answer: Answer if known. The capacity of Fryberger Arena is 300 people.

**Was anyone injured?**

Answer: Answer if known. Do not provide names unless given consent by the person or family.

**Is anything in the arena salvageable?**

Answer: We are currently working on that. Share item pickup information.

**There are over 800 kids registered with DAHA. What's your plan to find other ice time? Who is going to pay for last-minute fees associated with this?**

Answer: We have received lots of support from our neighboring communities. We want to assure our families that we are working around the clock with our partners on this. We are working on all the financial aspects at the moment.

*Also notable: DAHA is a non-profit. DAHA's goal is never to profit from its work.*

## **KEY MESSAGES**

### **Press Release**

DULUTH, Minn. – At 8:15 p.m. on Tuesday, the Duluth Amateur Hockey Association learned of fire that caused Fryberger Arena to burn down. At the current time, the Duluth Fire Department and DAHA is investigating this situation.

At this time, we believe that the arena is a total loss. Our insurance provider will be on-site on Thursday to complete a comprehensive assessment. Players and community members who had items in the arena are welcome to come back on Friday to see if they are able to salvage their belongings. Please note, players will not be allowed to go into the arena. Items and bags will be brought out to the North Parking Lot.

DAHA greatly appreciates the efforts and contributions of our neighboring organizations to provide us Ice Time at this time.

We will be holding a Press Conference on Wednesday morning (October 11) at 10 a.m. at the Essentia Duluth Heritage Center.

### **DAHA Website**

Fryberger Arena is now closed. Players and community members will be able to grab their belongings on Friday. Please call the DAHA Office with questions at [\(218\) 728-8000](tel:2187288000).

Another suggestion could be to offer a Q and A on the website. The information used can be similar to the press release.

### **Paper Signs in Parking Lot at Burnt Down Arena**

Due to a fire, Fryberger Arena is now closed. Players and community members will be able to grab their belongings on Friday. Please call the DAHA Office with questions at [\(218\) 728-8000](tel:2187288000).

### **MESSAGE CONVEYANCE STRATEGIES**

- Keep the messages above short and sweet
- Be honest about the incident/accident
- Provide updates when information is known. Utilize Twitter and Social Media for smaller developments. Hold a press conference and send a press release when something bigger occurs.

### **RESOURCES**

<https://newstribuneattic.wordpress.com/2014/12/19/10-years-ago-tonight-zamboni-explodes-peterson-arena-burns/>

<https://history.vintagemnhockey.com/page/show/5385334-peterson-arena>

<https://history.vintagemnhockey.com/page/show/2030601-fryberger-arena>

<https://uscenterforsafesport.org/>

<https://www.fox9.com/sports/mike-randolph-resigns-as-duluth-east-hockey-coach-after-32-seasons>

<https://www.duluthhockey.com/season-registration>