

Crisis Control Newsletter

RQA
Providing Solutions from Concept to Consumption

Crisis Control Newsletter from RQA, Inc.—An XL Catlin Preferred Provider to Foodservice, Food Processing and Consumer Products Industries

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Ringing In 2016, Are your Contacts Accurate?

Are you and your team equipped to be successful in 2016? As we get ready to celebrate the end of 2015 and ring in the New Year, one resolution may be to ensure your key contact lists are completely up to date. These lists are essential to performing critical tasks and efficiently completing incident responses should they be necessary.

Many of us have no doubt updated our personal contacts as a result of changes in our friends and family membersø contact details to reflect new home addresses or phone numbers. Or frustratingly received the ñundeliverableò or ñreturn to senderò mail notices or ñwrong numberò notices when attempting to contact friends and family. This is understandably disheartening, frustrating, and an inconvenience. During critical incident responses the impact can go beyond frustration to incapacitating when the need for reliable data and support are paramount to you and your teamøs effectiveness. It may also lead to perceptions as to your preparedness or lack of preparedness.

The contact lists associated with key responses such as those contained in a recall plans, crisis plans, or food defense plans are critical tools to accurately have on file and to equip our teams with for the upcoming new year.

Some items to consider when updating contact lists may include:

- Incident Response Team
  - Phone numbers for office, mobile and home, if applicable
  - Alternate team member or designee
  - Customer Service Team
  - Phone numbers
  - Key issue responders
  - Holiday/designee contacts
- Facilities/Security
  - Add any new manufacturing sites & contacts
  - Add new corporate location/office contacts
  - Holiday/designee contacts
- External Contacts
  - Check accuracy of contacts for key agencies
  - Verify if any new agencies should be added
  - Review any hyperlinks included in your plans, these links can become outdated
  - Consider supplier, vendor, and service contacts that may need to be updated (Hint: Procurement or Sourcing might provide support)

Risk Mitigation And VoC

Consumer and customer trust is valuable to the health of the organization. Once impacted, trust can be difficult to win back. Staying aware of the consumer needs, attitudes, and thoughts about your products can be a valuable when used toward holistically mitigating risk.

The Voice of the Customer (VoC) is a performance indicator that many businesses consider when determining if they are meeting expectations, wants, and addressing concerns. If we consider that the consumer is the end customer, then this metric most definitely plays a top role in business as an indicator of performance, potential longevity and sustainability. Changes in this metric may also provide insight into emerging risk. Being aware and monitoring this metric may provide insights toward business risk and provide an opportunity to mitigate incidents before they become crisis and media events.

Today, consumers share their opinions in many ways. These can be through Customer Service helpline calls, sharing with friends and family, social media, passive resistance, media reports, and governmental reports (whistle blowing). Though these may seem like consumer contacts and communications that are passive and after the fact in nature business leadership, risk managers, and quality managers can become much closer to the ñpulseò of the consumer and improve responsiveness and mitigate risk.

How? Consider the power of being proactive. Instead of waiting for the helpline, Customer Service, or Legal department to call indicating there is a problem, consider proactively connecting cross functionally with other departments. Not only can this support risk reduction, it may also support overall awareness and positive perception of your department. Many businesses have powerful Customer Service programs, reporting, and software that can provide insights. Marketing and Communications may have data from social media monitoring that can be useful. Additionally, incidents occurring at other companies (recalls, news alerts, etc.) or those mentioned by your friends and family may provide ideas that can be used toward strengthening and improving the overall robustness of the businessøs controls.

Listening, monitoring, understanding, and acting on the VoC can be crucial to restoring consumer trust, maintaining and building loyalty, and proactively reducing emerging risk.

Food and Drug Administration Recalls (www.fda.gov)

Product: Celery
Incident: Possible Health Risk–*E. Coli* O157:H7

A Tracy, CA firm is recalling several of their products because they may include celery which could potentially contain *E. coli* O157:H7. The recalled products are being recalled out of an abundance of caution due to a celery and onion diced blend testing positive for *E. coli* O157:H7 in a sample taken by the Montana Department of Health. The celery and onion diced blend that was tested was used in a retailer's chicken salad that has been linked to a multi-state *E. coli* O157:H7 outbreak. Consumers are warned not to consume the recalled products even if they do not look or smell spoiled. The products were distributed to specific retailers in AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, NV, OR, GA, ID, IL, UT, MT, NE, NM, NV, ND, SD, WA, WY. Consumers who have purchased these items are urged to discard them. Consumers with questions should call 209-830-314 for more information.

Product: Pet Bone Product
Incident: Possible Health Risk–*Salmonella*

A Wilton, CT firm is voluntarily recalling one production lot of pet bone products due to a possible health risk from *Salmonella*. To date, there have been no reports indicating that these products have caused any illness in association with this recall. The recalled products were individually shrink-wrapped in plastic and distributed starting November 19, 2015 to nine US states including CA, KS, MI, MN, MT, NV, OR, UT and WA. Routine testing at the manufacturing site revealed the presence of *Salmonella* in the product. *Salmonella* can affect animals eating the product and there is also a risk to humans from handling the contaminated pet products, especially if they have not thoroughly washed their hands after have contact with the products. Consumers who have purchased these products are urged to dispose of the product or return it to the pace of purchase for a full refund. Consumers with questions should contact the company directly or visit their website for more information.

United States Department of Agriculture Recalls (www.usda.gov)

Product: Chicken Product
Incident: Possible Health Risk-Adulteration

A Pine Bluff, AR establishment is recalling approximately 52,486 pounds of chicken wing product that may be adulterated because of having an "off odor" scent. The fully cooked 28-oz. bags containing chicken wing section items were produced on October 24, 2015 and October 25, 2015 and shipped to retail locations nationwide. The problem was discovered when the firm received consumer complaints about the product being "off-odor" as well as mild illness associated with consumption. There have been no confirmed reports of adverse reactions due to the consumption of these products. Consumers who have purchased these products are urged not to consume them. These products should be thrown away or returned to the place of purchase. Consumers and media with questions about the recall should contact the firm directly for more information.

Product: Beef and Chicken Empanada Products
Incident: Possible Health Risk–Non-inspection

A San Diego, CA establishment is recalling approximately 1,754 pounds of beef and chicken empanada products that were produced without the benefit of federal inspection. The recalled products were produced on August 31, 2015 and September 29, 2015. The recalled products were distributed to a retail location in San Diego, CA. The problem was discovered during routine FSIS inspection. The beef and chicken empanadas were found in the establishment's freezer and did not have the marks of FSIS inspection. The products had a "deli" sticker and labels indicating that the products were manufactured by another entity, which leases part of the facility from the firm. The company has not received any reports of adverse reactions due to consumption of these products. Consumers are urged to discard the recalled products or return them to the place of purchase and should contact the firm for more details.

Consumer Product Safety Commission Recalls (www.cpsc.gov)

Product: Blenders
Incident: Possible Risk-Laceration Hazard

A Newton, MA distributor is recalling approximately 1.1 million units of professional blenders (99,000 units in Canada) manufactured in China. The recall involves 12 models of professional blenders that have a clear 72-oz. pitcher with a removable gray or black lid that opens and locks closed, a stacked blade assembly and one or more cups. All recalled models have a motor base and may have been sold with additional accessories. The recalled blenders pose a laceration risk if consumers pour or invert the pitcher after removing the lid while the loose stacked blade assembly is still inside the pitcher. The company has received 53 reports of lacerations related to the use of this product. The product was sold at retailers nationwide and online from March 2012 through September 2015. Consumers should remove the blade before pouring. Consumers with questions should contact the company directly or visit their website for more information.

Product: Curling Irons
Incident: Possible Risk-Burn Hazard

A Venice, CA importer is recalling approximately 8,400 units of curling irons (800 units in Canada) manufactured in China and sold at two retailers and professional beauty supply distributors nationwide from December 2014 through October 2015. The recall involves 1.25 inch curling irons that have a white plastic handle, a white rotating heat barrel and clamp and a rose-gold colored grip. The clamp can detach while in use, posing a burn hazard to consumers. The firm has received 130 reports of loose or detached curling iron clamps including two reports of minor burns. Consumers should immediately stop using the recalled curling irons and contact the firm for additional information on how to obtain a prepaid shipping box to return the curling iron for a free repair. Consumers should contact the firm or visit their website for more information.

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