



# VISIT MENDOCINO COUNTY OPERATIONS MANUAL



Visit Mendocino County is dedicated to the growth of the travel and tourism industry throughout Mendocino County and provides tourist information for consumers and assistance to our tourism partners throughout the county. We market the county's travel opportunities, businesses, events and specials throughout United States and world with a variety of programs and partnerships.

This document contains important information on the day to day workings of the business and should be used as a guide. In addition, it clearly specifies expectations relating to general operations and policies.



# General Operations

## **Address**

105 West Standley Street, Ukiah CA 95482 (Main Office)  
345 North Franklin Street, Fort Bragg CA 95437 (Satellite Office)  
P.O. Box 89, Ukiah CA 95482 (Mailing)

## **Phone**

(707) 964-9010  
(866) 466-3636

## **Hours**

Monday thru Friday  
8:30am to 5:00pm

## Visit Mendocino County: Strategic Direction 2017/18-2019/20

<b>CLARITY</b>	<b>Vision</b> Enriching experiences for our guests, enhanced lifestyle for our residents, and stability and diversity for our economy	<b>Mission</b> Visit Mendocino County stewards and amplifies the total Mendocino County experience.	<b>Values</b> <b>Transparency</b> We foster trust through openness and integrity. <b>Accountability</b> We are outcome-oriented and professional. <b>Partnership</b> We create alignment through inclusive and meaningful relationships. <b>Community</b> We contribute to the fabric of Mendocino County. <b>Innovation</b> Our creativity reflects the uniqueness of our cultures and landscapes.	<b>Reputation</b> <b>Leader</b> We motivate and facilitate the tourism community. <b>Accessible</b> We welcome—and are responsive to—input from community members and stakeholders. <b>Collaborative</b> We actively seek engagement and collaboration with our stakeholders and partners. <b>Bold</b> We deliver on smart, effective, and forward-thinking ideas.	<b>Position</b> In order to support our stakeholders, generate economic activity for county residents through tourism, and inspire our visitors, Visit Mendocino County: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistently markets the entire county and its assets.</li> <li>Creates, develops, and manages brand awareness for the county.</li> <li>Connects people and organizations to opportunities.</li> <li>Provides information to in-county partners and tourism resources to the industry.</li> <li>Delivers a robust and sustainable return on investment.</li> </ul>
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<b>FOCUS</b>	<b>Imperatives</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Initiatives</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
	Demonstrate and strengthen VMC's contribution to county economic and community vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bid assessment growth at 5% over average of top 3 competitors</li> <li>Year-over-year increase of sales tax receipts in Mendocino County</li> <li>Year-over-year increase in stakeholder survey response rate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase tourism revenue through the development and implementation of the annual integrated marketing, public relations, and sales plan</li> <li>Improve data-driven decision making through increased participation and "buy in" from all of our partners</li> <li>Develop a data-sharing process that offers context and insights for partners.</li> </ul>	
	Cultivate VMC's relationships and collaborations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Year-over-year increase in partner participation in festivals</li> <li>Year-over-year increase in "opportunities" page visitation on VMC website</li> <li>Solicit new applicants for BID and MCTC Board positions and committee membership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foster collaboration and county-wide alignment by creating and developing the "go to" website for all tourism stakeholders.</li> <li>Strengthen regional tourism relationships to leverage broader marketing opportunities.</li> <li>Proactively educate and communicate with all tourism stakeholders.</li> </ul>	
Raise awareness of the Mendocino County experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Year-over-year increase Mendocino County awareness score</li> <li>Year-over-year increases in impressions and ad equivalency</li> <li>Year-over-year increase in experience perception score on in-market visitor survey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase Mendocino County brand awareness and positive perception.</li> <li>Work with partners to develop, promote and grow strong and beneficial tourism activities and events.</li> <li>Explore our options to influence and shape potential cannable tourism.</li> </ul>		

## Ongoing Management

# OPERATIONAL PLAN

**Guidance**

**Have Clear Ownership:**  
Assign an owner to serve as the point person to ensure the groups are meeting and the plan is being reviewed.

**Make It A Living Document:**  
Over the first few cycles, initiatives, action items, timing and priorities will continue to shift based on the priorities of the organization. Keep adjusting based on the association's needs.

**Progress Over Perfection:**  
Encourage everyone to continue to make progress – even if they are small steps, celebrate the successes and learnings.

**Remember Your Role as Change Leaders:**  
As the operational plan is implemented, the organization will start to shift to the desired future state. Keep your radar tuned into the transition needs of the team.

**Keep Communicating:**  
Share the progress and communicate any changes to keep everyone informed.

Complete  
the grey  
fields  
only

**VISIT MENDOCINO  
COUNTY, INC.  
Daily Time  
Sheet**

**Employee  
name:**

**Payperiod:**

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
DATE								
TIME IN	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	
TIME OUT	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Meal Break								
TIME IN	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	
TIME OUT	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Total	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

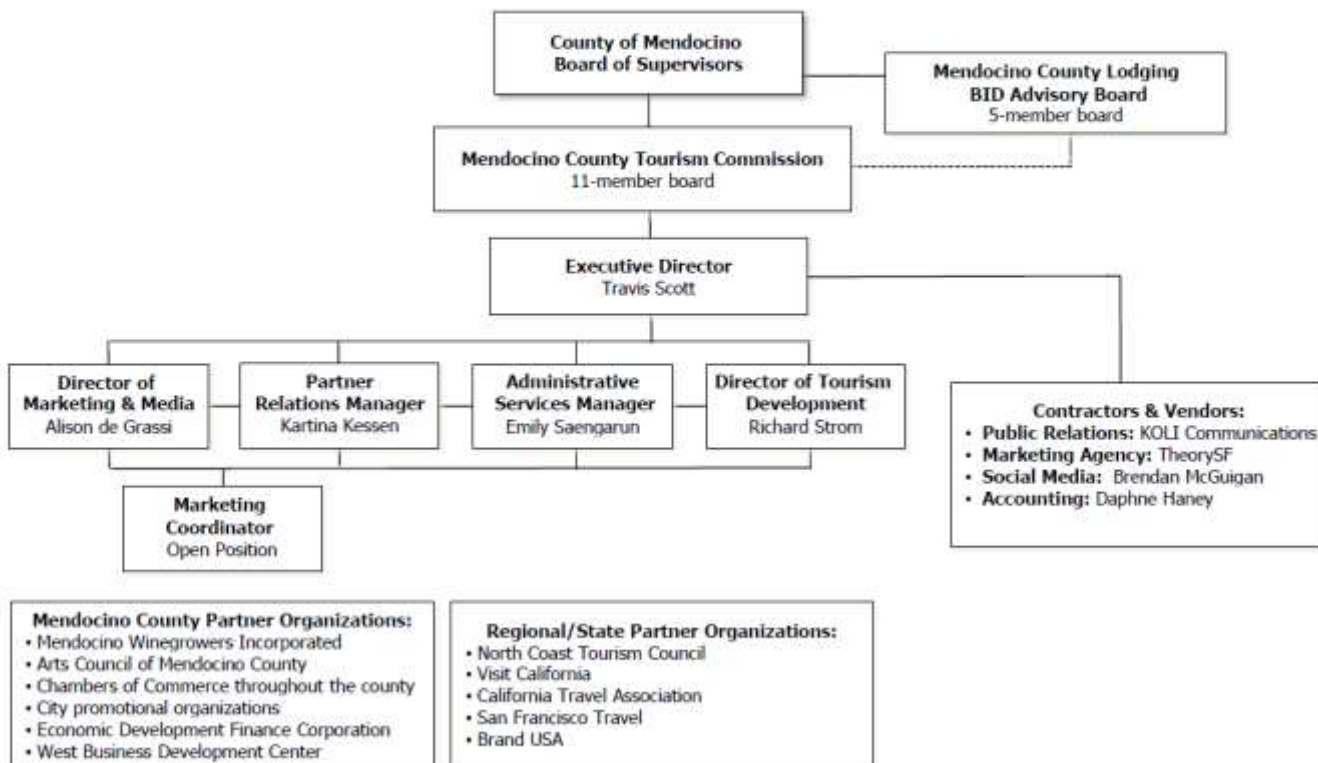
	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
DATE								
TIME IN	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	
TIME OUT	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Meal Break								
TIME IN	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	
TIME OUT	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Total	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
DATE								
TIME IN	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	
TIME OUT	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Meal Break								
TIME IN	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	
TIME OUT	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Total	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00





## Mendocino County Destination Marketing Organizational Chart



Revised 1/2/2019 ES



## **VISIT MENDOCINO COUNTY YEARLY REPORT PROCESS OVERVIEW**

THE FOLLOWING ARE DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS OF REPORTS IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF CREATION/APPROVAL BASED ON THE FISCAL YEAR (JULY – JUNE). ALSO, INCLUDES PROCESS FOR RENEWING THE BID:

**VMC ANNUAL REPORT (JULY/AUG):** This is a report developed by VMC staff, and approved by the VMC Board, describing the activities & accomplishments of the prior fiscal year; Report includes general activities of the marketing plan in the new fiscal year: Report sent to all lodging properties and other interested organizations, businesses & individuals (approx. 250 in addition to lodging properties)

**BID ADVISORY BOARD ANNUAL REPORT (NOV – MAR):** This is a report required by the BID Ordinance describing the parameters of the District including assessment percentage, activities, budget, method of collection, boundaries of District, etc. Traditionally, Advisory Board develops draft with VMC staff to submit to the Advisory Board who will then approve the final report to be submitted to the county for review and approval; Report includes a general budget outlying estimated amount of BID collection (which establishes the amount of the 50% county match), budget amounts for marketing, partnerships, & contingency. These amounts are used as a foundation in preparing the VMC budget for the next fiscal year.

**RENEWING THE BID (MAR – MAY):** Once the Advisory Board submits the Annual Report to the county, two meeting dates are set on the Board of Supervisor's calendars: One is for the presentation of the report by the County's Executive Office, Advisory Board Chair, VMC Executive Director. Board of Supervisors accepts the report (or requests changes) which does two things - solidifies the county's intention to match the BID funds for the next fiscal year and opens the public notification timeframe and sets a date for the BID Public Hearing and final approval of the Report by the Board of Supervisors.

The Public Hearing is the second meeting date required for BID Renewal. Unless there is 51% of written protest from properties (based on monies collected) during either the public notification timeframe or the actual public hearing, the Supervisors close the public hearing and confirm acceptance of the Annual Report. The Supervisors can choose not to accept the report if they feel they either cannot budget the required match or feel the BID should not continue.

After the Annual Report is confirmed, contract negotiations between the county and VMC commence. The contract is put on the Supervisor's consent calendar (May/June) which allows for BID funds and matching funds to VMC.





## **VMC MARKETING PLAN & BUDGET:**

Being an ongoing working document, the marketing plan & budget are meant to be a road map of activities carried out by VMC and the budget to cover the costs of the activities. The process is as follows:

- Jan/Feb when staff complete reports to analyze activities of the previous year (leads analysis, zip code analysis, current research, etc.);
- Feb - VMC Board holds retreat and discusses strategy and goals of organization
- Jan – Executive Director develops draft budget based on feedback from outline and brainstorm session with board and committee members. This draft is presented to the Finance Committee.
- Feb – Finance Committee recommends for approval to the full MCTC board the working budget.
- March/April – VMC Committees meet to discuss draft plan, discuss ideas on specific programs (i.e. media plan, PR parameters, focus for event coordinator, etc.) and budget requests for those programs
  - Committee Structure and Responsibility:
    - Marketing – oversees advertising, public relations and online marketing (including website)
    - Visitor Services – oversees visitor services, leisure sales, stakeholder education
    - Festival – oversees event coordination and partnerships
    - Finance – oversees budget allocation
    - Personnel – oversees staff plan and budget including benefits, pay rates, etc.
    - Organizational Development – Oversees the board training and recruitment
- April – Executive Director finalizes plan based on committee & board feedback and presents to VMC Board
- July – VMC staff begin implementation of plan & budget



## **Visit Mendocino County Meeting and Misc. Business Protocol**

Visit Mendocino County (VMC) Board of Directors meetings take place on the second Tuesday of every month starting at 1:00 pm (unless noted). Currently, the Executive Director attends these monthly meetings. In order to prepare for these meetings, the following steps are taken both before and after each meeting.

Please note: All meeting locations require free Wi-Fi and a phone line which can dial a long-distance number

### **Before the Meeting:**

- Office Coordinator identifies the location for the meeting (inland or coastal) and sets up the conference call number and log-in information on the agenda. Please note: To abide by the Brown Act, call-in locations must be listed on the agenda. If anyone from the public is calling in during the meeting, it must be done at the posted locations on the agenda.
- Draft agendas are created on the Monday the week prior to the meeting and are sent to the Chairman and Vice Chair of the Board for input/feedback/approval. This includes all standing committee action items for the board.
- Once the agenda is approved it is uploaded along with the rest of the documents of the meeting to the [www.mendocinotourism.org](http://www.mendocinotourism.org) website. The format to post to this site should follow the agenda. All agendas need to be posted at all locations posted on the agenda at least 72 hours prior to the meeting to abide by the Brown Act.
- The Board packet (agenda, prior meeting minutes, financials, and other supporting documents) is emailed via BCC to the entire BOD no later than the Friday prior to the Board meeting. Request for RSVP's is always included. A quorum represents 6 members of the 11-member Board.
- If a quorum is not reached by Monday AM, a reminder is sent out to the Board with a 3pm deadline for RSVP's. If no quorum by 3pm, the meeting will be cancelled at the Chair's discretion.

### **Miscellaneous:**

- The telephone system is required for all VMC Board meetings. Locations must have an outgoing phone line capable of calling long distance along with internet access



# Financial Policies & Procedures

## RESERVE POLICY

VMC must maintain a reserve fund equal to \$100,000 or ten percent (10%) of the annually projected expenses, whichever is greater, with the conditions that: A) this sum is to be held in an interest bearing account and be reflected as a line item on the MCTC balance sheet; B) all expenditures would require approval by the MCTC Board; and C) allowable uses would remain only those recommended and approved in the fiscal years BID Annual Report with the additional allowance for use to cover lower than budgeted assessment income.

## CAPITALIZATION POLICY

Assets are acquired occasionally through its normal operations for the Mendocino County Tourism Commission. These assets may be acquired through purchase and/or donation. In the case of non-monetary or purchased equipment, materials or real property a decision must be made whether to capitalize that asset or, in the case of a purchase, expense it.

The following criteria will apply when deciding whether to capitalize a newly acquired asset.

1. The acquisition cost, or in the case of a donation have a value of \$3,500 or more
2. The acquisition has a projected useful life of five (5) years or more
3. The purchase has a repair or improvement to an existing asset, if the repair or improvement meet the criteria of both one and two above

If an acquisition meets the criteria above, it may be entered appropriately into the accounting system as a capital asset. If not, it must be expensed in the month it was acquired.

Even if an acquisition meets the criteria of a capital asset it must be approved as such by the Executive Director at the time of acquisition. The Chief Executive Officer may, at their discretion, decide to expense an item even if it otherwise meets the requirements stated above for being classified as a capital asset. If the acquisition does not meet the criteria of 1, 2 and 3 above, however, it must be expensed and cannot be capitalized.

## DOCUMENT RETENTION AND DESTRUCTION POLICY

### 1. Policy and Purposes

This Policy represents the procedure of Visit Mendocino County with respect to the retention and destruction of documents and other records, both in hard copy and electronic media (which may merely be referred to as “documents” in this Policy). The purpose of this Policy includes (a) retention and maintenance of documents necessary for the proper functioning of the organization as well as to comply with applicable legal requirements; (b) destruction of documents which no longer need to be retained; and (c) guidance for the Board of Directors, officers, staff and other constituencies with respect to their responsibilities concerning document retention and destruction. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the organization reserves the right to revise or revoke this Policy at any time.

#### Administration

**2.1 Responsibilities of the Executive Director.** The organization’s Executive Director shall be in charge of the administration of this Policy. The Executive Director’s responsibilities shall include supervising and coordinating the retention and destruction of documents pursuant to this Policy and particularly the Document Retention Schedule included below. The Executive Director shall also be responsible for documenting the actions taken to maintain and/or destroy organization documents and retaining such documentation. The

Executive Director may also modify the Document Retention Schedule from time to time as necessary to comply with law and/or to include additional or revised document categories as may be appropriate to reflect organizational policies and procedures. The Executive Director is also authorized to periodically review this Policy and Policy compliance with legal counsel and to report to the Board of Directors as to compliance. The Executive Director may also appoint one or more assistants to assist in carrying out the Executive Director's responsibilities, with the Executive Director, however, retaining ultimate responsibility for administration of this Policy.

**2.2 Responsibilities of Constituencies.** This Policy also relates to the responsibilities of board members, staff, volunteers and outsiders with respect to maintaining and documenting the storage and destruction of the organization's documents. The Executive Director shall report to the Board of Directors (the board members acting as a body), which maintains the ultimate direction of management. The organization's staff shall be familiar with this Policy, shall act in accordance therewith, and shall assist the Executive Director, as requested, in implementing it. The responsibility of volunteers with respect to this Policy shall be to produce specifically identified documents upon request of management, if the volunteer still retains such documents. In that regard, after each project in which a volunteer has been involved, or each term which the volunteer has served, it shall be the responsibility of the Executive Director to confirm whatever types of documents the volunteer retained and to request any such documents which the Executive Director feels will be necessary for retention by the organization (not by the volunteer). Outsiders may include vendors or other service providers. Depending upon the sensitivity of the documents involved with the outsider relationship, the organization, through the Executive Director, shall share this Policy with the outsider, requesting compliance.

In instances, the Executive Director may require that the contract with the outsider specify the responsibilities of the outsider with respect to this Policy.

**3. Suspension of Document Destruction; Compliance.** The organization becomes subject to a duty to preserve (or halt the destruction of) documents once litigation, an audit or a government investigation is reasonably anticipated. Further, federal law imposes criminal liability (with fines and/or imprisonment for not more than 20 years) upon whomever "knowingly alters, destroys, mutilates, conceals, covers up, falsifies, or makes a false entry in any record, document, or tangible object with the intent to impede, obstruct, or influence the investigation or proper administration of any matter within the jurisdiction of any department or agency of the United States ... or in relation to or contemplation of any such matter or case." Therefore, if the Executive Director becomes aware that litigation, a governmental audit or a government investigation has been instituted, or is reasonably anticipated or contemplated, the Executive Director shall immediately order a halt to all document destruction under this Policy, communicating the order to all affected constituencies in writing. The Executive Director may thereafter amend or rescind the order only after conferring with legal counsel. If any board member or staff member becomes aware that litigation, a governmental audit or a government investigation has been instituted, or is reasonably anticipated or contemplated, with respect to the organization, and they are not sure whether the Executive Director is aware of it, they shall make the Executive Director aware of it. Failure to comply with this Policy, including, particularly, disobeying any destruction halt order, could result in possible civil or criminal sanctions. In addition, for staff, it could lead to disciplinary action including possible termination.

**4. Electronic Documents; Document Integrity.** Documents in electronic format shall be maintained just as hard copy or paper documents are, in accordance with the Document Retention Schedule. Due to the fact that the integrity of electronic documents, whether with respect to the ease of alteration or deletion, or otherwise, may come into question, the Executive Director shall attempt to establish standards for document integrity, including guidelines for handling electronic files, backup procedures, archiving of documents, and regular checkups of the reliability of the system; provided, that such standards shall only be implemented to the extent that they are reasonably attainable considering the resources and other priorities of the organization.

**5. Privacy.** It shall be the responsibility of the Executive Director, after consultation with counsel, to determine how privacy laws will apply to the organization’s documents from and with respect to employees and other constituencies; to establish reasonable procedures for compliance with such privacy laws; and to allow for their audit and review on a regular basis.

**6. Emergency Planning.** Documents shall be stored in a safe and accessible manner. Documents which are necessary for the continued operation of the organization in the case of an emergency shall be regularly duplicated or backed up and maintained in an off-site location. The Executive Director shall develop reasonable procedures for document retention in the case of an emergency.

**7. Document Creation and Generation.** The Executive Director shall discuss with staff the ways in which documents are created or generated. With respect to each employee or organizational function, the Executive Director shall attempt to determine whether documents are created which can be easily segregated from others, so that, when it comes time to destroy (or retain) those documents, they can be easily culled from the others for disposition.

**8. Document Retention Schedule. [Periods are suggested]**

<u>Document Type</u>	<u>Retention Period</u>
<b>Accounting and Finance</b>	
Accounts Payable & Accounts Receivable	6 years
Annual Financial Statements and Audit Reports	6 years
Bank Statements, Reconciliations & Deposit Slips	6 years
Credit Card Receipts	6 years
Employee/Business Expense Reports/Documents	6 years
General Ledger	Permanent
Interim Financial Statements	Permanent
<b>Contributions/Gifts/Grants</b>	
Contribution Records	6 years
Documents Evidencing Terms of Gifts	6 years
Grant Records	6 years after end of grant period
<b>Corporate and Exemption</b>	
Articles of Incorporation and Amendments	Permanent
Bylaws and Amendments	Permanent
Minute Books, including Board & Committee Minutes	Permanent
Annual Reports to Attorney General & Secretary of State	Permanent
Other Corporate Filings	Permanent
IRS Exemption Determination Letter	Permanent
Licenses and Permits	Permanent
Employer Identification (EIN) Designation	Permanent
<b>Correspondence and Internal Memoranda</b>	
Hard copy correspondence and internal memoranda relating to a document otherwise addressed in this Schedule should be retained for the same period as the document to which they relate.	
Hard copy correspondence and internal memoranda	
Relating to routine matters with no lasting significance	2 years
Correspondence and internal memoranda important to the organization or having lasting significance	Permanent, subject to review

### **Electronic Mail (E-mail) to or from the organization**

Electronic mail (e-mails) relating to a document otherwise addressed in this Schedule should be retained for the same period as the document to which they relate, but may be retained in hard copy form with the document to which they relate.

E-mails considered important to the organization or of lasting significance, should be printed and stored in a central repository.	Permanent, subject to review
E-mails not included in either of the above categories	12 months
<b>TO BE REVISITED</b>	

### **Electronically Stored Documents**

Electronically stored documents (e.g., in pdf, text or other electronic format) comprising or relating to a particular document otherwise addressed in this Schedule should be retained for the same period as the document which they comprise or to which they relate, but may be retained in hard copy form (unless the electronic aspect is of significance).

Electronically stored documents considered important to the organization or of lasting significance should be printed and stored in a central repository (unless the electronic aspect is of significance).

Permanent, subject to review

Electronically stored documents not included in either of the above categories

2 years

### **Employment, Personnel and Pension**

Personnel Records

7 years after employment ends

Employee contracts

7 years after termination

Retirement and pension records

Permanent

### **Insurance**

Property, D&O, Workers' Compensation and General Liability Insurance Policies

4 years

### **Legal and Contracts**

Contracts, related correspondence and other supporting documentation

7 years after termination

Legal correspondence

Permanent

### **Management and Miscellaneous**

Strategic Plans

5 years after expiration

Policies and Procedures Manual

Current version with revision

Trademarks, Copyrights and Patents

Permanent

### **Tax**

Tax exemption documents & correspondence

Permanent

IRS Rulings

Permanent

Annual information returns – federal & state

Permanent

Tax returns

Permanent



## MONTHLY ACCOUNTING CHECKLIST

MONTH \_\_\_\_\_

### VMC

- Payroll
- Reimbursements (end of month)
- Credit Card Statements
- Pay Invoices
- Issue Invoices (as needed)
- Reconcile Bank Statement
- Email Balance Sheet to Executive Director and Finance Committee
- Email P&L to Executive Director and Finance Committee
- Print Past Due A/R for Office Coordinator (monthly)
- Misc. Postings (deposits made, checks handwritten, etc.)
- Prepare monthly reporting (P&L, Balance Sheet)

### Miscellaneous

- VMC checks needs to be signed by an approved Board member or the Executive Director. Two signatures are required on amounts greater than \$5,000

### Bookkeeper Information

Daphne Haney | Abacus Accounting  
PO Box 456 | Mendocino, CA 95460 | 707-357-5270

### Certified Public Accountant(s)

Jeremiah K. Murphy, CPA (taxes)  
1102 South Main Street | Fort Bragg, CA 95437 | 707-964-6325

### Tax Consultant Attorney

Hogan & Stickel, Inc.  
811 N. Main Street | Fort Bragg, CA 95437 | 707-961-4400

### Insurance Information

Northwest Insurance Agency | Agent: Michael Hall | mhall@nwinsure.com  
522 N. Franklin St | Fort Bragg, CA 95437 | (707) 964-1271 | (707) 964-0108







# Technology



## VMC TECHNOLOGY PLAN

### Database Management:

VMC uses BigContacts as its main database. This database is used for data management as well as for sales. Since it is an internet-based system, it is flexible and can be accessed from anywhere a team member has internet access. This and the email database (MailChimp) is accessible from any internet connection worldwide through a password protected login. All team members are responsible in updating and maintaining the BigContacts database.

### Personnel Training:

Personnel training is handled by a team of individuals at VMC. For initial staff training and orientation, including paperwork and reviewing the handbook and office systems is conducted by the Executive Director, Office Coordinator and contract Bookkeeper. For additional training, each team member at VMC can provide more in-depth training pertaining to their area of responsibility with the organization.

Company Email, Calendaring & Office Systems  
Accounts payable, mileage reimbursement, coding  
Brown Act & Ethics Training  
MailChimp, Website CMS & Box.com

Administrative Services Manager  
Administrative Services Manager  
Executive Director  
Director of Marketing & Media

### Software:

VMC currently utilizes the following 'off-the-shelf' software products:

Microsoft Office 365	5 licenses
Microsoft 2010	3 licenses

VMC currently utilizes the following 'internet-based' software products:

MailChimp	1 license
Box.com	1 license
DropBox	1 business license
Survey Monkey	Unlimited Licenses
Sprout Social	1 license
Wufoo	1 membership

### Hardware:

VMC currently utilizes the following computer hardware:

Individual Workstations (CPU/Monitor)	2
Portable Shared Laptops	5

VMC currently maintains the following peripheral hardware:

Networked Printers	3
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VMC currently maintains the following office equipment hardware:

Networked copier/printer/scanner	1
Paper Shredder	2
PBX system, speaker phone, & desk phones	11

VMC currently maintains the following audio/visual hardware:

Portable Projector	1
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**Website:**

The VMC website was first developed in 2006 with a full rebuild in 2009. In 2014 the site underwent a complete redesign in a custom Drupal format. This format has not proven effective and a new site using WordPress was completed in 2018 and is maintained by TheorySF.

**Social Media:**

VMC continues to use social media as a vehicle to promote Mendocino County. The organization has contracted with an outside agent to serve as the social media coordinator. In the 2018/19 fiscal year, VMC contracted with Brendan McGuigan as our social media coordinator.

**Facebook:**

VMC maintains a fan page and curates local photographic and video content through this vehicle.

**Twitter:**

VMC maintains a Twitter presence, monitoring a wide range of Mendocino County relevant keywords, and reaching out to visitors, press, and interested parties directly.

**Pinterest:**

VMC maintains a range of Mendocino County related boards on Pinterest.

**YouTube:**

VMC currently maintains a YouTube channel which houses an array of :15, :30 and 2:00 minute videos

**Instagram:**

VMC currently maintains and updates an Instagram account

**Passwords:**

High-level passwords are generated through the LastPass system initiated by the MCTC Board in 2016. This system better tracks and monitors passwords through the online systems used with staff and contractors. It also provides additional security if attrition happens.

**Phones:**

The current phone system is comprised of (9) Polycom internet speaker phone units which operate independently of one another but are all connected through a central internet network, 1 base station and 1 linx devise for additional extensions that are completely wireless. There are 2 phone lines, The Virtual Receptionist handles incoming calls making it easier for callers to reach the correct individual.

**A/V Technology:**

VMC currently has a portable projector, (2) conference phone systems (one in each office)



## Guest Services



## **GUEST INTERACTION**

The purpose of the Visit Mendocino County Marketplace is to greet visitors and assist them with information on Mendocino County attractions, hotels, restaurants, retail shops, etc. The goal is to manage the flow of visitors throughout the county, extend their stay and create a positive experience of the destination.

The staff of VMC strives to provide impeccable customer service through a number of skills and talents. The following are guidelines VMC staff follow when fulfilling customer inquiries:

### **VISITOR SERVICES**

One of the main responsibilities of VMC staff is to meet and greet visitors in all mediums. These visitors include walk-in visitors, telephone calls, mail inquiries, and e-mail inquiries. Since the Visit Mendocino County Marketplace is also the administrative offices of Visit Mendocino County, “visitors” encompass a multitude of different people. “Visitors” include, but are not limited to:

- Travelers from outside Mendocino County
- Residents of Mendocino County
- Business professionals
- Elected officials
- Media
- Vendors
- Service providers
- School groups
- Etc.

It is important that each visitor be serviced in a professional and timely manner. When appropriate, it is beneficial to gather demographic/tracking information on visitors. The following are guidelines to assist with this endeavor:

### Telephone Calls:

1. Phones should be answered with professionalism and courtesy.
2. Answer with "Visit Mendocino County. This is xxxx. How may I help you?" or a version of this. It is important to use your name as it creates a connection between you and the visitor.
3. Assist the visitor with their request.
4. If a visitor requests material:
  1. Document visitor information. When applicable, gather how caller heard of Visit Mendocino County
5. All telephone inquiries for information should be addressed within 48 hours, including voice mail requests.
6. Business calls should be screened for name and business, then identify the caller to the appropriate director.
7. If it is a business call, do not give out information that the caller should already have. For example, a company calls and asks for our copier model number. Our servicing company already has this information and would not need to call for that. This is possibly a scam to get our model number and then send us user manuals we did not ask for and an invoice we also did not ask for.
8. Before hanging up the phone, always thank the visitor.

### E-Mail Requests:

1. Google (e-mail) should be opened at the beginning of the day (see the opening procedures).
2. E-mail requests for materials should be processed as soon as possible, within 48 hours.
3. E-mail requests for a phone call should be taken care of within 24 hours.

### Mail:

1. Mail should be sorted and delivered on a timely basis.
2. It is all right to open mail addressed solely to Visit Mendocino County or any version thereof.
3. On occasion, you will receive a request from a student needing materials for a school project. The standard package for this request is:
  - a. All VMC publications
  - b. County map
  - c. Postcards (2)
  - d. Personal letter of response
4. Mail requests for materials should be processed as soon as possible, within 48 hours.



# Media & PR Protocol



## Visit Mendocino County

### Media Protocol

#### General Rule

All media sales inquiries should be reported to the agency of record before any information is released. If the agency of record cannot be reached, direct call to the Executive Director or Marketing & Communications Coordinator should be placed or follow the media guidelines dictated below:

#### Visit Mendocino County Spokesperson(s):

*The following is a list of designated VMC spokespersons charged to speak on behalf of VMC to all media.*

1. Executive Director
2. Director of Marketing & Media
3. Koleen Hamblin, Public Relations Contactor

#### Interviews

All interviews requested by media must be arranged through the public relations firm of record or the Marketing & Communications Coordinator. If the above is unavailable, please forward to the Executive Director. Prior to these processes, you can ask the following questions to get a sense of the urgency

1. Who is calling?
2. What publication/media outlet are they from?
3. Who would they like to interview/speak with?
4. What is this call regarding? (Take down as much detail as possible including any possible interview questions.)
5. At what number can they be reached?
6. What is their deadline? By what time/date do they need to speak with someone?

Take down all information and report to Executive Director and the Marketing & Communications Coordinator immediately, to ensure a quick and proper response. If the media asks to speak to the Executive Director directly, inform the Executive Director beforehand in order to properly brief the interviewee of the subject matter and fulfill a proper response.

#### Negative Publicity

In the event that VMC has been negatively portrayed in the media, please make sure to forward this onto the Executive Director or Chair of the Board. Staff who are not designated to serve as a spokesperson should not answer questions directly to the media. This is the role of the Executive Director, Chair of the Board or a designee appointed by the Executive Director, Chair of the Board or the Board of Directors.

#### Media Assistance Policy

Visit Mendocino County offers Familiarization (FAM) Trip Assistance for qualified travel media in pursuit of their feature stories and editorial coverage of the Mendocino County area. FAM Trip Assistance is available to staff writers and editors, freelance travel writers on assignment or members of travel-related TV and radio programs, nationally and internationally. Depending on the nature of the assignment, the Marketing and Communications Coordinator may assist

with accommodations, suggested itineraries, story ideas, passes to attractions and more. Please note that all arrangements are provided through the discretion of VMC partner businesses, and are subject to the availability and interest of each facility. Black-out periods may apply during the year, which may necessitate a press rate, especially for hotel accommodations. 4-6 weeks' advance notice for media hosting and itinerary assistance is required. Interested media are required to provide a letter of assignment and/or copies of their most recently published articles, photographs, TV or radio segments. Media must also include details on their demographics, circulation and scheduled date for the assigned publication or a list of the publications to which they will be pitching their story.

### **Photography/Filming Policy**

Photography is available on the media section of [www.visitmendocino.com](http://www.visitmendocino.com) and may be used for non-profit purposes in the promotion of Mendocino County as a destination for visitors, meetings and events, and film production. All photography is the property of Visit Mendocino County. Any unauthorized use of this material constitutes copyright infringement.

A photo credit "Courtesy of Visit Mendocino County" or required photographer (as necessary and stated) must appear with all published photos.

## Visit Mendocino County

### Hotel Promotion Policy

As of August 31, 2006, any hotel in Mendocino County who pays Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) to the County of Mendocino, or a city within Mendocino County, is obligated to pay the Mendocino County Lodging Business Improvement District assessment (BID) (Mendocino County Chapter 5.140). The hotel is then granted the promotional benefits and privileges of the Mendocino County Tourism Commission (dba Visit Mendocino County).

A. A hotel (lodging establishment) is defined as being in good standing by being current with all TOT and BID payments. Current is defined as not being reported on the latest Treasurer-Tax Collector's Delinquent Report. This also includes operating under all required county and/or city licenses and permits.

Privileges and benefits of being in Good Standing include:

1. Advertising in all festival and event promotional materials
2. Co-op or other paid promotional materials and opportunities
3. Business and event listings on the Visit Mendocino website
4. Promotion to group travel operators
5. Various Travel Show sales opportunities
6. Media and travel writer engagement
7. Support of the MCTC staff

Any lodging establishment found to be out of compliance, based on the above requirements, will have all benefits and privileges revoked, until at such time as they are back in compliance. Compliance will be reported to MCTC by the County of Mendocino.

B. Definitions by the Mendocino County Code Section 5.20.020;

1. "Hotel" means any structure or any portion of any structure which is occupied or intended or designed for occupancy by transients for dwelling, lodging or sleeping purposes and includes any hotel, inn, tourist home or house, motel, studio hotel, bachelor hotel, lodging houses, rooming house, apartment house, dormitory, public or private club, mobile home or house trailer at a fixed location, or other similar structure or portion thereof.
2. "Occupancy" means the use or possession or the right to the use or possession of any room or rooms or portion thereof in any hotel for dwelling, lodging or sleeping purposes.
3. "Transient" means any person who exercises occupancy or is entitled to occupancy by reason of concession, permit, right of access, license or other agreement for a period of thirty (30) consecutive calendar days or less, counting portions of calendar days as full days. Any such person so occupying space in a hotel shall be deemed to be a transient until a period of thirty (30) days has expired, unless there is an agreement in writing between the operator and the occupant providing for a longer period of occupancy. In determining whether a person is a transient, uninterrupted periods of time extending both prior and subsequent to the effective date of this Article [May 1965] may be considered.
4. "Rent" means the consideration charged, whether or not received, for the occupancy of space in a hotel valued in money, whether to be received in money, goods, labor or otherwise, including all receipts, cash, credits and property and services of any kind or nature, without any deduction therefrom whatsoever.
5. "Operator" means the person who is proprietor of the hotel, whether in the capacity of owner, lessee, sublessee, mortgagee in possession, licensee, or any other capacity, including but not limited to use of a managing agent.
6. "Tax Administrator" means the Treasurer-Tax Collector of the County of Mendocino.



# Emergency & Crisis Plans

## Visit Mendocino County Emergency Operations Plan

Mission Statement: The purpose of the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) is to provide a systematic approach to follow in an emergency with an emphasis of ongoing safety awareness in the workplace.

The following EOP is for:

Visit Mendocino County  
345 N Franklin Street  
Fort Bragg, CA 95437  
707-964-9010

And

Visit Mendocino County  
105 West Clay Street  
Ukiah, CA 95482

Authority for Declaration of Emergency: The Executive Director of Visit Mendocino County (VMC) is responsible for making the decision to close the VMC offices during regular working hours due to an emergency or controversial issue such as natural disasters (earthquakes, mud slides, excessive rain, high tides, etc.), fires, bomb threats, or major crimes, or as requested by the City of Fort Bragg or Ukiah. In the Executive Director's absence, the Administrative Services Manager may consult with the Executive Director or Chair of the Board to make this decision. In the absence of both, a designated team member may use the same protocol to ascertain whether or not the office stay open by consulting with the Executive Director or Chair of the Board. If either one is not available, the Vice Chair of the Board may be contacted.

### Personnel for VMC includes:

- Travis Scott – Executive Director (Ukiah)
- Alison de Grassi – Director of Marketing (Ukiah)
- Emily Saengaur – Administrative Services Manager (Ukiah)
- Katrina Kessen – Partner Relations Manager (Ukiah)
- Richard Strom – Director of Tourism (Fort Bragg)

### Supplies:

Inventory of emergency supplies in the VMC office in Fort Bragg includes:

First aid kit, 4 emergency supplies kits\*, 2 fire extinguishers, toolbox, 5 gallon bottles of water, backup case of individual bottles of water,

Supplies at the Ukiah office include:

First aid kit, 1 emergency supplies kit, 1 fire extinguisher, and 3 gallons of water

\*Emergency supplies kits include enough supplies for 1-2 people for up to 3 days. Each kit includes: 2 food packages, 20 water packets, tube tent, 2 waterproof ponchos, 2 rescue blankets, 4 hand warmers and 2 dust masks, hand-crank flashlight/radio, multifunction tool, work gloves, 2.5 gallon collapsible water jug, whistle, 4 light sticks, 2 emergency

candles, a pencil, paper, 50 ft. nylon rope, waterproof tape, 2 cold packs, latex-free medical gloves (2 pairs), 6 antimicrobial hand wipes, bandage scissors, tweezers/forceps, 2 finger splints, digital thermometer, first aid manual, 2 facial tissue packages, 2 biohazard waste bags, eye pad, 5 butterfly closures and bandages and gauze in various sizes. Treatments include 3 sting relief wipes, 9 antibacterial wipes, 2 triple antibiotic ointment packets, 2 burn cream packets and 2 eye wash bottles. Medications include 4 Cetafen® acetaminophen tablets, 4 Nutralox® antacid tablets and 4 Proprinal® ibuprofen tablets. Also, includes 2 Diamode® loperamide HCl antidiarrheal tablets.

NOTE: The following sections apply to all office staff unless special instructions and responsibilities prevent employees from following these procedures.

### **Evacuation Plan and Accountability:**

The below plan details actions required to exit the office in the event of a major emergency. The plan's procedures are as follows:

1. Evacuate when notified by Executive Director, supervisor or local officials.
2. Each staff member will be responsible for turning off all office machines, lights, etc. and proceeding to the nearest exit door. If the nearest exit is near the emergency, find the next safest exit.
3. Report to the Northeast corner of Laurel Street and Franklin Street in Fort Bragg which is the designated assembly location.
4. Executive Director will account for all VMC office staff.
5. Remain on corner until released by Executive Director, supervisor, or local officials.

The procedures for the Ukiah office:

1. Evacuate when notified.
2. Report to the 105 West Clay Street parking lot.
3. Remain in parking lot until released.

NOTE: Be sure that you are accounted for to prevent others from looking for you in the event of a real emergency.

### **Staff Responsibilities:**

After any emergency, staff members are responsible for making every attempt to contact the President or their supervisor to notify as to their whereabouts and safety. President and supervisors are responsible for establishing an effective system of contacting employees, including designating a first and second person in charge in the event they are either out of town or unable to handle this assignment due to any number of reasons.

### **Emergency Scenarios:**

#### **A. Earthquake**

Most casualties from earthquakes are caused from falling materials. If indoors:

1. Take cover under sturdy furniture- table, desk, etc. A doorway is not a structurally safe alternative to a sturdy desk or table, but use if there is no other heavy furniture.
2. Stay near center of building and away from windows.
3. Wait for the quake to subside and falling objects to come rest. For small quakes and tremors with NO apparent damage, return to normal activities.
4. If quake is severe or damage appears heavy, evacuate after the quake stops.
5. Report to the designated assembly location. Stay away from electrical power sources, fallen lines, buildings, or other tall objects.

DO NOT SMOKE. Gas lines may have ruptured.

If outdoors:

1. Move away from buildings and utility wires.
2. If in a moving car stop as quickly as safety permits and stay in the vehicle.

## **B. Fire**

No matter how small the fire seems to be, call 911 right away and then follow these procedures:

1. Leave the fire area as quickly as possible. If able, close the door to the room the fire is in.
2. Close all doors that you pass through on your escape.
3. Proceed directly to the nearest fire exit. If smoke is evident near or in between you and your nearest exit, use an alternate route. If you must use an escape route where there is smoke, stay as low as possible. Crawling lets you breathe the cleaner air near the floor as you move toward the exit.
4. Before you open a closed door, feel it with the back of your hand. If it is hot, leave it closed and use an alternate escape route. If it feels normal, brace your body against the door and open it -- be prepared to slam it shut if heat or smoke starts to rush in.
5. Proceed to the designated assembly location and form a group. A supervisor will take a head count to ascertain that no one has been left inside the building.
6. Once outside, move well away from the building so you will not be in the way of Fire Department personnel.

**DO NOT RE-ENTER THE BUILDING.**

If you are trapped in the building:

1. If the door to the room you are in is hot to the touch and/or smoke is seeping in around it, **DO NOT OPEN IT.**
2. Pack the crack under the door with wet clothing or other material to keep the smoke out.
3. Let someone know you are trapped. Call 911 and stay on the line until the dispatcher tells you to hang up. If there is no phone available, yell out the window to gain attention.
4. Stay low to the floor near the window, as the smoke will fill higher areas first.

NOTE: One fire extinguisher is located in back room of the building. For small fires, you may use fire extinguishers *after* calling 911.

## **C. Flood**

Usually there will be sufficient time to perform an orderly and systematic shift of operations in the event of flooding.

For Interior Flooding:

1. Evacuate the affected area.
2. Notify building maintenance to have water shut off.
3. Stay away from all power (electrical) sources and utility vaults.
4. If able, move valuables to a higher level.

For Exterior Flooding:

1. Remain calm.
2. Call 911 and let them know your location, how high the water is, and how many people are with you.
3. If there is water all around the building, proceed to higher floors of the building.
4. If there is water on only one side of the building, proceed in an orderly fashion out of the building exit that has **NO** water.
5. Immediately go to the highest area possible.

## **D. Tsunami**

All low-lying coastal areas can be struck by tsunamis. Tsunamis that strike coastal locations in the Pacific Ocean Basin are most always caused by earthquakes.

If a tsunami is likely to occur, turn on your radio/television or check a reliable internet news site to learn if there is a tsunami warning. A regional tsunami from a local earthquake could strike some areas before a tsunami warning can be announced, so please take these necessary precautions:

1. Move inland and to higher ground *immediately* and stay there.

2. Stay away from the beach. Never go down to the beach to watch a tsunami come in. If you can see the wave you are too close to escape it.

CAUTION - If there is noticeable recession in water away from the shoreline this is nature's tsunami warning and it should be heeded. Move away immediately.

### **E. Tornado**

In the event of a tornado:

1. Immediately take shelter to the nearest interior room away from any windows.
2. Crouch down, covering your head.
3. Monitor the storm by listening to the radio, located in the Emergency Supplies Kit.
4. Do not leave the interior room until told to do so by local fire authorities.

### **F. Bomb Threats**

Locate the Bomb Threat Checklist (located at the bottom of this document) and record necessary information in the event of a telephone bomb threat. Take detailed notes if unable to locate questionnaire:

1. Note exact time of call
2. Pay close attention to the caller and make every attempt to determine the location and time of expected detonation and type of explosive device.
3. Alert a co-worker via note, if possible, while on the line with the bomb threat caller. Have co-worker call 911 and have the following information available:
  - Where the bomb threat is
  - Who is taking the bomb threat call
  - An estimate of how many people are in the area
  - Stay on the line until the dispatcher tells you to hang up.If this is not possible, notify 911 after the call.
4. At the conclusion of the call, also notify the President and building maintenance.
5. Evacuate the building immediately and report to designated assembly area and remain there until notified.

### **G. Medical Emergency**

1. Call 911 *immediately*. Give the location and condition of the victim.
2. Keep the victim still. DO NOT move the person.
3. Give first aid if you are qualified to do so. *Never* perform a medical procedure if you are unsure of how to do it.
4. Stay with the victim until police or paramedics arrive.

Business Continuity: VMC has offsite accounting and IT support. In the event of a disaster, VMC IT support company, Brendan McGuigan, can restore VMC's backup image to a server. He can then redirect all email to that location. In the event that the office building is still intact, but there is a catastrophic server failure, Brendan can restore the backup image to a physical. All data on the VMC server is included in the backup, such as files, emails and user accounts.

### **Important Telephone Numbers:**

NOTE: In an emergency, *always* call 911 first.

Fort Bragg Fire Department (707) 961-2831

Ukiah Fire Department (707) 463-6274

County of Mendocino Executive Office (707) 463-4441

State Street Investments Property Management (Non-emergency) Alan Limbird – (707) 621-1474

Beverly Sanders Realty (Ukiah office) (707) 463-2570

Travis Scott, Executive Director (707) 479-2400



Katrina Kessen, Partner Relations Manager (707) 262-2092  
Daphne Haney, Accountant (707) 357-5270  
Richard Strom, Director of Tourism Development (707) 486-1330  
Alison de Grassi, Director of Marketing & Media (707) 508-6752  
Emily Saengarun, Administrative Services Manager (707) 972-6438

**Important Websites:**

County of Mendocino <http://www.co.mendocino.ca.us/>  
Visit Mendocino County [www.visitmendocino.com](http://www.visitmendocino.com)  
National Weather Service [www.nws.noaa.gov](http://www.nws.noaa.gov)  
National Weather Service- Little River [www.wrh.noaa.gov/klr](http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/klr)  
National Weather Service- Eureka [www.wrh.noaa.gov/wfo](http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/wfo)  
Federal Emergency Management Agency [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)

**Visit Mendocino County  
Crisis Communications Plan**

**Crisis Scenarios**

A crisis is any unfavorable situation with the power to generate negative publicity for Mendocino County, with potential to impact the local tourism and hospitality industry in a negative manner.

Two main types of crises are:

1. Natural Crisis- An emergency caused by the environment, including floods, tsunamis, windstorms, earthquakes, contagious diseases, fires, etc.
2. Human-Created Crisis- A situation brought about by human action, including a bombing or bomb threat, riot, strike, murder, plane crash, hazardous waste or oil spill, prolonged power outage, controversial ballot measure, etc.

In the event of either type of crisis, the VMC Crisis Management Team (CMT) will meet to assess the situation and develop a thorough plan for dealing with the crisis.

**CMT Definition:**

In the immediate wake of a crisis, the primary response team – the Visit Mendocino County Executive Director, Marketing & Communications Coordinator, and VMC contracted public relations firm should be immediately contacted and apprised of the situation. A determination will then be made by the Executive Director to assemble the CMT at the VMC offices as soon as possible. This team shall be responsible for the release and flow of all relevant information to the media, VMC employees, board members and marketing partners. The team will meet at regular intervals to provide updates on the situation. The CMT is comprised of the following individuals, whose specific assignments are detailed here. Please note that these individuals are liaisons to particular groups or officials, they are not spokespeople for the association unless specifically noted.

Note: Contact information for the CMT is attached to this document and updated quarterly.

**CMT Responsibilities:**

- Executive Director - Liaison to Visit Mendocino County staff, VMC Board of Directors, key local government officials and the media.
- Director of Marketing & Media - Liaison to Visit Mendocino County staff. In the Executive Director’s absence, liaison to Visit Mendocino County Board of Directors, key local government officials, and the media.

- VMC Contracted Public Relations Firm- Liaison to media. In the Executive Director and the Chair of the Board’s absence, liaison to Visit Mendocino County staff, and key local government officials.
- CMT to also include the following members to assist in organization and assistance in messaging. This would be considered the secondary list:
- VMC Board Chair
- County of Mendocino Board of Supervisors Chair
- County of Mendocino Public Information Officer

**Crisis Management Team (CMT) Communications Network**

In most cases, VMC will be the lead agency in messaging for the Mendocino County tourism industry, creating media statements, making decisions and communicating proactively with media and consumers. In these cases, VMC’s Board of Directors and partners should be informed of VMC’s position and know to whom at the Bureau media/client calls should be directed. In other events, Mendocino County or individual Cities will take the lead in making decisions and communicating information. In those instances, VMC will effectively distribute information drafted by Mendocino County or Cities. VMC will also refer media and the public to the designated spokesperson. Once a plan has been implemented by the CMT, copies of the plan shall be distributed to the following entities:

- County Supervisors
- Governor's Office
- Mayor's Office/s
- City Council/s
- Local Senators and Members of Congress/State and Federal
- Visit Mendocino County Board of Directors
- Local Chambers of Commerce
- Hoteliers/Other Hospitality Industry Partners
- Visit California
- California Travel and Tourism Commission
- San Francisco Travel
- North Coast Tourism Council Partners

**First Steps**

1. Gear up the Team: Contact the primary CMT response team and possibly the secondary team and call an emergency meeting at the VMC office. This meeting should happen within two hours of the incident, at most.
2. Identify the Spokesperson(s): Depending upon the nature of the crisis, one to three spokespersons should be identified as the ONLY individuals designated to speak with the public and media. If the crisis is not directly related to tourism, deflect spokesperson assignments to the proper authorities.

Possible scenarios include:

Crisis:	Spokesperson:
Earthquake/Natural Disaster	Board of Supervisors Chair

Oil Spill	County Public Information Officer
Crime/Murder	Mendocino County Sherriff/Chief of Police

3. Fact Finding Mission: Divide the team and set out to determine the magnitude of the situation. Create a call-in center for reports. This might include physically scouting parts of the county/city and reporting on the status of hotels, attractions, public roadways and displaced tourists. A disaster at sea might call for beach scouts to determine beach closures and physical reports from the Coast Guard. Criminal crises will require immediate reports by the Sherriff/Chief of Police or Public Information Officer. Determine the severity of the situation as well as “what if” scenarios should the crisis continue or worsen.

4. Key Message Points: Upon completion of the fact-finding mission and prior to meeting with the media/public, prepare message points including a Q&A for all sanctioned spokespersons. Points should be fact-driven, concise and accurate at the time of delivery. These points will serve as the basis for daily updates on the destination. If the incident is tourist related and crime driven, positive statistics should be provided in support of findings. Examples include crime reduction over the past 10 years, improvement in pollution/ratings over the past five years, etc.

Message points should:

- List accurate facts at the time of delivery
- Provide background on cause/effect at the time of delivery
- Provide update on steps being taken
- Lessen immediate damage due to false information, local media exaggeration, guesswork or negative perceptions

5. Alert Tourism Partners: Once the spokespersons have been identified and message points outlined, alert key tourism partners to reduce the possibility of the wrong message being distributed. A simple one page “Situation Update” can be created and distributed daily to the following entities:

- Hotel general manager/sales staff for distribution to front line workers
- Local attractions
- Regional and State marketing partners
- Local Embassy if it relates to tourists detained or killed in Mendocino County
- Tour/receptive operators with groups booked within 90 days of the incident

6. Establish a Hot Line: Select an existing telephone line as the “hot line” for immediate updates, inquiries or tourist-related questions. The line should be manned by a person on the CMT who is well versed on the situation or a staff member appointed and well informed by the team. In the event that tourists are displaced, this hot line should function as a clearinghouse for hotel reassignment.

7. Stop advertising immediately following a crisis.

### **Media Outreach**

Perception is not always reality and the media can quickly paint a picture of disaster – especially television media. To ensure accurate coverage and build bridges for a post-crisis comeback program, the media must have a main link to immediate information.

1. Spokesperson: One person should be appointed to deal directly with the media.
2. Market Updates: VMC should distribute one page situation updates immediately and continue to do so until the crisis has subsided. This might include a one-page "Situation Update," "Media Alert" on pending press conferences or "Tourism Update" on the status of hotels, attractions, transport and infrastructure. Three means of distribution should be utilized:
  1. [www.co.mendocino.gov](http://www.co.mendocino.gov) , the County's website. This is a good distribution point as many residents will refer to this website for updates.
  2. [www.visitmendocino.com](http://www.visitmendocino.com): VMC's website and one of the most economical means for distributing updates to the media and public.
  3. E-Mail Blast: Create an email database of all major wire services, national TV bureaus and key market newspaper bureaus

Media Conference: In many cases, it is appropriate to call a press conference. The strategy behind this might have multiple goals, including:

- Displace media banked out at a crisis site
- Provide an immediate update to quell suspicions/misinformation
- Put a face behind the crisis, such as the Board of Supervisor Chair or Sherriff, to portray a sense of authority and control
- Provide television an alternative to crime scene footage

The fact-finding mission is imperative before a conference is staged. If the crisis is of international magnitude, the Board of Supervisor Chair/Mayor should precede it as he/she is an internationally recognized figure. Message points should be created for all spokespersons and will differ depending upon the situation. The Board of Supervisor Chair/Mayor's message should always be one of sympathy for lives lost, shock at the tragedy at hand and hope for restoring the County/City and/or situation. The second spokesperson should be one wielding the facts, generally the Sherriff, Chief of Police, Coast Guard or other official. Helpful statistics on a positive drop in crime, improvement in water quality, etc., come into play here. Visit Mendocino County should not be a spokesperson at this type of conference. The conference should take place at a place of authority, such as the Police Station, City Hall or "beauty site" that has been unaffected by the crisis such as a hotel. Follow up conferences should occur as a vehicle to update the media and disseminate accurate information.

4. Satellite News Release: Depending upon the severity of the crisis, a satellite news release can distribute a visual accounting of the situation that, in scenarios such as an earthquake, tsunami or oil spill, speaks volumes. This is also effective in dispelling misconceptions. The video news release is a simple 3-5-minute edited segment depicting a spokesperson at different locales throughout the city and must contain a news update to warrant coverage. It can document a positive side of a crisis, clean-up program or areas that are unaffected. The feed is then sent via satellite to news stations across the nation for pick up. This vehicle can also be successful as part of a post-crisis campaign.

### **Media Monitoring**

1. Electronic Coverage: An ongoing television-monitoring program will help establish both the short- and long-term action plans relating to the crisis. This can be conducted by Visit Mendocino County's public relations firm. Daily monitoring will help determine:

- The scope of coverage, local versus national and international
- The perception/message the media is delivering to the mass public
- The immediate steps required to offset misconceptions (e.g., freeways closed, beaches draped in oil, Tourism areas

affected)

-The long-term or comeback strategy

2. Internet Tracking: Simultaneously, the VMC's public relations firm should track all print articles via media tracking service and Google Alerts to determine the depth of coverage and short- and long-term action plans. Key message points can be tracked and analyzed to determine which markets were hardest hit.

### **Long Term Rebound**

VMC's public relations firm will need to communicate regularly with Visit California to coordinate messages and media strategies. The public relations firm should proactively pitch positive stories to national and local media. The public relations firm, Executive Director and Marketing & Communications Coordinator should also meet to develop comprehensive marketing strategies and messages. In addition, the following should be considered in the ongoing effort to re-establish the city as a safe and desirable travel location:

1. All travel writers who have visited the city in the last six months should receive a personal invitation to return and evaluate the effect of the crisis.
2. Produce a video highlighting attractions and hotel properties that are not affected. Target local celebrities to complement the President/CEO as spokespersons.
3. Shoot slide and video footage for post-crisis promotions.
4. Develop bumper (video footage) for any upcoming televised programs that originate in the city.
5. Review current advertising campaigns/marketing programs to determine if messages are appropriate or if campaigns should be suspended.
6. Work with other departments and partners to develop new marketing messages and strategies.
7. Once the crisis has subsided (1-4 months later, depending on the nature of the crisis), begin advertising strongly in primary markets. Design and purchase advertising in trades and public media concerning the County's status for travelers.
8. Develop a post-crisis media kit for use during any necessary FAMS.
9. Provide regular interviews to the media.
10. Proactively keep industry partners (media, international marketing affiliates, tour operators, film professionals, tour operators, etc.) informed of developments, progress, and long-term impact of crisis.
11. Incorporate post-crisis outreach into marketing plan for at least one year after crisis.