Post-Incident Executive Checklist

Maintaining Governance, Credibility, and Control After a Critical Incident

Excerpted from *Executive Oversight: The City Manager's Guide to the Business of Public Safety* by Jeff Cirminiello — Chapter 8

ORGANIZATION	REVIEWED BY	DATE

PURPOSE

This checklist helps city managers and chief executives maintain governance discipline after a critical incident. It is a discipline guide focused on leadership posture, communication, sequencing, credibility, and protection of public trust.

This checklist is intended for use by the city manager or chief executive and should remain part of executive oversight throughout the incident.

1. Executive Posture and Role Discipline

- ☐ The city manager remains focused on governance responsibilities rather than operational direction
- ☐ Oversight remains centered on systems, authority, communication, and accountability
- ☐ Leadership presence is visible, steady, and disciplined
- ☐ Major public statements are coordinated before release
- ☐ Leadership avoids making broad conclusions before facts stabilize

2. Information Discipline

- ☐ Executive briefings are timely, factual, and clearly sourced
- ☐ Information gaps are identified and acknowledged early
- ☐ Leadership avoids speculation or premature conclusions
- ☐ Updates distinguish between confirmed facts, developing information, and unanswered questions
- ☐ Corrections are made promptly if earlier information changes

3. Communication Control and Sequencing

- ☐ A single lead spokesperson is identified for the incident
- ☐ City, police, fire, and partner-agency PIO roles are clearly coordinated
- ☐ Communication follows established policy and approval processes
- ☐ Elected officials receive coordinated updates through a defined process
- ☐ Silence is avoided when it creates confusion or weakens trust
- ☐ Backup personnel are identified for public information, records coordination, video retrieval, and redaction

© 2026 Public Safety Advisory Partners. May be reproduced for internal governance use.

4. Investigation Oversight

- ☐ The investigative process is identified early
- ☐ Independence and credibility are prioritized
- ☐ Decisions regarding internal, external, or independent review are documented
- ☐ Leadership understands what can and cannot be discussed publicly while the investigation is active
- ☐ Investigative updates are coordinated with legal, operational, and communication leadership

5. Evidence Stewardship

- ☐ Video, data, and physical evidence are secured promptly
- ☐ Release decisions follow pre-established governance rules
- ☐ Video release capabilities and timelines are realistically understood before public commitments are made
- ☐ Delays are intentional, explainable, and defensible
- ☐ Public records obligations are coordinated early with legal and records personnel

6. Organizational Alignment

- ☐ Departments understand communication boundaries
- ☐ Conflicting or unauthorized messaging is corrected quickly
- ☐ Internal updates are coordinated so employees are not relying on rumors or media reports
- ☐ Leadership issues are addressed through established accountability processes
- ☐ Partner agencies understand how information will be coordinated publicly

7. Executive Review of System Performance

- ☐ Leadership examines whether governance systems functioned as intended
- ☐ Training, policy, communication, equipment, or oversight gaps are identified without rushing to conclusions
- ☐ Early lessons are documented while facts are still being reviewed
- ☐ Formal conclusions are delayed until the record is stable
- ☐ Corrective actions are assigned, tracked, and reviewed at the executive level

8. Workforce Stability and Care

- ☐ Employee support and wellness resources are activated
- ☐ Supervisors are equipped to monitor stress, morale, and operational fatigue
- ☐ Leadership acknowledges the human impact without presuming fault
- ☐ Employees understand where to receive support and how information will be shared
- ☐ Follow-up support continues after the immediate public attention fades

© 2026 Public Safety Advisory Partners. May be reproduced for internal governance use.

Executive Framing Statement

Post-incident leadership is measured by discipline, clarity, and the ability to maintain credibility while facts are still developing.

Executive Test

After the incident, can leadership clearly explain:

- What was known and when
- Who was authorized to speak
- Why major decisions were made
- How evidence and information were managed
- How communication and credibility were protected
- *If those answers are unclear, the organization is not only managing an incident. It is managing a governance gap.*

© 2026 Public Safety Advisory Partners. May be reproduced for internal governance use.