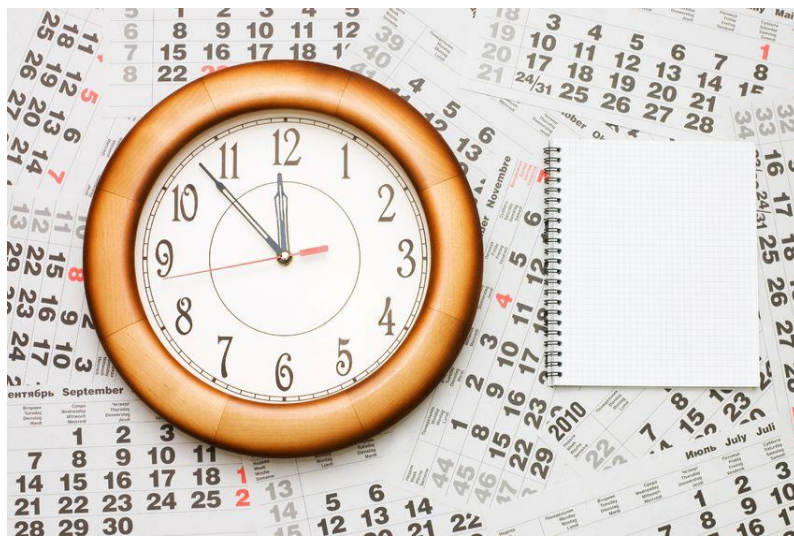# Electronic Log-keeping - using Microsoft Office WORD & EXCEL

Relevance:

Airline Emergency / Crisis Response - *A Simple, Useful* (electronic) *Method of Log-keeping*

Note - The 'situation' assumed for use of this electronic log is that of an airline major accident. In such circumstances, it is standard procedure for responding airline departments / business units (**crisis support units**) to maintain their own log of events related to the crisis

Furthermore, the airline's command and control centre (known in this article as the '**crisis management centre - CMC**') will also be maintaining its own 'big picture' log (typically managed by a CMC '**log manager**') - much of which will be based on the separate log entries typically / originally made (by the crisis support units as described above)

At the most basic level, such logs can be maintained in writing, on paper. At the more advanced level, logs can be produced as part of a 'crisis management software system'

There are problems with both systems i.e. a written log is inherently inflexible and has other significant limitations - whilst crisis management systems (generally acquired from commercial sources) can be very expensive - and many (despite the price) have very limited log keeping capabilities / functionality - from an *'operational management of the crisis'* viewpoint

The WORD / EXCEL log described herein is an excellent (low or no cost) compromise

www.aviationemergencyresponseplan.com (Parent Website)

An example of one, simple method of **Electronic** **Log-keeping** - using Microsoft Office WORD & EXCEL
(or equivalent systems)

FIRST STEP - Create a **soft copy** general purpose log 'template' in **WORD** - as per following example:

Example Log Sheet / for 'electronic (soft copy) Use

ABCX Airways CMC staff, CSUs + other, _pre-nominated_ airline etc. responders are required to
maintain an associated log of events specific to the particular role / responsibility etc. in question

For _each_ such log entry made an email is created and sent to the CMC Log Manager with that
particular log entry attached to that particular email. To make another log entry, the same process is
followed. The _record_ of all such log entries will be stored (saved) in the associated email's 'sent' box

After sending _each_ such log entry, simply close the log template (you had used to make that
particular log entry [see example further below]) **WITHOUT** saving. If you do not follow this
procedure (i.e. if you _do_ save) **_you will no longer have a blank log template_** on which to make
further log entries! The below diagram is a 'visualization' of the top line (only) of the 'master'
template for the electronic log

Month / Year used for _this_ log sheet ------------- (insert details)

Date	Time	Priority H/M/L	Event / Information etc.	Originator's Role/Initials

- H/M/L = High, Medium or Low Priority (as related to the specific log entry being made)

- Default time (_local_ time at airline HQ location recommended) **_must_** be in the 24 hour clock
  format, **_exactly_** as shown here i.e. '**hours: minutes**' e.g. 08:45

  If any other time reference is required (**_but must still be in the latter format_**) for log entry
  (e.g. GMT / UTC), the time zone used and its 'time difference (offset)' from **_local_** time, must
  be inserted **_in front of the opening sentence_** of the log entry concerned _e.g. '…………GMT (UK
  local time minus 1 hour)…………'_

Note again that the above log is typically for the **_individual_** use of **_each_** allocated position in the CMC
and for **_each_** Crisis Support Unit (CSU) position (and any other required and authorised users world-
wide) **_within and / or outside of_** the CMC (depending on the airline command & control system
[model] in use) etc. Access to a PC / laptop (loaded with an appropriate version of 'office' or
equivalent) is obviously required

As this is an 'electronic' log you only need to include just the **_one_** blank line when **_preparing_** it (as per
the template diagram above). If a real log entry itself exceeds one line it will simply word wrap to the
next line and the box will automatically expand

SECOND STEP

Send all completed log entries (as they are made) *to CMC Log Manager via email* (as per below)

An example of a completed log entry is shown just below. When it is eventually received by the CMC's Log Manager, he / she will, in turn, transfer (copy & paste) all such log entries into the CMC's 'Big Picture' (main) log (produced as an EXCEL document - see page 5)

Month / Year used for this log sheet: October 2021

Date	Time	Priority H/M/L	Event / Information etc.	Originator's Role/***Initials
10	08:45	H	Information from (ABCX Airways) Station Manager at LGW indicates that some flight-crew members may have survived the accident and been taken to local hospitals. However, there are also crew fatalities reported. No further information available at this time	FOPs CSU / xx

*** Where use of initials might be confusing (e.g. more than 1 person with same initials) - use name instead

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Note - this particular method assumes that each CMC and CSU etc. position *has its own, specific (dedicated) mailbox* e.g. there is a 'Crisis Director' mailbox; a '**Log Manager**' mailbox; a 'Flight Operations CSU' mailbox; a 'CMC Administrator' mailbox; an 'HR CSU' mailbox etc.

The same assumption (electronic log keeping) is made for a deployed GO Team and similar - provided access to an appropriate ICT system (with appropriate software) is available

However, this system can just as easily work with any work / personal mailbox if required - but the potential disadvantage here is the very real risk of confusion caused by mixing up 'emergency related' emails with 'normal' emails etc. Maintenance of information security is also a consideration

THIRD STEP

CMC Log Manager 'manages' *incoming log entry emails* (*more correctly - log entries sent via email as attachments*) by acting as a human filter & editor e.g. clarifying the meaning of text with the person that sent it if necessary; reassigning (correcting) log entry priority markings if required; correcting spelling, typing and grammar errors etc. This is all done using the 'WORD' version of the log entry i.e. not done using EXCEL (see below)

FOURTH STEP

Once filtering and editing of a received (Log Manager in-box) *log entry is complete* (as required) - the LM 'copies and pastes' the entry (from the WORD version) into a pre-prepared 'EXCEL' '**BIG PICTURE LOG**' worksheet (see example on next page) and 'saves' it. The whole process is repeated for *each and every* incoming email log entry

The pre-prepared EXCEL sheet should be set up to filter log entries e.g. by *date* (e.g. earliest date at top or bottom), by *time* (e.g. earliest time at top or bottom) and by *priority* (e.g. *show all high, medium and low priority entries*; e.g. *show only high priority entries*; e.g. *show high and medium log priority entries only etc.*) This process can be managed using EXCEL's editing tools i.e. '**Sort & Filter**' (or similar / equivalent - depending on EXCEL version in use)

Reminder - not only is there now a copy of the original log entry in the EXCEL 'Big Picture' log, it is also retained in the *LM's email* **inbox** and the *original sender's email* **sent box**. None of these emails should be deleted of course - as they are now part of a legal record of proceedings, concerning the airline's handling of the accident response

Emergency Response - CMC 'Big Picture' Log

For month of *October 2021*

Date	Time (UK Local)	Priority (H/M/L)	Event / Information / Actions	By / Initials
01	08:45	H	Information from (ABCX Airways) Station Manager at LGW indicates that some flight-crew members may have survived the accident and been taken to local hospitals. However, there are also crew fatalities reported. No further information available	CC4/ xx
01	08:47	M	Request for additional manpower for deployed HAT	HAT MGR / xx
01	08:49	H	Plans progressing for first press conference at accident location	CCC MGR / xx
01	08:53	L	20 second power failure in Crisis Management Centre - all OK now & no info lost	LM / xx

For information - CC4 = 'Crisis Controller 4'; HAT = 'Humanitarian Assistance Team'; CCC = 'Crisis Communications Centre'

FIFTH STEP

View the Big Picture Log

As the LM *saves* each log entry that he / she makes in the Big Picture log - it can be viewed by others who have been given appropriate access rights (generally 'read only'). If set up appropriately, world-wide access to the log may be possible (by each person so authorised)

Access rights to view the log should be carefully considered and managed as the log will invariably contain some very sensitive information.

Bear in mind that the Big Picture log is one of the main 'tools' used by the Crisis Director and supporting CMC team in the effective and efficient management of the crisis

The log is also a vital information / communication tool within the airline in general

Lastly, it will effectively become the main record of 'what happened' at any eventual legal, enquiry etc. proceedings

Only the Log Manager's and a very small number of other key staff (e.g. Ops Control Centre Duty Manager; Emergency Planning Manager etc.) should have '*read* / *write*' privileges for this log - all other persons (with permitted access) being able to 'read' only

Note - a limitation with the above system is that in order to read the latest log entries saved by the Log Manager - other authorised viewers of the 'big picture log' must refresh the page *on their own display* - on an on-going basis. This is a relatively minor inconvenience compared to the substantial investment required to procure an 'off the shelf' commercial (third party provided) equivalent (log management software system)

Note - Professionally developed Crisis Management software systems are available for commercial procurement or can be designed and developed 'in-house' - (if the airline has the operational and ICT expertise, resources and budget for the latter option)

Most such commercial systems *include* a self-contained (integral) log keeping function which is often (*but not always*) typically more comprehensive, flexible and easier to operate than the OFFICE / EXCEL system described further above

However, some such commercial systems have had (in the past) *significant operational limitations* (including 'logging' functions) which are not present in the simple (and free) 'WORD / EXCEL' system described herein

As ICT (in general) is rapidly advancing its capabilities, such limitations are rapidly being overcome

So, check the 'specs' of such systems carefully if considering acquisition of same - and also ask for a 'no quibble' and 'long enough' testing period (purchase cancelled at no cost if customer is not100% happy) if you do decide to go 'down this road'