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Crisis Management: 5 Ways to Come Out on Top

How well payroll specialists handle crises says much about their [leadership skills](#) and management potential. Perhaps you entered the wrong data, which resulted in improper withholdings — and angry employees. Or maybe your department didn't file quarterly returns on time.

Next time there's an emergency work situation, turn it into an opportunity to demonstrate leadership by following these crisis management tips:

- 1. Keep your cool.** It's easy to panic when something bad happens. Be the person who stays calm and approaches the situation with a level head. Take some deep breaths before going into action. You don't want to make the problem worse by overreacting and making poor decisions.
- 2. Don't assign blame.** It's natural to make excuses and point fingers. But doing so is unproductive, slows down crisis management and creates a poisonous workplace environment. If you made the mistake, [take responsibility](#), apologize and help fix the problem. Even when someone else is at fault, the wise next step is to work toward a solution as a team, not to play the blame game.
- 3. Gather data.** To solve the problem, you need to know exactly what went wrong. Retrace your steps or, if other people were responsible for the crisis, help them discover the source of the mistake. The sooner you find the source of the mistake, the sooner you can suggest ways to fix it (see the next step).
- 4. Offer solutions.** During a crisis, management does not need hand-wringers. If you were the one who discovered the mess, approach your boss with not just the problem, but also possible next steps. Being a problem solver will show leadership potential.
- 5. Do a postmortem.** After the emergency has passed, speak to your manager about gathering the payroll team to discuss ways to prevent it from happening again. To cut down on human error, for example, suggest a checklist for commonly performed payroll tasks.

Emergencies at work can happen at any time. By drawing on your crisis management skills, your department can get back to business with minimal disruption, and you can impress your supervisor with your leadership potential.

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