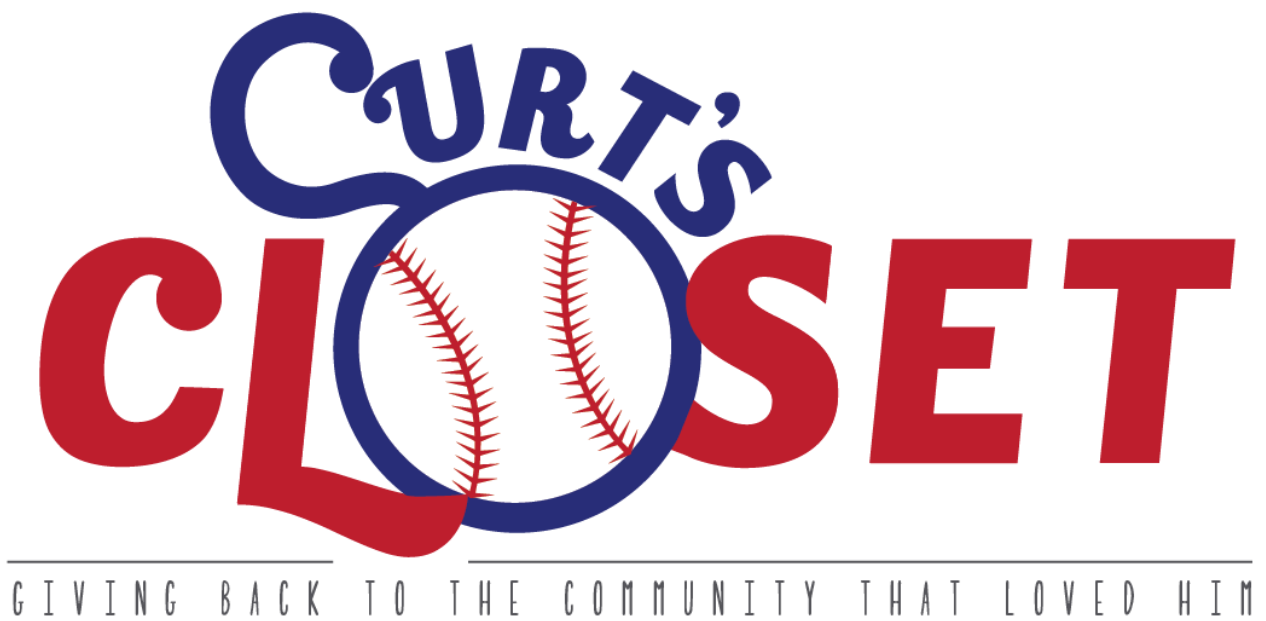




Crisis Management Plan

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CMST 440

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April 18, 2025

Overview

This plan outlines how Curt's Closet will prevent, identify, and respond to health and safety risks that may arise from donated clothing. These risks include infestations (like bed bugs or lice), mold and allergens (from musty or improperly stored items) and hidden hazards (such as pins or razors left in pockets). The plan includes:

- Prevention steps for clear donation guidelines, a quarantine zone, and volunteer training
- Response protocols for safely handling and disposing of hazardous items
- Communication strategies to inform staff and the public when necessary
- Follow-up actions to improve safety and update policies

Infestations, Mold/Allergens or Hidden Hazards in Clothing Donations

Donated clothing can sometimes carry hidden health and safety risks. Items may arrive with bed bugs, lice or pet dander, posing contamination threats to volunteers, staff and families. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), bed bugs can survive for several months without feeding, making secondhand items a common transfer source. Additionally, moldy clothing can trigger respiratory issues, especially in children or individuals with asthma. A CDC study found that 1 in 13 U.S. children have asthma, making clean, allergen-free clothing essential. Hidden hazards like razors, pins or sharp objects left in pockets also pose injury risks during sorting. Proactive screening and safety protocols are crucial to keep Curt's Closet a safe, trusted space for the community.

Step I: Identifying Publics

- Volunteers
- Client families
- Faculty/Staff
- Board of Directors
- Donors
- Media (local or otherwise)

Step II: Preventive Measures Pre-Crisis

Before any incident occurs, Curt's Closet will proactively implement strategies to reduce the likelihood of health and safety risks from donated clothing and prepare for a quick response if a crisis occurs.

The organization will establish clear donation guidelines that emphasize the need for clean, gently-used, pest-free and safe clothing. These guidelines will be posted on its website, social media and at the different drop-off locations in Cullman, Alabama. Volunteers and staff will be trained to recognize signs of infestations, mold and hidden hazards during the sorting and intake process. A designated quarantine area will be created for all new donations, allowing time to inspect and sort items before moving them into the main inventory.

In addition, Curt's Closet will develop incident reporting protocols and document templates for staff to use in case of exposure or contamination. Crisis communication roles will be assigned in advance, ensuring that everyone knows who is responsible for internal updates, donor communication and media relations.

Step III: Plan and Crisis

In the event that items infested with bed bugs, covered in mold, or containing dangerous objects are discovered, the organization will act promptly to contain the threat, protect individuals and communicate transparently to key publics.

Following health and sanitation protocols, the affected items will be immediately removed from the premises and safely disposed of. The donation area or sorting room will be temporarily closed for cleaning and disinfection. Volunteers and staff in contact with the items will be notified, offered guidance and monitored for any health concerns.

An internal incident report will be completed and shared with the board of directors. A communication will be sent to all volunteers reiterating safety procedures and notifying them of any changes to sorting protocols. If the risk originated from a specific donor, a private and respectful message will be sent to inform them of the issue and reinforce the importance of donation standards.

If the incident escalates (e.g. multiple cases of contamination, media attention or client exposure), a public statement will be issued acknowledging the issue, outlining the response, and reassuring the public of the organization's commitment to safety.

A sample statement directed towards the public is provided for reference:

“At Curt’s Closet, the health and safety of our volunteers, staff, and the families we serve is our top priority. Unfortunately, we have recently encountered a health and safety issue related to a batch of donated clothing. Some of these items were found to be contaminated with [type of contamination] during our standard sorting and intake process.

As a result, we have immediately removed all affected items, closed off the affected areas for cleaning and initiated a full investigation to ensure the safety of everyone involved. While this issue was quickly identified, we are taking the steps to address any further possible risks and will be fully disinfecting all areas involved.

We want to reassure our community that no contaminated items were distributed to the families we serve. We are closely monitoring the situation and are working with local health and safety experts to prevent this from happening again. Our team is also providing additional training to volunteers and staff to ensure that all donations are thoroughly inspected and safely processed.

We understand that this situation may cause concern, and we are committed to maintaining open communication as we work through it. For any questions or concerns, we encourage you to reach out to us at curtscloset20@gmail.com or call us at 256-735-4557. We are grateful for your understanding and continued support as we ensure Curt's Closet remains a safe and trusted resource for all.

Thank you for your patience and cooperation”.

Step IV: Post Crisis

After the immediate crisis has been managed, Curt's Closet will conduct a full review of the incident, examining what went well, what could have been improved and how future risks can be avoided/reduced.

Staff and volunteers involved will be debriefed and encouraged to provide feedback. Based on the review, the organization will revise donation sorting and intake procedures,

enhance training materials and, if needed, invest in better equipment (such as gloves, masks, or storage bins).

The organization will also follow up with donors, volunteers, board members and client families to reinforce trust by sending a newsletter or social media update highlighting new safety improvements and thanking the community for their ongoing support.

Documentation of the incident, response steps and outcome will be saved in the crisis management binder to serve as a reference for future preparedness.