

# CRISIS MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

At the chapter level, the president of the chapter should take charge in any crisis. The president should consult with volunteers, Headquarters staff and other members who possess more expertise or insight. The final decision, however, must rest with the president. All chapter officers should know where to find a copy of the chapter's emergency procedures.

## CRISIS HOTLINE NUMBER: 1-800-767-1901

1. The president (or officer next in line if the president is not present) takes charge.
2. Call emergency number(s), usually 9-1-1, so appropriate emergency personnel (police, fire, and ambulance) can respond. Cooperate fully with the needs of any public safety organization seeking to help you or protect your safety.
3. Restrict access to the chapter house at once. The president must have complete control of the situation, and be aware of who is in the area. Permit only your members and appropriate officials to enter.
4. Assign one or more responsible members to calmly be at the door.
5. Do not tamper with any part of the area involved in the incident specifically which might be construed as evidence or involved with the incident.
6. Call the Crisis Hotline number, 1-800-767-1901, to report incident.
7. Notify your chapter counselor.
8. Assemble your members in a group (in case of fire, assemble outside, in front near the street). All should remain calm. Explain there is an emergency, but that it is under control. Remind members that only the president or chapter counselor/key volunteer can speak for the Fraternity—members are not to speak to anyone (including friends, girlfriends, parents, the university) about the crisis.
9. Do not discuss details, speculate on events or otherwise elaborate on the situation. Often, litigation follows crisis. Statements made could later be used in court.
10. Contact appropriate campus officials:  
Campus official name/title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Home/work/cell telephone: \_\_\_\_\_
11. Fully cooperate with appropriate authorities.
12. All clothing with the Fraternity's name should not be worn during the investigation period.
13. Submit all requested information about the incident to Kathy Johnston, Member Safety Director, in a timely manner ([Kathy.johnston@sigep.net](mailto:Kathy.johnston@sigep.net) or 804.286.2191).

## Dealing with the media

If contacted, only the president or chapter counselor should speak for the chapter. Avoid "no comment" as it leads to speculation. Instead, make a simple statement: **"We are aware that an incident occurred and are cooperating fully with the police and university officials who are investigating."** Keep repeating the above statement if you are pursued further. Do not give in because you are asked the same question several different ways. Never release names or admit liability. Depending on the circumstances,

the Headquarters staff may take over any direct contact with the media including the issuance of a press statement.

### **Serious injury or death of a member**

DO NOT NOTIFY THE PARENTS. Medical or police personnel who are trained in this will notify the family. You should always have parent/guardian information on file available to proper authorities. After you know that the family has been notified, it is appropriate for a chapter representative to call and share your concern.

In the event of a death, do not remove any personal items from the room. Do not let members enter the room. Allow only authorized personnel to enter the room. If possible, keep the door locked. Ask the family what their wishes are in regard to the member's possessions. You may offer to pack them in boxes, but it is more likely that the family will want to do this themselves. Before they arrive, be sure that any borrowed items are returned. When the family arrives, have empty boxes available and offer your help. Understand that this is a difficult time for them and they may want privacy.

Coordinate member attendance at the funeral or memorial service. Along with your chapter counselor, discuss with the family or the family's clergyman the possibility of conducting Sigma Phi Epsilon's memorial service, which is available through Headquarters.

In the case of serious injury or illness, find out the visitation wishes of the family and coordinate this with members of the chapter.

### **Follow up**

University staff is usually available for member counseling and general assistance. Individual and group counseling is strongly recommended after a death or serious injury.