



## **Health Emergency Management Guidelines**

At the chapter level, the president of the chapter should take charge in any mental or physical health emergency situation involving a member or a guest of the chapter. While any member should be empowered to contact emergency services, the president should consult with volunteers, Headquarters staff and other members who possess more expertise or insight on subsequent actions. Final decisions, however, must rest with the president. All chapter officers should know where to find a copy of the chapter's health emergency procedures.

**If there is an situation where someone's physical health or wellbeing is in danger, call 911 immediately.**

**If there is a mental health emergency where someone has not been injured, call 988.**

1. The president (or officer next in line if the president is not present) takes charge.
2. Call 911, 988, or appropriate emergency personnel. Cooperate fully with the needs of any public safety organization (police, medical or fire personnel).
3. Restrict access to the chapter house at once. The president (or officer in charge) 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 be at the door to calmly limit access to those living in the house or emergency personnel.
5. Do not clean, arrange or otherwise tamper any part of the area involved in the incident or other areas of the facility, specifically those which might be construed as evidence.
6. Call the SigEp Crisis Hotline number, 804.353.1901, to report the incident. (During business hours press 0. After hours, please select option 1.)
7. Notify your Chapter Counselor or other AVC member.
8. Assemble the members in a group, or in the case of fire, outside the facility. Remain calm and explain the emergency. Remind members that only the

president, Chapter Counselor, or AVC member can speak for the chapter. Members should not speak to anyone external, including friends, partners, media, etc. about the situation. See below for guidelines if you receive media outreach.

- 9. Do not discuss details, speculate on events or otherwise elaborate on the situation. Often, litigation follows a crisis. Statements made in the moment 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. No clothing with Fraternity letters/name should be worn during the investigation period.
- 13. Submit all requested information about the incident to the headquarters staff in a timely manner.

Immediately upon knowledge of a health emergency, notify the appropriate campus, medical, fraternity, or law enforcement resources. This may include:

Police/EMS.....	911
Suicide and Crisis Lifeline...	988
SigEp Crisis Hotline.....	804.353.1901 (During business hours press 0. After hours, press 1.)
Campus Security.....	_____
Chapter Counselor.....	_____
AVC President.....	_____
Fraternity Sorority Life Advisor.....	_____
Campus Counseling Center.	_____
Dean of Students.....	_____
Other.....	_____

## Dealing with the media

The professional Headquarters communication team is here to help you navigate or prepare for media inquiries or attention that might be generated online. They will work directly with the chapter president and chapter counselor on a response plan. Follow this guidance closely:

- Chapter members should not comment on this situation to the media or on social media. Our Marketing & Communications Director will work with you directly if you receive any media inquiries.
- In the event of an inquiry, here is our protocol:
  - Be courteous to the reporter.
  - Please use the following language: “I don't have information to share but ask that you contact Ben Ford at our national office.” Keep repeating this statement if you are pursued further. Do not give in because you are asked the same question several different ways.
  - Share Ben’s contact information with the reporter:
    - Ben Ford, SigEp Marketing & Communications Director,  
[ben.ford@sigep.net](mailto:ben.ford@sigep.net).
  - Call Ben at 804.489.8310 or email at [ben.ford@sigep.net](mailto:ben.ford@sigep.net) to let him know of the media inquiry. If you have it, let him know the reporter's name and news outlet.
- Advise the chapter not to post about the crisis on social media in any way, as that can often lead to speculation, targeted media outreach, new questions and misinformation.
- In the event of a health emergency, share these guidelines widely amongst chapter members.

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

While we all hope that such tragedies do not occur, we are not immune to such crises. In the event of an injury, death, or suicide of a brother, a standard protocol provides guidance for response procedures, support for those impacted, and helps restore stability to the chapter. In the event of a death by suicide, it can also help mitigate the risk of additional suicidal actions or deaths (suicide contagion), as this is a risk factor to those vulnerable to suicide.

### **Parents**

Chapters should have emergency parent/family contact information on file to provide to the proper authorities. However, 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.

### **Social Media**

DO NOT NOTIFY ON SOCIAL MEDIA OR CHAPTER COMMUNICATION PLATFORMS. Hearing about someone's death or injury via such avenues can be difficult or traumatic, especially if someone doesn't have a support system present. There is also a risk that notification or misinformation can spread to friends or family members. Allow those trained in such notifications to do so, or to provide guidance for you to do so. You may need to alert chapter members to an emergency situation, but only give logistical facts, such as restricted access to the premises, an emergency meeting, etc.

### **Personal Belongings**

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.

### **Funeral, Memorial Services or Hospital Visits**

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.

## **Member Support**

In the event of the death of a brother, it is vital that the chapter receives grief counseling, crisis response and information about services available from the university. Connecting with the campus counseling services or FSL office will help ensure local support.

Remember that everyone responds to loss differently, and may appear outwardly "fine." It's important to follow guidance from the university, AVC and HQ to ensure all brothers' needs are met, regardless of outward appearance. Many universities and counseling centers have protocols in place to assist a chapter in a crisis; chapters should follow their guidance. This is especially important to mitigate suicide risk among vulnerable individuals.

Crisis support numbers should be provided to the brothers in the chapter. These include:

Crisis and Suicide Lifeline - 988

Crisis Text Line - 741741 or <https://www.crisistextline.org/>

## **SigEp Headquarters**

A member of SigEp Headquarters will work with the chapter and AVC to provide additional support and guidance. Chapters should call the SigEp Hotline at 1-804-353-1901 to report a crisis or incident, and assist the staff to coordinate the appropriate response from the fraternity. During business hours press 0. After hours, please select option 1.

## **Other Resources to Consult for Help**

Dealing with a health emergency can be difficult to manage emotionally for the other members of the chapter. There are resources available on most campuses through the health center to help students if they are struggling.

There are also some national resources that members can contact if they are struggling in the aftermath of a health emergency situation. Some of those resources are:

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-TALK (8255)
- JED Foundation: [jedfoundation.org](http://jedfoundation.org)
- Find Substance Abuse and Mental Health Treatment: 800-662-HELP (4357)
- National Sexual Assault Hotline: 800-656-HOPE (4673)

### **Additional Member Safety Resources**

Additional resources and documents can be found in the Member Safety section of the Fraternity's website as well as in the mySigEp resource library.