

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

IT CAN HAPPEN TO YOU...

The preceding information has been devoted to the prevention of crises. Yet, we must be prepared to react quickly and effectively should a tragedy occur.

Educate members before a crisis:

- **Review procedures in the membership development program.** The first priority should be the health and safety of each member, and the chapter in general. All members must know who is in charge and be prepared to follow instructions.
- **The president should take charge of an emergency situation.** The president may, and perhaps should, consult with other members who possess more expertise or insight. The final decision, however, must rest with the president.
- **If the president is absent, the next ranked officer is in charge.** All chapter officers should know where to find a copy of the chapter's emergency procedures.

Initial steps:

- **The president** (or next in line) **takes charge.**
- Usually, first **call emergency number(s)**, usually 9-1-1, so appropriate emergency personnel (police, fire, ambulance) can respond.
- **Close the chapter house at once.** The president cannot give instructions and maintain control if members are leaving and strangers are entering. Permit only your members and appropriate officials to enter. Assign one or more responsible members to calmly guard the door.
- **Notify your chapter counselor:**

Name: _____

Telephone: _____

- **Notify Headquarters**—(804) 353-1901—during business hours or the Sigma Phi Epsilon **24-hour crisis hot line**—(800) 767-1901—after business hours. A member of the Headquarters staff will contact you within 15 minutes.
- **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 can speak for the Fraternity—members are not to speak to anyone about the crisis.
 - ⇒ 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.
 - ⇒ If possible, secure names, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses of people in the area or eyewitnesses.

- **Contact appropriate campus officials:**

Name: _____

Telephone: _____

- **Fully cooperate with appropriate authorities.**

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.

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.
- SigEps outside your chapter may want to help. Headquarters should coordinate the appropriate responses.

Follow-up:

- University staff are usually available for member counseling and general assistance. Individual and group counseling is strongly recommended following any crisis situation.
- **An Incident Report Form should be filled out and sent to Headquarters within 24 hours of the incident.**

INJURED PERSON(S): (Use additional page if necessary.)

Name:	Name:
Sex:	Sex:
Age:	Age:
Member or Non Member?:	Member or Non Member?:
Street Address:	Street Address:
City/State/Zip:	City/State/Zip:
Telephone:	Telephone:

WITNESS(ES): (Use additional page if necessary.)

Name:	Name:
Street Address:	Street Address:
City/State/Zip:	City/State/Zip:
Telephone:	Telephone:

CONTACT PERSON: (At Chapter)

Name:
Phone:
Address:

WAS A POLICE REPORT MADE:	CHAPTER COUNSELOR or KEY VOLUNTEER:
Police Department:	Name:
Police Department Telephone:	Street Address:
Officer Name:	City/State/Zip
Report #:	Telephone:
SEND 1 COPY TO SIGMA PHI EPSILON HEADQUARTERS PO Box 1901, Richmond, VA 23218 Fax: (804) 359-8160	KEEP 1 COPY FOR CHAPTER SEND 1 COPY TO YOUR CHAPTER COUNSELOR