



## FRATERNITY AND SORORITY RELATIONS CRISIS MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

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It is an unfortunate reality that from time to time a serious injury, loss of life, major property loss, or criminal activity will occur in a chapter.

Events of this nature grievously impact not only on the chapter, the Greek community, the campus community, the families and friends of members, the national organization and the national organization.

Strong preventive measures will prevent most losses. Safety inspections, fire drills, the elimination of improper and illegal activities, and liability and risk management seminars are all essential to control risk.

Should any event of a disastrous nature occur, however, the chapter must be prepared to respond quickly and appropriately.

There are several recommended steps to follow in the event of a tragedy, with some additional steps to follow in the event of a death of one of your members or associate members.

1. WHO IS IN CHARGE DURING AN EMERGENCY/CRISIS? Be certain that each person in your chapter knows that:
  - You, as president, are in command of every emergency situation.
  - In your absences, have a ranking order or officers established.
  - Copies of these procedures should be given to each chapter officer to keep in their notebook.
  - A copy should be kept next to the chapter telephone, on a bulletin board, by mailboxes, or other easily accessible place.
  - You should arrange and communicate with your chapter advisor and housing corporation president as to how they are to be notified.
  - Be sure that your housemother or live in advisor are aware of these procedures.
  - You should also work closely if not hand in hand with your house manager.
  
2. IF A TRAGEDY OCCURS steps to follow:
  - Close the house/apartment only to members and University Officials
  - Before making announcements call all members and tell them to get to the house/apartment immediately make announcement at once
  - Only permit your members, alumnae and appropriate officials to answer.
  - Make sure someone is at the front door to meet campus police, FSR advisors, chapter advisors, chapter members and to watch for media.
  - In the event of death or suicide do not tell people over the phone. If the suicide has happened in the house/apartment chapter members will be most likely find another meeting space.
  
3. EMERGENCY PHONE CALLS TO MAKE: You need to make several phone calls immediately.
  - First call 911
    - If the emergency is a fire, your alarms may or may not automatically bring a fire truck. Regardless, Call 911.
    - Do not hesitate to call UCLA PD regardless of the situation.
  - Second, call your Greek Advisor. We are here to discuss the situation, help you manage it, help you to make calls and to be with you. We will arrive at the house/apartment or hospital. Always call day or night. If you are in doubt whether a situation is serious or not call. Better to be safe than sorry and have someone to assist you.
  - Third, call your national fraternity administrative office and the following people
    - Call your chapter advisor
    - Call your house corporation president

- Call your risk management/social advisor
- It is important that you do not call the parents. Leave that phone call up to the Greek Advisor, Official Campus Liaison, Chapter Advisor or National Headquarters.
- Greek Advisor will notify IFC President and other campus offices of the situation. You work to maintain order with your members.

## EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

The following people need to be notified of any emergency:

Greek Life Advisor:	Troy R. Bartels	Mande Adams	Carissa Requejo
Office:	310-206-1521	310-206-1549	310-825-7252
Emergency Cell:			

### Chapter Advisor:

Office:  
Home Phone:  
Cellular:

### Regional or District Officer:

Office:  
Home Phone:  
Cellular:

In many situations, it will be advisable for you to contact an attorney, especially if legal action may result from an incident (criminal arrest or a liability suit, etc.):

### Chapter Legal Advisor:

Office:  
Home Phone:  
Cellular:

Sometimes, it is helpful to contact a staff member of the campus counseling center for assistance (for example, when a member appears to be suicidal or when there is a death).

### Student Psychological Services:

Office: 310-825-0768

## FIRES

- In case of a fire, remain calm. Panic only causes confusion.
- Set off the alarm.
- Call 911, no matter how minor you consider the fire to be. Don't take a lot of time looking for the fire beforehand.
- Use an extinguisher if possible.
- Check as many rooms on the way out to see if everyone is alerted to the fire. Shut the doors to all rooms on the way out.
- When you are in a room when the alarm goes off, feel the doorknob to see if the heat is intense. If it is hot, do not open it. If you think it's safe, then open the door slowly with your shoulder against it to see if the fire is in the hallway. Because toxic fumes and high temperatures usually fill the highest levels of the air, it is best to crawl out of a burning building. Cover your face with a cloth, preferably damp. If the fire is in the hallway, exit through a window, but be sure to crack the top of the window first to let the smoke draft out. Most people are killed by smoke before they have a chance to jump.

- Have a plan to account for members. A roommate check system may work best. Have a pre-determined spot where members are to congregate in the event of a fire. Take a head count to make sure everyone is out of the house. NEVER go back into the house to attempt to rescue anyone.
- Turn off electricity and gas if there is time.
- Move cars out of the way for fire engines to get in.

## MAINTAINING CONTROL

Be certain that everyone in your chapter knows the president is in command of every emergency situation. In the absence of the president, you should have a rank ordering of officers (chain of command):

1. President
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

If a crisis has occurred at the chapter house, close the house at once. You cannot give instructions if your members are leaving and strangers are entering. Permit only members and appropriate officials to enter. Halt all incoming and outgoing telephone calls, except those of an emergency nature.

In most crisis situations, you will want to call a mandatory chapter meeting, for actives and pledges/associates, as soon as possible. Make sure your chapter advisor, Greek Advisor or other member of your alumni advisory board is present.

At this meeting:

- Explain the situation and gather facts.
- Project a strong leadership image to let your members know everything is under control so they will remain calm.
- Clarify who is the spokesman (normally the chapter president). No one else should make statements or answer questions about the situation.
- Instruct members not to discuss the incident with anyone, including boy/girlfriends and family members, until the situation has been resolved. In the event of a fire or accident, members should, of course, be encouraged to notify their parents to let them know they are okay.
- Detail the plan for the next several days.
- Instruct your members to cooperate with campus or law enforcement officials investigating an incident.
- You will need to stay in contact with multiple people. It is okay for you to delegate to your executive board duties to help you.
- Your Greek Advisors are your best allies. They have been through this before and will assist you and step in when needed.
- You will get asked a lot of questions and will have to explain yourselves many times to different people.
- Remember to take time for yourself to process - the days and maybe weeks ahead might be tough.

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## INVESTIGATIONS

Make written notes of all details relating to any incident. It will be especially important to get the names of all members present, the names and telephone numbers of any witnesses (in some cases you may want to get signed statements from the witnesses), and the names and telephone numbers of anyone injured (however slightly). Some incidents may result in lawsuits, and if you are called to testify in court months after the incident, the notes will be invaluable. Share the information you collect with your chapter advisor and any campus or law enforcement officials conducting an investigation. Itemize any property losses, and keep records of any expenses related to the situation.

## **MEDIA RELATIONS**

Again, it is critical that the officially designated chapter spokesperson be the only person to speak with the media. No exceptions!

Consult with your chapter advisor, the Greek Life Advisor, and your attorney (if applicable) so that they can help you prepare for any media contact. They can also assist you in developing a prepared statement that can be read to the press. Prior to the development of a statement the following standby statement should be used (avoid saying "no comment" — it sounds as if you are trying to hide something): "We can confirm that (describe the incident very briefly) occurred on (day) at (time) at (location). The chapter is cooperating with authorities and all interested parties. Further information will be released when we have completed our investigation of all pertinent matters." Absolutely nothing else should be said. The only response to other questions should be: "When we have completed our investigation, we will release more information."

Instead of a press briefing, you may elect to simply prepare a statement and distribute it to the media.

When you are being interviewed, tell the truth. Give only the facts. If you don't know an answer to a question, say so. Don't speculate or repeat hearsay. Avoid exaggerations and inflammatory remarks. Stress what positive action you are taking to resolve the situation. If you are asked a question you feel is unfair, simply rephrase the question the way you would prefer to have it asked, and then answer your question. Never make "off the record" comments.

Consider your appearance. Dress neatly (semi-formal). Your members should also dress neatly even if they are casual (no beer T-shirts, etc.). Clean up your house, being careful to remove trash, beer bottles, and anything else that may not look favorable in a photograph or on TV. Consider holding a press briefing away from the chapter house, perhaps at a location on-campus. Caution your members not to grandstand in the background during TV interviews.

Do not release any names until an investigation is complete and the timing is appropriate.

Don't discuss the personal life of your members with reporters.

Keep your house locked. Do not let television cameras or photographers into your house (unless you specifically want to invite them in for a press conference).

## **MEDICAL EMERGENCIES**

Be sure your chapter has a complete first aid kit in an accessible place in your chapter room. Take the kit with you at chapter retreats and other out-of-town functions.

Call the paramedics and give necessary information regarding the sickness/accident.

In the event of a serious illness or injury, do not notify the parents immediately. The medical officials will notify parents and advise them of their physical situation.

## **MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS**

In the event of a mental health crisis, for example a suicide threat or attempt, call emergency services as appropriate. If time permits, arrange for a professional counselor to provide you with assistance. While awaiting the counselor's arrival, talk with the member involved and provide him reassurance. Don't play psychologist--just be a friend and make the person comfortable.

In the event of a mental health crisis, do not assemble your members. Discuss with campus officials steps you should take to handle the situation. Campus officials will determine if the parents need to be contacted.

## SERIOUS ILLNESS

There are several procedures and precautions that group members should take in the event one of your fellow members develops what appears to be a serious illness (including substance addiction or eating disorder). An ill member may ignore his or her condition and may not take the initiative to seek proper medical attention. As responsible adults, you must be sensitive to your members' physical and psychological welfare. If you become aware of a member who is suffering from a serious illness, take immediate action by following these guidelines and contacting appropriate people who can help:

- Initially bring your concern to the attention of the member. Tell the member you are aware of his/her condition and that you are concerned.
- Determine what kind of medical or psychological counseling attention the member has sought. What kind of care has been described?
- If the ailing individual continues to ignore his/her physical or psychological condition, contact your chapter advisor. Information about the situation should be brought to the advisor's attention, and consult the campus counseling center for guidance on establishing a specific plan of action to help the member.

It is extremely important that members be understanding and sensitive in dealing with cases of serious illness. There may be some cases when an ailing person will not want your assistance and will strongly object to any contact with his parents. It is important to respect the wishes of the person; however, you may find yourself in a situation where respecting a person's wishes may not be medically wise or sound. The realities of the situation should not be ignored.

## DEATH

In the event of a death, do not notify the parents; this will be done by emergency or campus officials.

Do not announce the death until your chapter advisor has arrived to help. You may also want to have a campus counselor present when you make the announcement to help your members deal with the shock.

Be very careful that the death is not announced until all members of the immediate family have been notified.

If the member lived in the house, do not remove any of the deceased student's personal possessions. If the member had a roommate, the roommate should be moved temporarily to another room. You should call the family to offer sympathy on behalf of the chapter, and ask what their wishes are in regard to the possessions. You may offer to pack them in boxes, but chances are the parents will prefer to do this themselves. Before they arrive, be sure all borrowed items are returned to the deceased's room and if possible, lock it. When they do arrive, you may want to have empty boxes available and offer to help. This is an emotional trauma for parents and they may not want privacy.

It is of course proper to send sympathy cards and notes, flowers, etc. If the funeral is nearby, it will mean a great deal to the parents for members to attend. Offer to make a statement on behalf of the fraternity at the memorial service.

If the funeral will be out-of-town, you probably will want to arrange a local memorial service. You can contact the campus ministries for assistance in making arrangements. Check to see if your ritual contains a ceremony for memorial services.

For some of your members, this may be their first experience in dealing with the death of someone close to them. Keep an eye out for members who appear to be having difficulty coping with the situation and encourage them to talk with a counselor.

Student affairs officials will take care of notifying the deceased student's instructors and other campus offices of the death.

When someone close to you dies, it is difficult to accept the loss. You and your members may find yourselves consumed by pain, fear, and grief. Grief is a normal response to losing someone who was important to you. Grief hurts, but it is necessary. When a death tears your world apart, grieving is the process that puts it back together.

Grief runs through stages, although not everyone experiences every stage, and your members will pass through the stages at their own rate. That is why it is important to understand the stages of grief:

- *Denial* - This response is nature's way of protecting you and insulating you from what happened.
- *Anger* - You may feel angry toward the doctors and nurses who couldn't save the life of the deceased. You might even feel angry at the deceased for leaving you. These feelings of anger may lead you to feel guilty.
- *Guilt* - You may feel guilty for simply being alive when someone else has died. You might feel guilty about not saying goodbye, or you may remember a fight you had with the deceased.
- *Depression* - Even you are normally a committed, caring person, you may find that you don't care about anything or anyone. This is a common feeling as are the others.
- *Acceptance* - Hopefully, the grieving process will accept the death eventually. That does not mean you have to forget the deceased. It just means it is time to go on living.

One of the best ways to begin working through grief is to attend the funeral or memorial service. A funeral confirms the reality of death and serves as a focus for expressing feelings of loss. You begin to help the family of the deceased, and yourself, by attending the funeral. Being there demonstrates that although someone has died, friends like you remain, and it demonstrates that you care. Both before and after the funeral, it is important that you express your feelings. Crying is both healthy and normal. It may also help to hold a discussion to help members with accepting the loss.

All of this, no doubt, seems grim and harsh. Everyone hopes that no chapter president will ever have to use these procedures. But sadly, that hope is not realistic. Tragedies do occur. Usually they are unpredictable. You can ease the situation for all by being prepared to follow these procedures and guidelines.