

# CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN

Fraternities are not immune to the tragedies and crises that have struck the college population with alarming frequency over the past decade. As leaders and volunteers working with student chapters, we must be prepared to meet the needs of any crisis we face. This guide is dedicated to the prevention of risk management crises, but also outlines the basics steps to follow in case of an emergency.

## EDUCATE MEMBERS BEFORE A CRISIS

### **Teach Risk Management and Crisis Management to the membership.**

All Fraternity Statements of position and risk management policies and procedures should be taught during the initial intake period for members, the associate member education program. Review these policies and procedures with the entire membership in the beginning of each semester. The first concern 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.

### **Complete the Risk Management Statement of Responsibility.**

In order to reinforce the importance of managing our risk as an organization, make sure each officer and key committee chairman electronically signs that Risk Management Statement of Responsibility following elections (e-mailed to the address on file with the National Headquarters).

### **Identify the leader BEFORE the problem happens.**

At the chapter level, the President of the chapter should take charge in any crisis. The President should consult with volunteers, staff, and 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.

## IF A CRISIS HAPPENS...

1. The Chapter 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 guard the door.

5. Do not tamper with any part of the area involved in the incident, specifically things that might be construed as evidence or areas involved with the incident.

6. Call the Executive Director/Headquarters at \_\_\_\_\_.

7. Notify your Chapter Advisor:

Chapter Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Home/Work/Cell Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

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 Advisor 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 the National Headquarters in a timely manner.

## **DEALING WITH THE MEDIA**

- If contacted, only the President or Chapter Advisor 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 National Headquarters 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 Pi Kappa Phi'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 following any crisis situation.

*References: Linda Wright, EMCAS, Sigma Phi Epsilon Crisis Management Procedure Manual, Pi Kappa Phi Crisis Management Plan*