

PROCEDURES FOR AN EMERGENCY OR TRAGEDY

While we hope we won't have to deal with a serious accident, illness or death, from time to time these things do happen. The following suggestions are made to assist you in responding appropriately to such a situation. Your Council should review them and be prepared.

1. Be certain that every man in the chapter knows that the Prior is in command of any emergency situation. This does not mean you cannot consult with others who may have more expertise or insight, but the final decision is yours. In your absence the Vice Prior, or Exchequer or Recorder take over, and they should know where to find a copy of these procedures.
2. If a tragedy has occurred within your house, close the house at once. You cannot give instructions if your members are leaving and strangers are entering. Permit only your members and appropriate officials to enter,
3. Your first phone call is to the emergency number for an ambulance or for the fire department. Keep the police and fire numbers by your phone. If the event occurred away from the house, the authorities have already been notified so you skip this step.
4. Before you leave the phone, your next calls are to your chapter advisor and the Fraternity Office. A call to the school will be made at the discretion of the Chapter Advisor and national officers.
- 5 Assemble your members in a group. Explain that there is an emergency and that the house is closed. Ask them not to talk to those outside the chapter; you are the spokesperson. Do not discuss details, speculate on events or otherwise elaborate on the situation until your advisor or appropriate official is there; that would only create unrest and sometimes unnecessary concerns.
6. Do not notify parents at first unless properly advised. In the event of serious accident, illness or death, medical or police personnel will notify the family. You should call the family later to share your concerns/sympathy.
7. While your members are gathered, it is important that they remain calm and realize that the situation is under control. You should decide if out-of-house members need to be informed and if so, call them in.
8. Should the communications media contact you, only the Prior or Advisor should speak for the group. With the advisor, and others if necessary, formulate a short and careful statement, take care not to release a name until you are sure family has been notified. The media people sometimes misquote or take comments out of context, so the safest statement (if safety is a consideration) is no statement or as little as possible.
9. In the case of a death someone who lives in, do not remove any personal items from the room. Do not let members enter the room. Let in only police or other officials, Since it is likely that the member shared the room, you will want to move the roommate out of the room temporarily. Ask the family what their wishes are in regard to the possessions. If possible, keep the room locked. When they arrive, have empty boxes available and offer to help. Understand that this is a difficult time for them and they may want privacy.
10. In the case of serious illness or injury, find out the visitation wishes of the family and coordinate this with members of the group. Arrange for donations of blood if this is appropriate.
11. In the case of death, you will want to coordinate attendance at the funeral.
12. In any emergency, use tact and caution in your statements to members, to the press, to others. Particularly where litigation may follow, be careful about jumping to conclusions or speculating. Rumors will abound and add to the general confusion, so it will be helpful to keep your men from feeding the rumors.
13. If the emergency is a chapter house fire, there may be considerations of housing, feeding, clothing, funding, anxiety and distress and no end of details for which it is difficult to prepare. Chapter Advisors, other alumni, the Regional Governor, the Fraternity office, other SAM chapters, other fraternities, sororities and the school are all willing and ready to step in immediately to help.

Let us hope there won't be an emergency. However, should there be, these are the tools that will help you prepare to handle it effectively.