

# Alpha Rho Chi Fraternity

## Chapter Crisis Management Plan

This crisis management plan has been developed to aid Alpha Rho Chi chapters in the event of an emergency. Crisis management is much more than just dealing with a crisis, it is also about preventing or avoiding a crisis all together. We must be prepared for crisis prevention, planning for a crisis and damage control after a crisis. A fraternity emergency situation may be prompted by any of the following occurrences:

- An accident resulting in severe or fatal injuries, or a member attempting or committing suicide.
- Substantial damage to the chapter facility caused by fire, explosion, or an act of nature.
- Deliberate damage to the chapter facility from malicious mischief, sabotage, or a riot.
- Chapter member, members, or the entire chapter being accused of violating local, state, federal, or university/college laws, rules, or regulations.

There may be other types of emergencies not identified above, but in all cases, follow these guidelines. When an event like this occurs, it can do irreparable damage to the future of the chapter, the University community, and the entire Fraternity if not handled correctly.

These suggestions will help the chapter deal with and manage a crisis in the most effective and efficient way and put the chapter on the track towards normal operations. In all cases, it is recommended that these suggestions be followed.

### GUIDELINES:

- 1) **Maintain Control.** The chapter Worthy Architect is in charge during all emergency or crisis situations until relieved by the Regional Director, Control Corporation officer, or Grand Council representative. In the absence of the WA, the next highest-ranking chapter officer should assume these duties.
- 2) **Contact the proper authorities** (i.e. police, fire, ambulance, etc.) immediately. These emergency telephone numbers should be posted by each chapter house telephone and in everyone's cell phone.
- 3) **The building should be closed and secured immediately** if the emergency has occurred in or around the chapter facility. Only members, appropriate supervisory personnel, and the proper authorities should be allowed admittance.
- 4) **The Worthy Architect should notify each of the following individuals or offices within one hour of the emergency.**

CRISIS MANAGEMENT CONTACT NUMBERS			
	Name:	Primary Ph:	Secondary Ph:
Worthy Grand Architect:	name	(###) ###-####	(###) ###-####
Faculty Advisor:	_____	_____	_____
Regional Director:	_____	_____	_____
Control Corporation President:	_____	_____	_____
Fraternity Insurance Agent:	James R. Favor & Co.	(800) 344-7335	-
Greek Advisor/University Official:	_____	_____	_____

- 5) **The Worthy Architect should call a meeting of all members to inform them of the emergency** and to review this crisis management plan. While the members are assembled, there are several things which will need to be done. It is important to remain calm until the situation is under control. Depending on the situation, alumni or control corporation officers may need to be called in.

This task can be delegated to a responsible member. In the case of chapters with houses, have this person use a cell phone in order to keep the house phone free. (In the case of a suicide attempt, with or without serious injury, do not immediately assemble your members or call parents. Quietly discuss what to do with qualified personnel on the scene). Assign a member as a liaison between the hospital and the chapter to make communications operate more efficiently.

- 6) **All members should be instructed to make no statements, comments, suggestions, or remarks to the media.** All members should be instructed to make no statements, comments, suggestions, or remarks to the media. The Worthy Architect or the Grand Council are the only spokesmen for the chapter until relieved of those duties as described in guideline #1 above. Refer to "How to Work with the Media in a Crisis" for assistance.

The WA or Grand Council will make an appropriate statement after the situation is under control and only after the situation and the content of the statement has been discussed with all members of the Grand Council. Different media sources may want more information; offer to provide them updates as they become available.

No permission should ever be granted to film within the chapter meeting area or personal rooms. Do not jump to conclusions or speculate. Give plenty of updates to members to prevent the flow of incorrect information and rumors. Be aware that any comments that are made by any member may have the potential to do serious damage to individual members of the chapter, to the chapter, and to the fraternity as a whole

- 7) **Media Statements.** Express and convey sympathy; however, never admit liability or fault. Unless so advised by the Fraternity's Legal counsel after they have fully reviewed the incident, this sample media statement can be used:

*"We can confirm that (describe incident briefly) occurred on (day) at (time) at (location). We will do all we can to provide information as it becomes available. Currently, we are working with the authorities. Comments will be made when we are certain of all the facts. In the interim, feel free to call me or give us your name and phone number - we will forward information as soon as we have more details available."*

When talking with the media, be honest, factual, and prompt. Never say "No comment;" as that statement conveys guilt. Saying "I don't know" or "I don't have the answer to that question at this time" are the preferred replies. Don't get mad or frustrated, and don't lay blame.

In the event of an on-site interview with television cameras or print media accompanied by photographers, avoid wearing any apparel which displays our fraternity letters or name. Dress professionally and present yourselves in a professional manner. Wearing your letters will immediately portray that the event was organization-related rather than an isolated incident.

If at all possible, request that all members avoid publicly wearing the fraternity's letters or name immediately following a high-risk / high profile incident. Doing so will assist your members in avoiding the chance of being ill-prepared to respond to numerous questions surrounding an incident by curious classmates, instructors or individuals affiliated with the media "This is an unfortunate and

regrettable event. The Chapter and Fraternity are cooperating fully with all interested parties. Further information will be given promptly when we have fully completed our investigation.”

- 8) **Communication with Parents or Guardians.** Do not take it upon yourselves to personally notify the parents or guardians, unless otherwise suggested by Fraternity officers or your faculty advisor. In the event of a serious injury or death, medical or police personnel (who are trained in this) will notify the family. Parent/guardian information should always be on file and available for proper authorities. After you know the entire family has been contacted, it is appropriate then, and only then, for a chapter representative to call and share the chapter’s concern.

### **Be Prepared To Act When a Crisis Occurs**

This checklist is to be used when developing your chapter’s crisis management plan. This checklist should also be utilized during a crisis situation.

#### **In Advance**

- Have chapter officers and key volunteers agree on a positive plan, one that is spelled out on paper.
- Educate all chapter members and key volunteers on the completed plan and specific responsibilities.
- Obtain legal counsel and ask for legal advice regarding crisis planning ahead of time.
- Designate an official spokesperson, preferably the Chapter Worthy Architect, to whom inquiries will be referred. Speak with only one voice.
- Be aware of local media contacts.

#### **During a Crisis**

- When an emergency arises, notify members, school officials, Alpha Rho Chi Grand Council, key graduates, and legal counsel quickly. Activate chapter crisis management plan.
- Be calm. This will help eliminate confusion, speculation, and fear.
- Quickly assemble all of the facts and verify them, using reliable sources. Prepare an official statement with approval from legal counsel and the Grand Council. It is critical that the chapter be the source of the facts for the media.
- In the case of illness, injury, or fatality, follow up with details to the Grand Council following prescribed procedures.
- Complete an Incident Report.
- Release any statement to all media by the quickest means available. Do not play favorites or give exclusives.
- Circulate official statements to all chapter members, school officials, Grand Council, key graduates, and legal counsel. Keep everyone fully informed.
- Anticipate the needs of news media. Extend the fullest cooperation and have amenities available. Keep the media briefed at all times.
- Anticipate public and family inquiries, and pressure.
- Keep the lines of communication open.
- Establish emergency communication links where needed and monitor news sources.

#### **After the Crisis**

- Conduct an evaluation. Determine what were the successes and failures. Revise the chapter’s crisis management plan accordingly.
- Ensure that members and alumni receive appropriate counseling as needed.

**Instruct your brothers not to discuss incidents with anyone.**



# How to Work with the Media in a Crisis

The first public relations step to take when a media-covered crisis occurs is to call the Worthy Grand Architect. The WGA's contact information may be found on the national website. The Grand Council will assist you in dealing with the media or may even relieve you of the responsibility and speak to the media directly on your behalf.

The media is *not* out to get you. A reporter's primary job is to *report* the full story. Be polite and responsive when questioned. This is the best way to get balanced reporting of the situation. Limit your answers to the facts you know.

**Remember: *nothing is off the record.*** If you say anything of importance, they will probably use it, *on* the record or *off*.

One person, usually the Worthy Architect until s/he is relieved by someone of higher authority, should officially comment on any type of crisis. The appointed spokesperson should have as many of the facts as possible in a reasonable amount of time before speaking to the press, and should avoid commenting on a situation that is unclear. Do not volunteer information. Do not answer with information about which you do not have personal knowledge. Always speak clearly, use proper English, and avoid slang.

## Dealing with the Media

- Be honest . . . be factual . . . be prompt!
- If you don't know the facts, don't speculate. Say that you will get the information promptly.
- Release bad news in a timely manner.
- Avoid responding with "No comment," as this may convey guilt. "I don't have that information" or "I can't answer that at this point" are examples of preferred replies.
- Answer only the questions asked.
- Avoid getting frustrated or angry.
- Stay cooperative and united.
- Do not repeat negative questions or phrases.
- Recognize and do not reply to trick questions.
- Remember: *Nothing is off the record!***

## Television and Radio Interviews

- Use word pictures, anecdotes, and examples that are strictly applicable and accurate.
- Make key (most important) points first, simply and accurately.
- Repeat crucial information.
- Keep a calm voice, even when challenged.
- Use appropriate language and avoid sarcasm, slang, or crutch phrases.
- Avoid nervous laughter.
- Speak for the organization, not from a personal point of view.
- Correct inaccurate statements.
- Face the interviewer; concentrate on talking with him/her, not the camera. Listen, so that responses will be accurate and appropriate.

- ☒ Remember microphones are very sensitive and will pick up any noise or side comments.

## **Crisis Management and Public Relations**

Crisis management is much more than just stopping or avoiding a crisis. Crisis management is also crisis prevention, planning for a crisis, and damage control (public relations, dealing with the media, after a crisis occurs). Public relations is the one aspect of crisis management that is often ignored.

Having a good reputation and an ongoing relationship with all of your publics (neighbors, local authorities, or university officials) before an unfortunate occurrence will benefit the chapter in handling a crisis.

If your chapter has a positive reputation among university administrators, the administration will likely be more willing to help your chapter recover from a crisis. If other students feel positive about your chapter, they will be less likely to speak badly of you after a crisis.

When positive relationships have not been established, addressing a crisis will be more difficult. This points to the urgent need to have a crisis management public relations plan.

### **In Case of Serious Injury or Death:**

1. Notify the authorities immediately (Dial 911).
2. Call the individuals listed on the Crisis Management Contacts.
3. Follow the Fraternity crisis management plan.
4. Allow only authorized personnel in the room or chapter facility. (Keep the door locked until authorities arrive.)
5. Allow a professional to notify the relatives. After approval from university officials and the Grand Council, the chapter worthy architect or regional director should call the parents to express the chapter's concern.
6. Assist in the coordination of the hospital visitation or funeral/memorial attendance if asked.
7. Do not move anything in the room until instructed to do so by parents or police. After the incident is over, ask the parents what they wish to be done with possessions (in the event of a member's death or leaving school). Every effort should be made to help gather the member's possessions if the parents make such a request.

# Reporting an Incident or Crisis

In order to help you understand what needs to be reported and how to go about reporting it, we have compiled a short list of important ideas to use as general guidelines. Chapter members have a responsibility to promptly report all incidents. Prompt reporting often can prevent minor incidents from developing into major problems.

Remember, DO NOT admit liability or responsibility for any occurrence or accident. In general, liability claims are a result of conditions on your premises and/or general operations that are likely to involve someone other than members, or officers.

## WHAT DO I REPORT?

- Any incident that caused or contributed to an injury or death.
- Any demand for compensation, whether verbal or written.
- Any lawsuits or subpoenas served on you or your chapter by an officer of the court.
- Any contacts by an attorney or investigator asking about an occurrence that happened at the chapter facility or that involved chapter members.
- While on the scene of the accident or occurrence get names, addresses, and telephone numbers of all parties involved and of all witnesses.

## WHAT DO I DO AFTER I REPORT?

- Do not admit responsibility or liability in any accident or occurrence.
- NEVER discuss an incident with an attorney or investigator without clearance from the Grand Council or James R. Favor & Company.
- Appoint one spokesperson (usually the chapter worthy architect) to handle any questions from outsiders about the occurrence.
- Instruct the chapter members not to discuss the incident with anyone outside of the Fraternity.
- Within 48 hours, submit a detailed written narrative to the Grand Council, with as much information as possible including witnesses, circumstances leading to the occurrence, whether alcohol was involved and if it was a chapter-sponsored event. See the Crisis Occurrence Form.
- Continue constant communication with the Grand Council and James R. Favor & Company.

## WHAT CAN I DO TO PROTECT MY CHAPTER, MY FRATERNITY, AND MYSELF?

- Use common sense and good judgment.
- Feel free to contact the Grand Council and/or James R. Favor & Company with any questions.
- Report all the facts as they happened. Do not attempt to hide or alter the facts no matter how damaging they may seem. Investigations are based on the facts as reported.

## **Coping with the loss**

Someone close to you, your brother or good friend has died. As you struggle to accept this difficult loss, you may find yourself consumed by pain, fear, and grief. Grief is a natural 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 helps to put it back together. Grief runs through stages, and even if you do not experience all of them, chances are you will experience some of them. This is why it is important to understand the stages of grief.

1. **Denial** – This response is nature’s way of protecting you and of insulating you from what happened.
2. **Anger** – You may feel angry toward the doctors or nurses who couldn’t save your brother. You may even be mad at the deceased for leaving you. These feelings of anger may lead you to feel guilty.
3. **Guilt** – You may feel guilty for simply being alive when someone else has died. You might feel guilty for not saying good-bye, or you may remember a fight or argument you had with the deceased.
4. **Depression** – Even if 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.
5. **Acceptance** – Hopefully, the grieving 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 the grief is to attend the funeral. 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 you care. Both before and after the funeral, it is important you express your feelings. Crying is both normal and healthy. Contact your college or university’s Counseling Center to arrange a group or individual discussion for assistance with grief and loss.

## **Emergency Phone Numbers**

Police/Fire Departments                      911  
(Remember on campus, you may have to dial 9+ 911 to get an outside line)  
Campus Police  
Counseling Center  
Regional Director  
Greek/Student Affairs Advisor  
Grand Council officers: go to [www.alpharhochi.org/md](http://www.alpharhochi.org/md)

## Crisis Terminology

Agreement on terminology can be a problem in crisis communications. Some common terminology is listed below.

- **Fatality:** Death from any cause.
- **Fatal Injury:** An injury resulting in death.
- **Serious Injury:** Hospitalization is required. The injury has resulted in a bone fracture (except simple fractures of fingers, toes, or nose). A serious injury involves cuts and bruises that have caused severe bleeding. Nerve, muscle, or tendon damage has occurred. The victim has sustained an injury to any internal organ. The victim has been burned on more than five percent of the body or has suffered second- and third-degree burns.
- **Minor Injury:** One that does not fit any of the above categories.
- **Serious Illness:** One that requires hospitalization and/or could result in death.
- **Minor Illness:** One that requires little or no hospitalization and is not considered serious.
- **Missing:** An unexplained absence from normal activity, residence area, or activity area.
- **Missing and Presumed Lost:** Missing under conditions that raise strong presumption that the person is lost but may be located.
- **Missing and Presumed Dead:** Missing under conditions that raise a very strong presumption that the person is dead.
- **En Route Delay:** Use this term for aircraft or surface transportation delays that are temporary and not considered hazardous to the persons involved. Any delay in transportation will be reported to parents, so you may need to get out a statement immediately to reduce rumors and speculation.
- **Non operational Incident:** Airlines use this term to describe delays caused by hijacking, severe weather conditions, bomb threat, and other outside causes. No injury or personal harm is involved.
- **Operational Incident:** Describes minor accidents involving non-serious injuries, some light property damage, or potentially hazardous conditions.
- **En Route Emergency:** A temporary situation in which the safety of an aircraft or surface transportation is in jeopardy or in question due to a lack of information.
- **Aircraft Accident:** Involves substantial damage. One or more persons have suffered a serious or fatal injury. Usually both damages and fatalities have occurred.
- **Guidelines in the event of a death: Do not** announce or respond to the event of a death until **and only until** you are positive all members of the immediate family have been notified. University staff can assist you in this area, as they are trained professionals. If the funeral service is open, plan chapter attendance. Should the chapter conduct a memorial service, the family may appreciate it, but respect their wishes if they do not. Ask university officials for help in arranging an on-campus memorial service.

# Chapter Accident / Incident Occurrence Form

**The Worthy Architect should complete this form within 24 hours of the incident. Please email it to the Worthy Grand Associate Architect**

Chapter: \_\_\_\_\_ Location of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Person(s) Involved: \_\_\_\_\_

Position/Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Was the person injured involved in task/job/other: \_\_\_\_\_

Did the incident result in an injury? \_\_\_\_\_

Nature and extent of injury: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Did the injury require any medical attention? If so, describe in detail. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Describe in detail the circumstances surrounding this incident: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date of this report: \_\_\_\_\_

Did this incident result in any property damage? \_\_\_\_\_ Did this incident result in possible personal injury? \_\_\_\_\_

What was the nature and extent of the damage? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Was a police report filed concerning this incident?  Yes  No If *yes*, please attach a copy to this report.

Has there been any media coverage of this incident?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_ If *yes*, please explain in detail:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Please provide the following information for all witnesses to this incident.**

	Worthy Architect	Witness #1	Witness #2	Witness #3
<b>Name:</b>				
<b>Address:</b>				
<b>City, State, Zip</b>				
<b>Code:</b>				
<b>Telephone Number:</b>				

**Report submitted by:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_