



Texas Association

# Meeting Emergency & Crisis Procedures

September 25, 2015

Texas Association Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America

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## **Introduction**

Though the likelihood and impact of crisis varies with each event, risk is always present.

The Texas FCCLA Board of Directors believe that the following policy and procedures will make our participants more safe and our staff better prepared so that everyone may have an enjoyable time at our region and state meetings and conferences. This policy will make participants better prepared in case of emergency during a region/state meeting or conference. Safety of all involved is the ultimate goal.

Unfortunate events can occur quickly and without warning. Planning is a crucial first step in dealing with crisis events in a calm and effective manner.

All meeting participants should this document to be prepared should an emergency or crisis occur. Together, we'll continue to provide The Ultimate Leadership Experience.

## **Emergency Contact Plan**

Local chapters will submit accurate emergency contact information as part of member affiliation. This information will be readily accessible by conference personnel. Chapter advisors should have emergency contact information for all travelers including students, chaperones, and the advisor(s) readily available during all meeting or conference activities.

## **Notifying Emergency Contacts**

Emergency contacts will be notified immediately following a situation, once the situation is safe.

- ◇ In the event of an emergency the chapter advisor or chaperone, if present, will make the emergency contact. Once the emergency contact has been notified of the situation the chapter advisor will contact the State Advisor to notify them of the situation.
- ◇ In the event of an emergency when the chapter advisor or chaperone is not present the conference personnel will make the emergency contact with the information provided through the online affiliation process. Once the emergency contact has been notified of the situation the conference personnel will contact the State Advisor to notify them of the situation.

The State Advisor will guide the notification process via phone calls, text messages, emails, information posted on the Texas FCCLA website, or any other method of communication that he/she deems appropriate for the situation. All conference personnel will follow the directions of the State Advisor throughout the emergency notification process.

## **Conference Evacuation Plan**

### *Default Evacuations (Fire/Smoke Alarms)*

If you see fire or smell smoke, follow these guidelines to report the situation and exit the building:

- ◇ Remain calm. Conference facilities have sophisticated and efficient fire alarms and suppression systems and many exit doors.
- ◇ Call 911 and report the exact location of the fire, if known.
- ◇ Conference personnel will notify the facilities immediately to assist in directing emergency dispatch to the exact location.
- ◇ When reporting a fire and no telephone is available, notify the nearest security officer or event staff person.
- ◇ Proceed calmly to the nearest emergency exit, and exit the building immediately.
- ◇ If there is an actual fire, an audible alarm will sound.
- ◇ Do not attempt to use elevators.
- ◇ Try to assist disabled or elderly persons who may need assistance exiting the building.
- ◇ Do not re-enter the building until instructed to do so by the fire department and/or conference personnel.

### *Discretionary Evacuations*

If evacuation is deemed necessary you will receive instructions about what to do and where to go by emergency and conference personnel. Follow these instructions:

- ◇ Remain calm.
- ◇ Be attentive for instructions.
- ◇ Leave the facility through the nearest exit as instructed.
- ◇ Do not take time to retrieve personal property.
- ◇ If possible, assist elderly and disabled persons needing assistance.
- ◇ Do not loiter or wait for others.
- ◇ Do not try to re-enter the building.
- ◇ Listen for the “all clear” signal before attempting to return to the building.

## **Emergency Procedures**

### *Medical Emergency*

If you see an ill or injured person, the most important thing you should do is request assistance in getting medical help. Medical personnel may be stationed at a first aid station located in your event area and can assist you immediately. If no personnel are stationed there, look for conference personnel or a house phone or use your cell phone to call 911. If you encounter a person needing medical attention request assistance first at a first aid station, by contacting conference personnel, calling hotel staff on a house phone, or using a cell phone to call 911.

Should a medical emergency occur, you should follow the guidelines below:

- ◇ Remain calm.
- ◇ Check for injuries.
- ◇ Do not move an injured person, unless they are in immediate danger.
- ◇ Call for help to get medical assistance immediately.
- ◇ Reassure the victim that help is on the way.
- ◇ Do not attempt to perform first aid or CPR unless you are trained and certified to do so.
- ◇ Stay with the individual until emergency personnel and/or security arrive.

### *Bomb Threats*

Every bomb threat is treated as a serious matter. Most bomb threats are received by telephone. If you receive a bomb threat, keep the caller talking and get as many details as possible, notify authorities and evacuate the area of the threat. If you encounter a person needing medical attention request assistance at a first aid station, by contacting conference personnel, calling hotel staff on a house phone, or using a cell phone to call 911. Continuing to talk to the caller can provide important information that can help diffuse the situation and give clues to the location of a bomb; however, your safety and the safety of others is your first concern. In the event of a bomb threat, follow these instructions:

- ◇ Remain calm.
- ◇ Do not hang up on the caller. Attempt to keep the caller talking as long as possible so you can get as much information as you can. Check your caller ID.
- ◇ Listen for voice-identifying characteristic and background sounds.
- ◇ Try to remember the exact words used by the caller.
- ◇ Ask these questions of the caller:
  - Where is the bomb right now?
  - When is the bomb going to explode?
  - What does it look like?
  - What kind of bomb is it?

- Did you place the bomb?
- Why?
- What is your address?
- What is your name?
- ◇ Try to write the conversation down and do not hang up the phone.
- ◇ Have someone else call 911 and provide the dispatcher important details.
- ◇ Follow the instructions of emergency responders.

### *Suspicious Packages*

Should you encounter a suspicious package, follow these security guidelines to report the package and keep yourself and others safe and evacuate the area of concern:

- ◇ Do not touch or move the package.
- ◇ Alert conference personnel about the package.
- ◇ Note and share the location and general description of the package, explaining why you found the package suspicious.
- ◇ Follow the instructions of conference personnel.

### *Severe Weather and Natural Disasters*

Severe weather events occur quickly. Be alert to severe weather warnings and announcements. Follow these guidelines for severe weather events:

#### Earthquake

If you are inside a building:

- ◇ Stay where you are until the shaking stops. Do not run outside. Do not get in a doorway, as this does not provide protection from falling or flying objects, and you may not be able to remain standing.
- ◇ Drop to the ground onto your hands and knees so the earthquake does not knock you down.
- ◇ Cover your head and neck with your hands and arms to protect yourself from falling debris.
- ◇ If you are in danger from falling objects, and can move safely, crawl for additional cover under a sturdy desk or table.
- ◇ If there is low furniture or an interior wall or corner nearby, and the path is clear, these may also provide some additional cover.
- ◇ Stay away from glass, windows, outside doors and walls, and anything that could fall, such as light fixtures or furniture.
- ◇ Hold on to any sturdy covering so you can move with it until the shaking stops. Stay where you are until the shaking stops.

If you are outdoors:

- ◇ Move away from buildings, streetlights, and utility wires.
- ◇ Once in the open, drop to the ground, cover your head and neck, and remain as still as possible.
- ◇ Stay there until the shaking stops.

### Tornado

- ◇ Go to the lowest building level. If there is no basement, go to the center of a small interior room on the lowest level (closet, interior hallway) away from corners, windows, doors, and outside walls. Put as many walls as possible between you and the outside.
- ◇ Get under a sturdy table and use your arms to protect your head and neck,
- ◇ Do not open windows.

### Winter Weather and Storms

- ◇ Stay indoors during winter storms.
- ◇ Walk carefully on snowy, icy walkways.
- ◇ Dress properly for cold weather to prevent frostbite and hypothermia.
- ◇ Keep dry. Change wet clothes frequently to prevent a loss of body heat. Wet clothing loses all of its insulating value and transmits heat rapidly.
- ◇ Do not drive if the conditions are unsafe.

### Thunderstorms and Lightning

- ◇ Use a battery-operated weather radio for updates from local officials.
- ◇ If needed use flashlights, not candles.
- ◇ Avoid contact with corded phones and devices, including those plugged into electricity for recharging. Cordless and wireless phones not connected to wall outlets are ok to use.
- ◇ Avoid contact with electrical equipment and cords.
- ◇ Avoid contact with plumbing. Do not wash your hands or take a shower. Plumbing and bathroom fixtures can conduct electricity.
- ◇ Stay away from windows and doors, and stay off of porches or balconies.
- ◇ Do not lie on concrete floors, and do not lean against concrete walls.
- ◇ Avoid natural lightning rods such as a tall, isolated tree in an open area.
- ◇ Avoid hilltops, open fields, the beach, or a boat on water.
- ◇ Take shelter in a sturdy building. Avoid isolated sheds or other small structures in open areas.
- ◇ Avoid contact with anything metal.
- ◇ If you are driving try to safely exit the roadway and park. Stay in the vehicle, and turn on emergency flashers.

## **Lockdown Procedures**

In some circumstances, it will be safer for those in a room or building to remain inside. In the event of a lockdown, follow these guidelines to stay informed and protect yourself:

- ◇ Remain calm.
- ◇ Follow the instructions of conference personnel.
- ◇ Be attentive for instructions.
- ◇ Go into an interior room with few windows, if possible.
- ◇ Close the door and remain quiet.
- ◇ Barricade the door if materials are available.
- ◇ If possible, assist elderly and disabled persons needing assistance.
- ◇ Do not try to leave the room or building.
- ◇ Stay in your assigned area.
- ◇ Listen for the “all clear” sign given by conference personnel before attempting to leave the room or building.

## **Offsite Meeting Location**

Prior to any meeting or conference, state staff should designate an offsite meeting location. This offsite meeting location should be publicized in the program of all state events.

- ◇ Chapter advisors should communicate this location to their students, chaperones, and other attendees. Everyone should know where to meet in the event of an emergency situation.

## **Continuity of Leadership**

In the event the State Advisor is unable to perform his/her duties under the guidelines of this plan, the following leadership succession is in place.

Persons are listed in the order of succession with the first person listed being the first in line, the second person listed being second in line, etc.

- ◇ State Program Coordinator A
- ◇ State Program Coordinator B
- ◇ Chairperson of the State Board of Directors
- ◇ Vice-Chairperson of the State Board of Directors

## **Communicating the Plan**

Emergency contacts and the offsite meeting location should be included in the programs of all state events.

## **General Safety Tips**

### *For Advisors:*

- ◇ Before traveling to the meeting, collect parental consent forms and emergency contact forms from students and bring these forms to the event. Keep them at hand by carrying them with you in a binder or folder.
- ◇ Take a digital photo of each student traveling with you to the meeting using your phone or camera. Have the photos readily available with you either on your phone or on a flash drive. In the unlikely event that a student becomes lost, the photos will help conference staff and local authorities to locate him or her.
- ◇ Remind your students of the general safety tips and emergency procedures included in this document.
- ◇ Collect and carry cell phone numbers of all students and chaperones in your group.

### *For Students:*

#### Hotel Safety

- ◇ Read the emergency instructions on the back of your hotel room door. Familiarize yourself with the fire escape route.
- ◇ Count the number of doors between your room and the nearest exit.
- ◇ Do not leave your door open, and always use the dead bolt.
- ◇ Do not open your hotel room door to anyone you do not know. Call the front desk to verify hotel staff, security guards, and others requesting entrance to your room.
- ◇ If you encounter questionable individuals, report them to the front desk.
- ◇ Do not say your room number in public.
- ◇ Do not leave valuables out in the open. Many hotels provide lock boxes for the security of valuable items.
- ◇ Keep your room key with you at all times.

#### General Safety

- ◇ Go for the RED.
  - R=React: Take information around you seriously. Pay attention.
  - E=Evaluate: Judge the level of the threat to your safety or the safety of others.
  - D=Decide: Decide if you need to take immediate action or seek help.
- ◇ Do not wear FCCLA name badges or nametags outside of FCCLA events.
- ◇ Travel in groups.
- ◇ Refrain from visiting with strangers.
- ◇ Make sure your advisor knows where you are at all times.
- ◇ Be aware of what is happening around you.

- ◇ Carry a cell phone. Make sure people closest to you know how to reach you. Make sure you know how to reach other members of your group, including chapter members, chaperones, and your advisor.
- ◇ Report emergencies immediately.
- ◇ Locate emergency exits and fire alarms.