

## **CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN**

### Child Abuse/Sexual Imposition/Child Endangerment

It is mandated in the Commonwealth of Virginia that all suspicions, accusations or known occurrence of these types of actions against children be reported to the local child protection services. All reporters of such situations are protected from civil litigation when such reports are made without malice of intent. It shall be the policy of the Tidewater Council, Boy Scouts of America that all such incidents be reported by the Scout Executive or his designate as outlined below.

In the event you are notified of such an incident or incidents by a parent or volunteer Scouter, posture a listening mode as opposed to an investigatory mode. Obtain as much information as possible including others involved, witnesses, when, where, past situations. Tell the informant that their report will be held in strictest confidence and that you will immediately pass this information on to the Scout Executive who will be in contact.

Notify as immediately as possible: Follow list as outlined above.

The Scout Executive will read the written account to the Council President and Council Commissioner. The written account will be mailed to the Council President, Council Commissioner and Council legal representative.

The Scout Executive will arrange a meeting with the head of the chartering organization at the earliest opportunity. The Scout Executive and the Council President, or their designants will inform the head of the chartering organization of the allegations and ask for their concurrence in suspending registration.

A letter will be drafted by the Scout Executive informing the individual that registration has been suspended. This letter will be personally delivered by the Scout Executive and Council President or their designates.

Child Protection Services will be notified by the Scout Executive and furnished a copy of the written account.

The individual's registration will remain in suspension pending the outcome of Child Protection Services' investigation or, based on the preponderance of information as determined by the Scout Executive, permanently revoked. If permanently revoked, a letter stating such is personally delivered or delivered by certified mail to the individual by the Scout Executive and Council President or their designate. The Director of Registration and Statistics and the National Office will be so notified with appropriate forms completed by the Scout Executive with his signature.

A media statement will be prepared by the Scout Executive BUT NOT RELEASED unless a specific

inquiry is made by media. If such inquiry is made, the statement will be released by the Scout Executive to all media. The Scout Executive will be the sole spokesperson, or his designate in the Scout Executive's absence.

### Crisis Communications Plan

The district/division Key 3 will be briefed by the Scout Executive or his designate at the earliest opportunity, but after the facts are known and specific next steps known.

Parents/guardians or child(ren) involved will be notified in accordance of the advice of the child protection agency.

### Definitions

**Crisis:** Any event or situation which may create an unusual and/or immediate response from the general public, Scouting members, leaders, families, Chartered Partners, Sustaining Members, media, career or support staff, Executive Board members, or others. Such situations may include but are not limited to:

- Fatalities
- Serious Injuries
- Arrests
- Accidents
- Accusations of...
- Substance Abuse
- Misappropriation of Funds

**Communications:** The process by which information is transmitted to appropriate receivers.

**Plan:** The written instrument which outlines specific steps and procedures and sets accountability for performance of such steps and procedures.



### Crisis Communications Plan

Be prepared with as much information as possible as related to who, what, where, when (exact time), how, others involved, witnesses, name of hospital, officer's name/badge number, leader in charge, surrounding circumstances, unit number, age (if youth member), etc. The staff member you speak with will give you your specific next steps as they relate to the incident you report.

In the event of a "serious" (as determined by the Scout Executive or his representative) incident, the following steps will take place:

If a Scout Executive representative is notified of an incident first, he must then inform the Scout Executive.

Scout Executive prepares written account from information provided. Scout Executive calls the Council President, the Council Commissioner, and the Regional Director and reads the written account. The written account is then sent via courier to the Council President, Council Commissioner, and Council Legal representative. The written account is sent via overnight mail or fax to the Regional Director.

In the event of a fatality...Scout Executive locates family clergy or other significant family friend/relative. Scout Executive, Council President or Commissioner and clergy/friend meet at a central location and proceed to the family home to inform family of the fatality.

Scout Executive prepares media release and telephones the Director of the Public Relations Service at the National Office. Specific details of the incident are sent via telegram to the Director of Health and Safety Service at the National Office.

The Scout Executive responds to all media inquiry (Field Director in the Scout Executive's absence).

The "Preliminary Report of Fatal or Serious Accident or Illness No. 19-148" is prepared by the Scout Executive within four days and copies are sent to National, Region, and ESIS.

The Council President appoints an Accident Task Group within one week. This committee is charged with reviewing all facts and information and filing the final report within four weeks.

Be prepared to give a written account as soon as possible using an incident report.