

Dealing with the media in the case of an emergency . . .

How should you deal with media at the site of a university emergency?

It goes without saying, that the safety of the students, faculty, staff and all beings in the area comes first. Regardless of what the media may be asking of you at that moment, if you can aid in the safety of the area, that is your first and only responsibility.

Once key safety issues have been dealt with, the next step is to contact the Director of Public Safety (Ken Chant, 227-2152) and the Office of the President (227-2242).

You are not the official spokesperson for the university. In the case of an emergency where media are on the scene before the Director of Public Safety or the President's designate, this detail can sometimes get lost in the confusion of the situation. If you have media requests prior to the official spokesperson being on the scene, tell the media that the Director of Public Safety and the Office of the President have been informed of the situation and that a spokesperson is en route.

To protect privacy and liability issues, do not provide the media with names, numbers or types of injuries/fatalities/demands or any other specific details of the situation. The official spokesperson will make those announcements.

The best message that you can help to distribute in the time of a university emergency is that of order and control. The university has a well-organized, detailed crisis management plan. It is in the best interest of the entire university community that faculty and staff have read and discussed this plan as it pertains to individual departments.

It is dangerous for any university community to think that there will never be a crisis – accidental or intentional – on its campus. Be prepared to deal with a state of emergency. Read the entire crisis management plan found on the Web at XXX. Be sure your staff members have read the plan and understand any situations special to your area.

If you have any questions about dealing with a university emergency, contact Ken Chant, director of public safety.