

Phone Communication Protocol

Points to consider when contacting parents and families of those affected by the crisis event:

Preparing for the call

- Recognize that this communication needs to be handled with sensitivity, compassion, skill and courage.
- Think about how you would like this information to be communicated to you.
- Before making the call, determine how much information pertaining to the incident is appropriate to be released.
- Take into consideration how you would react to learning of a crisis event involving a family member or someone close to you.
- Get input from your Crisis Management Team before making the call.

One scenario, two different calls –

“Your child has been involved in a serious bus accident. We know that some of the children are injured and still trapped in the bus”

is substantially different than...

“Your child has been involved in a bus accident. We know that paramedics have been dispatched to the accident. The children are being taken to a local hospital and we’ll update you with information as soon as possible.”

Handling the call:

- Designate a person(s) within your crisis management team to make personal phone calls to parents/families using tips discussed above.
- Designate a person(s) to receive incoming calls.
- Be SENSITIVE, but describe what happened in a FACTUAL manner.
- Describe what is being done to stabilize the situation.
- Designate specific times when you will update families with additional information. Promise, and follow through with, additional information as soon as it is available.
- Offer to help with arrangements for parents to travel to the hospital, emergency center or your camp. Make arrangements for someone from your camp to meet the parents at the hospital or emergency center. You may also want to make and pay for lodging arrangements.