

## In an Emergency Tips

During some emergencies, public information officers are called in to help staff the emergency services command post. Their job is to collect, coordinate, and disseminate verified information to the news media.

Reporters, however, don't always station themselves at the command post to await official information. Sometimes they interview bystanders, seek out other administrators for comment, or call others who may have been involved in or affected by the emergency.

### A few things to remember during an emergency:

- **Refer reporters to any pre-designated spokesperson.** If there is a pre-designated person, and this is not you, you should not answer questions from a reporter, but instead make sure he or she is connected with the spokesperson.
- **Concern for people will come first** to emergency personnel and should come first to all those who comment on a particular incident.
- **Don't deny the obvious** by trying to minimize what is a serious disaster or tragedy.
- **Do not speculate or place blame.** A reporter might tell you, "I heard the fire was caused by a car accident with a fuel truck." Don't speculate on what could have started the fire; remind the reporter that he or she will have to obtain that information from the command post.
- **Don't forget that privacy regulations apply** during disasters and other incidents. For example, an accident doesn't give you freedom to discuss actions that might have occurred in the past.