



# Field Incident Communication Protocol

## Context

When serious events happen in the course of Extension activities/events, it is vital that proper communication occur within the CSU Extension chain of command in a timely manner. Serious events/incidents requiring such timely communication can be broken down into the following categories:

- Medical attention is required for a program participant or CSUE employee
- Law enforcement is or may be involved/implicated
- Observation of or actionable information regarding child safety/endangerment
- Political implication – Opinions/statements by employees/volunteers which could result in direct communication to the VPER or CSU president’s office.
- Legal issues are involved - Examples include:
  - program participant threatening to engage or engaging legal counsel
  - Extension staff asked to give legal opinions/statements/testimony/depositions

There are generally two framing assumptions to help determine if information needs to be shared through this rapid communication protocol. 1) An individual’s health/safety is involved. 2) Colorado State University’s reputation is involved.

Regarding the redundant nature of the accompanying communication graphic, it is important to insure that key individuals in Extension Administration are contacted even if a key person might be on annual or sick leave, traveling, or otherwise not in communication for an extended period of time.

## Procedure

**If e-mail communication is used to notify key administrators of an incident that involves law enforcement or potential legal action, always cc Jason Johnson [Jason.johnson@colostate.edu](mailto:Jason.johnson@colostate.edu) , CSU Legal Counsel to insure attorney/client confidentiality of information that otherwise would be discoverable/public information.**

**It is better to contact numerous people than to leave a key person out of such communication.**

Generally speaking, when an incident occurs it needs to be reported to:

- 1) Appropriate Regional Director – CJ Mucklow, Bill Nobles, JoAnn Powell and,
- 2) Director of Operations/Human Resources – Judy Barth and,
- 3) Director of Outreach and Engagement – Joanne Littlefield and,
- 4) Director of Extension – Lou Swanson.
- 5) And, if 4-H is involved, Director of 4-H – Jeff Goodwin.

Related to incident/issue management and communication, be aware *that covering up an issue or incident is the worst thing you can do as an Extension employee/volunteer*. Actions involving “cover-ups” of serious incidents could result in dismissal and/or loss of CSU legal representation normally provided to an employee or volunteer.