

GUIDELINES FOR YOUTH EXCHANGE EMERGENCIES

Rotary International District 5000

Although they are rare, unfortunate emergency situations do occasionally arise during Youth Exchange activities. Preparation for any possibility is an essential part of Youth Exchange program. How the exchangee's family and the media perceive that the emergency was handled will have a direct impact on the program. The following guidelines outline how to prepare in advance for a possible emergency, the individuals to contact should an emergency occur, and the steps to follow during an emergency.

Each Rotary club hosting a Youth Exchange student should have a small committee to help share the work in the event of tragedy. Suggested committee members are the host parents, the club Youth Exchange committee chairperson, the Rotarian counselor and the club president.

Tips for emergency preparedness

- The Rotarian counselor should keep the student's passport and airline ticket readily available at all times. Store these items in a safe place so that they can be accessed 24 hours a day if necessary.
- The district chairperson should have copies of the airline ticket and passport should the student be traveling or in case the student's documents are not accessible through the Rotarian counselor
- The district Youth Exchange officer should obtain consent form the student's parents or legal guardians to reissue a student's passport in the case it is lost, stolen or inaccessible at time of departure.
- The district Youth Exchange chairperson should share with the sponsoring Youth Exchange Officer the student's itinerary and know who will meet the student at the airport upon arrival.
- The sponsoring club should outline who (e.g., club, district, student's parents, a combination of sources) will pay for the student to return to finish the exchange after being evacuated in the case of political or civil unrest.
- The Rotarian counselor and current host family should know details regarding all of the exchangee's travel plans and should ascertain that these travel plans have been approved by the natural parent/legal guardians of the exchangee, especially if the exchangee is traveling to another city or country during the exchange.

- The exchangee's parents should issue a written authorization letter (or powers of attorney) naming the host Rotarian counselor, host families, and another Rotarian of the host/receiving club (preferable the host club president), any of whom is to act for the parent in the event of injury, death or other emergency. This is very important because most government departments and local authorities require it. Some districts have the parent/legal guardians sign a number of parental consent forms separate from the application form to ensure that each host family and Rotarian counselor has a copy of the form. This is page [5] in the student's application.

When a tragic event occurs, things need to be done quickly. Tasks are assigned to the various members of the club district emergency committee. The following people need to be informed immediately:

- Parents/legal guardians. (In case of death, obtain clear instruction concerning burial, cremation or return of body. Also ask about memorial service. Consideration must be given to the religion of the deceased.)

- **IMPORTANT** – The sponsoring district representative will contact the student's family. This is due to possible language or interpretative limitations.

- Host family, Rotarian counselor, district Youth Exchange chairperson, and SCANEX. In case of emergency the following people should be contacted in this order whenever possible:

- The student should contact host family.

- Host family should contact host club Rotarian counselor.

- Host club Rotarian counselor or President will contact District Youth Exchange Chair.

- District Youth Exchange Chair will contact hosting District Governor and sponsoring club or district Youth Exchange chair

- Hosting District Governor will contact sponsoring District Governor.

- **IMPORTANT** – The sponsoring district representative will contact the student's family. This is due to possible language or interpretative limitations.

- Host district governor and governor of the sponsoring district.

- The host district Youth Exchange chair will contact the host District Governor.

- The host District Governor will contact the sponsoring District Governor.

- Host Rotary club, for assistance and guidance. (If accident occurs away from the host area, you may want to contact a local Rotary club for assistance and guidance.)

- The host district Youth Exchange Chair will contact the sponsoring district Youth Exchange chair.

- The sponsoring district Youth Exchange chair is responsible for contacting the sponsoring Club.

- Insurance company.

- The host district Youth Exchange chair will contact the insurance company.

- Embassy Officer to obtain his/her advice.

- The host district Youth Exchange chair is responsible for contacting the Embassy Officer for advice.