

Handling Telephone Calls from Reporters

- Take a written message (don't transfer to voicemail without taking message)
- Get reporter's name, media outlet, direct phone #, and deadline
- Ask for topic of story
- Explain that a church spokesperson will return call
- Don't answer questions yourself
- Be polite, but firm
- Keep a log or written record of media calls

"Hold Response"

If a representative of the media – newspaper, TV station, Radio station, magazine – calls or approaches an employee or volunteer and seeks comments or asks questions about an incident of suspected child abuse or suspected vulnerable adult abuse, the employee or volunteer should not provide any comments or answer any questions about the incident. Instead, the employee or volunteer should get the media representative's name, business title, phone number and e-mail address and respectfully tell him/her that the Director of Communications Ministry will contact him/her as soon as possible. The following response to the media representative should be used:

"The Susquehanna Conference's Director of Communications Ministry can best respond to your inquiry regarding this matter. If you give me your name, business title, phone number and email address, I will ask the Director of Communications Ministry to contact you as soon as possible."

Handling Reports On-site

- Refer questions to pastor, conference communicator or district superintendent.
- Again, be polite but firm.
- Do not communicate in any way your personal opinion.
- Don't make any attempt to speak "off the record."
- Don't ever respond with "no comment."

Handling Casual Conversations or Question about a Crisis

- Don't speculate, repeat unconfirmed information or express personal opinions
- Don't feel that you are obligated to answer questions
- Do respond with a brief, positive, general statement