

# **BVDA Communication Protocol for Volunteers overseas in Summer 2012**

## **Rationale:**

The BVDA Communication Protocol has been put in place in order to ensure that, in the event of a major incident, all concerned parties know the most up-to-date information in the most appropriate order, as quickly as possible. This includes BVDA volunteers and their families, the emergency services, if appropriate, BVDA Trustees, partner CBOs, British Embassies (or other consular service) and the University of Bristol. It is important that the correct information goes to the relevant people without confusion or misunderstanding.

## **Protocol:**

In the event of a major incident the project co-ordinator (or another project volunteer) should take the following steps:

**Inform the emergency services** (if necessary). The CBO that you are working with will have a procedure for doing this.



**Inform the CBO** (if not done previously)



**Inform the Primary Trustee Contact.** If you cannot make contact leave a voicemail with **your name, contact number** and **who you are proposing to phone next**, then contact the Secondary Trustee Contact. If the Secondary Trustee Contact is not available leave a voicemail as before and try the Committee Contact (Orla Swindells). The trustees will be in contact with your parents as soon as possible when appropriate.



**Contact the British Embassy (or other relevant embassy or consular service).** Inform them of what has occurred and ask for advice. Inform them that the Trustees will be phoning your parents, but do give them the Trustees' contact details.



**Contact with Police** (if appropriate). Check terms of insurance – some require notification within 24hours.

Please make your parents aware of this document (on the BVDA website) so that they are aware of our communication procedures.

## Important Information:

### When calling the UK please have available the following information:

- Name of who is calling, and name of individual(s) involved in the incident
- Location and contact details of those calling – including best number to receive calls over the next 24-36 hours
- Brief factual outline of the event.
- What your proposed course of action is going to be with regards to the individual involved in the incident, and what discussions with the CBO have identified
- Information about any others whom you have or are proposing to contact.

### When you contact the Trustees they will:

- Arrange a conference call between themselves – if urgent asap or the greatest number of Trustees available within a 2 hour timeframe – to agree on a way forward involving BVDA President (Past and Current, if possible)
- Contact the parents / next of kin and then put parents in contact with you asap if appropriate
- Contact the University to discuss protocol any insurance issues, any additional medical or other support that might be available, communicating with external press agencies.
- Issue a statement dependent on the above for responding to general enquiries

### Contacting other project groups

- Unless you are seeking specific advice, please do not contact other project groups to avoid the risk of different versions of the incident getting communicated.
- If you do need to contact other project groups, please ask them not to communicate with people outside of their group about the incident unless it is critical to the wellbeing of the individual(s) involved in the incident. If you have communicated with others please inform the Trustees.

### Contact with External press agencies

- It is critical that external enquiries are carefully routed through a single point of contact to avoid confusion and to avoid the difficult situation of someone finding out about an incident in the wrong order, e.g. from a press enquiry.
- If approached by an outside agency, or someone you suspect belongs to an outside agency, please adopt a common line, for example:

*“The relevant individuals within the Charity have been informed, and processes are under way to address the incident. You are following a strict communications protocol to ensure that those who need to know, know the information in the right order – as they surely can appreciate. All questions should be directed to the Charity – and give the Trustees primary and secondary contact numbers. You have no further comment to make.”* **Do not be drawn into additional questioning.**

### Re-imburement of phone costs

Emergency communication costs are likely to either be met by the Insurers or by the Charity. If you can keep receipts or a record of these that is helpful, but the trustees will be understanding if this is not possible given the difficult circumstances that you might find yourselves in.

If you have any questions about this process, Jenny Grunwald from the Trustee board is happy to discuss these with you. Contact Jenny on [jenny.grunwald@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jenny.grunwald@yahoo.co.uk) or 07740780098.