

**Template for
Prescribed, Immediate Response to Media Inquires**

Use this template if the media is "at your door" and you need time to assemble the facts for the initial press release statement. Getting the facts is a priority. It is important that your organization not give in to pressure to confirm or release information before you have confirmation from your scientists, emergency operations center, etc. The following are responses which give you the necessary time to collect the facts. Use "Template for Press Statement" for providing an initial press release statement after the facts are gathered.

NOTE: Be sure you are first authorized to give out the following information.

Date: _____ **Time:** _____ **Approved by:** _____

Prescribed Responses:

If on phone to media:

- ❖ "We've just learned about the situation and are trying to get more complete information now. How can I reach you when I have more information?"
- ❖ "All our efforts are directed at bringing the situation under control, so I'm not going to speculate about the cause of the incident." How can I reach you when I have more information?"
- ❖ "I'm not the authority on this subject. Let me have (name) call you right back."
- ❖ "We're preparing a statement on that now. Can I fax it to you in about two hours?"
- ❖ "You may check our web site for background information and I will fax/e-mail you with the time of our next update."

If in person at incident site or in front of press meeting:

This is an evolving emergency and I know that, just like we do, you want as much information as possible right now. While we work to get your questions answered as quickly as possible, I want to tell you what we can confirm right now:

At approximately (time) , a (brief description of what happened).

At this point, we do not know the number of (persons ill, persons exposed, injuries, deaths, etc.) .

We have a (system, plan, procedure, operation) in place for just such an emergency and we are being assisted by (police, FBI, EOC) as part of that plan.

The situation is (under) (not yet under) control and we are working with (local, State, Federal) authorities to (contain this situation, determine how this happened, determine what actions may be needed by individuals and the community to prevent this from happening again).

We will continue to gather information and release it to you as soon as possible. I will be back to you within (amount of time, 2 hours or less) to give you an update. As soon as we have more confirmed information, it will be provided.

We ask for your patience as we respond to this emergency.

Source: CDC Public Health Training Network satellite and web broadcast CDC Responds: Risk Communication and Bioterrorism December 6, 2001, Barbara Reynolds, CDC Crisis Communication Plan, Draft 1999.