

In the first few minutes or hours following an incident that poses a threatening outcome for a member, the association representative should be prepared to take action.

The first stage of an incident is often filled with trauma that hinders clear thinking. Therefore, it is vital that members be warned against taking precipitous and potentially unwise actions.

Warn Members:

Not to make spontaneous responses to charges brought against them.

Not to appear at any accusatory hearing (including a meeting with an administrator) unless accompanied by an association representative.

Not to attempt to defend themselves alone.

Not to accept “an opportunity to resign.”

Not to agree to any proposals, whether orally or in writing.

Not to submit any written statement to administrators or school directors.

Not to refuse to carry out an order of an administrator, even though doing so would violate the contract (the field rep will advise the member concerning exceptions to this rule).

Advise Affected Members:

To write down immediately everything that happened — a narrative including time, date, location, names of persons involved, witnesses and actual words spoken.

To get advice early from association representatives — not to “wait and see what happens.”

To keep copies of all correspondence and papers relating to the situation.

NOTE: Many a career has been damaged as the result of a member's failure to pay early heed to one of these cautions.