

Georgia Fruit & Vegetable

Growers Association

FOOD SAFETY CRISIS MEDIA GUIDELINES

If the media calls you regarding a food safety crisis, here are the guidelines suggested by the Georgia Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association (GFVGA):

1. Stay Calm

When a crisis occurs, reporters are assigned the story at the last minute and are trying to learn as much as they can under a very tight deadline. Even though they are under a lot of pressure and demand quick information from you, **PLEASE REMAIN CALM**. Remember that you do not have to match their emotional state. Simply **remain respectful** and **gather their information** in a manner **free from agitation, excitement or passion**.

2. Gather the Facts

Please take notes of what the reporter has communicated to you regarding the crisis. He or she may ask some preliminary questions about the crisis and want immediate reaction from you. Please remember that **everything you say to a reporter should be treated as "on the record"** so please only gather their information and **DO NOT RESPOND ON THE SPOT** to their questions. Tell them you or someone else will **get back to them as soon as possible** because you have to learn more about what happened. After receiving the inquiry, please **immediately report it to your supervisor and the GFVGA**.

3. Contact GFVGA

Please **CONTACT THE GFVGA IMMEDIATELY** after receiving a media inquiry. Utilize your crisis contact cards for updated information. Please share the following information with GFVGA:

1. Name of reporter
2. Name of media outlet
3. Reporter's contact info (phone numbers, e-mail)
4. Deadline for story
5. Reporter's questions

If you have a product food safety crisis and/or media inquiry, please contact one of the following:

Georgia Fruit & Vegetable

Growers Association

**1-877-99GFVGA
(43842)**

Charles Hall, Executive Director / 706-255-5655

Beth Bland, Food Safety Director / 706-881-0092 or 706-540-2886

Rebecca Smith, Member Services Director / 706-302-0215

4. Monitor the Situation

IMMEDIATELY SHARE NEW INFORMATION you learn regarding the crisis and media inquiries **with the GFVGA**. GFVGA is the initial contact and will communicate with each specific commodity group in the produce industry. The open flow of communication between your organization and the GFVGA is critical during a time of crisis. We want to present a **united and effective voice** to the media during a crisis. It is important for everyone in your organization to follow these crisis guidelines because it helps our industry communicate our key messages effectively with the media and the public at large.