



Best Management Practice Catalog

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) worked with five institutions of higher education and developed case studies on campus-based homeland security issues for institutions of higher education. The case studies are included in the EPA's *Best Management Practice Catalog*. The EPA worked with Cornell University, Harvard University, the University of New Hampshire, the University of North Carolina, and Vanderbilt University to highlight best practices in the areas of prevention-mitigation, preparedness, response, and communication.

<http://www.epa.gov/NE/assistance/univ/bmpcatalog.html>

HELPFUL HINTS

FOR SCHOOL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Vol. 2, Issue 6, 2007

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANNING FOR INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Colleges and universities are typically safe and secure environments in which young adults, faculty, and staff can learn, develop, and live. However, the environment on campuses is sometimes threatened by both natural and man-made events. Comprehensive emergency management planning that focuses on all such hazards helps the university community prevent and mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from an incident and helps to reduce chaos and the psychological impact of an incident on students, staff, and the community. This issue of *Helpful Hints* discusses challenges encountered by campus administrators when engaging in emergency management planning and provides strategies for developing campuswide emergency management plans.

Challenges to Developing Campus Emergency Management Plans

Higher education institutions (IHEs) encounter a variety of challenges in developing emergency plans. Mark

Fischer, assistant director for Program Operations of Homeland Security Programs at West Virginia University, explains: "There is no standardization across campuses, governance structures are different, curricula are diverse, constituencies represent a broad spectrum, and geographical settings vary." Other challenges include:

1. *Physical design of the campus*— Many schools give open access to its campus and numerous campus buildings. In addition, campus buildings may be located in multiple jurisdictions.



This issue of *Helpful Hints* is not prescriptive of best practices for every higher education campus; rather, it contains suggestions to consider in a campus's emergency management efforts.

2. *Autonomy of college students, faculty, and academic and service departments—*

Higher education campuses intentionally foster autonomy for both students and faculty. In addition, campus facilities themselves often function autonomously. For example, each college, division, or department may be housed in a different building and have a different decision-making structure. This lack of standardization often is not conducive to campus emergency planning.

3. *Mobility of the campus community—*The student population, and to some extent the faculty, are very mobile and change regularly. This poses challenges to tracking people within the community and to monitoring access to the campus. Unlike secondary schools, higher education institutions have few mechanisms in place to monitor students' daily attendance, disciplinary infractions and consequences, and academic performance.

4. *General lack of awareness about the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)—*Fischer believes that often "IHE administrators are not aware of the functions, purview, and resources of state, regional, and local departments of homeland security or state and



local emergency management agencies." IHE administrators may believe that DHS focuses only on terrorism issues and may be unaware that DHS focuses on all hazards and supports all emergency management efforts, including ensuring that IHEs receive both information and resources.

5. *Contributions to community infrastructure—*In some jurisdictions the IHE contributes to a swell in the populace that is often not counted toward the numbers used to allocate state funds for first-responder resources.

6. *Competing priorities and limited resources—*Like all education institutions, IHEs have competing priorities and may not have the resources needed to create and maintain an all-hazards campus security force.

7. *Lack of understanding about or implementation of the Incident Command System—*Major Jay Gruber of the Department of Public Safety at the University of Maryland has found that "Many higher education campuses, and often campus law

enforcement, do not understand or use the Incident Command System (ICS)."

The following strategies may be helpful in designing and refining emergency management plans for a college campus.

Develop an Integrated Campus Emergency Management Plan With Campus Departments, First Responders, and Other Agencies and Organizations

A comprehensive, or integrated, emergency management plan developed and implemented in conjunction with local and state emergency management agencies, first responders, and campus personnel helps to ensure that resources are shared, jurisdictional issues are resolved, training is conducted, stakeholders are aware of the emergency procedures, communication notification systems are in place, and all campus departments know their roles in implementing the plan. A campus emergency management plan could become a complex document, and, thus, coordination with first responders and other agencies and organizations (e.g., mental health, public health, transportation, media, and utility companies) is important. Coordination helps to ensure a comprehensive response, obtain and activate additional resources, and promote clear communication among responders, the campus community, and surrounding communities.

Fischer believes that this coordination is integral to a rapid and effective response: “There are too many things that are interrelated — no one should plan in a vacuum.”

Plans should be tailored to the individual characteristics of each campus and may include, but not be limited to, the number of buildings; the number of students, faculty, and staff; geographic location (urban, rural, suburban); proximity to highways, chemical plants, nuclear facilities, and commercial areas; administrative resources such as campus police; student health clinics; and campus transportation.

Major Gruber suggests that a collaborative team approach should include representatives from the following organizations: university administration and department heads (e.g., food service, public affairs, resident life, student services, health center, and transportation), student groups, local and/or state law enforcement, fire safety, emergency medical system, public health, mental health, businesses, and community organizations (e.g., institutions of faith). Together these groups can share in key decisions, provide a cohesive message about emergency management priorities and actions, mobilize a response, and develop procedures.

Procedures outlined in the plan should align with the National

Information Management System (NIMS) that incorporates the principles of both ICS and unified command systems. ICS integrates resources among all partners, establishes equipment and communication standards, and creates a common incident management organization. When responders from multiple jurisdictions respond to an incident on campus, a unified commander may be designated to coordinate an effective response by creating an integrated response team.

Use the Four Phases of Emergency Planning as a Framework for Developing a Campus Emergency Plan

The four phases of emergency management help to frame plans and are a good foundation for developing, implementing, practicing, and evaluating plans with all partners. All four phases are interconnected, and, thus, proactive efforts in each phase impact the quality of outcomes of the other three phases. The



four phases of emergency management are:

Prevention-mitigation: This phase is designed to assess and address the safety, security, and integrity of a campus environment, including all buildings, students, faculty, and staff. *Prevention* is taking action to decrease the likelihood that any hazard will occur. *Mitigation* is taking action to eliminate or reduce risks, damages, injuries, or deaths that may occur during an emergency.

Preparedness: This phase readies campuses and all departments by developing policies and protocols for a rapid and coordinated response. These include incident command systems, training, planning, and coordinating exercises for potential incidents.

Response: This phase outlines the actions to be taken to effectively contain and resolve an incident that may impact a campus.

Recovery: This phase includes procedures and services that assist a campus community in the healing process and focuses on restoring the education, residential, administrative, and cultural operations of a campus.

When planning and developing activities under the four phases, both Gruber and Fischer suggest asking faculty and students to be part of the assessment teams or review the plans.

Emergency Management Phase	Illustrative Activities for Each Phase of Emergency Planning
Prevention-Mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Establish communication procedures for alerting students, faculty, staff, community members, and the media about an incident. ■ Enforce policies related to building access and student accountability. ■ Conduct comprehensive vulnerability assessments—of the campus grounds, staff capability, and community resources (e.g., fire, police, emergency management services, hospitals) — to identify, analyze, and profile hazards, and identify gaps in campus resources that are needed.
Preparedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Identify gaps in the current campus emergency management plan(s) using data from vulnerability assessments. ■ Develop or update processes and procedures to ensure the safety of the campus community. ■ Create and strengthen relationships with local community partners, including law enforcement, fire, safety, local government, public and mental health agencies, and the media. ■ Develop a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) for all operational functions (e.g., payroll, classes, stipends, transportation, food service). ■ Establish an ICS to identify and delegate roles and responsibilities, including levels of authority. ■ Implement functional training exercises with first responders. ■ Coordinate campus emergency management plans with those of state and local agencies to avoid unnecessary duplication.
Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Establish an incident commander to manage and resolve incidents. ■ Deploy resources from the campus or the partners. ■ Activate the communication, accountability, and decision-making procedures outlined in the campus emergency management plan. ■ Document all actions, decisions, and events (e.g., what happened, what worked, and what did not work). ■ Ensure that a process is in place for complying with <i>Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)</i> and the <i>Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)</i> for revealing information about a student or staff member. ■ Hold debriefing meetings with campus administrators, security, first responders, and representatives from the various departments and student body. ■ Review after-action reports to determine recovery activities and necessary revisions to the emergency management plan based on lessons learned.

Emergency Management Phase	Illustrative Activities for Each Phase of Emergency Planning
Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Outline systems and procedures for education and other campus services to resume after an incident. ■ Provide short- and long-term mental health services on and off campus or offer referral services for external providers as needed. ■ Develop letter or e-mail templates for students, staff, and families to provide information when an incident occurs. ■ Predetermine strategies for accepting donations following an incident. ■ Establish a policy for permanent memorials. ■ Establish a process for screening and registering volunteers.

Practice the Plan and Conduct Trainings With First Responders and the Campus Community

Major Gruber believes that campus emergency management plans should be viewed as living documents and should be continuously tested and updated. One strategy for doing this is through conducting tabletop exercises. Tabletop exercises present participants with an emergency scenario to increase their awareness and understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders who will be involved in an incident. They are designed to be conducted in a stress-free environment, prompt a productive discussion about existing campus emergency management plans, and resolve challenges and issues.

Functional exercises test one or more functions of the campus emergency management plan during a timed, interactive, simulated event. Controllers provide participants

updates about the scenario via telephones, radios, or Web sites and they must respond appropriately to the incidents that arise. Independent evaluators candidly critique the exercise and the team’s performance.

Tabletop exercises and functional drills should be based on scenarios and potential incidents that may occur on the campus or in surrounding communities. For example, the University of Maryland planned and conducted a full-scale exercise that helped to establish and retain partnerships among first responders, community organizations, the university administration, and students, who role-played as victims.

Both types of exercises are an excellent way to: (a) evaluate a plan’s strength; (b) test a team’s capabilities; (c) determine if a campus or its partners have proper equipment (e.g., suits to clean up hazardous chemical spills, protective vests, and interoperable

communication devices); (d) increase opportunities to plan and communicate with all first responders and other partners; and (e) identify any gaps or weaknesses in a plan.

Trainings should be conducted at least annually. For a college campus, different trainings may be conducted for the various constituencies. For example, Major Gruber suggests that all campus units—public affairs, administration, information technology, health center, food services, resident life, law enforcement, student services, and facilities management—attend the same training. During the training each unit is provided a template to develop an emergency management plan that can be mobilized for an emergency that impacts the campus for at least 48 hours and up to 72 hours. First responders should be invited to the trainings to encourage communication and relationship building.

Develop a Plan to Disseminate Emergency Management Procedures to Staff, Faculty, and Students

A campus communication or public affairs department is an essential partner for disseminating information about emergency procedures to the campus community. The public information officer (PIO) and marketing director can create brandings (e.g., logos, colors, designs) for the emergency management plan and develop a dissemination strategy for all the various constituencies.

Since the student population on a campus is very mobile and changes each quarter or semester, student services and residential life also play a significant role in communicating emergency procedures to students. All students should receive information about emergency procedures, alert systems, and resources during orientation, in residence hall meetings, and through campus meetings. Fischer believes that students coming to college are better prepared for



response procedures such as lockdowns, shelter-in-place, and evacuations because they practice or experience these activities in elementary and secondary schools. He does caution that many students may need to be reoriented to the campus terminology.

Investigate the Use of Campus Notification Systems

Events of the last 10 years have shown that communication and notification systems can be critical to keeping information flowing continually. It also has become clear that accessing information cannot be limited to one means, but rather multiple modes of contact are needed—cell phones, Web announcements, e-mail, automated message lines, radio and TV emergency alert systems, and sirens. Ideally, a campus notification system will have an operating platform that works across multiple systems.

Commercially available systems can send simultaneous alerts to individuals in a matter of minutes through landline phones, cellular phones, text messaging, and e-mail. Relying on one modality will result in failure to reach all of the intended population. For example, if students are in class, most will turn off their cell phones; therefore there must be some alternate system in place to notify students and faculty while classes are in session. Similarly, during the Sept. 11, 2001,

terrorist attacks, cell phone systems were overloaded and calls could not be transmitted. Additionally, disseminating information via text-messaging and cell phones is only as useful as the contact information people provide. Thus, students, faculty, staff, and families must be continually reminded to update emergency contact information.

There are several guidelines for campus alert systems, regardless of the communication modes used:

- There should be multiple modes of communication alerts (i.e., sirens, e-mails, cell phones, radio, TV, automated messaging); one or two may be insufficient to reach all intended populations.
- The systems must be tested at least every three months, and data should be collected about the time taken to alert the intended populations.
- All systems must be interoperable—that is, two or more of the communications systems or modes used must have the capability to work with the other systems without any additional effort on the part of users.

Collect and Disseminate Public Information and Guardian Notification Procedures

The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act, codified at 20

USC 1092 (f) as a part of the *Higher Education Act of 1965*, requires all campuses to report timely information about campus crime and security policies. All public and private institutions of postsecondary education participating in federal student aid programs are subject to the law.

Seven categories of crime must be reported: (1) criminal homicide (i.e., murder, non-negligent and negligent manslaughter); (2) sex offenses (both forcible and non-forcible); (3) robbery; (4) aggravated assault; (5) burglary; (6) motor vehicle theft; and (7) arson. Campuses also are required to report liquor and drug law violations, as well as illegal weapons possession, if the incidents result in either an arrest or disciplinary referral. To gather data for the *Clery Act*, campus security departments should work with local enforcement agencies and other campus entities (e.g., resident life,

health center, victims advocate, visitor services, student affairs, and recreation services). Major Gruber suggests that on a large campus, the campus security should work with the information technology department to establish a database to maintain, sort, analyze, and report the data; dedicate one person to ensure compliance with the act; and ensure that the report is available to all current students and staff.

In addition to providing general information about campus safety, institutions of higher education should develop systems to alert parents and families of current issues and events. As the Virginia Tech incident demonstrated, students and families need to communicate with each other during a major event. The campus emergency management plan should include a process for maintaining and updating contact information for each student with the names of

persons to be notified if a parent or guardian cannot be reached.

Conclusion

All campuses, public and private, regardless of size, location, and curricula, should establish and implement emergency management plans. The plans should promote cooperation and collaboration among campus administrators, campus departments, first responders, and other community-based organizations. Plans should be tailored to each campus, be framed around the four phases of emergency management, and consider all possible hazards or incidents that can occur on a campus. A well-developed plan that is practiced and disseminated to faculty, staff, students, and families will help to ensure the safety of a campus community and strengthen all safety operations.

Major Requirements of the *Clery Act*

- Publish an annual report disclosing campus security policies and three years worth of selected crime statistics.
- Make timely warnings to the campus community about crimes that pose an ongoing threat to students and employees.
- Maintain a public crime log (if the institution has a police or security department).
- Include the nature, date, time, and general location of each crime as well as its disposition if known; incidents are to be included within two business days but certain limited information may be withheld to protect victim confidentiality, ensure the integrity of ongoing investigations, or to keep a suspect from fleeing.
- Assure victims of campus sexual assaults certain basic rights, such as confidentiality.

RESOURCES

Building a Disaster-Resistant University

To help minimize injury, damage, monetary loss, and disruption of services, postsecondary institutions should put in place a comprehensive set of pre-disaster planning and mitigation actions. FEMA presents these actions alongside lessons learned by six universities and colleges that have been working to become more disaster-resistant.

<http://www.fema.gov/institution/dru.shtm>

Campus Public Safety: Weapons of Mass Destruction Terrorism Protective Measures

The Office for Domestic Preparedness at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security produced this guide with resources for the more than 4,000 Title IV institutions of postsecondary education. The guide provides affirmative steps to prevent, deter, or effectively respond to weapons of mass destruction or terrorist attacks.

<http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/emergencyplan/campusafe.html>

West Virginia University VMC/ Homeland Security Programs

The West Virginia University VMC/ Homeland Security Programs has a series of courses to support higher education emergency management efforts. Additional information, resources, and tools are also available.

<http://www.vmc.wvu.edu/index.htm>

Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse and Violence Prevention

The Center's mission is to assist the U.S. Department of Education in serving institutes of higher education in developing and implementing policies and programs that will foster students' academic and social development and promote campus and community safety by preventing the harmful effects of alcohol and other drug use and violence among college students. The Center is a primary provider of services in alcohol and other drug abuse and violence prevention in higher education founded upon state-of-the-art knowledge and research-based strategies.

<http://www.higheredcenter.org/>



U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools (OSDFS) would like to thank Mark Fischer, assistant director for Program Operations of Homeland Security Programs at West Virginia University, and Major Jay Gruber, Department of Public Safety at the University of Maryland, for their assistance in preparing this publication.

The ERCM TA Center was established in October 2004 by the U.S. Department of Education's OSDFS. The center supports schools and school districts in developing and implementing comprehensive emergency and crisis response plans by providing technical assistance via trainings, publications, and individualized responses to requests. For information about the Emergency Response and Crisis Management grant program, contact Tara Hill (tara.hill@ed.gov), Michelle Sinkgraven (michelle.sinkgraven@ed.gov) or Sara Strizzi (sara.strizzi@ed.gov).

This publication was funded by the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools at the U.S. Department of Education under contract number GS23F8062H with Caliber Associates, Inc. The contracting officer's representative was Tara Hill. The content of this publication does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Education, nor does the mention of trade names, commercial products or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. government. This publication also contains hyperlinks and URLs for information created and maintained by private organizations. This information is provided for the reader's convenience. The U.S. Department of Education is not responsible for controlling or guaranteeing the accuracy, relevance, timeliness or completeness of this outside information. Further, the inclusion of information or a hyperlink or URL does not reflect the importance of the organization, nor is it intended to endorse any views expressed, or products or services offered. All hyperlinks and URLs were accessed on Dec. 18, 2007.