

7.14 Emergency Management

Message from the Office of Emergency Management

Western Carolina University is committed to creating and maintaining a culture of safety. The institution has many strategies in place to promote a safe environment and respond to emergencies. Unfortunately we never know when an emergency might happen. They come in the form of severe weather, accidents, and terrorist attacks. Planning your response now will help you remain calm, think clearly, and react appropriately to any disaster.

Faculty and staff should visit the [Office of Emergency Management](#) and Office of Safety and Risk Management's web sites to reference detailed safety and preparedness information. Additionally, a [checklist](#) has been provided to assess your preparedness for an emergency.

To Report Emergency

In the event of an emergency on campus you can reach the University Police Department 24 hours a day 365 days a week by dialing:

Xtn-8911 from a campus phone

227-8911 from your cell phone

**Dialing 911 from your cell phone will take your call to Jackson County 911.*

To reach the University Police Department for non-emergencies dial 227-7301

Emergency Notification and Communication

In an emergency, Western Carolina University uses multiple methods of communication and notification to inform the campus community and general public about the nature of the emergency, what is being done and what you should do.

- CatTracker

CatTracker is a system that allows students, faculty, staff, and parents to receive a message in case of emergency. Messages can be sent to email, cell phone or home phone. Please register for CatTracker today: <http://www.wcu-campus.info/go/maillinglist/1400/>

- Siren System

A siren sound alert means there is an emergency on campus, a potentially dangerous condition, or an impending threat (i.e. severe weather, hazardous materials spill, or a person with a gun). When the siren sounds, everyone on the WCU campus should take shelter indoors immediately. Close all windows and doors, if possible, and remain sheltered until an "all clear" is given.

- Campus Email

This system will send an email to the entire campus community – every student, faculty or staff member through their WCU mailbox.

- Emergency Information Web Page

In the event of an emergency, this page will provide the most current information on the nature of the emergency and the university's response to the situation.

<http://www.wcu.edu/9885.asp>

- WWCU-FM (90.5 FM)

This channel will broadcast updated information during an emergency.

Training

The Office of Emergency Management, the University Police Department, and the Office of Risk Management and Safety are available to provide preparedness, safety and security training on an individual or group level. Please contact the Office of Emergency Management at 227-7301 to discuss available training programs.

Response Actions to Specific Emergencies

In the event of an emergency on campus, faculty members are often looked to for leadership and direction by their students. Faculty members should remain calm, follow the instructions provided by public safety personnel, and assist in directing students. Faculty should also participate in any emergency planning within their building or department. Faculty members are expected to observe University policies and procedures in the event of a disaster or crisis situation on campus. Monitoring email, the emergency information website, and WWCU for information and direction will be critical during a crisis situation.

Students in Crisis

Working with college students on a day-to-day basis provides many rewarding experiences as well as unexpected challenges. Some of those unexpected challenges arise because many of our students are struggling with issues in their personal lives that may have the potential to impact our campus community. It's with those students in mind that the [Division of Student Affairs](#) provides, "[Helping Students](#)" - *A guide for Assisting Students in Need*. Getting students the help they need before they're in crisis is a goal we should always be working towards. Please take a few moments to review the guide, developed specifically for faculty and staff, to familiarize you with the many programs and resources available to our students.

In case of a Fire

If your buildings' FIRE alarm is sounding:

- Ask everyone to calmly exit the building
- Do not stop to turn off computers; just close the door and leave.

If you smell smoke remember:

- Stay close to the floor
- Do not open doors that feel hot
- Do not use the elevator only the stairs
- If all possible exits are unsafe open the windows
 - Hang something out of the window to catch the attention of firemen
- Always remain calm. This could save your life!
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If you have a FIRE in your area or a lab:

- Get everyone out
- Close the door as you leave
- Activate the fire alarm located near the area/lab (if it is not already sounding an alarm) and exit through the nearest door

Fire extinguishers are only to fight your way out of a fire or put out a very small fire.

DON'T BE A HERO! PLEASE, NEVER PUT YOURSELF IN DANGER!

Electrical Failure

- In buildings equipped with emergency generators, the emergency generator will provide limited electricity to crucial areas, inclusive of the fire alarm system and emergency lighting
- Turn off all electrical equipment, including computers. Do not attempt to restart or “power-up” equipment until the power has been restored.
- In the event of an extended, campus-wide, or area wide power outage, instructions and information will be provided through the emergency notification and communication methods as described
- Elevators will not function during a power failure. Use the stairs to evacuate.
- If you are trapped in an elevator, use the emergency phone/intercom. If there is no emergency phone, trigger the elevator’s emergency alarm button.

Medical Emergency/Personal Emergency

All medical emergencies occurring on campus should be reported immediately by calling 8911 from a campus phone or 911 from a cell phone. Medical emergencies include:

- Any life-threatening situation
- Loss of consciousness
- Chest pain
- Seizures
- Head injury
- Allergic reactions with shortness of breath, excessive swelling
- Broken bones
- Ingestion or inhalation of a toxic substance

When contacting emergency personnel remain calm and prepared to provide the following information:

- Location of injured person (i.e. building name, floor, room number etc.)
- The phone number where you are
- Type of injury or problem
- The individual's present condition
- The sequence of events leading to the emergency
- Stay on the phone with the dispatcher until emergency response personnel arrive

Shelter in Place

When there is a threat of criminal violence or an emergency, it may be necessary for you to shelter-in-place. This precaution is to enhance your safety while you remain in your facility. Shelter-in-place means securing your current location by the use of locks, barricades, or means to restrict access to your location. Follow these instructions when notified of an incident that requires you to shelter-in-place:

- When you receive an alert that requires you to shelter-in-place, secure your room by locking the door or barricading access by placing a large desk or other object that restricts access to your location.
- Avoid windows. If possible, ensure that you cannot be seen from any windows that front the hallway. Stay low to the floor. If possible, seek cover in closets or behind large desks.
- Listen to the radio ([WWCU-FM](#)), check for text messages, or monitor [CatTracker](#).
- Stay where you are until the police arrive to evacuate you or you are told it is safe to leave the room.
- If you are outside, take cover until it is safe to enter a facility.
- During an emergency, access to certain areas of campus may be restricted. Do not intentionally go to a part of campus where an emergency is occurring. Be aware that some roads may be closed. Wait until you are notified that it is clear to enter the affected area.
- The University Police Department and other law enforcement agencies will respond to an emergency. Follow any commands that law enforcement officers or university officials may issue.

Severe Weather

Lightning may cause a loss in power or network connections to become unstable. Please advise users to save their work often.

- Tornado

The difference between a tornado watch and warning:

- Tornado Watch - tornadoes and severe thunderstorms are possible.
- Tornado Warning- a tornado has actually been sighted somewhere in the warning area.

When severe weather is threatening, it may be necessary to move individuals away from the windows. At times, it may even be necessary to temporarily close the area/lab and move down to the basement areas of the building. If it is necessary to close the area/lab, follow these procedures:

- Time permitting: ask everyone to calmly exit the classroom
 - Do not stop to turn off computers; just close the door and leave.
1. If time permits, go to the interior hallway on the lowest floor.
 2. If time does not permit, go to the safest area of your classroom or office (an inside wall) furthest away from the doors and windows.
 3. Avoid windows, auditoriums, gymnasiums, or other structures with wide, free-span roofs.
 4. Take shelter underneath a desk or any heavy furniture available.
 5. Assume a curled position to protect your head and eyes.