

Campus Crisis Communications Guidelines & Protocols

Executive Summary

UVU is committed to the safety of its campus community and to responding to emergency or disaster incidents in a safe, effective, and timely manner and in accordance with applicable laws and UVU policies, including those listed below. This guideline outlines the initial steps university leaders should take directly after an emergency or disaster. The chain of authority, roles and responsibilities of university entities, and emergency communication plans and methods are outlined as well.

For more detail on what Marketing & Communications will do during an incident see, Crisis Readiness Plan.

Pre-Incident Communications Readiness

Pre-approved message templates for a variety of scenarios (active threat, shelter-in-place, weather, power outage, campus closure). See Pre-Approved Text Message document. (appendix A)

All communication tools and messaging will be tested annually. The pre-approved messages will be reviewed and updated as needed annually.

Periodic tabletop exercises will be conducted by Emergency Management that will include Marketing and Communications.

Initial Notification of Emergency/Disaster

The following outline includes the initial response and communication protocols for notifying appropriate people and entities of emergency/disaster incidents involving Utah Valley University.

Notification of an emergency/disaster often comes from the UVU Police but may also come from another member of the Triage Team.

How it begins

An emergency, crisis, or disaster begins, and the campus becomes aware of the situation. Often this notification comes through the UVU police department (violence, bomb threat, or other police activity). However, an emergency could manifest in other ways such as a utility failure (water, power), this notification would come by way of facilities, or it could be impending severe weather.

Who gets involved (Triage Team)

There is a small group, the triage team, who are notified early on of a situation/incident or may monitor an impending incident (severe weather).

Members of the Triage Team include the following:

1. Vice President of Administration/Strategic Relations (Val Peterson)
2. Director of Emergency Management/Safety (Robin Ebmeyer)
3. Chief of Police (Jeff Long)
4. Sr. Director of Public Relations (Sharon Turner)
5. Associate Vice President of Facilities Planning (Interim Rick Chappell)

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6. Provost, as needed (Wayne Vaught)

If the UVU Police determine there is a life-safety issue, they may take immediate action, including sending emergency communication to students, faculty, and staff, to address those issues prior to notifying the Vice President of Administration/Strategic Relations. This notification will alert the Triage Team of the incident.

The Vice President of Administration/Strategic Relations, or Police Chief will notify the other members of the Triage Team.

What does the Triage Team do?

The Triage Team, or a portion thereof, will determine the appropriate level of response to manage the response to an incident. If the incident is large enough and obvious there will be a large response that would bypass the Triage Team, such as an earthquake or mass shooting.

The response level will be based on the scope and severity of the situation, injuries, media coverage, ability to maintain business operations, structural integrity of the buildings, resource management, etc.

For small-scale incidents — short-term incidents that can be handled at the scene with no threat to life/safety — the responding Triage Team members may open an Emergency Operations Center (EOC), if needed; or delegate the response to relevant university employees, committees, or teams such as the Cybersecurity Response Team or Campus Facilities and Planning or may determine that no action is needed.

A larger response would prompt the Triage Team to activate an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) which is a larger group that will convene (physically or virtually) and coordinate and respond to the incident.

Activation of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and Policy Group

Who Activates the EOC?

Any member of the Triage Team can activate the EOC.

Who may respond to the EOC?

Representatives of these departments or areas. Their response may be physically, virtually or as needed.

- Facilities
- Police
- Digital Transformation
- Dean of Students
- Finance/Auditing
- Environmental Health
- Risk Management
- Safety Officer

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- People and Culture
- Academic Affairs
- Faculty Senate President
- PACE President
- Purchasing and Procurement
- Assoc. VP of University Marketing & Communications
- Office of General Counsel
- Other support staff as needed

What is an Emergency Operations Center (EOC)?

The EOC is a management philosophy used to coordinate the university's response to an incident. Member composition and size of the group is scalable depending on current and foreseeable needs. An EOC manager will be assigned, and they will determine the appropriate positions/members needed to coordinate an incident based on circumstances.

What happens once the EOC is activated?

Once activated, EOC members will discuss the situation and determine, based on available information, what actions the university should take to manage and minimize an incident for the campus community.

They will develop objectives, then strategies and tactics for how to accomplish the objectives. For example, the objective may be to evacuate campus, the strategies and tactics will guide how, when, where, and who may be involved in completing this objective.

They will work closely with off campus agencies or organizations that may become involved in a response to the situation.

Who makes up the Policy Group?

The President, Provost, Vice Presidents and Legal Counsel and others as determined by the group.

When does the Policy Group activate?

During a larger scale incident that may take days to weeks to manage and coordinate.

What is the purpose of the Policy Group?

The Policy Group makes high level decisions that guide the direction of the response to the incident. This could include but is not limited to, cancellation of classes, closure of campus, halting all activities on campus, notification to appropriate entities, reputational consequences, external and internal communications, and so on. All decisions made by the EOC will be documented.

The Policy Group is responsible for notifying the UVU Board of Trustees chair and the state of Utah's Commissioner of Higher Education of an incident and any others they deem appropriate.

Location of EOC and Policy Group

The EOC will convene in the Fugal Gateway Building, Board of Trustees Conference Room. If that area is unavailable, another appropriate room will be selected, or if needed the team will meet

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virtually. There is also room for a smaller EOC in the conference room of the Police Department, Gunther Technology Building room 331 (GT-331).

The Policy Group location will be in Fugal Gateway Building in the Presidential Suite. If that area is unavailable, meeting virtually will be considered.

Depending on the incident, other locations may be designated for an EOC. If possible, the Policy Group should be near but not in the same room as the EOC.

Decision-Making Chain of Command in the Event of an Emergency/Disaster

In the event of an incident on campus, the chain of command for decisions/authorizations are as follows:

1. University President
2. Provost/Sr. Vice President of Academic Affairs
3. Vice President of Administration/Strategic Relations
4. Vice President of Student Affairs
5. Vice President of Planning, Budget, and Finance
6. Vice President of University Marketing & Communications
7. Vice President of Institutional Advancement
8. Vice President of Digital Transformation/CIO
9. Vice President of People and Culture

Emergency Communication (who and when)

In an emergency, **university police or emergency management staff** may initiate immediate life-safety messages without approval from other university groups. Members of the Triage Team will coordinate additional communication as needed until it can be delegated to the Marketing and Communications division.

The following table outlines university communication channels and those responsible for disseminating information to external and internal audiences in the event of an incident:

Emergency Communication

Type	Method of Communication	Responsible Positions
Internal	Mass Text Messaging System (Who can send the message)	• UVU Police • Director of Emergency Management • Associate Vice President of

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		Marketing & Communications • Director of Communications • Or their designees
Internal	Digital Signage, Emergency/Disaster Website, Alertus	• Sr. Director of IT and Technology Support
Internal	Campus email	• Director of Communications
Internal	Main Campus Public Announcement System	• UVU Dispatch
External	Media Requests/Interviews	• Sr. Director of Public Relations
External	Web Alerts (Banner across the top of UVU.edu)	• Director of Web Development • Assistant Director of Web Development
External	Social Media Monitoring social media platforms	• Sr. Director of Public Relations • Associate Vice President of Marketing & Communications • Sr. Director of Social Media

Who represents the university to the media?

The Senior Director of Public Relations is responsible for official university communications with the media, in accordance with Policy 110 *Contacting the Media*. Media requests for information or interviews concerning the incident should be directed to the Senior Director of Public Relations.

Off campus notifications

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The EOC staff will inform leaders at the following UVU-affiliated organizations and buildings of an incident: Utah County Academy of Sciences (UCAS), The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Institute, the Utah County Credit Union (UCCU) branch on campus, emergency services, School of Aviation Sciences, Culinary Arts Institute, Lehi, Wasatch, and West Campuses, Digital Transformation, and other appropriate entities.

Cadence of messaging during an incident

Incident updates through the selected communication channels will continue throughout the emergency or incident. Updated communications should be sent as possible, every 15-20 minutes and include where to go for more information such as uvu.edu/alert. The timing of messages may slow down as the incident progresses. The timing is designed to allow the EOC and Policy Group members to discuss and take appropriate action on university closures, cancellation of classes, etc. Decisions should take into consideration the impact on all areas of the University, including activities, events, and evening and weekend classes at all campuses.

Summary of Roles and Responsibilities

Title	Representative	Responsibility	Location
Incident Commander at the location of a police action like an active shooter or bomb threat.	UVU Chief of Police or designee Representatives of other responding agencies like city fire, police, etc., or auxiliary departments on campus may be involved.	Manages an incident that is on main campus or other UVU properties. Life safety and property protection are priorities.	Scene of the emergency or disaster on UVU properties
Policy Group	• University President • Provost • VP of Planning, Budget and HR • VP of University Marketing Communications • VP of Student Affairs • VP of Institutional Advancement • General Counsel • VP of People and Culture • VP of Digital Transformation • Administrative support • Others as needed	Activates during large-scale incidents. Makes overarching decisions and sets policy for university direction during an incident. Decisions include the ability to continue business operations, school closures, communication with state or local authorities, and media etc.	Primary Location: FG Conference Rooms Secondary Location: YLAC Conference Rooms Other locations: UVU Police Conference Room, any other appropriate location.

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Title	Representative	Responsibility	Location
Triage Team	• Vice President of Administration Strategic Relations • Director of Emergency Management/Safety • Chief of Police • Sr. Director of Public Relations • Associate Vice President of Facilities Planning • Provost (as needed)	Responsible for initial decision-making, and communication following an incident. Determines what response to an incident (if any) should occur, including if an EOC needs to be activated.	Communicates through text messaging or phone calls.
Emergency Operations Center (EOC)	The EOC manager will determine which groups need to be represented in the EOC. Members of the EOC may include, • VP Administration and Strategic Relations (acts as the EOC Manager) • Facilities • Police • Digital Transformation • Dean of Students • Finance/Auditing • Environmental Health • Risk Management • Safety Officer • People and Culture • Academic Affairs • Faculty Senate President • PACE President • Purchasing and Procurement • Assoc. VP of University Marketing & Communications • Office of General Counsel • And/or other support staff as needed	Supports activities and decisions made by the policy group and at the scene of the emergency or disaster with people, resources, supplies, information, and equipment as needed. This is a scalable group of people whose size and composition depends on the scope and severity of the incident.	Primary Location: FG Conference Room Secondary Location: YLAC Conference Rooms

Effective Date: August 2026

Related University Policies

UVU Policy 110 *Contacting the Media*

UVU Policy 154 *Workplace Violence*

UVU Policy 115 *Minors on Campus and at University-Sponsored Events*

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UVU Policy 161 *Freedom of Speech*

UVU Policy 407 *Clery Act Compliance*

UVU Policy 449 *Private Sensitive Information*

UVU Policy 542 *Student Records Access (Student Privacy/FERPA)*

Record of Updates

5/14/2014 First created and approved – President’s Council.

8/2023 Revised and updated.

12/2025 Revised and updated.

8/2026 Revised and updated.