

Faculty Emergency Guide

Prepared by the Offices of Academic Affairs and the Emergency Management, February 2013

In order to fulfill our teaching, research, and service missions effectively, the university must do everything in its power to provide a safe and secure environment for the entire campus community. In the event of an emergency that threatens the safety and security of the campus, university faculty will necessarily play an important role in responding to the emergency and restoring the university's ability to carry out the core elements of our mission. The purpose of this document is to provide faculty with a guide to the university's established emergency procedures in response to some of the more common and predictable emergencies. It is intended to familiarize faculty members with best practices in the event of an emergency before the emergency occurs and to suggest responses in order to minimize the emergency's impact on classes and other academic operations. It is also intended to provide faculty with guidance if an emergency occurs while their classes are in session.

General Information

Emergency Notification: The University has a variety of ways of making emergency notifications. Depending on the severity of a situation, the university uses a combination of text messages, e-mail messages, power fail phones, posts on the www.utk.edu web site, campus blue phones, social media (<https://twitter.com/UTKnoxville>) and local media outlets to inform the campus community about evolving emergencies and disruptions to regular operations.

If you have not signed up for UT Alert, please do so today by visiting <https://www.utk.edu/utalert/>.

If notified of an emergency, departments and individuals should spread the word among those people in offices and classrooms in their building. Recommended individual actions and responses are detailed on <http://safety.utk.edu/>.

If the UT Alert notification system has been activated in response to an emergency, a follow up "all clear" message will be sent when the threat has passed and regular operations are resuming. Follow up information will also be posted at www.utk.edu. We recommend checking the email notification and monitoring the front page to get additional details during an evolving emergency.

Planning Ahead: We recommend identifying all entrances and exits of your classroom, the closest telephone, and exit to outside the building. Familiarize yourself with signage posted in all buildings to assist in locating evacuation assembly points and shelter areas.

Applicable Academic Policies: Following an emergency that disrupts your class and class schedule, the following policies apply:

- Faculty have the discretion of canceling the current class session or resuming class if there is 30 minutes or more left in the session after the "all clear" message is given.
- Faculty should be reasonable when a campus emergency impacts a student's attendance.

- Faculty should provide students with a reasonable opportunity and amount of time to complete assignments or exams they may have missed.
- Faculty members may add an additional session or assign additional work to make up for the class missed (<http://safety.utk.edu/emergency-preparedness/campus-emergency-management/inclement-weather-policy/>). Where feasible, faculty members should consider developing a Blackboard version of their courses for remote delivery in the event of a major disaster or pandemic.

Responses to Emergencies

There are two basic categories of reaction to an emergency: Sheltering and Evacuating. The following provides detailed best practices for the most likely threats to the safety and security of our campus community.

I. Sheltering

Severe Weather

General: A National Weather Service (NWS) issued watch means the conditions are right for a weather event. An NWS WATCH indicates cause for closer monitoring of the local weather. A NWS WARNING indicates a confirmed presence of a weather event. NWS warnings are issued for the county and do not necessarily indicate an immediate threat to the campus. A UT Alert notification will be issued if the threat area includes campus. Departments may react to the NWS warning if their operations warrant extra caution.

Tornado: Full activation of the UT Alert system will occur if a NWS **warning** includes the main campus. Tornadoes are relatively rare in East Tennessee, but because of the short warning time, unpredictability, and destructive power of this weather event all warnings that include the main campus must be heeded. The practice of issuing campus alerts and sheltering for tornado warnings is an established standard of care in higher education. If a tornado warning is issued, everyone should seek appropriate shelter immediately and outside movement should be suspended.

In the case of a tornado warning, it is recommended that faculty observe the following protocol:

- If class has started, move the class to an appropriate shelter. As a general rule, proceed to a designated shelter area or to a lower floor in the building and in interior rooms (away from windows). Top floors should be avoided if possible. Most buildings have signage indicating appropriate shelter locations.
- If class has not started, follow the same inclement weather procedures for a weather-related delay.
- Classes may resume at the instructor's discretion if there are 30 or more minutes remaining in the session after the "all clear" message is given.
- If a lab has begun, the instructor should take appropriate actions to ensure it is safe to leave the lab before sheltering.

- Faculty members provide guidance to students, but the faculty member is not to interfere with an individual's decision to take safety-related action. The individual, not the faculty member, is responsible for any action that she or he decides to take.

For the full inclement weather policy visit <http://safety.utk.edu/emergency-preparedness/campus-emergency-management/inclement-weather-policy/>.

In most cases, tornado warnings create short interruptions. In the event of an extended interruption, the Chancellor (or his designee) will determine if classes are cancelled, and a message will be sent with that information.

Severe Thunderstorm/lightning: The University will not activate the UT Alert system for severe thunderstorms unless the storm poses an imminent threat. No changes to the academic schedule would be necessary. Severe thunderstorm watches, warnings, and lightning activity are monitored closely at the campus level and by all departments that sponsor outdoor activities.

In the case of a severe thunderstorm, it is recommended that faculty observe the following protocol:

- Cancel outdoor activities.
- Make allowances for students arriving late or missing class when dangerous conditions may impact outdoor movement.

Winter Storm: The University of Tennessee will remain open except in the most severe weather conditions that threaten the travel safety of students, faculty, and staff. It is important to note that this decision is based on conditions on and around campus. We encourage students, faculty and staff to use their own discretion based on local conditions.

In the case of a winter storm, it is recommended that faculty observe the following protocol:

- If the university remains open, make a reasonable effort to maintain regular class schedules.
- In the case of a delayed opening, adjust the class schedule in accordance with the inclement weather policy.

Active Shooter

This is one of the most difficult emergencies because the situation develops faster than information can be disseminated. The UT Alert system will be activated immediately upon notification, but the information provided may initially be limited or outdated. Our goal is to provide accurate information about the location of the attacker(s).

Three courses of actions are recommended: RUN, HIDE, FIGHT. The decision to evacuate to a safe location (RUN) requires personal, first-hand, up-to-date knowledge of the assailant(s)' location. Be advised that information received through the UT Alert system may be outdated by the time it reaches the end-user of that information. If the shooter's location is unknown or in doubt, faculty should shelter and barricade in a nearby location (HIDE) until better information is known.

In the case of an active shooter, it is recommended that faculty observe the following protocol:

- **RUN:** If you know the assailant is in your building and you have a clear exit, move to a safer location.
- **HIDE:** Make the best choice on where to barricade. Considerations are :
 - Can the doors lock from the inside?
 - Can the doors be blocked from opening?
 - It is best if doors and the room don't have exterior windows so the assailant cannot determine who is in the room.
 - Is there a way to communicate from the room (phone, computer, cell)?
- **Once barricaded:**
 - Call 911.
 - Take actions to limit indications of a presence in the room such as silencing phones and turning off lights.
 - Be prepared to communicate with responders. Follow all instructions given by police officers.
 - Understand that their first actions will be to address the threat.
 - Leave hands empty and in plain view.
- **FIGHT:** As a last resort, only if your life is in danger and you can neither run nor hide.
 - Attempt to incapacitate the shooter.
 - Act with physical aggression and in mass.
 - Improvise weapons.
 - Commit to your actions.

Refer to safety.utk.edu/emergency-preparedness/active-shooter/ for more detailed information.

Contact UTPD for active shooter training for your department.

Hazardous Materials Release Outside

In the unlikely event that a hazardous materials leak occurs on or near campus, the UT Alert system will be activated and the campus will be informed of the location of the release and given directions to shelter. The Knoxville Fire Department will direct evacuations once they evaluate the situation.

While some people may take it upon themselves to evacuate an area, they are certainly more likely to be exposed if outdoors and stuck in traffic than if inside a building. Facilities Services has procedures in place to shut down HVAC systems to help mitigate the potential of hazardous materials entering the sheltering space.

In the event of a hazardous materials release, it is recommended that faculty observe the following protocol:

- If HVAC systems appear to still be operating, call the Facilities emergency number (946-7777) or UTPD emergency number (974-3111).
- Make the best choice for where to shelter your class. Considerations are:

- Interior rooms are preferred to create an air buffer (like lobby doors).
- The fewer portals that need to be sealed the better.
- Seal vents and gaps around portals with wet towels, plastic or tape.
- Monitor communication channels for updates and be prepared to move if directed.

II. Evacuation

Fire

Fires can start as a minor hazard and escalate to a life-threatening event in a matter of minutes. Before there is visual evidence of a fire, there may be threats to safety from toxic smoke and/or impediments to evacuation.

In the event of a fire alarm, it is recommended that faculty observe the following protocol:

- Never ignore an alarm.
- Evacuate your class to an assembly area designated for that building. Buildings have signage designating these locations. As a general rule, evacuate to at least 200 feet from the building and not in the way of emergency vehicles.
- Direct your class to take keys, coats, wallets, and critical items. You may not be able to return.
- Close the door on the way out.
- Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by the fire department or police.

Bomb Threat

UT Police Department has specific indicators to determine if a bomb threat warrants an evacuation.

In the event of a bomb threat, it is recommended that faculty observe the following protocol:

- If you receive the call, follow the guidance provided at <http://safety.utk.edu/emergency-preparedness/bomb-threat/>.
- Evacuate your class to a location designated by law enforcement personnel.
- Do NOT touch any suspicious objects that you may see.
- Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by the fire department or police.

Pandemic

The university has specific procedures in its Emergency Operations Plan to address the threat of a pandemic. They outline levels of risk based on the threat levels set by the World Health Organization, Centers for Disease Control, and local health authorities. If a severe risk is identified, University leadership will suspend regular operations. If there is a high risk, which is defined as evidence of remote person to person spread in the U.S. and abroad, mitigating actions can be taken at the department level to help avoid a campus shutdown.

In the event of a pandemic, it is recommended that faculty observe the following protocol:

- Adjust classroom attendance policies and make sure students are comfortable meeting class requirements without being physically present when ill and potentially contagious.
- Prepare class materials for alternate delivery means such as Blackboard.

While not all courses lend themselves to remote delivery, Blackboard will be a critical tool for university continuity of operations. This could be the only way to continue course delivery in a pandemic. In addition, this will be essential in any large-scale disaster that impacts available campus infrastructure.

The recommendations above are based on widely adopted protocols in emergency management. They are considered best practices and are distributed to UTK faculty to help them prepare for emergencies and guide their responses when the Chancellor or his designee declares an emergency. For more information on campus safety, see <http://safety.utk.edu/>.

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