

Hudson Valley Community College Emergency Preparedness Plan and Operational Protocols



Updated December 2022

Introduction

Hudson Valley Community College is committed to protecting the safety and welfare of its community and property by minimizing the impact of natural and human emergencies and maximizing the effectiveness of the college's response to and recovery from their potential occurrence.

Planning ahead for campus emergencies is part of normal business operations. Unforeseen events of all types occur despite all efforts to prevent them; therefore, it is necessary to develop effective emergency procedures to respond to multiple situations.

The institution's Emergency Preparedness Plan (EPP) provides a structure for responding to those events, as well as operational protocols for addressing known hazards that present a reasonable risk to the campus community.

I. Comprehensive Emergency Management Process

Emergency management is a continuous process, which includes activities to prevent occurrences and includes planning and response activities to ensure that the college is prepared to respond to and recover from occurrences.

A. Emergency Preparedness Team

The Emergency Preparedness Team (EPT) provides strategic oversight to the college's emergency response. The team makes policy determinations regarding response actions.

Emergency Preparedness Team members:

Vice President for Administration and Chief Financial Officer - Chairperson (Convener)

Director of Facilities and Planning - Deputy Chairperson (Convener)

Associate Director of Facilities - Deputy Chairperson (Convener)

Director of Public Safety (Convener)

Executive Director of Communications and Marketing

Director of Environmental Health and Safety

Director of College Health Services

Chief Information Officer – Instructional and Information Technologies

Recorder of Meeting Minutes: Assistant to the Vice President for Administration and CFO

Certain individuals within the EPT are identified as conveners. A convenue is an EPT member with the authority to activate the college response to an emergency as follows:

- determine/confirm the level of emergency
- determine whether to convene the EPT
- set the direction as to how the emergency will be managed or continue to be managed
- make key event decisions, and notify the college president

The EPT is responsible for the development and maintenance of this EPP, however maintaining our campus preparedness and responding to an emergency is a responsibility of every member of the campus community.

- Intelligence - Students, faculty, staff and visitors have the responsibility to recognize and report any event with the potential to become an emergency, or to provide intelligence, to our Public Safety Office.
- Awareness - The Public Safety Office has the responsibility to maintain current knowledge of any developing local, state or national potential of an emergency and to inform the campus community as appropriate.
- Training - The EPT has the responsibility to identify and resource the delivery of emergency prevention and preparedness training to the campus community.
- Testing - The EPT has the responsibility to ensure testing of the Emergency Preparedness Plan through simulated occurrences of emergencies to determine the effectiveness of the guidelines defined in the plan.
- Maintenance - The EPT has the responsibility to regularly review the EPP to maintain the accuracy, currency and completeness of the plan. It also has the responsibility to coordinate the regular review of all other related emergency documents. In the event of an emergency event, the EPT should conduct a thorough post-emergency review within a 48-hour timeframe to determine the effectiveness of the campus response and to modify this plan as appropriate.

B. Meetings

The EPT will meet at least once each semester under the direction of the VP of Administration and CFO for the following purposes:

- to review the need for any necessary changes to this EPP
- to coordinate with other campus personnel the review and need for any necessary changes to related emergency documents
- to review the need for emergency prevention and preparedness training
- to ensure functional areas have necessary procedures and resources for emergency response
- to review the need for simulated testing of this EPP
- to schedule trainings and/or drills based upon the EPP review, past events, and anticipated needs
- to ensure all records related to emergency events and planning are accurate and accessible within the office of the Vice President for Administration and CFO

C. Planning, Prevention, and Mitigation

Planning refers to the periodic risk assessment of potential hazards, plus a historical review of emergency situations in the area which inform the development and refinement of the EPP. Planning activities should also include discussions with off-campus providers of emergency services, such as local emergency responders. The EPP also includes contingency planning for critical services and incident recovery and cleanup.

Prevention refers to those short- or long-term activities that eliminate or reduce the number of occurrences of emergencies and disasters.

Mitigation refers to all activities that reduce the effects of emergencies and disasters when they do occur.

D. Scope

The EPP is an “All Hazards” plan designed to address a variety of emergency situations at all college and satellite locations, specifically those most likely to occur. Potential situations addressed in this plan, together with supporting information and contingency plans which vary according to severity level are identified below include:

II. Levels of Emergencies

An emergency is a situation that poses an immediate risk to health, life, property, environment. It may also be a situation that disrupts operations. Emergencies can occur on many levels, and the emergency response may be as simple as a repair a building component or a complex situation involving the coordination of multiple campus departments and community response organizations.

The college has adopted a three-tier system of incident severity to structure the its response to emergencies.

A. Level I-Minor Emergency

A minor emergency situation is when a potential danger exists or could exist and personnel are altered to respond and be aware that further action might be necessary. The response may involve specific personnel and notifying the department where the problem occurred, as well as the possibility of a campus wide notification.

These situations are characterized by the following:

- The incident appears to be a short-term situation
- The situation is limited in scope, such as a broken water pipe, and can be managed by the appropriate administrative area
- The situation is usually a one-dimensional event that has little impact to the campus community beyond those using the space/building in which it occurred

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- A severe storm watch issued by the National Weather Service
- A fire or hazardous materials incident within two miles of a facility

- A minor building system problem
- A local power outage
- A minor fire confined to a small area with no hazardous material exposure
- Minor chemical (non-hazardous chemicals) or fuel spills
- A loss of heat and/or electricity to a single building, which is expected to last longer than two hours
- A water main break on campus resulting a boil water advisory issued by the water supplier

B. Level II-Major Emergency

A major emergency situation indicates a risk exists or a situation is about to occur that will impact one or more college buildings as well as a large number of students, and/or employees.

A major emergency situation is characterized by the following:

- There is potential danger or the threat of harm
- The situation has the potential for expanding beyond a specific physical area
- The situation may continue for an extended period
- It involves violent crime
- Resolving the situation may require a response by multiple college departments and/or response by an outside agency

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- A severe storm warning issued by the National Weather Service, such as an impending weather event such as a tornado warning
- A major fire or hazardous materials incident within one-half mile of a college facility, such as a fuel or chemical tanker spill on Rt. 4
- A major system failure affecting multiple buildings or locations
- Contagious disease outbreak (slow acting contagion)

C. Level III-Disaster

Disaster situations impact a sizable portion or all of the campus and/or outside community. Responses to these emergencies often require considerable and timely coordination both within and, at times, outside of the college.

A disaster situation is characterized by the following:

- Students, employees and visitors are in danger and/or facilities and equipment are at risk
- Immediate action is necessary by multiple departments and agencies
- The incident is at a college location or close enough to affect students, employees and visitors
- The situation requires the coordination of multiple college resources and outside agencies

Examples of a disaster situation include, but are not limited to the following:

- A fire or hazardous materials incident occurring at a college facility
- A major storm or weather event that is causing or has caused injury/damage
- Active shooter on campus
- Death on campus
- Bomb threats
- Extended power outage
- Contagious disease outbreak (fast acting contagion)
- Civil disturbance
- Civil unrest
- Hostage situation
- Organized or large-scale criminal activity

D. Digital Emergencies

All digital/electronic threats/emergencies will be handled by Instructional and Information Technologies.

III. Response

Most response activities follow the immediate impact of an emergency or disaster. Generally, they are designed to minimize harm and protect property to the extent possible and also seek to reduce the probability of secondary damage and to speed recovery operations.

A response is required when:

- Students, faculty, staff and visitors are in danger or harm
- The college is damaged or exposed in some way
- Evacuation or special sheltering of all or part of the college may be required
- The possibility of disruption of any kind may occur to campus operations

Response activities include:

- Assessing and monitoring the hazard and alerting at-risk populations as needed
- Alerting appropriate off-campus response agencies
- Evacuating or special sheltering of threatened populations
- Dispensing and/or relocating critical equipment and resources

IV. Entities Involved in the College Response

A. Incident Commander (IC)

The first arriving college official at all levels of an emergency situation will assume the role of Incident Commander until relieved by appropriate emergency first response personnel, or when relieved by a college official of higher authority, or by the IC appointed by the EPT as noted below. The IC's function is frequently assumed by a member of the college's Public Safety Office. (Note: Public Safety maintains a 24/7 presence on campus and are the college's first line of emergency response).

Priority tasks include:

- Initiate emergency response procedures/plans
- Limit the growth of the incident
- Ensure the safety of the community and first responders
- Stabilize the scene
- Determine the threat level
- Establish communications and control
- Identify any “danger zones”
- Establish an inner perimeter to secure the “danger zone”
- Notify the President’s Office
- Establish an outer perimeter to control access to the entire scene
- Establish a staging area
- Request needed resources

B. Recovery

Recovery activities are those following an emergency or disaster to correct adverse conditions and to protect and return to normal operations. Recovery activities will include measures to:

- Prevent or mitigate a reoccurrence of the emergency
- Implement contingency plans
- Provide psychological support
- Address public health needs
- Activate support services such as the American Red Cross
- Reinstate college services
- Restore private and public property
- Repopulate evacuated areas

V. Outside Agencies and Response Coordination

In responding to an emergency or disaster, the college will initially rely on the full use of campus facilities, equipment, supplies, personnel and resources, as well as the resources of private entities (e.g. contractors). However, some emergencies will require or initiate an immediate response for outside agencies and, in other scenarios, the college may request the involvement of outside agencies. Several local government and the emergency service organizations play an essential role in supporting the college or acting as the first line of defense in responding to some emergencies.

In disaster level scenarios, outside agencies will typically exercise their authority to assume command and control of the emergency response. In this scenario, the EPT and/or the college’s designated IC will be the primary liaison with the outside agency. Outside agencies, which may exercise command and control, include: Local Fire Departments, the Local, County, or State Police Departments, County or State Health Departments, as well as the state or federal emergency management offices.

VI. Additional Roles and Responsibilities

In some circumstances, the EPT may request faculty or staff members to assume temporary roles outside the normal scope of their duties in an effort to provide a coordinated response to an emergency. In these situations, the EMT will consider the skills and abilities of individuals to carry out

those temporary roles prior to making the assignment. Any employees in departments that do not have specific roles related to the emergency response will become part of a "pool" of reserve personnel to assist as assigned by those coordinating the specific emergency.

VII. Training

Emergency plans should be in place and rehearsed internally through "tabletop" exercises as well as larger scale "live" drills with key campus personnel and local emergency responders to ensure their ability to function in the event of an actual emergency or disaster. The EPT at the direction of the Office of the Vice President of the Administration and CFO will schedule tabletop and live exercises to allow the EPT to apply the knowledge gained from actual experience and prior training to simulated emergency situations. Exercises and trainings may also be initiated to test lessons learned from previous emergency events.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) makes available a number of training resources. Members of the EPT will continually review available training resources and offer training resources to any other key staff, as appropriate. All training records will be maintained via Human Resources existing training system with the support of the Environmental Health and Safety Department.

VIII. Response Framework

A. Direction and Coordination of an Emergency

The college will follow a protocol when responding to an emergency situation.

1. With the identification of an emergency situation or with information indicating a potential for a future emergency, individuals should contact the Office of Public Safety Department immediately. All employees have the responsibility to report emergency conditions. Public Safety may be reached at (518) 629-7210, via internal extension at 7210, or by dialing 911 on any college phone.
2. For any emergency call, the Public Safety dispatcher will notify the on-duty Public Safety supervisor, who will contact the Director of Public Safety to apprise him/her of the emergency. Public Safety will assume the lead role and IC until emergency responders arrive on site, if appropriate.
3. Public Safety will notify the conveners of the EPT when emergency information is received, except for most Level I emergencies, which will be communicated through routine channels to the appropriate departments. Level I emergencies do not warrant the assembly of the EPT. Public Safety will assume the lead role and IC until the emergency situation is no longer determined to exist or until outside emergency aid responders arrive on site. During Level II or III emergencies, the dispatcher will notify the Director of Safety who will then notify the EPT Conveners.
4. If the nature of the emergency warrants the assembly of the EPT, the Director of Public Safety or his/her designee is responsible for contacting team members. Members can be directed to meet immediately or notified that the EPT may be activated in the near future.
5. The EPT will assemble as quickly as possible in the designated Emergency Control Center (ECC). Normally, the ECC will be located at the LaPan Service Building Conference Room (120). The backup ECC location on campus is the Higbee Hall Conference Rm (201). In

the event that the emergency is at a Disaster level it may be impractical or impossible to have an ECC physically located on campus.

In the event of such a Disaster scenario, an ECC may be set up at one of the following locations:

- Capital District Educational Opportunity Center, 431 River St., Troy NY
- The Cardiorespiratory and Emergency Medicine Department, 400 Jordon Rd, Rensselaer Technology Park.
- Rensselaer County Emergency Services Building

The off-site ECC will be determined by the EPT based on the needs of the situation. It may be possible or necessary to remotely communicate with EPT members during an incident in the event they are unable to reach the ECC.

Primary and backup ECC's will be equipped with the following:

- Building floor plans
- Campus and local telephone directories
- Telephone and cellular telephone capability
- Computers and computer access
- Fax machine
- Portable lectern
- Portable public address system
- Emergency Preparedness Plan

6. Mobile emergency operations center (Public Safety Vehicle) will be equipped with the following:

- Cellular telephone
- Digital camera
- Mobile radio
- Campus utility drawings

7. Once the emergency has been resolved, the EPT will:

- Develop a plan for a smooth transition to normal operations by coordinating with other relevant college, federal, state, county, and local organizations.
- Initiate a complete review of the incident under the direction of the IC.
- Direct all personnel involved in the incident to prepare an after-action report for major or disaster level emergencies to be presented to the Office of the Vice President of the Administration and CFO to be distributed at their discretion.
- Provide a report to the President and keep it with the incident file.
- Provide counseling support to any staff involved in the incident.

B. Direction and Coordination of a Potential Emergency

The EPT may assemble and communicate when an impending emergency situation provides ample time (example: anticipated major snow or ice storm, large campus gathering, etc.). If time is of the essence, to the most senior EPT member available on campus will coordinate for the impending emergency.

C. Declaration of an Emergency Condition

An EPT convener shall declare a state of emergency (an action possible for some Level III emergencies), upon recommendation of the EPT. The EPT determines when an emergency procedure should be implemented and will also determine if all or part of the college should be closed (such action may also be done by the EPT at the direction of the college President). An EPT convener or their designees shall declare an end to the state of emergency when appropriate (or as directed by the college President).

The EPT conveners, in addition to declaring a state of emergency, may also initiate other actions to ensure safety during emergency situations. Those actions include:

1. **Shelter in Place**

Students, employees and campus visitors are directed to remain in or report to a sheltered area, such as any college building. This action may be taken when a threat is imminent, such as a tornado, or to prevent exposure, in the case of a chemical spill. Individuals will need to close window blinds and stay away from windows. A shelter in place order may also be called for an individual facility in order to allow emergency responders easier access to a specific area, for example to allow EPT's access to a specific classroom for a medical emergency.

2. **Lock Out**

All doors on college buildings are locked to prevent access from the outside. In this scenario, the threat is external and this action is to prevent it from entering a college building.

Individuals finding themselves outside during a lock out are instructed to leave campus rather than attempt to enter a locked building. This action will be taken if an active shooter or violent threat is reported to be on campus. In a lock out situation, individuals should not open doors unless police and/or other authorities are present. Individuals should close window blinds and stay away from windows.

3. **Lockdown**

All internal doors (where possible) in college buildings shall be locked to prevent access to individual spaces. Lockdowns are to address a threat that has entered a building or buildings. Individuals finding themselves outside during a lockdown are instructed to leave campus rather than attempt to enter a locked building. This action will be taken if an active or violent threat is reported to be on campus. In a lockdown situation, individuals should not open doors unless police and/or other authorities are present. Individuals should close window blinds and stay away from windows. Additionally, individuals shall stay clear of sight line form entry doors.

4. **Evacuation**

Students, employees and visitors will be directed to evacuate all or a portion of the campus or facility. If an evacuation is initiated, specific instructions will be provided. An evacuation may be initiated for a long-duration power outage, flood or other emergency situation.

D. Emergency Communication

Communication is essential in any emergency situation, and the EPT is responsible for providing accurate and updated information to both internal and external audiences. It should consider the following framework when sharing information with college stakeholders.

Designate a spokesperson

- Person possessing the most direct knowledge of the crisis or emergency situation (e.g. local police chief; a member of the college's EPT or Communications and Marketing staff member)
- President or member of senior staff

Gather factual information and notify key constituencies

- Gather accurate information about the incident to communicate key details of the emergency event and instructions
- Determine constituencies such as students, employees, trustees, SUNY, legislators, community organizations, partners, etc. that should be informed
- Provide timely notification through college communication channels such as email, website, Alertus, SUNY-NY Alert and social media sites
- Communicate with the media, if appropriate
- Send updated information as it becomes available

Draft a fact sheet and a press release/statement

- A summary statement of the situation including details and relevant quotes.
- Approved by the president or EPT
- Consider the public's right to know and concerns for privacy and security in consultation with college counsel
- Updated on a regular basis if needed

Develop talking points

- Craft talking points including key details; describe the college's emergency response
- Develop a series of potential questions for the spokesperson(s) to consider addressing
- Consider relevance of location (EOC, TEC-SMART, Jordan Rd., etc.) of incident or other special circumstances that need to be communicated

Provide information to high volume call centers

- Notify high volume campus call areas of key facts and where to refer calls pertaining to the crisis

Respond to media inquiries/Alert the media

- Determine whether a news conference and/or news release/statement/advisory is appropriate.

- Determine logistics of the news conference including when, where and how the media will be contacted, which media will be contacted, who will supervise the news conference, who will appear, etc.

Establish a staging area for media, other constituencies or the EPT

- Location may vary depending on location of event/incident/emergency
- Bulmer Telecommunications Center or Maureen Stapleton Theatre may be appropriate given auditorium availability and flexible meeting space

Photography/Videography.

- Determine the need to assign videographers and photographers to capture images of the scene; this may prove helpful in responding to media inquiries, to assist with follow up, and for documenting events.
- Decide whether to provide photos or footage for immediate distribution
- Determine whether it is appropriate to allow on-location shooting by media

Other spokespersons/experts.

- Identify other individuals to serve as spokespersons/experts or who might be available to the news media.
- Counsel individual on the message and appropriate ways to work with the media.

Media Relations Policy

In the event of campus emergencies requiring notification of the media, communication to the media must take place through designated spokespeople, the EPT or the Office of Communications and Marketing. Other college employees must refrain from speaking with the media to avoid giving inaccurate, contradicting or incomplete information.

Emergency Alert Systems

In addition to standard communication vehicles, students and employees are encouraged to register for two notification systems, Alertus and SUNY NY-Alert, to receive important communications during emergency situations and severe weather events.

In addition to improving communications during unexpected events, both systems are used to share weather-related college-wide closures and class cancellations.

Alertus App

Alertus is a system that allows the college to share messages through select communications tools, including a mobile app. To receive notifications, download the app Alertus + through the iTunes App Store or Google Play Store and follow the instructions below.

- Organization Code: hvcc
- Enter your email address and click "Register"
- Open your email and click on link to confirm your account
- Restart Alertus + mobile app and set up notifications

SUNY NY-Alert

SUNY NY-Alert allows Hudson Valley to send text messages, phone, email and/or fax alerts to those who sign up. Individuals need to opt in to the system to receive the alerts and message delivery preferences.

Sign-up for SUNY NY-Alert by accessing "Personal Information" after you log in to WIRed. Those who have already signed-up for SUNY NY-Alert are encouraged to review their contact information to make sure it remains up-to-date.