POL 04.25.10
Emergency Notifications Policy

**Authority:** Chancellor

**History:**
- First Issued: March 20, 2014
- Last Revised: December 8, 2020

**Additional References:**
- 2008 Higher Education Opportunity Act
- The Handbook for Campus Safety and Security Reporting, 2016 Edition
- The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act
- UNCP Homepage
- UNCP Emergency Operations Plan
- Brave Alert
- The LiveSafe App

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## 1. PURPOSE

1.1 The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act (the Clery Act) is a federal law that requires institutions of higher education to establish policies related to Clery crimes and issue notifications related to those crimes to the campus community.

1.2 UNC Pembroke has an Emergency Notification System (ENS) with multi-channel communication capabilities. The UNC Pembroke ENS is intended to rapidly disseminate emergency information on an incident and provide instructions to the UNC Pembroke campus community in Pembroke, North Carolina. The protocols outline the emergency notification process and organization.

1.3 The institution will, without delay, and taking into account the safety of the community, determine the content of the notification and initiate the notification system, unless issuing a notification will, in the professional judgment of RUA, compromise efforts to assist a victim or to contain, respond to, or otherwise mitigate the emergency.

1.4 This policy defines the process for activating the UNC Pembroke ENS protocols when a threat or emergency situation is reported to the UNC Pembroke Police Department or to another RUA operating within their direct area of responsibility and directly involved with the emergency response for a safety-and-security incident at UNC Pembroke. Authorizing decision-making at the operational response level enables UNC Pembroke to disseminate rapid and responsible emergency information to the campus population.

## 2. SCOPE

2.1 This policy addresses the UNC Pembroke notification process and applies to all departments, personnel, and agents of UNC Pembroke, although some departments or agencies may have more specific roles and responsibilities within emergency notification operations.

## 3. DEFINITIONS

3.1 **Clery Geography:** UNC Pembroke must disclose statistics for reported Clery crimes that occur: (1) on-campus, (2) on-campus residence halls, (3) on public property within or immediately adjacent to the campus, and (4) in or on non-campus buildings or property that the institution owns or controls. For a detailed explanation of each geographic category visit What is Clery Geography?

3.2 **Emergency Notification:** A notification to inform the campus community of a dangerous situation occurring on campus involving an immediate threat to the health or safety of the campus community.

3.3 **Responsible University Authority (RUA):** Any authorized individual capable of activating a notification based on their professional role and knowledge or University affiliation.

3.4 **Confirmation:** A RUA has verified that a legitimate emergency or dangerous situation exists.

## 4. BACKGROUND

4.1 UNC Pembroke has several emergency notification systems. They are outlined below:

4.1.1. Blue Light Phones (Emergency Call Boxes). Located throughout campus, blue light phones are constantly monitored and allow for two-way emergency communications.

4.1.2. Outdoor Emergency Alert System. The university's outdoor emergency alert system consists of two separate specially designed and strategically placed 50-foot towers outfitted with a series of powerful speakers. The system is designed for immediate campus-wide notification of a serious emergency. In the event of such an emergency, university police can utilize alert audio tones as well as voice broadcasts to warn the campus community of the specific nature of the threat and where to seek shelter.

4.1.3. Panic Devices. In the event of an emergency, key offices within the campus community are equipped with a telephone panic button that allows office personnel immediate contact with university police. At the push of a button, a pre-recorded message alerts the university police of the activation location and signals an immediate police response.

4.1.4. Brave Alert  and the LiveSafe app. In the event of a serious threat – whether the threat is crime related or a natural disaster – to the campus community, the university has the ability to

send immediate notifications via telephone, email, and the LiveSafe app. Brave Alert, using the Public Information Emergency Response (PIER) system, offers the additional advantage of having groups contacted immediately via text message, phone, email and web. Students, faculty and staff are automatically opted into Brave Alert.

4.2 The UNC Pembroke ENS addresses the reporting requirements of the 2008 Higher Education Opportunity Act. The Handbook for Campus Safety and Security Reporting, 2016 Edition, explains The Clery Act and defines emergency notification as:

4.2.1 "Procedures to immediately notify the campus community upon the confirmation of a significant emergency or dangerous situation involving an immediate threat to the health or safety of students or staff occurring on the campus ... unless issuing a notification will compromise efforts to contain the emergency."

4.3 While the law does not specify requirements related to time(s) or channels(s) associated with issuing an emergency notification, it does indicate that once the emergency situation is confirmed, such warnings should be issued "immediately."

4.4 Training and Exercising

4.4.1 Training and exercising are essential to demonstrating and improving the ability of UNC Pembroke to execute its ENS protocols, and the most effective methods for implementing the UNC Pembroke ENS. Periodic exercising also helps ensure that equipment and procedures are maintained in a constant state of readiness. Testing UNC Pembroke's ENS technology may help identify issues and determine functionality before an emergency occurs.

4.4.2 Staff with responsibilities in the UNC Pembroke ENS will receive an initial training on the emergency notification protocols and process. University executives will be briefed on the emergency notification system. On an ongoing basis, staff and leadership will be trained and exercised on the UNC Pembroke ENS and will be informed when UNC Pembroke ENS protocols or UNC Pembroke ENS system characteristics or capabilities are updated.

4.4.3 UNC Pembroke recognizes that trained staff may not be available in an emergency to perform their function under the ENS protocols and has committed to cross-training staff on responsibilities. New staff with ENS roles will be trained on the system and protocols as they assume their positions.

## 5. OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

5.1 Purpose and Authority of the Emergency Notification System Protocols

5.1.1 These protocols provide operational guidelines for issuing emergency messages via UNC Pembroke ENS. These protocols are integrated with and supplement the UNC Pembroke Emergency Operations Plan. The protocols are consistent with the safety and security policies of the university and have been approved by UNC Pembroke administration.

5.2 Purpose of the UNC Pembroke Emergency Notification System (UNC Pembroke ENS)

5.2.1 The purpose of the UNC Pembroke ENS is to authorize and issue safety and security warning notifications to the UNC Pembroke campus community in an emergency or when specific actions must be taken to maintain safety and security at the UNC Pembroke campus.

5.2.2 For the purposes of these protocols, "authorizing" and "issuing" notifications are distinct activities and responsibilities. "Authorizing" a notification refers to providing approval for the issuance of the notification, while "issuing" a notification refers to the technical activity of broadcasting the notification. Note that in the interest of timely notification, these protocols do not contain a separate "approval" procedure for the language of a notification; use of the pre-approved templates (with relevant blank fields completed) addresses this issue.

5.3 Responsible University Authorities (RUA). The following university officials have been assigned the authority by the Chancellor of the University to authorize emergency notifications to provide alert, warning and safety or protection instructions:

5.3.1. Chancellor;

5.3.2. UNC Pembroke Director of Police and Public Safety;

5.3.3. UNC Pembroke Senior Police and Public Safety Officer on Duty;

5.3.4. Executive Director of University Communications and Marketing;

5.3.5. Associate Vice Chancellor for Campus Safety and Emergency Operations;

5.3.6. Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs;

5.3.7. Assistant Vice Chancellor for Facility Operations;

5.3.8. Director of Student Health Services; and

5.3.9. Environmental Health and Safety Officer.

5.3.10 These positions will be collectively referred to as "Responsible University Authorities" (RUA) for the purposes of these protocols. At all times in these protocols, reference to any position at the university shall be understood, in the absence of the referenced individual, to include designees.

5.4 Confirming the Existence of a Significant Emergency or Dangerous Situation

5.4.1 The RUA and/or other campus first responders may become aware of a critical incident or other emergency situation that potentially affects the health and/or safety of the campus community. Generally, campus first responders become aware of these situations when they are reported to the UNC Pembroke Police and Public Safety or upon discovery during regular patrols

and other assignments. Before an emergency notification is disseminated, the RUA will confirm that there is an ongoing threat to the campus community.

5.5 Initial Activation of the Protocols

5.5.1 The process for activating the UNC Pembroke ENS protocols begins when a threat or emergency situation is reported to the UNC Pembroke Police Department (UNC Pembroke PD) or to another RUA. For confirmed threats or emergency situations that require immediate or urgent notification, the UNC Pembroke PD senior officer on duty or another RUA will authorize the emergency notification based on the operational guidelines in Section 4 of this regulation.

5.5.2 It should be noted that, for the majority of emergency threats and incidents at the UNC Pembroke campus, the first notice of the situation will be via an incoming call to the UNC Pembroke PD dispatch center. In the event of a threat or emergency in which the UNC Pembroke PD senior officer on duty is not yet at the incident and/or for which specialized technical knowledge is required, another RUA may confirm the threat and authorize the message with emergency safety instructions. The RUA will call the dispatch center and authorize the dispatcher to issue the message. If the RUA is trained in and has direct access to the UNC Pembroke ENS, the RUA may issue the message if necessary.

5.6 UNC Pembroke Emergency Notification System Channels

5.6.1 UNC Pembroke ENS consists of the following channels:

5.6.1.1. Outdoor Emergency Alert System;

5.6.1.2. Brave Alert (PIER) and the LiveSafe app– Provides SMS, phone, and email to contact information (phone and email) entered into the systems;

5.6.1.3. University email (faculty, staff, and student email listservs);

5.6.1.4. UNCP homepage;

5.6.1.5. Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram);

5.6.1.6. Emergency Information Hotline; and

5.6.1.7. News Media Contacts (region and state).

5.7 Emergency Notification Message Characteristics

5.7.1 All UNC Pembroke ENS messages will contain, at a minimum, the following information in this order:

5.7.1.1. nature of the incident;

5.7.1.2. location; and

5.7.1.3. actions to be taken by affected populations.

5.7.2 UNC Pembroke ENS messages generated via these protocols will follow formatting consistent with UNC Pembroke phone alerts system characteristics. Therefore, regardless of the channel used, UNC Pembroke ENS messages generated via these protocols will use the same message of no more than 160 characters (the maximum number of characters available in a SMS message) for all message systems.

5.7.3 Additional or subsequent messaging via non-UNC Pembroke phone alert channels (which are not constrained by technical limitations related to SMS) may use additional characters, as appropriate, to convey more information. As soon as possible following the issuance of an emergency message, the UNC Pembroke homepage, social media sites, and the emergency information hotline (910.521.6888) will contain additional and/or supplemental information about the alert and/or the incident. These will provide instructions for:

5.7.3.1. obtaining additional detailed information if university programs and/or services are interrupted;

5.7.3.2. receiving additional updates and information; and/or

5.7.3.3. reporting information.

5.8 Levels of Emergency Notification (Appendix 3)

5.8.1 The process for activating the UNC Pembroke ENS protocols begins when a threat or emergency situation is reported to UNC Pembroke PD or to another RUA. There are three levels of notifications under UNC Pembroke ENS. These are "immediate," "urgent (timely warning)," and "status update/all clear."

5.8.2 Immediate (Appendix 1)

5.8.2.1 An immediate notification to the campus is made when UNC Pembroke PD or another RUA has confirmed that an emergency situation poses an immediate threat to the life safety or security of the campus population. The UNC Pembroke PD senior officer on duty or another RUA is authorized to make an immediate notification to provide alert, warning and safety, or protection instructions.

5.8.2.2 However, the UNC Pembroke PD senior officer on duty or other RUA also has the authority not to authorize an immediate notification to the campus if issuing the message will create a more serious emergency and/or compromise the university's efforts to contain the emergency. If the UNC Pembroke PD senior officer or other RUA makes a decision not to authorize an alert, he or she must notify and consult with the UNC Pembroke police chief.

5.8.2.3 As necessary, the university police chief notifies the associate vice chancellor for campus safety and emergency operations of the situation, notifications authorized/issued (or not authorized/issued), and any other actions taken.

5.8.2.4 At any time, if more than one operator attempts to log into the UNC Pembroke ENS interface, or if a UNC Pembroke PD dispatcher or other operator is given conflicting instructions, the system operator will contact his or her supervisor to de-conflict the messages and/or clarify the instructions.

5.8.3 Urgent (Timely Warning) (Appendix 2)

5.8.3.1 An urgent notification (timely warning) to the campus is made when UNC Pembroke PD or another RUA has confirmed that an emergency situation may pose a threat to the life safety or security of the campus population.

5.8.3.2 If the UNC Pembroke PD or another RUA confirms an emergency situation, he or she notifies the university police chief, who has the option to consult with the associate vice chancellor for campus safety and emergency operations regarding the emergency situation.

5.8.3.3 The UNC Pembroke PD senior officer on duty or other RUA may authorize a UNC Pembroke ENS message that alerts campus populations as to the location of the situation and provides precautionary actions.

5.8.3.4 As necessary, the university police chief notifies the associate vice chancellor for campus safety and emergency operations of the situation, notifications authorized/issued (or not authorized/issued), and any other actions taken.

5.8.3.5 At any time, if more than one operator attempts to log into the UNC Pembroke ENS interface, or if a UNC Pembroke PD dispatcher or other operator is given conflicting instructions, the system operator will contact his or her supervisor to de-conflict the messages and/or clarify the instructions.

5.8.4 Status Update/All Clear

5.8.4.1 A status update is made when there is new information or instructions for the campus population. It may provide an update on the situation or change in protective actions. An all clear notification indicates that the emergency has been contained. Status update and all clear notifications should be timed such that SMS messages do not overlap. Status update and all clear notifications are authorized by the person who has incident command, which may be the senior officer on duty, university police chief, or other RUA.

5.9 Emergency Notification System Authorizations (Appendix 3)

5.9.1 All UNC Pembroke ENS alert protocols and procedures will be coordinated and authorized through the Department of Police and Public Safety and the Office of the Executive Director of University Communications and Marketing.

**6. EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION SYSTEM STAFF ASSIGNMENTS, ROLES**

6.1 Roles and actions may be assigned to staff at UNC Pembroke for authorizing and operating the UNC Pembroke ENS. The action checklists provide detailed guidance for each position within the UNC Pembroke ENS.

6.2 Summaries of the UNC Pembroke ENS Staff Assignments and Roles are listed in Appendix 4 of this regulation.

**7. LEGAL NOTICE**

7.1. The information contained in this protocol has been prepared for use by UNC Pembroke. The information is guidance for issuance of an emergency notification, recognizing that individual circumstance or events not anticipated by this protocol may occur. The experience and judgment of those utilizing the protocol is an important consideration in how and when the protocol is utilized and when a notification is issued. The content represents the best opinions on the subject. No warranty, guarantee, or representation is made by the university as to the sufficiency of the information contained herein and the university assumes no responsibility in connection therewith. This protocol is intended to provide guidelines for safe practices; therefore, it cannot be assumed that all plausible and non-plausible scenarios are contained in this document, or that other or additional information or measures may not be required.

**8. APPLICABLE FORMS**

8.1 Appendix 1 - Immediate Notification Decision-Making Flowchart

8.2 Appendix 2 - Urgent Notification (Timely Warning) Decision-Making Flowchart

8.3 Appendix 3 - Emergency Notification System Authorizations

8.4 Appendix 4 - Summary of Staff Assignments and Roles in the UNC Pembroke ENS