

# EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

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## INTRODUCTION

The University of Winnipeg Emergency Communications Plan is a partner document to the Emergency Management Plan and is designed as a reference to guide response for the communication of critical information to campus constituents — including faculty, staff, students, contractors, visitors, and external and community partners/stakeholders — during emergencies and other events where there is a requirement to alert individuals of situations which may pose a threat to injury and/or the loss of life.

This plan has been developed in consultation with, and adheres to, the policies and guidelines for communication as established through The University of Winnipeg’s marketing and communications department.

For the purpose of this document, an emergency is defined as any incident or situation that poses an immediate risk to health, life, property, or the environment and which has impacted upon or disrupted the delivery of services on the University campus. Emergencies may include situations related to fires, severe weather, and criminal activity.

The University of Winnipeg has designed its emergency response plan based on an “all hazards” approach. Messaging and the delivery of emergency communications have been developed in consultation with the UWinnipeg marketing and communications department and approved through the University’s executive committee under authority of the President.

## OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of emergency communications is to ensure the quick and accurate dissemination of information for the safety and well-being of all University of Winnipeg constituents.

Secondary objectives include ensuring that all University constituents affected by the emergency event are continually updated until the event’s conclusion.

## ANATOMY OF EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

The following points outline considerations related to the deployment of mass notification systems for alerting individuals of emergency events:

- Many emergencies that may befall the university (or surrounding area) can occur with little to no warning. As a result of the campus layout, individuals may not be readily aware of potential threats that may impact their safety and well-being.
- As a result of instant messaging through various social media platforms, information from individuals “close” to the scene may be skewed and incomplete. This creates the potential to provide inaccurate information for persons to take actions for their and others’ personal safety.
- The Emergency Communications Plan is designed to work with the emergency response apparatus to ensure that the University of Winnipeg may quickly share information based on known facts and to ensure the furthest possible reach with the use of established communications platforms to convey critical messaging.
- All emergency communications and messaging provided to University of Winnipeg constituents shall be authorized and appropriately direct individuals regarding actions to take throughout the life cycle of an emergency event, beginning from the critical initial phases to the cessation of the situation.
- The University of Winnipeg, through the Emergency Communications Plan, will endeavor to ensure timely and accurate information is provided concerning emergency incidents and to not convey information which is speculative or may lead to confusion and/uncertainty.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **Level 1 - Routine Incidents (Yellow)**

Routine Incidents are those which can typically be handled locally (security, facilities, IT, C-CERT, etc.) and for which there is no immediate threat to life safety or critical infrastructure. Despite no imminent threat, there may be a requirement to disseminate advisory information to the University populace for awareness and, depending on the circumstances, to keep individuals away from the affected scene. Messaging for these scenarios will normally be sent through the University’s UW Safe app using language prepared for release by the marketing and communications department.

For situations that requires an immediate action be undertaken and under the premise of an Emergency Management situation, as described in the UWinnipeg Emergency Plan, “push” notifications will be issued through the UW Safe app.

All other messaging deployed through the UW Safe app will continue under the current parameters of the service and in accordance with the University’s security communications guidelines.

## **Level 2 - Emergency Incidents (Orange)**

Emergency Incidents are situations which may require the assistance of emergency services (Winnipeg Police Service, Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service, Winnipeg Ambulance, or others as required) as the event is beyond the capacity of what can be handled locally. These incidents have the potential to cause, or have caused, a disruption to normal operations — and the incidence of injuries or damage to infrastructure is likely to or has occurred.

In these types of events, the Emergency Operations Centre may be activated and the Executive Committee engaged to provide direction on actions and communications related to the event.

Critical information relating to Emergency Incidents will be communicated through established messaging protocol including: UW Safe app push messaging, the UWinnipeg website, internal email, UWinnipeg social media channels, and established media protocols.

## **Level 3 – Disaster-level Incidents (Red)**

Disaster-level Incidents are significant and involve major disruption to University operations, including serious injuries and/or loss of life and critical infrastructure. Disaster-level Incidents are well beyond the University's capacity to manage on its own and require a full activation of the University Emergency Plan. Emergency communications will flow through the established messaging protocol, and there will also be significant involvement of the Executive Committee, the Emergency Operations Centre and First Responder Teams operating under the provisions of the Incident Command Management System.

Disaster-level Incidents require a continuous and unimpeded flow of information involving all aspects of emergency communications, including:

- The development of key outbound messages for pre-approval by the President;
- The coordination of news conferences and/or news releases in consultation with the Emergency Management Team or the Emergency Operations Centre, if activated — with final approval of messaging through the President;
- Updating the media through the life cycle of the emergency event;
- The development of messaging for operators at the call centre or “hotline” as established by the Registrar, human resources department, and Technology Solutions Centre;
- Continuous updating of the University's website for dissemination of information and guidance related to the emergency event for faculty, staff, students, and their families;



- Designating a “site” representative at the emergency event to serve as the media manager and working in partnership with emergency responder services; and/or
- Convening a communication working group (if required) established by the Communications Director or designate to assist the Information Officer with the development of key messaging and dissemination.

### **Post-event Communications**

The Executive Committee, in consultation with the EOC and/or Emergency Services, will determine when an emergency event has concluded and regular communications may resume. Although the emergency may have subsided, it will still be necessary to inform University constituents and stakeholders about recovery efforts and other supports/services to deal with the after-effects of the emergency incident.

These messages will typically be conveyed through the use of the university’s established messaging protocol and apparatus.

### **COMMUNICATIONS PLAN TESTING AND MAINTENANCE**

The Emergency Communications Plan and the various applications for disseminating information will be tested on a regular basis to ensure functionality. There should also be an educational campaign each school year to make University constituents aware of emergency notification methods and individual responsibilities should these tools be activated.

The Emergency Communications Plan is a living document and subject to regular review and updating, including:

- Changes in emergency messaging delivery methods (equipment, software, etc.)
- Key contacts and lists
- Additional supporting documents (templates, checklists, etc.)



**EMERGENCY  
INCIDENT**



# Emergency Communications Summary Action Plan

**CAMPUS SECURITY  
ENGAGED**

**ROUTINE INCIDENT**

**EMERGENCY INCIDENT**

**DISASTER INCIDENT**

**LEVEL TWO OR THREE RESPONSE  
(Emergency or Disaster)**

Primarily tools:  
**EMNS & Social Media**

**Security calls 911.**

Director of Security tells Director of Communications (phone, cell, email) we must either:

**a) EVACUATE**

or;

**b) LOCKDOWN**

Communications activates pre-authorized messages.

**INCIDENT CLOSURE**

## **UWSAFE APP**

Emergency vs. Standard Messaging

Emergency Events of a routine nature and where specific actions are required to be taken by the university populace and where no imminent threat exists to safety, may be pushed out through the UWSafe App.

Where immediate action is not required, but the information would be useful to the community the newsfeed function of the app will be used.

These messages are designed to provide an awareness and cautionary information in order that individuals have relevant information and in some cases, can avoid areas where there may be a concern.

## **STEP ONE: PUBLIC ADDRESS, EMAILS, SMS, SCREEN LOCK, SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBPAGE**

SEE Appendix 1 pre-authorized immediate messages

- a) Security communicates danger INTERNALLY immediately to everyone on campus via the PA system, runners and loud hailers, directs university community to take action(s).
- b) Communications sends same message EXTERNALLY via social media (ongoing tweets, Facebook Posts)
- c) Communications sends same message to faculty and staff via Outlook email
- d) Communications sends email to UW tenants group
- e) Communications posts same message on homepage website – top banner
- f) TSC sends same message to students in email blast (8:30 to 4:30 pm only, weekdays)
- g) Emergency Manager initiates AppArmor Mass Notification protocols
- h) Communications creates web page under NEWS for detailed messages

## **STEP TWO: MEDIA COMMAND ON-SITE and at EOC**

SEE Appendix 2 holding messages

- i) Communications Director activates Digital Communications Centre team
- j) Communications Director attends to Emergency Operations Centre
- k) Public Information Officer #1 goes to Emergency Operations Centre and creates ongoing messages for multiple audiences
- l) Public Information Officer #2 attends to crisis site, liaises with police, fire officials, establishes scrum area and liaises with media on site, under the direction of the Communications Director, in coordination with EOC
- m) Public Information Officer #3 goes to phone bank to assist with incoming/outgoing messaging, if required

## **STEP THREE: ON-GOING COMMUNICATIONS**

- n) Communications centre team uses social media as primary on-going information vehicles
- o) Communications staff prepare on-going website and media bulletins for review by EMT and approval by President
- p) Communications staff set-up media scrums or press conferences as needed
- q) Communications staff monitors media reports for inaccuracies, reaction and prepares corrective messages
- s) EOC activates phone bank as needed to accept incoming inquiries

**Tweet to us @uwinnipeg**

**Tweet out: #UWPG**

**Security: 204.786.6666**