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# MERCER UNIVERSITY



# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

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## SUMMARY

The Mercer University Emergency Preparedness Plan provides a management framework for responding to major emergencies that may threaten the health and safety of the University community, or disrupt its programs and operations. The Emergency Plan applies to a broad range of emergency events, including such incidents as fires or explosions, hazardous material releases, extended power outages, floods, or mass casualty events.

The Emergency Plan establishes an **Emergency Management Team (EMT)** that ascertains the scope of an incident and advises the University President. The Emergency Management Team establishes response strategies and tactics, deploys resources, and initiates the emergency recovery process.

Emergency response actions are guided by Mercer's **overriding emergency goals**:

- 1. To protect life safety**
- 2. To secure critical infrastructures and facilities**
- 3. To resume the teaching and research program**

The Emergency Management Team (EMT) mobilizes at a central **Emergency Operations Center (EOC)**, located in the **Mercer Police Department (MERPO) headquarters**, 1765 Winship Street. An alternate EOC site is the University Relations Office, 400 Poplar Street. The EMT gathers emergency information from a number of **Field Operations Centers (FOCs)** that are established in the offices of Vice-Presidents, Deans, and Directors, and then disseminates guidance concerning emergency resources and information to the various FOCs. On the Atlanta Campus, the Emergency Management Team mobilizes in the EOC, located in the MERPO—Atlanta headquarters. The alternate Atlanta site is the Physical Plant building. The **University Relations Office FOC is the sole source of campus emergency information**, and it disseminates all internal and external emergency bulletins and announcements. In some emergencies, field command posts may be set up to stage resources or manage operations in affected areas of the campus.

An emergency event at Mercer may be designated as a **Level 1, Level 2, or Level 3 event**:

- Level 1:** A minor incident that is quickly resolved with internal resources or limited help. The Emergency Plan is not activated.
- Level 2:** A major emergency that impacts sizable portions of the campus, and that may affect mission-critical functions or life safety. The Emergency Plan may be activated, as determined by the President or his designee. The Emergency Operations Center may be opened.

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**Level 3:** A disaster that involves the entire campus and surrounding community. The Emergency Plan is activated, and the entire Emergency Management Team mobilizes at the Emergency Operation Center.

**Department Emergency Plans** are developed in each Mercer administrative and academic unit. These documents outline strategies for protecting department personnel and programs, and for coordinating with the FOC and the EOC.

# INTRODUCTION

## PURPOSE

The Mercer University Emergency Preparedness Plan outlines the University's procedures for managing major emergencies that may threaten the health and safety of the campus community or disrupt its programs and activities. The Emergency Preparedness Plan identifies departments and individuals that are directly responsible for emergency response and critical support services, and provides a management structure for coordinating and deploying essential resources.

At Mercer, planning ahead for emergencies is part of normal business planning and campus life, and all members of the campus community share a responsibility for preparedness. An emergency can strike anytime or anywhere, and a disaster will affect everyone. Accordingly,

- All employees and students have a personal responsibility for knowing what to do before, during, and after an emergency to protect their safety and their work.
- All administrative and academic units are expected to maintain a Department Emergency Plan to protect personnel and programs, and to support campus emergency response and recovery. Vice Presidents, Deans, and Directors establish Field Operations Centers (FOCs) that distribute Department Emergency Planning Guidelines with "templates" for developing local plans that are consistent with University policies and procedures.
- The University maintains a comprehensive emergency preparedness education and training program to mitigate potential hazards, and to familiarize students and employees with emergency procedures.

The Emergency Preparedness Plan is written, reviewed, and amended by the Emergency Preparedness Planning Steering Committee. The Steering Committee provides general oversight for the entire emergency planning process and meets regularly to address ongoing preparedness, response, and recovery issues.

## SCOPE

The Mercer University Emergency Preparedness Plan guides emergency preparedness, response, and recovery actions. It applies to a broad range of emergency incidents, which are classified according to their severity and potential impact:

**LEVEL 1:** A minor, localized department or building incident that is quickly resolved with existing University resources or limited outside help.

A Level 1 emergency has little or no impact on personnel or normal operations outside the locally affected area.

Level 1 incidents generally do not require activation of the Emergency Plan. Impacted personnel or departments coordinate directly with the Mercer Police Department, the Health and Safety Office, and/or Physical Plant to resolve Level 1 conditions. In some incidents, University Relations will be asked to assist in the preparation of bulletins, press releases, or other public announcements.

Examples: Odor complaint, localized chemical spill, plumbing failure or water leak

**LEVEL 2:** A major emergency that disrupts sizable portions of the campus community. Level 2 emergencies may require assistance from external organizations. These events may escalate quickly, and have serious consequences for mission-critical functions and/or life safety.

Level 2 incidents may require activation of the Emergency Plan, as determined by the President or his designee.

Examples: Building fire, major chemical spill, extensive power or utility outage, severe flooding, or any existing or imminent external emergency that may affect University personnel or operations.

**LEVEL 3:** A disaster involving the entire campus and surrounding community. The effects of the emergency are wide-ranging and complex, and normal University operations are suspended. A timely resolution of disaster conditions requires University-wide cooperation and extensive coordination with external jurisdictions.

Upon a determination by the President or his designee that a Level 3 incident exists, the Emergency Plan is automatically activated.

Examples: Major earthquake, terrorist attack.

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**All Mercer management personnel (i.e., senior administrative officers, deans, department chairs, directors, laboratory and facility managers) are considered “essential personnel” during major emergencies or disasters, and their emergency roles and responsibilities are specified in their respective Department Emergency Plans.**

# **EMERGENCY PREPARATION**

## **EMERGENCY RESPONSE LEADERSHIP**

An Emergency Management Team (EMT), drawn from the University's senior administrative and academic leadership, coordinates the campus response to major incidents. The President or his designee provides executive supervision for the entire emergency response process. The President determines whether to activate the Emergency Plan and whether to convene all or part of the Emergency Management Team.

The Emergency Management Team (EMT) is comprised of:

1. President
2. Senior Vice President for Marketing Communications and Chief of Staff
3. Executive Vice President for Administration and Finance
4. Senior Vice President for University Advancement
5. Senior Vice President and General Counsel
6. Senior Vice President for Enrollment Management
7. Provost

When the Emergency Management Team assembles, its responsibilities are to:

- Determine the scope and impact of the incident
- Prioritize emergency actions
- Deploy and coordinate resources and equipment
- Communicate critical information and instruction
- Monitor and re-evaluate conditions
- Coordinate with government agencies

When emergency conditions abate, the President determines the appropriate time to deactivate the Emergency Plan.

## **THE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER (EOC)**

When the President activates the Campus Emergency Plan, Emergency Management Team (EMT) members report to a central Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to coordinate decisions and resources.

The Macon campus EOC is located at the Mercer Police Department (MERPO), 1765 Winship Street, Macon, Georgia. An alternate Macon campus EOC site (if conditions are unsafe at MERPO) is the University Relations Office, 400 Poplar Street, Macon, Georgia.

The Atlanta campus EOC is located at the Mercer Police Department (MERPO), Student Center, Atlanta, Georgia. An alternate Atlanta campus EOC site (if conditions are unsafe at MERPO) is the Physical Plant Office, 3042 Flowers Road South, Atlanta, Georgia.

An EOC Directory of critical contacts and resources, special databases and maps, and critical communications supplies are stored at each EOC site. EOC equipment and supplies are also maintained at both locations. Supplementary materials are also stored in a portable container at the Environmental, Health & Safety Office in the Patterson Building (Macon Campus), which can be transported to any appropriate location if emergency conditions affect the functionality of both designated EOC sites.

The Environmental, Health & Safety Office manages the EOC facility and coordinates with MERPO to organize the alternate EOC if required. The Environmental, Health & Safety Office ensures that appropriate data, contact information, equipment, and supplies are maintained at all times. When the President activates the Campus Emergency Plan and convenes the Emergency Management Team, the senior MERPO officer on duty (or an appropriate designee) opens the EOC facility, and assists the Director of the Environmental, Health & Safety Office in the arrangement of the EOC's equipment and supplies and in the coordination of the EOC's continued operation.

## **FIELD OPERATIONS CENTERS (FOCs)**

Field Operations Centers (FOCs) serve as the pivotal communications interface between the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and the campus community during a major emergency or disaster. FOCs gather emergency impact data from their areas and account for their personnel, transmit reports to the EOC, and disseminate emergency instructions to constituents. FOCs also oversee preparedness planning in their areas. For example, they have oversight for department preparedness planning and training. FOCs also help communicate the location of Emergency Assembly Points (EAPs) used during emergency evacuations in their respective areas, and participate in campus exercises to practice using these resources. Furthermore, FOCs coordinate the planning and implementation of business recovery and resumption activities in their respective areas.

There are currently thirty-three (33) Field Operations Centers: eleven (11) are in operational areas that have specific emergency response or specialized emergency service responsibilities, and the remaining twenty-two (22) are in academic or administrative units.

Operational Services FOCs:

1. Environmental, Health & Safety Office (Macon)
2. Physical Plant (Macon and Atlanta)
3. University Relations Office
4. Residence Life Office (Macon)
5. Auxiliary Services Office
6. Campus Life (Atlanta)
7. Information Technology & Telecommunications
8. University Finance Office
9. Psychiatric Response Team

Administrative and Academic FOCs:

1. College of Liberal Arts
2. Walter F. George School of Law
3. School of Medicine
4. Eugene W. Stetson School of Business and Economics (Macon and Atlanta)
5. School of Engineering
6. Tift College of Education (Macon and Atlanta)
7. University Libraries
8. Georgia Baptist College of Nursing
9. Southern School of Pharmacy
10. McAfee School of Theology
11. Payroll, Benefits and Institutional Research
12. University Advancement Office
13. University Admissions
14. Student Financial Aid
15. Human Resources
16. Athletics
17. Mercer Engineering Research Center
18. University Center
19. Regional Academic Centers
20. Grand Opera House

To prepare for their critical roles and responsibilities, all Field Operations Centers coordinate effective emergency preparedness planning in their respective jurisdictions by:

1. Preparing a written FOC Emergency Plan that addresses preparedness, response, and business recovery, and communicating it to their constituent units
2. Identifying a primary and alternate FOC site for emergency response
3. Establishing communications strategies and resources to support FOC functions (e.g., emergency hotlines, faxes, telephone notification lists, wireless telephones, etc.)
4. Designating key personnel for primary emergency roles:
  - A *FOC Emergency Coordinator* to develop the FOC Emergency Plan
  - A volunteer *Response Team* to assist with building evacuations
  - An *Information Coordinator* to interface with the Emergency Operations Center (EOC)
  - A *Business Recovery Team* to manage local program resumption
5. Arranging appropriate preparedness training for their personnel
6. Participating in campus FOC Workshops and Emergency Management Exercises

Two documents supplement this Emergency Preparedness Plan and aid in its implementation at the local level:

- The FOC Emergency Planning Guidelines (*Appendix A*)
- The Department Emergency Planning Guidelines (*Appendix B*)

In addition, the Environmental, Health & Safety Office provides preparedness planning consultations to Vice-Presidents, Deans, and Directors, along with technical support to their constituent departments, and administrative support to the Emergency Preparedness Steering Committee.

## EMERGENCY RESPONSE

### EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER (EOC) ACTION CHECKLIST

Upon the activation of the Emergency Plan by the President or his designee, the Emergency Management Team (EMT) will convene at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), and address the following tasks:

- Obtain a situation briefing from MERPO, the Environmental, Health & Safety Office, or external agencies.
- Evaluate the institutional effects of the emergency. Review emergency goals and response priorities (below), and develop an Action Plan in accordance with those guidelines.
- If necessary, authorize a temporary suspension of classes, or a campus evacuation or closure.
- Establish communications with affected areas, and verify the safety of non-reporting areas (e.g., conduct a “roll call” of Field Operations Centers and field command posts, if they have been set up for the emergency).
- Establish special services, as necessary (e.g., sheltering, communications, transportation)
- Provide appropriate security at critical sites. Post signage and/or barricades where necessary.
- Coordinate with Student Affairs FOC to organize phone banks, if necessary. (Phone banks can refer callers to emergency services, take messages, support rumor control, etc.)
- Establish a Media Relations Center that will coordinate press releases, and manage news conferences, site tours, interviews, etc.
- Review the content of internal and external public information bulletins and announcements.
- Coordinate casualty notifications.
- Develop emergency-specific policies as needed.
- Determine University priorities for the recovery of mission-critical teaching and research programs.
- Plan the resumption or relocation of University activities.
- Interface with external agencies and the community.
- Address legal issues associated with the emergency.

## **EMERGENCY RESPONSE GOALS AND PRIORITIES**

### ***GOALS:***

In any emergency situation, Mercer University's overriding goals are:

- 1. To Protect Life Safety**
- 2. To Secure Critical Infrastructure and Facilities**
- 3. To Resume the Teaching and Research Program**

In developing emergency-specific action plans and policies, the Emergency Management Team will be guided by these goals. Naturally, the circumstances of a particular emergency event (such as the time or day when an incident occurs) may require some adjustments, but the following emergency response priorities will generally be observed:

### ***LIFE SAFETY, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND PROGRAM PRIORITIES:***

- 1. Dependent Populations**

(e.g., student residences; occupied classrooms; offices; event venues)

- 2. Buildings Critical to Health and Safety**

(e.g., medical facilities; sites with potential hazards from chemical, biological or radioactive materials; police buildings; emergency shelters; food supply locations)

- 3. Systems that Sustain the Emergency Response**

(e.g., energy systems and utilities; communications hubs; computer networks; transportation systems)

- 4. Classroom and Research Buildings (Unoccupied)**

(e.g., primary lecture halls and classrooms; specialized laboratories and research sites; libraries and special collections)

- 5. Administrative Buildings (Unoccupied)**

## **EMERGENCY INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS**

In any emergency, notifications to affected students, faculty, researchers and staff should be initiated immediately as the first step in the emergency response process.

During a limited Level 1 incident, response units simply alert department managers of the situation and provide updates throughout the course of the event. (In some cases, the Emergency Management Team may issue bulletins to affected units). Making timely internal and external emergency announcements during a Level 2 or Level 3 emergency requires a much broader approach involving many participants. Students, faculty, researchers, staff, and visitors must know what happened, where it happened, and what to do next.

At Mercer, the delivery of internal and external emergency information is planned and coordinated by the University Relations Office. The University Relations Office FOC becomes the central source of information for the entire University. The University Relations Office FOC works with the other campus FOCs and pre-designated Information Coordinators from each unit that is represented at the central Emergency Operations Center. Internal campus status bulletins and external press briefings are issued every two hours, on an alternating schedule. At least two general information management meetings are held daily.

Resources that are used to distribute internal emergency information and instructions include:

- Campus Emergency Information Hotlines  
University EOC bulletins
  - Atlanta (678) 547-6111
  - Macon (478) 301-5335
- Mercer emergency web site: <http://www.mercer.edu>
- Local Field Operations Center (FOC) emergency hotlines
- Voice-mail, e-mail, and Cell Phone contacts
- Staffed information booths and phone banks
- Posted bulletins & flyers

This coordinated approach to disseminating critical emergency announcements will provide quick, reliable and consistent information to our community and will reduce general demand on vital emergency communications lines.

In the event that emergency conditions disrupt power and telephone service, emergency information, along with all emergency communications, will be profoundly restricted. Messengers, radios, and cellular phones will be used until systems can be restored.

## **PLAN DE-ACTIVATION**

When emergency conditions are stabilized and normal University operations can resume, the Emergency Plan will be de-activated by the President or his designee. A formal announcement will be disseminated, using all emergency information and notification systems.

If the nature of the incident requires an extension of some emergency services, limited EOC functions may be continued to coordinate those services among selected FOCs. Continuing functions may include:

- Ongoing repairs and their staging
- Academic or administrative space adjustments
- Support services for impacted students, faculty, or staff
- Community relief efforts

## **EMERGENCY RECOVERY**

### **COST RECOVERY**

One of the final EOC actions may be to appoint an “Emergency Cost Recovery Work Group.” The composition of the Work Group will be related to the nature and magnitude of the emergency, but will include a core membership representing:

1. President
2. Senior Vice President for Marketing Communications and Chief of Staff
3. Executive Vice President for Administration and Finance
4. Senior Vice President for University Advancement
5. Senior Vice President and General Counsel
6. Senior Vice President for Enrollment Management
7. Provost

All academic and administrative departments have advance copies of internal cost and loss documentation forms in their Department Emergency Planning Guidelines to help prepare them for the post-event claims process. Additional materials and guidance documents from external funding sources, such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Georgia Emergency Management Agency, or other agencies will be distributed as needed.

### **BUSINESS RESUMPTION**

Mercer’s business contingency planning process will be focused upon the following core activities:

1. Identification of local mission critical processes, based on the primary mission(s) and business function(s) of each unit
2. Development of procedures for recovering all or part of the highest priority functions, given specific failure scenarios and time horizons
  - Determination of whether each process could be suspended or degraded, or whether it must be fully functional
  - Identification of alternate work sites or other temporary facilities for the most critical functions
  - Ongoing back-up of critical data and protection of critical equipment
3. Assignment of local business resumption roles, responsibilities, and authority
4. Procedures for recovering impacted operations
5. Criteria for returning to normal business

Schools and departments are expected to continue to review and identify mission-critical functions, and maintain an updated plan that specifies how they will provide those functions in the context of different emergency scenarios. The following questions have been distributed to Field Operations Centers to provide specific guidance for recovery planning in their constituent departments:

1. What are your department's business interdependencies? What do you need from other departments to perform critical functions? Which departments depend on you to perform their critical functions?
2. Are there days of week or month, or months of the year, when a major emergency would be even more disruptive than at other times?
3. Is your essential data backed-up regularly? Would the information be accessible if your building was closed, or if the University network was down?
4. Does your Field Operations Center (FOC) and its constituent departments have documented disaster recovery procedures in place?
5. Has your Field Operations Center (FOC) and the constituent departments named a Disaster Recovery Team of key individuals who would coordinate the restoration of business operations?
  - Are the members of the Recovery Team aware of their disaster recovery roles and responsibilities?
  - Do these essential personnel live nearby? How would you notify them to come in to work?
6. Is there a process for tracking the cost of business recovery (including funds spent on overtime, special materials/supplies, temporary personnel, etc.) and a mechanism for distinguishing emergency recovery costs from other business expenditures?
  - Are special vendor/contractor arrangements necessary for your department(s) to insure continuity of services?
  - Does your FOC have a Purchasing Card System account for emergency purchases?
  - If only 50% of your staff/faculty could return to work, could you open?
  - Can some employees telecommute during a disaster? What can you do now to plan for that?
  - If University had volunteer workers available after a disaster, what skills would be needed in your department?
8. What equipment is necessary for the department to perform its functions?

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- How would you replace equipment within hours or days to be able to resume normal business?
- If your department couldn't use its office space to operate, how much space would you need to relocate? What kinds of equipment are essential for performing your unit's critical functions?

## **PLAN RE-ASSESSMENT**

Immediately following the cessation of Level 2 or Level 3 emergency operations, a survey of EMT members, Field Operations Centers, and other campus constituents will be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the response. Survey results will help determine whether portions of the Emergency Plan should be modified as a result of the emergency experience. The Emergency Preparedness Planning Steering Committee will prepare a written "Post-Emergency Summary Report" compiling post-event observations, and will coordinate appropriate Emergency Plan revisions.

Strengthening emergency recovery plans will ensure that Mercer University's Emergency Plans address all three phases of an emergency – Preparedness, Response, and Recovery – in order to protect both the safety and the program goals of the entire campus community.

## ***Glossary of Terms***

### **Emergency Preparedness Planning Steering Committee**

Provides general oversight for the entire planning process and meets regularly to address emergency preparedness, response, and recovery issues

### **Emergency Levels**

A ranking that classifies Mercer emergencies according to their severity and potential impact:

- Level 1:** Minor, localized emergency
- Level 2:** Major incident that disrupts operations
- Level 3:** Disaster involving the campus and community

### **Emergency Management Team (EMT)**

A team drawn from the University's senior administrative and academic management that coordinates the campus emergency response to major incidents

### **Emergency Operations Center (EOC)**

A management center where the EMT coordinates the University's emergency decisions and resources

### **Field Operations Center (FOC)**

Emergency management centers in Vice-Presidents', Deans', and Directors' areas of responsibility that interface between the University EOC and campus departments

### **Emergency Information Hotlines**

Dedicated telephone lines that disseminate recorded emergency bulletins

### **Emergency Assembly Point (EAP)**

Outdoor evacuation locations for each Mercer building

Maps and lists of EAP assignments for campus buildings are found at:

[http://www.mercer.edu/\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_/\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_/](http://www.mercer.edu/_____/_____/)