

# Emergency Operations Plan Synopsis

September 1, 2014

The University of Alabama

Prepared by the Office of Emergency Preparedness

## **Introduction**

The University of Alabama may be vulnerable to a variety of disasters (natural, technological, or human-caused), disorders, and other emergencies that may cause property damage, injury, and/or loss of life. Effective planning and implementation of an emergency operations plan may mitigate the effects of such events. To provide an effective response, it is important that University officials, departments, and units understand their roles and responsibilities during such events. These non-routine responsibilities begin when the incident is recognized and a response ensues. A prepared and coordinated response by the University and local officials can save lives, protect property, and quickly restore essential services.

In an effort to assist the University community during an emergency, an Emergency Operations Plan has been developed. The plan calls for the creation of the Emergency Preparedness and Response Policy Group (EPRPG).

The EPRPG convenes and/or communicates when an emergency or potential emergency occurs. The EPRPG monitors the status of an incident and provides the President with policy recommendations. Additionally, the EPRPG has the authority to appoint the Incident Commander and provide policy direction for the incident.

The Incident Commander manages the emergency response. The Emergency Preparedness and Response Policy Group manages the impact of the significant emergency or dangerous situation and provides policy guidance and support to the Incident Commander.

The Emergency Operations Plan works in conjunction with the Tuscaloosa County Emergency Management Agency's (EMA) Emergency Operations Plan. The effectiveness of the Emergency Operations Plan depends on the support and cooperation of all University community members.

## ***Purpose***

The purpose of The University of Alabama Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) is to establish policy, procedures, guidelines, organizational structure, and responsibilities for response during campus emergencies. This document incorporates principles from the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the Incident Command System (ICS).

This plan provides guidelines for an all-hazard approach to mitigate harmful effects from potential hazards in three broad categories: natural, technological, or human-caused. Potential hazards are defined and addressed in the response annexes.

## ***Scope***

The EOP applies to the University community (students, employees, and guests) on property owned or leased by the University. It is the official Emergency Operations Plan for The University of Alabama and supersedes previous plans. It is designed to anticipate University needs during an incident and provides guidance for departments, agencies, and response organizations. Nothing in the plan shall be construed in a manner that limits the use of good judgment and common sense in matters not foreseen or covered by this plan or any of its annexes and appendices.

Each individual has a personal responsibility to familiarize him/herself with basic emergency procedures and to act in a manner so as not to endanger his/her life or the lives of other members of the University community. Faculty and staff may have specific roles that require them to respond outside of their normal responsibilities. Due to the nature of an emergency, faculty and staff should be willing to assist the University community in varied roles as needed.

The plan shall be subordinate to State and Federal plans during a disaster declared by these authorities.

## ***Authority and References***

This Emergency Operations Plan is promulgated under the authority of the President of The University of Alabama. The EOP fulfills the University's responsibility to adhere to the following guidelines and standards:

- National Incident Management System (NIMS) — Homeland Security Presidential Directive #5 mandates the usage of this standard across all jurisdictional levels as the approach for managing incidents
- National Response Framework (NRF) — Homeland Security Presidential Directive #8 provides the framework for how various levels of government conduct an all-hazards response

- Alabama Emergency Operations Plan — “State Code 31-9-10 directs the establishment of local organizations for emergency management in accordance with the State emergency management plan and programs. The local organizations have the responsibility of coordinating the disaster preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery efforts of local governments.” (p. 30, AEOP, 2009)

### ***Declaration of State of Emergency***

The University of Alabama President may declare a “University State of Emergency” in accordance with local, state, and federal law. The declaration, as determined by the President, may suspend or curtail normal University operations until a disaster, disorder, or crisis is resolved.

### ***Activation of Plan***

When warranted, the Emergency Preparedness and Response Policy Group will convene or communicate to obtain information concerning an emergency or potential emergency and to provide recommendations to the President. The activation of the Emergency Operations Plan is the responsibility of the Emergency Preparedness and Response Policy Group Leader on behalf of the President.

### ***Concept of Operations***

The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) will be activated as needed by the AVP for Public Safety or his/her designee. The EOC’s scope and function will be determined by type, severity, and needs of the incident. There are three levels of activation (current EOC status levels can be found at [www.beready.ua.edu](http://www.beready.ua.edu)):

Level 3 (Standby/Alert): Some emergencies may be handled through normal response operations. During this time, the EOC will not be formally activated.

Level 2 (Partial Activation): In the event the emergency cannot be handled using normal response procedures, the EOC will be activated to support the incident response.

Level 1 (Full Activation): A major emergency will necessitate the full activation of the EOC. The EOC will provide support to the Incident Commander.

## ***Organization Structure and Responsibilities***

### **President**

The University President is the Chief Executive Officer of The University of Alabama. As the senior officer, the President has the responsibility to either oversee or delegate oversight of the University's Emergency Operations Plan.

### **Incident Command**

The University of Alabama will follow the principles of NIMS during a significant emergency.

### **Emergency/Crisis Communication**

The Office of University Relations (UR) is charged with providing timely emergency and crisis communications to the University community. UAPD and the Office of Emergency Preparedness will serve as a limited backup in the event UR is unable to make the notification.

University Relations is the official spokesperson for the University during emergencies. All personnel should direct any media inquiries to UR for a response. University employees should refrain from speaking with the media on behalf of the University unless approved by UR.

### **Emergency Call Center**

During an emergency, the University Emergency Call Center may be activated to handle telephone inquiries. The EPRPG will authorize the activation of the Emergency Call Center when needed. The Office of University Relations will coordinate with the Emergency Call Center to provide information. The Office of Information Technology may be called upon to provide support in establishing and maintaining the Emergency Call Center.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### ***Students***

It is the responsibility of each student to familiarize him/herself with emergency procedures and evacuation plans for each building he/she regularly occupies, such as dorms, classrooms, and various student activity centers. Additionally, each student is responsible for quickly evaluating his/her situation in an emergency, and using common

sense to act in a way that does not endanger his/her life, nor the lives of fellow students, faculty/staff, or University visitors.

Students are expected to follow official communication and direction provided by University Relations, UAPD, or other University officials. The following sources may be used to communicate emergency information: UA Alerts, campus PA system, UA websites, UA social media, television/radio, digital signage, etc. Finally, students should notify UAPD (205-348-5454) or call 911 to report any situation they believe could be a danger to life and safety.

### ***Faculty and Staff***

It is the responsibility of faculty/staff to read and understand emergency procedures and evacuation plans for their respective units and the buildings they regularly occupy. Additionally, each faculty/staff member is responsible for quickly evaluating his/her situation in an emergency, and taking action according to the appropriate emergency plan and in a common sense approach so as not to endanger his/her life, nor the lives of students, fellow faculty/staff, and University visitors.

Faculty/Staff should follow the Emergency Plan procedures to report any situation they believe could be a danger to life and safety. Since employees are viewed by students as official representatives of the University, faculty/staff should be prepared to direct and assist students in the evacuation of buildings and help maintain order at designated assembly areas.

Finally, during a declared University State of Emergency, faculty/staff may be called upon to perform duties outside their specific job description. As such, faculty/staff should be prepared to assist as needed when their supervisor requests assistance.

### ***Academic/Support Unit Coordinators***

Each Academic/Support Unit coordinator will establish a Unit EOP designed to effectively handle problems affecting the unit.

### ***Emergency Preparedness***

The Office of Emergency Preparedness is responsible for maintaining the EOP, developing emergency plans for the University, monitoring the weather, ensuring a state of readiness for the EOC, providing NIMS training, developing and conducting exercises, and serving as a primary point of contact/liaison with Alabama and Tuscaloosa County Emergency Management Agencies or other emergency management officials. The Office of Emergency Preparedness is responsible for notifying and updating the Tuscaloosa County EMA should a University emergency occur. Emergency

Preparedness will also assist academic and support units in developing their emergency plans.

During an incident or event, Emergency Preparedness personnel may be tasked to Incident Command and/or activation and management of the EOC.

## **Hazard, Threat, or Incident Specific Annexes**

Response annexes provide specific guidelines and direction for identified crisis, disorders, or disasters that may impact The University of Alabama. University community members may find resource information regarding these types of incidents at [www.beready.ua.edu](http://www.beready.ua.edu).