

Emergency Operations Plan Synopsis

The University of Alabama

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Prepared by the
Office of Emergency Management

Introduction

The University of Alabama could be vulnerable to a variety of hazards (natural, technological, or human-caused) and emergencies that could cause property damage, injury, disruption of services, and/or loss of life. Effective planning and implementation of an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) could 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 forecasted or occurs 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.

The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and partners developed the EOP in an effort to better prepare the University and enhance public safety operations. The plan calls for the creation of a presidentially appointed Emergency Management Policy Group (EMPG) and EMGP Coordinator. The effectiveness of the EOP depends on the support and cooperation of all University community members.

Purpose

The purpose of The University of Alabama EOP is to establish procedures, guidelines, organizational structure, and responsibilities for the University's Emergency Management Program. This document incorporates principles from the *National Incident Management System* (NIMS) and the *National Response Framework*.

The EOP provides the framework to lessen the potential consequences of an emergency that threatens the safety of students, employees, and visitors, and/or damage to University property. Implementing this plan can minimize the effects of an emergency and aid in the restoration of University services following an emergency.

Scope

The EOP applies to students, employees, and visitors on property owned or leased by the University. The EOP supersedes plans from previous years. 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 (available at <https://ready.ua.edu> or the UA Safety mobile app) and to act in a manner so as not to endanger his/her life or the lives of other members of the University community. Employees could have specific roles that require them to respond outside of their normal roles and job description. Due to the nature of an emergency, employees should be willing to assist the University community in varied roles as needed. Employees should

familiarize themselves with the [Building Emergency Plan](https://ready.ua.edu/) (available at <https://ready.ua.edu/> or the UA Safety mobile app) and signage posted in buildings.

Authority and References

The EOP is promulgated under the authority of the President of The University of Alabama, as empowered by the Board of Trustees. The EOP fulfills the University's responsibility to adhere to the following guidelines and standards:

- *The Constitution of the State of Alabama, Section 264* – Created the Board of Trustees with the authority to manage The University of Alabama.
- *State of Alabama Code 16-47-1* – Identifies The University of Alabama as a public corporation.
- *State of Alabama Code 16-47-2* – States that the University shall have all of the rights, franchises, and powers necessary for its operation.
- *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
- Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) *Emergency Management Standard (2022)*
- *The University of Alabama Public Safety and Emergency Management Policy*
- *The University of Alabama Clery Emergency Response and Evacuation Policy*

Declaration of University State of Emergency Authority

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

Activation and Deactivation of Emergency Operations

The activation and deactivation of emergency operations is the responsibility of the Incident Commander. When warranted, the EMPG will convene or communicate to obtain information concerning an emergency or potential emergency and to provide recommendations to the president.

Concept of Operations

The EOP is used to provide prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery guidance for The University of Alabama. Potential hazards and threats are analyzed and response guidance provided.

In compliance with NIMS, the EOP contains a scalable, flexible approach for an emergency or disaster response. The EOP is structured to ensure a consistent and controlled response. EOP

implementation could require relocation of priority assets and personnel to alternate facilities and emergency acquisition of resources. If needed, the order of succession within the EOP will be implemented. Additional logistical support and resource requirements can be found in relevant ESFs.

Organization Structure and Responsibilities

President

The University President is the Chief Executive Officer of The University of Alabama. As the senior officer, the President is responsible for overseeing or delegating oversight of the University's EOP. These responsibilities include, but are not limited to, ensuring the University has an EOP, declaring a "University State of Emergency" when required, and serving as the highest level of authority during an emergency. The President appoints the EMPG and the EMPG Coordinator.

Office of Emergency Management

OEM maintains the EOP, develops emergency plans for the University, monitors hazard conditions and provides situational awareness, ensures a state of readiness for the EOC, provides NIMS training, develops and conducts exercises, and serves as a primary POC/liaison with Alabama EMA and Tuscaloosa County EMA or other emergency management officials. If a University emergency occurs, the OEM is responsible for notifying and providing situational awareness to key stakeholders and status updates to the Tuscaloosa County EMA. During an incident or event, the OEM staff could be tasked to Incident Command and/or activation and management of the EOC.

Emergency Management Policy Group (EMPG)

The EMPG is appointed by the President and comprised of senior administrative officials. The EMPG convenes and/or communicates as needed to gather information concerning an emergency or potential emergency and to provide recommendations to the President or designee. The EMPG meets regularly to discuss public safety issues and upcoming events, reviews emergency plans and processes, and provides input to the President on public safety concerns.

Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

The EOC is a designated, physical location where the University could provide central direction, control, and coordination for incident planning, response, and recovery.

Incident Command (IC)

The University of Alabama will follow the principles of NIMS during an emergency. As such, UAPD will initially fill the role of IC, including as needed the positions of operations chief,

planning chief, logistics chief, and finance/administration chief. Based upon the need for a multijurisdictional response, IC may evolve into Unified Command.

Building Representatives

Building representatives serve as a liaison between the building occupants and Facilities for communicating repair requests and tracking work orders. Additionally, they will function as the OEM point-of-contact to ensure the distribution of the *Building Emergency Plan* and safety information to all building occupants. The *Building Emergency Plan* is an all-hazard plan developed by OEM and includes ways building occupants should respond when an emergency occurs and is available at <https://ready.ua.edu/buildingrepsafetyinfo>.

Emergency/Crisis Communication

Public Safety Communications in coordination with Strategic Communications provides emergency communications for the University (*Communications Plan*). Public Safety Communications is charged with providing timely emergency and crisis communications to the University community. Once an emergency has been identified, UAPD/IC will notify Public Safety Communications to initiate the appropriate notification processes. Strategic Communications will serve as backup in the event Public Safety Communications is unable to make the notification. Once individuals or UA property is no longer in danger, Strategic Communications will assume responsibility for ongoing messaging.

Strategic Communications is responsible for the official communications for the University. All personnel should direct any media inquiries to Strategic Communications for a response. University employees should refrain from speaking with the media on behalf of the University unless approved by Strategic Communications.

Emergency Call Center

The EMPG could authorize Strategic Communications to establish and operate the emergency call center. During an emergency, the University community can seek accurate information regarding the University's status and/or that of its students, employees, or visitors from the emergency call center. The emergency call center could be established to handle telephone inquiries and, at the same time, correct any misinformation. Strategic Communications will coordinate with the emergency call center team to provide information. The Office of Information Technology (OIT) could be called upon to provide support in establishing and maintaining the emergency call center.

Students and Employees

It is the responsibility of students and employees to familiarize themselves with emergency procedures and evacuation plans for each building they occupy, such as dorms, classrooms, shelters, etc. Additionally, each student and employee is responsible for quickly evaluating their situation in an emergency, and using common sense to act in a way that does not endanger their life, nor the lives of fellow students, employees, or visitors.

Students and employees are expected to follow official communication and direction provided by Strategic Communications, UAPD, or other University officials. The following sources could be used to communicate emergency information: UA Alerts, PA systems, UA websites, UA social media, television/radio (including 92.5 FM), digital signage, etc. Finally, students and employees should notify UAPD (205-348-5454) or call 911 if they observe a dangerous or life-threatening situation. Additional safety information can be found in the [UA Safer Living Guide](#) at <https://ready.ua.edu> and/or UA Safety mobile app.

As representatives of the University, employees should be prepared to direct and assist students in evacuating buildings, locating shelters, and maintaining order. (This information can be found in the *Building Emergency Plan* posted within buildings.)

Finally, during a declared University State of Emergency, employees could be called upon to perform duties outside their specific job description. As such, employees should be prepared to assist as needed when their supervisor requests assistance. Additional information can be found at <https://ready.ua.edu> and the UA Safety mobile app.

Hazard, Threat, or Incident Specific Response

Specific guidelines and direction for hazards, threats, or incidents that could impact The University of Alabama are provided to students, employees, and visitors on the OEM website at <https://ready.ua.edu>, through the UA Safety mobile app, and through the *Building Emergency Plan* available at <https://ready.ua.edu/buildingrepsafetyinfo>. During an emergency, students, employees, and visitors should follow the guidance of UA officials.