

8. Emergency Preparedness

The following sections provide general safety guidelines and procedures for emergency preparedness. This section covers the following topics:

Topic	Page
8.1 Elements of Emergency Preparedness.....	8-2
8.2 Handling Emergencies	8-2
8.3 Bomb Threats	8-3
A. How to Handle a Threatening Phone Call.....	8-3
B. UPD Response to Bomb Threats.....	8-5
C. Handling Suspicious-Looking Items	8-5
D. Bomb Threat Observations	8-5
8.4 Emergency Power	8-6
8.5 Evacuation Plans	8-6
A. Developing a Plan	8-6
B. Conducting Fire Exit Drills and Evacuations	8-7
8.6 First Aid.....	8-8
A. Student Health Center	8-8
B. Initial First Aid.....	8-9
C. Snake Bites.....	8-9
8.7 Spill Response	8-10
8.8 Weather Emergencies.....	8-10
A. Heavy Rain/High Winds/Flash Flooding	8-10
B. Lightning	8-11
C. Tornado.....	8-11
D. Winter Weather	8-12
E. Hurricane.....	8-12

List of Figures

Figure 1 - Typical Evacuation Plan	8-7
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8.1 Elements of Emergency Preparedness

An emergency consists of any situation that poses immediate and extreme danger to people, property, or process. Because most emergencies are sudden, severe, and unexpected, it is extremely important to be prepared for a possible emergency. Proper preparation helps ensure safety and survival. A written emergency response or action plan is the best preparation tool for handling emergencies.

To ensure effectiveness, review and update emergency response plans regularly. Make sure that each response plan includes the following information:

- ◆ Procedure for sounding alarms
- ◆ Emergency escape procedures and escape route assignments
- ◆ Emergency procedures for employees with special needs
- ◆ Rescue and medical assistance requirements
- ◆ Names of persons or departments to contact for more information on handling emergencies
- ◆ Method for reporting emergencies
- ◆ Provision for training emergency procedures

8.2 Handling Emergencies

Regardless of the type of emergency in progress, you may call 911 and/or sound the fire alarm immediately. Remain calm, notify others, and respond to the emergency as appropriate. Do not attempt to handle any emergency situation in which you do not have training (e.g., firefighting, first aid, spill response, etc.).

IMPORTANT!

Call 911 and/or pull the fire alarm whenever a situation poses immediate danger to people, property, or process.

When you call to report an emergency, provide the operator with the following information:

- ◆ Building or area name
- ◆ Location
- ◆ Brief description of the emergency
- ◆ Your name
- ◆ A return contact phone number

The following sections offer specific safety guidelines and procedures for handling different types of emergencies.

8.3 Bomb Threats

Bomb threats and other threats of violence are serious emergencies that required prompt attention. Although bomb threats are rare, they are most likely to occur during final exams. The following sections offer guidance for handling bomb threats.

A. How to Handle a Threatening Phone Call

If you receive a bomb threat over the phone, remain calm and act courteous. If feasible, notify another person to listen on another extension. Take notes on the caller's threat, tone, voice characteristics, and background noise. If the caller seems talkative, ask questions such as the following:

- ◆ When will the bomb go off?
- ◆ How much time remains?
- ◆ Where is the bomb located?
- ◆ What kind of bomb is it?
- ◆ How do you know about this bomb?
- ◆ What is your name?
- ◆ Do you know there are people in the building who could be hurt or killed?

IMPORTANT!

If you receive a threatening phone call, remain calm and take notes. Try to find out as much as possible about the caller and threat.

The following form is an example of sounds to note while the caller is on the phone:

Caller's Identity	
Male	Female
Approximate Age	
Voice Characteristics	
Loud Voice	Soft Voice
High Pitched Voice	Low Pitched Voice
Intoxicated	
Accent	
Local Accent	Foreign Accent
Race	
Speech	
Fast Speech	Slow Speech
Distinct Speech	Slurred Speech
Nasal Speech	Lisp Speech
Normal Speech	
Manner	
Calm	Angry
Rational	Irrational
Coherent	Incoherent
Emotional	Laughing
Language/Grammar	
Excellent Grammar	Good Grammar
Fair Grammar	Poor Grammar
Foul Grammar	
Background Noises	
Voices in Background	Music in Background
Animals in Background	Street Traffic in Background

B. UPD Response to Bomb Threats

The UPD regards all bomb threats as serious. After learning of a bomb threat, the UPD notifies the appropriate building official and asks him or her to notify key building personnel. Together, the building personnel and the UPD search the building, including trash cans and restrooms, for anything “suspicious” or “out of the ordinary.” After interviewing the person who received the bomb threat, the UPD determines if the threat appears to be a hoax or an actual emergency.

The UPD has the authority to evacuate a building if circumstances warrant this precaution. The building official may evacuate the building at his/her discretion based on the nature of the threat.

Building evacuations may be conducted by sounding the fire alarm. If a fire alarm is used in response to a bomb threat, the UPD will advise the Fire Department.

C. Handling Suspicious-Looking Items

If you locate a suspicious-looking item, do not handle the item. Clear the area of personnel and notify the UPD immediately. If necessary, the UPD will call San Marcos Fire Department or the Austin Bomb Demolition Squad for assistance.

D. Bomb Threat Observations

For most bomb threats, the caller announces that a bomb is set to go off at a certain time and then hangs up. Because routine bomb threat evacuations may spawn numerous hoax calls, consider the following:

- ◆ Most intended explosions have no warning. Usually, after the bomb is detonated, a party claims credit and then explains why the bomb was set.
- ◆ In cases where an actual device is located, the caller usually provides specific information for finding the device before the detonation time.
- ◆ With few exceptions, bomb threats on campus are hoaxes designed to avoid or postpone an unpleasant task (e.g., exam).

University policy is to use restraint from evacuating buildings based on the following:

- ◆ A bomb that is set to detonate at a certain time is either a timed explosive device or a site-activated device. Both devices require considerable expertise to develop. Furthermore, a site activated device, such as a radio-controlled mechanism, must be activated in close proximity of the bomb.
- ◆ Unless a bomb contains a large amount of volatile explosive (e.g., C-4 plastic), damage will be limited to the immediate area of the detonation.

8.4 Emergency Power

Some buildings on campus provide automatic emergency power during electrical outages. The emergency power only supports essential life safety equipment such as elevators, corridor lighting, fire alarms, and exit lighting. Some new buildings have red emergency power outlets for essential equipment and machinery. Contact the Facilities Department to determine if other emergency outlets are available in your work area.

There are three types of emergency power sources:

- ◆ Portable generators
- ◆ Building generators
- ◆ Battery power packs

Contact the Facilities Department for more information on emergency power.

8.5 Evacuation Plans

A. Developing a Plan

Each department is responsible for developing a comprehensive plan for evacuations and fire drills. Consider the following when developing the plan:

- ◆ Contact EHSRM for assistance in developing an evacuation plan for your building.
- ◆ Building evacuation routes or maps should provide accurate layout of the building and multiple exit routes from any location. These plans must be posted in prominently traveled areas (e.g., hallways, stairwells, dorm rooms, etc.). Unusual building layouts require more evacuation maps to be posted.
- ◆ Building floor plans used for evacuation plans are prepared by EHSRM.
- ◆ Special attention must be given to evacuation procedures for persons with disabilities. Even if no known building occupants have special needs, the evacuation plan must contain these provisions to ensure the safety of visitors or others with special needs.
- ◆ A preplanned meeting place for evacuated occupants should be at least 200 feet from the building and clear of fire hydrants and access roads.
- ◆ Certain people on each floor should be responsible for the following:
 - Ensuring that persons on the floor are aware of an emergency and the need to evacuate
 - Ensuring that building evacuation routes are clearly posted in prominently traveled areas
 - Ensuring that new employees are familiar with evacuation and fire drill procedures

A written plan for emergencies and fire drills is essential for each major University building. Evacuation exercises are particularly important for student-residence facilities, high-rise buildings, patient treatment facilities, and daycare centers. Studies show that when occupants discuss, plan, implement, and practice evacuation plans, they are better able to protect themselves and others. The figure below shows a typical evacuation plan posted in University buildings.

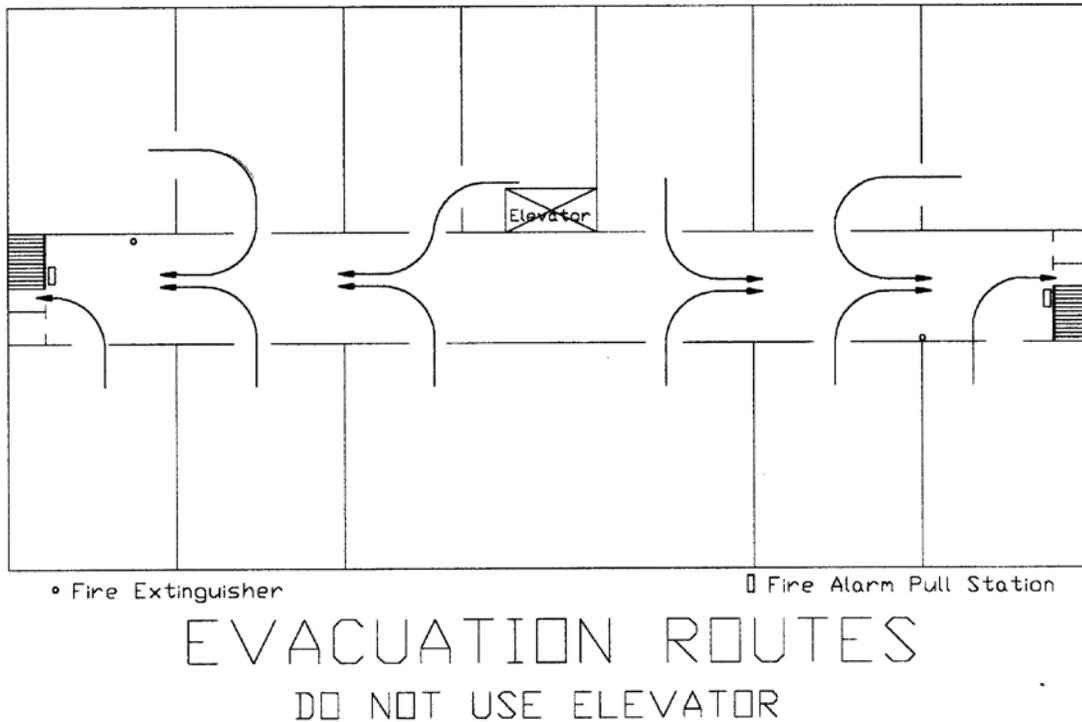


Figure 1 - Typical Evacuation Plan

B. Conducting Fire Exit Drills and Evacuations

To ensure that building occupants are prepared for an emergency evacuation, fire drills must be conducted periodically. A safe and orderly evacuation is more important than a quick evacuation.

Fire exit drills are only conducted by or under the direction of the Fire Safety Specialist for the Environmental Health, Safety & Risk Management Office.

Before conducting a practice fire drill, the Fire Safety Specialist or his/her representatives will do the following:

1. Notify UPD dispatch operator so they do not contact the local fire department.
2. Invite stake holders, UPD, San Marcos Fire Department, Department Heads to participate or observe the conduct of the drill.

Practice fire exit drills should proceed as follows:

1. Fire drills should involve all occupants. Everyone should leave the building when the fire alarm sounds. A person may be exempt from a fire drill if it will cause undo hardship (e.g., interrupt an experiment); however, exemptions are strongly discouraged.
2. Occupants should close (not lock) doors as they leave the work area. Items that require security may be placed in a locking file cabinet or desk drawer on the way out.
3. Department administrators should check all rooms and close doors on their way out.
4. All building occupants should gather in the preplanned meeting place.
5. Department administrators should take a "head count" to determine if all occupants have left the building.
6. Upon completion of the drill, the Fire Safety Specialist completes a Fire Drill Checklist and forwards it to the affected department heads.

8.6 First Aid

First aid training is necessary to prevent and treat sudden illness or accidental injury. The primary objective of first aid is to save lives. This objective is achieved with the following:

- ◆ Preventing heavy blood loss
- ◆ Maintaining breathing
- ◆ Preventing further injury
- ◆ Preventing shock
- ◆ Getting the victim to a physician or Emergency Medical Service (EMS)
- ◆ People who provide first aid must remember the following:
 - Avoid panic.
 - Inspire confidence.
 - Do only what is necessary until professional help is obtained.

A. Student Health Center

The Student Health Center is NOT available to the staff and faculty for treatment of common (minor) injuries occurring in the course and scope of performing your duties. If medical treatment is necessary, contact your supervisor or Workmen's Comp Specialist to determine which local physician is authorized to handle work related injuries.

For personnel with injuries requiring emergency care, versus first aid the university is serviced by both the Hays County and San Marcos Mobile Intensive Care Units (EMS) providing emergency treatment and transport to the Central Texas Medical Center. Call 911 from any telephone to obtain the EMS Service.

B. Initial First Aid

If you are the first one on the scene of a medical emergency, your first priority is to remain calm. Your action will vary depending upon the nature of the situation, but the following rules apply to any medical emergency:

1. Assess the Situation:
 - Can you safely approach the victim? If not, what can you do to help without threatening your own safety?
 - Determine what is wrong with the victim.
2. Set Priorities:
 - Is the victim conscious?
 - How serious is the emergency?
 - Can someone else call EMS, if necessary? If no one else is available, decide if it is more important to administer first aid immediately or to call EMS and leave the victim unattended.

NOTE:

Never leave a victim in a life-threatening situation without first trying to help.

C. Snake Bites

Most snakebites are not fatal. If a snake bite occurs, follow these steps:

1. Have the victim move as little as possible.
2. Apply a constricting bandage (not a tourniquet) between the wound and the heart.
3. If possible, call EMS. In rural locations, transport the victim to the nearest hospital immediately. If necessary and possible, carry the victim to transportation. Do not let the victim walk.
4. If you cannot obtain medical attention:
 - Do not make any incisions or suck out the poison.
 - Do not cool the bitten area.
 - Every fifteen minutes, loosen the constricting bandage for a few seconds and then reapply it.

8.7 Spill Response

Shops, labs, and areas with hazardous chemicals should have spill clean-up supplies on hand. Call 911 (UPD) to report potential hazards from oil spills, fuel spills, chemical spills and other spills. UPD will contact Environmental Health, Safety & Risk Management Office and the San Marcos Fire Department. The Fire Department has an Emergency Response Team that is equipped and trained to handle spills.

See the Chemical Safety chapter for more information on chemical spill response procedures. See the Biological Safety chapter for more information pertaining to spills of biological materials. For spills of hazardous waste refer to procedures in the RCRA Contingency Plan and Emergency Response Procedures.

8.8 Weather Emergencies

Weather emergency concerns for Central Texas primarily include high winds, heavy rains, lightning, flash flooding, and tornadoes. The University has a Emergency Alert System that is used to notify the campus of severe weather or an armed intruder. The following sections provide general guidelines for handling various weather emergencies.

A. Heavy Rain/High Winds/Flash Flooding

Heavy rain and high winds provide dangerous driving conditions. Because flooding is a common problem in Central Texas, motorists should be aware of local weather conditions and avoid roads that tend to flood in heavy rains.

IMPORTANT!

Do not drive in flooded areas or attempt to cross moving water in an automobile. Moving water can easily capsize a car or truck and drown the victim. Avoid creeks, low water crossings, rivers, ditches, and flooded roads during heavy rains. Keep children from playing in these areas during inclement weather.

High winds can topple trees, outdoor equipment, and electrical lines. Avoid downed power lines and notify the utility company of power outages. If an electrical line falls across your car, do not move the car or try to get out. Stay where you are until help arrives.

B. Lightning

Lightning is nature's worst destroyer. A typical lightning bolt contains several hundred million volts at 30,000 or more amperes.

- ◆ Lightning need not strike a person directly to be dangerous.
- ◆ Lightning can crash down from virtually clear sky.
- ◆ Stay away from open doors or windows during an electrical storm.
- ◆ Avoid using the telephone or television set and keep clear of all metal objects such as pipes and electrical appliances during a storm.
- ◆ Do not go outside.

If you find yourself caught in a storm away from a protected building:

- ◆ Avoid tree lines.
- ◆ Stay away from unprotected storm shelters.
- ◆ Stay away from flag poles, towers, and metal fences.
- ◆ Do not wade, swim, or go boating in a thunderstorm.
- ◆ A closed automobile provides a protective metal shell.
- ◆ If caught in the open, stay low.

C. Tornado

Tornadoes produce violent winds that can damage homes, vehicles, people, and wildlife. The primary dangers associated with tornadoes are high winds and flying debris. Severe thunderstorms and hail commonly precede a tornado. A dark funnel cloud or roaring noise (like a train) is evidence of an actual tornado.

A tornado watch is issued when weather conditions are ideal for a tornado to form. A tornado warning is issued when a tornado is actually identified in the immediate vicinity.

If a tornado warning is issued, seek shelter immediately. Stay away from windows, doors, and outside walls.

- ◆ Do not drive to shelter, unless you are already in a vehicle when the warning is issued. Drive to the nearest building or seek shelter in a ditch or ravine.
- ◆ Never try to outrun a tornado in your vehicle.
- ◆ If you are in a school, hospital, factory, shopping mall, or other public area, go to the designated shelter area. Interior halls on the lowest floors are usually best.
- ◆ If you are at a home or in a building, go to an interior room on the lowest level (e.g., bathroom, closet, hall, etc.). Get under a piece of sturdy furniture if possible.

D. Winter Weather

Even though extreme winter weather is uncommon in this area, people must still take special precautions to ensure safety. Wear appropriate clothing for local weather conditions and keep your vehicle in good working order. If the roads become slick with ice, use extreme caution or avoid driving.

- ◆ Slippery streets increase stopping distances. Drive slowly in winter weather.
- ◆ Choose shoes that provide the best footing for the weather.
- ◆ Clear walkways and steps of snow and ice.
- ◆ Use handrails where available.
- ◆ Clean snow and ice from all vehicle windows.

E. Hurricane

Because Texas State University is located 150 miles inland, the main threat from a hurricane is heavy rains. Due to its location, Central Texas is a common hurricane refuge for people from Lake Jackson, Port Lavaca, Galveston, Beaumont, and Bay City.

END OF SECTION