**Fire Alarms, Fire Drills, and Facilities UPPS No. 04.05.04**

**Evacuation Issue No. 1**

**Effective Date: 02/22/2022**

**Next Review Date: 12/01/2026 (E4Y)**

**Sr. Reviewer: Director, Environmental Health, Safety,**

**Risk and Emergency Management**

**POLICY STATEMENT**

*Texas State University is committed to* providing a safe environment for its students and employees.

**01.** **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

01.01 This university policy and procedure statement (UPPS) establishes procedures for the response to fire alarms and conduct of fire drills for Texas State University facilities. The evacuation procedures outlined in this policy apply to activation of any alarm including fire, fire drill, or other non-fire emergency. Evacuation procedures are applicable to university buildings and include other university facilities.

01.02 The specific objectives of this UPPS are to:

a. assign administrative responsibility to Environmental Health, Safety, Risk and Emergency Management (EHSREM) for facilities evacuation training;

b. require compliance with the training provisions of the [National Fire Protection Association’s Life Safety Code](https://www.nfpa.org/Codes-and-Standards/All-Codes-and-Standards/List-of-Codes-and-Standards) operating features regarding fire alarms and fire drills. The purpose of such training is to facilitate the orderly evacuation of university facilities by faculty, staff, students, and other occupants; and

c. establish a program to evaluate fire alarms and fire drills to ensure that established procedures and fire alarm reporting systems operate efficiently and effectively.

01.03 Failure to comply with this UPPS may jeopardize the safety of the individual who is in non-compliance, as well as other university employees, students, or rescue personnel. Non-compliance is a serious issue and may result in disciplinary action or financial penalties.

01.04 This UPPS applies only to fire drills, fire alarms, and facilities evacuation. Refer to [UPPS No. 05.04.03](http://www.txstate.edu/effective/upps/upps-05-04-03.html), Emergency Operations for policies and procedures associated with all other emergencies or disaster situations.

**02. DEFINITIONS**

02.01 Emergency – a situation that threatens the physical safety of university personnel or property and is not the result of a fire (e.g., bomb threat, environmental conditions).

02.02 Fire Alarm – audible or visual signal from a fire safety system, designed to warn of a potential fire danger or other emergency.

02.03 Fire Drill – a pre-planned activity designed to test the fire alarms and evacuation procedures.

02.04 Fire Official – Texas State Fire Marshal or Fire Department Officer at the scene.

**03. FIRE DRILL REQUIREMENTS**

03.01 EHSREM will be responsible for conducting fire drills, as detailed below. EHSREM will coordinate such drills with the dean or director of each area.

OCCUPANCY SEMESTER QUARTERLY MONTHLY

Residence Halls X

Health Care X

Facilities

Child Development X

Center (CDC)

All other buildings will conduct fire drills at the discretion of the director of EHSREM or at the request of a department head.

a. Residence halls will conduct one fire drill each fall and spring semester. A fire alarm activated accidentally during the first thirty days of a semester may be credited toward the fire drill requirement. Residence hall directors may request additional fire drills to ensure the resident staff and students are familiar with the building evacuation procedures.

b. Health Care Facilities – for accreditation, a quarterly fire drill will be conducted for each shift.

c. CDC – to comply with the minimum standards for day care centers, will conduct a fire drill once each month.

d. all other buildings – annual fire drills will be conducted at the discretion of the director of EHSREM, or at the request of a department head.

e. The director of EHSREM, or designee, will include the San Marcos Fire Department (SMFD) in university fire drills and training, on an as-needed basis, to assure SMFD is familiar with the university procedures, facilities, and emergency personnel.

**04. FIRE RESPONSE TRAINING PROCEDURES**

04.01 EHSREM has primary responsibility for conducting training programs, as listed under this UPPS. EHSREM provides fire response training in several ways:

a. New Employee Welcome (NEW) – A fire and safety briefing will be given to all new staff employees at the monthly NEW conducted by Organizational Development and Communications.

b. New Faculty Orientation – A fire and safety briefing will be given to all new faculty employees in conjunction with the New Faculty Orientation sessions conducted by Faculty Development.

c. Residence Halls – EHSREM will conduct training on fire drill and evacuation procedures for resident directors and resident assistants at the beginning of each semester.

d. Student Health Center – EHSREM will conduct training for Student Health Center employees consistent with accreditation requirements and the Center’s Fire Safety Plan.

e. Assembly Occupancy – Local, state, and federal fire codes require that owners and operators of facilities with assembly occupancies greater than 1,000 have fully-trained crowd managers. These staff members are to be versed on space, energy, time, and metering techniques which are essential to effective crowd management in large assembly halls or other required areas. EHSREM will ensure that crowd managers are designated and trained annually.

f. Other Departments – At the request of a department head, EHSREM will conduct a fire and safety class in the workplace for department employees. All department heads are encouraged to arrange a fire and safety class for their sections on at least a biannual basis.

04.02 Fire Training Programs will include the following subjects:

a. chemistry of fire – prevention and extinguishment;

b. fire alarm systems;

c. use of building fire extinguishers; and

d. crowd management.

04.03 Department heads will assure that their employees are familiar with fire exits and building evacuation procedures. Procedures should include the following requirements:

a. When the fire alarm is activated, all building occupants are required to evacuate the building.

b. When a fire drill is conducted, the building fire alarm must be activated as a means of alerting the occupants.

c. Utilize the building communication intercom system, if available, to notify occupants of the nature of the alarm. An announcement should direct all occupants to evacuate the building.

d. Intercom announcements should identify the area or zone of the building.

e. Direct personnel must report to a designated central location outside at least 100 feet from the building. Procedures must be established to account for building occupants.

f. Remain outside of the building until the building has been cleared by first responders. The senior University Police Department (UPD) officer or university Fire Marshal on the scene will give the building occupants permission to re-enter the building.

04.04 Resident directors will conduct a training session with their residence hall staff and provide each staff member with a copy of detailed evacuation procedures prior to each fall and spring semester. The session will cover at least the following items:

a. the identification of students with disabilities, their location of residence in campus residence halls, and procedures for the evacuation of persons with disabilities in the event of a fire or fire drill;

b. identification of all fire extinguishing and fire alarm equipment located in the residence hall;

c. procedures for spreading the alarm and ensuring evacuation of all building occupants from the building;

d. a complete review of the hall evacuation plan; and,

e. requirement that all entrances and exit routes (corridors, hallways, and aisles) are clear of furniture, storage items, or other obstructions at all times.

**05. PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCTING FIRE DRILLS**

05.01 The director of EHSREM, or designee, is the only university official authorized to conduct a fire drill and to activate a fire alarm for such drills. The director of EHSREM will coordinate with SMFD for joint participation.

05.02 The occupants of each residence hall, academic, and administrative building are expected to participate fully in the drill.

05.03 Fire drills in an academic building will be scheduled to start ten minutes prior to the end of the academic class.

05.04 Resident Directors and Resident Assistants

a. Upon sounding of the building fire alarm or having been notified, resident directors and resident assistants, or designees, on duty will:

1) alert occupants within their sector, have them evacuate according to drill procedures, and assemble at the assigned evacuation station outside of the building;

2) ensure occupants do not attempt to use elevators. Evacuation must be accomplished using stairwells; and

3) assist persons with disabilities to the point of safe refuge.

b. The resident director will hold the resident assistants accountable for:

1) strictly adhering to emergency evacuation procedures during fire drills; and

2) performing other duties as assigned by the resident director during the drill.

05.05 The director of EHSREM

a. will review the results of all fire drills and evacuation procedures;

b. prior to initiating the alarm for a fire drill, the director of EHSREM, or designee, will take the following actions:

1) notify UPD, allowing sufficient time for their participation if desired;

2) notify SMFD, allowing sufficient time for their participation if desired.

3) notify the director of Housing and Residential Life, associate vice presidents, and Facilities, of the impending drill.

4) report to the residence hall or building involved to observe the procedures.

c. upon sounding the building fire alarm, the director of EHSREM, or designee, will:

1) closely observe the practices used for compliance to the written procedures;

2) closely evaluate all the factors and note appropriately on the evacuation and fire drill checklist;

3) ensure residential advisors take appropriate follow-up actions with building occupants who are not present during the fire drill;

4) coordinate the services of SMFD with UPD to direct traffic from the area, to protect fire equipment, and to provide emergency communications; and

5) upon the determination that the building is ready to be reoccupied, will advise the resident director and UPD to notify occupants that re-entry is authorized.

d. The director of Housing and Residential Life, or designee, will:

1) report to the scene (when practical) to observe the drill procedure for compliance;

2) take notice of any procedural problems for the purpose of discussion with the resident director;

3) upon completion of a fire drill, will secure all pertinent data for evaluation purposes and arrange for a debriefing with the resident director; and

4) in the event of a fire requiring relocation of students, will initiate emergency housing procedures.

05.06 Unauthorized activation of a fire alarm in a non-emergency situation by a student or employee may result in disciplinary action or financial consequences. This is also a criminal offense, under [Section 42.06 of the Texas Penal Code](https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/PE/htm/PE.42.htm), and criminal prosecution may result in addition to any university sanction.

**06. PROCEDURES DURING AN ACTUAL FIRE OR OTHER NON-FIRE EMERGENCY**

06.01 Because of the danger posed by an actual fire or other non-fire emergency, any individual may activate a fire alarm to alert others to an imminent danger in or near a university facility.

06.02 SMFD has primary authority during an actual fire, UPD has authority for other non-fire emergency. UPD will coordinate with the University Fire Marshal, SMFD, San Marcos Police Department, and any other emergency and rescue personnel. EHSREM and other university departments will serve as support staff for the emergency situation, as needed by UPD.

06.03 Evacuation procedures for buildings and other university facilities will be as follows:

a. The facility will be evacuated according to the procedures outlined for fire drills. Residents or building occupants should proceed to a designated area outside and away from the building.

b. If possible, UPD and SMFD should be contacted by telephone immediately after an alarm has been sounded. The person calling will identify the location, type and extent of the fire, and any personal knowledge of persons in imminent danger.

c. Upon arrival of fire officials at the scene, the building managers will report to the senior fire official for information and instructions.

06.04 Re-entry procedures will be as follows:

a. SMFD will return control of the building to the occupants through the University Fire Marshal or UPD. UPD will notify the building manager when the building is cleared for occupancy.

b. The building manager will assist UPD in notifying occupants that the building is cleared for occupancy.

c. No one will be allowed to re-enter the building for any reason until the building is released by the fire official, University Fire Marshal, or UPD.

**07. EVALUATION OF FIRE DRILLS AND FACILITIES EVACUATION**

07.01 Upon completion of each fire drill or after facilities evacuation (due to a fire or other non-fire emergency), a written evaluation will be prepared by the director of EHSREM, or designee.

07.02 The fire drill evaluations will address:

a. evacuation time and efficiency;

b. student, faculty, and staff safety;

c. response time:

1) SMFD (where appropriate); and

2) UPD units.

d. effectiveness of evacuation procedures:

1) training;

2) routes and exits.

e. procedural deficiencies;

f. recommendations for improvement in procedures; and

g. recommendations for alterations in the facility.

07.03 Distribution of the evaluation will be as follows:

a. For residence halls:

1) vice president for Student Success;

2) director, Housing and Residential Life;

3) resident director;

4) director of UPD;

5) associate vice president for Facilities;

6) associate vice president for Financial Services; and

7) University Safety Committee.

b. For other facilities (non-resident):

1) divisional vice president or provost and vice president for Academic Affairs (where appropriate);

2) department heads of Facilities involved;

3) associate vice president for Facilities;

4) associate vice president for Financial Services;

5) director of UPD; and

6) University Safety Committee.

c. Recommendations for revising procedures impacting other university departments shall be routed to those departments for their input and consideration.

d. Building and fire systems found to be non-compliant will be noted in the evaluation and reported to the associate vice president for Facilities for corrective action. Departments or individuals who have caused non-compliance may be charged for repairs or other cost of compliance.

**08. REVIEWERS OF THIS UPPS**

08.01 Reviewers of this UPPS include the following:

Position Date

Director, Environmental Health, December 1 E4Y

Safety, Risk and Emergency

Management

Associate Vice President for

Facilities December 1 E4Y

Director, Housing and Residential

Life December 1 E4Y

Director, Office of Disability

Services December 1 E4Y

Director of University Police

Department December 1 E4Y

**09. CERTIFICATION STATEMENT**

This UPPS has been approved by the following individuals in their official capacities and represents Texas State policy and procedure from the date of this document until superseded.

Director, Environmental Health, Safety, Risk and Emergency Management; senior reviewer of this UPPS

Vice President for Finance and Support Services

President