



# Contingency Planning Guide

## OPSEM

The George Washington University  
Office of Public Safety and Emergency Management

THE GEORGE  
WASHINGTON  
UNIVERSITY  
WASHINGTON DC

*The George Washington University requires all departments of the University to be covered by a local contingency plan. The goal of contingency planning is to protect life safety and to identify geographically specific information as it pertains to departments and personnel. It addresses only those persons, property, and functions operating from a specific location (it does not include, for example, classes taught by your department but held elsewhere on campus). At a minimum the contingency plan should include the following sections: Responsibilities, Communications and Resources, Preparation, Response, Recovery, and Implementation.*

## *Responsibilities*

Prior to an incident, it is useful to assign specific roles and responsibilities to staff members. Designating roles before an event will reduce confusion and ensure someone is assigned to each task. Principals and alternates should support responsibilities to ensure complete coverage and build continuity in these functions. Duties critical to contingency efforts include:

- Ensuring faculty and staff are aware of and understand the plan.
- Providing guidance to faculty and staff regarding their responsibilities to the students.
- Providing guidance and support to individuals who are physically challenged, disabled or those with special needs.
- Designating those who have authority to make departmental decisions.
- Identifying individual expectations during an incident.

The responsibilities list for the Executive Vice President and Treasurer's suite (Rice Hall 701) is attached as an addendum (*see Addendum 1*) to provide a generic example of responsibilities. Your duties and responsibilities may vary greatly from the example attached, but this provides some suggested roles that you may need to assign.

## *Communications and Resources*

During an incident, the ability to communicate could pose challenges. Prior to an incident, identifying emergency communication strategies is critical to protecting lives and sustaining operations. Identifying reliable systems prior to an incident will also help merge the gap between contingency and continuity. Communication items to consider include:

- Identifying alternatives to normal communication methods, or using normal methods alternatively. For example, voicemail, email, and departmental list-serves can be useful ways to report post-evacuation attendance, check-in with department leaders, and inform people of next steps.
- Encouraging people to sign-up for *Alert DC* and download the *Alert GW* program, and to become familiar with and frequently visit the GW Campus Advisories (<http://campusadvisories.gwu.edu>) page for current information.
- Directing people to the WTOP radio station (103.5FM) for current information and news reports.

## *Preparation*

The Preparation section of your contingency plan should detail the location of items such as fire alarms, fire extinguishers, defibrillators, first aid kits, and other emergency supplies (when available) that aid in protecting

people or in making them more comfortable. The Preparation section should also identify more than one evacuation route out of the building and highlight primary and secondary indoor University-owned rendezvous locations. Such indoor convening locations are the safest option for individuals and comply with the University's Shelter-in-Place Policy. In selecting indoor rendezvous locations, please note:

- A location must be large enough to accommodate faculty, staff and students and be within a reasonable and safe distance to the department's normal location.
- The principal and alternate rendezvous sites should preferably be in opposite directions. For structural safety, it is best if the rendezvous points do not share an adjoining wall with your current location.

The Preparation section should also include a list of personnel with each person's emergency contact information, office hours, and class schedule as applicable. Keep in mind that this list may need to be frequently updated to accommodate changes in personnel or contact information. This is especially true if your department(s) employ students or temporary hires. Faculty should also be encouraged to keep current student rosters for each course taught.

Please refer to the IT preparedness document available on the Campus Advisories webpage (under the "Planning Guidance" tab) for guidance in assessing your department's technological readiness and robustness in the event of an incident.

## *Response*

The Response section of your contingency plan should address your department's response in the event of a variety of circumstances (*e.g.* fire, hazardous mail, or structural damage). This section must include or guide people to the University Shelter-in-Place guidelines which can be found in the Incident Manual from the Campus Advisories page (<http://campusadvisories.gwu.edu>). Remember, sheltering-in-place is always the first option for unaffected buildings. Evacuating to your primary or secondary indoor rendezvous locations should only occur if it is unsafe to remain inside your current location.

The Response section should also discuss methods of communication within and outside the department. We encourage your department to be creative and utilize all available resources. Having a list of emergency contact numbers for staff and designating someone to correspond with a University point of contact is essential. It is particularly important to report post-evacuation attendance to the University Police Department's (UPD) non-emergency number, (202) 994-6110. Communicating with staff through voicemail messages, having access to home and cell phone numbers, and using home email addresses are alternates that need to be available during an incident. We encourage you to become very familiar with the Campus Advisories pages and particularly the incident manual to help with your response procedures. In addition, please include the University's procedures for handling media and family inquiries during and after an incident:

- All inquiries from the media should be referred to the Office of the Vice President for Communications (202-994-8810).
- All inquiries from the families of students should be referred to the Dean of Students Office (202-994-6710) and contacts from the families of staff and faculty should be referred to the Office of the Vice President for Communications (202-994-8810). All contacts should be informed that this is standard University policy during incidents and does not represent any information regarding their family member.

## *Recovery*

The recovery section of your contingency plan is a gateway to your continuity of operations plan. It identifies someone with the authority to dismiss or redirect staff, faculty and students, report damaged property, and inform people of when it is safe to return to campus. It should provide guidance for the immediate aftermath of an incident, for instance by:

- Directing faculty and staff to report their status within a given time frame after an incident (for example, to a specific voicemail number).
- Establishing a procedure for alerting faculty, staff, and students as to when and where classes/work will reconvene (for instance, through Blackboard).

## *Implementation*

A plan that is designed to protect life safety is worse than useless if the people it is designed to protect are unaware of its existence. After the plan is final, all members of the department and frequent visitors need to be given a copy and made aware of the critical components. For implementation purposes, each department needs to identify someone who will explain the key aspects of the plan, provide written copies to all existing and future employees, and routinely provide updated copies as revisions are incorporated.

## *In Conclusion...*

A contingency plan helps departments prepare for, respond to, and recover from disruptions caused by incidents. This is accomplished by detailing emergency procedures, best practices, and by assigning specific duties to department personnel. It serves a critical purpose in an incident because it protects individuals, preserves corporate memory, and enables departments to maintain operations. The purpose of the contingency plan is to protect life, versus the continuity of operations plan which protects operations and functions. Annex A of the Incident Manual is devoted to contingency planning (<http://www.gwu.edu/~response/aboutannexa.cfm>). Some portions of the Incident Manual are password protected but available to faculty and staff. The manual includes a collection of resources that guide people through plan development and also provide information about the University that is particularly pertinent for contingency planning. The Incident Manual is important during an incident because it contains nearly all completed departmental plans and is accessible from a variety of locations via the internet.

When items in the preparation, response, and recovery sections have been addressed, it is worthwhile to consider any other items that should be included in the plan. Referencing University policies is a great addition to any contingency plan and is particularly helpful to new staff and faculty members. Many departments have produced wallet cards and/or reference sheets (see Addendum 2) that summarize their contingency plans to ensure everyone receives this vital information. When your planning efforts are complete, the plan should be distributed throughout your department, routinely verified for accuracy, and updated as needed. The Office of Public Safety and Emergency Management (OPSEM) tracks completed plans, and periodically reports them to the university leadership. OPSEM will also send annual review reminders to remind you to verify the accuracy of and/or update the information in your plan.

## *Addendum 1—sample responsibilities list*

### **Executive Vice President and Treasurer Local Contingency Plan Incident Responsibilities and Duties [campusadvisories.gwu.edu](http://campusadvisories.gwu.edu)**

#### ***Individual***

1. Know the Local Contingency Plan procedures and expectations.
2. Ensure that your Emergency Contact Information is kept up to date with the Office Manager.
3. Inform your supervisor of medical, linguistic, and/or physical conditions, and how to best assist you.
4. After evacuation, check in with your supervisor or the Office Manager at the post-evacuation rendezvous point.
5. By the close of business on the day of an incident, all staff should leave a message on the Office Manager's voicemail (202-994-6600) indicating their safety, location, and any change in contact information. Know how to check Campus Advisories website for University Alert Status and operational information.

#### ***Supervisor***

1. Ensure that the people who work for you are aware of the incident response procedures.
2. Ensure that individuals with medical, linguistic, and/or physical conditions are accounted for and accommodated in plans for evacuations.
3. During an evacuation, confirm the location of the post-evacuation rendezvous point with their people. During an evacuation, bring a copy of your personnel roster and in coordination with the Office Manager, conduct check in with your employees at the post-evacuation rendezvous point.

#### ***Office Manager***

1. Ensure that the Emergency Contact Information for the Rice Hall 7<sup>th</sup> floor is kept up to date.
2. Bring copies of Emergency Contact Information and rosters during an evacuation, and in coordination with supervisors, conduct check in with Rice Hall 7<sup>th</sup> floor employees at the post-evacuation rendezvous point.
3. In coordination with the Office of Public Safety and Emergency Management, ensure that personnel rosters are kept up to date.

#### ***Risk Management***

Organize and perform evacuation drills at least twice a year.

#### ***Executive Vice President and Treasurer***

1. In those instances where there is a need to decide whether or not to evacuate the EVPT will decide. When he is not present the Assistant Vice President for Public Safety and Emergency Management will make this decision.
2. After an evacuation, and meeting at the post-evacuation rendezvous point, if necessary direct people to a safer, more comfortable place wait until the situation clarifies.
3. Following an incident, decide when the Rice Hall 7<sup>th</sup> floor staff can leave campus.

#### ***Office of Public Safety and Emergency Management***

1. Maintain and update the Rice Hall 7<sup>th</sup> floor Local Contingency Plan.
2. Ensure that there is some form of external communication (cellular phone, battery-powered radios, etc.).
3. In coordination with the Office Manager, ensure that personnel rosters are kept up to date.
4. When the EVPT is not present, the AVP of OPSEM will decide on evacuation, in those instances where there is a need to decide whether or not to evacuate.
5. When the EVPT is not available, the AVP of OPSEM following an incident will decide whether or not this office staff can leave campus.

*Addendum 2—sample wallet cards*

Sample specifications: 2" x 3.12" (approximately the size of a credit card); In this example, *Tw Cen MT Condensed* font size 9 was used.

**OUR LOCAL CONTINGENCY PLAN: EVP&T      RICE HALL 7th FLOOR**

+Emergency contact number for **UPD: 4-6111**. If this is not working, dial **911**.  
+**Check University status** at [campusadvisories.gwu.edu](http://campusadvisories.gwu.edu) or 202-994-5050  
+Location of Emergency Supplies:  
    **Fire Alarms:** elevator lobby and outside Thornell Page II's office (7011)  
    **First Aid Kit:** under the microwave  
    **Fire Extinguisher:** above the copier  
+**In case of a medical emergency, contact UPD (or 911)** then send someone to meet the ambulance. **Avoid moving the victim** unless necessary, and only perform emergency medical procedures if you are qualified to do so.  
+For more information, **please refer to the complete local plan**, available from your supervisor or online at [campusadvisories.gwu.edu](http://campusadvisories.gwu.edu) in Annex A of the University Incident Response Manual.

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+ **When to Stay Put:** During an incident, **Shelter in Place** (stay inside in a windowless, interior room) unless the building has received structural damage or you receive directions to do otherwise.

+ **When to Move:** Only evacuate to move to a location of greater safety. When evacuating, take your **GWorld Card and keys**, and **use the stairs**. If there is smoke or fire, cover your nose and mouth, staying low to the floor.

+ Our principal post-evacuation rendezvous point is the **Abrams Great Hall in the Marvin Center**. The **Academic Center Lobby** is our alternate location. Once there, check in with your supervisor or the Office Manager.

+ By **COB** on day of an incident **leave a message on the Office voicemail 202-994-6600** indicating safety, location and contact information.

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