

# Appendix A: Emergency Notification Policy

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## A. Policy Statement

As safety and emergency notification practices are under greater scrutiny at institutions of higher education, it is the position of The University of Texas at Austin that at least one emergency contact person must be listed for each student enrolled at the University. A student's cell phone number is also part of the emergency notification protocol in case the University should need to contact the student via text message about critical incidents on campus. Information gathered remains confidential to the extent allowed by law.

## B. Scope

This policy applies to all admitted and enrolled students of the University. This policy provides for two distinctly different types of emergency notification. First, it details all the ways the University provides notification about emergencies to students, faculty members, and staff members. Second, it indicates the way the University will follow to notify a student's designated emergency contact in the event of personal distress or missing person status.

## C. University Communication of Emergency

Emergencies may range from inclement weather to building evacuations to campus closures, and the University has a variety of tools to communicate with the public in the event of these and other possible emergencies. Depending on the type of emergency, some or all of the following tools may be used to communicate with faculty members, staff members, and students:

### 1. Siren System

This system is tested at about noon on the first Wednesday of every month. It delivers a siren warning and public address in the event of certain outdoor emergencies. More information about the [siren system](#) is available.

### 2. Emergency Website

The emergency [website](#) is updated with information during actual emergencies or campus closures.

### 3. University Emergency Information Line, (512) 232-9999

Students and faculty and staff members may call this main number for information about campus closures.

### 4. Campus Television Emergency Announcement System

Emergency announcements will override residence hall and campus cable television, instructing the viewer where to go for additional information.

### 5. Text Messaging Service

The University contracts with a third-party vendor that provides the technological ability to send text messages to members of the campus community. Only text messages about emergencies and messages used periodically to test the system are sent. Any data provided to the vendor by the University is protected by contractual arrangements.

### 6. Pager System

Campus first responders, resident advisors, and some building managers are part of the Austin Warning and Communication System paging system. Pagers send text messages about emergencies on campus and alert city responders like the Austin Police Department, the Austin Fire Department, Emergency Medical Services, and the Office of Emergency Management to campus crisis situations.

### 7. Fire Panel Systems

Residence halls are equipped with fire panel systems that have a public address capability. Resident advisors are trained to use

these systems in emergencies in order to make announcements to the entire building regarding evacuation, shelter in place, or other responses.

## 8. University Group E-mail

During emergencies, UT Safety Alert sends an "urgent" group e-mail to every student and faculty and staff member. The message directs individuals to the emergency Web site for additional information and instructions.

## 9. Voice Mail to Office Telephones

This system leaves a voice message on every faculty and staff member's office phone on campus.

## 10. Local News Media

The Office of Public Affairs sends press releases and makes calls to contacts on a local media list. Because of the transient nature of its population, the University depends a great deal on broadcast media to notify students, faculty members, and staff members of emergencies before or during their commutes.

## 11. Public Safety Patrol Car Announcements

University of Texas Police Department patrol cars are equipped with public address systems that officers can use to provide instructions to pedestrians during emergencies.

## 12. Telephone Tree

The president's office has a telephone tree of department contacts that is activated during an emergency

## D. Emergency Contact Information

Using the online [update form](#) in UT Direct, every student must provide the University with the name and contact information of at least one individual who could be contacted in the event of an individual emergency or to report the student missing. Students under the age of eighteen (unless emancipated) must provide contact information for at least one custodial parent. Students over the age of eighteen may designate anyone of their choosing to be the emergency contact. If a student living in University housing is determined to have been missing for more than twenty-four hours, University Housing and Dining will notify law enforcement (The University of Texas Police Department) and the Student Emergency Services unit in the Office of the Dean of Students to initiate missing person procedures. Student Emergency Services will notify the designated emergency contact for a student identified as a missing person within twenty-four hours of receiving the report.

## E. Updating Emergency Contact Information

Students are required to update their primary cell phone and emergency contact information annually in order to keep the information current. Students who fail to update their emergency contact information have holds placed on their records that keep them from registering for classes. The hold is removed when the student submits the required emergency contact information.

## F. Privacy and Confidentiality

Official use of emergency contact information is subject to the same privacy and record retention requirements as other official University information.

## G. Authoritative Source

The authoritative source of this policy and responsibility for its implementation rests with the vice president for student affairs. The University emergency protocols are managed by the associate vice president for University operations.

## H. For Assistance

Questions about data security should be directed to the registrar at (512) 475-7575. Questions about acceptable use standards should be directed to the Office of the Dean of Students at (512) 471-5017.