730 Campus Crisis and Emergency Management

Approved by Board of Trustees
Effective Date: ____________, 2021
Responsible Division: Business and Finance
Responsible Office: University Police
Responsible Officer: Assistant Vice President, University Police

I. Purpose

Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU or University) considers emergency preparedness and planning activities essential for maintaining the safety and security of the campus and our community. This policy ensures that the University develops and maintains plans and procedures utilizing emergency mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery criteria consistent with the National Incident Management System and the Tennessee Emergency Management Plan. These plans and procedures will help ensure that the University is able to respond appropriately in the case of emergencies or disasters that could occur within or around the University in order to mitigate risks to students, faculty, staff, and property.

II. Definitions, Types, and Levels of Crisis

The following definitions are provided as guidelines to assist personnel in determining the appropriate response:

A. Level 1 - Limited Crisis: A limited crisis within the scope of this plan is any incident, potential or actual, that will not seriously affect the overall functional capacity of the University but requires some degree of action. A limited crisis may be small enough that the affected department can effectively resolve the issue. In other cases, assistance from the University Police Department and/or off-campus emergency response groups may be required according to the standard operating procedures of the MTSU Police Department. While some damage and/or interruptions may occur, conditions are localized and MTSU Emergency Operations Center (EOC) activation is not needed. Examples of Limited Crises in the context of this plan may include, but are not limited to, a localized chemical spill, plumbing failure, or water leak.

B. Level 2 - Issue-Driven Crisis: Includes issue driven and/or slowly developing situations that negatively impact the University. The incident may be severe and cause damage and/or interruption to MTSU operations. A partial or full activation of the MTSU EOC may be needed. MTSU may be the only affected entity. Examples of issue-driven crises
may include, but are not limited to, unscheduled or planned protests or disruptions, civil disturbances, unauthorized occupancy of campus areas, sexual assaults, controversial speakers, and hate crimes.

C. Level 3 - Major Crisis/Emergency: A major crisis or emergency, within the scope of this plan, is an incident posing major risk to University personnel, students, visitors, or resources that has caused or has the potential for causing fatalities or injuries and/or major damage. Such an incident is equivalent to a campus-wide state of emergency, and is expected to require activation of the MTSU EOC and Crisis Management Team (CMT) in order to provide an immediate emergency response. MTSU may request assistance from the City of Murfreesboro, Rutherford County, other state agencies or request federal assistance via the Rutherford County Emergency Operations Center. A Level 3 crisis may develop from incidents beginning at the Level 1 or 2 stages. Examples of major crises may include major emergencies, building emergencies, or disasters such as those listed in Section V.A. below.

III. Emergency Operations Planning

A. An Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) addresses all types of emergency functions. MTSU shall develop, maintain, and execute an EOP that meets state and federal requirements. The EOP will guide the MTSU community in responding to natural, man-made, and/or public health hazards with the goal of mitigating risks to students, faculty, staff, and property.

B. The EOP shall be based on the concepts and principles of the National Incident Management System (NIMS), incorporating elements of the Incident Command System (ICS). The EOP should identify how the University fits within the overall NIMS structure.

C. The University should utilize the Guide for Developing High-Quality Emergency Operations Plans for Institutions of Higher Education.

D. The EOP shall address how MTSU will integrate and coordinate with other governmental entities and the EOP will be shared, as appropriate, with relevant local, regional and/or state agencies in order to promote coordination among the various entities.

E. Since emergencies normally occur without warning, plans and procedures should provide sufficient flexibility to accommodate contingencies of assorted types and magnitudes.

F. The EOP must be reviewed and revised, as necessary, at least annually by senior administrators in conjunction with the University’s CMT.

G. Additionally, aspects of the EOP must be tested in training exercises and drills consistent with Federal and State law.
H. The University should undertake emergency operations planning within the context of local or regional, state, and federal emergency planning. To promote coordination among these entities, the University should include a local or regional emergency planning representative to assist in developing its EOP.

I. University units that do not maintain an independent emergency management plan are still responsible for developing and maintaining local building emergency procedures to address the safety of occupants with the assistance of and oversight by campus safety officers.

J. The University’s EOP should be developed and maintained in compliance with Federal Emergency Management (FEMA) standards.

K. Maintenance of the EOP

1. Environmental Health and Safety will properly maintain the EOP and review it at least annually.

2. Electronic and/or hard copies of the EOP will be maintained by all members of the CMT and department/office heads with significant roles in responding to emergencies.

3. The EOP will also be maintained in the University Police Department.

4. A redacted version of the EOP shall be kept updated and posted on the University’s website.

5. An electronic copy of the EOP must be maintained in a manner that will permit access during an emergency.

6. Department/office heads should establish appropriate procedures within their work units to facilitate EOP implementation.

7. The President or Designee, in consultation with the CMT, will annually review the EOP and update/modify it as necessary.

IV. Emergency Management Roles

A. The administrative emergency management roles of Environmental Health and Safety and the University Police are to:

1. Provide necessary guidance for University officials to meet federal and state requirements;
2. Act as liaison with Rutherford County Emergency Management Agency (RCEMA), which will coordinate with the Tennessee Emergency Management Association (TEMA) directly on MTSU’s behalf;

3. Coordinate meetings of University emergency management planning staff;

4. Assist in coordinating key personnel training;

5. Monitor compliance with this policy; and

6. Report periodically to the President or Designee on the status of emergency preparedness.

B. MTSU will develop and maintain a system that assigns and trains people within campus units to develop department/building specific responses to general emergencies, helps communicate campus requirements, provides information during emergencies and coordinates department/building specific drills.

V. Emergency Status

A. A state of emergency may be declared at any time an emergency reaches such proportions that it cannot be handled by routine measures. Such emergencies may include, but not be limited to:

1. tornados

2. earthquakes

3. winter storms

4. fires

5. infectious diseases

6. hazardous chemical spills

7. transportation accidents

8. explosions

9. utility outages

10. civil disturbances
11. bombs  
12. hostage situations  
13. terrorist activities  
14. active threats  
15. technological hazards  

B. The EOP shall designate an employee (or group of employees) authorized to Declare an Emergency.  

1. The EOP provides that the President or Designee, with or without consultation from the CMT, will determine whether declaration of an emergency is appropriate.  

2. If an emergency is declared, the employee(s) authorizing the declaration will cause CMT members (as well as others as directed by the President or Designee) to be contacted, advise them that an emergency has been declared, and direct them to respond to the EOC.  

3. A systematic calling plan must be established to ensure that CMT members receive timely notification of the official declaration of emergency.  

4. The EOP designates that the President or Designee is the highest University authority in any emergency situation. The EOP must establish a clear chain of command specifying University employees with authority to act in response to the emergency.  

5. The CMT will serve in a support role to the President or Designee during an emergency.  

6. MTSU senior administrators have discretion to determine whom to appoint from their areas to the CMT; however, it is advisable that administrators seriously consider including the following personnel with potentially significant operational responsibilities:  
   a. President  
   b. Chief Academic Affairs Officer/Provost  
   c. Chief Business/Finance and Administration Officer  
   d. Chief Student Affairs Officer
e. Chief Public Relations Officer

f. Chief of University Police Department

g. Director of University Health Services

h. Chief Information Officer

i. Housing/Residence Life Director

j. Physical Plant/Facilities Director

VI. Emergency Processes

A. The EOP will designate a location to serve as the University’s EOC. An alternative location should also be designated in the event that the primary location is not available.

1. Members of the CMT and others as designated by the President or Designee should be present in the EOC during emergencies, to the extent practicable.

2. University administrators should consider having all activities, such as requests for personnel, equipment, and supplies, monitored from the EOC to ensure a coordinated effort and to ensure the best use of the resources needed to handle the emergency situation.

3. A log should be maintained in the EOC that reflects all significant events and actions taken in the EOC.

4. A communications log should also be maintained that notes the time, date, content, and source of every significant communication to/from the EOC; to whom the communication was directed; and any EOC action resulting from the communication.

B. The EOP should authorize the establishment of a command post on campus that is near the scene of the emergency. The command post will maintain contact with the EOC for purposes of instruction, status reports, and requests for support.

C. The EOP should authorize an appropriate administrator to determine that an evacuation is necessary and issue an evacuation order.

D. The University should designate appropriate location(s) as safer areas at designated campus facilities.
E. The University will develop and maintain a procedure to manage media inquiries during an emergency situation.

1. The EOP will include a news/media procedure to direct the management of media inquiries during emergencies. The University’s News and Media Relations office coordinates the University’s response to news media inquiries at all times, including emergency situations.

2. No University employee, other than employees of MTSU’s News and Media Relations office or the designated administrator, should release information to news media representatives, unless instructed to do so.

3. All news media requests should be directed to MTSU’s News and Media Relations, the designated administrator, or the EOC.

4. The news media procedures will designate a location for press conferences during emergency incidents.

5. News media personnel should not be allowed into secure areas without an appropriate escort.

F. MTSU will maintain a procedure to manage volunteers who respond to an emergency situation.

1. Volunteers should be directed to the EOC or a central location for registration and assignment. During the registration process, volunteers will be required to provide some form of reliable identification.

2. A volunteer log should be maintained to include the name, address, date of birth, driver’s license or social security number, any particular skill of each volunteer, the name of the supervisor to whom they are assigned, and the number of the identification card issued to the volunteer. Access to this information should be limited to certain personnel and safeguarded at all times.

3. If practical, each volunteer will sign a standard Volunteer Release Form and be issued an identification card that will be affixed to their outer clothing.

4. Volunteers will be assigned to a supervisor involved in the emergency response.

G. MTSU will document and maintain a procedure to manage purchases during an emergency situation.

1. All emergency purchases will be handled in the shortest possible time frames.
2. To the greatest extent possible, University employees will make purchases using procurement cards.

3. For those purchases that cannot be made by use of procurement cards, Business and Finance personnel will facilitate the timely acquisition of needed resources in a manner consistent with emergency situations.

4. A record of all emergency related expenditures will be maintained by the work unit making those expenditures. A copy of those records will be forwarded to the EOC and the original purchase documents will be handled consistent with University purchasing guidelines.

H. MTSU will develop and maintain a plan to transport persons and/or equipment during an emergency.

1. An appropriate University department should be designated to be responsible for providing vehicles for evacuations and other emergency related activities.

2. Distribution of vehicles should be made in such a manner as to maintain accountability while being responsive to the emergency needs of the University.

3. Facilities Services or appropriate personnel should be prepared to experience an increase in emergency maintenance to University vehicles, to include minor off-site repairs related to such problems as flat tires, dead batteries, etc.

I. MTSU will establish a plan for alternate communication options for use during an emergency response period.

1. Generally, the primary means of communications during an emergency are telephones, cell phones, satellite phones, and two-way radios.

2. If the University phone system has been rendered inoperable or if the emergency incident is a bomb threat, then the EOC, CMT, and other necessary personnel should use cell phones and radios.

3. Radios should be the primary communications medium if landline phones, satellite phones, and cell phones are inoperable.

4. If phones, cell phones, and radios become inoperable, consideration should be given to the use of “runners” to transmit messages.

J. In response to an emergency, each department/office should be instructed to maintain a record of all emergency-related activities performed by the personnel of that
work unit. The record will reflect the personnel worker hours (for non-exempt staff), as well the assignments of personnel, the work performed by each work unit, and other resources expended in response to the emergency.

K. MTSU will ensure that copies of campus maps, site maps, and building prints/records are in a central location and/or are disseminated to areas that will need access during emergency operations.

1. To the extent that doing so does not compromise University security, the EOP should ensure that accurate copies of main and satellite campus maps/site plans, prints of buildings, and record plans of buildings are attached to the EOP.

2. If the determination is made that security concerns outweigh the inclusion of such material in the EOP, then the University must ensure that accurate copies of campus maps and building prints are maintained in a secure location that is readily accessible by law enforcement personnel, the President or Designee, and the CMT.

L. MTSU will maintain a Student Assistance Coordinating Committee/Threat Assessment Team.

1. The University's Student Assistance Coordinating Committee will meet on a regular basis to evaluate the needs and provide necessary assistance to students who are identified as distressed, disturbed, disruptive, and/or dangerous.

2. The Division of Student Affairs has the sole discretion to determine which administrators to appoint to the Committee from the following departments, if applicable:

   a. Student Conduct
   b. Disability and Access Center
   c. Student Health
   d. Counseling Services
   e. Academic Support Services
   f. Housing and Residential Life
   g. University Police Department

M. MTSU will maintain an Academic Continuity Committee.
1. The Academic Continuity Committee will meet on a regular basis to evaluate needs and provide guidance to ensure continuity of instruction, research, and service and maintain quality and integrity of courses and programs.

2. The Division of Academic Affairs has the sole discretion to determine Committee appointments from the following departments as applicable:
   
a. Provost’s Office  
b. Deans’ Cabinet  
c. Council of Chairs  
d. Faculty Senate  
e. Student Affairs  
f. Student Health Services  
g. Disability and Access Center  
h. University Police Department  
i. Campus Planning and Facilities Services  
j. Institutional Equity and Compliance  
k. University Counsel

VII. Training

Emergency Operations Plan Training. MTSU shall conduct appropriate training for relevant personnel regarding the EOP.

A. Members of the CMT and department/office heads should ensure that they and members of their staff are knowledgeable concerning the contents of the EOP.

B. The CMT Members should receive training in the (NIMS) National Incident Management System method of handling emergency situations.

C. All employees should have knowledge of the contents and procedures of the EOP. On a periodic basis different aspects of the EOP should be tested, either through simulated exercises or in-service training, as appropriate.
D. A Safety Committee/Risk Management Committee may be established to assist in these training exercises as necessary. The Safety Committee/Risk Management Committee or appropriate personnel may consult the TEMA Training and Education Office to request information regarding special training seminars.

Forms:

Volunteer Release

Revisions: June 5, 2017 (original); _______, 2021.

Last Reviewed: ____________ 2021.

References: none.