

CRITICAL INCIDENT PROTOCOLS – Security incidents

The greatest good for the greatest number
The safety of the rescuer comes first

Frontline Prevention

Sometimes we can control behavior before it escalates into tragedy. It's important to understand how workplace violence can be controlled through reporting unacceptable behavior and cooperating in progressive discipline procedures.

The University asks everyone to build a safer workplace by following APM procedure 05.33, "Reporting Incidents of Violent or Threatening Behavior."

Additional training on employee and student behavior issues is available from Risk Management, Human Resources, the Ombuds Office, Dean of Students Office, and the Counseling and Testing Center.

Issues regarding non-students and visitors should be reported to Risk Management.

Have a plan

The most important aspect of prevention is planning. Your unit should have a Safety Plan. Is it up to date? Does it include after-hours numbers? The University plan template covers physical hazards and bomb threats. Have you considered personal security hazards and how you would respond to those? Such responses, while there are some common elements (described below) must take into account the physical configuration of your workspace, your communication devices, your security and safety skills, and pre-arrangements with your co-workers.

When developing your Unit communication plan, a primary rule of incident / emergency response is that the information coordinator continues to contact people until all "need to know" parties acknowledge receipt of the information, either by direct contact or by a direct response. In other words, you can leave a phone message (brief and discreet) but you must continue to contact until you receive either a direct call back to you or a message acknowledging the person has received the information. Do not use a call "tree," where one person calls the next. Call trees lead to communication breakdowns.

Have you exercised your plan in front of an observer? For assistance, contact Risk Management.

Frontline Assessment

You are responsible for your safety and security and that of your co-workers. You are supported by many resources within the University and its security providers (Moscow Police Department and Moscow Fire Department). You are usually the first to observe or hear information that is vital to a quick and effective response to emergencies.

The response to security incidents differs from physical incidents. In a physical incident, you may be able to provide some response, such as use of a fire extinguisher or an AED.

In a security incident, your most important roles are:

- Secure your own safety
- Call 911 to summon aid
- Transmit information

Getting to a place of safety

Talk with your unit about recognizing an escalating incident. How would you isolate yourself from a person or situation that seems to be escalating? Plan escape and shelter in place options for your unit. How would you decide if it is safe to exit? How would you shelter yourself if exit is not possible? How would you signal your concerns to others in your immediate surroundings (codes)? Does your unit have such an exposure to risk that you need to consider panic buttons? How can your environment be strengthened if it has security risks?

The 911 call

Once you are safe, call 911 and report everything you have observed. Work to remain calm, so that you can think of the details and convey them to the responder. Think of “who, where, when, what, how” details. Stay on the line with 911 until you have transmitted your information and received any instructions from them. If the line is busy, keep yourself safe and continue to call. In a widespread emergency, a busy signal will indicate that others are also trying to get through to report information. Information you report is important...it helps first responders continually adjust their response basing on rapidly updating information.

The safety of others

Once you are safe, can you safely assist others? If you cannot (and this is hard), STAY PUT. If you add to the number of people down, you risk the safety of your co-workers and that of the first responders. When you can safely do so, attempt to call others in your immediate vicinity to alert them to danger. If you can safely do so, call Risk Management at 885-7177 and then Environmental Health and Safety at 885-6524.

The University's Emergency Management Plan

The University does have a written and exercised plan for handling critical incidents and emergencies. Once the emergency management staff (Risk, EHS) have been alerted by you or by first responders, we begin to respond to the emergency. Our job is to help assess the threat level of the incident, and continue to determine the validity of facts as they develop. We also try to focus everyone on taking an “enterprise wide view” of an incident, and determine how the fiscal, reputational, operational, and legal liabilities will affect the University as a whole. We try to get the right people “around the table” in order to make the best possible wide-angle decision for the University.

Generally, our role at Risk is to convey information to the appropriate people, not to handle the emergency. Others, such as the police or Safety, will do the actual incident response. If an incident is serious enough, we assist with threat assessment, gather situation-appropriate University resources, and determine a course of action. We will contact the President's Office and Communications immediately (day or night) with whatever information is available. After that, we contact other appropriate offices, such as University Counsel, Safety, Provost, Office of the Dean of Students, ITS, Residences, Human Resources, Ombuds Office, Counseling, etc.

Once Risk is informed of an incident, whether by the police or another party, we take down whatever information we can from the caller (Who, What, When, Where, How and Why). We will ask who else has been notified. If the incident involves something Safety normally responds to (property damage or bodily injury) we ask if they've been contacted and contact Safety immediately to convey the information and get their instructions. For bomb threats, consult the specific procedures for this hazard. (BOMB THREAT CARD) Safety handles most of these.

Controlling external and internal communications

As time goes on, you and your Unit may be involved in communicating about the incident, or you or your Unit may need to act as technical experts in an incident. Exchange of internal and external communications needs

to be controlled from the start. Individuals should not respond to media inquiries. Media inquiries should be referred to University Communications. It is University Communication's role to verify information before it is released. It's important that information be accurate and email or phone chatter controlled to free up lines and prevent rumors that can start destructive and fruitless counter-actions.

Phone calls, meetings, and face-to-face communications are best, since by their nature incidents involve very sensitive and confidential information about people, and we must respect privacy. Minimize communications by email, as incidents by their nature develop too fast for email and people must share ideas and verify sources of information more quickly. Strategizing a response is best with voice communications.

After incident

The effects of incidents can be very traumatic. The University always has the services of our Ombuds office available. Employees can also use the Employee Assistance Plan and other mental health benefits. If the incident is large-scale, the University may also consider the services of counselors specially trained to provide counseling after critical incidents.