



# Emergency Procedures



Southwest Minnesota State University

## **INTRODUCTION**

Southwest Minnesota State University is committed to creating a safe and secure environment for students, faculty, staff, and visitors. To achieve this goal, SMSU maintains an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) as well as Emergency Response Procedures.

All employees and students are encouraged to regularly review the information provided in the Emergency Procedures and become familiar with the appropriate guidelines for responding/reacting to disasters or emergencies that may impact the SMSU Community. Students and employees are encouraged to sign up for the University's Star Alert Notification System. Star Alert is the emergency notification text message system. In the event of an emergency, a text message will be sent to the cell number and/or email address provided. To sign up for Star Alert or update your information, please visit SMSU's Public Safety web site at [www.smsu.edu/campuslife/publicsafety/index.html](http://www.smsu.edu/campuslife/publicsafety/index.html)

## **EVACUATION PROCEDURES**

### **Building Evacuation**

All building evacuations will occur when an alarm is sounded and/or upon notification from SMSU Security or Administration. (Refer to exception for an Active Shooter). When the building evacuation alarm is activated during an emergency, leave by the nearest marked exit and alert others to do the same. If emergency personnel direct you to another exit based on the type of emergency, follow their directions.

- Do not use elevators in case of fire, tornado, or earthquake.
- Once outside, proceed to a clear area that is at least 500 feet away from the affected building(s).
- Keep streets, fire lanes, hydrants, and walkways clear for emergency vehicles and personnel. Evacuate further if directed by emergency personnel.
- Do not return to an evacuated building until emergency personnel give an all clear.

### **Shelter-in-Place**

One of the instructions you may be given in an emergency where hazardous materials may have been released into the atmosphere is to shelter-in-place. This is a precaution aimed to keep you safe while remaining indoors. (This is not the same as going to a shelter in the event of a storm or tornado). Shelter-in-Place means selecting a small, interior room with no or few windows, and taking refuge there.

Depending on the type of emergency and directives received from authorities and emergency personnel the following options are available depending upon the emergency and/or disaster.

- Closing of the University and activation of the University's Crisis Plan.
- Follow reverse evacuation procedures and bring students, faculty, and staff inside.
- Monitor television, radio, and other forms of communication for information regarding the threat/emergency and follow their directions.
- Bring everyone in the building. Shut and lock the door.
- Gather emergency supplies if possible. Close windows, secure doors, and duct tape if told to do so.

## Evacuation for People with Disabilities

The most important factor in emergency planning for people with disabilities is advanced planning. In all emergencies after an evacuation is ordered evacuate people with disabilities if possible.

- Do not use elevators, unless directed to do so by police or fire personnel. Elevators can fail in certain situations.
- If situation is life threatening call the police/fire departments immediately (911).
- Check on people with special needs during an evacuation. A buddy system, where people with disabilities arrange for volunteers to alert them and assist them in an emergency is a good method.
- Always ask someone with a disability how you can help before attempting any rescue technique or providing assistance. Ask how he or she can best be assisted or moved and whether there are any special considerations or items that need to come with the person.
- if you are unable to evacuate a disabled person contact law enforcement or fire personnel and be able to provide them with the person's location that needs assistance in evacuating.
- Students should inform faculty members of their special needs regarding evacuation, especially prior to an emergency or disaster.

### Response to emergencies (blindness and visual impairment)

- Offer to lead them out of the building to safety.
- Give verbal instructions about the safest route or direction using compass directions, estimate distances, an directional terms.
- Do not grasp a visually impaired person's arm. Ask if he or she would like to hold onto your arm as you exit, especially if there is debris or a crowd.

#### 1. Response to emergencies (deafness or hearing loss).

- Get the attention of a person with a hearing disability by touch and eye contact. Clearly state the problem. Gestures and pointing are helpful, but be prepared to write a brief statement if the person does not seem to understand.
- Offer visual instructions to advise of safest route or direction by pointing toward exits or evacuation maps.

#### 2. Response to emergencies (mobility impairment).

- It may be necessary to clear the exit route of debris (if possible) so that the person with a disability can move out or to a safer area.
- If people with mobility impairments cannot exit, they should move to a safer area for example:
  - Most enclosed stairwells.
  - An office with the door closed, which is a good distance from the hazard.
- Notify police or fire personnel immediately about any people remaining in the building and their locations.
- Police or fire personnel will decide whether people are safe where they are and will evacuate them as necessary.
- If people are in immediate danger and cannot be moved to a safer area to wait for assistance, it may be necessary to evacuate them using an evacuation chair or a carry technique.

## **EVACUATION**

In the event a limited or mass evacuation of any part of Southwest Minnesota State University, officials will instruct members of the campus community where to evacuate to and/or what staging areas will be used to coordinate transportation to safe areas.

The Incident Commander and/or emergency personnel will coordinate the evacuation of members of the campus community to designated safe areas.

On limited evacuations faculty, staff and students may be directed to safe areas outside the affected building and/ or area. SMSU Security will allow those displaced members access to facilities when necessary based on inclement weather, special needs, etc.

## **Lockdowns**

A lockdown is an emergency course of action ordered by a person or persons in command, such as law enforcement, SMSU Administration, to contain a problem or incident within the area of origin by controlling the movement of people. When considering a lockdown of campus facilities, campus authorities will take into account the severity and urgency of the problem or threat and the imminent danger to persons on the campus.

When a lockdown is ordered members of the campus community are encouraged to take appropriate action immediately. The university may use a number of different options in making notification to the campus community. For information concerning lockdowns refer to the "Violent Behavior" section of this plan.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

### **Utility Failure**

- If you are trapped in debris, remain calm and minimize your movements so that you do not kick up dust.
- Cover your mouth with a handkerchief or a piece of clothing.
- Tap on a pipe or wall so that rescuers can hear where you are.
- Shout only as a last resort, as shouting can cause a person to inhale dangerous amounts of dust.

### **Hazardous Materials**

In the event of an environmental spill involving hazardous chemicals or other materials follow these guidelines:

- Evacuate the affected area of spill immediately. Use judgment depending on the nature and quantity of spilled material.
- Small containable spills:
  - Call SMSU Security (ext. 7252).
  - Call 911 immediately for police/fire if emergency response is necessary.
- Large spills
  - Call 911 immediately for emergency assistance.
  - Call SMSU Security (ext. 7252) for immediate assistance.
  - Remove the victims from the spill area to fresh air if possible to do so without endangering yourself.
  - Do not endanger your own life by entering areas with toxic gases.
  - Inform others not to enter the affected area.
  - If safe to do so, assist in the evacuation of persons with disabilities.

## Fire Procedures

- Should you see or smell smoke immediately pull the nearest fire alarm, leave the building, and contact the Marshall Fire Department (911) from a safe area. Be prepared to give the following information:
  - Location of fire
  - Building and room number (if known)
  - Your name and telephone number
  - Stay on the line until the dispatcher releases you
- The person reporting the fire should remain in the vicinity outside the building to supply information upon request to the Marshall Fire Department.
- Always take fire alarms seriously. When a fire alarm has been activated, everyone is to evacuate the building immediately.
- NOTE: Persons who do not leave the building when a fire alarm is sounded may be subject to disciplinary action and/or possible criminal charges.
- Evacuate all rooms, closing all doors to confine the fire. Do not lock doors. Check doors for heat before opening. Open doors slowly and check for smoke.
- Fire doors leading into stairwell landings should be closed.
- Do not attempt to put out a fire if you are endangering your own safety or the safety of others
- Do not use elevators. Power may fail causing the elevators to stop between floors or elevator doors may open onto the fire floor.
- Disabled persons who are unable to move down the stairwells should move to a stairwell. (Caution should be used as to not block traffic).
- Immediately notify rescue personnel of any persons left in the building along with their locations.

NOTE: If you become trapped in a building during a fire and a window is available place an article of clothing outside the window as a marker for rescue personnel. If there is not a window, stay near the floor where the air will be less toxic. Seal up the cracks around the door using pieces of clothing or whatever is handy. Shout at regular intervals to alert emergency personnel of your location.

CAUTION: Building fire alarms may stop ringing. If they stop, do not return to the building unless notified by the Marshall Fire Department or SMSU Security.

**(Know the location of fire alarm pull stations, fire extinguishers and exits)**

## Medical Emergency

If you are involved in or witness any medical emergency immediately call 911 and SMSU Public Safety (ext. 7252). Be prepared to provide the following information to the police dispatcher

- Name of the injured or ill person, if known.
- Current location of the person (i.e. building, room number, etc.)
- Nature and type of injury, if known.
- If safe to do so, remain with the individual until help arrives; try to keep the individual still. Do not attempt to move a seriously injured person (unless a more serious injury or life threatening situation may result). Provide first aid only if you are trained to do so.
- Provide any assistance to emergency medical personnel at the scene upon request.



## Exposure Control Plan

Immediate treatment for an individual exposed to blood and/or body fluids is to thoroughly wash the exposed area with non-abrasive antibacterial soap and running water. Students should be sent to SMSU Health Services or to the emergency room. Employees should be referred to the emergency room for treatment.

## Communicable Disease Protocol

If you believe a student has contracted a contagious disease that may pose a health risk to others notify the SMSU Director of Health Services. If Health Services is closed encourage the student to be seen at the local emergency room.

## Suspicious Packages/Mail

General Guidelines for Handling Suspicious Mail

Notify SMSU Public Safety immediately (ext. 7252). Call 911 if you perceive an immediate risk of a dangerous situation.

- Isolate all suspicious packages and seal off the immediate area. If possible, place the envelope or package in a plastic bag or some other container to prevent leakage. All personnel should leave the room. If possible, turn off air-flows, such as fans or air-conditioning.
- If necessary employees processing mail should wear protective gloves.
- If you have identified a suspicious package, DO NOT handle, shake or empty it. Do not carry it to other areas or show it to other people. If anything spills out, DO NOT try to clean it up.
- Cover any spilled contents immediately. You can use clothing, paper, or a trash can. Do not remove the covering materials from the spill. DO NOT cover with wet objects.
- Direct all persons who have touched the mail to wash their hands with soap and water. After hands are washed, wash/rinse face for a period of time. Make a list of anyone who has handled or come into contact with the mail. Include contact information and provide this to responding EMS personnel and SMSU Security.
- As soon as practical, employees who have come in contact with any contamination should shower and place all clothing in plastic bags. The clothing should be made available to the police responding to the reported incident. Contain the potentially impacted individuals to ensure that they receive proper medical attention. Names and contact information of those that may have been contaminated should be obtained and given to public health officials.
- Attempt to verify the sender and/or the legitimacy of the package (i.e. ask the recipient if he/she was expecting a package that matches the suspect package's size and shape).

Things to Look for When Inspecting Mail

- Origination postmark or name of sender is unusual, unknown, or no return address is given, if given, it can't be verified as legitimate.
- Shows a city or state in the postmark that does not match the return address.
- Excessive or inadequate postage.
- Addressed to title only or incorrect title; addressed to someone no longer employed at SMSU.
- Misspellings of common words or names.
- Restrictive markings, i.e. "Personal, Eyes Only or Special Delivery"
- Rub-on block lettering.
- The letter is lopsided, unusually thick or contained in an uneven envelope.
- Excessive weight, the letter or package seems heavy for its size.

- Damaged envelope(s) or packages.
- Stiffness or springiness of contents; protruding wires, aluminum foil or components; oily outer wrapping or envelope; feels like it contains powdery substance (when checking do not bend excessively).
- Oily stains, discoloration, package/letter emits an odor, particularly almond or other suspicious odors.
- Crystallization or powdery substances on wrapper.
- Ticking sound.

#### Things to Look for When Opening Mail

- Powders
- Soil
- Sand
- Liquids of any kind, any color
- Oily or soapy residues
- Sticky or adhesive substances
- Flakes
- Crystals
- Fibers

## Terrorism

### Understanding the Homeland Security Advisory System

#### Homeland Security Advisory System



The world has changed since September 11, 2001. We remain a nation at risk to terrorist attacks and will remain at risk for the foreseeable future. At all threat conditions, we must remain vigilant, prepared, and ready to deter terrorist attacks. The following threat conditions each represent an increasing risk of terrorist attacks.

Low Condition (Green) – This condition is declared when there is a low risk of terrorist attacks.

Guarded Condition (Blue) – This condition is declared when there is a general risk of terrorist attack.

Elevated Condition (Yellow) – An elevated condition is declared when there is a significant risk of terrorist attack

High Condition (Orange) – A high condition is declared when there is a high risk of terrorist attack Severe Condition

(Red) – A severe condition reflects a severe risk of terrorist attacks. Under most circumstances, the protective measures for a severe condition are not intended to be sustained for substantial periods of time.

Southwest Minnesota State University will take actions necessary based on current threat levels and recommendations made by federal, state, and local agencies in implementing measures to respond to threat levels or other actions that may affect the SMSU community.

## **Bomb Threats**

If you receive and/or overhear a bomb threat, immediately call 911 and SMSU Public Safety (ext. 7252). You should complete the Bomb Threat Checklist as thoroughly as possible and submit it to SMSU Security or the police.

### **DO NOT ACTIVATE THE FIRE ALARM**

Threats may be communicated in a number of ways; via telephone, paper correspondence, and email or otherwise. Please follow the guidelines set forth above. Additionally, the following measures should be taken:

- **WRITTEN THREATS** – Anyone receiving a bomb threat in writing should handle the correspondence as little as possible.
- **EMAILED THREATS** – Persons receiving a bomb threat via email should leave the message on the computer. The person receiving the email should remain at the computer and not allow anyone to interfere and/or tamper with the message until Security arrives.
- **OTHER THREATS** – Anyone receiving a bomb threat in person and/or overhearing such a threat should obtain the following information if possible and practical: The name of the suspect, time and location of the threat, witnesses, exact wording of the threat and any other relevant information.

### **Evacuation:**

- If circumstances require that evacuation efforts are necessary, SMSU Security or emergency personnel will direct those affected to appropriate locations.
- If an evacuation is taking place, turn off all cell phones and leave the immediate area (at least 300 feet) and “listen only” on two-way radios.

### **Clearance:**

Building(s) may be re-entered only after clearance is given by SMSU Security or Emergency Personnel.

### **Bomb Threat Checklist: Questions to ask the caller**

1. When is the bomb going to explode?
2. Where is the bomb?
3. What does it look like?
4. What kind of bomb is it?
5. What will cause it to explode?
6. Did you place the bomb?
7. Why?
8. What is your name?



9. Where are you
10. Exact wording.

Other Identifying Characteristics:

Number at which call is received:

Background Sounds, Caller Voice, Threat Language (insert here)

Report call immediately to: Police (911) and SMSU Security (ext. 7252)

## **VIOLENT BEHAVIOR**

Weapons on Campus

- Immediately call 911 and SMSU Security (ext. 7252)
- Do not confront the person with the weapon.
- No effort should be made to intervene.
- If known, provide the following information to the police:
  - Name of individual(s) with weapon(s).
  - Location of individual(s) with weapon(s).
  - What person(s) did with weapon after it was displayed..

Active Shooter

- If shots are fired, notify the Marshall Police Department immediately by calling 911. Be prepared to provide the police with the following information:
  - Description of the shooter(s)
  - Location of incident
  - Nature of injuries
  - Stay on the phone with the police dispatcher if safe to do so
- If shooting is outside go inside the building as soon as possible (if safe to do so). If you can't get inside, take cover and get as compact as possible, put something between you and the shooter.
- If shots have been fired, classrooms and offices should be immediately locked down if possible. If unable to lock down consider evacuating the building if safe to do so. If you remain in a classroom or office use caution and discretion in allowing anyone inside. Stay away from doors and windows.
- If shots have been fired, turn off the lights in the room. Close the drapes or blinds on the window if safe to do so.
- Do not panic and calm others if they are present.
- Remain in the room until the police or other emergency personnel arrive with directions.
- When requested by emergency personnel, move as quickly as possible out of the room. Assist others if necessary and safe to do so.
- If qualified, provide medical care to the injured if safe to do so.

Hostage – Witness

- If hostage taker is unaware of your presence, do not intervene.
- Call 911 immediately and be prepared to provide the police with the following information:
  - Description of the hostage taker(s).
  - Location of the incident.
  - Number of hostages (if known).
  - Reason for hostage taking.
  - Injuries to hostages (if known).
  - Stay on the phone with police if requested and safe to do so.

- Do not enter the hostage scene and advise others not to enter the area.
- Follow police directions upon arrival at the scene.

#### Hostage – If you Are Taken Hostage

- Follow the instructions of the hostage taker.
- Do not panic. Calm others if they are present.
- Be respectful to the hostage taker.
- Ask permission to speak and do not argue.

## Severe Weather/University

### Closing

Severe Weather/Tornado Watch: A watch is a statement that severe weather/tornado conditions are present and could occur. The National Weather Service will issue a watch bulletin to local authorities as well as to the local radio and TV stations.

Severe Weather/Tornado Warning: When a severe weather/tornado sighting occurs, the National Weather Service alerts all weather stations and local authorities. If severe weather or a tornado is approaching a continuous sounding of the city's emergency sirens will signal the warning.

In case of severe weather/tornado: When the emergency warning sirens sound, it is YOUR responsibility to get to shelter. All persons should immediately seek shelter in the nearest building. Go to the basement or interior walls of lower floors. Auditoriums, gymnasiums, and similar large rooms with wide roofs should be avoided. Stay away from all windows and exterior doors. Take a battery-operated radio with you and listen for the "All clear" signal.

### Severe Weather

#### Guidelines:

- Move to the nearest building and locate a safe place.
- Move to, or stay on, the lowest floor of any building.
- Stay in central corridors away from glass, cover your face with folded arms.
- Stay away from windows.
- Leave corridor doors open.
- Do not use any elevator.
- Types of areas considered to be the safest.
  - Basements
  - Stairwells
  - Tunnel
  - Lower level rooms without any windows.
  - Lower level hallways without any windows.

Most tornadoes strike in the late afternoon and evening hours. When a severe thunderstorm/tornado warning is issued, take shelter immediately. Go to the basement and seek shelter under stairs or sturdy furniture. If you do not have a basement, seek shelter in a small room at the lowest level, in the center of the building. Bathrooms and closets are good potential shelters. Avoid rooms with windows.

## What To Do When Away From The University Or Home:

- The best tornado shelter in any building is the lowest level.
- Look for pre-designated shelters in buildings you frequent
- Smaller rooms, such as closets, rest rooms, or storerooms are good shelter areas.
- Position yourself beneath a piece of sturdy furniture.
- Cover your head and chest to protect yourself from flying debris.
- Seek shelter away from doors and windows.
- Long span roof areas like those in malls and gymnasiums are especially vulnerable to tornadoes. Find a small room.
- Don't run from your car. You are safer inside a car than in the open.

## **Severe Winter Weather:**

Because SMSU is a residential student campus, campus closings are rare events. Nonetheless when extreme weather conditions pose a serious danger for travel, the campus may be closed. When the campus is officially closed, all classes and extracurricular activities are cancelled.

Please note that SMSU only announces closings or cancellations and not that SMSU is open.

Appropriate actions will be determined by SMSU administration and publicly announced using various media sources.

Severe weather conditions may result in any of the following:

- Delaying opening
- Cancellation of non-academic activities
- Cancellation of all classes
- Closing the University

How can faculty, staff and students find out if campus is closed or  
Individual classes are cancelled:

Please do not call the switchboard! The best way to find out if campus is closed is by signing up for Star Alert and checking SMSU's web page. A list of cancelled classes will also be posted on SMSU's web page.

