

Emergency Frequently Asked Questions

Western remains active in its efforts to prepare for emergency situations and disasters. Below are frequently asked questions about emergencies at Western.

For more information about emergency preparedness at Western, [visit the Public Safety website](#).

What should I do if I am concerned about a threat or unusual behavior that I have observed?

Individuals who are concerned about a person's behavior, either personally or to the campus in general, even if no violence or threat of violence has occurred, should call the "SAFE" Campus phone number: **SAFE Campus Phone Number: (360) 650-SAFE or 650-7233**

Trained personnel screen the information provided and forward it to Western's Network Group or appropriate university office. This helps campus professionals evaluate students and others who may be exhibiting behavior that is reason for concern.

How will Western communicate with me in the event of an emergency?

Western will use its integrated **Western Alert** system to communicate during times of emergency. Multiple methods of communication are included in this approach, as this is a best practice in disseminating information quickly and effectively. **Western Alert** includes the following methods:

Text messages

Text messages will be sent out to anyone signed up to receive them. It should be noted that text messages appear to be FROM a random number (e.g. 53430 or another similar number, not a phone number); the FROM field does not state that the message is from Western. The text within the message clarifies that the message is being sent from Western and is an important **Western Alert**. If you are in doubt about the authenticity of the text message, you can consult the emergency.wvu.edu website, which will provide up-to-date information.

Building Enunciation

The building enunciation system sends emergency voice messages to the campus through fire alarm speakers. Enunciation capability exists within fire systems in almost all academic and administrative buildings, most residence halls, the Wade King Student Recreation Center and the Viking Union.

Email messages

Emergency emails will be sent to all Western official email addresses describing the nature of the emergency.

Desktop notification

Installed on Western computers throughout campus, including offices, classrooms and computer labs. A test message will display. Users need to only click on the green "Acknowledge" button to make the test message disappear.

Website

Information will be disseminated on the emergency.wvu.edu website, which is hosted at an external location. This system will still function even if university servers are down. If that webpage is unavailable, go to the Western homepage: <http://www.wvu.edu/>.

Facebook and Twitter

Information sent to campus will automatically go to Western's Facebook and Twitter feeds.

To date, 97% of students, 75% of staff, and 71% of faculty have provided their cell phone numbers to [Web4U](#) to receive emergency text messages. Parents of students and general community members may [sign-up](#) to receive emergency information.

Those currently not using text messaging are encouraged to become accustomed to it. In many disaster scenarios, texting is the most effective method of disseminating information as it requires less signal strength for transmission and reception than a cell call.

Non-Main Campus Sites

- Olympic College students can sign up at <https://www.olympic.edu/services/campus-security/campus-alerts>, using their Olympic College login, for alerts.
- Peninsula College students are automatically signed up for PCAAlertMe messages.
- Everett University Center follows Everett Community College and can sign up at <https://www.getrave.com/login/everettcc>

When is the Western Alert system tested?

Testing of the **Western Alert** system occurs at least twice per year. Generally, testing occurs in the spring and fall quarters. A test of the **Western Alert** system includes the following:

1. Sending email messages to every employee and student,
2. Sending text messages to all cell phones that have registered for **Western Alerts**.
3. Desktop notifications
4. Activating the building enunciation system
5. Putting emergency information on the emergency.wwu.edu website
6. Putting information on Western's Facebook page and Twitter feed

Prior to the test, Western provides notification information about it, including the date and time.

What do I do in the event of an emergency?

Ahead of Any Emergency:

- View the Western emergency video available at emergency.wwu.edu (scroll down on this web-page).
- Review the information in the [WWU Emergency Response Guide](#) regarding emergencies of varying kinds. Employees should hang a paper copy of the guide in a visible location for quick reference. Contact Emergency Management at [Public Safety](#) for a copy if you have not received one. Copies should be posted in classrooms.
- Faculty may wish to review the page in the above guide regarding classroom information in an emergency.
- Every employee should be aware of your departmental emergency plan.
- Keep an emergency wallet card with important Western emergency contact numbers with you.
- Back up your work-related information so you can retrieve it even if you cannot return to your workplace.
- Evaluate the spaces you frequent and know where to drop, cover and hold in an earthquake.
- Know two exit routes from your office and the classrooms in which you are teaching. Floor plans are on the [Facilities Development website](#).
- Have emergency supplies at work and at home including personal medications. Personal 72-hour kits are considered the minimum. The AS Bookstore sells pre-made emergency kits. Check out the following source for suggestions as well; <http://www.whatcomready.org/preparedness/what-to-know-about-disaster-kits/> or <https://www.ready.gov/>
- First aid and CPR training is available free to campus employees. Call the Environmental Health and Safety office to sign up. Students may contact the [American Red Cross](#) or [Bellingham Technical College](#) regarding training opportunities. Departments wishing to organize classes for student employees may choose to contact [Randy Flitz of I Know CPR](#).
- Include **becoming emergency ready** as a part of your life. Whatcom County provides Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) [training](#). FEMA's [ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) site has many suggestions and resources as well.

During or after an emergency:

- Follow the guidance in the [WWU Emergency Response Guide](#) for the type of emergency occurring.
- For example, if you feel an earthquake, drop, cover and hold. When and if it is safe, exit the building, gather at your building meeting location or at a major disaster meeting location.

- Evacuate immediately if the fire alarm sounds. In classrooms, instruct students to calmly gather coats and books and exit slowly and with order. Gather at your Building/Department Assembly Point.
- As discussed earlier, a **Western Alert** communication will be activated in the event of a major emergency.
- Following a major disaster, go to one of the three Disaster Assembly Points:
 - Old Main lawn,
 - The south campus oval by the Communications Facility, or
 - Harrington Field.
- Bring your personal and departmental emergency supplies to assist in caring for yourself and our community.
- If you know first aid and CPR, assist with caring for any injured.

How will WWU respond to campus needs during and immediately following an emergency?

- Western bases its responses on priorities identified in the university's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan. These include:
 - Eliminate major threats to life and safety
 - Preserve property and the environment
 - Maintain continuity of educational activities
 - Restore essential systems and services
 - Restore the residential living programs

What measures are in place to help prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies?

Threats and Violence

- The Network Group meets weekly to discuss student issues and concerns and to identify potential threats of violence. This interdisciplinary team is comprised of representatives from University Police, Counseling Center, Student Health Center, Prevention and Wellness, University Residences, Crime and Sexual Assault Services (CASAS), the Dean of Students Office, Student Life Office, and Disability Resources for Students.
- The university maintains a collaborative, multi-disciplinary Safety Assessment (SAFE) Team that includes law enforcement, mental health professionals, medical professionals and others. This team identifies, assesses and manages situations indicating violent or potentially violent behaviors by any individual or groups affecting personnel associated with Western.
- University Police are available to train campus departments or groups about violent behaviors. They provide two types of training: what to do during an active shooter scenario and recognizing and responding to behaviors of concern. The behaviors video is available at this [link](#).
- Campus community members who have concerns related to domestic violence are encouraged to consult the Human Resources' [domestic violence website](#) that includes relevant contacts and links, applicable policies and useful information. The [Wellness and Prevention Center website](#) provides information for students.

Other Types of Emergencies

- Green coat escorts are available at University Police, (360) 650-3555.
- Personal safety brochures and posters are available from University Police or Environmental Health and Safety.
- The [Employee Assistance Program](#) is a benefit for employees. The Human Resources Department arranges this state service that provides free, confidential and professional assistance.
- A *WWU Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan* is available and updated.
- Individual departments summarize their emergency preparations in the *WWU Safety Information Book*, Section 2. Many departments have completed these departmental and building emergency plans.
- A half-time, permanent fire safety officer checks facilities to enhance WWU's fire prevention efforts.

- Fire drills are performed annually in many academic buildings and quarterly in residence halls and places of assembly.
- Selected WWU personnel receive National Incident Management System (NIMS) training, and regularly collaborate with City emergency responders and others.
- Exterior emergency call boxes with blue lights at night are located across campus.
- The *WWU Emergency Response Guide* has been distributed to employees and is on-line.
- New staff employees receive the guide, emergency and fire protection information during an initial, on-line orientation. New faculty members receive the guide and fliers with information.
- Wallet-sized cards with emergency information and phone numbers are distributed to employees.

How is WWU working to increase the awareness of safety and emergency procedures among the campus community *before* the event of an emergency?

- The website emergency.wvu.edu provides emergency information as well as information related to emergency situations and Western's emergency video.
- Western has web-based [emergency planning](#) information available.
- Western's [policy website](#) includes all approved policies. [Policy U5615.01](#) is Responding to Campus Violence or Threats of Violence. [Policy U5950.03](#) is the Emergency Management Policy. [Policy U5400.04](#) is Suspending University Operations.
- Department heads review emergency information with their staff members at least annually.
- New staff employee orientations include a review of emergency information.
- New faculty packets include emergency information.
- Western's Emergency Management Committee is composed of 25 persons from across the campus community that meet regularly. The Committee reviews issues, evaluates and pursues effective measures relating to mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.