EXECUTIVE POLICY GROUP RECOMMENDATION

The Emergency Management Team Executive Policy Group, consisting of the following members, reviewed this document and hereby formally recommends this plan to the President to serve as the Emergency Notification System Plan for the University of South Carolina Columbia.

______________________________   ________________________________
Michael Amiridis, Provost (Chair)   Chris Byrd, VP Human Resources

______________________________   ________________________________
William Hogue, VP Information Technology   Luanne Lawrence, VP Communications

______________________________   ________________________________
Walter Parham, General Counsel   Dennis Pruitt, VP Student Affairs

______________________________   ________________________________
Tom Quasney, AVP Facilities   Thomas Stepp, Secretary Board of Trustees

______________________________   ________________________________
Ed Walton, VP Business and Finance   (month / year)
PROMULGATION

I hereby accept and formally approve this document as the official Emergency Notification System Plan for the University of South Carolina Columbia. As such, this plan is henceforth University practice and shall be observed by all University students, staff, faculty and all other affiliated members of the Carolina community.

President Harris Pastides

Date
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PRINTED DISTRIBUTION

Upon promulgation, printed copies of this plan should be distributed to the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University of South Carolina</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Department</strong></td>
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<td>Law Enforcement and Safety (DLES)</td>
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<td>Emergency Management Team, Chair</td>
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<td>ENS Committee, Co-Chair</td>
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<td>DLES Community Relations Supervisor</td>
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<td>DLES Dispatch</td>
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<td>DLES Emergency Mgmt. Coordinator</td>
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<td>Mobile Command Post</td>
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ELECTRONIC DISTRIBUTION

Two electronic copies of this document should be published on the Internet for members of the University community.

- A public version can be found on the Carolina Alert website at [www.sc.edu/carolinaalert/plans.shtml](http://www.sc.edu/carolinaalert/plans.shtml).
- The full version will be restricted to authorized personnel and remain on a secure server, due to the sensitivity of this document.
TERM

The Emergency Notification System Plan will be maintained by the Division of Law Enforcement and Safety in cooperation with the Vice President for Student Affairs and Vice President for Communications. This plan should be comprehensively reviewed by the Emergency Notification Committee, updated, and resubmitted for approval and promulgation upon: scheduled review, major revision, or a period not to exceed four (4) years from date of promulgation, whichever comes first. The current version of this plan should be reviewed and re-signed no later than July 31, 2015.

EMERGENCY NOTIFICATIONS COMMITTEE

The Emergency Notification Committee, co-chaired by the Vice President for Student Affairs and the Vice President for Communications, is a sub-set of the University Emergency Management Team (EMT). This group is responsible for creating and maintaining the Emergency Notification System Plan, researching new mass communication products and technologies, creating policies and procedures associated with mass communication, and making recommendations to the EMT. Members of the committee are chosen by the chair and should include participation from the following areas:

- Student Affairs and Academic Support
- Law Enforcement and Safety
- Environmental Health and Safety
- Student Media
- Human Resources
- University Communications
- University Technology Services
- University Housing
- Facilities

MINOR UPDATES

This plan is subject to continuous change based on the results of actual events, exercises, annual reviews, and stakeholder input. Minor updates and changes may be made with majority approval of the Executive Policy Group (EPG). A record of all changes is attached and maintained on the master document. The most recent, public version of the plan should be posted electronically on the Carolina Alert website.

MAJOR REVISIONS

Major content changes that significantly alter the intent of all or part of this plan prior to expiration are subject to stakeholder review, endorsement of the EPG, and should be resubmitted for promulgation.
# Record of Changes

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# Record of Annual Review

This document should be reviewed annually by the emergency management coordinator and distributed to all personnel who serve as the initial points of contact for the communication media listed in Section 2. The point of contact should review the section(s) for which they are responsible, submit changes to the emergency management coordinator, and sign a final copy.

Once all necessary signatures are received, the emergency management coordinator will sign below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature</th>
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<tr>
<td>July 2012:</td>
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SECTION 1 – BASIC PLAN

INTRODUCTION

In any disaster response, success is often synonymous with how well agencies and responders communicate essential information with the community as well as with each other. If those lines of communication fail, it compounds the difficulty of responding to an emergency. Therefore University responders and public safety officials must utilize, test, and exercise a variety of communication media to ensure that continuous information flows in all directions to facilitate the response.

The Emergency Notification System Plan outlines the following sections:

1. Basic Plan: provides a basic overview of the emergency notification system plan, establishes policies and procedures for activation, as well as identifies the communication media available in the Carolina Alert notification system.

2. Preparedness and Public Education: informs the campus community about the hazards the University faces and educates them on the steps that can be taken when a message is received.

3. Testing and Exercise: outlines how communication media are tested, and users trained, drilled, and exercised to ensure that systems are functional and operational for implementation at a moment’s notice.

SCOPE

This policy applies only to the University of South Carolina campus in Columbia. It is incumbent upon the administrative personnel of the other University of South Carolina campuses and related facilities to develop their own localized Emergency Notification System Plans that are consistent with all applicable laws, authorities, and standards.

It is important to note that no one system is capable of reaching everyone, everywhere, every time. Each communication method has strengths, weaknesses, and limitations. As such, it is valuable to consider an emergency notification system that utilizes multiple delivery methods. This ensures a greater coverage of intended recipients and redundancy in the event of failures, to which many communication systems are prone. In addition, while this plan sets forth guidelines by which communication systems may be used in specific hazards, the actual implementation and activation of the media will be left to the discretion of the authorized personnel at the time of activation.
LEGAL AUTHORITIES

The following legal authorities form the basis for the University’s Emergency Management Program including all subsequent policies, plans, response, committees, etc.:

Higher Education Opportunity Act

U.S. Public Law 110-315, Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA), and Code of Federal Regulations (34CFR) require colleges and universities to:

- “…Immediately notify the campus community upon confirmation of a significant emergency or dangerous situation involving an immediate threat to the health or safety of students or staff occurring on the campus…unless issuing a notification will compromise efforts to contain the emergency;

- Publicize emergency response and evacuation procedures on an annual basis in a manner designed to reach students and staff; and

- Test emergency response and evacuation procedures on an annual basis.”

In addition, each institution shall:

- “Make timely reports to the campus community on crimes considered to be a threat to other students and employees…that are reported to campus security or local law police agencies.” This includes:
  - Murder and non-negligent manslaughter;
  - Negligent manslaughter;
  - Sex offenses (forcible and non-forcible);
  - Robbery;
  - Aggravated assault;
  - Burglary;
  - Motor vehicle theft; and
  - Arson.

Such reports shall be provided to students and employees in a manner that is timely and that will aid in the prevention of similar occurrences.

Chapter 117, SC Code, University of South Carolina

As a state institution of higher education, the University of South Carolina is governed by the South Carolina Code of Laws. Chapter 117 grants the authority to the University of South Carolina Board of Trustees to:
“Make bylaws and all rules and regulations deemed expedient for the management of its affairs and its own operations not inconsistent with the Constitution and laws of this State or of the United States.” 59-117-40 (7)

**University of South Carolina Board of Trustees Bylaws**

Under the Board of Trustees Bylaws, the University President:

- “Shall be the chief executive officer of the University System and shall exercise such executive powers as are necessary for its appropriate governance under the authority of the Board.” (Article XI Section 2)

With the general authority granted by the Board, the University President is authorized to:

- “Recommend policies and procedures which will accomplish the Board’s investment responsibilities and objectives and supervise the implementation of the policies and procedures approved by the Board.” (Article XI Section 2)

- “Direct, coordinate and implement the planning, development, and appraisal of all activities of the University System and shall be directly responsible to the Board for its operation.” (Article XI Section 2)

- “Administer University policies as promulgated by the Board, speak for the University as its chief executive officer, and coordinate all activities of each campus of the institution directly or through his designated representatives.” (Article XI Section 2)

**University of South Carolina Policy**

University policy UNIV 3.00 states:

- In the event of an emergency situation that affects or could potentially affect the safety and well-being of the University, the Director of the Division of Law Enforcement and Safety, or designee, is designated as the Incident Commander, until one can be officially selected by the EPG. This person is authorized to take any necessary actions on behalf of the University’s EMT needed to protect the life, property, and/or security of the University of South Carolina community, until the EMT is properly staffed with the appropriate members and has the ability to commence response operations.

**Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Compliance**
The University will comply with all requests made under the FOIA. However, portions of the Emergency Notification System Plan are exempt from inspection or copying of public records per South Carolina statute 30-4-20.

- “Information relating to security plans and devices proposed, adopted, installed, or utilized by a public body, other than amounts expended for adoption, implementation, or installation of these plans and devices, is required to be closed to the public and is not considered to be made open to the public under the provisions of this act.

- See University Policy UNIV 2.00 for more information.
PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS

To plan for and consider the effectiveness of the Carolina Alert notification system, one must take into account several planning assumptions:

1. No single method of communication will reach everyone, everywhere, every time. Utilization of numerous and various communication methods is required.

2. With the exception of some forecasted weather situations, most emergencies requiring activation of the Carolina Alert notification system will be “no notice,” which means there is an immediate threat to life safety.

3. With assumption #2 in mind, there is a need to streamline the activation process for mass notification to ensure timely communication. Therefore, designated personnel and their alternates must be identified and granted the authority to immediately enact the Carolina Alert system in a timely manner 24 hours a day.

4. Electronic communication mechanisms are subject to failure. Redundancy through utilization of numerous and various communication methods is required.

5. Even with numerous and various notification systems, 100% message delivery to the intended audience will not be achieved due to limitations beyond the University’s control.

6. A small portion of the intended audience will receive their emergency messages in a later timeframe than desired, due to limitations beyond the University’s control.

7. Contact information provided to the University may be errant or outdated.

8. Errant information may be generated and distributed by alternate means of communication (i.e. word of mouth).

9. The campus community may or may not respond according to the message.

10. Unintended consequences will occur as a result of sending a message (i.e. increased onlookers, media interest, etc.).

11. Appropriate communication methods must account for individuals with functional needs (i.e. hearing or sight impairments).

12. Language barriers may result in difficulty understanding messages.

13. Emergency messages must be recognizable as “official” USC emergency notifications.

14. An aggressive educational campaign is required to introduce every person on campus to the Carolina Alert notification system. This educational campaign should be maintained to reach new people who come to the University (i.e. new student / employee orientations).
15. Regular testing for all media within the Carolina Alert system should be conducted to ensure functionality and to familiarize recipients with the system’s features. Tests should be evaluated and corrective action recommendations developed as necessary.

16. As communication technology evolves, new communication methods may be identified as others become obsolete. A constant evaluation of the effectiveness of the system is required.
DEcision Criteria

Five criteria may be considered to determine if activation of the Carolina Alert system is warranted, which communications may be utilized, and who authorizes activation of the system:

1. Hazard Type
   - What is the hazard? (Room fire, tornado, hurricane)
   - What is the impact to USC? (Minor, major, catastrophic)
   - What is the potential for the situation to worsen?
   - Is the situation under control?

2. Life Safety / Property Protection
   - What is the potential for death?
   - What is the potential for serious injury?
   - What is the potential for minor injury?
   - What is the potential for damage?
   - What is the potential for disruption to the normal course of business?

3. Urgency
   - How quickly does the message need to be sent? (Seconds, hours, days)
   - Is there time for additional approvals?

4. Audience
   - Who needs to be alerted? (Administration, faculty, students, guests, area surrounding campus)
   - How many people need to be alerted? (Dozens, hundreds, thousands)

5. Capabilities / Limitations
   - What are the limitations of the system? (Limited audience, lengthy of delivery time)
   - Which system should be used? (Press conference, mass text message, siren)
   - How quickly can the messages be sent? (Seconds, minutes, hours)
**Activation Authority (Life Safety)**

This section applies to emergency conditions or urgent situations that pose a threat to life safety. Typically these are messages that require some form of action on the part of the community (i.e. evacuate, seek shelter, etc.).

Planning assumption #3 previously stated:

“…there is a need to streamline the activation process for mass notification to ensure timely communication. Therefore, designated personnel and their alternates must be identified and granted the authority to immediately enact the Carolina Alert system in a timely manner 24 hours a day.”

As such, this plan establishes a flexible but controlled activation approval hierarchy. It is the responsibility of these authorized persons to confirm the emergency, determine the appropriate segment(s) of the campus community to receive a notification, determine the content of the message, and initiate the notification system within the Carolina Alert system:

1. Emergency Management Coordinator
2. Officer with the rank of Captain or above, Division of Law Enforcement and safety
3. Associate Director, DLES
4. Director, DLES
5. Chairperson, Emergency Management Team
6. Executive Policy Group

**As practical without jeopardizing life safety**, the authorized individuals (or their designees) shall consult the next person on the list prior to emergency message dissemination. However if an individual is unavailable, or time does not allow for a delayed warning, subsequent approval is not necessary.

This plan includes a number of pre-approved messages from which to choose, however if there is no pre-approved script for an incident, **as practical without jeopardizing life safety**, the person authorizing the activation should consult News and Internal Communications for content consideration

**Exceptions (Life Safety)**

If sending a notification of a confirmed emergency or dangerous situation compromises the efforts to assist a victim, contain the emergency, respond to the emergency, or otherwise mitigate the emergency, one is not required to be sent.
**ACTIVATION AUTHORITY (WEATHER)**

Upon official notification by the National Weather Service (NWS) of hazardous weather conditions affecting the University of South Carolina Columbia campus, the appropriate, prescribed Carolina Alert media may be activated without any further approval.

**EXCEPTIONS (WEATHER)**

There may be occasions, especially in weather conditions, where a hazard threatens campus multiple times in a short period of time. For example, a storm can strengthen and weaken multiple times within a couple of hours. If this is the case, subsequent notifications may not be necessary, and will be made at the discretion of the authorized person.

**ACTIVATION AUTHORITY (INFORMATION ONLY)**

‘Information Only’ messages are defined as communication used to inform the community of situations that are **not** an immediate threat to life safety but still warrant a notification method such as a school closing, health advisory, winter weather, extreme heat, etc.

Communications methods used for ‘information only’ messages are typically restricted to: website postings, e-mails, and/or social media updates. Text messages, sirens and other disruptive media should not be used for these announcements.

Offices that commonly would provide information for mass notification include: News and Internal Communications, DLES, Student Health Services, Human Resources, Student Affairs and Academic Support, etc. Content may be posted with the approval of that area’s Associate Vice President or Vice President. If possible, information should be sent to News and Internal Communications for review prior to posting.

**ACTIVATION AUTHORITY (CRIME ALERTS/TIMELY WARNINGS)**

To maintain compliance with the HEOA, when the USC Division of Law Enforcement and Safety (DLES) receives information that a serious crime occurred in the area, and could potentially affect persons on campus they will “Make timely reports to the campus community…” DLES posts crime alerts on their website [http://www.les.sc.edu/crimealerts/index.asp](http://www.les.sc.edu/crimealerts/index.asp).

Whenever a crime alert is posted to this site, the message may be subsequently distributed via the Carolina Alert notification system using the following media: Carolina Alert website, social media, and may include mass email. Depending on the severity of the situation, additional communication media (i.e. text message, digital signage, etc.) may be used.

The format and general information has been reviewed and authorized by the University Office of Communications; the message content will come directly from police reports and is not subject to further review.
FOLLOW-UP COMMUNICATION

Once a mass notification is issued, the person who authorized the notification should contact the News and Internal Communications office and the EMT Executive Policy Group as soon as possible.

Initial notifications should be followed by a subsequent message(s) that provides greater detail of the incident and/or protective action recommendations. If the incident requires an extended response time, subsequent information releases should be done so at the discretion of the University Public Information Officer or designee.

INFORMING SURROUNDING COMMUNITY

If a dangerous situation exists on campus that has the potential to affect the surrounding Columbia community, the person who authorized the alert will notify DLES Dispatch to call Columbia –Richland 9-1-1 Communications Center, or the appropriate authority depending on the nature and type of emergency, to make the determination to initiate its community notification process.

IDENTIFICATION

As mentioned in Planning Assumption # 13:

“Emergency messages must be recognizable as “official” USC emergency notifications.”

When the University sends a message using one of the Carolina Alert media, those receiving the notification must be able to differentiate between an emergency communication and a general, day-to-day communication.

Therefore, all email messages will be sent from CAROLINA ALERT and text messages sent from 67283 or 226787.

‘CAROLINA ALERT’

To aid in the education and recognition by University of South Carolina students, faculty, staff, and visitors, the University combines all of its emergency notification systems described herein into a single concept referred to as “Carolina Alert.”
COMMUNICATION MEDIA

The following is a list of communication media the University may have at its disposal for the timely dissemination of emergency notification. This list does not imply that all media will be used for every notification.

1. www.sc.edu/CarolinaAlert Website
2. RSS Feed
3. Facebook™
4. Twitter™
5. www.sc.edu Website
6. Outdoor Warning Sirens
7. Tone Alert Radios
8. Voice Over Fire Alarms
9. Digital Signage
10. Alert FM
11. Text Messages
12. E-mail
13. Emergency Information Line (777-5700)
14. Television Message Crawler
15. 90.5 WUSC Radio
16. Blackboard Announcement
17. Fire Alarm
18. Vehicle Public Address Speakers
19. Bullhorns
20. Media Advisory

COMMON DELIVERY METHODS

Every incident is unique; therefore, different communication media will be activated based on their reach, effectiveness, and location. The following two circumstances are outlined to provide guidance to authorized personnel when selecting communication media.

Requires Action:
If a situation exists that poses an immediate risk to life safety and requires persons to change their behavior (i.e. seek shelter, evacuate, etc.), information may be pushed using disruptive media (i.e. sirens, AlertFM, text messages, TV message crawler, etc.).

Public Notification:
If a situation exists where persons should be notified about an incident that is not immediately life threatening (i.e. crime alerts, situations that have already been contained, etc.), media such as the Carolina Alert website, social media, or select others may be used to communicate the information.

For more information regarding emergency notification, please visit: www.sc.edu/CarolinaAlert/carolinaalert.shtml.
Section 2 – Preparedness & Public Education

Website

The Carolina Alert website at [www.sc.edu/carolinaalert](http://www.sc.edu/carolinaalert) serves as a one-stop emergency preparedness resource for the University community. In an emergency, this site may host official University announcements, situation reports and emergency instructions. For daily use, this site can host a variety of information to educate students, faculty and staff about their role in an emergency.

Campus Presentations

In addition to maintaining the Carolina Alert webpage, the Emergency Management Program makes a considerable effort to reach out to the Carolina community to provide educational sessions to clubs, organizations, classes, residence halls, etc. on a requested basis. The information regarding Carolina Alert is included in several DLES presentations typically given to student, faculty and staff groups.

The following is a list of outlets that can be used to reach various members of the Carolina community.

- U101
- New Faculty Orientation
- Student Orientation
- Student Orientation: Parents Session
- DLES Presentations
- Orientation Booth
- Benefits Fair Booth
- New Employee Orientation

Printed Material

There are a number of methods available for the University to use to provide emergency preparedness information. They include:

- Publications
- Advertisements in campus publications

Documentation

All emergency preparedness educational presentations, media advisories and printed material should be documented and forwarded to the Emergency Management Coordinator for historical purposes.
SECTION 3 - TESTING AND EXERCISES

INTRODUCTION

The University of South Carolina is dedicated to regularly testing the knowledge, skills, and abilities of emergency personnel as well as the plans, policies, procedures, facilities, and equipment of the institution.

Training helps emergency personnel become familiar with their responsibilities and acquire the skills necessary to perform assigned tasks. Exercises provide a means to validate plans, checklists, and response procedures and evaluate the skills of personnel.

Training, committee meetings, exercises and other necessary activities should be conducted on a regular basis at the discretion of the Emergency Notification System Committee.

DEFINITIONS

Testing
The communication methods within the Carolina Alert system should undergo tests each year to ensure the functionality and maintenance of the media. Some of these tests are conducted on a regular basis by owners of the system, while others are done only in concert with Carolina Alert System tests.

Training
All personnel authorized to activate the Carolina Alert system should, upon hiring, receive instruction on how to operate these media. This may be accomplished through workshops, drills, tabletop exercises, functional or full-scale exercises. Documentation and evaluation of each test should be submitted to the Emergency Management Coordinator.

Drill
Drills test specific tasks and functions, such as activating one component of the Carolina Alert System.

Exercise
As the EMT conducts various exercises (functional / full-scale), mass communications will often be included in the response.

Emergency Use
Some media may be used more frequently, independent of the Carolina Alert mass notification (i.e. fire alarms).

Operational Use
Some media are used on a regular basis, independent from a Carolina Alert mass notification (i.e. vehicle PA systems, 90.5 WUSC).
**Annual Testing**

The Carolina Alert system should be tested at least once a year to not only ensure the system is operational, but to introduce members of the Carolina community to the methods in which they can receive mass notifications during an emergency. Optimal times include September and February, during a time of day when the fewest classes are scheduled. A tentative test schedule for all communication mediums can be found in the Carolina Alert training calendar.

At least one test per calendar year will include information about the University’s emergency response and evacuation procedures; a mass email notification would suffice.

**Annual Exercises**

In addition to testing the Carolina Alert System, the personnel authorized to activate the system need regular training and exercising. Personnel may be given a scenario and activate the communication media accordingly. Optimal times include winter break, spring break, and summer to minimize interruption to campus activities.

**Annual Drills**

Drills must be conducted annually in order to test a single procedural operation. The Carolina Alert training calendar shows a tentative schedule for drills related to the communication mediums contained with the Carolina Alert system.

**Prior Notification**

It may be necessary to provide prior notification to the Columbia campus as well as the surrounding community in an effort to inform members that the anticipated notification is only a test. The amount of prior notification and communication media used will be selected at the discretion of the University Public Information Officer.

**Evaluation**

After each exercise or activation of a Carolina Alert medium, a brief after action report should be written to evaluate the event against measurable goals. This document should include: purpose, date / time, whether the test was announced or unannounced, participants, description, successes, shortcomings, and corrective action recommendations. The evaluation is designed to assess the emergency plans and its capabilities.

The after action reports may be distributed to the EMT for corrections and recommendations. A meeting to review the corrective action recommendation may also be scheduled to discuss the necessity of altering any University policies and procedures.