

Emergency Notification System

Purpose

The Northwest Missouri State University (Northwest) has an Emergency Notification System (ENS) with multi-channel communication capabilities. Northwest's ENS is intended to rapidly disseminate emergency information on an incident and provide instructions to the Northwest campus population. The procedures outline the emergency notification and organization.

The purpose of the ENS is to authorize and issue warning notifications to the Northwest campus population during emergency events or when specific actions must be taken to maintain safety and security. These guidelines establish the process for activating the Northwest ENS when a threat or emergency situation is reported to University Police Department and provides operational guidance for issuing emergency messages via the ENS. These procedures are integrated with and supplement the Northwest Emergency Operations Plan.

These procedures are intended to provide guidelines for safe practices and it cannot be assumed that all plausible and non-plausible scenarios are contained within this document.

Situation and Assumptions

Situation:

The process for activating the ENS procedures begins when a threat or emergency situation is reported to the University Police Department. For confirmed threats or emergency situations that require immediate or urgent notification, the University Police Department senior officer on duty can authorize the emergency notification based on the operational guidelines within these procedures.

In the event of a power disruption where access to the different levels of the ENS protocol could be diminished, systems may be accessed either remotely via off-site internet access, mobile phone app, Maryville Public Safety, or on-site at individual locations. Locations and systems requiring utility support, will have a battery or solar powered back-up system installed allowing for a limited amount of emergency service.

Assumptions:

It is assumed that many of the existing communications and warning system components will survive and remain functional regardless of what type of disaster strikes the area. The information contained within this document recognizes that individual circumstance or events not anticipated by the procedure occur. The experience and judgment of those utilizing the procedure is an important consideration in how and when the procedure is utilized and when an alert is issued.

Concept of Operations

For the majority of emergency threats and incidents at the Northwest campus, the first notice of the situation will be via an incoming call to the University Police communications center. The University Police dispatcher will notify the senior officer on-duty and provide necessary information regarding confirming the incident. The University Police dispatcher will then notify the University Police Chief who in turn will notify the Emergency Management Coordinator. A decision will be made as to the channels and content of emergency notifications to be utilized.

Authorization for providing emergency notifications to the campus community will normally come from the University Police Chief or the Emergency Management Coordinator. However, depending on the nature and severity of the emergency, there may be occasion that that University Police senior officer on-duty will be responsible for the release of immediate campus emergency messaging. If an incident is severe enough, and the delay in the notification process increases the risk to life and safety, the University Police senior officer on-duty is authorized to provide immediate notification relating to the event.

Emergency Notification System Channels:

The following makes up the Northwest Emergency Notification System channels:

- Bearcat Alert emergency text message system – sent to mobile cell phones (limited to 124 characters)
- Simplex indoor siren and public address system – a system that consists of a siren blast from internal speakers throughout campus buildings
 - This system is also capable of playing a recorded message or live audio
- Whelan outdoor siren and public address system – a system that consists of a siren blast from a speaker on campus
 - This system is also capable of playing a recorded message or live audio
- Northwest campus wide e-mail – mass e-mail to all Northwest accounts
- Northwest homepage – messages posted on the homepage of Northwest's internet website

- Other channels as developed – these could include social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook

Emergency Notification Message Characteristics:

All Emergency Notification System messages may contain the following information:

- Nature of the incident
- Location of the incident
- Actions to be taken by affected populations

Additional or subsequent messaging (which are not constrained by technical limitations related to SMS) may use additional characters, as appropriate, to convey more information. As soon as possible following the issuance of an emergency message, the Northwest homepage and e-mails should contain additional and/or supplemental information about the alert and/or the incident. Further instructions should be provided for obtaining detailed information for University programs/services affected, receiving additional updates, and avenues for reporting information.

Levels of Emergency Notification:

There are three levels of notification under the ENS. These are immediate, urgent and status update/all clear, each of which are described below:

- **IMMEDIATE:** An *immediate* notification to the campus is made when the University Police Department has confirmed that an emergency situation poses an *immediate* threat to life safety or security of the campus population. The University Police Department senior officer on-duty is authorized to make an *immediate* notification to provide an alert, warning and safety information, or protection instructions.

However, the University Police Department senior officer on duty also has the authority not to authorize an immediate notification to the campus if issuing such a message could create a more serious emergency and/or compromise the University's efforts to contain the emergency. If the University Police Department senior officer makes a decision not to authorize an alert, he or she must notify and consult with the Northwest Police Chief or the Emergency Management Coordinator.

As necessary, the University Police Chief will notify the Emergency Management Coordinator of the situation, the notification authorized/issued (or not authorized/issued), and any other actions taken. As necessary, the Emergency Management Coordinator will notify the University President and other officials of the situation, the notification authorized/issued (or not authorized/issued), and any actions taken.

- URGENT: An *urgent* notification to the campus is made when the University Police Department has confirmed that an emergency situation may pose a threat to life safety or security of the campus population.

When the University Police Department confirms an emergency situation exists, immediate notification will be made to the University Police Chief. As necessary, the University Police Chief will notify the Emergency Management Coordinator of the situation, the notification authorized/issued (or not authorized/issued), and any other actions taken.

As necessary, the Emergency Management Coordinator will notify the University President and other officials of the situation, the notification authorized/issued (or not authorized/issued), and any actions taken.

- STATUS UPDATE / ALL CLEAR: A *status update* is made when there is new information or instructions for the campus population; it may be to provide an update on the situation or change in protective actions. An *all clear* notification indicates that the emergency has been contained or no longer exists.

Status update and all clear notifications will be based on information provided by the person, or Department, who has incident command responsibilities. Authorization will be by the University Police Department senior officer on duty, University Police Chief, or the Emergency Management Coordinator.

Emergency Notification System Authorizations:

LEVEL:	AUTHORIZED BY:	ISSUED BY:	CHANNEL OPTIONS:
<p>Immediate</p>	<p>University Police senior officer on duty, University Police Chief, Emergency Management Coordinator</p>	<p>University Police dispatcher, or other trained personnel</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Bearcat Alert text messaging system 2) Simplex indoor siren/PA, as needed 3) Whelan outdoor siren/PA, as needed 4) Northwest campus email 5) Northwest homepage 6) Other channels as developed
<p>Urgent</p>	<p>University Police Chief, Emergency Management Coordinator</p>	<p>Trained personnel</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Bearcat Alert text messaging system 2) Simplex indoor siren/PA, as needed 3) Whelan outdoor siren/PA, as needed 4) Northwest campus email 5) Northwest homepage 6) Other channels as developed
<p>Status Update / All Clear</p>	<p>University Police senior officer on duty, University Police Chief, Emergency Management Coordinator</p>	<p>Trained personnel</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Bearcat Alert text messaging system 2) Simplex indoor siren/PA, as needed 3) Whelan outdoor siren/PA, as needed 4) Northwest campus email 5) Northwest homepage 6) Other channels as developed

Organization and Assignment of Responsibilities

This section describes the roles and actions assigned to staff at Northwest for authorizing and operating the Northwest Emergency Notification System. The action checklist provide detailed guidance for each position within the ENS.

NORTHWEST STAFF POSITION	ROLE
<p>University Police Dispatcher</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with the University Police Senior officer on duty • Issue immediate notifications • Issue status updates or all clear notifications as instructed • Activate the sirens and public address systems as instructed
<p>University Police Senior Officer on Duty</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm the emergency situation or existence of a threat • Determine whether an emergency notification to the campus would create a more serious emergency and/or compromise the University’s efforts to contain the emergency • Authorize the dispatcher to send out immediate notifications • Notify the University Police Chief of the situation, notifications authorized/issued, notifications not authorized/issued due to the potential to compromise University efforts to contain the emergency, and any other actions taken in relation to the emergency • May authorize the University Police dispatcher to send an all clear notification (for incidents in which this person serves as the Incident Commander)
<p>University Police Chief</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive information on immediate notifications that have been sent, or notifications not sent because they might compromise the University’s efforts, or because the immediacy of the threat is undetermined • Authorize urgent notifications • Notify the Emergency Management Coordinator of the situation, notifications authorized/issued, and any other actions taken to contain the emergency • Determine whether an emergency notification to the campus would create a more serious emergency and/or compromise the University’s efforts to contain the emergency • May authorize the University Police dispatcher to send status update notifications, or all clear notifications

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NORTHWEST STAFF POSITION	ROLE
Emergency Management Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive information on immediate notifications that have been sent and, as appropriate, notifications not sent • Confirm whether the emergency situation threatens the life safety, or security of the campus population for situations outlined within the Emergency Operations Plan • Authorize urgent notifications • Notify the University President and other University Officials as necessary of the situation, notifications authorized/issued, and any other actions taken • Provide safety and security information for notifications as needed • May authorize the University Police dispatcher or trained personnel to send status update notifications or all clear notifications
University Marketing and Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue notifications • Provide additional information on notification messages on the northwest homepage and campus email accounts
University Information Technology Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide technical support to the University Police Department, Emergency Management Coordinator, and other offices in the operation of the Emergency Notification System and associated networks and systems • Coordinate with service providers as needed to ensure system operability