

Community-Facing Emergency Operations Plan

Prepared for Students, Faculty, Staff and Visitors

Academic Year 2026- 2027



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Executive Overview

The St. Mary's College of Maryland Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) establishes a comprehensive framework for preparedness, response, continuity, and recovery in the event of an emergency affecting the campus community.

Emergency preparedness is a shared responsibility. While the College is committed to providing coordinated leadership, timely communication, and appropriate resources during emergencies, every member of the campus community plays an important role by remaining informed, following official guidance, and supporting one another. This plan reflects the College's commitment to fostering a safe, resilient, and supportive learning environment for students, faculty, staff, and visitors.

This EOP is designed to explain how the College organizes its emergency response, communicates during emergencies, and provides guidance to students, faculty, staff, and visitors. It aligns with nationally recognized emergency management principles, including the Incident Command System (ICS), while remaining accessible and actionable for the campus community.

The response to emergencies is guided by the following priorities:

1. **Protection of Life** - The safety of students, faculty, staff, and visitors is the College's highest priority.
2. **Stabilization of the Incident** - Emergency personnel and/or College leadership will assess, contain, and manage emergency conditions as quickly and safely as possible.
3. **Clear and Timely Communication** - Official emergency information and actionable instructions will be shared through established communication channels
4. **Protection of Property and Infrastructure** - College facilities and resources will be protected without compromising life safety.
5. **Continuity of Operations** - Essential functions will be maintained or restored as conditions allow.
6. **Recovery and Support** - Resources and support will be provided to help the campus community recover following an emergency, traumatic event, or significant loss. When appropriate, recovery efforts may include activation of the College's postvention plan.

This plan establishes a structured and scalable approach that supports immediate on-scene response, coordinated institutional management, and executive-level decision-making.

I. Introduction

The Emergency Operations Plan serves as the guiding document for how St. Mary's College of Maryland prepares for, responds to, and recovers from emergencies. This plan applies to the campus community and to College-owned or operated facilities, programs, and activities.

A. Definition of an Emergency

For purposes of this plan, an emergency is any situation that:

- Threatens the safety or well-being of students, faculty, staff, or visitors;
- Disrupts or may disrupt College operations;
- Causes or threatens damage to College property or infrastructure;
- Requires coordination with external emergency services or government agencies;
- or
- May significantly affect public trust, institutional operations, or the broader campus community.

B. Purpose

The purpose of this EOP is to provide a clear, coordinated framework for emergency response and recovery. Specifically, this plan is designed to:

- Define the College's emergency management structure;
 - Clarify roles, responsibilities, and decision-making authority;
 - Establish communication and coordination expectations;
 - Identify protective actions for the campus community; and
 - Support continuity of operations and recovery efforts.
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- Help students, faculty, staff, and visitors understand what to expect before, during, and after an emergency.

C. Scope

This plan applies to all College departments, personnel, students, visitors, and operations. It also supports coordination with local, state, and federal emergency

response partners when incidents exceed campus resources or require specialized response capabilities.

D. Planning Assumptions

This plan is based on the following assumptions:

- Emergencies may occur at any time, with little or no warning;
- Initial response may rely on on-campus personnel and resources;
- External emergency services may be delayed or limited depending on the scope of the incident;
- Conditions may change rapidly and require adjustments to response actions;
- The campus community must follow official instructions to support safety and response effectiveness.
- Emergency response actions may be adapted based on the specific circumstances of an incident, available information, and operational considerations at the time.

II. Emergency Management Framework

The College uses a tiered emergency management framework to determine the appropriate level of response, leadership involvement, and resource coordination.

This framework is scalable and allows the College to respond to routine disruptions, significant incidents, and major emergencies.

A. Levels of Emergency

Level	Description	Typical Response
Level 1 - Minor Incident	Localized event with limited impact on operations.	Managed by the affected department, Public Safety, or available College resources.
Level 2 - Significant Incident	Incident affecting a building, department, or segment of campus with limited-to-moderate impact on campus operations.	May require partial activation of the Emergency Response Team and coordination with external responders.
Level 3 - Major Emergency or Disaster	Large-scale emergency significantly disrupting College operations and potentially affecting the surrounding community.	Requires full activation of the EOP, Emergency Response Team, executive leadership, and external agency coordination.

B. Incident Command System

The College uses the Incident Command System (ICS) as the operational model for managing emergencies. ICS provides a standard structure that supports clear leadership, coordinated action, and effective integration with emergency response agencies.

Key ICS principles include:

- Clear chain of command;
- Unified coordination with external agencies;
- Scalable response based on incident complexity;
- Common terminology and shared situational awareness;
- Defined roles for operations, planning, logistics, communications, and administration when needed.

C. Institutional Leadership Structure

Emergency response is coordinated across three levels:

Response Level	Primary Function	Examples of Decisions
(On-Scene) Incident Command	Immediate life safety, scene stabilization, and coordination with responders.	Evacuation, lockdown, perimeter control, emergency service requests.
Emergency Response Team	Institutional coordination, resource support, communication alignment, and continuity planning.	Resource allocation, operational priorities, student support, internal coordination.
President or designee	Strategic decisions and institutional authority.	Campus closure, emergency declaration, external stakeholder engagement, Board notification.

D. Decision-Making Principles

Emergency decisions will be made at the appropriate level based on urgency, available information, and the potential impact on life safety, operations, and institutional continuity. Operational decisions may be made immediately by the Incident Commander, while broader institutional decisions are elevated to the Emergency

Response Team and President as appropriate. Official instructions resulting from these decisions will be communicated through established emergency communication channels.

III. Concept of Operations

The Concept of Operations explains how the College identifies, evaluates, activates, coordinates, and concludes emergency response activities. The process is designed to support rapid action while maintaining alignment with institutional leadership and external response partners.

A. General Operational Approach

Emergency response activities follow a phased approach outlined below:

Phase	Description
Detection and Notification	A potential or actual emergency is identified and reported to Public Safety or appropriate authorities.
Assessment and Initial Response	Public Safety or responding personnel assess the situation and initiate immediate life safety measures.
Activation and Coordination	College leadership and resources are activated based on the level and complexity of the incident.
Sustained Operations	The College coordinates response actions, communications, resource deployment, and external agency support.
Recovery and Transition	Response operations transition to restoration, recovery, and after-action review.

B. Detection and Initial Notification

Emergencies may be identified through reports from students, faculty, staff, visitors, Public Safety personnel, emergency dispatch, external agencies, or environmental and technological monitoring systems. Any individual who becomes aware of an emergency or potential threat should immediately contact Public Safety or 911 as appropriate.

Upon notification, Public Safety will assess available information, initiate necessary emergency response, and notify appropriate leadership based on the nature and severity of the incident.

C. Assessment and Initial Response

The initial response focuses on life safety and incident stabilization. Depending on the incident, immediate actions may include requesting police, fire, or EMS; establishing a secure perimeter; directing evacuation or shelter-in-place; initiating lockdown; or coordinating medical response.

D. Activation of the EOP

Activation of the EOP is based on incident severity and follows the Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 framework. Level 1 incidents may be managed through routine operations. Level 2 incidents may require partial activation of the Emergency Response Team. Level 3 incidents require broader institutional coordination and executive leadership involvement.

The Chief of Campus Police, in coordination with the Vice President for Student Affairs and the other members of the Emergency Response Team (ERT), may recommend activation or escalation of the EOP. Final authority for major institutional decisions rests with the President or designee.

E. Emergency Operations Center

For significant or prolonged incidents, an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) may be established. The EOC supports coordination, information sharing, resource management, and communication. The EOC does not replace on-scene Incident Command; rather, it supports the incident response and broader institutional needs.

The EOC may be activated when an incident requires sustained coordination, multi-department involvement, executive-level decision-making, or communication demands beyond routine operations. The EOC will be located in a safe and functional space with reliable communications, network access, and adequate room for assigned personnel.

F. Deactivation and Transition to Recovery

Emergency operations may be deactivated when immediate threats have been resolved, essential services are stabilized, and coordination with external agencies has concluded or transitioned to routine operations. The President, in coordination with the Emergency Response Team, authorizes formal deactivation of the EOP when appropriate.

IV. Roles and Responsibilities

Effective emergency management requires coordinated action across the College. The following roles provide a high-level description of responsibilities during emergencies. Detailed operational procedures are maintained internally by the ERT.

A. Emergency Response Team (ERT)

The Emergency Response Team (ERT) serves as the central coordination body for managing the College's institutional response to emergencies.

The ERT is composed of key College leadership and functional representatives responsible for coordinating response efforts, supporting decision-making, and ensuring alignment across the institution.

Membership of the ERT includes:

- Chief of Campus Police or Designee
- Vice President for Student Affairs or Designee
- Chief Financial Officer or Designee
- Dean of Students or Designee
- AVP of Human Resources or Designee
- Director of Physical Plant or Designee
- AVP of Planning & Facilities or Designee
- Office of Communication and Marketing Representative
- Academic Affairs Representative

Additional members may be included based on the nature, scope, and complexity of the incident.

IV. Roles and Responsibilities

High-level emergency management responsibilities during incidents.

Role / Group	Primary Responsibilities
President	Provides overall institutional authority, declares a campus state of emergency when warranted, approves major operational decisions, and represents the College to external stakeholders and the Board of Trustees.
Emergency Response Team	Coordinates institutional response, analyzes situational information, recommends actions, supports communication, allocates resources, and assists with continuity and recovery.
Incident Commander	Manages immediate on-scene response, establishes command and control, coordinates with emergency responders, and implements protective actions.
Office of Public Safety	Serves as the primary operational lead for emergency response, emergency notifications, access control, incident coordination, and post-incident reporting.
Student Affairs	Supports student safety, housing, accountability, wellness resources, family communication, and student recovery needs.
Physical Plant	Assesses and stabilizes buildings, utilities, grounds, and infrastructure; supports restoration and recovery operations.
Office of Planning & Facilities	Provides executive support requiring assessments and strategic action recommendations for buildings, grounds, and infrastructure.
Marketing and Communications	Coordinates official internal and external messaging, website and social media updates, media relations, and communication support for executive leadership.
Human Resources	Supports employee communication, essential personnel coordination, workforce continuity, and employee support needs.
Academic Affairs	Supports academic continuity, class cancellation or modification decisions, faculty communication, and resumption of academic operations.
Business Officer / Chief Financial Officer (CFO)	Oversees financial decision-making and emergency expenditures; coordinates emergency procurement, contracts, and vendor support; ensures availability and tracking of funds for response and recovery operations; supports documentation for reimbursement, insurance, and regulatory requirements; assists with financial continuity and operational sustainability during extended incidents; and coordinates with executive leadership and the Emergency Response Team on resource allocation and fiscal impacts.
All Departments and Employees	Maintain awareness of emergency procedures, follow official instructions, support accountability, and assist with protective actions when appropriate.

V. Emergency Communications

Effective communication is essential to protecting life, supporting informed decision making, and maintaining public trust during an emergency. Official emergency information will be shared as quickly and accurately as circumstances allow before, during and after an incident.

A. Communication Objectives

Emergency communications will prioritize:

- Clear and actionable safety instructions;
- Timely updates to students, faculty, staff, and visitors;
- Consistency across official communication platforms;
- Coordination among Public Safety, Communications and Marketing , the Emergency Response Team, and executive leadership;
- Reduction of confusion, speculation, and misinformation;
- Protection of privacy, operational integrity, and institutional credibility.

B. Communication Authority

Emergency communications will be coordinated through a unified structure:

- The Office of Public Safety confirms operational information, identifies immediate protective actions, and issues urgent emergency notifications through the College's authorized emergency notification systems;
- The Office of Communication and Marketing coordinates and disseminates official institutional updates through College communication platforms, including the College website, official social media accounts, and external media outlets;
- The President or designee serves as the primary external spokesperson for major incidents;
- The Emergency Response Team supports message coordination and ensures that institutional communications align with operational conditions and priorities.

During rapidly evolving situations, the College may share preliminary information before all facts are known. As additional information becomes available, updates will be provided through official communication channels. The College is committed to communicating as quickly as practical while balancing accuracy, privacy, safety, and operational needs.

C. Official Emergency Communication Channels

Students, faculty, staff, and visitors should rely on the following authorized sources for emergency information and instructions:

- Seahawk Alerts delivered through text message, College email, or the Seahawk Safe Mobile App;
- The official St. Mary's College of Maryland website;
- Official College and Office of Public Safety social media accounts;
- The external campus alert system, including sirens and voice instructions when activated;
- Direct announcements or instructions from the Office of Public Safety; and
- Direct instructions from police, fire, emergency medical personnel, or other authorized emergency responders.

Information received from personal social media accounts, group messages, unofficial webpages, screenshots without a verifiable source, or other informal channels should not be treated as confirmed emergency information.

Only information originating from an authorized College communication channel or an identified emergency response agency should be forwarded, reposted, or repeated as confirmed information. Community members should avoid adding speculation, assumptions, or unverified details when re-sharing official messages.

When messages differ, community members should follow the most recent instruction issued through an authorized source.

D. Seahawk Alert

Seahawk Alert is St. Mary's College of Maryland's emergency notification program. Seahawk Alerts provide urgent safety instructions and other important information concerning emergencies, serious weather, College closures, delays, and conditions that may affect the campus community.

The Seahawk Safe Mobile App, powered by CampusShield, is a mobile safety and emergency communication tool connecting members of the campus community with the Office of Public Safety. Through the application, users may receive Seahawk Alerts,

contact emergency assistance, submit safety information, and access emergency resources.

Students, faculty, and staff are strongly encouraged to download the Seahawk Safe Mobile App, complete the registration process, keep their contact information current, and enable notifications. Individuals who do not use the mobile application should ensure that they are registered to receive Seahawk Alert text messages through the available web-based registration system.

Receiving the same emergency message through more than one channel is intentional and increases the likelihood that critical information reaches the community promptly.

E. Communication Phases

Phase	Purpose	Typical Content
Initial Notification	Notify the community and provide immediate safety instructions.	Avoid area, evacuate, shelter-in-place, lockdown, or other urgent action.
Ongoing Updates	Maintain situational awareness and reduce uncertainty.	Operational impacts, closures, route changes, support resources, known safety information.
Resolution and Recovery	Provide next steps after the immediate threat has ended.	All clear, return instructions, support services, recovery updates, after-action improvements when appropriate.

F. Internal and External Communication

Internal communication is focused on students, faculty, and staff and emphasizes safety instructions, operational updates, and access to support services. External communication is focused on parents, families, media, government agencies, community partners, and other stakeholders. External communication will be coordinated through Communication and Marketings to ensure accuracy and consistency.

The College recognizes that emergencies often affect multiple audiences simultaneously. Communication will be coordinated to provide consistent information while addressing the unique needs of students, employees, families, visitors, media, government agencies, alumni, and community partners, as appropriate.

G. Documentation

Emergency communication actions should be documented to the extent possible, including the time, method, message content, platform used, and any coordination with external partners. This documentation supports after-action review, compliance, and continuous improvement.

VI. Protective Actions

Protective actions are measures used to safeguard life and reduce harm during an emergency. The appropriate action is based on the type, location, and severity of the incident. Instructions will be communicated through official channels whenever possible.

A. Evacuation

Evacuation is used when it is unsafe to remain in a building or area. Evacuation may be required for fire, explosion, hazardous materials, structural concerns, utility emergencies, or other unsafe conditions.

When directed to evacuate:

- Leave immediately using the nearest safe exit;
- Do not use elevators unless directed by emergency personnel;
- Move at least 300 feet away from the building or affected area;
- Proceed to the designated assembly point when known;
- Do not re-enter until authorized by emergency personnel or College officials;
- Report missing persons or urgent concerns to Public Safety.

B. Shelter-in-Place

Shelter-in-place is used when it is safer to remain indoors than to evacuate. This may occur during severe weather, environmental hazards, hazardous material releases outside a building, or external threats where movement increases risk.

When directed to shelter-in-place:

- Move indoors immediately;
- Stay away from windows and exterior doors when appropriate;
- Move to an interior room or designated shelter area if directed;
- Close and secure doors and windows;
- Turn off ventilation systems if instructed;
- Remain in place until an official all-clear is provided.

C. Lockdown

Lockdown is used during an immediate threat of violence or when securing facilities may protect individuals from danger.

When directed to lockdown:

- Move to a secure location immediately;
- Lock and barricade doors if possible;
- Turn off lights and silence phones and electronic devices;
- Stay out of sight and remain quiet;
- Do not open doors unless directed by law enforcement;
- Be prepared to follow law enforcement instructions.

If communication is delayed, individuals should make the safest decision based on their circumstances, including running, hiding, or fighting as a last resort.

D. Restricted Access / Campus Control

During certain emergencies, access to campus or specific areas may be limited. Public Safety may establish perimeters, require identification, redirect traffic, restrict pedestrian movement, or close buildings and areas until conditions are safe.

E. Campus Evacuation

A partial or full campus evacuation may be required during major emergencies. The President, in consultation with the Emergency Response Team and appropriate external partners, authorizes campus evacuation. Residential students, employees, and visitors will receive instructions through official communication channels. Transportation, relocation, sheltering, and accountability efforts may involve Student Affairs, Residence Life, Public Safety, Physical Plant, the Business office and external emergency management partners.

F. Accountability and Assistance

Departments should make reasonable efforts to account for personnel following evacuation or relocation. Residence Life will support accountability for residential students. Individuals with disabilities or access and functional needs should be assisted consistent with safety and available resources. Missing persons or urgent concerns should be reported immediately to Public Safety.

VII. Continuity of Operations and Recovery

The College will work to maintain mission-essential functions during emergencies and restore normal operations as safely and quickly as possible. Continuity and recovery activities may begin while response operations are still underway.

A. Continuity of Operations

Continuity of Operations (COOP) ensures that critical services remain available or can be restored quickly. Essential functions may include public safety, residential life, communications, facilities, academic instruction, business office, and student services.

Each division is responsible for identifying its critical functions, maintaining internal continuity procedures, and ensuring that key roles have designated alternates.

B. Alternate Facilities and Operations

If primary facilities are unavailable or unsafe, the College may relocate services to alternate campus locations, remote platforms, or off-campus facilities. Displaced students may be temporarily housed in other campus spaces, hotels, partner institutions, or other suitable locations as conditions require.

C. Resource Management

The Emergency Response Team will coordinate resource needs, including personnel, equipment, transportation, supplies, space, vendor support, and emergency procurement. Departments should communicate needs and available resources through the established coordination structure.

D. Restoration Priorities

Restoration efforts will generally prioritize:

- Life safety and security;
- Critical infrastructure and utilities;

- Student housing and essential services;
- Academic operations and student support;
- Administrative functions;
- Full return to normal operations.

E. Support Services, Community Recovery and Postvention

The College recognizes that emergencies may affect the physical, emotional, academic, and operational well being of the campus community. Recovery extends beyond restoring facilities and operations to supporting people as they return to learning, teaching, working, and engaging in campus life. Support services may include counseling and health resources, employee assistance, academic accommodations when appropriate, and other recovery resources.

Following a suicide, suspected suicide, traumatic death, or other event that may have a significant emotional impact on the campus community, the College may activate its official postvention plan. Postvention activities are intended to support affected individuals and groups, coordinate accurate and trauma-informed communication, reduce the risk of additional harm, and guide the institution's short- and long-term recovery efforts.

F. After-Action Review

Following a significant incident or exercise, the College will evaluate its response through an after-action process. The Chief of Campus Police, in coordination with the ERT, will prepare or coordinate an After Action Report that identifies strengths, challenges, lessons learned, and recommended improvements. Findings will be used to update procedures, training, communication workflows, and emergency planning efforts.

G. Deactivation of Emergency Operations

Formal deactivation of emergency operations may occur when immediate threats have been resolved, critical services are stabilized, and coordination with external agencies has concluded or transitioned to normal operations. The President, in coordination with the ERT, authorizes deactivation of the EOP when appropriate.

VIII. Additional Emergency Response Procedures

Detailed operational procedures for specific emergency scenarios are maintained by the ERT, these procedures support the College's response capabilities and are implemented by trained personnel during an incident.

These internal procedures may include scenario-specific response guidance for active threats, fire or explosion, evacuation, natural disasters, hazardous materials, civil disturbances, bomb threats, utility failures, public health emergencies, and other hazards. They are maintained separately to preserve operational flexibility, protect sensitive response details, and keep this community-facing plan clear and usable.

Members of the campus community are expected to follow official instructions issued through emergency notifications, Public Safety, first responders, and College leadership.

IX. Plan Management and Maintenance

The EOP is a living document that requires regular review, training, and revision to remain effective. The College is committed to ongoing preparedness, evaluation, and improvement.

A. Plan Authority and Oversight

- The Chief of Campus Police is responsible for coordinating development, implementation, and maintenance of the EOP;
- Oversight is provided through the Vice President for Student Affairs and ERT members;
- Reviewed by Leadership Council periodically
- Major policy-level revisions may be reviewed by appropriate senior leadership.

B. Review and Updates

- The EOP will be reviewed annually at a minimum;
- Updates may occur after incidents, exercises, organizational changes, legal or regulatory changes, or identified best practices;
- Departments are responsible for maintaining internal procedures that align with the EOP.

C. Training and Exercises

- Emergency Response Team members and key personnel should participate in regular training and exercises;
- The College should conduct at least one emergency exercise annually;
- Training may include tabletop exercises, functional drills, full-scale exercises, or scenario-based discussions;
- Training outcomes should inform plan revisions and corrective actions.

D. Documentation and Compliance

- Emergency incidents, exercises, training activities, major decisions, and communication actions should be documented;
- Financial and operational records related to emergencies should be maintained in accordance with College policy;
- Documentation supports compliance, reimbursement, evaluation, and continuous improvement.

E. Continuous Improvement

The College will use lessons learned, after-action findings, training outcomes, and emerging best practices to strengthen preparedness and response capabilities over time.

Appendix A: Emergency Communication Workflow

The following workflow provides a community-facing overview of how emergency information moves from initial report to official campus communication. This appendix is intended to support understanding and coordination; specific operational details may be maintained internally.

Emergency Communication Workflow

Step / Phase	Communication Action
1. Emergency Identified	Incident reported by Public Safety, a community member, external agency, alarm, or monitoring system.
2. Initial Assessment	Public Safety evaluates available information, requests emergency services if needed, and determines immediate life-safety concerns.
3. Initial Notification Decision	Chief of Campus Police determines whether an emergency notification is needed based on urgency, threat, and protective-action requirements.
4. Emergency Alert Issued	Public Safety issues urgent mass notification when immediate protective action is required.
5. Leadership Notification	Chief of Campus Police, Vice President for Student Affairs, ERT, President, and other leaders are notified based on incident severity.
6. Message Coordination	Marketing and Communications coordinates official campus messaging with operational input from Public Safety and leadership.
7. Ongoing Updates	The College provides updates through official channels as information is confirmed.
8. Resolution / All Clear	The College issues resolution, all-clear, or recovery instructions when appropriate.
9. Documentation	Messages, timing, decisions, and coordination actions are documented for review.

Throughout the process, communication is coordinated through authorized channels to provide timely, accurate, and actionable information to protect the campus community.

Appendix B: Community Quick Reference - What You Should Do

This quick reference summarizes immediate actions for common emergency conditions. Always follow official instructions from Public Safety, emergency responders, and College leadership.

Situation	Immediate Action	Key Reminder
Fire / Explosion	Leave the building immediately using the nearest safe exit.	Do not use elevators. Move at least 300 feet away.
Active Threat	If it is safe to do so, leave the area immediately. If you cannot leave safely, hide, secure your location, remain quiet, and follow law enforcement instructions. Fight only as a last resort when your life is in imminent danger.	Silence devices and follow law enforcement instructions.
Severe Weather	Shelter indoors.	Move away from windows and wait for official guidance.
Suspicious Package	Move away and report it.	Do not touch or move the item.
Hazardous Material	Avoid the area; shelter or evacuate, if directed.	Follow official instructions; do not enter affected areas.
Medical Emergency	Call Public Safety and/or 911.	Provide location, condition, and hazards, if known.
Campus Evacuation	Follow official relocation instructions.	Take essentials only and report to a directed location.
Information Needed	Check official College communications.	Avoid spreading unverified information.

Your safety is our priority. Stay aware, stay informed, and follow official instructions.

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