

**PROPOSED REVISION OF: REG 04.00.01, Crisis Communications Protocol**

**Rationale:** University Advancement seeks revision of REG 04.00.01, Crisis Communication Plan, to update and streamline the regulation regarding changes in structure and operations related to protocol and the Crisis Communications Team (CCT), as well as to update titles of individuals with key responsibilities. The regulation is being updated and standardize the definitions of a “crisis” and an “emergency”. The regulation is also being revised to update current practices as to notification methods.

**Consultation Process:**

2/1/18 Chief Communications and Marketing Officer and Associate Vice Chancellor for University Communications and Marketing authorizes transmittal of PRR for review.

5/24/18 Environmental Health and Safety, including University Police, review

6/1/18- University Communications Review  
11/3/18

2/9/18- General Counsel review  
12/19/18

Vice Chancellor for Advancement Review and Approval

Cabinet Notification and Review

**NC STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**NC STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**Policies, Regulations and Rules**

Authority	Vice Chancellor for University Advancement
Title	<u>Emergency Notification and Crisis Communications Plan</u>
Classification	REG04.00.01
PRR Subject	Campus Environment
Contact Info	Chief <del>Communication</del> <u>Communications and Marketing</u> Officer (919-515-7373)

**History:** First Issued: September 1, 2001. Last Revised: March ~~1715, 2015.~~ 2013 January, 2018

**Related Policies:**

NCSU REG04.20.07 - Adverse Weather and Other Emergency Conditions

**Additional References:**

Emergency Information  
 NC State Emergency Operations Plan (doc)

~~NC State Emergency Notification and Communication Protocols~~

**1. PURPOSE**

~~1.1~~ This emergency notification and crisis communications plan-regulation serves as an additional component of the NC State University's Emergency Operations Plan. This plan-regulation is intended for use in conjunction with the normal decision-making ~~structure-process~~ within the university. ~~This plan- when dealing with issues or emergencies that may impact university operations and/or reputation. This regulation~~ further describes key ~~protocols-processes~~ and responsibilities, but is to be ~~utilized-used~~ flexibly with specific emergency decision-making procedures of the university, as outlined in the Emergency Operations Plan ~~to appropriately address any actual or potential emergency or crisis situation.~~

~~1.2 — Key elements and communications vehicles contained within this plan are to be tested in conjunction with targeted and campus-wide emergency preparedness exercises.~~

**2. DEFINITIONS**

~~Following~~ The following are meanings of key terms and team descriptions as used in this Plan protocol, and in University crisis or emergency communications:

2.1 A crisis means an issue or incident that requires responsive immediate and coordinated action to preserve business services minimize the impact on the University operations, business, reputation, and/or the University community.

2.2 .Crisis Communications Team (CCT) refers to a group consisting of the Chief Communications and Marketing Officer, Executive Director of University Relations, Director of Media Relations, Director of Web Communications, and University Communications Issues Management Lead working in collaboration with members of the Emergency Operations Group to triage, plan, create and deliver an effective communications strategy as warranted by each situation.

~~2.1 — Crisis Communications Team (CCT) refers to a group consisting of, at a minimum, the Chief Communications Officer, Public Relations Director, Associate Director of News Services, Director of Web Communications, and representatives from Environmental Health and Public Safety, Human Resources, General Counsel, the Chancellor’s Office, Division of Academic and Student Affairs, and Enrollment Management and Services, whose strategy is to collaborate and communicate across all appropriate channels to ensure effective ongoing communications to targeted audiences. Other campus representatives can be asked to serve on the CCT on a case by case basis as determined appropriate.~~

~~2.2 — Emergencies are incidents, either natural or manmade, that pose an imminent threat or danger to the campus and require responsive action to protect life or property. Emergencies may constitute incidents of major crimes, natural disasters and severe weather, fires, bomb threats and other situations as determined necessary and appropriate by the Emergency Operations Group.~~

2.3 Emergency means a threat, planned or unplanned, to NC State that is relatively unexpected, abrupt and requires a collective reaction as the negative impacts worsen and, if not addressed, will jeopardize the university's ability to carry out its mission or conduct business.

2.4 The Emergency Operations Group (EOG) is a group of University employees authorized by the Chancellor to staff the Emergency Operations Center and to exercise decision-making authority during an emergency. The EOG reports to the Emergency Operations Center dependent on the level of activation. The EOG has the authority to assign University resources, make operational decisions and coordinate with external emergency agencies to provide the most efficient response and recovery possible.

~~2.3~~2.5 The Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) means the strategy that establishes ~~a~~the management framework for NC State to follow during an emergency. The EOP is the management system that defines the ~~organization~~organizational structure and general procedures for the management of people, information, activities, and operations during an emergency to facilitate effective response and recovery from the emergency. The EOP is modeled on the Wake County EOP and follows the framework established by the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

~~2.4 — The Emergency Operations Group (EOG) is authorized by the Chancellor to staff the Emergency Operations Center and to exercise decision-making authority during an emergency. The EOG has the authority to assign University resources, make operational decisions and~~

~~coordinate with external emergency agencies to provide the most efficient response and recovery possible. In the early stages of an emergency, before the EOG convenes or in a time limited emergency, the Associate Vice Chancellor of Environmental Health and Public Safety, University Police Chief or their designees are authorized to make decisions impacting life safety.~~

~~2.5—The **Emergency Operations Group** is comprised of, but not limited to, the following:~~

~~Associate Vice Chancellor for Environmental Health & Public Safety—Lead~~

~~Associate Vice Chancellor for Facilities~~

~~Associate Vice Chancellor for Campus Enterprise~~

~~Assistant to the Chancellor and Secretary of the University~~

~~Associate Vice Chancellor for Human Resources~~

~~Vice Provost for Campus Life, Division of Academic and Student Affairs~~

~~Vice Chancellor and General Counsel~~

~~Vice Provost and University Registrar~~

~~Vice Chancellor and Chief Information Officer~~

~~Chief Communications Officer~~

~~Director of Environmental Health and Safety~~

~~Department Head or chief contact in area affected (university related, or non-university related)~~

~~Others as the emergency warrants~~

~~2.6—The Emergency Operations Group reports to the Emergency Operations Center (location determined by the EOC Manager) dependent on the level of activation.~~

~~2.7~~2.6 **WolfAlert** refers to the University's primary brand for emergency and related notification systems. WolfAlert's uses include notifications for emergencies as well as non-emergency situations causing a significant and real or perceived threat to the campus community. The University issues three types of WolfAlerts:

~~2.8~~2.6.1 **WolfAlert Emergency Notifications** are issued 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 employees, occurring on campus. Examples of such significant emergencies or dangerous situations include, but are not limited to, shooters on campus or tornado warnings. Emergency Notifications are issued by the University Police Department by a combination of methods that may include broadcast e-mail, audible alert, campus billboards, desktop notifications, or text message. In addition, University Communications may issue emergency information via the University Home Page and social media, ~~and the Crisis Communications Team.~~ The CCT and University Communications ~~should~~ will direct any follow-up communications.

~~2.9~~2.6.2 **WolfAlert Crime Warnings** are issued to notify the campus community for Clery crimes occurring anywhere on NC State's Clery geography that are considered to be a serious or continuing threat to students and employees. The crime may have occurred in the past but constitutes an ongoing threat. Examples of crimes where crime warnings may be issued include, but are not limited to, sexual assaults, burglary, robbery, or aggravated assaults. Distribution of a Crime Warning is generally by broadcast e-mail or text message by University Police and may include social media by University Communications.

~~2.10~~2.6.3 **WolfAlert Safety Notices** are communications to the campus community for crimes that do not occur on NC State's Clery geography but are determined to require the awareness of campus for safety purposes, or for situations that are not deemed an emergency or dangerous situation, but are determined to require the awareness of campus for notification reasons. ~~WolfAlert safety notices are distributed when non-emergency information could help the campus community, or subsets of the community, either on or off campus, make safe choices regarding a health or safety issue.~~ Distribution of a Safety Notice is generally by broadcast e-mail by University Police or University Communications, but could also include text message or social media if determined appropriate.

### ~~3. AUTHORIZATION~~

~~3.1 — The Chief Communications Officer (CCO) or Public Relations Director will be the primary spokesperson during all crisis situations, unless otherwise assigned by the aforementioned or by the Chancellor. The CCO or Public Relations Director, along with the CCT if activated, has primary responsibility for managing ongoing communications with key audiences throughout an emergency or crisis situation.~~

~~3.2 — The CCT, under direction of the CCO or Public Relations Director, will manage all initial communications in a crisis situation, and determine appropriate second-level spokespersons as the situation develops. To ensure accuracy and reduce confusion, it is vital that all communications are consistent, coordinated, and delivered (written or spoken) with one voice.~~

~~3.3 — Reliable dissemination of information to the public may become difficult during a disaster. Multiple methods of communication must be used to provide the greatest possibility of getting accurate information to the campus community and other key constituents.~~

~~3.4 — During a campus emergency requiring activation of the Emergency Operations Plan, communications activities are coordinated through the EOG and Incident Command established by emergency response agencies. In an emergency, the EOG may have already been convened. If so, the functions of the CCT would be transferred to the EOG.~~

### ~~4.3. PROCEDURES~~

~~4.1 **Assessment:** The CCO and/or Public Relations Director will join the EOG (either leadership or full group depending on situation) in a swift and thorough assessment of 3.1 Initial Assessment and Action. The Chief Communications and Marketing Officer (CCMO) or Executive Director of University Relations will swiftly review and assess the situation to determine whether a communications response is warranted, and if so, the type of communications and scope of commitment needed. The CCMO or Executive Director of University Relations will be responsible for recommending appropriate communication actions and activating appropriate communication support as needed for any crisis or emergency situation.~~

~~3.2 **Primary Crisis Spokesperson.** The CCMO or Executive Director of University Relations, or their designee, will be the primary University spokesperson during crisis situations, unless otherwise delegated by the Chancellor. The CCMO or Executive Director of University Relations will manage the ongoing work of CCT members and supporting staff during a crisis.~~

Daily issues management, and certain emergency situations handled by University Police, may not rise to the crisis level defined in this protocol and therefore may be handled in line with standard media responsibilities.

3.3 Initial Emergency Response. In the early stages of an emergency, before the EOG convenes or in a time limited emergency, the Associate Vice Chancellor of Environmental Health and Public Safety, University Police Chief or their designees are authorized to make decisions impacting life and safety.

3.4 Emergency Communications Content and Messaging. If the event or incident constitutes an emergency, the CCT, acting on direction from the EOG, CCMO and/or Executive Director of University Relations, will develop a strategy for timely, efficient, and appropriate messaging. A core content team will be assembled in the Butler Communications building, or auxiliary location. Working with representatives in the EOG, this content team will create messaging-based situational updates, and will work in collaboration with university units (such as Parent and Family Services, Housing, Athletics, etc.) as needed to ensure timely, accurate messages are pushed to key audiences as necessary.

~~4.2 — Action: The CCO or Public Relations Director will be responsible for activating the CCT as appropriate to the specific situation.~~

~~4.3 Media: A~~ 3.6 Media. The CCT will develop a strategy for managing media relations ~~will be part of the overall communication platform~~ in a crisis or emergency situation, and may include tactics to address media onsite and via typical distribution channels. Provisions may be set up, depending on the severity and proximity of the ~~crisis~~ situation, to provide for an ongoing information center to keep the media, and public, abreast of key developments throughout the ~~crisis~~ response efforts. Examples of the types of provisions may include:

~~4.3.1.~~ 3.6.1 Creation of a single, safe outpost, as designated in collaboration with University Police, where media may gather to report their stories and/or receive updates from the University; or

~~4.3.2.~~ 3.6.2 Preparation to operate the media center on a 24-hour basis ~~for the duration of the crisis as needed~~ until ~~Emergency Operations Group~~ EOG declares an all clear and normal university operations have resumed.

~~4.4~~ 3.7 Updates. The ~~CCO~~ CCMO, ~~Public~~ Executive Director of University Relations ~~Director~~ or designee will keep media staff members briefed continually on developments related to the ~~crisis~~ issue. ~~He/she~~ The CCMO, Executive Director of University Relations or designee will also keep the EOG apprised of information that may come in from outside the campus. The flow of information to and from all parties involved in the ~~crisis~~ response is essential to the success of ~~that~~ the response.

## **5.4. NOTIFICATION RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **4.1 WolfAlert**

~~5.1~~As described in the NC State *Emergency Notification and Communication Protocols*, the 4.1.1 University Police have primary responsibility for issuing ~~both a~~ WolfAlert ~~Emergency Notifications and WolfAlert Crime Warnings~~announcement. University Communications ~~has the primary responsibility to issue WolfAlert Safety Notices.~~ will take appropriate steps to replicate the WolfAlert on various university communication channels, such as social media and web, as warranted by the situation.

~~5.24.1.2~~ University Police should immediately notify the Associate Vice Chancellor of Environmental Health and Public Safety of the emergency situation, notifications authorized/issued and any other actions taken to contain the emergency, and then immediately notify the ~~Chief Communications Officer~~CCMO.

#### 4.2 Parents and Families

~~5.3~~The Division of Academic and Student Affairs (DASA) During a crisis or emergency situation, communications to parents and families will be coordinated through University Communications and Parent and Family Services. Parent and Family Services is responsible for maintaining contacts for parents. Additional channels can be used, such as ~~Web~~web communications and social media, to keep parents and families informed. ~~During an emergency or crisis situation, communications to parents and families will be coordinated through and approved by the CCT.~~

#### 4.3 Public Officials

~~5.4~~During any crisis, emergency or other campus-wide notification situation, the Secretary of the University or other designee, in coordination with the Chancellor, will notify the UNC Board of Governors, the NC State Board of Trustees, the Governor's Office and other public officials as necessary.

#### 4.4 Other Constituent Groups

~~5.5~~The ~~CCT~~University Communications, acting under direction of the CCMO and/or Executive Director of University Relations, as a component of the EOG, will determine key constituent groups, and call in other staff (such as ~~Development~~Advancement, Athletics or Greek Life) to determine and distribute appropriate alerts and/or ongoing communications to those groups given the particular situation.

### **6. CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES**

~~6.1~~— Depending on the type and severity of the situation, the ~~CCO or Public Relations Director~~ will be responsible ~~engaging the CCT in the creation, execution and/or dissemination of an appropriate communications platform to address the crisis~~ The team will determine which audiences to communicate with, via which appropriate channels, at what times, during an emergency or crisis situation.

~~6.2—There will be incidents, such as Crime Warnings, when the CCT is not engaged, other than receiving updated information. In an imminent danger situation, the CCT will often not be engaged as the initial alert or warning is being distributed by University Police.~~

~~6.3—The CCT will meet on a regular basis to develop and improve effective, collaborative communications channels and strategies to reach specific audiences, as well as to identify and implement opportunities to continually improve crisis communications at NC State.~~

~~6.4—Representatives of the CCT will meet annually with representatives of Environmental Health and Public Safety to review the Emergency Notification and Communication Protocols.~~

## **7.5. ONGOING COMMUNICATIONS RESPONSIBILITIES**

~~The CCO, Public Relations Director, or CCT are responsible for the following communications functions:~~

The CCMO, Executive Director of University Relations, or designated member of the CCT are responsible for leading the university’s ongoing communications efforts, including but not limited to the following::

~~7.5.1 Creating Clear Messages—As soon as possible.~~ As needed, a fact sheet and key messages will be prepared as base documents ~~for~~ from which all communications ~~to constituents will be created.~~ These “living base documents” will be continually updated as the situation continues. The messages will be checked for accuracy by those with a direct knowledge of the ~~crisis, and approved by the EOG situation.~~ Fact sheets released publicly or posted to a designated ~~University Web~~ university web page will be time stamped and updated as information changes.

~~7.5.2 Establishing a Situation Web~~ and Social Media Presence— Although ~~Web web~~ communication is one of many message distribution options available, the NC State Emergency Information site at [wolfalert.ncsu.edu](http://wolfalert.ncsu.edu) also serves as the key information repository for public information during an emergency ~~or crisis~~ situation. All other communications should drive the public to this site for updated information throughout the entirety of a situation. Therefore, it is imperative that ~~the~~ accurate information regarding an emergency ~~or crisis~~ situation be ~~immediately~~ posted as quickly as possible and consistently updated. The Director of Web Communications or designee will be responsible for keeping the Emergency Information site updated during an emergency ~~or crisis~~ situation.

~~7.5.3 Informing the Campus~~ University Community— Within the ~~campus community~~ University Community, ongoing messages often require ~~being tailored to~~ tailoring for specific groups, such as students, faculty and staff, and even different categories within these groups, such as on-campus students. Determinations must quickly be made about audience appropriate segments, channels and messaging for continual communications. Communications to the ~~campus community can~~ University Community will be posted on the university home page, circulated via broadcast email and/or text messaging, distributed through social media, posted across campus on the electronic ~~Billboard~~ billboard system, submitted for publication ~~in~~

~~the Technician, the campus radio station or broadcast in Student Media at NC State~~, and through mass meetings if needed.

~~7.5.4 Communicating with the Media and managing~~ **Managing Media Relations**—~~As described above, during any emergency or crisis situation, information spreads quickly.~~ Utilizing media outlets to help distribute accurate information in a timely manner is a vital strategy in ~~a crisis-an emergency~~ situation. Factual communication with the media ~~must~~ should occur as quickly as possible, and be updated regularly during ~~a crisis-an emergency~~ situation.

~~7.4.1-5.4.1~~ The ~~CCO~~ CCMO, ~~Public-Executive Director of University Relations~~ Director or designee will determine which messages will be released to the media, through which channels, and at what times. The ~~CCO~~ CCMO or Executive Director of University Relations, in conjunction with University Police ~~and News Services if necessary~~, will manage all media requests.

~~All media relations will flow through the CCT and the CCO or Public Relations Director will approve interviews and message distribution.~~ ~~7.4.2 The CCO and News Services~~ 5.4.2 The CCMO and University Relations staff will ~~also~~ be responsible for arranging and managing any necessary ~~on-site~~ press conferences or briefings. ~~News Services~~ University Relations will also provide appropriate accommodations for media professionals (parking passes, water, etc.).

~~7.5—Deciding necessity and type of long-term communications—During a significant crisis, decisions must be made as to the level and types of ongoing, long-term or follow-up communications with key constituent groups. The CCT will work to identify these needs and ensure plans are in place to address.~~

~~7.6—Developing Message Templates—Pre-planning is necessary to help assure timely notification and communication in an emergency. The CCT will develop and/or review message templates to be used in emergency and crisis situations.~~

~~7.7—Deciding whether to assign videographers and photographers—This may prove helpful in responding to media inquiries, to possible later litigation, as well as documenting events. The CCT will work with the Emergency Operations Group to determine any needs to supply video and/or photography support.~~

## **86. ADDITIONAL OPERATIONS and FOLLOW UP**

**86.1 Informing Switchboards.** The following locations, which receive high volumes of incoming telephone calls to the university, should be notified regarding the key facts of the ~~crisis~~ emergency and instructions where to refer calls pertaining to the ~~crisis~~ emergency:

Location/Phone	
Campus Switchboard	919/515-2011
University Police	919/515-3000
Talley Student <del>Center</del> <u>Union</u> Student Information	919/515-3138

OIT Help Desk	919/515-HELP (4357)
Human Resources	919/515-2135
McKimmon Center	919/515-2277
Veterinary Medicine and Veterinary Teaching Hospital	919/513-6500

**8.6.2 Informing Key Offices.** In addition to switchboards, ~~fact sheets~~ approved information and instructions should be provided to key offices on campus, depending on the specific situation, which would be likely to receive calls from students, parents, employees or the media. These could include offices of the Chancellor, Provost, DASA, University Advancement, Parent and Family Services, Human Resources, Environmental Health and Public Safety, Alumni Association, Student Government and others.

**8.3.6.3 Tracking.** ~~A~~ University Communications staff ~~member~~ members will be responsible for monitoring and documenting related media coverage and social media conversations. ~~Media reports~~ Reports will be delivered to the ~~CCO~~ CCMO, university leadership and others as determined necessary and appropriate.

**8.4.6.4 Documenting.** University Communications will ~~obtain~~ maintain external ~~Information~~ information files on the ~~erisis~~ emergency. These should include material related to the ~~erisis~~ emergency, including clippings, statements, letters, memos, screen shots of ~~Web~~ web sites and any other relevant documents.

**8.5.6.5 Review.** Unless otherwise convened as part of the EOG, the ~~ECT~~ CCMO, Executive Director of University Relations, and members of the ECT shall meet within ~~10~~ ten (10) University business days following ~~a~~ erisis an emergency and review all actions taken as a result of the ~~erisis~~ emergency to determine effectiveness and efficiency of operations and make any needed changes to this ~~Plan~~ protocol. ~~At a minimum, this Plan~~

## 7. PROTOCOL REVIEW AND TESTING

7.1 Key elements and communication methods contained within this protocol will ~~will be reviewed on an annual basis~~ be tested in conjunction with targeted and campus-wide emergency preparedness exercises.

7.2 This protocol will be reviewed on an annual basis to determine effectiveness and efficiency of operations and make any changes as needed.