FORMAL NOTICE: Emergency Preparedness and Safety Plans

Ongoing attention to national security issues leaves many of us wondering about the potential for a terrorism-related emergency to touch our lives in Chapel Hill. It is important for Carolina's students, faculty and staff to know that our campus is well prepared to respond to emergency situations.

The University has received no direct terrorist threats. Emergency and communication plans developed, updated and refined over several years will be activated when and if our campus ever receives such a threat. These plans are coordinated with other Orange County emergency response agencies and were recently tested in a joint training drill that included UNC Hospitals, which is one of the state's six regional sites designated to respond to any terrorist incident. The University also constantly receives the most up-to-date information available on risks as well as threats, and prepares accordingly.

The University community already benefits from several recent improvements to campus safety. For example, designated University staff are trained and equipped to respond first to hazardous materials emergencies on campus. In any emergency, campus Housing and Residential Education staff and other University professionals also are prepared to provide support to students, faculty and staff. In addition, the University has established an Emergency Operations Center to ensure centralized and coordinated management of an emergency. The center will be immediately activated if any threat occurs on or near campus, if the United States is at war or experiences a terrorist attack, or if the government ever elevates the Homeland Security Advisory System to its highest risk level of red, meaning "severe." (Currently, the system is coded yellow, meaning "elevated" risk.)

The University will provide instructions about a specific situation and issues such as taking shelter inside campus buildings or evacuating. Students, faculty and staff can prepare for emergencies by following these guidelines:

Prevent to "Shelter in Place"

If a campus emergency ever involves the release of hazardous materials, the University community should expect to be directed to remain inside or to take shelter indoors on campus in the closest residence halls, campus apartments or other buildings where toxic vapors are reduced or eliminated. Doing so will help eliminate any uncertainty outside.

To "shelter in place" - or stay in a safe place protected from the hazard - close doors and windows. Move to an interior room away from as many windows as possible. It may take time for local authorities or University officials to advise about what is happening. Remain in the shelter until University officials notify you that it is safe to leave. Until then, do not try to contact parents or friends to come to campus to pick you up. Tell your family now that you expect to seek shelter on campus during a hazardous materials
emergency. Make plans now for your own emergency communications. Discuss those plans with co-workers, classmates, roommates, parents and friends. If necessary, arrange for backup care of family members who would need special assistance. If such an emergency occurs when you are home, do not come to campus until officials announce that it is safe to do so.

Students should follow these same procedures while in residence halls, campus apartments or off-campus accommodations when an emergency happens. Housing and Residential Education staff, on call 24 hours daily, seven days a week, will implement "shelter in place," provide directions and share information updates as they are available from University officials.

Stay Informed

To stay informed about threats and emergencies, consider monitoring news media reports and subscribing to news Web sites offering free e-mail news subscriptions. You can check for any important changes to campus conditions on the main Web site, or by calling the Adverse Weather and Emergency Hotline at 843-1234. Battery-powered radios are another information source, particularly if there is a power outage. The University broadcasts on 1610 AM, the campus low-frequency travel advisory radio station. Orange County also can disseminate non-weather emergency information via the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's weather radio system.

Stay Alert

- Watch for strangers or anyone who seems to be acting suspiciously.
- If you see anything raising your concern - including unattended bags, backpacks, cars or vehicles - call the Department of Public Safety at 911.
- Keep building doors and windows locked when the building is closed and not open for business. If you see an unsecured building, report it to public safety by calling 962-8100.

For More Information

- See a special poster outlining emergency preparedness measures and safety tips at the University. Printed copies of the poster are available from the Department of Environment, Health and Safety by calling 962-5507.
- View a special domestic preparedness section of the Department of Environment, Health and Safety's Web site. This site features information about security issues involving the mail and laboratories and offers a variety of health and safety tips.
- View the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Web site supporting a new "Be Ready" information campaign. The department also has established a toll-free telephone number, (800) BE READY.
Call the Department of Public Safety, 962-8100, or the Department of Environment, Health and Safety, 962-5507, for more information.

Sincerely,

Pete Reinhardt, Director, Department of Environment, Health and Safety
Derek Poarch, Director, Department of Public Safety