
Issuing Office: Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance

Policy Number: FY13-A&F-005-04

Policy Name: Evacuation Policy

Original Date Issued: April 22, 2013

Revision #: 7

Last Update: August 1, 2025

Purpose of Policy: This policy outlines the guidelines for emergency evacuation of the campus.

Applicable to: All departments at UMass Boston

Policy:

Any building or campus-wide evacuation will follow the response of the Emergency Operations Plan.

Authority to Call for Building or Campus-Wide Evacuation

Upon confirmation of conditions that present a significant emergency or potentially dangerous situation involving imminent or immediate threat to the health or safety of students or staff occurring on or immediately adjacent to the campus (hereafter referred to as “confirmed threat to the campus community”),

- Chief of Police or designee
- Director of OEHS or designee
- Associate Vice Chancellor for Facilities Management or designee

This can be done alone or in conjunction with any of the following entities:

- City of Boston Fire and Police Departments
- State Fire Marshal
- State Police
- Any appropriate federal, state or local agency
- MA Department of Public Health
- MA Department of Environmental Protection
- MA Department of Public Safety

Building Evacuation Protocol

If a building is evacuated, occupants should avoid the area and await further information from campus officials. A building evacuation does not constitute a building closure for

the day. An evacuated building is temporarily closed until the Incident Commander and Safety Officer can assess the condition. Only the Incident Commander, in consultation with the Safety Officer, and with the approval of the Vice Chancellor of Administration and Finance, may close a building for a day or more. Occupants will be updated on building status via the UMass Boston Alert System.

Compliance with Orders to Evacuate

When the campus is under an evacuation order, the campus community will be notified via the UMass Boston Alert System and all faculty, staff, and students must comply with the order to evacuate. If the campus is closed unexpectedly, non-essential personnel will not be allowed on campus. Single building evacuations may be signaled by building fire alarm and/or emergency alert. Evacuation is mandatory if a building fire alarm is sounding.

Procedures:

Building Evacuation

Building-specific evacuations will be signaled by fire alarm sounding in the affected building and, if conditions warrant, a campus-wide alert message indicating building evacuation and advising people to avoid the area. ("Avoid the area" means go to another building or otherwise leave the immediate area of the affected building, out of the way of first- responders.) On-scene notifications may also include use of bullhorns, police cruiser loudspeakers, and door-to-door building sweeps. Response staff should follow the Emergency Operations Plan and department protocols. Building occupants should follow evacuation procedures provided in Building Evacuation Plans and the directions of first- responders on scene. Evacuated individuals should follow the directions of first responders. Further information will be provided as it becomes available. Not all building evacuations will result in building closures.

Campus-Wide Evacuation

Campus-wide evacuations will follow the Campus-Wide Evacuation Plan and will be signaled by UMass Boston Alert System messages sent via email, text, voice, digital signage, PC desktop alerts (where available), external speakers, social media, and the UMass Boston Smartphone Application.

Depending on the nature of the emergency, a pedestrian evacuation may be necessary. This means that, depending on the circumstances of the emergency, you may not be able to drive your car off campus. UMBPD and first responders will determine whether a pedestrian evacuation is necessary.

Response staff will serve in pre-defined roles for evacuation procedures. All other staff must leave campus. The Chancellor's Cabinet will be contacted with instructions for follow-up via virtual meeting, conference call, or in-person meeting at a designated location off-site.

Specific Roles and Responsibilities:

Building occupants are responsible for:

- Being familiar with the evacuation procedures
- Knowing their evacuation routes and how they may change from time to time
- Promptly evacuating when the fire alarm sounds
- Following the directions of UMass Boston Public Safety and Police, OEHS, and Fire Safety Team members (identified by their vests).
- People who need assistance should develop a personal evacuation plan and discuss with the Office of Environmental Health and Safety and UMass Boston Public Safety and Police.

The Fire Safety Team Volunteers are responsible for:

- Responding in the event of an emergency to their pre-determined location
- Responding with safety vest and megaphone, if available
- Knowing where the assembly areas are located and communicating this information to occupants
- Assist individuals needing assistance and visitors
- Helping to account for building occupants at the assembly area
- Evaluating and reporting problems to OEHS after an emergency event
- Providing input to OEHS for improvements in communications, implementation, and maintenance of the Evacuation Plan.

UMass Boston Public Safety and Police is responsible for:

- Response to fire alarms, or other situations that warrant an evacuation i.e. bomb threat
- Maintaining order during evacuations
- Escorting the Boston Fire Department and other first responders to the building
- Conducting all rescue and medical duties in conjunction with Boston Fire Department and Boston EMS
- Coordinating with other outside public safety entities, including Massachusetts State Police, Boston police, and MBTA police.

OEHS is responsible for:

- Coordinating the preparation and update of building-specific Evacuation Plans
- Ensuring that updated floor plans and evacuation maps are posted
- Helping to make the evacuation as safe as possible by assigning Fire Safety Team Volunteers to strategic locations during an alarm situation
- Helping to ensure that all new volunteers of the Fire Safety Team receive periodic training
- Providing new members of the Fire Safety Team with a safety vest and megaphone
- Relaying applicable information to the UMBPD, institutional security officers, and other emergency personnel.

Facilities is responsible for:

- Overseeing facilities-related building closures
- Managing the building fire alarm system
- Initiating an alarm for drills
- Resetting alarms after an evacuation.

Transportation Services is responsible for:

- Altering parking operations when advised by UMBPD
 - Ex. Lifting toll gates, alternative exits, closing a facility etc.
- Requesting additional University shuttle buses
- Alerting the MBTA

Emergency Management is responsible for:

- Assisting with activation of Emergency Operations Plan and Emergency Operations Center as needed
- Assisting UMBPD with emergency alerts as needed
- Assisting Chancellor's Office with Cabinet and System notifications
- Anticipating business continuity needs
- Assisting Incident Commander as needed
- Maintaining the Evacuation Policy for the campus
- Maintaining the Campus-Wide Evacuation Plan

Marketing and Engagement is responsible for:

- Crafting and sending emergency notification to the campus
- Monitoring social media
- Communications with news / media outlets

Individuals who may need assistance to evacuate the building are encouraged to prepare a Personal Evacuation Plan. This Plan can address your specific challenges. At a minimum the Plan should include your cell phone number (if applicable) and your plan for exiting the building or getting to an area of refuge. The Plan can be shared with occupants in your vicinity and UMass Boston Public Safety and Police. The Office of Environmental Health and Safety and the ADA Compliance Officer are available to assist you in preparing this Plan.

Transporting individuals with disabilities up and down stairs must be avoided. OEHS and Fire Safety Volunteers will collect any pertinent information including individuals that may be in specific areas of refuge. Information should be related to the Incident Commander so appropriate resources can be directed to the area.

All people, regardless of their circumstances, need to take some responsibility for their safety in an emergency, which means being able to move away from any and all hazards.

Drills

The University of Massachusetts Boston conducts building evacuation/fire drills at least twice per year. A team of Fire Safety Volunteers assists with the drills. The Office of Environmental Health and Safety maintains records for dates and times of all building evacuation drills.

The Campus Community receives information about evacuation and shelter-in-place procedures in their classrooms annually.

Definitions

- Early Dismissal:

In the event of an Early Dismissal, a controlled release will be practiced. The campus community will be required to exit the parking lots as normal using their parking pass. This type of release more efficiently controls potential congestion on University Drive. Additional shuttle buses may be gathered at the Campus Center for those going to JFK MBTA Station. During winter, outside parking lots will need to be evacuated so Facilities can clear the lots. If it is necessary for members of the community to stay on campus after the requested dismissal time, it is required that all vehicles be moved indoors to the West or Campus Center garages.

- Evacuation

The campus is evacuated for a “confirmed threat to the campus community”.

- Emergency Alert

An emergency alert is an urgent communication issued upon confirmation of a significant emergency or dangerous situations involving imminent or immediate threat to the health or safety of students or staff occurring on or immediately adjacent to the campus (hereafter referred to as “confirmed threat to the campus community”).

Emergency alerts are sent via the UMass Boston Alert System. An example of a threat requiring an emergency alert would be an active shooter or hurricane/tornado warning. Weather emergencies that warrant cancellation of classes and events will be signaled by text messages, social media, and the UMass Boston Smartphone Application.

- Shelter-in-Place

Seek shelter inside a building and remain inside until the danger passes. Shelter in- place is used when evacuating a building would cause greater risk than staying where you are. Shelter in-place is the best approach for certain chemical releases where the doors and windows are closed and the ventilation, heating and cooling systems are shut down. During high winds or tornadoes, it’s often safest inside a building where you can stay away from windows. In-place protection can also be the best approach if there is an active shooting incident outside especially if you can lock your building. Officials will continue to gather information and announce when the threat is removed.

University Hall at UMass Boston has a Lockdown Button System. Each classroom and large gathering area in University Hall has a lockdown button that when pressed, will immediately lockdown the room, and activate an alert to UMBPD. There will be a quick response to the location by law enforcement officials. All other bookable classrooms on campus have thumb turn key locks on the doors.

Oversight Department: Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance

Responsible Departments: Director of Emergency Management, Director of EHS

Monitoring: After Action Reports, Fire Drill Reports and other indication of outcomes to VC for Administration and Finance, Director of Environmental Health and Safety, Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs, Chief of Police, Associate Controller for Procurement and Contracts, and Chancellor’s Office

Authority: DOC. T99-060, Passed by the UMass BOT 8/4/99, revised 12/14/11.
University of Massachusetts Emergency Management and Business Continuity and Planning Policy



Administration & Finance

Policy & Procedure

Related Documents: Campus-Wide Evacuation Plan, Campus Closure Policy, Building- Specific Evacuation Plans, Fire Code