



Affiliated with Duke University Health System

Emergency Preparedness Education and Operations Plan (EPEOP)

Updated January 2026

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A. PURPOSE

The Emergency Preparedness Education and Operations Plan (EPEOP) is designed to help students, staff, and faculty respond appropriately when emergency conditions exist. Although some events are unpredictable, the EPEOP allows for immediate response/procedures thereby minimizing danger to lives and property.

B. NARRATIVE

Watts College of Nursing (WCON) is a corporate affiliate of Duke University Health System (DUHS). WCON follows all policies and plans of DUHS. The College is located at 311 Trent Drive, Durham NC 27710. The College is located on the campus of Duke University. Resources as part of DUHS and Duke University, are available to WCON.

The administrative team comprising of the President, Associate Executive of Business and Finance and the Associate Executive of Academics are responsible for making decisions regarding any disruption or change in the normal operations of the College. Decisions are made following those of DUHS to maintain the safety of students, faculty and staff. The College may cancel classes/operations as deemed necessary for the safety of students, faculty, and staff as WCON is a commuter college. The EPEOP for WCON must articulate with the DUHS emergency management plan.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

If an individual needs immediate medical treatment, human lives are at risk, or a crime is being committed (including acts of violence), first call Durham Police at 911, then notify Duke Police at 919-684-2444. The acute situation should be managed first, and only after it is stabilized (or at first opportunity) should the administrative channels of communication described in this document be implemented.

C. EMERGENCY LEADERSHIP TEAM (ELT) RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Coordinate with DUHS officials based on the nature of the individual incident.
2. Serve as a central point for incoming and outgoing information on the emergency or crisis through the media, marketing and communications departments at DUHS.

3. Develop an appropriate mechanism for communication of the emergency or crisis, and update for internal constituencies.
4. Determine the appropriate response to the situation.
5. The first responsibility of leadership during a workplace emergency is to protect life and property by notifying the appropriate response personnel (Call 911, then Duke Police, DUHS leadership) as appropriate to the situation.

Website Communication

WCON's external facing website is connected to Duke University. Special emergency messages sent out by Duke University communications officials are displayed as a banner at the top of the WCON webpage. Emergency notifications are also available on the [Duke Alert](https://emergency.duke.edu) website (emergency.duke.edu).

Emergency Contact Information (See [Appendix A](#))

The following provides an outline of position-specific responsibilities, as needed and applicable, of the WCON ELT members in the event of an emergency or crisis.

| POSITION | RESPONSIBILITIES |
|--|---|
| President Dr. Yolanda Neal Office Phone: 919.470.7344 Cell Phone: 336.430.0619 Email: yolanda.neal@duke.edu | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall responsibility for the WCON and makes strategic decisions in the event of an emergency or crisis. • When logistically possible, the Associate Executive of Business & Finance consults the President during the crisis or emergency about important decisions that impact the school. |
| Associate Executive of Business & Finance Brandon Balandra Office Phone: 919-470-3268 Cell Phone: 740-646-4346 Email: brandon.balandra@duke.edu | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declares an emergency when required and is the highest level of authority during the emergency, serving as Incident Commander. • Convenes the Emergency Leadership Team's opening meeting/conference call. • Has authority and responsibility for WCON matters during the emergency. • Has specific authority and responsibility for WCON facility, administrative, human resources, IT, and business-related issues during the emergency. • Will consult with the President as needed. Orders implementation of WCON emergency plans. • Declares an end to the emergency and concluding dates for certain processes and procedures. |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Associate Executive of Academics</p> <p>Dr. Judy King Office Phone: 919-470-8513 Cell Phone: 919-454-9842 Email: judyanne.king@duke.edu</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has authority and responsibility for WCON academic affairs related issues especially as it relates to faculty, students, classroom and clinical experiences, and impact upon class schedules.• Functions as back up to the Associate Executive of Business & Finance during their absence and has back-up authority to activate the WCON ELT during the Associate Executive of Business & Finance's absence.• When not serving as Incident Commander in the back up capacity, responsible for overall coordination of student, faculty, and administration issues. |
|--|--|

WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY

D. EVACUATE

- Leave the building.
- Take personal belongings (keys, purse, cell phone, etc.).
- Assist those who need assistance and individuals with disabilities if possible.
- Convene in the back-parking lot.
- Once safe, report all fires/incidents to Duke Police (919-684-2444).

E. EXTENDED POWER OUTAGES

In the event of an extended power outage, a generator system will provide very limited power for the building in the event of an electrical failure. If classes need to be relocated or canceled, or if the outage will be extensive, the WCON ELT will work with those faculty whose classes will be impacted and will notify the College of such plans.

F. SEVERE WEATHER

- Staff in "essential service" positions report to or remain at work.
- Staff in "delayed service" positions do not report to or remain at work.
- Those traveling should use only priority roads, sidewalks, and walkways during periods of severe weather.
- Use caution while traveling around campus as surfaces may be icy, slick, or blocked. Sloped surfaces, stairs, ramps, and paths not identified as the preferred route of travel should be avoided.

- Monitor the WCON website, <https://emergency.duke.edu> , or call 919-684-INFO for updates.

G. TORNADO

- Stay inside until danger has passed.
- Seek shelter on the lowest building level, interior rooms or hallways with interior walls. Use interior spaces with short spans. Stairwells, bathrooms and closets are good options.
- Put as many walls as possible between you and the exterior of the building.
- Avoid windows and doors with glass panels.
- Avoid interior and exterior doors.
- Avoid areas where chemicals are stored. Chemicals and cleaning supplies should be removed from areas designated for shelter use.
- Unsecured items (shelving, supplies, wall lockers, etc.) should either be secured or removed from shelter areas.
- Stay away from entrances. All doors around a shelter area should be closed and secured during a tornado warning.
- Monitor the WCON website, <https://emergency.duke.edu> , or call 919-684-INFO for updates.
- Wait for the “All Clear” alert by police or College officials.
- For more information visit: [ReadyNC](#), [NCDPS Emergency Management](#), or [Duke Emergency Management: Tornadoes](#).

H. HURRICANE

- Secure any outdoor furniture or other loose items that could pose a danger in high winds prior to the storm.
- Ensure all windows and exterior doors are closed prior to the storm.
- Any flooding or property damage should be reported to the appropriate maintenance unit so crews can respond quickly. Unless a situation is life-threatening, crews may wait until after dangerous winds have subsided before responding.
- Any potential safety-related issues, such as downed trees or power lines, should be reported immediately to 911 or Duke Police 919-684-2444.
- Monitor the WCON website, <https://emergency.duke.edu> , or call 919-684-INFO for updates.

I. EXTREME HEAT

- Stay hydrated. Drink water regularly throughout the day.
- Avoid caffeine.
- Limit outdoor activity to morning or evening hours.
- If outdoors, stay in the shade as much as possible.
- Keep track of outdoor temperatures and personal comfort levels to know what temperatures feel too hot.
- Dress in lightweight, light-colored cotton clothing.
- If you start feeling significantly weakened, take a break.
- Should issues arise with HVAC resources, faculty, staff, and students may be sent home to work or conduct classes.

J. WINTER WEATHER

- Staff in “essential service” positions report to or remain at work.
- Staff in “delayed service” positions do not report to or remain at work.
- Those traveling should use only priority roads, sidewalks, and walkways during periods of severe weather.
- Use caution while traveling around campus as surfaces may be icy, slick, or blocked. Sloped surfaces, stairs, ramps, and paths not identified as the preferred route of travel should be avoided.
- Decisions regarding closure or delay will be made by the President, Associate Executive of Business & Finance and Associate Executive of Academics.
- Monitor the WCON website, <https://emergency.duke.edu> , or call 919-684-INFO for updates.

K. FIRE

- When dealing with a fire, use the **RACE** acronym to remember how to proceed.
R-emove persons in danger. Exit through stairwell. Do not use elevator.
A-ctivate alarm (Code Red) **AND** dial 911
C-lose doors and windows.
E-xtinguish fire. Have a person knowledgeable of incident and area assist with emergency personnel.
- In the event of a small fire that requires the use of a fire extinguisher, use the **PASS** acronym to remember how to safely and effectively put out the fire.

P-ull the pin and hold the extinguisher with the nozzle pointing away from you.

Aim low. Point the extinguisher at the base of the fire.

S-queeze the lever slowly and evenly.

S-weep the nozzle from side to side.

- For more information on fire preparedness, visit [Duke Fire Safety](#).

L. CRIME PREVENTION

- Download the [Duke LiveSafe](#) mobile app for important safety and security resources.
- Don't walk alone at night and avoid unfamiliar, dimly lit areas.
- If you are being followed, go to the nearest populated, well-lit location and call 911. If you are walking, cross the street away from the person and go somewhere else, such as a convenience store.
- If a person confronts you and demands money or possessions, law enforcement officials suggest giving what is demanded and creating a safe distance.
- Lock your car when away and secure your belongings.
- Alert police to strangers or suspicious activity in your area.
- Don't leave valuables unattended.
- When you park, do not leave personal property and valuables (i.e. laptops, purses, GPS systems) in plain view.
- Do not leave the building at night alone, call someone to walk you to your car.

M. ARMED INTRUDER

If an armed intruder alert has been issued, use the following steps to protect yourself:

1. Get Out:

- Have an escape route and plan in mind.
- Leave your belongings behind.
- Keep your hands visible to law enforcement.

2. Hide Out:

- Hide in area out of the assailant's view.
- Block entry and sight to your hiding place and lock the doors.

3. Take Out:

- As a last resort and only when your life is in imminent danger.
- Attempt to incapacitate the assailant by acting with physical aggression and throwing items at the assailant.

4. Call 911 when it is safe to do so.
5. Follow the instructions of law enforcement officers when leaving the area. Keep your hands visible and remain calm.
6. Visit [Duke Emergency Preparedness-Armed Intruder](#) for more information.

N. BOMB THREAT

1. If you receive a bomb threat by telephone:
 - Remain calm and listen carefully to the caller. Gather and write down as much information as possible, including the phone number of the caller.
 - Have someone call 911 while you are on the phone.
 - Do not hang up the phone, even if the caller does.
 - Alert others nearby and call 911 from a safe location.
2. If you receive a bomb threat by email or physical mail:
 - Do not reply or forward an email, avoid touching the physical mail.
 - Take a picture of the threat or print the email and write down any information you can remember (ex: date/time received, surrounding circumstances).
 - Alert others nearby and call 911 from a safe distance.
3. Visit [Duke Emergency Preparedness-Bomb Threat](#) for more information.

O. REPORT A CRIME

You are strongly encouraged to report suspicious activity or crime in a timely manner to Durham Police 911. Timely reporting of information assists in keeping Duke University and Health System safe and secure. You may also report non-emergency matters anonymously through [CrimeStoppers](#), [Duke Silent Witness Program](#) or the [Investigations Unit](#).

Reporting Options:

1. When reporting a crime, please be ready to provide information such as:
 - Brief description of what occurred, including where and when.
 - Whether the suspect(s) had a weapon.
 - Where and when the suspect(s) was last seen.

- What the suspect(s) looked like: gender, race, age, height, weight, hair color/length, clothing including shoes worn, facial hair, tattoos, and scars.
2. Online reporting for non-emergency incidents such as thefts, vandalism and concerning behaviors (suspicious activity or inappropriate behaviors), visit [Duke Online Reporting](#). Remember, if a crime is in progress or if it is an emergency, dial 911.
 3. For a copy of a criminal report, visit or contact the Records Division of the Duke University Policy Department at 502 Oregon Street, or call 919-684-4602.

P. INFECTIOUS AND/OR COMMUNICABLE DISEASE OUTBREAK

1. Planning is the first step in preparing to manage the consequences of an infectious and/or communicable disease outbreak. It can help to reduce the spread of disease, decrease the numbers of deaths and hospitalizations, help maintain essential services and reduce the disruptions due to a disease outbreak. WCON guidance on infectious and/or communicable disease planning efforts, prior to an outbreak, is two-fold:
 - Reduce illness and death due to an infectious and/or communicable disease among students, faculty, staff and the campus community.
 - Allow emergency operations, response and overall business continuity that maximizes our students' ability to complete their studies while minimizing the impact of disruption and economic loss.
2. If any individual has been diagnosed with an infectious and/or communicable disease at WCON, the following is a planning objectives list:
 - Provide the individual with essential guidance from Duke Employee Occupational Health and Wellness (EOHW).
 - Provide essential tools and resources for academic continuity.
 - Provide informational resources to the College to support awareness, health and well-being.
 - Maintain essential functions and support services.
 - Provide isolation/quarantine protocols per DUHS and community guidance.
 - Provide vaccination locations on campus if needed.
 - Provide support for students, faculty and staff.
3. Communication Plan:

- In the event someone at WCON is affected by an infectious and/or communicable disease outbreak, WCON will work with DUHS media and communications for all communication with regards to preparedness, response, and dismissal.
 - WCON will use the following methods of communication: individual email, text, phone call, or via the college wide email system.
4. For information on COVID-19 and Higher Education, visit [US Department of Education COVID-19 Handbook \(2021\)](#).

Q. BUSINESS CONTINUITY

The administrative team is responsible for providing proper business continuity planning that improves WCON's chances of minimizing losses and maintaining critical functions to remain operational during disruptive incidents. Business continuity is part of the Emergency Preparedness Education and Operations Plan (EPEOP) phase to the recovery stage.

R. EDUCATION CONTINUITY

In the event of emergencies or disruptions, the College ensures continuity of education and clinical experiences through the following measures:

1. Clinical Agency Availability: As part of a major health system, Duke University Health System (DUHS), there is a low probability of reduction in available clinical placements. However, the college maintains alternate clinical assignments to ensure students can complete required clinical hours if unexpected changes occur.
2. Transition from In-Person to Virtual Learning: Courses are designed to pivot quickly to online platforms if in-person instruction is interrupted. Faculty receive training and support from DUHS technology support to deliver virtual instruction effectively, ensuring that learning outcomes, student engagement, and assessments are maintained.
3. Increased Use of Simulation: Simulation resources are utilized to supplement or temporarily replace clinical hours when necessary. Simulation scenarios are aligned with course and program outcomes, and student performance is evaluated and documented to ensure competency alignment.

These measures are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure compliance with accreditation requirements and maintain the quality of student education.

APPENDIX A-EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

1. WCON Executive Leadership Team

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|---|--|--|
| Dr. Yolanda Neal President Office Phone: 919.470.7344 Cell Phone: 336.430.0619 Email: yolanda.neal@duke.edu | Brandon Balandra Associate Executive of Business & Finance Office Phone: 919-470-3268 Cell Phone: 740-646-4346 Email: danny.love@duke.edu | Dr. Judy King Associate Executive of Academics Office Phone: 919-470-8513 Cell Phone: 919-454-9842 Email: judyanne.king@duke.edu |
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2. Student, Staff, Visitor Injury

- Respond to the injured and report the incident.
- [Safety at Duke](#)
- Contact Information:
 - Emergency/Fires-911
 - Duke Police - [\(919\) 684-2444](tel:(919)684-2444)
 - Exposure Hotline (biological, chemical, radiological) - [\(919\) 684-8115](tel:(919)684-8115)
 - Employee Occupational Health & Wellness (EOHW) - [\(919\) 684-3136](tel:(919)684-3136)
 - Poison Control - [\(800\) 222-1222](tel:(800)222-1222)
 - Corporate Risk Management - [\(919\) 684-6226](tel:(919)684-6226)
 - Workers' Compensation - [\(919\) 684-6693](tel:(919)684-6693)
 - Occupational & Environmental Safety - [\(919\) 684-2794](tel:(919)684-2794)

3. [Employee Work-Related Injuries/Illnesses](#)

- If emergency care is needed, go to a DUHS Emergency Department or call 911
- All work-related injuries/illnesses regardless of the severity must be reported to your supervisor/faculty immediately or as soon as practical, but no later than conclusion of the staff member's shift.
- Obtain care for non-life-threatening injuries through EOHW. When EOHW is closed (7:30 am -4:30 pm M-F), employees may seek treatment at Duke Urgent Care or a DUHS Emergency Room.
- All work-related exposures to blood or body fluids are to be reported immediately through the Employee Blood/Body Fluid Exposure Hotline (919) 684-8115 or 115 from a campus land-line phone.

4. Resources:

- [Duke LiveSafe](#) mobile app, [DukeAlert Text Messages](#)

REFERENCES

CDC COVID-19 Guidance of Institutions of Higher Education (IHE), Updated July 31, 2021, <https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/108282>

Emergency Management, Be Prepared Duke University, <https://prepare.duke.edu/prepared/>

Emergency or Crisis Management Plan, Duke School of Nursing, <https://nursing.duke.edu/faculty-staff-resources/school-nursing-emergency-information-center/emergency-or-crisis-management-plan>

Personal Injury, Duke Health Occupational & Environmental Safety Office <https://www.safety.duke.edu/emergency/personal-injury>

[The Department of Education COVID-19 Handbook Volume 3: Strategies for Safe Operation and Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Higher Education Students, Faculty, and Staff \(2021\)](#)

What To Do In An Emergency, Duke University School of Nursing, <https://nursing.duke.edu/faculty-staff-resources/emergency-information-hub/what-do-emergency>