

Sam Houston State University

COMMUNICATIONS ANNEX



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I. SITUATION

A. This plan provides guidelines for communicating crucial information to University leadership, the media, public, and the university community in the event of an emergency, crisis, or incident.

B. This plan describes SHSU's approach to communicating the emergency both **internally and externally**, and the various roles and responsibilities of key individuals involved in creating, disseminating, and coordinating vital information to key constituents to facilitate safety and a return to normal operations.

C. These procedures will be tested periodically in conjunction with campus-wide emergency drills and checked each semester.

II. CONCEPT OF THE OPERATION.

A. Objectives

1. Rapidly inform the President and University Leadership of the emergency situation.
2. Immediately disseminate warning for the safety of all on campus.
3. Initiate the appropriate emergency operations to mobilize the planning staff, synchronize the University's response, and communicate to restore a sense of confidence and order.

B. General.

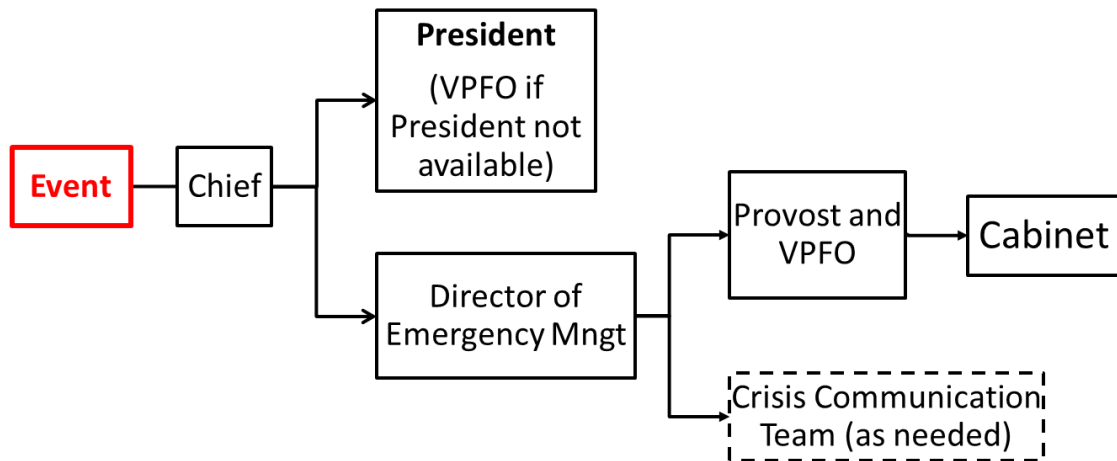
1. **Internal** flow of decision-making and communication procedures include police emergencies (imminent loss of life/property) and other events requiring leadership notification. Internal communication is defined as essential information communicated between the President, Cabinet, and Crisis Communication Team (CCT). The CCT consists of the Executive Director of Public Safety Services, VP for Information Technology, University PIO, and the Director of Emergency Management. The Emergency Planning Group assembles at the direction of the CCT to execute the guidance of the President.

a) **Police Emergencies Only – Imminent loss of life/property**

- 1) Chief will contact Director of Emergency Operations and President. If President is not reachable, VPFO will be the secondary contact.
- 2) Director of Emergency Operations will notify Provost and VPFO.
- 3) Chief/Director of Emergency Operations will activate the Emergency Communications Team (UPD, MarCom, IT), at his

discretion to ensure timely notification to campus to minimize loss of life/property.

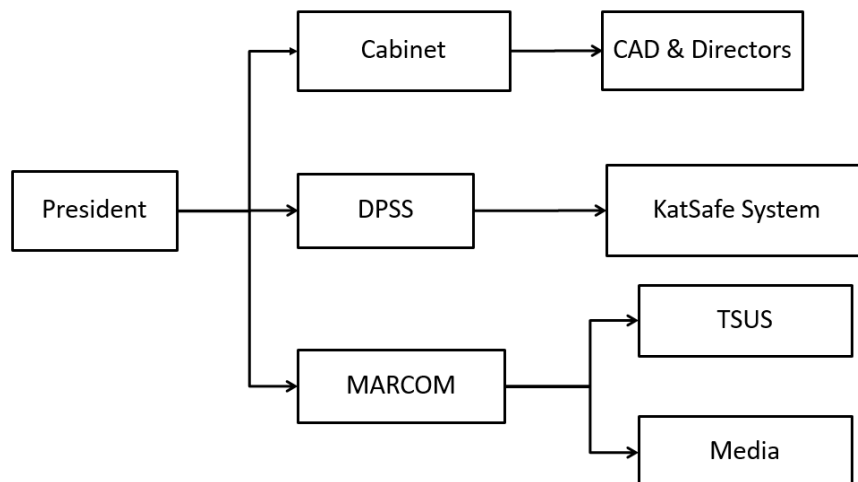
- 4) Director of Emergency Operations will update President, Provost, VPFO and the CCT until normal operations are restored.



b) All other events will be handled in accordance with associated procedures:

- 1) Inclement Weather - Director of Emergency Management.
- 2) Public relations/Social media challenges - Director of University Communications

2. **External** Flow of Communication. External flow of communication is defined as information dissemination to subordinates including the Council of Academic Deans, Department Directors, Texas State University System Office, all forms of media, and the continuous flow of information via the KatSafe system.



C. General Public

1. Information Management. Throughout an event, the CCT becomes the nexus point for information inflow and outflow. Messaging/content will be disseminated to key constituencies as facts are gathered and new information becomes available that can be both legally and ethically released to the public. Meanwhile, public sentiment measurement and internal/external information monitoring provide necessary feedback for the CCT in evaluating the overall effectiveness of communications as well as the need for additional messaging.

2. Media Relations. The PIO should decide on the best way(s) to reach the news media. In cases where a crisis is likely to be prolonged, and/or especially complex, the PIO may choose to create a news media briefing center to coordinate the information flow and assure that the right people are involved in collecting and disseminating information. Consideration should be given to appropriate media staging locations that can accommodate vehicles such as satellite trucks. Depending on the nature of the incident, examples of location might include the Visitor Center, Coliseum, LEMIT Blackwood Building, Criminal Justice Center Courtroom, or the Walker Education Center at the Sam Houston Memorial Museum.

3. Communication with the media must occur frequently. Information from news briefings may be captured in audio and/or video and posted to the Internet along with updated facts. News coverage in key media outlets will be monitored in order to correct significant inaccuracies either through direct contact with media outlets or through content distributed by the university via the appropriate communication channels.

4. In general, the university will welcome reporters and allow them as much access as public safety and operations permit. Public Information Officers will facilitate access to key individuals and respond quickly to as many requests as possible. Communication must occur early and often but be confined to the facts.

III. ORGANIZATION AND ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES.

A. Department of Public Safety Services. The Executive Director initiates the flow of emergency information by notifying the University President. Elements that trigger notification may include:

1. Loss of life or life-threatening injury
2. Impact to operations due to weather, threat of attack, fire, or power loss
3. Significant damage and cost to University property

B. Director of Emergency Management. Disseminate urgent emergency information via the KatSafe system. Inform the Provost and the VPFO of the emergency.

C. Marketing and Communications. Generally, the PIO is the spokesperson for the university. However, the individual with the highest credibility and understanding of the events surrounding the crisis may be designated to address the general public, the media or the university community on an as-needed basis.

D. Crisis Communication Team. Identify the appropriate KatSafe messaging platform based on urgency and key constituencies that require notifications. Appendix 1 contains a description of the communication tools, their possible applications in a crisis, and who can operate those tools. Key constituencies include:

- a. Faculty, staff, and students
- b. Parents or immediate families of Students
- c. TSUS System Office
- d. Board of Regents
- e. Government Officials including City and County leadership
- f. Alumni
- g. Media

IV. PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

A. This plan shall be reviewed and updated at least once each semester.

B. After-action Report/Review (AAR) process will also be used to drive plan updates. Depending on the nature of a crisis, the SHSU EMC will convene the Crisis Communication Team for a review of lessons learned. This AAR may be used to provide summary information to a more comprehensive campus-wide AAR coordinated through SHSU EMC.

Appendix 1: Crisis and Mass Communication Tools

In a crisis situation, no single medium will suffice to notify all constituencies. Depending on the particular situation, some combination of the communication tools listed below may be employed to reach the widest number of people as quickly as possible.

Communication Tool	Application	Characteristics	Responsibility
KatSafe Emergency Notification System	Blackboard Connect platform. Messages sent directly to recipients' multiple devices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office phone • Cell phone • Home phone • Email • SMS text • Social Media • SHSU Workstations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used to disseminate official information during emergencies or crisis situations that may disrupt the normal operation of SHSU or threaten the health or safety of members of the SHSU community. • Provides active notification to multiple devices. • Message delivery dependent on network conditions and the number of recipients. • Messages are less detailed and shorter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMC and Marcom – Develop message content • EMC or IT – Delivers message
Katsafe Website		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centralizes messaging and serves as a resource for emergency preparedness • Used to disseminate official information during emergencies or crisis situations that may disrupt the normal operation of SHSU or threaten the health or safety of members of the SHSU community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMC oversight • Marcom assists in content development & messaging
SHSU Home Page	Alert and notice linked to KatSafe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crisis Communication team posts information. • Alerts community and refers to KatSafe for info. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMC and Marcom – Develop message content,

			<p>backup to web posting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IT – Posts message
Social Media	Short messages on SHSU Facebook & Twitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used to disseminate official information during emergencies or crisis situations that may disrupt the normal operation of SHSU or threaten the health or safety of members of the SHSU community. Crisis Communication team posts information. Messages are less detailed and shorter. Provides updates. Can be monitored with response. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EMC and Marcom – Develop message content, delivery & monitoring IT – backup for delivery
Today@Sam	More detailed messages posted on this web site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not timely. More of a wrap-up of information; not part of the emergency notification system. Marketing & Communications Office posts information. Messages can be as detailed and as long as necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marcom – Develops message content and posting IT – backup for posting
Media List	Messaging sent directly to key, regional media outlets (print, TV & radio)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used to disseminate official information during emergencies or crisis situations that may disrupt the normal operation of SHSU or threaten the health or safety of members of the SHSU community. Proactive communication. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marcom – maintains media list, develops and distributes messaging

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Messages can be as detailed or long as necessary. • Messaging content can be written, photographic or video. • Promotes goodwill with media. 	
Call Center	Provides pre-approved messaging, routes media calls and source for monitoring sentiment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows concerned constituents to reach out to a “real” person. • Risk of providing too much information or unsubstantiated information to public. • Great source for monitoring sentiment and public questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marcom – provides messaging for callers and voicemail • EM/Call Center – communicates with callers, routes media calls & provides CCT feedback on any issues • IT – initiate voicemail messaging
Outdoor Alert	Short messages broadcast to loudspeakers on main SHSU campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used to disseminate official information during emergencies or crisis situations that may disrupt the normal operation of SHSU or threaten the health or safety of members of the SHSU community. • Provides active notification to people within earshot of the broadcast. • Messages customized to provide more details as needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMC – develops message content • EMC and IT – can initiate alert

Interior LED Signage	Short messages displayed on limited number of LED signs on campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can be used to disseminate official information during emergencies or crisis situations that may disrupt the normal operation of SHSU or threaten the health or safety of members of the SHSU community.• Messages are less detailed and shorter.• Localized and limited reach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EMC and Marcom – develop message content• IT – initiates alerts
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