

# EMERGENCY RESPONSE HANDBOOK

FOR THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY



Office of Safety & Security

Emergency Management | Health & Safety | Police Department

[safety.gwu.edu](https://safety.gwu.edu)

THE GEORGE  
WASHINGTON  
UNIVERSITY

WASHINGTON, DC



*To ensure a safe campus, the GW community must work together by understanding our responsibilities if an emergency should occur. We have developed this handbook to help with emergency preparedness efforts. The following sections address how to prepare and respond in emergency situations that may arise. Help make GW a safe university by becoming familiar with this guide and placing it somewhere visible and easily accessible. For additional information contact the Office of Safety and Security ([safety.gwu.edu](https://safety.gwu.edu)).*

Sincerely,

**Louis H. Katz**

Executive Vice President and Treasurer

**Steven Lerman**

Provost and Executive Vice President  
for Academic Affairs

**Darrell Darnell**

Senior Associate Vice President for Safety and Security

**The George Washington University Office of Safety and Security**—comprised of the Office of Emergency Management, Office of Health and Safety and GW Police Department—is tasked with promoting a safe campus and protecting our community. This cannot be accomplished alone and requires involvement from all corners of the university, including students, faculty and staff.

The Office Emergency Management (OEM) ensures that the George Washington University community works together to mitigate, prepare for, respond to and recover from all hazards.

- Emergency Communications (Campus Advisories and GW Alert)
- READY GW Preparedness Program
- Planning Guidance
- Training and Exercises
- Community Partnerships

**[CAMPUSADVISORIES.GWU.EDU](https://campusadvisories.gwu.edu)**

The Office of Health and Safety (H&S) serves the university by providing inspections, safety training and technical expertise in the areas of environmental and occupational health.

- General Safety
- Fire Safety
- Safety Inspections
- Environmental Health
- Training

**[HEALTHANDSAFETY.GWU.EDU](https://healthandsafety.gwu.edu)**

The George Washington University Police Department (GWPD) is committed to working with the GW community to help ensure a safe and secure environment. Police patrol 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

- Emergency Medical Response Group (EMeRG)
- Sexual Assault Response Consultative (SARC) Team
- Threat Assessment Team
- Blue Light Phones
- Lost and Found
- Self-Defense Program
- Operation Identification and Bike Registration
- Personal Alarm Locator (GW PAL)

**[POLICE.GWU.EDU](https://police.gwu.edu)**



## FIRE

- ☐ Pull the fire alarm
- ☐ Leave the building immediately using the closest emergency exit
- ☐ Close doors behind you
- ☐ Call GWPd (202-994-6111) or 911 when safe to do so
- ☐ Assemble in a designated area
- ☐ Re-enter the building only when instructed by officials



- Do not assume an alarm is false
- Use stairs, do not use elevators
- If unable to exit the building, go to the nearest exit stairwell or safe area of refuge and call GWPd (202-994-6111) or 911 to report your location
- If trained, use a fire extinguisher if the fire is small and contained, and room is not filled with smoke



## SEVERE WEATHER

Thunderstorms are the most common type of severe weather in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. However, winter storms, extreme hot/cold temperatures, flooding, tornadoes and hurricanes can occur. Check [CampusAdvisories.gwu.edu](http://CampusAdvisories.gwu.edu) for up-to-date weather advisories and information.

**Shelter-in-place** for severe thunderstorms and tornadoes:

- ☐ Seek shelter indoors in a low part of the building
- ☐ Move to a windowless interior room away from hazardous materials
- ☐ Take cover under a sturdy object or against an interior wall
- ☐ Monitor Campus Advisories and local media
- ☐ Wait for the *all clear* before leaving your safe space



## EARTHQUAKE

- ☐ Drop to the ground, take cover under a sturdy object and hold on until shaking stops
- ☐ If a sturdy object is not available, move to an inside corner of the room, crouch down and cover face and head with arms
- ☐ Stay away from glass, outside walls or anything that could fall
- ☐ Stay inside and wait for the *all clear* before leaving your safe space
- ☐ Do not use elevators
- ☐ Monitor Campus Advisories and local media



### WEATHER TERMS:

**WATCH:** Conditions are favorable or expected

**WARNING:** Conditions are occurring or imminent



## ASSISTING PEOPLE WITH ACCESS AND FUNCTIONAL NEEDS



### Blind or Visually Impaired:

- ☐ Clearly announce the emergency
- ☐ Offer your arm for guidance
- ☐ Lead the person and alert them of obstacles



### Deaf or Hard of Hearing:

- ☐ Turn lights on and off to gain the person's attention
- ☐ Indicate directions with gestures or a written note



### Mobility-Impaired:

- ☐ Guide the person to the nearest exit stairwell or safe area of refuge
- ☐ Do not use elevators
- ☐ Call GWPd (202-994-6111) or 911 to report your location
- ☐ Stay with the person if it can be done without unreasonable personal risk
- ☐ If in imminent danger and the person requests assistance before emergency personnel can arrive, find volunteers to evacuate the person per his/her instructions



## MEDICAL EMERGENCY

- ☐ Call GWPd (202-994-6111) or 911 immediately
- ☐ Provide the location, nature of injury or illness, current condition of the victim and other requested information
- ☐ Remain on the phone until directed to hang up
- ☐ Stay with the victim
- ☐ Do not move the victim unless he/she is in immediate danger



## UTILITY FAILURE

Utility failures include power outages, gas leaks/unusual odors, flooding/plumbing problems, broken or malfunctioning life-safety equipment or elevator entrapment.

- ☐ Move to a safe area
- ☐ Call Emergency Maintenance (202-994-6706) or GWPd (202-994-6111) to report issues
- ☐ Be prepared to provide failure type and location
- ☐ Building may be evacuated due to utility failures



## BIOLOGICAL RELEASE/ CHEMICAL SPILL

- ☐ Secure area and do not attempt to clean unless properly trained in managing biological releases or chemical spills
- ☐ Move to a safe area
- ☐ Call Health and Safety (202-994-4347) or GWPD (202-994-6111) and provide information on location and type of release or spill
- ☐ If the release or spill has the potential to impact a larger area, activate the building's fire alarm and evacuate individuals from the immediate work and/or laboratory area



## SUSPICIOUS/UNUSUAL PACKAGE OR MAIL

- ☐ Do not open the item(s)
- ☐ Leave the area and close doors behind you
- ☐ Call GWPD (202-994-6111) or 911 and provide a detailed description of the item(s) and its location



## SUSPICIOUS PERSON

- ☐ Call GWPD (202-994-6111) or 911
- ☐ Do not confront the person or let the suspicious person into a locked building or office
- ☐ Do not block the person's access to an exit



## BOMB THREAT

Obtain as much information as possible from the caller and report the threat immediately to GWPD (202-994-6111) or 911.

**Be sure to note:**

- ☐ Precise time of the call
- ☐ Caller's exact words
- ☐ Noticeable characteristics of the caller (gender, age, calm/angry, excited/slow, accent, stutter, lisp, high/low pitched, etc.)
- ☐ Information regarding the device and possible location
- ☐ Background sounds (machine, voices, street noises, music, etc.)
- ☐ Threat language (well-spoken, taped, irrational, foul, incoherent, etc.)

**Ask the person questions, such as:**

- ☐ Where is the bomb located?
- ☐ When will the bomb explode?
- ☐ What does the bomb look like?
- ☐ What kind of bomb is it?
- ☐ What will cause it to explode?
- ☐ Did you place the bomb?
  - ☐ If so, why?
  - ☐ If not, who did?
- ☐ What is your name?
- ☐ What is your address?



## VIOLENCE/ACTIVE SHOOTER

If an **active shooter** is in your vicinity:

- ☐ **Call GWPD (202-994-6111) or 911 when it is safe to do so** and provide information, including the location and number of shooters, description of the shooter(s), weapons used and number of potential victims

### ☐ **Evacuate**

If there is an accessible escape path, attempt to evacuate the premises:

- Have an escape route and plan in mind
- Evacuate regardless if others agree to follow
- Leave your belongings behind
- Help others escape if possible
- Prevent others from entering an area where the active shooter may be
- Keep your hands visible
- Follow the instructions of any police officers
- Do not attempt to move wounded people

### ☐ **Hide Out**

If evacuation is not possible, find a place to hide where the active shooter is less likely to find you:

- Hide in an area out of the shooter's view
- Provide protection if shots are fired in your direction
- Lock the doors
- Block entry to your hiding place with heavy objects or furniture pieces
- Do not trap yourself or restrict your options for movement
- Silence your cell phone and stay quiet
- Wait for law enforcement

### ☐ **Take Action**

As a last resort and only when your life is in imminent danger, attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the shooter by:

- Acting as aggressively as possible against him/her
- Yelling
- Throwing items and improvising weapons
- Committing to your actions

\*Adapted from DHS Active Shooter Guidelines, DHS.gov



## CRIME

Criminal acts towards persons or property can occur on or off campus.

**Be sure to:**

- ☐ Remain in or move to a safe area
- ☐ Report criminal or suspicious activity to GWPD (202-994-6111) or 911



### **ACTION TERMS:**

**SHELTER-IN-PLACE:** Take immediate shelter indoors and isolate yourself away from the threat

**EVACUATE:** Leave an area or building and move to a safe area



# IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS:

	EMERGENCY	NON-EMERGENCY
Foggy Bottom (GWPD) .....	202-994-6111	202-994-6110
Mount Vernon (GWPD) .....	202-242-6111	202-242-6110
VSTC (Loudoun County) .....	911	
Other Locations .....	911	
GW Information Line .....		202-994-5050
VSTC Information Line .....		571-553-8333
Emergency Maintenance .....	202-994-6706	
Emergency Management .....	202-994-4936	
GW Hospital .....	202-715-4000	
GW Housing .....	202-994-2552	
Health and Safety .....	202-994-4347	
Information Technology .....	202-994-4948	
Medical Services .....	202-994-6827	
Mental Health Services .....	202-994-5300	
Parent Services .....	202-994-2305	
Sexual Assault Response .....		
Consultative Team (SARC) .....	202-994-7222	
Student Affairs .....	202-994-6710	
University Operator .....	202-994-1000	

# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS: *READY GW*

## MAKE A PLAN

### Get Away/Evacuate:

- ☐ Know alternate exit routes
- ☐ Identify assembly areas (near & far)

### Shelter-in-Place:

- ☐ Identify a safe location to shelter
- ☐ Know how to protect and isolate yourself from the threat

### Communication:

- ☐ Consider a variety of ways to keep in contact with family, friends, roommates and co-workers

### People with Access and Functional Needs:

- ☐ Include family, friends, roommates and co-workers in your plan by helping them understand your needs during an emergency

## BUILD A KIT

### Have at least three days of supplies to sustain yourself. Recommended items\*:

- ☐ Water (one gallon per person per day)
- ☐ Non-perishable food
- ☐ Flashlight & extra batteries
- ☐ First aid kit
- ☐ Radio & extra batteries
- ☐ Medications & items for unique needs
- ☐ Cash & some change
- ☐ Clothes & comfortable shoes
- ☐ Important documents
- ☐ Filter mask or cotton t-shirt
- ☐ Moist towelettes, garbage bags & plastic ties
- ☐ Plastic sheeting & duct tape
- ☐ Whistle
- ☐ Mobile device charger

\* Adapted from Ready.gov

## STAY INFORMED

**CampusAdvisories.gwu.edu** is the university's primary website used for communicating emergency preparedness and incident-related information to the GW community.

GW Alert is a notification system that sends emergency alerts to email addresses, mobile devices, GW IP desk phones, social media and university webpages. Students, faculty and staff are requested to maintain current contact and campus location information at [banweb.gwu.edu](http://banweb.gwu.edu).

Local media, such as 103.5FM or WTOP.com, delivers additional community awareness.

## TIPS:

- ☐ Always carry your GWorld ID card
- ☐ Keep GW Alert contact information up-to-date
- ☐ Know your location and exits, and the placement of first aid kits, AEDs and fire extinguishers
- ☐ Program GWPD and personal I.C.E. (in case of emergency) numbers into your mobile device
- ☐ Report unusual/suspicious activities or items