

Be Prepared!

Emergency Information for VCU and VCUHS Communities



Welcome to VCU Alert!

Students, faculty, staff, parents, and community members can sign up for Virginia Commonwealth University's text message alert system to receive immediate information by cell phone about campus emergencies, weather delays and cancellations. Messages are only sent during an emergency or cancellations as well as for two system tests during the year.

GENERAL GUIDANCE :

What to do in an emergency:

- Remain calm, use common sense, render needed assistance, and obey requests of VCU and First Responder authorities.
- Call VCU Police at 828-1234 or the Richmond Police by dialing 911.
- Evacuate buildings immediately upon hearing/seeing fire alarm activation and/or upon request of authorities.
- Shelter in place upon hearing a campus siren or seeing activation of an Alertus warning device until "all clear" issued by VCU authorities.
- Know the location of at least two emergency exits close to your working/living areas.

What not to do in an emergency:

- Don't use the telephone except to report the emergency situation.
- Don't use elevators.
- Don't jeopardize your life and the lives of others by attempting to save property.

Medical Emergency:

Do:

- Call VCU Police at 828-1234 or Richmond Police at 911 for emergency medical service (EMS/ambulance) if injured or encountering someone who is injured.
- Give VCU Police your name, exact location and any key information regarding the injury.
- Remain with injured person until VCU Police or EMS arrives.
- Remain calm and tell the injured person (even if they appear to be unconscious) that help is on the way.

Avoid:

- Rendering first aid or medical care unless trained to do so.

Inside:	
Medical Emergency	1
Lightning and Thunderstorms	2
Snow/Ice Storm	2
Fire	2
Tornado	3
Hazardous Material	3
Earthquake	3
Suspicious Person	4
Active Shooter	4
Crime in Progress	4
Civil Disturbance	4

Lightning and Thunderstorms:

Do:

- Postpone outdoor activities if a thunderstorm is audible via thunder, evident visually, likely because of current weather conditions, or has been forecasted in your area.
- Secure outdoor objects that could cause damage; shutter windows and secure exterior doors.
- Watch for darkening skies, lightning, and increasing winds.
- Go quickly inside a sturdy and enclosed building. If no building is close, get in a car and avoid touching metal surfaces.
- Go to the lowest area nearby and make yourself the smallest target possible if no shelter or car is available.
- Get to land and shelter immediately if on open water.

Avoid:

- Any tall, isolated trees in an open area.
- Avoid showering or bathing during a thunderstorm. Plumbing fixtures can conduct electricity.
- Hilltops, open fields, the beach, a boat on the water, isolated sheds or small structures in open areas.
- Anything metal – tractors, farm equipment, motorcycles, golf carts, golf clubs, bleachers, fences and bicycles.
- Laying flat on the ground.
- Using electrical items such as computers or televisions as power surges from lightning can cause serious injury and damage.
- Corded telephones if possible by using cell or cordless phones.

Snow/Ice Storms:

Do:

- Monitor VCU Alert and local news media for weather reports and emergency information.
- Dress warmly and wear multiple layers of protective, loose-fitting clothing, scarves, mittens, and a head covering such as a hood or hat.
- Wear insulated boots or shoe rubbers with good rubber treads when walking on snow or ice.
- Take short steps and walk at a slower pace to respond to traction changes when walking on icy or snow-covered walkways and parking lots.
- Slow down driving speeds to avoid accidents on slippery roadways.
- Allow extra time to reach your destination.
- Be on the lookout for vehicles that may have lost traction and are slipping towards you.
- Fully winterize your vehicle and clear snow and ice from windows, mirrors, lights, hood, roof, trunk, and license plates.
- Be aware that approaching vehicles may not be able to stop at crosswalks or traffic signals.
- Wear bright clothing or reflective gear during storms to ensure that motorists can see you.
- Wear sunglasses during the daytime to enable you to see better and to avoid hazards.

Avoid:

- Weather exposure to unprotected portions of the body to reduce frostbite of fingers, toes, nose, and ear lobes.
- Hypothermia by minimizing time outdoors, operating outdoors in wet clothing, and minimizing intake of depressants (alcohol) and stimulants (coffee and tea).
- Walking in a street with your back to traffic if a sidewalk has not been cleared.
- Leaving a stranded vehicle where you could become disoriented and lost in blowing and drifting snow.
- Overexertion when shoveling snow and freeing stuck vehicles as frostbite and heart attacks occur during extended outdoor physical activities in cold weather.

Fire:

Do:

- Activate building fire alarm pull station if you discover fire or smell or see smoke.
- Immediately leave the building and, if possible, shut off equipment and quickly stabilize experiments.
- Close your door.
- Alert others.
- Assist others in evacuating if possible. Have those you cannot assist wait in areas designated “Areas of Rescue Assistance”.
- Call VCU Police or activate Emergency Reporting Telephone System (ERTS) flashing yellow strobe light (exterior) or ERTS flashing red light (interior) phone or Richmond Police by calling 911.
- Stay low to the floor when escaping from a fire.
- Assemble at safe place away from danger and account for others in your office/classroom/floor.
- Have person with knowledge of situation meet with first responders.

Avoid:

- USING ELEVATORS
- Opening a door that feels hot to the touch.
- Attempting to fight fire yourself unless trained in use of firefighting equipment, and it is safe to do so.
- Allowing fire and heavy smoke come between you and an exit.
- Taking deep breaths if caught in heavy smoke.

“Student safety and well being is a top priority of the faculty, staff and administration at VCU. Safety is everyone's responsibility and only with the involvement and commitment of every member of our community will we achieve the goal to make VCU the safest college campus in the country.”

**Dr. Michael Rao
VCU President**

Tornado:

Do:

- Monitor weather status.
- Move immediately to a pre-determined shelter location such as ground floor or basement.
- If outside, seek shelter inside the nearest building in the ground floor or basement.
- Move as close to the center of the building as possible.
- Stay away from windows and doors with glass panes.
- Sit or crouch in an inner hallway, bathroom, or room.

Avoid:

- USING ELEVATORS.
- Leaving the safe location until “all clear” is given by emergency personnel.
- Broken glass, debris, and unstable structures after tornado.

Hazardous Material Release:

Do:

- Report all spills or releases of hazardous materials observed to VCU Police.
- Give VCU Police your name, exact location of spill or release, and source, character, amount, and extent of material spill/release if possible.
- Advise VCU Police of any injuries associated with the incident.
- Shut windows, turn off open flames and open hoods in the area, if possible.
- Remain a safe distance from released or spilled material.
- Keep others from entering the area.
- Wait for VCU Police and emergency responders to direct them to the area.

Avoid:

- Initiating spill/release cleanup unless properly protected and qualified to handle HAZMAT events.

Earthquake:

Do:

- DROP to the ground; take COVER by getting under heavy furniture, such as a desk, table, or bench until shaking stops if inside during an earthquake.
- Stay clear of buildings, power lines, overpasses and elevated expressways, due to falling debris if outside.
- Expect aftershocks for several weeks after the quake which can further weaken structures.
- Report suspicious smells of gas by calling VCU Police.

Avoid:

- Proximity to large windows, mirrors or other glass during a quake.
- Locations next to buildings and exterior walls due to falling debris.
- Exiting a building during an earthquake.





EMERGENCY DIRECTORY

Fire/Police: 828-1234
Medical Emergency: 828-1234
Bomb Threat: 828-1234
Sexual Assault: 828-1234
Poison Control: 828-9123
Chemical/Radiological: 828-9834
Electrical/Mechanical: 828-9364
Security Escort Service: 828-WALK/9255
Telecommunications Device for the Deaf:
Voice: 1-800-828-1140
TTY: 1-800-828-1120

Suspicious Person:

- Do:
- Notice persons going door to door, office to office.
 - Notice persons loitering in hallways or commons areas.
 - Notice persons entering private offices unescorted.
 - Notice persons offering items for sale in buildings.
 - Notice persons entering secure areas.
 - Notice persons asking for an unknown individual or department.
 - Notice persons asking for money.
 - Notice persons leaving packages.
 - Notice any person who does not appear to belong in the area.
 - Call VCU Police or Richmond Police at 911.
 - Provide authorities a description and where person(s) were last observed.
 - Alert others on your floor or area.

- Avoid:
- Seeing something and not reporting it to VCU Police or VCU authorities.

Active Shooter:

- Do:
- Move to safe location away from shooter.
 - Remain in place or hide if moving is unsafe.
 - Lock and barricade doors, block windows, and close blinds.
 - Turn off lights.
 - Silence cell phones.
 - Take cover behind dense, solid objects that might be effective in stopping bullets.

- Avoid:
- Attempting negotiations with shooter.
 - Attempting to overpower or disarm the shooter.

Crime in Progress:

- Do:
- Report crimes observed or believed to be in progress to VCU Police.

- Avoid:
- Apprehending or interfering with the criminal except in cases of self-defense.

Civil Disturbance:

- Do:
- Call VCU Police if activities threaten or may result in damage to University grounds or buildings.
 - Give VCU Police your name, exact location of disturbance, and any information known about the disturbance.
 - Remain calm.
 - Alert all persons in area of the situation.
 - Lock doors and windows and close blinds to prevent flying glass.

- Avoid:
- Obstructing or provoking protestors.
 - Remaining at your location if it is unsafe due to the disturbance activities.

VCU Inclement Weather Procedure:
<http://www.hr.vcu.edu/VCU-InclementWeatherProcedure.pdf>

VCUHS Inclement Weather Procedure:
<http://www.hr.vcu.edu/VCUHS-InclementWeatherProcedure.pdf>