

12/16/2015

Greetings,

This email is primarily intended for those who have completed some or all of the Emergency Operation Center (EOC) training and for those who have a responsibility to respond and/or communicate when there is an emergency event on campus. This is a follow-up email to share a few lessons learned, changes made after Emergency Operation Center training and recent campus events, and what we are doing to improve campus communications and emergency response.

Lessons learned in 2015

1. Training - We learned that training improves our understanding of emergency response. The recent EOC training was time consuming but once completed EOC staff now have a better understanding of:
 - a. Regulatory requirements for campus emergency responders (i.e. SEMS, NIMS, ICS, etc.),
 - b. How we should be organized to respond (i.e. EOC operations, field response, etc.) and,
 - c. Gaps in our preparedness to respond (a needs list was developed and will be shared at a later date).
2. Communication – From previous experience we now know that the hand-held radios used during an evacuation can be very ineffective if traffic is heavy or we talk over one another. We also know that communication to impacted classes or departments during any incident on campus has been a challenge. In 2015 we made a few changes to our hand-held radio protocols. Besides improving radio communication in the field we also see a need to improve communication within departments. We are introducing new radio protocols during Building Marshal/Floor Captain training and will soon provide recommendations for the development of department phone trees.
 - a. Radio protocols –The most important change to evacuation radio communications is Channel 22 is designated as an EMERGENCY ONLY channel. This is a big change from previous radio protocols. An announcement for building evacuation refresher training will be sent immediately after winter break. The refresher training dates and times are available on the POD calendar.
 - b. Communication protocols - During a recent suspicious package incident, communication to the campus was noticeably improved. Largely in part to trained EOC staff, information about the incident was quickly disseminated to VPs and deans directly impacted by the incident. Going forward we will be recommending departments and programs develop phone trees. This also includes a phone tree for the EOC staff. An announcement with directions on how to develop a phone tree will be sent after winter break.

In the upcoming months, emergency preparedness and response for our campus will improve. Small changes in the way we prepare, communicate and respond will make a large impact on our ability to save lives, preserve our environment and protect our property. Please feel free to contact Karen Saldana by email at ksaldana@mtsac.edu or Melonee Cruse at mcruse1@mtsac.edu if you have any comments or concerns.



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