Active Shooter FAQ
What steps is West Chester University taking to provide safe classrooms?

While no institution can guarantee absolute safety in the classroom or on campus grounds, WCU has taken the issue seriously and works continually to improve the safety of the University’s campus and classrooms. The guidelines in this FAQ are just one step toward a safer educational environment.

Among the actions the University has taken are these:

1. Purchase and activation of an emergency text messaging system
2. Use of the WCU Emergency Informational Home page to notify the campus community of an emergency
3. Ability to utilize, if appropriate, the local media and the Chester County and West Chester Borough Reverse 911 System for notification purposes
4. Purchase (in progress) of an external emergency notification system
5. Current comprehensive review of the emergency telephone and call box system on campus
6. Creation of a Threat Assessment Team (TAT) to collect information about possible threats and to recommend actions based on the determined threat level
7. Training by the University Department of Public Safety (DPS) of all police officers on how to respond to an active shooter incident: Several of the DPS administrative staff are considered experts on the subject of active shooters and ensure that the department is trained in and equipped for the most up to date tactics and strategies.

In the event of an emergency, what is my responsibility?

Many respected legal minds believe that, along with campus officials, faculty are important partners in providing for the safety of their classroom students in the event of an emergency, just as they oversee student safety during classroom and laboratory activities. All faculty should anticipate and plan how they would ensure the safety of their students in the event of an active shooter in the building. While anticipating every detail of an emergency is impossible, by planning ahead, faculty can greatly improve their students’ and their own odds of surviving the emergency.

In the event of gunfire in my classroom building, should I evacuate my class, or should we stay where we are and barricade the door?

Statistically, the more distance you place between yourself and someone firing a weapon, the higher the probability that you will escape injury. Therefore, if you hear gunfire, your first course of action should be to evacuate yourself and your students away from the danger if you can safely do so. You should only consider sheltering in place or elsewhere within the building if evacuation is not possible.

Would locking all classrooms during classes deter a shooter?

1. Most WCU classroom doors lock, although some can only be locked by using a key on the outside of the door. If you wish to lock the door while teaching your class, you should do so, but relying solely on locks for safety has two fundamental problems: Most classroom doors have a glass window, and any modern firearm is powerful enough to shoot through even tempered or safety glass. A shooter could then easily unlock the door or reach victims through the glass.

What should I consider in making my emergency plan?

1. Identify the type of emergency for which you are planning. This FAQ is designed to help you plan for an active shooter emergency. For an active shooter situation, select and become familiar with an area or building where you could most likely evacuate your class. Your evacuation site should be close to your classroom and away from the door, a natural barrier, or other potential escape routes. Your evacuation site should be near heavy windows, doors, or other structures, and it should be inside a public building or basement. Your evacuation site should be accessible only through a locked door or window to prevent anyone unauthorized from entering.

I still don’t feel comfortable; what is my next step to receive more information?

Faculty are encouraged to contact the director of public safety if they would like additional information or would like to discuss planning. A wealth of information is also to be found on the Internet. The following Web sites may be particularly helpful:

http://www.wcupa.edu/dps/emergency/emergencypreparedness.asp
http://www.wcupa.edu/dps/Crisis-Response
http://www.wcupa.edu/dps/emergency/emergencylinks.asp

Key Actions

1. Evacuate away from the danger and remain calm
   • Follow the instructions of a faculty member, university employee or emergency personnel
   • Evacuate to the nearest exit
   • Notify anyone you may encounter to exit the building immediately
   • Evacuate to an area at least 500 yards from the danger
   • Stay together
   • Once you reach an area of safety, call the police at 911 or 610-436-3311
   • Notify the police of your group size and location and stay in a contact phone
   • Remain in the reported location until you are released by police

2. If you cannot evacuate, remain calm
   • Lock or barricade the door—placing anything heavy in front of it
   • If the door opens and cannot be barricaded, evacuate or move to another room
   • Stay out of sight, away from windows and doors
   • Turn off the lights
   • Remain quiet
   • Once secure NEVER open the door
   • Have one person call the police at 911 or 610-436-3311
   • Place a large note or article of clothing out or on the window to let emergency personnel know you are there. Do not identify that the room is occupied for anyone inside the building

3. If the shooter enters your room
   • Be prepared to attempt to overtake the individual with greater numbers
   • If the individual is overtaken, hold that person down
   • Call police at 911 or 610-436-3311 and report the situation
### Preplanning:

**Reporting an Emergency**
Calling 911 or 610-436-3311 in an emergency or under stress will be difficult. Preprogram your phone for one-touch dialing.

**Receiving Emergency Notifications (WCUAlert)**
Decide on a policy for cell phone use in the classroom.
1. Faculty member has the only cell phone on in the class.
2. Selected individuals have their cell phone on in class.
3. The entire class has their cell phones on.

**Keep attendance for each class**
In an emergency, your attendance sheets may be used to identify who was in the building for accountability purposes.

### Evacuation:

**Have an evacuation route planned**
Posted evacuation plans are at the entrance to each floor of a building. Become familiar with these routes. Evacuate to the nearest exit.

**Know your destination**
Identify two buildings you can flee to that are at least 500 yards away from the danger zone.

**Don’t take personal property**
Leave personal property behind as carrying items with you can slow you down.

**Do not stop**
An evacuation takes seconds if you do not stop. Do not pull the fire alarm in an attempt to have people evacuate the building.

**Do not use the fire alarm to evacuate**
Do not use the fire alarm in an attempt to have people evacuate the building.

### Sheltering in place:

**Locking the door**
Does the door have a lock? Is the lock functional? Do you have a key to activate the lock? Do you have that key?

**Does the door open in or out?**
Doors that open into the classroom can be barricaded with heavy objects inside the room.

**Does the door open into the hallway?**
Doors that open out into the hallway cannot be barricaded. Reconsider evacuation or move to another room. If not possible, attempt to tie the door closed with an extension cord, belt, or anything that can be wrapped around the door handle.

**Barricade the door**
If the door does not have a lock, place heavy items inside of the room in front of the door. If there are no heavy objects, consider wedging the door or going to another location.

**Do not stand in front of the door or windows**
Stand out of sight and do not stand in front of doors and windows. Avoid huddling together in a mass. Use the walls and heavy objects such as desks, tables, and filing cabinets to hide behind.

**Stay Quiet**
Turn off lights, silence cell phones, turn off computers, etc.

**Call for help**
Have one person call 911 and advise them of your location and the number of people in the room.

### Unsecuring your location:

**NEVER open the door**
Once you are secure, you should never open the door for any reason. Responding police will open the door for you.

**Sheltering:**
- I know if the rooms where I teach can lock and if I have the means to lock them.
- I have identified a way to barricade, tie, or secure the door in absence of locks.
- I will not open the door once it is secured.

### My Plan

**Preplanning:**
- I have programmed my cell phone to dial 911 and 610-436-3311.
- I have implemented a plan to receive text alerts through the WCU alert system.
- I have advised my class that I have an emergency plan and that they are to follow my instructions should an emergency occur.

**Evacuation:**
- I have reviewed the building evacuation plans.
- I have identified my closest exit, and I routinely check the route to this exit for obstructions.
- I have identified two locations that I will take my class away from the danger area. They are _________and_________.

**Notes:** __________________________________________________________

**Sheltering:**
- I have identified two buildings that are at least 500 yards away from the danger zone.
- I have identified a way to barricade, tie, or secure the door in absence of locks.
- I will not open the door once it is secured.

**Notes:** __________________________________________________________

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**Special Considerations**

| 1. Faculty member has the only cell phone on in the class. |
| 2. Selected individuals have their cell phone on in class. |
| 3. The entire class has their cell phones on. |

**Evacuation:**

- I have reviewed the evacuation plans posted at the entrance to each floor.
- I have identified two locations that I will take my class to that are at least 500 yards away from the danger zone.
- I have identified a way to barricade, tie, or secure the door in absence of locks.
- I will not open the door once it is secured.

**Notes:** __________________________________________________________

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**FAQ and Planning Considerations**

- This frequently asked questions section has been developed to provide the WCU faculty with necessary information on emergency planning and classroom safety. It is our hope that these answers will help you begin your individual emergency planning. Should you wish to attend an emergency planning training meeting, please contact the Department of Public Safety for the schedule.

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