

Emergency Preparedness Planning for MCRO Courses

I. Preparedness Resources

It is always better to be prepared for an emergency by thinking through in advance how you will handle various situations. Preparation allows you to take immediate action when time is of the essence. For MCRO courses:

- UNC expected all classroom instructors to complete “Emergency Preparedness for Instructors (with Attestation)” training prior to the start of Fall 2024 classes. If you have not done this, then go to Connect Carolina and use the link to Carolina Talent Learning within the Self-Service menu to find the training.
- If you have a smartphone, then download the Carolina Ready Safety App at <https://campussafety.unc.edu/safetyapp/>.
- Familiarize yourself with the extensive resources available at Carolina Ready (<https://campussafety.unc.edu/carolina-ready/>).
- The Carolina Ready poster at <https://campussafety.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/873/2020/06/carolina-ready-poster.pdf> (also attached) is a particularly useful comprehensive quick guide to all kinds of emergencies. If a copy is not posted in your classroom, then consider printing and posting one yourself. The department has placed copies in 6004 Marsico.

II. General Preparedness

First day of class. Discuss emergency preparedness plans with students on the first day of class. A Powerpoint slide you can use or modify is attached. In particular:

- Put this document on your course website and tell students where it is, so they can read it themselves later. A good place might be with the syllabus. Having this document on Canvas can also serve as an easily accessible reminder for everyone of what to do during an active assailant lockdown.
- No matter what the emergency, if you need to exit the building then do so via stairs and not the elevators. Tell students where multiple stairs are on the first day of class (e.g., for Marsico Hall, there are three stairwells).
- Encourage students to download the Carolina Ready Safety App to their smartphones at <https://campussafety.unc.edu/safetyapp/>.
- Point out where the Carolina Ready poster is in your classroom.
- Cover the “*First day activities*” in the Weather, Fire, Medical, and Assailant sections of this document.

You are in charge but crowdsource. In case of emergency, you (the instructor) are in charge. Stop teaching and take action immediately. After taking the first steps, be willing to ask others for suggestions, which both takes advantage of everyone’s

collective knowledge for the common good, and also helps people feel that they are actively participating in addressing the emergency.

911 Calls. Be aware that depending upon how your cellphone call is routed, your call to 911 may be connected to Orange County or Chapel Hill or Carrboro instead of UNC. Be clear that you are calling from UNC. The emergency dispatchers in different jurisdictions know how to connect with each other.

III. Weather Emergencies

The most likely emergency we will face at UNC is severe weather (tornado/hurricane). The primary danger in the classroom is broken/flying glass and debris. Most classrooms used by MCRO have windows; the class needs to move to an interior area of the building away from windows.

- **First day activity.** Tell class where you will go to shelter in place in case of a weather emergency (likely an interior hallway).

IV. Fire Emergencies

A fire almost always necessitates immediately leaving the building. Make sure everyone in the class is accounted for and guide students to the nearest stairs. If you see a fire, activate an alarm to alert others. If the fire is just starting and you judge it safe to act, then direct students out of the building and use a fire extinguisher. You potentially could request some people locate and bring additional fire extinguishers. However, the first priority is safety for all.

- **First day activity.** Ask everyone to find the nearest fire extinguisher and fire alarm on their own after class. People are much more likely to remember this information if they actively figure it out for themselves than if they passively hear it from someone else.

V. Medical Emergencies

Find the nearest Automated External Defibrillator (AED) and inform the class of the location. At UNC, AEDs are generally on the first floor of the building in a public space (e.g., in the lobby outside 1131 Bioinformatics, by the elevators on the ground floor of Marsico Hall).

- **First day activity.** Take an inventory of student experience. Who has training in first aid? CPR? AED? Other medical or EMT training (there may be MD/PhD students or volunteer EMTs in your class)?

VI. Active Assailant Emergencies

Prevention. Most violence occurs between people who know one another, which provides an opportunity for intervention and prevention. If you have concerns about someone's behavior, then report your concerns so the person can get trained help to resolve the matter before violence occurs:

- For concerns about a student, call the Dean of Students Office at 919-966-4042 (<https://dos.unc.edu/urgent-concerns/>).

- For concerns about an employee, call Employee and Management Relations in Human Resources at 919-843-3444 (<https://hr.unc.edu/employees/emr/>).

Strategy. Just because you are a victim does not mean you must behave like a victim. Be prepared with a plan. The recommended strategy for an Active Assailant emergency is: Run, Hide, Fight:

How to Run. If you know where the threat is located, then do what you can to get away from the threat. To be ready to run, know multiple exit routes from your classroom, office, lab, or other work locations. If you do not know where the threat is, then you should Hide. After a brief delay to allow people to get to safety, UNC will remotely lock down buildings. You do not want to inadvertently run toward danger or be stuck outside with an assailant.

Rationale for Hiding. A hiding strategy is informed by the following information:

- Police response time for assailants is very fast (a couple of minutes).
- Assailants typically leave the scene in 5 to 10 minutes. It takes much longer for police to be sure it is safe to sound the “All Clear”.
- Violence predominantly occurs between people who know one another and not at random. Therefore, mass casualties are highly unlikely.
- Building doors will be locked remotely after a delay to allow people outside to hear sirens and get inside. If the assailant is not in the building, then they will have a hard time getting to you through locked exterior and interior doors.
- The above points all suggest the danger will diminish rapidly and significantly after the start of an event. The longer you hide, the safer you are.

How to Hide.

- Tell the class that the safe thing to do is stay put and not leave.
- Practice locking the doors to your classroom. All UNC door locks are designed to prevent entry into the room, but will allow exit. Instructions on how to operate the various locking mechanisms used on the UNC campus are at <https://campussafety.unc.edu/carolina-ready/resources/classroom-door-locks/>. For 6004 Marsico, lift the cover and push the big red button (the button only locks the door and does not trigger an alarm). To unlock the door, turn the button clockwise as indicated.
- Lock and barricade any doors and windows to the classroom using whatever is available (ideally furniture). However, be aware that people outside of your classroom may also want to shelter there. In buildings with open lab architecture such as Marsico Hall, a classroom such as 6004 Marsico is likely the best place to hide.
- If the doors to your classroom open outwards (such as in 6004 Marsico), then you can restrict the doors from being opened by tightly tying a belt or a piece of clothing over the V-shaped hinge at the top of the door to keep the hinge closed.
- If there are a few minutes after an alert while people are still entering the classroom, take the opportunity to gather some fire extinguishers as potential weapons.

- If there are windows through which an assailant could see into the classroom, then move away from those windows. If there are blinds or shades, close them even if you are on an upper floor.
- Turn off the room lights. The reason for reducing all forms of light is to minimize shadows of people inside the room that might be visible to an assailant from the hall.
- Ask everyone to turn the sound off on their cell phones and other electronic devices.
- It is generally OK for people to use their phones to tell friends and family they are safe and where they are. However, it is preferable to text or email rather than call to avoid (i) making noise and (ii) overwhelming the cell phone network, which will be heavily used during an emergency.
- Tell everyone they should NOT post anything to social media during the lockdown, because that could reveal your location to the assailant.
- Be aware that paying too much attention to your phone has the potential to distract your attention from your surroundings. You need to be present in the moment.
- If it is clear that the shooter is elsewhere, then make and agree upon a plan for people to leave the room briefly to use the bathroom, etc. The door should be locked after people leave. Reentry could for example involve use of a code word or passing ID under the door before people inside the room will unlock the door.
- Ask how everyone is doing and if anyone has any special needs in the moment.
- Ask for suggestions of other actions that the group could take to improve their chance of survival.

How to Fight

- While hiding, assess what items are available that could be used as weapons if it becomes necessary to fight and make a plan to use them.
- An obvious choice is a fire extinguisher, which is readily available, can be effectively discharged at a distance from an assailant, and is briefly incapacitating if sprayed in the face, allowing for follow-up physical action to subdue an assailant. Furthermore, because a fire extinguisher is nonlethal, a user does not need to worry about a case of mistaken identity, and therefore can immediately use it against a perceived assailant without hesitation.

First day activity. State that the class will hide in place if Alert Carolina warns of an active assailant and briefly explain why. Demonstrate how to lock the classroom doors. Decide what you can use to barricade the doors.