To ‘LOCK DOWN’ or ‘SHELTER IN PLACE’? That is the question.

When an emergency occurs at Weber State University, will you be ready to take appropriate action?

Fire, severe weather, hazardous material spills, suspicious packages or hostile individuals are examples of emergencies that occur on college campuses. Taking simple and decisive actions during a crisis could mean the difference between life and serious injury, or even death.

Three basic concepts keep people safe during an emergency: evacuation, lockdown and shelter in place. You were probably taught how to evacuate in elementary school: Leave the building via the nearest exit and arrive at an assembly area. But, what if you were asked to lock down or shelter in place? Knowing the differences between the two and how to carry them out are critical.

_LOCKDOWN_: Should a hostile or armed intruder be on campus, you will be directed through Code Purple (the university’s emergency notification system) to lock down. This means you should secure and barricade doors and windows. Once you are barricaded, you should remain silent and wait further instruction.

_SHELTER IN PLACE_: Should there be severe weather conditions or a hazardous material spill, you might be advised to shelter in place rather than evacuate. This means you should stay in a safe place indoors in order to avoid dangerous conditions outside the building. In the event of a hazardous material spill, you may be directed to turn off ventilation systems or seal off areas where outside air could get into the room.

Now that you know how to react, it is imperative that you sign up for Code Purple to receive emergency text messages. This is how you’ll know an emergency is taking place and also how you’ll receive instruction and follow-up information.

To practice lockdown and shelter in place, WSU’s Office of Emergency Management and Planning will conduct a drill this fall using Code Purple. You will be informed of the drill and given specific instructions. It will take only a few short minutes, but it will give you an opportunity to think about your safety and what you should do in your classroom or office in the event of an emergency.

As always, stay informed and stay safe. And remember the words of Shakespeare:

“All things are ready, if our mind be so.”

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Special Points of Interest:

• Understanding the best way to stay out of harm’s way
• Using Code Purple to get continued instruction on how to stay safe
• Preparing for Risk
WSU Continues Its Emergency Exercise Efforts

Late last summer, WSU’s Ogden campus was swarming with law enforcement, fire trucks, medical personnel and media. There were no injuries involved, but the activity did make the evening news, showcasing WSU’s full-scale, active-shooter exercise. Designed to test the response of WSU’s emergency personnel, as well as outside police and fire agencies, and hospitals, the exercise showed the importance of training together.

But what happens after the initial emergency response? As seen over the past several years, the impact of an active shooter reaches far beyond the initial day of violence. Therefore, it is also necessary to train for the recovery period.

In April, a tabletop exercise with WSU’s President’s Council (which will be referred to as the Crisis Management Team during an emergency) and a sample of personnel from WSU’s Emergency Operations Center focused on the days following an active-shooter situation. They discussed how the university would be impacted and how to mitigate damages. Business continuity was the theme of the day, and the exercise proved that there are already many measures in place that will allow the university to operate effectively after such a disaster. The group also found other ways to continue the university’s mission during a crisis, which is the very reason Weber State is so committed to improvement through exercise.

It is necessary to train for the recovery as well as the response.

Improving Preparedness By Ranking Our Risks

For Weber State to be prepared for an emergency, it is imperative to know what hazards could affect the university. Therefore, WSU’s Office of Emergency Management and Planning, in coordination with the WSU Emergency Planning Committee, recently updated the university’s risk analysis, which lists all reasonable hazards that could happen at any of its campuses or centers, and then ranks them.

The list of hazards was long, ranging from an active shooter to a power outage, winter storm or earthquake. Using a mathematical equation, the hazards were ranked based on likelihood and impact to people, facilities and teaching.

The new analysis allows Weber State to quantify the threats to campus and to stakeholders. This is very important in regard to training, as it allows the university to better identify how and what to exercise and how best to utilize resources. In the university’s effort to continually prepare and keep students, faculty and staff safe, updating the risk analysis was paramount.