

Emergency and Crisis Communication Policy and Protocols

I. Introduction

An effective communication strategy is a key component of an effective response to and recovery from an emergency. As the situation unfolds the need to communicate is immediate and will continue several days after, many UCEAP constituents must be reached with specific information. Strategic targeting and message consistency are the primary objectives of UCEAP's communication strategy in an emergency.

The University of California image can be positively or negatively impacted by public perceptions of how an incident is handled. Listed below are steps to be followed by UCEAP representatives during and immediately following an emergency or crisis. This document and those listed under *Section VI - Related Documents*, provide information about effective communication protocols for all UCEAP representatives. This policy may also apply to extraordinary situations that require specialized communications and/or coordination of multiple activities.

The emergency and crisis communication policy helps coordinate internal and external communications within the UCEAP community in California and abroad, and between UCEAP and the University of California Office of the President and its campuses, the media and the public. This policy assigns responsibilities for devising and implementing an event-specific crisis communication strategy. It also helps ensure that UCEAP representatives and those acting on behalf of UCEAP in California and overseas are familiar with procedures and with their roles, particularly during an emergency.

II. Policy Scope

This Policy applies to all UCEAP representatives in California and abroad, including parties acting on behalf of UCEAP.

III. Definitions

Communication strategy – Within the context of this policy, the term communication strategy refers to the event-specific communication plan that is devised by the Regional Director (RD) and the International Health, Safety & Emergency Response Director (IHS&ER) at the onset of an occurred or impending crisis or emergency.

Crisis or Emergency – Defined broadly, a crisis or emergency is an event, which can negatively impact (including serious damage) participants or UCEAP. Within the context of this policy, the words crisis and emergency (real or perceived) are used interchangeably in reference to any situation that:

- requires immediate and coordinated action to minimize impact on the student population, and/or
- has a significant impact on the operation or reputation of UCEAP.

Crisis Management Team (CMT) – UCEAP's Crisis Management Team serves as the primary coordinating body for dealing with international crises and disasters. The CMT may be convened when a crisis situation or local condition is determined to have the potential to impact the safety or security of UCEAP students and employees or to cause a major disruption to UCEAP operations.

External constituent – A member of a group not associated directly with UCEAP or the University of California that has an interest or stake in the outcome of the events. E.g. the media, the general public, the USG, etc.

Internal constituent – A member of a group associated with UCEAP or the University of California that has an interest or stake in the outcome of the events. E.g., UCEAP, UC campus staff, UCEAP students, parents, UCEAP and UC Office of the President.

Timely warning – Within the context of this policy, timely warning refers to the ethical and, at times, legal obligation of UCEAP representatives to provide a warning to UCEAP students at risk when a serious crime occurs that may pose a continuing threat to others. This timely warning will be issued in collaboration with the UCEAP Systemwide office.

UCEAP emergency level 3 – Incidents that require a coordinated response involving three or more UCEAP Crisis Management Team (CMT) members, or an escalation of any of level 2 incident.

UCEAP emergency level 4 – Crises that put the immediate well-being of students, faculty or staff at risk, or that create a significant drain on University of California resources.

UCEAP AVP&ED – UCEAP Associate Vice Provost and Executive Director, Systemwide Office

UCEAP RD – UCEAP Regional Director, Systemwide Office

UCEAP IHS&ER Director – International Health, Safety, and Emergency Response Director, Systemwide Office

UCEAP representative abroad – Study Center Director (SCD), Liaison Officer (LO), Visiting Professor (VP), Program Manager, Senior Program Officer, partner, or other UCEAP-designated official.

Refer to the document [Student Incidents and Emergency Levels](#) for additional emergency severity level definitions and examples of student incidents falling into each category.

IV. Emergency & Crisis Communication Policy

A. Key Responsibilities

1. The UCEAP representative abroad will:
 - a. share the facts of an emerging situation with the RD and IHS&ER Director immediately;
 - b. monitor the local situation and provide regular updates;
 - c. assess the current threat level and potential for escalation; and
 - d. coordinate any needed actions to mitigate risk for UCEAP participants.
2. The IHS&ER Director has primary responsibility for liaising with local staff, third-party security providers, government agencies, other U.S. institutions with programs in the country/region, local staff, and other resources to assess the reliability of information received about the crisis.
3. Depending on the severity of the emergency, the RD/regional team and/or the IHS&ER Director (incident responders in California) will have primary responsibility for:
 - a. developing the appropriate communication strategy,
 - b. providing the content of official messages, in coordination with the AVP&ED, and
 - c. overseeing the dissemination of official UCEAP messages delivered to internal and external constituents.
4. The UCEAP Marketing and Communications (M&C) Director serves as the primary media contact and spokesperson for UCEAP. The M&C Director will work with the UCEAP incident responders to:

- a. make recommendations regarding appropriate messaging language and tactics, as needed;
- b. communicate and coordinate with relevant UCOP and UC campus officials (e.g., Public Affairs & Media Relations offices);
- c. communicate with the media and coordinate media releases;
- d. control and correct misinformation and rumors; and
- e. communicate with the UCEAP Systemwide staff.

B. Developing the Communication Strategy

The RD and IHS&ER directors are responsible for devising the appropriate communication strategy during and after the emergency.

1. Components of the communication strategy will include:
 - a. identification of internal and external audiences;
 - b. Key messaging and communication tools (e-mail, phone, text message, social media); and
 - c. frequency of communications;
 - d. evaluation of strategy and amendments, if necessary.

C. Delivering Official UCEAP Messages

Crises are chaotic. To avoid confusion, reduce uncertainty, and help ensure that all information being released is factually accurate and consistent all UC employees and UCEAP representatives abroad will adhere to the following communication policies during a crisis.

1. All actions and messages will be coordinated through the RD and IHS&ER Director.
2. UCEAP official messages communicated to internal and external constituents, including the public, will be timely, honest, concise, professional, consistent, accessible, and empathetic.
3. Do not issue messages to UCEAP constituents, including parents, until accuracy can be verified and an official response can be developed by the appropriate UCEAP officials.
4. UCEAP communications will comply with confidentiality laws and be sensitive to the privacy of UCEAP students and employees. See [FERPA Student Information Release Matrix](#) for more information.
5. Only the authorized UCEAP media spokesperson will speak to U.S. or international news media.
6. Any communication being delivered by an individual acting on behalf of UCEAP will be construed as an “official” UCEAP message and is bound by this policy.
7. During the early stages of major emergencies, the UCEAP Worldwide Alerts web page (www.eap.ucop.edu/911) will serve as UCEAP’s primary tool for providing updated information to the UCEAP community, the media and the public. The IHS&ER Unit is responsible for content accuracy.
8. UCEAP M&C will use the official Facebook and Twitter accounts and other social media, as needed, to reach UCEAP constituents to update them about unfolding events.

Depending on the situation, the UCEAP M&C Facebook page, in particular, may be used as a space for UCEAP to post crucial public information and provide a central location for individuals to share information and support. Ideally, any social media message will be reviewed by the M&C Director and/or the Editor for content and copy-edits before it is posted. Information provided will be drawn

from UCEAP Worldwide Alerts page or, when needed to respond quickly to vital Facebook or Twitter posts, from the appropriate UCEAP unit.

9. UCEAP social media sites will be monitored by M&C for misinformation or matters that need to be shared with the RD and IHS&ER Director. All UCEAP representatives will assist in managing rumors and misinformation by following this policy and by alerting M&C of misinformation posted on the web or via social media.

D. On-Going Communication

1. The IHS&ER Director and the Regional Director/regional team will update internal constituencies (UCEAP Systemwide, Study Centers/Partners, campus staff, etc.) about changes to or additional details of the situation via available methods of communication (voice mail, e-mail, phone contact, social media, letters, newsletters/other publications) as per the communication strategy they developed.
2. The IHS&ER Director and Regional Director/regional team will continually evaluate the effectiveness of the devised communication strategy and will revise as necessary by adding constituency groups, revising message content, changing the frequency of communications, etc.
3. M&C staff will continue to monitor coverage of the situation in social media and correct misinformation as quickly as possible throughout the crisis lifecycle.
4. The RD or IHS&ER Director will update CCD and CAD. The Operations Specialist updates campus staff and other UCEAP constituents (current and future students), as necessary.
5. Depending on the situation, the RD or the IHS&ER Director will be the primary, on-going contact with UCEAP representatives abroad.
6. Depending on the emergency, the Regional Director will ask UCEAP study centers and partners at other locations within the region to communicate with all current UCEAP students abroad to inform them about the evolving situation. The HIS&ER Director may be asked to send a message to all UCEAP study centers and partners around the world.
7. The RD will determine whether a message about future programming in the country/region should go out to future participants.
8. The AVP&ED will provide updated status reports to the UC Office of the President and the UCSB Executive Vice Chancellor and others on the campus, as necessary.
9. The IHS&ER Director will update selected individuals at the Office of the President Risk Services staff and the UCEAP Attorney at the Office of the General Counsel.
10. News releases, media advisories and other means of media and public communications will be used to provide status updates if recommended by the M&C Director.

V. UCEAP Crisis & Emergency Communication Procedures

A. Step-by-step Protocol

1. The IHS&ER Director will continually monitor, assess, and disseminate relevant information, verifying accuracy, consulting official sources, UC experts, other U.S. institutions with programs in the country/region, U.S. Department of State, Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC), iJET Intelligent Risk Services, and other sources.
2. Once an occurred or impending emergency or crisis is assessed by the IHS&ER Director and RD as warranting an emergency response, the following will happen:
 - a. The following individuals will be immediately notified: AVP&ED, UCEAP representatives abroad, IHS&ER Unit, RD, Operations Specialist, Campus Directors and advisors through the Operations Specialist, M&C, IT.
 - b. Depending on the nature of the emergency and its impact on the program, the AVP&ED will brief the Office of the President and the UCSB Executive Vice Chancellor; the IHS&ER will notify the CCD and CAD and the OP Risk Services.
 - c. The UCEAP local staff and/or partners will activate the appropriate emergency response as instructed in the *Study Center Emergency Preparedness Handbook*.
2. If necessary, the IHS&ER Director will convene appropriate members of the Crisis Management Team (CMT) or a subgroup to consider criteria and determine the appropriate communication strategy. The criteria will include:
 - a. Threat Type
 - What is the threat? Any situation that could impact UCEAP programming and students; e.g., strike, fire, shooter, political instability, bomb threat, terrorism.
 - What is the potential impact to UCEAP operations (minor, major, catastrophic)?
 - Is the situation stable, or is it likely to worsen?
 - b. Potential consequences if situation deteriorates
 - death?
 - serious injury?
 - minor injury?
 - damage?
 - disruption to UCEAP operations or the academic program?
 - c. Urgency
 - How soon does the message need to go out? (minutes, hours, days)
 - How much time is there for review and approval of the messaging?
 - d. Audience
 - Who is our audience with whom we need to communicate? (UC officials, faculty, staff, students, parents, media)
 - e. Capabilities/Limitations
 - What are limitations of the selected communication methods? (limited audience, lengthy delivery time, inaccurate contact info, potential to cause mass panic)

- What are back-up communication methods if those selected do not work within a reasonable time?
 - How quickly will the information be received, and can receipt be verified?
 - a. The IHS&ER Unit will upload confirmed information to the Worldwide Alerts web page, even if not all key elements are available.
3. Once posted to the UCEAP Worldwide Alerts page, the UCEAP M&C Director will be notified by the IHS&ER unit. M&C will determine how to push out via social media.
 4. If the incident is serious and/or gets immediate coverage, reporters will call the UCEAP Systemwide office. The M&C Director is the spokesperson and will be in charge of prioritizing the message through press releases, talking points and instructions for selected UC campus and Systemwide staff.
 5. The M&C Director will coordinate and communicate with UCOP and UC campus Public Affairs Offices.
 6. If time permits, the IHS&ER Director will discuss posting and alert on the UCEAP Alerts page with the Regional Director. The IHS&ER will post updated information for the UCEAP Worldwide Alerts website. The IHS&ER Director will share all critical information with the UCEAP representatives abroad, UCEAP AVP&ED, UCOP RS, UCEAP Systemwide staff, UC campus directors, and the UCEAP regional team. The regional team will work with the IHS&ER Director to release updates to campus advisors.
 7. All local staff abroad and partners will consult with the UCEAP regional team and the IHS&ER Director on all communications before sending anything about these matters to UCEAP constituents, including students, parents, UC officials, or other public venues.
 8. As the situation unfolds, the RD will provide regular updates to the UCEAP AVP&ED and the Campus Directors.
 9. If necessary, other UCEAP CMT members will be brought in as needed. For example, if the incident becomes public, the M&C Director will coordinate with UCOP about media response, etc.
 10. For some significant events (e.g. severe accidents or large-scale, high-impact emergencies during UCEAP operations abroad), the AVP&ED will brief the UC Office of the President and the UCSB Executive Vice Chancellor.

B. Depiction of Protocol

Reliable communication is a key factor in the successful management of any crisis. Procedures may vary slightly depending on the circumstances. The RD and IHS&ER Director will work closely together to define the best communication strategy to fit the situation. However, coordination of communications with the UCEAP Systemwide office concerning statements to be made to internal groups and external groups (parents or the press) is essential to meeting crisis/emergency communication goals.

Table 1: First Notification: Individual student crisis level 3 or level 4

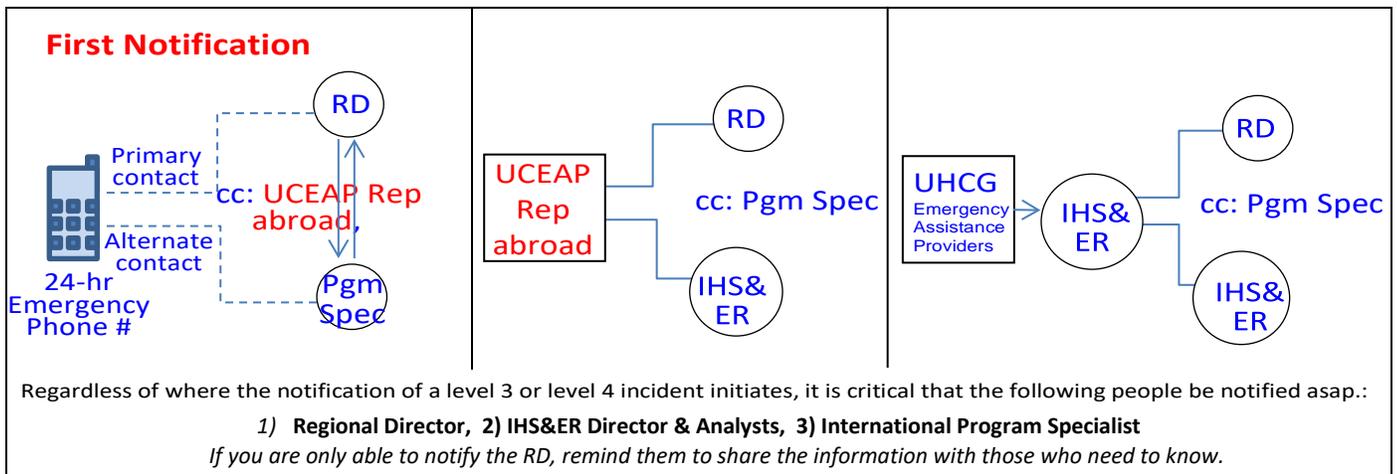


Table 2: First Notification: Large-scale, high-impact event

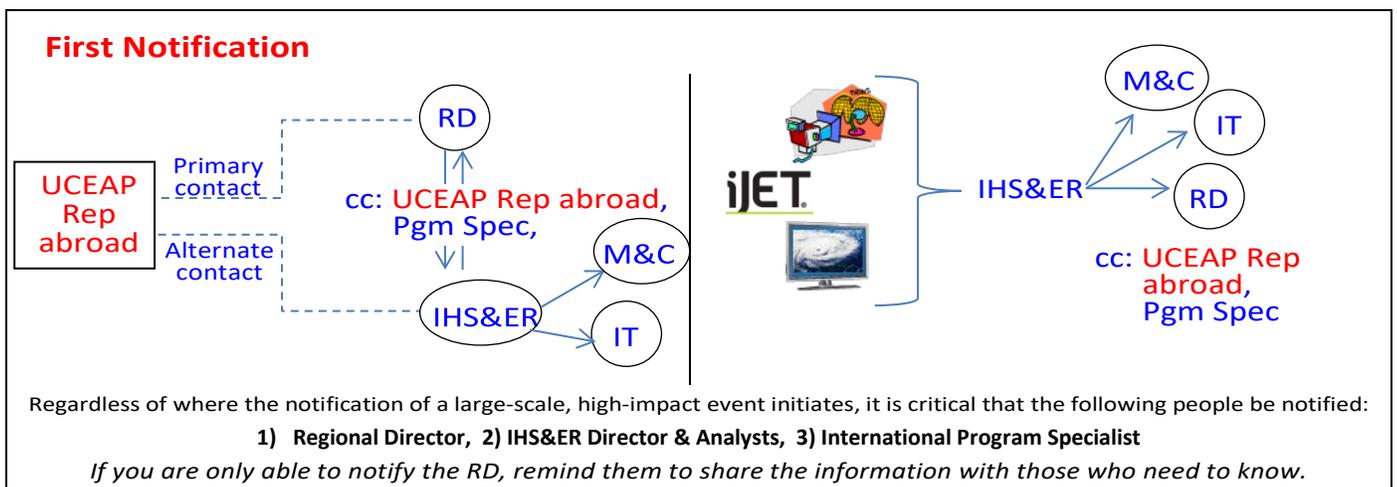
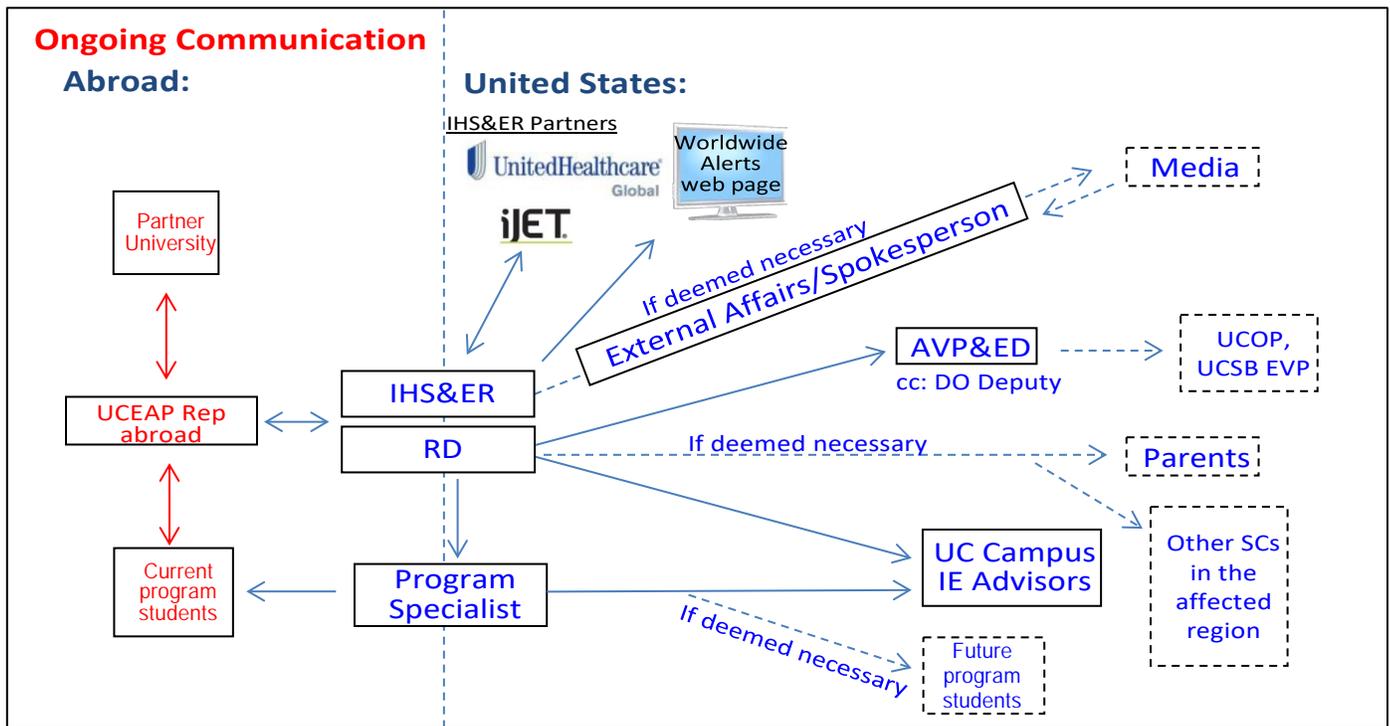


Table 3: Ongoing Communication: Individual student crisis (level 3 or level 4) or Large-scale, high-impact event:



During the management of the crisis, it is important that everyone stays ‘in the loop.’ However, to minimize misinformation, it is critical that those trained in incident management and communication (the RD, IHS&ER Director, and M&C Director) are the ones that provide it to key constituents, such as the **AVP&ED**, **parents** and the **media**. UCEAP communications should comply with confidentiality laws and be sensitive to the privacy of UCEAP students. See [FERPA Student Information Release Matrix](#) in the Appendix for more information.

VI. Related Documents

Please reference the following related documents for a full understanding of this policy:

1. [FERPA Student Information Release Matrix](#) – this matrix assists in defining the circumstances under which information about a student can be released to third parties, including the student’s parents. http://www.eap.ucop.edu/Documents/forms/Data_access_chart.pdf
2. [Student Incident Report](#) – this form defines the information needed by the UCEAP Systemwide IHS&ER unit for incidents with a severity level 3 and 4. http://eap.ucop.edu/Documents/Safety/Safety_Incident_Form.pdf
3. [Student Incidents and Emergency Levels](#) – this document describes the incident severity categories and outlines the overall incident response actions that will be followed for incidents in each severity category, including incident reporting and communication. http://www.eap.ucop.edu/Documents/EmergencyResponseAlerts/EMERGENCY_LEVELS.pdf
4. [Study Center Emergency Preparedness Handbook](#) – This handbook outlines UCEAP’s emergency response plan in the event of many types of hazards and threats. To be an effective tool in an emergency, the handbook must be customized with localized information including local emergency phone numbers, current student contact information, and location-specific risk assessments and

planned responses. *This document is password protected and available on the UCEAP Extranet (staff log in required).* Contact the IHS&ER Unit (HSER@eap.ucop.edu) for assistance.

5. *UCEAP Worldwide Alerts* web page (www.eap.ucop.edu/911).

Created: 2010. Revised April, 2017 - *This document will be reviewed and updated annually.*