**Policy Name:** UMass Boston Alert System

**Original Date Issued:** April 24, 2013
**Revision #:** 3
**Last Update:** November 9, 2017

**Purpose of Policy:** This policy establishes the guidelines by which the UMass Boston Alert System will be used for distribution of emergency alerts. This policy complies with the Department of Education requirements regarding timely notice of certain events as described 20 U.S.C. s. 1092(f), known as the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy (The Clery Act), along with the Campus Crimes Statistics Act (1998) and the Higher Education Reauthorization Act (2008).

**Applicable to:** All departments at UMass Boston.

**Policy:** All reports of fire or explosion should be made immediately by calling 911. To report other emergencies, dial 911 from a campus phone or 617-287-1212 from a cell phone to reach UMass Boston Police Dispatch. A reminder of this important reporting of an emergency will be issued annually by the Department of Public Safety.

The University of Massachusetts Boston has an emergency alert system in place to provide timely information and direction to students, faculty, staff, visitors, and other members of the campus community (hereafter referred to as “the campus community”). Upon confirmation of a significant emergency or dangerous situation involving imminent or immediate threat to the health or safety of the campus community, occurring on or immediately adjacent to the campus (hereafter referred to as “confirmed threat to the campus community”), emergency notifications will be sent without delay via the UMass Boston Alert System.

The decision to issue an alert without delay, shall be decided by the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Facilities Management for facilities-related incidents; the Chief of Police for criminal incidents and campus-wide evacuations; the Director of Environmental Health and Safety for hazardous materials incidents; or the Emergency Manager for severe weather incidents. Decisions are made on a case-by-case basis, in light of all circumstances.
the facts surrounding an incident or crime, including factors such as the nature of the incident/crime, the immediate or continuing threat to the campus community, and the possible risk of compromising law enforcement efforts.

Public Safety has the authority to issue an immediate alert to preserve life safety without consultation with other departments. Public Safety Dispatch will utilize pre-scripted messages stored in the Alert System and reviewed annually and following incidents by the Emergency Management Leadership Group.

The system has the capability to send alerts via email, text, voice, digital signage, PC desktop alerts (where available), external speakers, social media (official UMass Boston Twitter and Facebook accounts), and the UMass Boston Smartphone Application.

Authority to Send Messages:

- The Assistant Vice Chancellor for Facilities Management/designee, Chief of Police/designee, Director of Environmental Health and Safety/designee, or Emergency Manager/designee may request an immediate initial alert be sent by Public Safety Dispatch if there is a “confirmed threat to the campus community.” The authority of each office to trigger an alert is limited to the area overseen by each respective office, but Public Safety may issue an alert in the interest of time if there is an imminent threat.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Type of Emergency Authorized to Alert</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AVC Facilities Mgt.</td>
<td>Confirmed facilities emergency causing immediate threat to the campus community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chief of Police</td>
<td>Confirmed threat to the campus community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Director of EHS</td>
<td>Confirmed hazmat emergency causing immediate threat to the campus community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Manager</td>
<td>Confirmed weather emergency causing immediate threat to the campus community. (Not routine weather closing messages sent by Communications.)</td>
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</table>

- Departments must review and approve available alert templates on an annual basis.

- Following the initial alert, the Office of Communications issues all follow up alerts and “all-clear” messages. Communications may also send an initial alert for weather closing, utility outage, building disruption, or other customized alerts, as
needed.

- If there is a confirmed threat to the campus community, an initial emergency alert will be sent without delay via email, text, voice, digital signage, PC desktop alerts, social media, and smartphone application. External speakers should be activated as appropriate. If external speakers are activated, alert texts will also be issued so that those who are not able to hear the loudspeakers may read the text alerts. Multiple methods of alerting are used to increase reach of alert and to accommodate those with functional or access needs.

- Public Safety maintains clear protocols for individuals authorized to send messages to avoid delay.

- Other
  There are specific lists within the system available to campus and department leadership personnel to notify smaller groups as appropriate. List administrators will have access to specific department lists, as approved.

**Procedures:**

Access to the system is managed by the Office of Emergency Management and Business Continuity. A list of staff trained and authorized to send mass-notification alerts is posted in Public Safety and Administration and Finance. Positions trained include Communications staff, Emergency Manager and all Public Safety dispatchers.

**Alerts:**
When there is a “confirmed threat to the campus community”, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Facilities Management, Chief of Police, Director of Environmental Health and Safety, or Emergency Manager will direct Department of Public Safety Dispatch to send an emergency alert, according to the specific procedures articulated in the Alert System Training Document. (This document is limited to staff trained in sending alerts.) The initial alert will be sent using one of the pre-scripted template messages stored in the Alert System.

Following the issuance of the emergency alert, the Chief of Police or designee shall notify the Chancellor’s Chief of Staff, Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance and the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs of the circumstances necessitating the alert.
Follow-up alerts may be issued by the Office of Communications, in coordination with Public Safety and will be posted on the university homepage. The Vice Chancellor of Government Relations and Public Affairs notifies the campus community neighbors.

Training:
The Chief of Police or designee and Director of Communications shall designate individual staff members to receive UMass Boston Alert System training provided by the Emergency Manager. Refresher training and drills shall occur each semester and when new technologies require additional training. These regularly scheduled trainings of personnel shall be documented by the Emergency Manager. The Chief of Police will mandate regular training of Public Safety Staff conducted by the Emergency Manager.

Outreach:
Faculty, staff, and students with active UMass Boston email addresses will be contacted during the fall and spring semesters to encourage cell phone participation in the alert program and updating of all data in the system, including cell phone numbers.

The system shall be maintained by testing and verification through the Office of Emergency Management and Business Continuity and IT. There shall be at least one scheduled test during each quarter. Each test and follow-up will be documented in accordance with the Clery Act.

Definitions:

- **UMass Boston Alert System**
  UMass Boston’s Emergency Alert System, contracted from Rave Wireless and integrated with the outdoor speaker system provided by Acoustic Technologies is hereafter known as the “UMass Boston Alert System”. The system is capable of issuing emergency alerts by text, email, voice, outdoor loudspeaker, digital signage, and via social media.

- **Emergency Alert**
  An emergency alert is an urgent communication warning upon confirmation of a significant emergency or dangerous situations involving imminent or immediate threat to the health or safety of students or staff occurring on or immediately adjacent to the campus (hereafter referred to as “confirmed threat to the campus community”). Emergency alerts are sent via the UMass Boston Alert System. An example of a threat requiring an emergency alert would be an active shooter or hurricane/tornado warning. Weather emergencies that warrant cancellation of classes and events will be signaled by text messages and social media.
• **Broadcast Emails**
  When conditions do not warrant the issuance of an emergency alert, the University may send preparedness information in the form of a Broadcast Email. Email broadcasts may be sent either through the University Outlook email system or as UMass Boston Alert System emails.

• **Timely Warnings**
  Timely Warnings are notices to the community that a crime named by the Clery Act has been committed on or around campus. The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act (20 USC § 1092(f)) is the landmark federal law, originally known as the Campus Security Act, that requires colleges and universities across the United States to disclose information about crime on and around their campuses. The Act is enforced by the United States Department of Education. Timely Warnings, under the Clery Act, may be sent as email broadcasts.

• **Shelter in Place**
  There may be a need to advise the community to shelter in place via text alert. If you are told to shelter in place, seek shelter inside a building and remain inside until the danger passes. Shelter in place is used when evacuating a building would cause greater risk than staying where you are. Shelter in place is the best approach for certain chemical releases were the doors and windows are closed and the ventilation, heating and cooling systems are shut down. During high winds or tornadoes, it’s often safest inside a solid building where you can stay away from windows. In place protection can also be the best approach if there is an active shooting situation outside especially if you can lock your building. Officials will continue to gather information and announce when the threat is removed.

**Oversight Department:** Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance  
**Responsible Party within Department:** Emergency Manager  
**Monitoring:** Quarterly reports, including participation levels, training, and test results to Chancellor’s Cabinet and the Director of Communications.  
**Authority:** Clery Act, DOC. T99-060, Passed by the UMass BOT 8/4/99, revised 12/14/11. University of Massachusetts Emergency Management and Business Continuity and Planning Policy  
**Related Documents:**  
• Quarterly Report Format  
• Pre-scripted Emergency Alerts