

NEW YORK STATE UNIFIED COURT SYSTEM



EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PLANNING MANUAL

MARCH 2003

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- B. UCS Building Evacuation Procedures
- C. UCS Employee Evacuation Checklist
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- E. UCS Department of Public Safety Drill Protocols
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IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE
FOR MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE,
NEW YORK CITY COURTS

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

OFFICE OF FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

DEPARTMENT OF TECHNOLOGY

LOCAL NUMBERS:

I. Overview

This guide identifies the tasks and issues that must be addressed to ensure that the courts are prepared for a broad range of emergencies. The goal is to ensure that in an emergency the courts are able to:

- Protect the safety of all court employees and users
- Safeguard the court's records and other property
- Continue the operation of the courts

Knowing what must be done – before, during, and after an emergency – is critical, but not sufficient. Clear direction regarding who is responsible for each task, and definitive information for all personnel as to their responsibilities in planning for, responding to, and recovering from an emergency are vital.

It is also critical that decisions regarding emergency response not be made only at the local level.

- Except in extraordinary circumstances where the nature of a particular emergency requires an immediate local response, it is essential that no decisions regarding re-deployment of personnel, facility closings or relocations be made until the Deputy Chief Administrative Judge, New York City Courts is notified and consulted.
- As soon as practicable, the Deputy Chief Administrative Judge will notify the Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Management Support.
- The Deputy Chief Administrative Judges will notify and consult with the Chief Administrative Judge.
- The Chief of the Department of Public Safety also must be notified as soon as practicable.

This coordination will ensure that the response is appropriate, that it is consistent with actions being taken elsewhere in the court system, and that all available resources and assistance are being provided.

II. Building Security and Life Safety

In any emergency, ensuring the safety of court personnel, court users, and other building tenants is the first priority. To achieve that objective:

Evacuation Plans

- Ensure that an evacuation plan is completed and regularly updated for each facility (Appendix A)
- File a copy of the plan and all updates with the UCS Department of Public Safety
- Ensure that appropriate personnel (e.g., fire wardens, public safety supervisors) are familiar with the plan

Evacuation Procedures

- If it is necessary to evacuate a court facility, follow the procedures set forth in the UCS Building Evacuation Procedures (Appendix B), as modified in light of local conditions
- Ensure that appropriate personnel are familiar with the procedures, including those dealing with the:
 - ▶ Decision to evacuate
 - ▶ Notification of an order to evacuate
 - ▶ Special procedures for building occupants such as incarcerated defendants, jurors and persons with disabilities
 - ▶ Re-entry of the building
- In the event of an evacuation, notify the following as soon as possible:
 - ▶ The Deputy Chief Administrative Judge, New York City Courts
 - ▶ The UCS Department of Public Safety
 - ▶ As appropriate, the UCS Office of Communications
 - ▶ Other non-UCS entities as necessary, e.g., DOCS and other custodial agencies

Designated Assembly Area

- In the event of an evacuation, the Designated Assembly Area is the place where court personnel are to report for further instructions
- Select a Designated Assembly Area for each facility, according to the following criteria:
 - ▶ At a sufficient distance from the facility to ensure that court personnel are safe from smoke conditions, building collapse or other danger – typically, 3 to 4 blocks from the facility
 - ▶ In an area where interference with emergency response teams would be minimized
 - ▶ Large enough to accommodate the number of occupants in the facility on a typical business day. Based on the size of a facility, the number of occupants, and the physical space

available, more than one assembly area may be required

- The location of the Designated Assembly Area(s) should be posted in conspicuous areas throughout the facility
- Ensure that all personnel assigned to the facility are aware of the Designated Assembly Area(s)

Employee Evacuation Checklist

- Post the current UCS Employee Evacuation Checklist (Appendix C) in conspicuous areas in each facility
- Distribute the Checklist to each employee to post in their work area
- Ensure that the Checklist includes the Designated Assembly Area for the facility

Emergency Contact Cards

- Ensure that all court personnel have an UCS Emergency Contact Card (Appendix D)
- Ensure that personnel complete the Emergency Contact Card to include the following information:
 - ▶ the Designated Assembly Area for the facility
 - ▶ contact number for their direct supervisors, e.g., office, cellular, page or home telephone number(s)
 - ▶ a contact number for one or more co-workers
 - ▶ the general number of the court facility
- Remind personnel to periodically update and replace the cards, so that the information remains current

Drills

- Conduct complete building evacuation drills at least yearly (See UCS Department of Public Safety Procedures for Evacuation Drills at Appendix E)
- Conduct fire drills regularly
- Complete a post-drill evaluation form following each drill and file a copy with the UCS Department of Public Safety (Appendix F)

Emergency Equipment Maintain and re-stock all first aid kits and other emergency equipment, including defibrilators and flashlights, on a regular basis.

Facility Profiles The Facility Profile form captures key information that might be needed in many different types of emergencies, such as the telephone numbers and locations of the nearest police and fire stations, the names and numbers of key supervisors, and the number of employees assigned to each floor (Appendix G).

- Complete a Facility Profile for each court facility
- Review the profile at least annually, and update as needed

- File the Profile (and all updates) with the UCS Department of Public Safety; this may be accomplished on-line
- Include a copy of the profile in the facility Drive-Away Kit (see section IV D)

Facility Plans In many emergency situations, building plans showing the location of stairways, exits and other building features, are critical. Therefore:

- If available, obtain copies of building plans
- As the automated facility inventory proceeds, obtain hard copies and Computer Assisted Drawing (CAD) copies of building plans

Public Address Systems As appropriate, coordinate with building management at each facility to conduct regular tests of the public address system and, to the extent possible, post standard emergency announcement language near the system controls.

Fire Wardens Ensure that Fire Wardens are chosen for each facility and have received any required training.

Mail Handling Procedures Ensure that UCS Mail Handling Procedures and other procedures for protecting each facility's air intake system are in place and followed (Appendix H).

Secure Pass Ensure that Secure Pass procedures are in place and followed (Appendix I).

III. Communications

Communication is vital in any emergency. Both the technology and procedures must be in place to ensure that we can communicate with our employees, public safety organizations, and other entities whose services and assistance may be necessary.

In developing a strategy for continuing communication during an emergency, consider and plan for all possible contingencies from a temporary or short-term disruption to a complete technological failure. *Internal* and *external* communications must also be considered, including: contacting court personnel and their families; the Office of Court Administration; other court facilities; State and local agencies; emergency responders; vendors and the public.

A. Technology

Back-Up Communication Systems Provide key personnel with backup communications equipment, such as:

- cellular phones
- hand-held radios
- voice-over internet phones

Note: Additional cellular phones have been secured by OCA for distribution during an emergency. The phones are being maintained by DOT at various central locations. In the event of an emergency, contact DOT to arrange for delivery of the phones.

Employee Call-In System Establish an employee call-in system for each facility to disseminate emergency-related information since it may not be appropriate to post certain emergency information or information relating to a limited number of court facilities on the State-wide toll-free information line (1-800-COURT-NY) or on the UCS website (www.courts.state.ny.us). However, any information provided through such system must be consistent with the information provided on the State-wide toll-free information line and the UCS website.

CourtNet Security Policy To safeguard the integrity of the CourtNet system, ensure that the UCS CourtNet Security Policy is in place and followed (Appendix J).

B. Contact Lists

Key Personnel Create and distribute telephone contact lists to key personnel which include work / home / cellular telephone numbers and pager numbers for

- Administrative and Supervising Judges
- Court managers
- Chief public safety officer of each court

- Key building management and personnel
- State and local first responders
- Key OCA offices, including Department of Public Safety, Office of Communications, Office of Facilities Management, and Department of Technology
- Vendors of critical services and equipment

All Personnel

- Ensure that managers maintain contact lists with home and alternative phone numbers of all court employees
- Ensure that managers maintain list of emergency contact numbers for each employee, e.g., family members, friends, etc.
- Impress upon personnel the importance of keeping paper copies of all contact lists for which they are responsible off premises at a location (e.g., at home) where they will be readily accessible if the court facility is closed or the computer system fails
- Encourage employees to fully complete their UCS Emergency Contact Card, to update it regularly and to keep it on their person

IV. Continuity of Operations

In the event of an emergency, including those which force the closing of a courthouse, it is essential that the courts remain open and accessible; therefore, every court and district must have a plan for continuing operations – a Continuity of Operations Plan or COOP. While the response to each emergency will necessarily be unique, the following are general guidelines for preparing a COOP.

A copy of the original COOP for each facility must be filed with the Deputy Chief Administrative Judge, New York City Courts and the UCS Department of Public Safety.

The COOP must be reviewed annually and updated as necessary. Copies of all updates also must be filed with the above named offices.

A. Coordination of Response

UCS In any emergency that requires the evacuation of a court facility or the possible relocation of court functions, it is crucial that the response be a coordinated one. Therefore:

- Except in extraordinary circumstances where the nature of a particular emergency requires an immediate local response, it is essential that no decisions regarding re-deployment of personnel, facility closings or relocations be made until the Deputy Chief Administrative Judge, New York City Courts is notified and consulted.
- As soon as practicable, the Deputy Chief Administrative Judge will notify the Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Management Support.
- The Deputy Chief Administrative Judges will notify and consult with the Chief Administrative Judge.
- The Chief of the Department of Public Safety also must be notified as soon as practicable.

This coordination will ensure that the response is appropriate, that it is consistent with actions being taken elsewhere in the court system, and that all available resources and assistance are being provided.

As appropriate, the UCS Office of Communications should be kept apprised of the status of and response to the emergency, both to enable that office to respond to inquiries and to provide accurate information to the press for publication to the public.

Non-UCS Non-UCS entities may also be implicated and should be notified of the emergency as necessary, including the Department of Correctional Services and other custodial agencies responsible for individuals who may be on site at the court facility or en route to the facility.

B. Decision Making Authority

During an emergency, decisions must be made without delay. Authority for such decisions will reside in those individuals vested with supervisory responsibility during non-emergency situations and the succession of that authority will follow the normal local reporting structure as follows:

- Deputy Chief Administrative Judge, New York City Courts
- Administrative Judge
- Supervising Judge
- Chief Clerk
- Deputy Chief Clerk

Each member of the local court administration listed above and the UCS Major assigned to the court shall keep at home a complete list of all employees with their home and alternative telephone numbers.

C. Alternative Work Sites

In the event that an emergency renders a court facility inaccessible for some period of time longer than one working day, the court's essential operations will be moved to an Alternative Work Site. Given that the nature of the emergency condition may dictate the use of one Alternative site over another, several sites must be identified.

Selection

- Each site should be capable of supporting operations in a secure environment. This can be determined by considering the geographical location of the proposed site, especially in relation to the court facility, the risk assessment of any possible local threat, and the collective protection characteristics of the proposed site.
- Each site should provide the following:
 - ▶ adequate telephone and data lines
 - ▶ sufficient space and equipment to sustain the relocated operations
 - ▶ at least one private office
 - ▶ reliable logistical support, services and infrastructure, including water, electrical, power, heating and air conditioning
 - ▶ appropriate physical security
- Sites must be identified for displacement lasting various lengths of time (1 - 2 days, 3 - 5 days, and more than 5 days)

Activation The determination of which Alternative Site will be activated will be made by the Deputy Chief Administrative Judge, New York City Courts, in consultation with the local Administrative Judge, Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Management Support, the Chief Administrative Judge and upon notification of

the Chief of the UCS Department of Public Safety.

Personnel Key personnel who will be required to report to the site must also be identified and a communications tree must be created to inform these individuals which Alternative Work Site will be activated and when.

As appropriate, the UCS Office of Communications should be kept apprised of the status of the relocation of a court facility's essential operations, both to enable that office to respond to inquiries and to provide accurate information to the press for publication to the public.

D. Drive-Away Kits

Key court personnel designated to move the court's operations to an Alternative Work Site must create a kit of essential items to be carried when relocating, a "drive-away kit." Documents included in the kit should be filed in a transportable, fire-safe and waterproof security box. Identified items may include the following, among others:

- forms and other documents necessary to continue the business of the courts
- contact lists discussed in section III B
- any other contact information deemed necessary
- facility plans
- the facility profile
- other emergency response plans that impact on court facilities
- personnel documents
- copies of databases
- a laptop computer
- software disks and a minimal amount of other office supplies

Since an emergency can occur at any time, it is advisable, to the extent possible, to maintain two kits, one in the office and one at home. Additionally, documents identified for inclusion should be copied and filed off-site, e.g., at another court facility.

E. Recovery and Restoration

Continuity of management and operations following an incident is equally as important as that maintained during the crisis.

Personnel Personnel continue to be the first priority during recovery and restoration operations. Consider providing employee support services, such as:

- alternate means of transportation
- salary continuation
- flexible work hours / locations

- crisis counseling (e.g., the UCS Work/Life Assistance Program)

Facility Upon a decision that the court facility can be reoccupied or that a different facility will be established as a new court facility:

- in an effort to facilitate a quick and orderly transition of the court's operations to a new or restored facility, key local court personnel will work closely with personnel from the following court administration offices to ensure the orderly transition of all court functions, personnel, equipment, and records
 - ▶ Office of the Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Management Support
 - ▶ Office of the Deputy Chief Administrative Judge, New York City Courts
 - ▶ Department of Public Safety
 - ▶ Office of Facilities Management
 - ▶ Department of Technology
 - ▶ Office of Communications
 - ▶ Division of Administrative Services
 - ▶ Division of Court Operations
- ▶ prior to relocation, the UCS Department of Public Safety and appropriate State and City entities will conduct security, safety and health assessments for suitability

V. Evaluations

Critical evaluations of emergency preparedness drills and training as well as post-incident evaluations are valuable tools in creating the most effective emergency response plans.

A. Preparedness Evaluations

Conducting Evaluations Ensure that evaluations are conducted of

- ▶ All evacuations and other drills conducted at a court facility
- ▶ All training programs provided to court personnel.

Reporting Evaluations must be completed and filed with the UCS Department of Public Safety

B. Post-Incident Evaluation

Operations Meeting As soon as practicable following an emergency, convene a meeting of appropriate court and non-court personnel to conduct a review of the court system's emergency response.

Public Safety Meeting As appropriate, request a meeting with a member of the UCS Department of Public Safety and local first responders to further review the court system's response and emergency plans and procedures.