Departmental Emergency Plan Template Instructions

Thank you for taking the time to create or update your departmental emergency plan. Your commitment to the safety and preparedness of your department is admirable and appreciated. The Departmental Emergency Plan Template was developed to aid departments in creating or updating emergency plans and to standardize the format and content of emergency plans at Dartmouth College.

**Personalization**

The template has been developed with ease of personalization in mind. Throughout the template you will find red text identifying form fields. Simply click on this red text and enter the information which corresponds to the field. For example, if the field says “Department Name” click on the text and type your department’s name. Do this with all applicable form fields including the cover page and the header of the document.

At any point you are encouraged to update sections to better reflect your department. For example, if your department has a specific goal for the plan, add it to the “Goals” section.

**Emergency Evacuation Meeting Location**

If your department’s building is evacuated it is important that everyone meet in a designated location to be accounted for. If everyone splits up the safety of firefighters and other public safety personnel could be put at risk by searching for them. On the cover page of the plan, insert the evacuation location in the red box. Ensure that everyone in the department is familiar with the location and understands the importance of meeting there.

**Order of Succession**

If your department already has a respected chain of authority which is used during emergencies, reflect it in this section. If your department has never addressed a chain of authority during an emergency it should be discussed among key personnel to ensure an appropriate order of succession. Without a clearly stated order of succession an emergency could easily suspend departmental operations due to lack of leadership.

**Emergency Communications**

No stock information is provided in this section because of the complexity and uniqueness of each department. Some possible communications methods are presented in a form field in the section, but it is not an exhaustive list. Your department may already have a plan for communicating in an emergency (phone tree, pagers, radios, etc.) Reflect any current plans in this section. Keep in mind that email is not a reliable form of communication. The most reliable forms of communication are those in which personnel communicate in real time (telephone, conference call, face-to-face,
The least reliable forms of communication are those which are not immediately verified (email, text message, written notes, etc.)

**Test, Training, and Exercises**

No stock information is provided in this section. The needs of your department will be different than other departments. At the very least you should distribute the completed emergency plan for review by all employees and discuss it at a regularly scheduled staff meeting. It is recommended that an ongoing discussion regarding emergency preparedness and response be launched around this plan. There are many other options for training including, but not limited to, an annual emergency planning meeting, participation in CPR/AED courses, regular review of the departmental plan with employees, and specific training for new employees.

It is important to practice any emergency plan. Exercises serve as training, plan testing, and opportunities for improvement. It is impossible to know if your plan works if you do not exercise it. Learning that all or a portion of the plan does not work during an emergency is equivalent to not having a plan. It is recommended that at least once annually the department participate in an exercise of all or part of the plan. This can take the form of a fifteen minute exercise of the communications plan, a fire drill, an evacuation drill, or any number of other exercises.

**Emergency Contact Directory**

For small departments it is recommended that all personnel be added to this directory. Larger departments may choose to add only key personnel.

**Additional Annexes or Appendices**

If your department already has a comprehensive emergency plan it is important that you complete this template and attach the current, updated plan as an annex.

If your department has any other materials or documents that are applicable to the emergency plan, these should be added as annexes at the end of the plan.

Maps, diagrams, lists, etc. should be added as appendices.

**Updating**

It is the responsibility of the department to keep the plan accessible and on file throughout the year. It is also the responsibility of the department to review the plan at least once annually to ensure that it is current and applicable. Any necessary changes should be made at least once annually.

**Questions**

Any questions regarding the Departmental Emergency Plan Template should be directed to the Emergency Planning Group through Nicole Buck (Emergency Management Coordinator), Michael Cimis (Interim Director of Environmental Health & Safety) or Harry Kinne (Director of Safety & Security).