

## VSU Campus Alert Q&A

### **How are emergency situations communicated to the campus community?**

In the event of an emergency, the campus alert system will send notifications in the form of phone calls, text and/or email messages, delivered via the mass notification system to VSU students, faculty, and staff. The mass notification system also provides an efficient and convenient method for communicating with individuals and/or groups associated with VSU; therefore, it can be used for other functions not associated with campus emergency alerts.

### **Who administers campus alerts?**

The campus alert system is administered by the Emergency Response Coordinator (Plant Operations); however, several VSU departments may also be involved in administering campus alerts, including the Communications Unit, Information Technology, Office of Environmental and Occupational Safety and University Police.

### **When is a campus emergency alert issued?**

A campus alert is issued when there is a severe threat to public safety and health of the entire campus, which has not been contained or controlled, and when immediate action is required on the part of the recipient group(s), (e.g. chemical spills impacting public health, school closing, tornado warnings, active shooters, etc). Once the situation receives an "all clear" by the proper authorities then this information will be posted on the VSU Web site at [www.valdosta.edu](http://www.valdosta.edu).

The campus alert system will not be used for non-emergency notifications such as lane closures, routine crime updates, localized building emergencies, situations that have been contained or where a threat does not exist, rumor control, and situations where notification is merely a convenience or when VSU's main Web Site is the most appropriate communication method. The campus emergency alert system will not replace VSU's main Web Site <http://www.valdosta.edu/> for non-urgent messages. The campus alert system will be tested twice a year during the spring and fall semesters.

### **How many telephone numbers and email addresses can I put in when signing up?**

Instructions on how VSU faculty, staff, and students can sign up to receive a campus alert (via the mass campus notification system) is located at <http://www.valdosta.edu/vsu/editalertinfo/>. Students can indicate one campus alert primary number in the Banner system under "Personal Information", VSU recommends cellular telephone numbers. Additionally, numbers associated with local, mailing, and permanent addresses will be used as appropriate. Employees provide their main (department), business (desk), and cellular telephone information via the Employee Self Service system, which should be updated periodically. Email notifications are sent to the VSU email address assigned to each student and employee.

### **If you do not provide VSU with a specific telephone number where you can be reached in the event of an emergency, then what information is automatically placed into the system by VSU?**

For students, the telephone number listed in their records as their local, mailing, or permanent telephone number is uploaded into the system in addition to a given specific campus alert number. For faculty and staff, the office telephone number as listed within Human Resources will be automatically uploaded into the mass campus notification system.

**What is the "primary number" in the mass notification system?**

The primary number is the one most likely to reach you when you are on VSU property. For most people, this will be a cellular number.

**What number will be reflected on my caller identification when a campus emergency alert warning is issued?**

The telephone number reflected on your caller identification will be 229-333-5800. You should program this number into your telephone so it will immediately recognize it as an urgent call.

**What email address will be reflected when a campus emergency alert warning is issued?**

The "from" address will reflect the following: VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY [email@blackboardconnect.com]. Please set your spam filters to allow mail from this address.

**Does this notification system overwhelm the telephone systems (cell and land lines)?**

No, mass notification system utilizes proprietary algorithms designed to maximize the available local switch network for best success of delivery. However, because VSU's incoming line capacity is limited, calls to VSU's may experience a slight delay as compared to those made on a cellular or home telephones. Lines reserved for outgoing calls are not impacted by the incoming emergency warning calls.

**What should I do if I receive a campus alert call or email?**

Take the warning very seriously as the campus alert system will only be used when there is an immediate threat. Follow the instructions provided and take immediate action. Never attempt to go past barricaded areas.

**What other emergency notification systems are used at VSU?**

VSU is researching the purchase of an outdoor emergency sirens (primarily for weather related events); VSU's home Web page provides the most recent emergency updates, National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather radios located in many VSU office buildings; telephone trees (where assigned individuals call others with emergency messages); and announcements over police cruiser public address systems when warranted.

**After a warning is issued, how can I find out more details?**

It is imperative to keep telephone lines open during an emergency situation. As soon as additional information is available, it will be reflected on the VSU's home Web page (<http://www.valdosta.edu/>).

**What else should I know about emergency preparedness?**

Although college campuses are usually safe places, emergencies and disasters do occur. Individual preparedness is the cornerstone of emergency preparedness and response. Every individual should have an emergency kit and emergency plan, which includes a family communication plan. The plan should be tested periodically. Each campus office and residence hall room should have a NOAA weather radio. Visit [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) for information about individual emergency preparedness.

**Whom should I contact if I have additional questions or concerns with the campus alert system:**

- Ray Sable, VSU Emergency Coordinator, 229-333-5882, [rasable@valdosta.edu](mailto:rasable@valdosta.edu)
- Joe Newton, Director of Information Technology, 229-333-5441, [jnewton@valdosta.edu](mailto:jnewton@valdosta.edu)
- Robert DeLong, Director of Environmental and Occupational Safety, 229-293-6171, [radelong@valdosta.edu](mailto:radelong@valdosta.edu)
- Scott Doner, Director of University Police, 229-333-7816, [sdoner@valdosta.edu](mailto:sdoner@valdosta.edu)