



## Timely Warning/Crime Alert

**Policy Type:** Administrative

**Responsible Office:** Virginia Commonwealth University Police Department, Division of Administration

**Initial Policy Approved:** 12/01/2011

**Current Revision Approved:** 1/22/2018

### Policy Statement and Purpose

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As required by the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act (Clery Act), this policy outlines the procedures that the university follows to provide a timely warning/crime alert to the university community upon the VCU Police department’s discovery of pertinent information about a reported crime in which the VCU Police department determines there could be a serious or ongoing threat to the university community or risk of additional incidents in the future.

Pursuant to this policy, the VCU Police department notifies the university community of reported crimes that occur on or near the university campus which represent an ongoing or serious threat to the university community, and does so in a manner that is timely and will aid in the prevention of similar crimes.

Noncompliance with this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. VCU supports an environment free from retaliation. Retaliation against any employee who brings forth a good faith concern, asks a clarifying question or participates in an investigation is prohibited.

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## Who Should Know This Policy

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VCU students, faculty, and staff

## Definitions

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### Clery Act Reportable Crimes

Crimes that are required by the Clery Act to be reported annually to the university community, including: criminal homicide (murder and negligent/non-negligent manslaughter); sexual assault (rape, fondling, incest, and statutory rape); robbery; aggravated assault; burglary; motor vehicle theft; arson; hate crimes (including larceny-theft, simple assault, intimidation, or destruction/damage/vandalism of property that were motivated by bias); domestic violence, dating violence; stalking; and arrests and referrals for disciplinary action for any of the following: (a) liquor law violations, (b) drug law violations, and (c) carrying or possessing illegal weapons.

### Timely Warnings/Crime Alerts

Issuance of a timely warning/crime alert is initiated when the VCU Police department identifies a Clery Act reportable crime that occurs on or near the university campus that poses a serious or ongoing threat to students, faculty, staff, and/or guests. The decision to inform the community shall be based upon the facts of the incident known to the VCU Police department.

VCU has designated what has been deemed as VCU's "core campus geography." A map of the core campus geography can be found at <https://police.vcu.edu/about/jurisdictioncore-campus/>. The chief of police or their designee will decide whether to inform the VCU community of crimes that may present a serious or ongoing threat or risk to members of the university community. Such timely warnings/crime alerts are intended to enable individuals to take reasonable precautions for their safety. The decision to issue a timely warning/crime alert will be made on a case-by-case basis in light of all the facts surrounding the crime that are known to the VCU Police department, including all of the following factors:

- The nature of the crime
- The continuing danger to the university community
- The possible risk of compromising law enforcement efforts

### Timely Warning/Crime Alert Incidents

The university community will be notified of incidents that represent a serious or ongoing threat to the VCU community. The incidents may stem from reports to university police, other state or local agencies, or campus security authorities. Those incidents that prompt a timely warning/crime alert notification could include, but are not limited to:

- Murder/Non-Negligent Manslaughter
- Manslaughter by Negligence
- Sexual Assault
- Robbery
- Aggravated Assault

- Arson

## Contacts

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Pursuant to the policy [Creating and Maintaining Policies and Procedures](#), the VCU Police department, in consultation with the vice president for administration, officially interprets this policy and shall revise or eliminate any or all parts as necessary to meet the changing needs of the university through the appropriate governance structures. Please direct policy questions to the VCU Police department.

## Policy Specifics and Procedures

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### Timely Warning/Crime Alert Notification Process

1. The on-duty police supervisor will inform the chief of police or their designee of any crime that may pose an ongoing or serious threat to the personal safety of students, faculty, staff, and/or guests.
2. The chief of police or their designee will determine whether the crime requires a timely warning/crime alert, and if so, develop a timely warning/crime alert message. Upon confirmation from the chief of police or their designee, the on-duty police supervisor will promptly notify the university community by activating the text message system and notifying the on-call public relations specialist for University Public Affairs, Division of University Relations, in order to update the VCU Alert website and activate the mass email notification system, if necessary. The timely warning/crime alert message content will include all of the following:
  - a. Nature of the incident or immediate threat
  - b. Location, date and time of the incident
  - c. Description of any suspect(s)
  - d. Action recommended for university members
  - e. Crime prevention information
  - f. Contact number for the VCU Police department

In situations in which the chief of police or their designee is not available, or where any delay to brief these officials would significantly increase the risk to the VCU community, the on-duty police supervisor is authorized to determine the necessity of a timely warning/crime alert, develop a timely warning/crime alert message, activate the text message system, and notify the on-call public relations specialist for University Public Affairs, Division of University Relations, in order to update the VCU Alert website and activate the mass email notification system, if necessary.

3. The timely warning/crime alert mass email notification is distributed by the on-call public relations specialist for University Public Affairs, Division of University Relations.

## VCU Mass Notification System

In notifying the university community, one or more of the following communication channels may be employed as appropriate:

- An email message sent with more detailed information to everyone with a VCU email account
- Posting on the VCU Alert website at [alert.vcu.edu](http://alert.vcu.edu), which will be updated regularly with information and instructions about how to respond in an emergency situation
- Text messaging, which provides personal communication to all cell phone users who register for the service

## Forms

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There are no forms associated with this policy and procedures.

## Related Documents

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1. Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act  
<https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?type=simple;c=ecfr;cc=ecfr;sid=54da22f8ac207179cde8180bfd795efc;idno=34;region=DIV1;q1=668.46;rgn=div8;view=text;node=34%3A3.1.3.1.34.4.39.6>
2. VCU Policy: [Emergency Notification, Response and Evacuation](#)
3. Violence Against Women Act  
<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2014/10/20/2014-24284/violence-against-women-act>

## Revision History

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This policy supersedes the following archived policies:

|            |                       |
|------------|-----------------------|
| 12/01/2011 | <i>Timely Warning</i> |
| 1/08/2014  | <i>Timely Warning</i> |

## FAQ

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1. **Will I be notified of crimes that occur outside of the university's "core campus geography?"**  
Crimes that occur outside of the "core campus geography," but within the expanded VCU Police department's jurisdiction, will also be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Although VCU Police department is not required by law to issue a timely warning for off campus crimes, if the VCU

Police department is aware of an off campus incident of crime and the VCU Police department determines that the crime poses a serious or ongoing threat to members of the university community, a public safety advisory will be posted on the VCU Alert website so that students, faculty, staff, and/or guests can easily access information about crimes that occur in the surrounding area and take reasonable precautions for their safety.

**2. Will I be notified of crimes that do not pose a serious or ongoing threat to the university community?**

If VCU Police department learns of a serious crime, either on or off campus, and there is no indication of a serious or ongoing threat to the university community, a public safety advisory may be sent via email. If only a segment or portion of the community needs to be informed, a public safety advisory may be sent via email to the relevant segment of the university community.

**3. How do I sign up to receive text message alerts?**

VCU students, faculty and staff may subscribe to the VCU Alert text messaging through the university's [main login screen](#). Parents and community members may also [sign up for the university's text message alert system](#) to receive information about campus emergencies and cancellations.

**4. Will I receive a timely warning/crime alert if an emergency notification has previously been issued to the university community based on the same circumstances?**

If the university has followed the emergency notification procedures, the university is not required to issue a timely warning/crime alert based on the same circumstances; however, the university will provide adequate follow-up information to the university community as needed.