



**Keeping Your Campus Safe:**

The How & Why for Emergency  
Management Solutions

# The How and Why for Emergency Management Solutions

Colleges and universities have a serious and often difficult responsibility to keep students, faculty, staff, and visitors safe in the case of a myriad of emergencies that can occur.

To do this, complete situational awareness is critical for every natural and man-made disaster that affects their campus and population. Additionally, higher education institutions must be able to quickly and seamlessly interface with and receive updates from emergency management partners in the surrounding community, including local, state, and federal agencies.

## Campuses Need an All Hazards Approach to Critical Incident Management

At colleges and universities of all sizes, comprehensive critical incident technology is taking the place of outdated and ineffective processes (i.e., pencil & paper, spreadsheets, etc.). These solutions help manage emergencies and even day-to-day incidents or activities, and give administrators and campus emergency officials the capabilities they need to plan and respond to:

- + Severe weather, including storms, tornadoes, winter storms and blizzards, flooding, wildfires, and other weather related incidents that may threaten safety or facilities status
- + Active shooter incidents
- + Campus violence and terrorism-related incidents
- + Cyber security and other IT-related incidents
- + Campus safety and campus security policing activities
- + Compliance with Clery Act and other regulatory mandates
- + Campus activities, including large-scale sports and social events
- + Facilities safety and operational status

Universities also need to be able to spread the word quickly about safety concerns to anyone who might be affected by any incident that may occur, and be capable of tracking the status of critical infrastructure on campuses, to ensure safety and operability.





## Necessary Capabilities for Campus Emergency Preparedness and Response

Incidents and events occur at a faster rate than ever before; critical incident management technology is increasing the ability of higher education institutions to monitor and manage incidents with complete, real-time situational awareness, as well as to:

- + Develop an Emergency Management Plan and keep it up to date
- + Develop Critical Incident Recovery Framework, Support Function Guides, and Incident Specific Guides
- + Maintain communications with a central Emergency Operations Center and incident command post
- + Support situational awareness of incidents and events as they happen
- + Interact quickly with campus emergency response teams and community first responders
- + Work seamlessly across public and private sectors, as well as hospitals
- + Send notifications about safety concerns
- + Track local populations
- + Check facilities status
- + Create after-action reports
- + Track training, tests, and exercises to ensure effectiveness of current emergency plans

## Critical Incident Management at Work in Real World Campus Emergencies

When unexpected incidents and emergencies occur, colleges and universities have to put emergency response plans into action. An incident management system can help centralize important information and ensure processes run smoothly, for a safe, efficient response. Here are several examples where a critical incident management platform could benefit higher education institutions.



### Hurricane Dorian

Fall classes had barely started when the massive Category 5 Hurricane Dorian, after battering the Bahamas, made its way toward Florida, Georgia, and the Carolinas prompting mandatory evacuations, including 60,000 students at University of Central Florida, as well as students at College of Charleston and The Citadel in South Carolina, and faculty, staff, and students at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington.

In Florida, emergency managers from across the state tracked all aspects of hurricane preparations using a critical incident management platform to support emergency response. [Click here to see how.](#) This technology established a comprehensive common operating picture containing all activities and information including information requests, deployment of equipment and personnel, shelter availability, requests for resources, situation reports, and public messaging.

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[See How](#)

## Campus Active Assailant

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**See How**

One tragic active shooter incident occurred in February 2020 at Texas A&M University-Commerce, in which two women were killed and a small child was injured at residence hall. The shooter was not a student at the university. The college was placed on lockdown and students, faculty, and staff were told to shelter in place for around two hours.

The fear of active assailant incidents can give way to confusion and chaos, which can be made worse by a lack of communications. In the past few years, some colleges have also reported false alarms of active shooter incidents, some of which have resulted in one part of campus being placed on lockdown while another part of the campus is unaware of the incident.

In January 2020, a college was placed on lockdown for several hours following a report of gunfire. Students and staff were escorted off campus by police, and rooms were checked, but there were no casualties or any evidence found of an active shooter. After the college issued an all-clear, classes were cancelled for the remainder of the day.

According to a recent **Juware survey**, the top concern for emergency managers at higher education institutions was a tie between *infrastructure disasters* and *active shooter incidents*. In the same survey, emergency managers said the number one aspect that could be improved in their emergency management processes was *communications*.



## Gas Explosions

In September 2018, a series of gas explosions rocked Massachusetts' Merrimack Valley, forcing over 50,000 people in three nearby towns to evacuate from their homes, as well as thousands of students from several nearby colleges and universities. In addition to the evacuations, 22 people were transported to local hospitals, and more than 130 structures were damaged. The response involved over 180 fire departments and 140 law enforcement agencies, with some 1,000 officers.

While this major incident didn't occur on a campus, it was critical for emergency response teams to maintain awareness of these events in surrounding communities that affected the health and safety of the campus community. These teams were aided by a critical incident platform that allowed them to communicate and interact with emergency responders as well as everyone on campus.

## Wildfires

California has been affected by numerous wildfires over the past several years, which have triggered evacuations of communities, as well as several college and university campuses. Wildfires impacted universities across the state in October 2019 and necessitated quick evacuations in the middle of the night at one college, with new reports describing students "walking down a mountain in fire."

In addition to the evacuations, college administrators and emergency teams were forced to deal with a wide range of problems including air quality, power outages, road closures, and maintaining facility operations, as well as traumatized students and staff.

## Situational Awareness and Communication are Essential to Protect Your Campus

In emergencies such as those described above, quick, accurate communications can save lives, as well as prevent unnecessary confusion and disorder. Higher education institutions need an emergency management platform to perform critical tasks, allowing them to:

- + Centralize important information and data
- + Use forms and workflows for a more efficient, streamlined process
- + Send notifications to the emergency response teams, stakeholders, and other appropriate key personnel
- + Maintain communications with and disseminate information to employees
- + Create alerts or notifications using preferred modes (e.g., email, text, voice, push notification, etc.)

The platform should also allow the ability to monitor and track lockdowns, BOLO's (be on the lookout), sheltering-in-place, and evacuations, as well as the status of critical infrastructure during a power outage, water service disruptions, fires, flooding, or high winds.

## Maintaining Situational Awareness at Campus Events

Emergency management solutions are also integral during large-scale planned events. At colleges and universities, planned events might include athletic events, concerts, or other campus-wide or community events. Critical incident management technology is frequently used by higher education institutions during planned events for a variety of functions including:

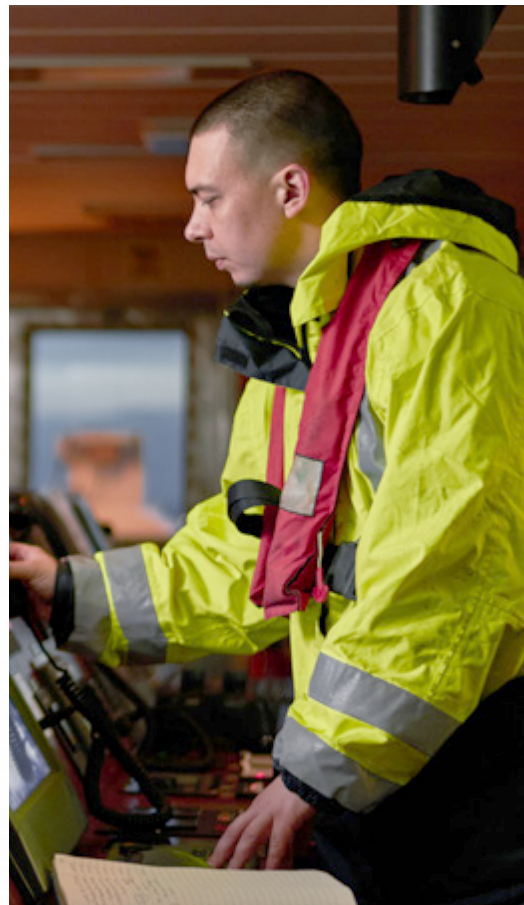
- + Tracking location of personnel and resources
- + Monitoring weather and NWS significant weather advisories
- + Visualizing key points of interest such as gates, barriers, routes, etc.
- + Reporting real-time information about medical and situation status at the event
- + Viewing available emergency services in the area, including hospitals and EMS
- + Maintaining key contact lists
- + Sending notifications to event participants or staff
- + Managing tasks, assignments, forms, and reports

## Taking the Next Step with your Emergency Management

Increasingly, universities and colleges that evaluate their comprehensive emergency operations plans are finding a greater need for technology that includes:

- + Greater situational awareness during day-to-day operations, planned events, and unplanned natural and man-made disasters
- + Enhanced communications and collaboration with stakeholders, including emergency teams and local, state, and federal agencies
- + Automated workflows, day-to-day incident reporting, and general activity logs
- + Integration with campus/student health centers and area healthcare facilities
- + Ability to send notifications to campus community
- + Tracking of drills and exercises, responder training, and certifications

Addressing these needs can help create a safer campus by ensuring better preparation and response capabilities. The next step is to evaluate your current critical incident response capabilities and identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT), and identify technology that can improve emergency preparedness, response, and recovery.



## Preparation is Critical for Effective Communications and Response

Emergency management is a process that requires ongoing preparation, training exercises and testing, and evaluation. A campus safety survey by Magolis Healy found that about 86% of U.S. Higher Education Institutions have an emergency operations plan but only a little over half of those surveyed “had conducted a comprehensive hazard and vulnerability assessment critical to the development of appropriate all-hazards emergency planning.” In other words, most have a plan but only about half had evaluated it to see whether the plan would be effective.

## Juware Helps Higher Education Institutions Prepare, Connect, and Respond

All colleges and universities recognize the need to keep students, faculty, staff, and facilities safe. Using a state-of-the-art critical incident management solution helps centralize important information and data, speeds up critical communications to those impacted, accelerates response time and effectiveness, and enhances collaboration with emergency response teams.

As the leading provider of emergency management software solutions, Juware empowers preparedness and response professionals to protect people, property, and brands. Juware solutions enable situational awareness during unexpected incidents, large-scale planned events, and day-to-day operations.

Let us show you how Juware can help keep your campus safe. **Contact us today** to schedule a demonstration — call 866-200-0165 or click the “Request a Demo” button below.

**Request A Demo**

