

## **International Crisis Response Protocol - Checklist Washington University in St. Louis**

This document contains step-by-step procedures to be followed in the event of a serious injury, illness, death or other emergency connected with students abroad for purposes of study or research under the auspices of Washington University in St. Louis.

### **PART I: ASSESSMENT**

- Determine the urgency of the situation.

The first actions taken following an accident, death or other emergency vary depending upon whether the situation is contained or could potentially worsen.

#### **A. Definitions of an emergency**

1. A death or serious injury/illness that may require hospitalization of a participant or faculty member, or one that makes it impossible for the participant or faculty member to continue the program.
2. An emergency may also be (but is not limited to) a situation involving a criminal act against one or more participants in the program; an act or threat of terrorism that poses a threat to the security of the program participants; a natural disaster; an act of war; or other event causing or threatening harm to one or more participants in the program.

A “perceived emergency” results from events that are not immediately threatening to the health or safety of program students or staff, but which may be viewed as such by family and friends at home, or by the media. In many instances, a perceived emergency must be treated as a real emergency.

#### **B. Immediate Responsibilities of the Faculty Director/On-Site Coordinator**

- Attend to the immediate needs of the student(s) involved;
- Remove other participants from danger, if possible;
- Contact (as appropriate): local medical emergency officials, law enforcement officers, the U.S. Embassy/Consulate, and the WUSTL program contact in the appropriate school; and
- Contact the relevant WUSTL administrative officials as soon as feasible (contact/response charts attached)

#### **C. Immediate Responsibilities of the relevant WUSTL administrative official**

##### **Call from Faculty Director/On-Site Coordinator**

Upon receiving a call from on-site study abroad program staff/faculty director concerning an emergency, WUSTL staff will:

- Begin a log of all calls and activities pertaining to the incident
- Get the following information from the on-site personnel:
  - Name of caller
  - Identity of individual(s) involved, if applicable
  - Brief description of accident, illness or emergency
  - Location of caller – address, city, country

- Location of accident or emergency; proximity to WUSTL students (if not directly affected)
- Phone and fax number where caller can be reached
- Verify calls have been placed to emergency response services, and will be placed to U.S. Embassy/Consulate if situation warrants
- Information, if any, that has been released to the media

If the emergency is a natural disaster, an act of terrorism, or an act of war, you should also ask the following:

- What was the target of unrest, if event was political?
  - What is the intensity of the emergency or political unrest?
  - Are there military or emergency personnel at the site of the emergency?
  - What is the advice of the nearest U.S.Embassy/Consulate?
  - What impact, if any, did emergency have on availability of food, water, and medical supplies?
  - How able are our students and staff to travel?
  - Is continuation of classes feasible?
- If appropriate, instruct caller to call again after emergency response team or law enforcement have arrived.
  - In event of emergency other than illness or isolated accident, call the U.S. Department of State Citizens' Emergency Center at 202/647-5225 for suggestions or assistance; and call U.S. offices of other institutions with students in the target location to compare information and to develop a common plan of action. Continue coordination throughout emergency.
  - Call the Chair or Co-chair of the Crisis Management Team who will assemble a task force if appropriate (see below) and coordinate contact with University Public Affairs.
  - Consult with other key WUSTL administrators: Associate Vice Chancellor for Students and Dean of Students, General Counsel, Student Health Services, Emergency Management Coordinator , University Risk Manager, Student Records, and WUPD.

### **Call from Student or Parents**

A Student or Student's Parents may contact WUSTL staff before the on-site program staff/faculty director is aware of the incident or is able to make contact.

- WUSTL staff will:
  - Ensure student is in a safe location/make sure they have local support
  - Take down details of incident as follows:
    - Date/time/location of incident
    - Student's current location/contact information
    - Nature of incident (include as much detail as possible)
    - Type of follow-up care already received
  - Director informs Dean/others as warranted
  - Coordinate support with local and U.S.-based study abroad program staff to provide additional resources
  - Liaise with parents as needed (with student's consent)
  - *Consult with colleagues at WU (SHS, OGC, faculty advisors)*
  - *For medical emergencies, SHS will be contacted directly by Assist America*
  - *Continue to follow up regularly with student and family*
  - *Assist student in making arrangements to return home if needed*

*WUSTL study abroad staff may continue performing the steps in italics through their office OR steps maybe be coordinated through a special Task Force. See Part II.*

## **PART II: CONVENING OF TASK FORCE**

If convened, once important facts have been collected, the task force (appointed by the Crisis Management Team) will be assembled which may include: the Assistant to the Chancellor, the Vice Chancellor for Students, the Vice Chancellor for Public Affairs, Emergency Management Coordinator, WUSTL Risk Manager, General Counsel, 1-2 faculty with specialization in affected region, and staff from relevant WUSTL office. Composition of task force may vary depending upon nature of emergency.

The task force should:

- Address immediate actions necessary to maintain security and health of program participants and staff
- Address other issues of health, safety, academic concerns, financial aid, public relations and legal liability
- Identify appropriate steps to take abroad (addressing student reactions, creating written action plan, sending family members/WUSTL staff/faculty/counselors to program site etc.)
- Develop and help with an evacuation plan (should one become necessary)
- Designate a WUSTL individual to assume responsibility for the situation
- Develop a communication document to be utilized by all personnel involved
- Prepare a list of persons to be alerted (to include Chancellor, Provost, Board of Trustees, parents/family of students abroad, legislators, media)
- Develop a daily communication plan
- Assess the impact of the event once ended and document all actions taken in written report

## **PART III: FOLLOW-UP PROCEDURES, NOTIFICATION AND MEDIA RELEASE**

### **A. Follow-up procedures coordinated by relevant WUSTL administrative officials**

- Make certain that written accounts of incident are obtained as soon as possible from all witnesses and affected students, faculty and staff.
- Prepare a detailed factual report, including preliminary recommendations without judgments, analysis or conclusions.
- Submit the report to WUSTL General Counsel
- Convene follow-up meeting of task force to discuss:
  - Distribution and dissemination of the report
  - The need, if any, for further in-house or external review or investigation

### **B. Follow-up procedures for Faculty Director/On-Site Coordinator**

**Once all immediate life-threatening circumstances have been secured:**

- Reassess planned activities for the program and adjust as deemed necessary to avoid subjecting students and staff to additional stress. Plan for creative ways to proceed.  
***The program should be terminated only as a last, and necessary, resort.***
  - International SOS will coordinate and cover emergency group evacuations
  - Consult with local and U.S.-based study abroad program staff
  - Consult DOS Travel Warnings/Public Announcements ([www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov))
  - Consult CDC ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov))
  - Communicate promptly with students and families

- Stay in close communication with the relevant WUSTL administrative official, for instructions or input from task force, and to let relevant WUSTL administrative official know of activities and whereabouts of group
- Assess physical and emotional needs of students/staff. Remind students of appropriate behaviors
- Let relevant WUSTL administrative official know if WUSTL staff are needed on-site to carry out needed arrangements, or to provide counseling to students
- Make certain all affected local and U.S. authorities are consulted and kept informed
- In the event of a fatality, wait for legal authority (usually local) before moving the body. Make sure photographs are taken before the body is moved. See WUSTL Student Death Protocol for detailed instructions
- Communicate any action or evacuation plans in writing to students and ask for written acknowledgment of receipt
- Document ALL activities
- Collect written statements from students and staff as soon as possible following incident

### **C. Notification of Next of Kin in Case of Death Abroad**

In the event of death of a student or accompanying faculty member participating in an international program administered by Washington University in St. Louis, it is the responsibility of the Associate Vice Chancellor of Public Affairs and relevant WUSTL administrative official to see that next of kin are appropriately and promptly notified (also see Faculty, Staff or Student Death Protocol)

The appropriate Embassy officials will take charge in the event of the death of a U.S. citizen abroad. In most cases, the next of kin are contacted directly by representatives of the U.S. Department of State or local authorities.

### **D. Releasing Information to the Media**

Statements to the press should be made exclusively through WUSTL's Associate Vice Chancellor of Public Affairs. Program leaders and WUSTL staff should not seek contact with the press, since many difficulties may arise when more than one source releases information to the media. If it is necessary for the faculty director, or other staff to speak to the press, s/he should follow the guidelines in section G of this document.

Equally important is that all steps taken after the accident, death or emergency be recorded for future reference. It is vital that information is passed promptly, accurately and completely at each communication link.

No one, including the designated spokesperson, should release any of the following without first consulting legal counsel:

- \* Names of victims prior to notification of next of kin
- \* Information regarding nature of illness or injury prior to diagnosis by a medical doctor
- \* Information assessing responsibility for an accident, or criticizing conduct, policy or equipment
- \* Estimates of property damage

The Office of Public Affairs, in consultation with the relevant WUSTL administrative official, the Assistant to the Chancellor, General Counsel and the faculty director abroad (when possible), will prepare a statement for the press to be released to appropriate media services (depending upon scope of incident) and set up a system for responding to telephone inquiries.

**Appendix I:**  
**Action Steps for Off Campus WUSTL Staff**  
**(Faculty Leader, Program Director, or On-Site Coordinator)**

**PART I: ASSESSMENT**

- Determine the urgency of the situation.

**Immediate Responsibilities of the Faculty Director/On-Site Coordinator:**

While the Faculty Director/On-Site Coordinator is responsible for the local coordination and trouble shooting, they may expect US-based support from Washington University in St. Louis and other resources.

- Attend to the immediate needs of the student(s) involved and remove other participants from danger, if possible;
- Begin a log of all calls and activities pertaining to the incident.
- Contact (as appropriate): local medical emergency officials, law enforcement officers, the U.S. Embassy/Consulate, and the WUSTL program contact in the appropriate school; and
- Contact the relevant WUSTL administrative officials as soon as feasible (contact/response charts attached).

**PART II: CONVENING OF TASK FORCE** (action taken by U.S. based staff)

- Communicate and consult with Task Force (if Task Force has been convened).

**PART III: FOLLOW-UP PROCEDURES FOR FACULTY DIRECTOR/ON-SITE COORDINATOR**

**Once all immediate life-threatening circumstances have been secured:**

- Reassess planned activities for the program and adjust as deemed necessary to avoid subjecting students and staff to additional stress. Plan for creative ways to proceed.  
*The program should be terminated only as a last, and necessary, resort.*
  - International SOS will coordinate and cover emergency group evacuations
  - Consult with local and U.S.-based study abroad program staff
  - Consult DOS Travel Warnings/Public Announcements ([www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov))
  - Consult CDC ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov))
  - Communicate promptly with students and families
- Stay in close communication with the relevant WUSTL administrative official, for instructions or input from task force, and to let relevant WUSTL administrative official know of activities and whereabouts of group.
- Assess physical and emotional needs of students/staff. Remind students of appropriate behaviors.
- Let relevant WUSTL administrative official know if WUSTL staff are needed on-site to carry out needed arrangements, or to provide counseling to students.
- Make certain all affected local and U.S. authorities are consulted and kept informed.
- In the event of a fatality, wait for legal authority (usually local) before moving the body. Make sure photographs are taken before the body is moved. See WUSTL Student Death Protocol for detailed instructions.

- Communicate any action or evacuation plans in writing to students and ask for written acknowledgment of receipt.
- Document ALL activities.
- Collect written statements from students and staff as soon as possible following incident.

\*\* Statements to the press should be made exclusively through WUSTL's Associate Vice Chancellor of Public Affairs. If it is necessary for the faculty director or other staff to speak to the press, the Office of Public Affairs, in consultation with the relevant WUSTL officials, will prepare a statement for the press to be released to appropriate media services (depending upon scope of incident) and set up a system for responding to telephone inquiries.\*\*

## **Appendix II: Action Steps for WUSTL Administrative Officials**

### **PART I: ASSESSMENT**

- Determine the urgency of the situation.

#### **Immediate Responsibilities of the relevant WUSTL administrative officials**

##### **Call from Faculty Director/On-Site Coordinator**

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  - Brief description of accident, illness or emergency
  - Location of caller – address, city, country
  - Location of accident or emergency; proximity to WUSTL students (if not directly affected)
  - Phone and fax number where caller can be reached
  - Verify calls have been placed to emergency response services, and will be placed to U.S. Embassy/Consulate if situation warrants
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  - What is the intensity of the emergency or political unrest?
  - Are there military or emergency personnel at the site of the emergency?
  - What is the advice of the nearest U.S.Embassy/Consulate?
  - What impact, if any, did emergency have on availability of food, water, and medical supplies?
  - How able are our students and staff to travel?
  - Is continuation of classes feasible?
- If appropriate, instruct caller to call again after emergency response team or law enforcement have arrived.
  - In event of emergency other than illness or isolated accident, call the U.S. Department of State Citizens' Emergency Center at 202/647-5225 for suggestions or assistance; and call U.S. offices of other institutions with students in the target location to compare information and to develop a common plan of action. Continue coordination throughout emergency.
  - Call the Chair or Co-chair of the Crisis Management Team who will assemble a task force if appropriate (see below) and coordinate contact with University Public Affairs.
  - Consult with other key WUSTL administrators: Associate Vice Chancellor for Students and Dean of Students, General Counsel, Student Health Services, Emergency Management Coordinator , University Risk Manager, Student Records, and WUPD.

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- \* Identify appropriate steps to take abroad (addressing student reactions, creating written action plan, sending family members/WUSTL staff/faculty/counselors to program site etc.)
- \* Develop and help with an evacuation plan (should one become necessary)
- \* Designate a WUSTL individual to assume responsibility for the situation
- \* Develop a communication document to be utilized by all personnel involved
- \* Prepare a list of persons to be alerted (to include Chancellor, Provost, Board of Trustees, parents/family of students abroad, legislators, media)
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## **PART III: FOLLOW-UP PROCEDURES, NOTIFICATION AND MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Follow-up procedures coordinated by relevant WUSTL administrative officials**

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- Prepare a detailed factual report, including preliminary recommendations without judgments, analysis or conclusions.
- Submit the report to WUSTL General Counsel
- Convene follow-up meeting of task force to discuss:
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### **Notification of Next of Kin in Case of Death Abroad**

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