

Emergencies  
can happen  
anytime and  
anywhere . . .

Amherst College

**Emergency**

Response

Handbook

**Emergencies can happen anytime and anywhere**, and the College's utmost priority in such situations is the health, safety and security of every member of the community. This booklet provides you with a reference guide for immediate steps to take if various crises occur. In addition, here are a few important steps you can take right now, **before** an emergency situation arises:

- Sign up for AC Alert, Amherst's emergency alert system, to receive all important notifications and information via text, email and phone messages:  
[www.amherst.edu/go/notification](http://www.amherst.edu/go/notification).
- Program the Amherst College Police Department's (ACPD) emergency number as a speed dial on your phone:  
**413.542.2111**.
- Familiarize yourself with this booklet to know what to do in an emergency situation.
- Use the buddy system! Watch out for colleagues and friends to make sure they are accounted for.

The College reviews and refines emergency management procedures on an ongoing basis in order to stay current on the evolving best practices in the field. One reality is constant, however: Planning for emergencies is every member of our community's responsibility. In doing so, you don't just protect yourself—you protect your coworkers, classmates, friends and colleagues.

We appreciate your attention to and cooperation with keeping all of us safe and prepared.

## **IMPORTANT RESOURCES**

**Emergency Numbers: 413.542.2111**

(Ambulance, Fire, Police and hazardous conditions)

**Amherst College Police Department (ACPD): 413.542.2291**

(For non-emergency, holiday, weekend and after-hours calls)

**Facilities: 413.542.2254**

(Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–4 p.m.)

**Environmental Health & Safety: 413.542.8189**

**Health Services: 413.542.2266**

(Monday–Friday, 8:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m.)

**Snow Line: 413.542.SNOW (7669)**

or 888.289.1049

Weather closures and delays are announced on the College's website and at the SNOW phone number listed above.

**Closure Procedures & Notifications: [www.amherst.edu/emergency/weather-emergencies-closings](http://www.amherst.edu/emergency/weather-emergencies-closings)**

**EMERGENCY? DIAL 413.542.2111**

**1**

**AC ALERT**

**5**

**ACTIVE SHOOTER**

**6**

**ASSAULT, THEFT, SEXUAL MISCONDUCT OR OTHER CRIMES**

**7**

**BOMB THREAT**

**8**

**CAMPUS EVACUATION**

**9**

**CIVIL UNREST/PROTEST**

**10**

**CYBER THREAT**

**11**

**FIRE ALARM**

**11**

**FIRE AND/OR SMOKE**

**12**

**HAZARDOUS LEAKS, ODORS OR SPILLS**

**13**

**MEDICAL EMERGENCIES**

**14**

**SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING**

**15**

**SHELTER-IN-PLACE**

**16**

**WEATHER EMERGENCIES OR NATURAL DISASTERS**

**EMERGENCY? DIAL 413.542.2111**



## AC ALERT

One of the best ways to protect yourself in an emergency situation is to stay informed. We urge you to sign up for the College's **AC Alert system**, which shares important information and instructions with the campus community via texts, emails and automated phone messages, as well as emergency banners on college computers. **We strongly encourage you to provide, confirm or update your personal contact information immediately at [www.amherst.edu/go/notification](http://www.amherst.edu/go/notification) if you have not done so.**

## ACTIVE SHOOTER

In a quickly unfolding situation involving an individual with a gun, immediately leave the area and call the Amherst College Police Department (ACPD) at **413.542.2111**. DO NOT attempt to disarm someone with a gun. For those in an area with a dangerous person, remember: **RUN – HIDE – FIGHT**.

### RUN

- Have an escape route and plan in mind.
- Keep your hands in plain sight for your safety and the safety of responding police.

### HIDE

- Hide in an area, room or closet out of the shooter's view.
- Lock the doors. If the door cannot be locked, block or wedge the door shut from inside.
- Move away from windows and pull down blinds/shades.
- Leave cell phones on, but turn the volume off so you can continue to receive messages.
- **Do not** open the door for anyone identifying themselves as a police officer or other rescuer. The police will gain entrance using keys or after an "All Clear" is sent.

### FIGHT

- As a last resort, when your life is in danger, FIGHT!
- Any object or substance—such as coffee, chemicals, pens and pencils, furniture—can be used as a weapon to incapacitate a shooter.

To get a better sense of how to handle an active shooter situation, watch the ACPD Active Shooter Video: [www.amherst.edu/offices/campus\\_police/active\\_shooter](http://www.amherst.edu/offices/campus_police/active_shooter).



## ASSAULT, THEFT, SEXUAL MISCONDUCT OR OTHER CRIMES

In the event of an assault, theft or something more serious:

- Call the Amherst College Police Department (ACPD) at **413.542.2111** and provide the dispatcher with as much information about the person(s) as possible, such as:
  - Name(s), if known
  - Physical description
  - Approximate age
  - Clothing description
  - Estimate of height and weight
  - Distinguishing marks/tattoos
  - Weapons, if any
  - Direction of travel, if known
- Try to remain calm and in a safe location.
- Stay on the phone until help arrives.

## BOMB THREAT

Bomb threats should always be taken very seriously. Such threats may be made via emails, texts, handwritten notes or, most often, by phone. The two most important things to remember in every bomb threat scenario are to (1) stay calm and (2) call, or have someone call, the Amherst College Police Department (ACPD) immediately at 413.542.2111. If a threat is made via email, do not delete the message; forward it to the ACPD. If it is made via handwritten note, call the ACPD immediately and handle the paper as little as possible while waiting for the ACPD to arrive.

- If a bomb threat is made on the phone, a different course is in order. You should have someone else contact the ACPD at **413.542.2111** from another phone. If this is not possible, call the ACPD from another phone ***after the caller hangs up***. While the caller is on the phone, keep them on the line for as long as possible. Do not hang up, even if the caller does. Wait for a police officer to arrive.
- If possible, try to remain unemotional and “interested” and try to keep the caller talking in order to gather and supply authorities with as much information as possible.
- If your phone has a display, write down or copy the number and/or letters that appear on the display.
- Try to remember as much about the call/caller as possible and provide that information to the police.



## CAMPUS EVACUATION

In the event the campus must be evacuated, the College will notify the community via the AC Alert system, as well as campus-wide emails, with specific instructions for faculty, staff and students. Faculty and staff in non-critical roles will be instructed to leave campus and remain away until it is safe to return. Students will be assisted by the Office of Student Affairs, the Amherst College Police Department (ACPD) and others to alternative shelter and/or local transportation hubs based on the potential duration of the evacuation.

Those leaving campus should bring the following:

- Driver's license, passport and College ID
- Medication and prescriptions
- Money, checks, bank cards and credit cards
- Contact lenses and eyeglasses
- Cellphones, chargers and phone cards (in case cell coverage is down)
- Personal toiletries
- Keys, including keys for home
- Laptops, iPads and other portable electronics of value
- Valuable jewelry or heirlooms
- Minimal essential clothing
- Other important documents: social security card, insurance information, etc.

## CIVIL UNREST/PROTEST

On a dynamic, engaged campus like Amherst's, individuals or groups of people will exercise their right to free speech and assembly. Sometimes, however, peaceful demonstrations can turn confrontational or heated and devolve into a riot or violence. If tensions start to escalate:

- Report any suspicious behavior or unauthorized persons in your building or on campus to the Amherst College Police Department (ACPD) at **413.542.2111**.
- Stay inside and away from doors and windows.
- Secure your area (doors, safes, files, vital records, expensive equipment, etc.).
- Be vigilant and aware of unfolding events.
- Do not engage in verbal confrontations, and do not physically engage protestors. If you are personally confronted, remain calm and try not to raise your voice or escalate the situation.

## CYBER THREAT

Breaches of privacy and theft of personal information often begin with a “phishing” email from a spammer, a hacker or other individuals. Such messages will try to trick you into entering your Amherst login information on a non-Amherst login page, thus compromising your account. To prevent this from happening:

- Refrain from opening a suspicious email, clicking on any links or opening attachments.
- Report phishing emails to [phishing@amherst.edu](mailto:phishing@amherst.edu).
- Use the College’s anti-virus software, and change your password frequently.
- Visit the Information Technology website for more information on how to protect your information:  
[amherst.edu/offices/it/knowledge\\_base/security](http://amherst.edu/offices/it/knowledge_base/security).

## FIRE ALARM

Knowing what to do when the fire alarm sounds is one of the best ways to prepare for an emergency. When the alarm sounds:

- Leave the building through the closest EXIT door, even if the door is alarmed.
- Proceed to a spot at least 50 feet from the building that has been designated as a check-in area. Make sure everyone in your physical area is accounted for.

Do not reenter the building until the fire alarm has been silenced and the fire and/or police department have confirmed that it's safe to return.

## FIRE AND/OR SMOKE

A fire situation involves not just a flame, but smoke and heat as well, all of which can be dangerous. Protect yourself and others by remembering the acronym **CAPE**:

- **C**lose the door to **C**ontain the fire or smoke.
- **A**lert people in the **A**rea about the fire.
- **P**ull the fire alarm and **P**hone the Amherst College Police Department (ACPD) at **413.542.2111**. Provide the dispatcher with as much information as you can about the fire and its location.
- **E**xtinguish the fire or **E**vacuate. (Do not use a fire extinguisher unless you have been trained and it's safe to do so.) If you're able to leave the building, find a police officer or firefighter and give them any information you might have about the fire.

If you're aware of a person who was unable to evacuate the building for any reason, report that individual to the ACPD at **413.542.2111**.

## HAZARDOUS LEAKS, ODORS OR SPILLS

The release of hazardous materials such as gas (gasoline, natural gas and propane), carbon monoxide, mercury and other chemicals can pose a serious threat to one's health. In the event of a leak, explosion, spill or other release:

- Call the Amherst College Police Department (ACPD) at **413.542.2111**.
- Stay away from the area around an incident or leak. Do not go near it, even to rescue a victim.
- If possible, note the location of the incident, number and condition of patient(s), hazardous materials involved and other pertinent information, and provide it to the ACPD dispatcher.
- Avoid using electrical equipment, lighters or other items that might ignite a flammable gas or liquid.

## MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

In the case of a medical emergency:

- Call the Amherst College Police Department (ACPD) at **413.542.2111** and provide all relevant information (name, location, number of patients, nature of accident, injury or emergency, etc.).
- Stay with the patient and provide as much emotional and first-aid support as possible until medical assistance arrives; move the individual only if there is immediate danger.
- Avoid contact with blood, bodily fluids and needles/syringes. Report any hazardous conditions, including needles and syringes, to the ACPD.
- If necessary, close the door(s) or cordon off an area until it has been properly cleaned by a custodian or Environmental Health & Safety.

## SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING

Many potential safety threats can be averted by simply informing the Amherst College Police Department (ACPD) at **413.542.2111** of suspicious activity.

Describe specifically what you observed, including:

- **Who** or **what** you saw
- **When** you saw it
- **Where** it occurred
- **Why** it's suspicious

Suspicious worth noting:

- **Unusual items or situations:** A vehicle parked in an odd location, a package/luggage left unattended or an open window/door that is usually closed, for example.
- **Solicitation of information:** A person who questions individuals at a level beyond curiosity about a building's purpose, operations, security procedures and/or personnel, shift changes, etc.
- **Observation/surveillance:** A person who pays unusual attention to facilities or buildings beyond a casual or professional interest. Examples include extended loitering without explanation (particularly in concealed locations); unusual, repeated and/or prolonged observation of a building (e.g., with binoculars or video camera); taking notes or measurements; counting paces; sketching floor plans; etc.

## SHELTER-IN-PLACE

“Shelter-in-place” means, simply, to move to a safe place indoors and wait until you are instructed to leave. If you receive this instruction from the Amherst College Police Department (ACPD), whenever possible:

- Look for a small, interior room with no or few windows.
- Close, lock and avoid all doors and windows.
- Remain where you are until you receive an “All Clear” signal from the ACPD or other emergency personnel.



## WEATHER EMERGENCIES OR NATURAL DISASTERS

If there are reports of threatening weather in the area (tornado, high winds, lightning, thunder, etc.) or you hear that a warning has been issued:

- Seek shelter inside immediately in an interior room or hallway.
- Shut all doors and close windows and blinds.
- Stay away from exterior windows and doors.
- Remain inside until the storm has passed.
- If you must leave, be aware of downed wires and falling objects, and do not re-enter the building until you are cleared to do so by emergency personnel.
- Once the weather emergency has ended, report leaks, fires, injuries, power outages, etc., to the Amherst College Police Department (ACPD) at **413.542.2111**.

Some specific weather situations require slightly different actions, including:

- **Snowstorms:** Stay at home if the College has closed to help keep sidewalks clear and passable. Avoid going outside.
- **High winds:** Seek shelter indoors and away from windows and doors.
- **Tornados:** If you are indoors, shelter in the lowest level of the building, away from windows and doors. If you are outside, go to the nearest ditch or depression away from power lines and trees.
- **Earthquakes:** If you are inside, seek refuge under a doorway, table or desk and away from windows, doors, shelves or heavy objects. If you are outside, move away from buildings and power lines.
- **Hurricanes:** Move furniture away from the windows, close and lock the windows, pull down curtains and blinds, move to a basement or center hall of the building, and stay indoors for the duration of the storm.