

After-Action Report

University Housing Fire Drills

November 18, 2020

Summary

During the duration of the fall semester, University Safety Officers, in conjunction with University Housing, conducted table top fire drill training via Zoom. The audience included A-State sororities, fraternities (on campus and off), and residence halls. Each residence hall our Greek house participated individually, with the exception of ZTA and DZ, who combined their session. Arkansas Hall and the Living-Learning Communities (Honors, ROTC and STEM) also combined their session. Overall, the table top format seemed to work better with Greek organizations, but all participants reported value in the opportunity to ask questions and clarify reasoning behind certain procedures. A combination of table tops and live drills is recommended for the future.

The following report includes timing information and areas for improvement identified during the drills and their follow-up activities, along with steps to address the issues noted. Observations and corresponding action steps are assigned to the appropriate department in the sections below.

Observations Overview

Observation: Recorded sessions on Zoom did not save properly in the cloud.

- Action Step 1: Record on personal device and discuss alternatives with ITS
- Responsible Department: Safety & Emergency Management

Observation: RAs reported that they use apps like GroupMe to communicate regularly and that these might be used to help account for residents after evacuation. One sorority reported that they would use the Find My Friends app, which could provide a physical location automatically.

- Action Step 2: Encourage use of similar technology to streamline the process of ensuring all evacuate.
- Responsible Department: Individual Greek houses and RAs in their areas of responsibility.
- Note: This strategy is purely supplemental and voluntary, depending on an individual resident's wiliness to use these apps on their personal phone, so it cannot replace steps in emergency procedures

Observation: There is concern for the physical appearance of participation with no real proof – logging on with no camera activated and no active participation in the discourse.

- Action Step 3: Measure participation and recognize groups that have the most participants on the call and the most active participation as a percentage of members present
- Responsible Department: Safety & Emergency Management will identify these measures at the beginning of future fire table top exercises.
- Action Step 4: Cameras and/or audible participation should be required. If there are not any cameras or microphones available, social distancing within a permitting room and utilize one phone per two people.

- Responsible Department: The director of Greek Life participated one of the fraternity table tops and had participants turn on their cameras. It is recommended for that representatives from University Housing or Greek life communicate this to participants at the beginning of the exercise.

Observation: A majority indicated that they did not know how to use a fire extinguisher.

- Action Step 5: Forward Fire Extinguisher Safety presentation to all campus residents. Presentation can be found online: <http://www.astate.edu/a/ehs/emergency-services/files/fire-safety.pdf>
- Responsible Department: Safety & Emergency Management

Observation: Assigning responsibilities

Sororities

The amount of time that it took for most sororities to complete the training would range from 55-70 minutes. The participation was as expected and resulted in appropriate discourse within the exercise.

Observation: Sororities in general were more familiar with the concept of a “go bag” or evacuation bag with essentials needed to leave their residence for an unspecified time.

- Action Step 6: Encourage practice of using “go bags” or other means to ensure essential items are immediately retrievable in the event of any evacuation
- Responsible Department: Safety & Emergency Management will post information about “go bags” on its website and share with campus residents

Observation: The level of participation varied from sorority to sorority. Some had multiple members actively engaged, but others only had two and sometimes one person who answered all questions.

- See Action Steps 3 and 4 in Observations Overview section

Observation: Knowledge of fire drill procedure varied as well. Some were familiar with the “walk and knock” / “pound and howl” procedure, but others had no concrete plan in place.

- Action Step 4: Implement a completely unannounced drill in person. Vary times throughout the semester to account for individual schedules
- Responsible Department: Safety & Emergency Management will coordinate live drills in the spring semester, assess implementation of plans and report deficiencies

Fraternities

The amount of time that it took for most fraternities to complete the training would range from 80-93 minutes. This was longer than most exercises and resulted in a very detailed and precise table top exercise.

Observation: The participation from fraternities was split. Those who showed up did better than expected and resulted in good discourse between the administrators and participants. Most were interactive and understood key concepts of the exercise. Others did not show up to their scheduled time and did not reschedule their exercise.

- Action Step 5: In future exercises, require all participants to schedule dates with the Office of Greek

Life and recommend withholding approval for social events until exercises are completed.

- Responsible Department: Office of Greek Life.

Observation: Some participants were not actively engaged and some were even driving with their phone on their knee or propped up.

- Action Step 6: Reiterate that active participation is highly encouraged but not at jeopardy of personal health.
- Responsible Departments: Safety & Emergency Management, Office of Greek Life and organization leadership.

Residence Halls

The amount of time that it took for most resident halls to complete the training would range from 65-70 minutes. The participation was as expected and resulted in appropriate discourse within the exercise.

Observation: RAs were more familiar with university evacuation procedures than Greek organizations, likely due to experience with complex drills, whereas Greek housing is usually straightforward due to the smaller size of the houses, which are rarely over 2 stories tall.

- Action Step 7: Combine table top exercises with a mixture from all housing types, so that participants can learn from one another.
- Responsible Department: Safety & Emergency Management, Office of Greek Life and University Housing.

Observation: Based on the RAs familiarity with evacuation procedures, residence halls are likely ready to conduct drills with minimal direction from Safety & Emergency Management.

- Action Step 8: Use mixed tabletops as an opportunity to review procedures then have RAs run the subsequent drills largely on their own.
- Responsible Department: Safety & Emergency Management will ensure procedures are covered in table tops. RAs should pre-assign responsibilities and communicate among themselves prior to Safety Officers arriving for live drills.