VCSU SAFE OPERATING PROCEDURES:
Building Evacuation

It is very important that regardless of the type or duration of an evacuation that faculty, staff, students and visitors listen very carefully to official information and evacuation orders issued from the university administration.

An evacuation may last from a few hours to several days. Individuals should consider where the individual might stay and what items the individual needs. Evacuees should take any medication, textbooks, laptop computers, and personal/important papers when leaving.

Information from Pittsburg State University’s building evacuation plan was used in developing the building evacuation plan.

Evacuation Plans

Building Evacuation

- Evacuate a building/area when emergency communications systems indicate to do so or when instructed by local law enforcement, county or city officials, or by appropriate Valley City State University personnel.
- Remain calm. Your calm leadership may very well save lives.
- Aid individuals needing assistance. Anyone who is aware of a hearing or sensory-impaired person in the building should alert that person of the need to evacuate. Report the location of all persons with disabilities to emergency personnel.
- In case of fire, do not use elevators.
- When evacuating the building/area, proceed to a designated or alternate assembly site and remain there until a designated university personnel instruct you to disburse.
- Due to weather or other conditions, evacuation may be determined to be more appropriate to other areas. Appropriate emergency or university personnel will announce a move to a different area via emergency communication systems.
- Never return to an evacuated building/area until an all clear is announced from the appropriate university personnel.

Campus Evacuation

A widespread emergency may require an evacuation of the entire campus. Examples of such emergencies include floods, fires, and large-scale public health emergencies, such as a pandemic flu event. Remember the below terminology in order to understand a campus evacuation:

- Classes canceled:
  - A period of time when classes will not take place at VCSU, therefore grading and attendance policies are revoked.
- Voluntary evacuation:
  - An evacuation order given to VCSU students prior to a large-scale emergency. Classes are officially canceled and the grading and attendance policies are revoked. Students are encouraged to leave campus for a safer location but are not required to do so. Voluntary evacuations do not affect VCSU employees.
- Campus closed/ class continuing:
  - A situation in which only essential personnel are allowed on the campus, but classes will continue using alternative delivery methods.
- Mandatory evacuation:
  - An evacuation order in which students are required to evacuate the residence halls and leave campus for a safer location. The campus will soon close following a mandatory evacuation and all residence halls will be locked.
- University closed:
o All business operations will cease at VCSU. No VCSU faculty, staff, or students will be allowed on campus unless designated as emergency personnel. Entrances will be blocked and all services stopped until the university is once again opened. VCSU reserves the right to partially open the University for business operations and continue the cancellation of classes if necessary. This will be specified in public announcements.

- University opened:
  o When access to campus will open to traffic and VCSU students, faculty, and staff will be allowed on campus. Business operations and education processes will resume where possible. However, classes may or may not resume at this time and residence halls may or may not remain closed. VCSU reserves the right to partially open the university for business operations and continue the cancellation of classes if necessary. This will be specified in public announcements.

All of the above steps will be announced using emergency notification methods.

For VCSU Employees
Please keep in mind that normal working hours will continue unless otherwise stated in emergency messages. Class cancellations pertain only to students. Employees should be aware of when the campus closes.

For VCSU Students
If a voluntary evacuation is issued for the campus, you are free to leave campus and go to a safer location. However, you may also remain on campus for the duration of the emergency if you choose. Voluntary evacuations are put into effect so that you have the opportunity to leave campus if you feel unsafe, or if your parents want you to return home. If you choose to remain on campus, VCSU staff will provide general services, such as food and water, to you during the emergency. Your access to the outdoors may be restricted if you choose to stay if hazardous weather occurs.

If a mandatory evacuation is issued for the residence halls, you will be required to evacuate your residence hall until the campus reopens. Your Residence Assistant (RA) will conduct floor meetings to assist you with the mandatory evacuation process. You MUST check out with your RA before leaving the campus and you must provide them with the location where you will reside off campus as well as contact information. You may not return to campus until you are notified that campus has reopened.

Students who cannot go home should report to the assistant housing director. The campus may provide transportation to shelters, or provided shelter in motels and/or hotels outside the evacuation area.

For Parents of VCSU Students
Continue to check the campus web site at www.VCSU.edu for information about evacuations and campus closings. Be sure to keep in touch with your son/daughter about his/her plans to evacuate.

Shelter in Place
Shelter-In-Place simply means seeking immediate, temporary shelter inside a building, residence hall, or area. This course of action may need to be taken during an accidental release of toxic chemicals to the outside air or other emergency where the escape route may not be safely secured.

Sheltering in place may be advised for individuals or large groups depending on the situation.

Notification
Notification of the need to shelter in place may come through several ways:

- Severe weather alert sirens.
- Emergency Alert System media broadcast.
- Direct observation or sense of dangerous situation.
- Directly from housing staff or other emergency personnel.
**Emergency Action**
- Stay calm.
- Stay inside a building.
- Seek inside shelter if outside.
- Seal off openings to your room if possible.
- Remain in place until you are told that it is safe to leave.
- Additional Actions:
  - Close all doors and windows to the outside
  - Do not use elevators as they may pump air into or out of the building
  - If possible, close and / or seal vents and ducts
  - Do not go outside or attempt to drive unless you are specifically instructed to evacuate

**Information Sources**
Tune to the Emergency Alert System station on your radio or television for further information.
Remain in place until appropriate University or emergency personnel tell you it is safe to leave.
*Information from Clemson University’s shelter-in-place plan was used in developing this information.*

**Emergency Shelters**
VCSU has two buildings listed as possible emergency shelters for the Red Cross. The agreement allows VCSU to maintain control of the buildings while the Red Cross operates the shelters. Graichen Gym and W.E. Osmon Fieldhouse are two locations for possible shelters. Barnes County Emergency Management and the Red Cross chose these facilities. Each county must have enough shelter space designated to house twenty-five percent (25%) of the county’s population.

If these shelters are activated, VCSU will receive notification from the Red Cross and/or the county. The ND Bureau of Criminal Investigations (BCI) will need to set up a registration point at each center. This is to help screen sex offenders and others from the general population. BCI will require power, tables, chairs, and Internet connections. Along with BCI, the ND National Guard generally provides security at the shelters. The Red Cross will provide beds and other materials. Additional supplies should be coordinated through Barnes County Emergency Management and the ND Department of Emergency Services.

**Minimum Care Facility**
The W.E. Osmon Fieldhouse is also designated as a minimum care facility per an agreement with City-County Health and Barnes County Emergency Management. In a large pandemic or health related emergency, the field house may be used as a lower level health care facility. VCSU will maintain control of the facility while City-County Health manages the minimum care facility. City-County Health will give ample notification to the campus in the event the building is needed.

**Fire Safety Evacuation**

**Emergency Fire Plan**
- Familiarize yourself with primary and secondary evacuation routes, nearest first aid stations, fire alarms stations, fire extinguishers, telephones, and stairways.
- Activate the nearest fire alarm pull box and call the Valley City Fire Department at 9-911. Give as much information as possible (name, location, type of fire, others in the building). Setting off an alarm automatically notifies the Powerhouse.
- Attempt to extinguish the fire ONLY if it is very small and you have been trained in proper operation of a fire extinguisher. Always activate the fire alarm system *first*.
- Only take medications and valuables, IF there is time.
- When the fire alarm sounds, immediately leave the area using the designated evacuation route posted for the area you are currently in.
- When evacuating, **do not use elevators**. Walk – do not run!
- If using stairways, stay in single file and keep to the right as fire department personnel may be coming up the stairway.
- If employees or visitors have disabilities or need assistance evacuating, assist them to an “Area of Rescue Assistance” or Area of Refuge that is away from obvious danger. Then go to the building
• Evacuation assembly point and notify the on-site Emergency Response Officials of the location of the person in the Area of Rescue Assistance. The Area of Rescue Assistance is located next to each stair case entrance, unless otherwise instructed. (see Appendix D)

• Close all doors behind you to help contain the fire.

• Before opening any door use the following procedures:
  o Slowly open the door if it is not hot.
  o Follow the evacuation route and move to the nearest stairway.
  o Do not enter the hallway if the smoke is too heavy.

• If you cannot leave the room:
  o Close the door and place a towel or piece of clothing along the bottom to block smoke.
  o Open the windows for fresh air, and hang a sheet or large piece of clothing out the window. This will notify the emergency personnel that you are inside.
  o Call 9-911 and inform emergency services of your location, and wait for them to assist you.

• Notify your direct supervisor if any individuals suffer an injury.

• Exit the building and proceed to the designated assembly point (posted at the entrances of all buildings) for headcount and accountability. The meeting place should be a reasonable safe distance from the building to ensure the safety of employees and visitors if there is a fire or explosion. Allow for the flow of emergency vehicles and personnel – keep clear of the traffic lanes around the buildings. Remain outside until given further instructions by the Fire Department or VCSU Building Emergency Team. Faculty and staff will assist in counting building occupants.

*If you know the cause of an accidental false alarm, notify VC Police immediately and make yourself available to the responding police and fire officials outside the building as appropriate to help them confirm the source.*

**Fire Drills**
Facilities Services will conduct fire drills periodically during the year. However, treat every alarm as if it were an actual fire. Follow all fire procedures during the drills. It is VCSU’s policy that participation in fire drills is mandatory and you may be subject to disciplinary procedures for non-compliance. VCSU Housing must conduct semester fire drills in accordance with the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008.