

TYPE:	Administrative
TITLE:	Emergency Communications
NO.:	ADMIN-265
RESPONSIBILITY:	Vice President, People, Communications and Enrolment
APPROVED BY:	Durham College Leadership Team
EFFECTIVE DATE:	May 2026

1. Introduction

During emergencies that may affect members of the campus community, Durham College (DC) is committed to providing timely, accurate, and coordinated communication. In the event of an incident impacting the Oshawa or Whitby campus, the Communications and Marketing (C+M) department leads and coordinates institutional communications, guided by the Emergency Management Response Team, through designated channels to support informed decision-making and promote campus safety.

2. Purpose

This policy and procedure outlines how information will be developed, approved, and disseminated to employees and students to ensure messaging is clear, consistent, and appropriate in the event of an emergency.

3. Definitions

Refer to [Durham College's Standard Definitions](#).

4. Policy statements

- 4.1. Internal communications are guided by DC's purpose, vision, values, brand, and policies.
- 4.2. C+M will provide accurate and timely communication as a necessity to employees and students.
- 4.3. C+M will work with the Office of Campus Safety to ensure communications are aligned with operational response efforts.

5. Procedure

- 5.1. The College's Manager, Emergency Management is responsible for declaring an emergency and notifying the campus Emergency Management Response Team (EMRT).

- 5.2. In the event of a high-level emergency, the Office of Campus Safety is responsible for notification of an active threat on campus and will activate Alertus, DC's emergency mass communication software.
- 5.3. The Manager, Emergency Management, will work with C+M to confirm situational details and the required response actions.
- 5.4. The C+M department is solely responsible for creating and distributing all internal and external communications during an emergency. To help the college communicate effectively and efficiently in an emergency, C+M has a comprehensive Emergency Preparedness Communications Plan and Emergency Communications Checklist in place.
 - 5.4.1. Information will first be communicated to employees and students through DC email.
 - 5.4.2. Depending on the nature, scope, and urgency of the incident, C+M may use additional communication channels to ensure timely dissemination of information including:
 - a) The DC corporate website, when information impacts campus operations, closures, or access to facilities.
 - b) Social media channels, when amplification is required, when the incident may be visible or disruptive to the broader community, or when directing audiences to official updates on the website.
 - c) A media statement or response may be issued when the incident has impact beyond employees and students or there is reputational risk requiring proactive clarification. C+M serves as the official point of contact for media.
- 5.5. Employees should not engage in communications activities related to the emergency in any form (email, social media, etc.) to avoid confusion, negatively impact C+M's ability to communicate clear and accurate information to the college community or jeopardize police investigation.
- 5.6. For situations involving Durham Regional Police Service (DRPS), C+M will strive to do the following whenever possible:
 - 5.6.1. Commit to timely and transparent communication, sharing information to the extent it can be without jeopardizing a police investigation. Communications may include sharing links to DRPS information (e.g. news releases) through authorized channels, including DC social media accounts when appropriate and when additional information will benefit employees and students.

- 5.6.2. Consult with the Ontario Tech University Communications department and provide notice of any campus-related communication prior to sending messages, and coordinate response as appropriate.
- 5.6.3. Communicate with students and employees, where appropriate and when possible, in advance of any media communication issued by DRPS related to the College.

6. Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act considerations

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) standards have been considered in the development of this policy and procedure and it adheres to the principles outlined in the College's commitment to accessibility as demonstrated by the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

7. Non-compliance implications

Non-compliance with this policy and procedure could negatively impact the current and prospective College community with both external stakeholders and the media, which could lead to significant financial loss and damage to the College's reputation.

8. Related forms, legislation or external resources

- Emergency Management Plan
- [Alertus App](#)