

Do You Know Your Responsibilities During Weather Emergencies?

By Pamela Lewis, *Institutional Advancement*

It's that time of year again — it's hot and muggy and things are swirling in the tropics. We hold our collective breath, watch the weather reports and hope that the Texas Gulf Coast dodges the hurricane bullet this year.

It is important to remember that warnings and evacuation orders for one place in the greater Houston area may not be applicable to what is happening in the Texas Medical Center (TMC), says Robert "Safety Bob" Emery, Dr.P.H., assistant vice president for Safety, Health, Environment and Risk Management.

"UT Health Science Center decisions will be based on conditions at the TMC and surrounding areas. Students and employees living in more vulnerable areas — Galveston, Chambers, Brazoria and East Harris counties, for example, need to work with their supervisors about any leave they may need to take due to their inability to get to the TMC.

"We all must remain aware of possible weather flare-ups and their ramifications during the entire hurricane season," Emery says. "Given the issues with evacuation problems during the lead-up to Hurricane Rita in 2005, we should be prepared for Houston's emergency management teams and those of the surrounding counties to possibly 'pull the trigger' a bit earlier."

In emergency situations, decisions regarding the open, restricted-access or closed status of The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston are made by executive leadership **based on the conditions impacting the institution at the central Texas Medical Center campus as well as other locations.**

This summary is designed to serve as a reminder of the roles and responsibilities of all students, fellows, residents, employees, supervisors and institutional leadership in times of emergency.

Student Responsibilities

Students are:

- Expected to attend classes and their normal academic responsibilities when the UT health science center is open.
 - Encouraged to:
 - Make home "all hazards" preparations for emergency situations and
 - Ensure care for family and pets in any type of emergency.
- Included in these preparations should be school contact information so that notifications

can be provided if an individual is unable to report to class.

- Responsible for knowing how to access information about the university's status open, restricted-access, or closed (see Emergency Numbers below). Students must understand that:
- If the institution is open, but they are unable to arrive to their class for whatever reason, the absence must be addressed with the course instructor, and established course and school attendance expectations will be adhered to.
- The buildings of the health science center are not a place of refuge, so in situations where the institution is in a condition of restricted access, only those individuals absolutely needing access to university buildings will be allowed. Examples of such essential persons would include;
 - Animal care workers and
 - Facilities support personnel.

In situations where the institution is closed by government-mandated evacuation, no building access will be permitted.

Employee, Fellow and Resident Responsibilities

Employees are expected to fulfill their normal work responsibilities when the university is open.

- Employees, fellows and residents are encouraged to:
 - Make home "all hazards" preparations for emergency situations (see article, page 4) and to
 - Ensure care for family and pets during any type of emergency.

The buildings of the health science center are not a place of refuge for family and pets in emergency situations, hence the increased need for at-home preparations.

- Employees, fellows and residents should have supervisor contact information with them at all times so that notifications can be made if an employee is unable to report to work.
- **Employees, fellows and residents who have been identified by their supervisors as critical to the continued operation of the unit are expected to have preparations in place for their families and pets so that they can fulfill their work obligations.**
- Employees, fellows and residents are

✂ Cut on dotted line and put in your wallet or purse

UT Health Science Center Emergency Numbers

In a serious weather or other emergency, UT Health Science Center employees and students may use the following means to find out the university's open/closed status:

- Tuning to radio stations: KILT-AM 610, KILT-FM 100.3, KPRC-AM 950, or KTRH-AM 740. Local television stations KHOU 11, KHCW 39, KPRC 2, KRIV 26, KTRK 13, KXLN 45 and KTMD 47.
- Employees with offices in the Medical School, UT Professional Building or Jesse Jones Library Building, call 713-500-7999. Harris County Psychiatric Center employees, call 713-741-5001.
- All other employees, fellows, residents and students, call 713-500-9996.
- Toll-free number if Houston numbers don't work: 1-866-237-0107.
- Closings and other emergency conditions will be posted on the Web at <http://www.uthouston.edu> and <http://www.uth.tmc.edu>. If these sites are not working, use <http://www.uthoustonemergency.edu>

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—Robert "Safety Bob" Emery

responsible for knowing how to access information about the health science center's open, restricted-access, closed status (see Emergency Numbers below).

- Employees, fellows and residents must understand that if the institution is open, but they are unable to arrive to their workplace for whatever reason, their supervisor must be notified and the appropriate type of leave time must be utilized.
- When the institution is in a condition of restricted access, only those who absolutely need access to university buildings, such as animal care workers and facilities support personnel, will be allowed to enter.

If the institution is closed by government-mandated evacuation, no building access will be permitted.

Supervisor Responsibilities

Supervisors are responsible for the identification of essential functions that must be maintained for their unit's continuous operation, including employee education about these essential operations.

- Supervisors also are responsible for having back-up capabilities so that services can be continued, even if an employee or employees cannot report to work.
- Supervisors are responsible for maintaining means for contacting their employees after hours.
- Supervisors should be aware of the types of leave that employees may use in situations where a region is affected, but the institution

remains open. Examples may include annual leave, compensatory time, or holiday worked.

Institutional Responsibilities

The university is responsible for:

- Maintaining a plan for responding to emergency situations, including means of informing executive leadership of situations, carrying out desired actions, and informing the health science center community;
- Maintaining an aggressive communication information system through Public Affairs to inform all of the health science center community about institutional status and developments;
- Providing for systems that can maintain certain support infrastructures during an emergency, such as controlled access, security, electricity, water and temperature/humidity control;
- Ensuring that institutional decisions during emergency situations are aligned with local decisions.
 - If Harris County is under a mandatory evacuation order, then the university would have no choice but to close.
 - If Galveston or any other county in the region is under a mandatory evacuation, but Houston is not, and the health science center remains open, **then employees and students from affected areas who cannot attend to their regular duties need to make individual arrangements for absence from school or work.** ★

Oral Surgery Clinic at Ben Taub Hospital Named after Dental Branch Alum

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Under Dr. Johnson, the service and its residents became known for their hard work and good manners — traits that reflected its leader.

A retired colonel from the U.S. Army, Johnson spent a total of 28 years in the military, in either an active or reserve status, including time spent in Operation Desert Storm and Operation Joint Endeavor. Because of his accomplished military background, he became an invaluable asset to the U.S. Army, whose residents have trained at Ben Taub Hospital, one of the world's most renowned Level 1 trauma centers, for the past 20 years.

As part of the Department of Surgery, OMS residents from the Dental Branch and U.S. military are responsible for all facial trauma patients who come to the hospital every third night of the week. Gunshots and blunt trauma from inter-

personal violence cause most of the injuries seen at Ben Taub, Wong says.

"Jimmy never looked back at what he left, but saw within Ben Taub Hospital an opportunity of a lifetime. It is difficult for anyone to be trained to manage the entire suite of conditions that present in a large urban county hospital, burdened by a chiasm of cultural neglect and economic restraints. Jimmy met these challenges with hard work and sacrifice. He had that capacity of being able to change people's lives for the better. In the end, his time at Ben Taub earned him a life and not just a living."

— James W. Wilson, D.D.S., associate professor and vice chair, department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, UT Dental Branch at Houston

"Much of the same trauma that is seen in Iraq is seen right here in Houston, so it is an excellent training ground for these residents," said James Kennedy, D.D.S., a 1966 UTDB alumnus who was selected to serve as chief of

service of the OMS division after Johnson's retirement. But Kennedy doesn't

mind admitting that Johnson's shoes can't be filled. "There is no question about it. He is a giant within our specialty — heads and shoulders above the rest," he said. "He has always diverted attention away from himself and toward his residents and patients. His patients always came first — that is the mark of a great surgeon."

Colonel Michael J. Will, D.D.S., M.D., consultant to the surgeon general for the U.S. Army Dental Corps, said Johnson's superb talent and leadership has

been one of the primary reasons the U.S. Army has sent residents to Ben Taub for so many years. Will, who is stationed at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, rotated to Ben Taub when he was a resident.

In a letter supporting the naming of the clinic after Johnson, Will said, "He is a surgeon whose surgical abilities and teaching capacity are second to none. Dr. Johnson has so favorably enriched the professional lives of so many military surgeons over the past 20 years.

"Most of the young military surgeons that Dr. Johnson trained in maxillofacial trauma have gone on to serve our country in the Middle East in support of the global war on terrorism."

Johnson said he welcomes the next phase of his life, but like most dedicated teachers he finds it hard to stay away. He is considering coming back to teach part-time at the UT Dental Branch. ★