

# Crisis Response Procedures

Goals for this module include:

- Top 10 tips for risk mitigation and emergency response
- Understanding the variety of incidents that could occur
- Describing how to provide timely and appropriate information and assistance to students
- Understanding how to respond to a situation

☰ Introduction

☰ Defining an Emergency or Incident

☰ Incident Levels

☰ Responding to an Incident

☰ Key Takeaways

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# Introduction

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In this module, we will explain **UNC's expectations regarding the measures that you should take to ensure the safety of our students**. Each individual situation will demand a unique response, and we trust your judgment in weighing all of the factors and taking appropriate action within the guidelines provided. As UNC's primary contact overseas for your program, **you serve as our students' main link with our campus and the host community**.

All activities involve inherent risks, and leading programs domestically or abroad is no exception. As the faculty or staff lead of a UNC program abroad, you may find yourself facing risk, incidents, or emergencies involving one or more of the program participants. UNC cannot ensure the absolute safety of our students in every eventuality, and students are ultimately responsible for their own actions and decisions.

However, there are **basic strategies to undertake towards the goal of facilitating a rewarding program while prioritizing the health and safety of our students**. You are *not* expected to be an expert on all of the various health and safety issues that may occur during a program, but it is **essential that you educate yourself on the basic health, safety, and risk concerns at your destination**.

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## Defining an Emergency or Incident

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An emergency/incident is any circumstance or event that poses a threat to, or has already disturbed, the health, safety, or security of participants, faculty, or staff on your program.

Emergencies may be both "real" and "perceived."

- **Real** emergencies are those events which pose a genuine and sometimes immediate risk to the health, safety, or well-being of program participants.
- **Perceived** emergencies are those which pose no significant risks to the safety or well-being of participants, but which are seen as threatening by the participants, family members back home or by others, including friends, fellow students, or program staff. In many instances, a perceived emergency may require a response that will feel similar to a real emergency.

Emergency situations can happen anytime, but do have general characteristics:

- **Individualized:** What is an emergency to one person may not be to another, especially with perceived emergencies.
- **Unexpected:** They can happen at anytime and when you least expect them.
- **Time is critical factor:** The first actions taken in response to an emergency and the rapidity of the response often determine whether the situation is contained or if it worsens.
- **Vary in intensity:** Emergencies move along a fluid continuum of levels, which will be addressed in the next section.

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While it is not possible to plan for all contingencies involving program related travel, observing the procedures discussed in this training and in the accompanying **Incident Response Guide** will allow you to react in a responsible and level-headed way when emergencies and health and safety

incidents arise. It also allows you to provide, in a consistent and predictable way, for the safety and well-being of participants.

CONTINUE

## Top 10 Tips for Risk Mitigation and Emergency Response

- 1 Do the right thing.
- 2 Do something rather than nothing.
- 3 Consider what a reasonable person would do and do it.
- 4 Build your Emergency Action Plan. Consider what could go wrong before the program begins.
- 5 Disclose and discuss any potential health, safety, and security risks in the program location.
- 6 Refer back to the releases signed by students during application process.
- 7 Don't adopt policies or procedures that you can't enforce.
- 8 Alcohol/drugs and students don't mix well.
- 9 Prepare yourself and students - information is key to healthy and safe behavior.
- 10 Involve and educate yourself and those you work with on campus about your program and important outcomes.

# Incident Levels



Incidents are categorized into **three levels** based on severity of the situation and the impact it has on an individual or the group.

## Level One

A **Level One** incident is typically **minor in nature and lower in severity and impact** on an individual's or the group's safety, security, and well-being. Most incidents you encounter abroad will be Level One, but it is crucial to address these incidents promptly so that they do not escalate!

Examples include:

- Academic or behavioral misconduct
- Unusual or changed patterns of interaction in class/the field
- Minor illness or injury that may or may not require medical attention
- Minor harassment
- Non-violent theft or loss of personal items or documents, such as loss of passport, cell phone and other possessions
- Changed political or social circumstances that do **not** impact or disrupt program operations, such as political unrest, natural disasters, and terrorist activity

## Level Two

A **Level Two** incident is **moderate in severity and impact and may pose an immediate threat** to an individual's or the group's safety, security, and well-being. These incidents may occur and require swift response and ongoing support.

Examples include:

- Major illness or injury requiring hospitalization
- Mental health emergency or suicide threat from student
- Physical or sexual assault
- Student commits a crime and/or is arrested
- Missing person

## Level Three

A **Level Three** incident is **major in severity and impact** and **poses a real threat** to an individual's or the group's safety, security, and well-being. Although rare, these incidents can be catastrophic and require a large-scale response.

Examples impacting an individual participant include:

- Life-threatening injury
- Death of a participant

Examples impacting the full group include:

- Changed political or social circumstances that **do impact or disrupt program operations**, such as political unrest, natural disasters, terrorist activity, and public health emergencies.

# Responding to an Incident



As a faculty or staff lead, you should be prepared to respond to incidents of varying severity and impact. Your **first concern in any incident is to secure the safety and well-being of the impacted program participant(s)**. All actions taken during any level of incident or emergency can be organized under these steps. However, it is important to note that the actions you take may not neatly fall into this order; more often than not, all will be happening at the same time. Please be mindful that situations are often fluid and can change very quickly.

When a situation arises:

1

## Stabilize

- Remain calm. Deep breathing can help.
- Ensure all participants (students, faculty, staff) are contacted and accounted for and, if possible and relevant for the incident, assembled in a single location.
- Concern for participants physical and psychological well-being should guide all decisions.

2

## Assess & Respond

- Perform an initial assessment of the situation, gathering as many facts as possible.
- Respond to the needs of those impacted.


3

## Communicate

- Share information about the situation with those who need to know.
  - **Contact your Study Abroad Office Program Director or Program Administrator in your school as soon as possible.** They will be able to confer with you and mobilize UNC officials as necessary to respond to the situation.
- Start an incident form immediately and continue to use it to document the situation as it evolves, and the response.



## Monitor & Debrief

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- Continue to monitor the situation and those impacted. Consider what additional factors are at play, such as: potential academic impact, financial considerations, legal issues, or physical or mental health concerns.
  - Review the situation and evaluate how it was managed.
    - The crisis should not be considered concluded until planning and execution have been reviewed for effectiveness. All parties should meet to evaluate the overall management of the situation.

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### **Incident Documentation Form**

It is important to document the situation as it is happening, providing a record of events as they occur. This process should be started as soon as possible, will be ongoing until the situation is resolved, and communicated to your UNC designated on-campus contact.

The incident documentation should include:

- Date, time, and location of incident
- Name of all individuals (student, faculty, onsite staff, etc.) involved and impacted by event
- Description of incident (i.e. what happened)
- Description of steps taken in response to the incident
- Recommended follow-up to be done (as well as when to be completed)

Prior to departure, you will be provided with a link to our online incident documentation form.



# Key Takeaways




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As a result of this module, we hope you are familiar with:

- Top 10 tips for risk mitigation and emergency response
- The variety of incidents that could occur while abroad
- Understand how to respond to a situation
- Understand you are not alone. Your Program Director or Program Administrator in your school is available as a resource for support, and to help guide your response to the incident.

Lesson 6 of 7

# Quiz

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Question

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Perceived emergencies:

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- pose no significant risks to the safety or well-being of participants
- are seen or experienced as very real and threatening
- may require a response that will feel similar to a real emergency
- All of the above

Match the incident level with an example of that type of incident.

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☰ Level One - minor impact and severity	Academic or behavioral misconduct
☰ Level Three - significant impact and severity	Physical or sexual assault
☰ Level Two - moderate impact and severity	Life-threatening injury

Match the incident level with an example of that type of incident

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<p>☰ Level One - minor impact and severity</p>	<p>Minor illness or injury that requires medical attention</p>
<p>☰ Level Three - significant impact and severity</p>	<p>Mental health emergency or suicide threat from student</p>
<p>☰ Level Two - moderate impact and severity</p>	<p>Political unrest causing disruptions to program operations</p>

When responding to an incident, the correct steps for action are:

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1. Assess & Respond  
2. Stabilize  
3. Document  
4. Communicate

1. Communicate  
2. Stabilize  
3. Assess & Respond  
4. Document

1. Stabilize  
2. Assess & Respond  
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4. Document



Thank you for completing this course. Please exit this window to go to the next module.