



University of Pennsylvania Police Department 4040 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, Pa 19104		 
Directive: 107	Subject: Emergency Phones	Effective Date: 10/05/2015
Order of: Gary Williams, Chief of Police		Amended Date: 08/01/2023

I. Purpose

The purpose of this directive is to establish policy pertaining to the emergency phone system managed by the University of Pennsylvania Division of Public Safety (DPS).

II. Policy

Emergency (Blue light) telephones are located throughout the University of Pennsylvania campus and the surrounding community. The phones provide the public with direct access to the University of Pennsylvania Police Department Communications Center (PennComm).

It shall be the policy of the Division of Public Safety (DPS) to maintain and test all emergency phones managed by the University; respond to emergency and non-emergency calls for service placed through the emergency phone; conduct a review of phone locations every three years; and ensure the community is aware of the emergency phone service.

III. Scope

This directive shall affect all sworn and non-sworn UPPD employees.

IV. Procedures

A. Emergency Telephone Program

1. Emergency phones on University of Pennsylvania campus and the surrounding community consist of “Blue light” emergency phones and elevator emergency phones.
 - a. “Blue light” phones are generally found inside of weatherproof boxes affixed to autonomous poles with a blue light on top. Blue light phones are activated by picking up the receiver.
 - b. Elevator emergency phones are affixed directly to the elevator and are activated by picking up the receiver or pushing a button.

2. Details of the program are available to the public through the University of Pennsylvania Division of Public Safety website: <http://www.publicsafety.upenn.edu/TEC/blue-light-ephones/>.
 - a. The website encourages members of the public to use the University of Pennsylvania emergency phones to report a potential safety hazard or suspicious activity to the UPPD, to request a walking escort, for general assistance, or in case of emergency.
 - b. The website also provides a detailed map of all blue light phone locations owned by the University of Pennsylvania.

B. Response Procedures

1. All emergency phones owned and maintained by the University are linked directly to the University of Pennsylvania Police Department Communications Center (PennComm).
2. The University of Pennsylvania Police Department personnel shall be dispatched to respond to emergency calls for service originating from emergency phones.
3. The University of Pennsylvania Division of Public Safety (DPS) contracts with Allied Universal Security Services to provide uniformed guard services for the University of Pennsylvania community.
 - a. Allied Universal Security Officers assigned to the University of Pennsylvania are unarmed, have no powers of arrest or investigation and provide ancillary services to the UPPD by preventing and deterring criminal activities through supplemental patrols and walking escorts.
 - b. Allied Universal Security officers may be dispatched to respond to non-emergency calls from emergency phones. Allied Universal Security Officers may also be dispatched to supplement UPPD response to emergency calls for service from emergency phones.
4. Telephone calls from emergency phones are directly answered by PennComm dispatchers and take priority over other incoming calls.
 - a. When answering a call from an emergency phone, dispatchers will immediately determine the nature of the call, monitor the area around the emergency phone using the CCTV camera system and dispatch police and/or other emergency personnel to the identified location. Dispatchers are expected to remain on the line with a caller in order to gather further information that will assist responding personnel.
 - b. Disconnected calls or “hang-ups” from emergency phones shall be investigated immediately by PennComm personnel via the CCTV camera system. Police or security personnel may be dispatched based on the determination of the PennComm supervisor and UPPD Operations Room Supervisor (ORS).

C. Testing and Maintenance

1. The University maintains systems of both standard “hardwire” and cellular emergency telephones throughout campus.
 - a. Standard Emergency Telephones:
 - 1) Allied Universal Security personnel are responsible for conducting daily checks of all “hardwire” phones throughout campus and report their findings to PennComm personnel.
 - b. Cellular Emergency Telephones:
 - 1) The cellular emergency telephone system is self-diagnostic and will report any trouble conditions to PennComm on a daily basis.
2. On an annual basis, Allied Universal personnel conduct a physical inspection of all emergency phones throughout campus.
3. In the event that a malfunctioning or inoperative phone is reported to PennComm, a UPPD police officer or Allied Universal/UCD security officer will be sent to check the status of the phone.
4. All inoperable emergency phones shall be covered with an E-Phone bag indicating that the phone is out of service. PennComm shall notify the UPPD ORS of the inoperable phone; the PennComm supervisor shall send an e-mail to the Administrative Coordinator for Technology & Emergency Communications indicating the location of the inoperable e-phone as per PennComm Standard Operating procedure #388, “Emergency phone bags”.

D. Risk Assessment and Triennial Review

1. The Division of Public Safety, Department of Security Technology shall conduct risk assessments of all construction/security projects on campus and make recommendations regarding the placement of emergency phones as needed.
2. The Department of Public Safety shall conduct a needs review based security survey of the emergency phone system at least once every three years.

E. Compliance

Violations of this directive, or portions thereof, may result in disciplinary action.

F. Officers Assigned to Other Agencies

Officers of this department assigned to or assisting other law enforcement agencies will be guided by this directive.

G. Application

This directive constitutes departmental policy, and is not intended to enlarge the employer's or employee's civil or criminal liability in any way. It shall not be construed as the creation of a higher legal standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense with respect to third party claims insofar as the employer's or employee's legal duty as imposed by law. Violations of policy will only form the basis for departmental administrative sanctions. Violations of law will form the basis for civil and criminal sanctions in a recognized judicial setting.