

WIU EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

GENERAL INFORMATION

The WIU Emergency Alert System (WEAS) allows WIU officials to reach all students and employees with time-sensitive information during unforeseen events or emergencies using voice, e-mail and text messaging. During critical situations, WEAS will be used to broadcast pertinent information and provide details on appropriate response.

The contact information you provide on the WEAS Emergency Alert Contact Update screen will not be shared with other entities, and it will be kept private and confidential. Student and employee emergency contact information is used only for sending emergency messages through WEAS. Updates made on the Emergency Alert Contact Update screens will not update student or personnel records systems.

If you have a direct office phone number that bypasses your department's general number or automated attendant, then you should enter your direct telephone number for more efficient delivery of the WEAS message.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

QUESTION: Why does the Emergency Alert Contact Update screen automatically appear when I sign on to STARS (students) or WIUP/MVS (employees) at the beginning of each semester?

ANSWER: Every member of both the Macomb and Quad Cities WIU campus communities is required to update or simply verify their emergency contact information at the beginning of each term.

QUESTION: All of my contact information is already correct. How do I exit the Emergency Alert Contact Update screen and proceed to the main menu?

ANSWER: At the beginning of the term when the Emergency Alert Contact Update screen automatically displays after signing in, scroll to the bottom of the screen and click on "I have reviewed my information and everything is accurate," then click/hit "Enter." If after doing this, you are still not able to proceed to the main menu, please contact the Office of the VP for Administrative Services at (309)298-1800.

QUESTION: What contact data should I provide for the WIU Emergency Alert System?

ANSWER: WEAS can deliver messages to up to two home, two school, and two cell phone numbers, and one text messaging device. The WIU e-mail address is automatically included, but you may enter one additional e-mail address. The best emergency contact number may be your cell phone. Enter your cell phone number in the "SMS Phone" field in order to receive emergency text messages.

QUESTION: Will I be notified of campus emergencies during breaks (i.e. between semesters)?

ANSWER: If you are an active student (returning the following semester), and want to be notified of campus emergencies between semesters or during summer if you are not enrolled in summer classes at WIU, you may be notified by selecting the appropriate "Notify me between semesters" option on your Emergency Alert Contact Update screen.

QUESTION: I heard that others received a voice message from the emergency alert system but I did not. Why?

ANSWER: It is possible that your contact information was not properly loaded in the WEAS database or it may be inaccurate. Sign on to STARS (students) at <http://mvs.wiu.edu/stars.html> or WIUP/MVS (employees) at <http://mvs.wiu.edu> to verify your information. If everything is correct, and you still do not receive messages, contact the Office of the VP for Administrative Services at (309) 298-1800 or VPAS@wiu.edu.

QUESTION: I heard that others received a text message on the cell phone from the WEAS but I did not. Why?

ANSWER: To receive text messages, you need to enter your cell phone number on the Emergency Alert Contact Update screen in the "SMS Phone" field. Sign on to STARS (students) at <http://mvs.wiu.edu/stars.html> or WIUP/MVS (employees) at <http://mvs.wiu.edu> to verify your information. If everything is correct, and you still do not receive messages, contact the Office of the VP for Administrative Services at (309) 298-1800 or VPAS@wiu.edu.

QUESTION: If I change cell phone providers, do I need to change anything for WEAS?

ANSWER: No, as long as you keep the same phone number, you do not need to change your information in WEAS. If your phone number changes, you will need to sign on to STARS (students) or WIUP/MVS (employees) and go to the Emergency Alert Contact Update screen to change your cell phone number in the system.

QUESTION: I received the message in my e-mail inbox, but when I clicked the link to play the message nothing happened. Why?

ANSWER: You may not have a default media player like Windows Media Player or Quicktime installed. Download these players from www.microsoft.com or www.apple.com and install on your computer to listen to messages.

QUESTION: I received the message but I missed the information. What should I do?

ANSWER: While on the call, you can replay the message by pressing the star key (*) at the end of the message. You may also check your e-mail to locate the link for that message.

QUESTION: I received the message but it kept looping (repeating). Why?

ANSWER: The system attempts to detect whether it has reached a live person or an answering machine. Sometimes loud background noises may cause the system to loop. If this happens, use the mute feature on your phone or move to a quieter location to prevent the message from looping or repeating.

QUESTION: I see a caller ID display of (309) 298-9999. Who is this?

ANSWER: When the WEAS sends a message, it will always display Caller ID information. This number represents a unique number that was established to help you recognize that the incoming message is an emergency notification. Please save this number on your cell phone as a contact.

QUESTION: I am a student who lives at school for part of the year and at my parent's/guardian's home for part of the year. What should I record in the "Home" phone number fields when I am providing my contact information?

ANSWER: The system allows two school phone numbers and two home phone numbers. Students should include their school residence phone number in one of the "School Phone" fields on the Emergency Alert Contact Update screen. You may also enter your parent/guardian's home telephone number in one of the "Home Phone" fields. If you do this, your parent/guardian's home telephone will be contacted if an emergency notification is initiated at any time during the semester.

QUESTION: If I change any of my telephone numbers or e-mail address on the Emergency Contact Update screen, will it also update my student or employee records?

ANSWER: No. At this time, all updates made on the Emergency Contact Update screen will only update the WEAS database.

QUESTION: My office has an extension (intercom) number. Will WEAS dial my extension number too?

ANSWER: If your extension (intercom) number is reached through the University's automated attendant system, then yes, your extension (intercom) can be dialed by WEAS. You must, however, ensure that your three digit extension (intercom) number is correctly recorded on your Emergency Alert Contact Update screen.

After calling your main office number, as soon as the system detects an answer, the system will dial your three-digit extension (intercom) number.

For the Quad Cities campus, enter (309) 762-3999 as your main office number, and then add your three-digit extension.

If you have a direct office number that bypasses the department's general number or automated attendant, enter that number for more efficient delivery of the WEAS message.

QUESTION: Am I allowed to leave fields blank on the Emergency Alert Contact Update screen?

ANSWER: Yes. The only field that must remain populated is your WIU e-mail address. That field is locked and may not be deleted. All other fields are editable and may be left blank if not applicable.

QUESTION: What does the field entitled “TTY/TDD” refer to on the Emergency Alert Contact Update screen?

ANSWER: “TTY/TDD” refers to a group of telecommunication devices that make it easier for deaf and/or mute people to talk on the telephone. “TTY” is an acronym for telephone typewriter, teletypewriter or text phone. “TDD” is an acronym for Telecommunications Device for the Deaf.

If you are hearing impaired and have a TTY/TDD on which you would like to receive emergency notification messages, indicate the appropriate phone number in the TTY/TDD field on the Emergency Alert Contact Update screen.
NOTE: This number must match another number already provided in one of the other phone number fields (i.e. home, school, work, or cell).