

Tips for Back to School Safety

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For some, college is the first time you're leaving home so it can be an overwhelming thought.

Unfortunately, many students can lose a sense of reality while away at school because they're in an unfamiliar environment, unaware of the potential hazards the area is prone to. As we've seen all year, from the deadly tornadoes this spring to the current hurricane season, disasters can strike anywhere, and can affect college campuses as well.

As you return to campus, remember to take a few steps to make sure [you're prepared in case of an emergency](#):

- **Take the time to learn your campus' emergency plan**, like where your evacuation route would be to leave campus, or who would give the order to evacuate.
- **Sign up for your college or university's emergency alert system**. Many schools have a system that will alert students and faculty in the event of an emergency, either through a text message or an email, letting you know what to do and where to go.
- If you are living in a dorm, **learn and practice your dormitory's emergency evacuation plan**. Know where the nearest exits are from your room.
- **Use your phone as vital a communication vehicle** – have emergency contacts saved in your phone so you will be able to call or text in the event of an emergency.
- **Learn to update your social networking sites through your phone**– post/ update you status during an emergency to let family/friends you are OK.
- If your cell phone has internet access, **take advantage of mobile websites** that are formatted to display information within your phone's internet browser. And remember to bookmark useful mobile websites such as [The National Weather Service](#), [Center for Disease Control](#), and [FEMA](#).
- And of course, **get an emergency kit and store it under your bed or in your closet**. Include items such as a NOAA battery powered weather radio, canned food and a manual can opener, and important documents. ([More tips on building your emergency kit](#))