

**Safety,  
Security,  
& Fire  
Report  
2020**

## **Chief Nick Kirkland**

On behalf of the Meridian Community College Campus Police Department, I would like to welcome everyone to Meridian Community College, and our home on the web! Whether you are a student or a faculty or staff member, we want to make your college experience, and/or workplace, a safe and enjoyable one.

First, let me tell you a little about our police department, our authority, jurisdiction and our services. The Meridian Community College Campus Police Department is a full-service police agency which is always open to answer your questions, or to assist you in any way possible. We are located on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of Ivy Hall.

We have 11 full-time sworn police officers who are complemented by security officers. Campus police officers have jurisdiction and legal authority on all college-owned property. Since students live both on and off campus, we work very closely and share jurisdiction with the Meridian Police Department, the Lauderdale County Sheriff's Office and other law enforcement agencies. Those of you living on campus in residence halls will see officers on a regular basis. Police officers are required to patrol residence halls routinely.

Officers are also required to visit academic buildings. We maintain a high visibility on campus not to catch you doing something wrong, but to give you a sense of security and safety. Of course, if you are breaking the law in the police officer's presence, he or she will take the appropriate enforcement action. Be aware of the laws and policies of the college so you will know what type of behavior is illegal and unacceptable.

If you have any suggestions or ideas for classes or programs such as self-defense, personal safety, drug and alcohol-awareness, etc., contact Chief Nick Kirkland at 601-484-8620.

Being aware of your surroundings and using good judgment lessens the likelihood of you becoming a target for crime. Theft of unattended property is one of the biggest crime problems reported on campus. Locking your doors, marking and securing your valuables will reduce the chances you will be the victim of theft.

Violence is a top concern and one the police department takes very seriously. We encourage anyone who has become a victim of violence to report it to the police. It is very important to let us know regardless of whether or not you decide to press charges. There are resources available both off and on campus for victims of sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking.

These services are available whether or not a survivor decides to report the incident to the police. Sexual assaults are one of the most underreported criminal offenses on many college campuses. If you are a victim of a sexual assault, we encourage you to seek help. We cannot help you if we don't know about it.

Because of the thousands of students, faculty, and staff who are on the campus each day, many of them driving, it is very important to pay attention to traffic especially when crossing the street. Do not assume that vehicles will stop. It's important to practice what you learned as a child: look both ways before crossing the street.

Call the police department to inquire about our services, ask questions, or voice concerns. For emergencies dial 911, all other calls dial 601-484-8620 (Office)/601-938-0072 (Cell). Do not hesitate to contact me directly if I can be of assistance.

Chief Nick Kirkland Email: [nkirklal@meridiancc.edu](mailto:nkirklal@meridiancc.edu)

## **The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act**

Complying with the Clery Act requires Colleges and Universities throughout the United States to publish and distribute an annual report that contains crime statistics, security-related policy statements and the disclosure of fire safety requirements and local regulations.

Ø The Annual Security Report is published each year by October 1st for the general public. It discloses crime statistics that occurred on and around Meridian Community College covering a three year period.

Ø The crime statistics are compiled from reported incidents that occurred on campuses, public areas immediately adjacent to or located within the confines of campus properties and at non-campus facilities not within the same reasonably contiguous geographic area of the College, such as remote classrooms. The reports are taken by campus police or security officers, local law enforcement officers, and “campus security authorities” who are college officials who have “significant responsibility for student and campus activities”.

Ø Precautionary safety measure policies are disclosed such as the issuance of a “timely warning” notice, initiated when crimes have occurred on or within close proximity of the College and poses an on-going “threat to students, faculty and employees”.

Ø The Annual Fire Safety Report is contained within this report and it outlines the fire safety policies, practices and standards of the institution and disclosed statistics for the number of fires that has occurred in Meridian Community College residence halls.

## **HOW TO REPORT CRIMES & EMERGENCIES**

Students, faculty, employees, and guests of the College are encouraged to promptly report criminal incidents, accidents, and other emergencies to the Meridian Community College Campus Police Department. In the event of an emergency, members of the College community are instructed to first call 911 giving his or her name, location, and the nature of the emergency to the 911 operator. Immediately thereafter, the person reporting should call and report the incident to the Campus Police at the appropriate number at the locations listed below. Individuals may also respond in person to the Meridian Community College Campus Police Department located in Ivy Hall. To report a crime or incident, students, faculty, staff and visitors, whether a victim and/or a witness, have several options. They may contact the MCC Police Department to have an officer dispatched to their location to begin conducting the preliminary investigation, respond in person to the Campus Police Department, contact a Campus Security Authority, a designated College official, such as department administrators, directors and staff who has the authority to take reports or contact the local law enforcement agency.

### **Meridian Community College • 910 Highway 19 North Meridian, MS 39307**

Campus Police Telephone:

601-484-8620 (Primary Campus Police Number)

601-938-0072 (Campus Police Secondary Number)

601-484-8874 (College Crossing Guard Shack)

601-485-1893 (Meridian Police Department)

601-482-9806 (Lauderdale County Sheriff's Office)

### **Contacting Local Law Enforcement**

The Meridian Community College Campus Police Department has enforcement authority on any property owned by the College. However for major crimes, the local law enforcement agency such as the Meridian Police Department or the Lauderdale County Sheriff's Office would be the lead agency conducting the investigation. To this end, local law enforcement agencies may lead or assist with specialized and complex investigations on campus, handle off-campus incidents and will be contacted at the request of a victim. Members of the MCC Campus Police Department and other college officials will assist any victim with identifying the appropriate local jurisdiction to file a criminal report and notification of that law enforcement agency. It should be noted, when considering to file a report, the victim usually retains the right to file the report and to seek prosecution.

### **Filing Internal Complaints**

As an alternative to filing reports with outside agencies, Meridian Community College has an internal system in place for handling alleged discriminatory, harassment and misconduct with gender based overtones, in accordance with Title IX. These complaints can be filed at the Office of the Title IX Coordinator, Derek Mosley, located in Smith Hall 109. (601-553-3453)

[dmosley@meridiancc.edu](mailto:dmosley@meridiancc.edu)

The College's systems are designed to afford a complainant (the person who is bringing a charge) and a respondent (the person who is answering a charge) a fair, prompt, and impartial

process. The process is designed to help persons who need support, while at the same time addressing an incident. Alleged complaints are taken seriously and will be investigated by the appropriate College authority to determine the violation.

In certain proceedings, both the complaint and the respondent are entitled to having others present for support during proceedings. Both parties will be informed of the outcome of the proceedings in certain instances. The College exercises a wide range of latitude when determining sanctions which can range from an informal resolution to formal disciplinary actions to include expulsion or termination.

## **Confidential Reporting**

### **Voluntary Confidential Reporting of Crime**

If crimes are never reported, little can be done to help other members of the community from being victimized. We encourage the College community members to be an active participant in our crime prevention and reduction efforts by promptly reporting criminal incidents.

If you are the victim of a crime or want to file a report of a crime, but do not want to pursue any further action within the College or criminal justice system, we ask that you consider filing a voluntary, confidential report. You may file this report, known as “Silent Witness”, by going to the MCC Campus Police website located at this web address:

[http://www.meridiancc.edu/campus\\_life/campus\\_police/silent\\_witness/index.html](http://www.meridiancc.edu/campus_life/campus_police/silent_witness/index.html) With your permission, a designee of the Chief of Police can file a report on the details of the incident without revealing your identity, depending upon the circumstances of the crime you are reporting. The purpose of a confidential report is to comply with maintaining your confidentiality while taking steps to ensure your safety and the safety of others. Confidential reports allow the College to compile accurate data on the number and types of incidents occurring on campus and are for disclosure in the Annual Security Report.

### **CAMPUS SECURITY AUTHORITIES**

Administrators, directors and staff members identified as having a significant responsibility for student and campus activities that include, but are not limited to, those responsible for student housing, disciplinary and campus proceedings have been designated as Meridian Community College Campus Security Authorities.

## **Off-Campus Incidents**

In Meridian, MS, the Meridian Police Department responds to off-campus incidents which occur in the city limits. The Lauderdale County Sheriff's Office has jurisdiction in Lauderdale County both inside and outside the city limits.

## **Our Officers and Their Training**

Campus security is provided by a College-employed staff of Campus Police officers and Security Officers.

- Police officers are certified by the State of Mississippi Board of Law Enforcement Officers Standards and Training and are sworn Peace Officers.
- Campus Police officers receive basic law enforcement training at the Mississippi Law Enforcement Officers' Training Academy and all receive continuous in-service training in law enforcement and human services.
- Security officers, although without police power, are able to enforce College rules and regulations.
- Officers are in constant radio communication with mobile and stationary units as well as other police agencies.
- Marked vehicles allow flexibility and mobility in patrolling the campus area. Officers patrol in vehicles, on foot, golf cart, and bicycles.

## **To Protect and Serve**

The Campus Police Department is a team of professionals working to provide a secure environment in which the educational mission of the College can be fully realized. The officers and staff are service-oriented and committed to the safety and well-being of those associated with Meridian Community College. They provide crime prevention and control, criminal investigation, traffic and parking supervision, disaster coordination, maintenance of public order and other related services. The officers of the department are responsible for the enforcement of state and local laws. They also work closely with the Dean of Student Services to ensure that safety policies and procedures are uniformly executed and conveyed in a clear and consistent manner to the College's students, faculty, visitors, and staff. The department's ability to function as an independent law enforcement agency enables the staff to respond to situations requiring police assistance while still maintaining the autonomy of the College.

## **MCC Campus Police Assistance Programs**

Many staff members, students and visitors to our campuses may be unaware of the services that our office provides. The following is a list of things that we can do for you:

- Investigate all incidents on campus.
- Make emergency notifications.
- Escort service to your vehicle or building to building.
- Maintain the College lost-and-found service.
- Issue vehicle registration decals.
- Provide classes, clubs, offices with programs on safety awareness and crime prevention tips.

### **Campus Safety and Security Services**

- Provides a full service police department on campus.
- Provides and maintains doors that lock to all rooms and buildings.
- Implements safety and security awareness programs, such as self-defense and substance abuse education.
- Conducts campus lighting and safety surveys.
- Issues identification cards to all students and employees, which provide access to campus activities and facilities.
- Manages campus parking.

### **Facility Access and Security**

• Identification cards with proper validation are issued to all students and employees. They are to be used for admission to residence halls, athletic facilities, and social events. These cards are necessary for students and employees to take advantage of library, bookstore, financial aid, food service, and business office privileges.

Failure to visibly wear one's I.D. card at all times when on College property can result in fines and disciplinary action, including suspension from MCC. The I.D. card must be surrendered to any College official upon request.

- Exterior entrances to residence halls, academic, technical, career and athletic facilities are routinely and regularly patrolled and secured by the Campus Police/Security officers. Additionally, Campus Police/Security officers provide routine and regular foot and/or vehicular patrol of the Campus.
- Maintenance of security hardware and electronics is provided by the College's maintenance employees.
- Private business or solicitation may not be conducted on College premises, including residence halls and/or academic buildings, except when a student organization has requested a particular service which is directly relevant to the purpose of that organization and has been given approval by the appropriate college officials.
- Exterior entrances to all residence halls have controlled access by mechanical lock.

### **Security in the Residence Halls**

Meridian Community College has 3 residence halls.

All students have the opportunity to request changes in room assignments, which are accommodated as quickly as possible based upon available facilities. The College does not provide off-campus housing.

- Resident Assistants staff the halls and are on call 24 hours a day. They undergo thorough training by Campus Housing in enforcing residence hall security procedures.
- Residence Hall Staff Members are assigned to the desk at the main entrance of the residence halls during specific hours of the day.
- All exterior doors in residence halls are locked at 10:00 PM and reopen at 7:00 AM when staff is on duty. Eagle Hall exterior doors remain locked at all times.

## **Residential Safety & Security Programs**

Currently, the College has a multi-faceted program to inform students and employees of campus security procedures and crime prevention.

- The Campus Police/Security Department, along with the Dean of Student Services, utilizes multi-media presentations to promote crime prevention and awareness in the College community.
- Campus Police schedule Rape Aggression Defense classes each semester.

## **Offenses Classified Under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)**

The signing of the “2013 Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act” broadened the Clery Act crime categories in regards to the disclosure of statistics. In addition to disclosing statistics for Sexual Assaults, the Clery Act now requires statistics to be disclosed for Stalking, Domestic Violence and Dating crimes. At Meridian Community College, victims of and witnesses to crimes are encouraged to file reports with MCC Campus Police Department or the Title IX Coordinator, Derek Mosley, located in Smith Hall, room 109, 601-553-3453, [dmosley@meridiancc.edu](mailto:dmosley@meridiancc.edu). Reports can be filed directly with the Meridian Police Department as well. The College takes all reported incidents of violence seriously. If the victim elects to file a report with the MCC Campus Police Department, the officer investigating the case will work with the victim to gather the evidence and pertinent information for case development. The officer will advise the victim about the College counseling agreements with Weems Mental Health and Psychology Associates, as well as outside services available to them such as The Care Lodge or The Wesley House. It is the decision of the victim to file a report; however any report of sexual misconduct must be reported to the Title IX Coordinator. Additionally, officers may inform victims of local agencies and organizations that provide emotional support, medical and legal assistance.

## **Changing Living, Academic, and Working Situations**

Any Meridian Community College student, faculty, and/or staff who are the victim of a crime of violence, e.g. a sexual assault or relationship violence may file a request to change her/his living arrangements (if they live on campus) and/or academic schedule if they attend a class, and/or work assignment (if they are employed on campus). The Office of Student Services, Housing Director, and/or Director of Human Resources will assist individuals with this matter. These changes will be made, as long as those changes are reasonably available.

## **Sex Offender Registry**

Campus Sex Crimes Prevention Act

The CSCPA provides requirements relating to registration and community notification for sex offenders who are enrolled in or work at institutions of higher education. Effective October 2003, the law required institutions of higher education to issue a statement advising the campus community where law enforcement agency information provided by a state concerning registered sex offenders may be obtained. This information can be obtained by accessing the Mississippi Sex Offender Registry at the following link: <http://state.sor.dps.ms.gov/>



# Meridian Community College

## Sexual Misconduct Policy

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Meridian Community College is committed to creating and maintaining a community in which students and employees can learn and work together in an atmosphere free of the threat of sexual assault. Every member of the college community should be aware that the College considers personal physical safety of students and employees to be a minimal prerequisite for the establishment of a quality learning environment.

MCC views any form of sexual misconduct (including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking) as a serious offense, and such behavior is prohibited by state law and by college policy. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination based on sex in education programs and activities. The College will investigate reports of violations of sexual misconduct in an impartial, prompt, and equitable manner. Reporting an incident is a separate step from choosing to prosecute. We are concerned with the victim's welfare and want to ensure that the appropriate treatment and support is provided. When a person files a report with the Campus Police, they are not obligated to continue with legal proceedings or college disciplinary action. Prosecution of individuals for crimes they commit, whether by state or federal prosecutors, is independent of and in addition to the charges or disciplinary proceedings instituted by the College. The Title IX coordinator (or designee) oversees the College's investigation and response to incidents of Title IX violations. Meridian Community College has designated the following employee as the Title IX Coordinator:

Mr. Derek Mosley  
Social Science Instructor  
Smith Hall, Room 109  
910 Highway 19 North  
Meridian, MS 39307  
Phone: 601-553-3453  
Fax: 601-484-8635  
Email: [dmosley@meridiancc.edu](mailto:dmosley@meridiancc.edu).

A student also has the right to file a formal complaint by contacting the United States Department of Education:

Office of Civil Rights (OCR)  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202.1100  
Customer Service Hotline: 800-421-3481 TDD: 877-521-2172  
Email: [OCR@ed.gov](mailto:OCR@ed.gov) Website: [www.ed.gov/ocr](http://www.ed.gov/ocr)

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### Types of Sexual Misconduct

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- 1. Sexual Assault:** An offense that meets the definition of rape, fondling, incest, or statutory rape as used in the FBI's UCR program.
- 2. Sex Offenses:** Any sexual act directed against another person, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent.

**Rape-** The penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim.

**Fondling** – The touching of the private body parts of another person for the purpose of sexual gratification, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her age or because of his/her temporary or permanent mental incapacity.

**Incest** – Sexual intercourse between persons who are related to each other within the degrees wherein marriage is prohibited by law.

**Statutory Rape** – Sexual intercourse with a person who is under the statutory age of consent.

**Consent** is defined as agreeing to do or allow something. It may be given by words or actions, so long as those words or actions create clear, mutually understood permission to engage in (and the conditions of) sexual activity. Silence does not necessarily constitute consent, and past consent of sexual activities does not imply ongoing future consent. A person who is unable to consent includes, but is not limited to, any person under the legal age of consent, anyone who is physically helpless, or anyone who is mentally incapacitated. A physically helpless person is considered to be one who is unconscious or for any other reason unable to communicate unwillingness to engage in any act. A mentally incapacitated person may be one who is under the influence of alcohol or a drug, or who is mentally incapable of understanding the implications and consequences of any act.

**3. Domestic Violence:** A felony or misdemeanor crime of violence committed

By a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim;

By a person with whom the victim shares a child in common;

By a person who is cohabitating with, or has cohabitated with, the victim as a spouse or intimate partner;

By a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction in which the crime of violence occurred;

By any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected from that person's acts under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction in which the crime of violence occurred.

**4. Dating Violence:** Violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim.

The existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on the reporting party's statement and with consideration of the length of the relationship, the type of relationship, and the frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship.

For the purposes of this definition, dating violence includes, but is not limited to, sexual or physical abuse or the threat of such abuse.

Dating violence does not include acts covered under the definition of domestic violence.

Any incident meeting this definition is considered a crime for the purposes of Clery Act reporting.

**5. Stalking:** Engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to

Fear for the person's safety or the safety of others; or

Suffer substantial emotional distress.

For the purposes of this definition:

*Course of conduct* means two or more acts, including, but not limited to, acts in which the stalker directly, indirectly, or through third parties, by any action, method, device, or means, follows, monitors, observes, surveils, threatens, or communicates to or about a person, or interferes with a person's property.

*Reasonable person* means a reasonable person under similar circumstances and with similar identities to the victim.

*Substantial emotional distress* means significant mental suffering or anguish that may, but does not necessarily, require medical or other professional treatment or counseling.

Any incident meeting this definition is considered a crime for the purposes of Clery Act reporting.

**Reporting sexual assault and receiving assistance**

The Title IX Coordinator (or designee) is available to help anyone who reports a violation of the sexual misconduct policy. The Coordinator can provide assistance and information regarding crisis intervention, assessment, and referral for the victim and the accused. The Coordinator, along with other members of student services, is responsible for coordinating prevention education efforts on campus.

Individuals may report violations of sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator by phone, email, or written notice. Employees of the college should report violations to the Human Resources Coordinator located in the Business Office of Hardin Hall.

When a student or employee reports to the institution that the student or employee has been a victim of dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking, whether the offense occurred on or off-campus, the College will provide the student or employee with a copy of the MCC Sexual Assault policy which contains written explanations of the student's or employee's rights and options.

A student may choose to use the College disciplinary process in cases involving another student, whether the incident occurred on- or off-campus. An individual has the right not to report if they choose. If the reporting student requests confidentiality or requests that the complaint not be pursued, the Coordinator will take all reasonable steps to investigate the complaint and respond consistently with the student's request as long as doing so does not prevent the College from responding effectively. The College will take all reasonable steps to protect the confidentiality of the victim and other necessary parties. Publicly available record keeping, including Clery Act reporting and disclosures, will not contain personally identifying information about the victim. The College will also maintain as confidential any accommodations or protective measures provided to the victim, to the extent that maintaining such confidentiality would not impair the ability of the institution to provide the accommodations or protective measures. The Coordinator will inform the student that confidentiality cannot be assured.

If the reporting student insists that he/she remains anonymous in the investigation, the Coordinator will inform the student that such a request will limit the College's ability to respond to the complaint. The Coordinator will evaluate the request in the context of the College's responsibility to provide a safe and nondiscriminatory environment for all students. When reasonably available, the College can provide assistance in changing academic, living, transportation, working arrangements, and other protective measures, if requested with the Coordinator, regardless of whether the victim chooses to report the crime to campus or local police and regardless of whether the incident occurred on or off campus.

Any college employee receiving a report of sexual assault involving a student should refer the matter to the Title IX Coordinator. The Coordinator will discuss options and resources with the person reporting the sexual assault and with the student.

Where applicable, MCC will enforce orders of protection, "no contact" orders, restraining orders, or similar lawful orders issued by criminal, civil, or tribal courts or by the institution.

MCC maintains relationships with various institutions which offer confidential services to assist victims of sexual violence. A few of those institutions are the Care Lodge, Weems Mental Health, Psychology Associates, and Wesley House. These institutions provide services such as counseling, health, mental health and victim advocacy. See the contact information below for off campus resources.

<p><b>Care Lodge</b>  24 Hour Hotline 601-693-4673  Community Service 601-482-8719  Domestic Violence Shelter  601-483-8436</p>	<p><b>Wesley House</b>  1520 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue  Meridian, MS 39307  601-485-4736</p>
<p><b>Weems Community Mental Health Center</b>  1415 College Drive  Meridian, MS 39307  601-483-4821</p>	<p><b>Psychology Associates</b>  5004 Highway 39 North  Meridian, MS 39307  601-693-8307</p>
<p><b>Anderson Regional Medical Center</b>  2124 14<sup>th</sup> Street  Meridian, MS 39301  (ER) 601-553-6111</p>	<p><b>Rush Foundation Hospital</b>  1314 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue  Meridian, MS 39301  (ER) 601-703-9260</p>
<p>Care Lodge- Meridian, MS  <a href="http://www.carelodge.com">www.carelodge.com</a></p>	<p>Wesley House- Meridian, MS  <a href="http://www.wesleyhousemeridian.org">www.wesleyhousemeridian.org</a></p>
<p>Mississippi Coalition Against  Domestic Violence  <a href="http://www.mcadv.org">www.mcadv.org</a></p>	<p>Clery Center for Security on Campus  <a href="http://www.clerycenter.org">www.clerycenter.org</a></p>

**Procedures for reporting a sexual misconduct violation:**

1. A person should go to a safe place as soon as possible.
2. The person should also try to preserve all physical evidence. If a person is reporting a sexual assault that has occurred within the previous 72 hours, it may be possible to collect trace evidence of the offense. This evidence is important particularly if a person wishes to prosecute the offender. Do not shower or bathe, wash hands, use the toilet, change clothing, or wash clothing or bedding. If the victim changed clothes, please place all of the clothing that was worn at the time of the incident in a paper (not plastic) bag.
3. Seek medical attention. A medical examination will provide any necessary treatment and collect important evidence. MCC police are available to transport sexual assault victims to any local hospital of the victim's choice where a rape examination may be conducted. See the local hospitals listed above.
4. A person may report the incident to the Title IX Coordinator or Campus Police, and/or local law enforcement.
5. Call MCC Campus Police. (It is the victim's decision whether to involve the police in an incident. Deciding not to involve the police does not prevent the victim from seeking assistance from the Title IX Coordinator.) To report an incident that has just occurred, or to report an incident at a later date, call MCC Campus Police at 601-484-8620 or 601-934-0072. Campus Police will assist the victim in notifying local law enforcement if the victim chooses to do so.

Reporting an incident to the MCC Campus Police helps:

- Identify and apprehend the alleged assailant;
- Maintain future options regarding criminal prosecution, College disciplinary action, and/or civil action against the perpetrator; and
- May protect the victim and others from future assaults by the same assailant.

When an incident is reported, an MCC police officer will complete an incident report. An investigator will be summoned to begin an investigation into the offense. This process is important if the victim wishes to bring criminal charges at this or a later time. The victim will be asked questions about the incident and asked to identify any witnesses and what happened before and after the incident. Generally, the MCC Campus Police works to safeguard the identity of the victim.

6. Call off-campus police. A person can call 911, the Meridian Police Department (601-485-1893), or the Lauderdale County Sheriff's Department (601-482-9898).
7. Seek counseling or other support. A victim who wishes to speak to someone confidentially is encouraged to contact one of the resources listed in the chart above.

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## Disciplinary process

In responding to reports of sexual assault, the College will support and protect the persons involved and protect the College community. Interim measures such as campus escorts, academic changes, employment or housing modifications, or interim suspension may be provided to any person involved in an incident.

A charge of sexual assault against an individual will be handled by the Office of the Dean of Student Services under the normal College disciplinary processes. The Dean, or Associate Dean, will conduct a prompt, fair, and impartial process from the initial investigation to the final result. The Dean, or Associate Dean, of Student Services has the discretion to suspend a student accused of sexual assault, pending the completion of the investigation. Upon completion of any necessary investigation, the Dean, or Associate Dean, of Student Services will formally notify the accused student of the charge(s).

Investigations involving any type of reported sexual assault will be conducted by officials who, at a minimum, receive annual training on the issues related to dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking along with how to conduct an investigation and hearing process that protects the safety of the victims and promotes accountability.

Both the person filing a complaint and the person accused of a violation of the policy on sexual assault has certain rights in the College disciplinary process. The standard of evidence in sexual misconduct violations is a preponderance of the evidence.

The person filing a complaint has the right to:

- Be present whenever the accused student is present in the disciplinary process;
- Be accompanied by a representative of their choice;
- Be present when (or if) disciplinary action is announced to the accused;
- Make a formal statement, orally or in writing, prior to consideration of any penalty to be imposed on the offender;
- Be notified, at the same time as the offender, of any penalty being imposed;
- Be notified of any appeals filed by the offender, and to respond to any new evidence presented as the basis for any appeal; and
- Be notified, at the same time as the accused, of the result of any appeals.

Both the accuser and the accused have the same opportunities to have others present during any

institutional disciplinary proceeding, including the opportunity to be accompanied to any related meeting or proceeding by the advisor of their choice.

Both the accuser and the accused will be simultaneously notified, in writing, of the result of any disciplinary proceeding that arises from an allegation of dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Both the accuser and the accused have the right to appeal the result of the institutional disciplinary proceeding.

Both parties will be notified when the results become final and any change to those results.

See the *MCC College Catalog* for the Disciplinary Process for Students and for the Student Appeals Procedure.

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### **Retaliation**

Retaliation against a person who has in good faith filed, supported or participated in an investigation of a complaint of any type of discrimination, harassment or sexual misconduct as defined above is prohibited. Retaliation includes but is not limited to, ostracizing the person, pressuring the person to drop or not support the complaint, or adversely altering that person's educational, living, or work environment. Students accused of retaliation will be subjected to the procedures of the MCC Disciplinary Process.

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### **Sanctions**

The sanctions for students found guilty of sexual assault under this policy range from a minimum of suspension for one year to a maximum of permanent expulsion. Any student suspended under this policy must, as a condition of reentering the College, submit to the Dean of Student Services proof of successful completion of counseling by a licensed mental health professional and the results of a psychological evaluation.

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### **Education programs**

MCC has contracted with a company to provide online, interactive sexual misconduct education for students and employees. Each module provides information related to sexual assault, dating and domestic violence, sexual harassment, bystander intervention and links to federal and state laws. Other topics related to healthy relationships, the importance of consent and being a good communicator, and the many ways a student can help create the safe, positive campus to be a part of are also discussed.

During the academic year, local agencies such as the Care Lodge and Wesley House provide programs and services to our students and employees relating to domestic violence. The Care Lodge also hosts a conference on Domestic Violence which is attended by various employees.

Following an allegation of dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, or sexual assault, MCC will provide to the best of its ability changes to a victim's academic, living, transportation, and working situations or protective services regardless of whether the victim reports to law enforcement.

### **Sexual Misconduct Education**

Meridian Community College is committed to creating and maintaining a community in which students and employees can learn and work together in an atmosphere free of the threat of sexual assault. Every member of the college community should be aware that the College considers personal physical safety of students and employees to be a minimal prerequisite for the establishment of a quality learning environment.

MCC views any form of sexual misconduct (including sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking) as a serious offense, and such behavior is prohibited by state law and by college policy. The College will investigate reports of violations of sexual misconduct in an impartial, prompt, and equitable manner. Reporting an incident is a separate step from choosing to prosecute. We are concerned with the victim's welfare and want to ensure that the appropriate treatment and support is provided.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination based on sex in education programs and activities. The Title IX coordinator (or designee) oversees the College's investigation and response to incidents of Title IX violations. Meridian Community College has designated Mr. Derek Mosley as the Title IX Coordinator.

MCC has partnered with EverFi to provide students and employees with a comprehensive sexual assault training program. **HAVEN: Understanding Sexual Assault** training addresses the issues of sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, consent, bystander intervention, and risk awareness. **Meridian Community College** wants to work together with you to create a fun, healthy and vibrant campus community. As part of that commitment, MCC encourages all students to complete **Haven** -- an engaging online, research-based program that provides a unique learning experience regarding important prevention skills and strategies for our students.

#### **To fulfill MCC's requirement:**

- **Always** sign in at: Eaglenet
- On the HOME tab, look on the left side for the section titled "Haven." The link "Log in here to complete Haven" is the last line displayed in that section.
- Complete Part 1 and Part 2 by the midpoint of the semester.

**Login problems?** Contact MCC's Helpdesk at [helpdesk@meridiancc.edu](mailto:helpdesk@meridiancc.edu) or at 601-483-8241.

**Other Important Information:**

- You will need Internet access and audio capabilities.
- To avoid technical issues, please use any major web browser (e.g., Firefox, Internet Explorer, Google Chrome) released within the previous two years.
- You may take the course in multiple sittings.
- The course may include surveys to help personalize your experience and measure students' attitudes and behaviors. All survey responses are confidential; the school will only receive information about the student body as a whole and will never see individual students' answers.
- Should you experience problems, technical support is available 24/7 and can be accessed from the "Help" link within the course.

All employees should complete the training via Eaglenet within the "faculty/staff intranet & help" tab.

MCC also works in conjunction with The Wesley House and The Care Lodge to organize pamphlet distributions, presentations, and one to one contact with students on campus. Students, faculty, and staff are also encouraged to attend Rape Aggression Defense Training (R.A.D.). "The Cornerstone of R.A.D. Systems, this course has its foundations in education and awareness. The course includes lecture, discussion and self-defense techniques suitable for women of all ages and abilities. Classes range from a minimum of nine to twelve hours plus in length, depending on the Instructor."

**Bystander Intervention**

Bystanders, the largest group involved in violence, who greatly outnumber both perpetrators and victims, have the power to stop abuse and to get help for people who have been victimized. Active bystanders are people who are aware of an abusive situation, and choose to speak up and say or do something without putting their own safety at risk.

The power to stop sexual violence is not limited to eyewitness heroics or endangering your own safety. Things you can do before or after an instance of violence will help STOP ABUSE at MCC:

- Call 911 if there is immediate danger to you or someone else.
- Speak up if someone says or does something indicating intent to commit sexual violence. Like stopping a friend from driving drunk, or stopping a friend or teammate from inappropriate actions, your intervening can help protect more than one person.
- Respect your fellow Eagles. Say something to protest offensive or derogatory remarks, including sexist or racist jokes. Always ask for partner consent in intimate situations. If you sense trouble, ask the affected person if help is needed.

**Tips for Intervening**

In a situation potentially involving sexual assault, relationship violence, or stalking:

- Approach everyone as a friend



- Do not be antagonistic
- Avoid using violence
- Be honest and direct whenever possible
- Recruit help if necessary
- Keep yourself safe
- Keep your phone handy, call for help or document when you can safely do so.
- If things get out of hand or become too serious, contact the Public Safety or the police.

## **Risk Reduction**

### **But I was at a party with friends...**

Most sexual assaults among college students involve people who know each other, and the majority involves use of alcohol or other drugs. Whether someone is sober or under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, if they are sexually assaulted they are not responsible for the assault.

Anyone can be sexually assaulted, and there are no sure means to prevent sexual assault because the only people who can prevent sexual assault are those who perpetrate it. However, you can take steps to lessen the likelihood that you or your friends will be assaulted or will assault someone.

Here are some tips to consider when you go out:

- Know where you are going and speak up if you are uncomfortable with the plans.
- Communicate with your partner: NO MEANS NO; CLEAR verbal or non-verbal CONSENT MEANS YES.
- Know that drinking and drug use can impair your judgment. You might not be able to make the same decision you would make if you were sober.
- If you drink, drink responsibly: eat a full meal before going out, have a glass of water between each drink, stick to one type of alcoholic beverage, know your limits and don't go beyond them, have a designated driver, and don't let anyone else make the decision of how much you will drink.
- Only drink something that you poured yourself or that comes in a pre-sealed container, and don't drink something that has been left unattended. Mixed drinks can have more alcohol in them than you might want to drink. Also, drugs (e.g., Rohypnol, GHB) can be dissolved in a drink, causing side effects such as nausea, dizziness, disorientation, &/or loss of consciousness.
- Use the buddy system and look out for each other. Don't go anywhere with someone you don't know well. If you do leave a party with a new friend, tell the friends you came with where you are going and when you are coming back. If you are worried about a friend's safety, tell them.

### **Reduce the Risk of Committing Sexual Assault**

1. Listen carefully. Take time to hear what the other person has to say. If you feel they are not

being direct or are giving you a “mixed message” ask for clarification.

2. Don't fall for the cliché “if they say no, they really mean yes.” If your partner says “no” to sexual contact, believe them and stop. If they seem uncomfortable or uncertain, stop and check in. It is never acceptable to force sexual activity, or to pressure, coerce, or manipulate someone into having sex, no matter the circumstances.

3. Don't make assumptions about a person's behavior. Don't assume that someone wants to have sex because of the way they are dressed, they drink (or drink too much), or agree to go to your room. Don't assume that if someone has had sex with you before they are willing to do so again. Also don't assume that if your partner consents to kissing or other sexual activities, they are consenting to all sexual activities. Obtain clear consent for each sexual activity.

4. Be aware that having sex with someone who is mentally or physically incapable of giving consent is rape. If you have sex with someone who is drugged, intoxicated, passed out, or is otherwise incapable of saying no or knowing what is going on around them, you may be guilty of rape.

5. Remember sexual assault is a crime punishable via campus conduct, criminal, and civil proceedings.

6. Be careful in group situations; resist pressure from friends to participate in violent acts.

7. Get involved if you believe that someone is at risk. If you see someone in trouble or someone pressuring another person, don't be afraid to intervene - or get help to do so.

### **Reduce the Risk of Being Sexually Assaulted**

1. Know your sexual intentions and limits. You have the right to say “NO” to any unwanted sexual contact. If you are uncertain of what you want, ask your partner to respect your feelings.

2. Communicate with your partner. Do not assume that someone will automatically know how you feel or will eventually “get the message” without you having to say anything. Just as its okay to say “NO” to unwanted activities, its okay - and important - to give clear consent to activities you would like to engage in. Avoid giving “mixed messages”; back up your words with a firm voice and clear body language (e.g., if you consent, give a big smile and say “YES!”).

3. Remember that some people think that drinking, dressing provocatively, or going to your or someone else's room is saying you are willing to have sex.  
Be clear up front about your limits in such situations.

4. Listen to your gut feelings. If you feel uncomfortable or think you might be at risk, leave the situation immediately and go to a safe place.

5. If you feel you are being pressured or coerced into sexual activity, you have a right to state your feelings &/or leave the situation. If you are concerned about the other person becoming angry, it is okay to make up an excuse to leave or create time to get help.

6. Attend large parties with friends you trust. Agree to “look out” for one another. Leave with the group, not alone. Avoid leaving with people that you don't know very well.

7. Attend a workshop on sexual assault risk reduction or take a self-defense course such as the RAD (Rape Aggression Defense).

### **If someone you know has been sexually violated**

DO:

- Be supportive, listen to them.
- Share your feelings of concern for them.
- Communicate to your friend that they are not responsible for the violation.
- Make sure your friend has a safe place to stay.
- Allow your friend to regain control by making their own decisions.
- Make yourself available to accompany your friend to a helping resource (e.g., hospital, Health Center, Counseling Center, Harlan House).
- Realize that you, too, have been affected and seek support if you need it.

DON'T:

- Attempt to seek revenge.
- Make jokes.
- Be angry with your friend.
- Force them to talk and/or take control from them.
- Ask your friend how they could “let this happen”.
- Assume you understand how your friend feels.
- Discuss the incident with others unless you have permission from your friend

Compliance with these provisions does not constitute a violation of section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g), commonly known as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA).

### **Definitions**

**Awareness Programs-** comprehensive sexual assault training program which promotes the awareness of the issues of sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, consent, bystander intervention, and risk awareness.

**Bystander Intervention-** is about preventing and de-escalating potentially violent incidents. It's about empowering bystanders with the confidence and tools to intervene in an incident in order to stop it in its process.

**Ongoing Prevention and Awareness-** comprehensive sexual assault training program which promotes the prevention and awareness of the issues of sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, consent, bystander intervention, and risk awareness provided in an ongoing manner. Students, faculty, and staff are provided with online Haven training as well as pamphlet handout and one to one interaction administered by the Care Lodge and Wesley House during the school year.

**Primary Prevention Program-** comprehensive sexual assault training program which promotes the

awareness of the issues of sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, consent, bystander intervention, and risk awareness. This training is offered to every new student, faculty, and staff member.

Risk Reduction- information and training aimed at reducing the risk of sexual assault. Haven training, pamphlet handout, and Rape Aggression Defense Training are examples of MCC's risk reduction education.

Proceeding- the investigation process.

Result- final determination in the investigation process.

## **Meridian Community College Missing Persons Policy and Procedures**

**Each student who lives in on-campus student housing, regardless of age, has the option to identify an individual(s) that the Meridian Community College can contact no later than 24 hours after the time the student is determined missing according to the school's official notification procedure.**

**Each on-campus housing student will be given a Confidential Contact Information sheet in which they can register one or more persons with the Director of Residence Life and Housing in the event the student is determined missing for more than 24 hours. This contact information is confidential and will only be accessible by authorized campus officials and may only be disclosed to law enforcement personnel.**

**Meridian Community College will notify the parent or guardian of any student under 18 years of age (who is not emancipated) no later than 24 hours after the time the student is determined to be missing according to the college's official notification procedure.**

**Meridian Community College will initiate the emergency contact procedure that the student designates if Campus Police or law enforcement personnel have been notified and determine that the student has been missing for more than 24 hours and has not returned to campus.**

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All concerns regarding a possible missing person (student, faculty, or staff) should be immediately directed to the Campus Police Office. Upon receipt of a missing person report, the Campus Police will initiate a priority investigation. An investigating officer will meet with the individual(s) making such a report and will gather the following information:

1. Essential information about the missing person --- description, clothes last worn, possible location including last known destination, individuals the missing person might be with, known associates, and vehicle description. A recent photograph will also be secured.
2. The investigating officer will also gather information about the physical and mental well being of the missing person. A current class schedule, class attendance information, job information and work schedule or residence hall information sheet (if applicable) will be obtained.
3. Based upon information gathered in steps one and two, appropriate campus staff will be

contacted and either questioned or notified regarding the missing persons' status.

4. If after the completion of steps one through three it appears that the person is actually missing, parents or an emergency contact person will be notified by the Dean or Associate Dean of Student Services or the Chief of Campus Police. The College will also notify local law enforcement within 24 hours.

5. After consultation with the family of the missing person, the Campus Police will issue a regional welfare alert for the missing person through the National Crime Information Center. Further investigatory measures will be taken or additional notifications made based upon the circumstances of the individual case.

6. The Dean or Associate Dean of Student Services and/or the Chief of Campus Police will keep family apprised of the status of the investigation.

Revised 08/2016; Bd. Appr. 08/16/16

### **Drug-Free Policy**

Meridian Community College prohibits the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol on college property or as any part of its activities. Therefore the College informs all students and employees regarding illicit drugs and alcohol abuse and use.

If a student is found to be engaged in the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of a controlled substance, the College will initiate legal action or begin dismissal proceedings, or both, against the violator(s). MCC shall continue to inform and educate all students of the dangers of drug abuse. Should a student need counseling, referral or other assistance, the College will provide this assistance. This statement is prepared to comply with the "Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1989," 34 CFR Part 85, Subpart F, and the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act Amendments of 1989 (PL 101- 226). **To comply with this act, any student convicted of a drug statute violation is required to notify MCC within five days of such conviction.** Students found guilty of substance abuse may be suspended from campus housing and/or suspended from MCC for one or more semesters as determined by the Dean of

Student Services or the Associate Dean of Student Services. For additional information related to the MCC substance abuse policy, contact the Dean of Student Services Office in Ivy Hall.

### **Alcohol Policy**

Under MCC's drug-free compliance policy, alcohol possession and/or use on any MCC property as well as off-campus MCC related activities or events are strictly prohibited. Those individuals determined to be in violation of the alcohol policy will be placed on disciplinary probation. In addition, the following actions will apply:

1. For the first offense, possession of alcohol on MCC property or an MCC related activity or event carries a \$100 fine; viewing of an alcohol violations video; and mandatory, confidential, alcohol counseling provided through a contracted mental health service provider.
2. For the second offense, possession of alcohol on MCC property or an MCC related activity or event carries a \$200 fine and disciplinary suspension/dismissal from MCC.
3. If any fine is not paid by the end of the semester, a hold will be placed on the student's record.

### **Student Identification Card**

All students who enroll at Meridian Community College must have a valid MCC identification

card. Students must display a current MCC ID card on his/her person at all times while on campus. ID cards are provided and validated by the Campus Police office, located on the first floor of Ivy Hall. The student must provide a form of photo identification and a current class schedule to obtain an ID card. The ID card must be worn on the person above the waist, which means it cannot be on a purse, book bag, etc. Individuals without an ID card in plain view will be stopped to verify their status as a student, staff, or authorized visitor. Displaying of the ID is also required for use of the MCC library and most other services and activities. Individuals who fail to display the identification card may be subject to sanctions and penalties including charges of trespassing and/or suspension from school.

The first ID made for any student is free. There is a \$10.00 replacement fee.

### **Emergency Response Procedures**

Any emergency should be promptly reported by dialing 9-911 from a campus phone, or by cell phone dialing 911. Alert the dispatcher on the nature and location of the emergency and follow instructions provided.

Should a campus emergency exist, the College will activate the Incident Management Team. The college has a comprehensive emergency response plan that is activated any time an emergency occurs that will require the Incident Management Team oversight to provide guidance for the College's response.

The College's Incident Management Team assures appropriate response to any campus emergency. This team is made up of members of Campus Police, facilities management, student services and other vital staff. The Emergency Response Team also works with city police, fire and ambulance personnel to coordinate response efforts and to conduct joint drills.

### **Class Closing Procedures**

Any classes taught by Meridian Community College will close when the safety and well-being of the student body is in jeopardy.

There may be times when some classes will close while others remain open. The following administrative procedure is set forth as a guide for all concerned when it becomes necessary to deviate from the calendar which has been set and approved by the Board of Trustees:

1. When College is in session, any change from the routine schedule will be announced by the President and/or by the Vice President/operating Dean after instructions have been received from the Office of the President.

In the event of a natural disaster where telephone communications are interrupted or it is impossible or inadvisable for the Vice President/operating Dean to consult with the President, the Vice President/operating Dean concerned will take action to provide for the safety and welfare of the students and faculty.

2. If weather or other situations necessitate a cancellation of classes when students are at home after a school day, during a weekend or during holidays, students and instructors are requested to give attention to the television and radio announcements in the early evening (between the hours of 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m.) and in the early morning (between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m.) to get correct information. Students, faculty, and staff will also receive text messages and emails on EagleAlert if they have registered for EagleAlert. When the following conditions exist, students and faculty should listen for announcements concerning the operation of the various College classes and functions:

- (a) When streets, roads and highways are covered with ice and snow and are otherwise dangerous to travel.

- (b) When rapidly changing temperatures produce sub-freezing weather that causes failure in water and heating systems.

- (c) When there are natural disasters such as floods, tornadoes, and explosions.

3. Students should not call administrators or instructors. They should listen for announcements from television and radio.

Instructors are at liberty to call the Vice President/operating Dean if there is any reason for concern or if there are any questions. The President and/or his designee will coordinate with the proper city and county Emergency Operations Centers and other necessary agencies, and proper notices will be given to the television and radio stations for announcements between the hours of 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. if possible, or between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m.

4. While efforts will be made to provide either an open or closed announcement, if no announcements are forthcoming from the television or radio stations between the hours of 6:00 and 7:00 a.m., it will be assumed that all campuses will be open and in operation. All students, faculty and other employees would be expected to report to classes and work.

## **Building Evacuation**

Every person in a building, including staff, faculty, students, visitors, and contractors where the fire alarm is sounding or when directed to do so by emergency officials, regardless of known or suspected cause, is required to evacuate immediately.

Persons evacuating must leave via the closest exit. Any equipment that could cause a fire should be turned off before exiting if it can be done quickly and safely. Exits are posted throughout each building.

**Elevators:** Elevators cannot be used by any person as a means of emergency evacuation.

Elevators in most buildings are pre-set to return automatically to the bottom floor. Use of an elevator can result in opening on the fire floor, exposure to life-threatening levels of fire or gases, and being trapped in a malfunctioning elevator.

Evacuation for the Mobility and Visually Impaired: Persons with mobility impairment may be allowed to “defend in place” and not be required to evacuate if they are: (1) located above or below the level of building exit, and (2) physically cannot exit without assistance.

**Definition of Mobility Impaired:** Persons who use a wheelchair, crutches, canes, walkers, etc. Persons who are able to walk should exit if possible, but need to decide if they can safely descend the stairs. Those with emphysema, asthma, heart disease, and arthritis, depending on the situation, may also follow the guidelines for defending in place.

**Visually Impaired:** Persons who are visually impaired should, with the assistance of others, evacuate the building using the stairs, if they are familiar with their immediate surroundings and frequently traveled routes. If visually impaired persons are unfamiliar with the emergency evacuation route and assistance is not available, they should defend in place. To assist visually impaired persons:

- Announce the type of emergency.
- Offer your arm for guidance.
- Tell the person where you are going, obstacles you encounter.
- When you reach safety, ask if further help is needed.

**Hearing Impaired:** To alert people with hearing limitations:

- Turn lights on/off to gain the person’s attention, or
- Indicate directions with gestures, or
- Write a note with evacuation directions.

## **Personal Emergency Plans (PEPs) for Persons with Disabilities**

Although the process of developing a Personal Emergency Plan is optional for students and staff, the College encourages proactive planning on the part of the entire college community for emergency conditions. Individuals with disabilities may require additional assistance with alerting, evacuating, and sheltering in the event of an emergency.

The College offers the opportunity, through a confidential process, to develop a PEP that

could include such strategies as storing extra equipment or medications, providing public safety with your class and personal schedule, specific evacuation procedures, sheltering procedures, volunteer rescue assistants, and designating means of communication in the event of an emergency. The individual may meet with the College's Support Services Coordinator to declare their disability and develop such a plan.

Although not required, faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to identify their concerns about evacuation in case of an emergency, and to develop a PEP that is effective for them.

Even without a PEP in place, having a cell phone on you at all times and programming the Campus Police Cell Phone #1 phone number into your phone can allow you to alert public safety if an emergency occurs and you have concerns about evacuating. (601-938-0072)

Students wishing to create a PEP for themselves, or those with questions about evacuations can contact the Support Services Coordinator located in the Admissions office in Ivy Hall. (601-484-777)

**Defend in Place:** Unless the fire or other hazard is life threatening to a mobility-impaired person, or the person is on the ground floor (exit level of the building), then it may be advisable for that person to remain in his/her currently occupied room. If the individual decides to defend in place, he/she must immediately:

- Notify others evacuating that you are remaining in your room and ask them to contact public safety with that information immediately upon exiting the building.
- If a phone is available, call 911 to inform them that you are defending in place, and your exact location.
- Close the door to prevent smoke entry, and, if necessary, put towels or any other available fabric at the crack at bottom of the door.
- If possible, move to a window with a brightly colored cloth to wave to the fire department. Do not break the window unless absolutely necessary. (Breaking the window could allow smoke to enter the room from the floor below or injure a person below).

### **Campus-Wide Evacuation**

- Evacuation of all or part of the campus will be announced by the Department of public safety or appropriate agency.
- All persons (students and staff and their visitors) are to vacate immediately the area of campus in question and relocate to another part of the campus grounds or off campus as directed.

All Meridian Community College residential buildings have one evacuation drill each month.

### **Campus Emergency Alert System – Eagle Alert Safety Alerts and Campus Emergency Notification System**

Meridian Community College's Emergency Alert System is called Eagle Alert. It is used to communicate vital information to let students, parents and staff know when there is an emergency on or around campus and what they need to do to be safe.

MCC will use the Eagle Alert system to notify subscribed parties of those emergencies. In the event an alert must be sent, the College has trained personnel with the ability to send messages. Designated personnel will send out alerts through email or text messages. These personnel will conduct periodic checks of the system to ensure it is operating properly.

**The Eagle Alert includes the following notification components:**

- **Mobile: Text**
- **E-mail: E-mail**

Eagle Alerts will be used to send text or e-mail messages to subscribers in the event of a campus



emergency.

To subscribe to Eagle Alert, go to the EagleNet site page under the Personal Information tab on the right side of the page and follow the instructions. While there is no charge to subscribe to Eagle Alerts, your cell phone provider may charge a fee for delivery of text messages based on your calling plan. This is an optional service that will only be used to advise you of potential, developing, or existing critical emergencies.

It is Meridian Community College's procedure to provide timely and accurate information to the community in the event of an incident that puts the community at risk. To accomplish this, the College has in place several methods to rapidly disseminate information. The use of these methods will be based on the severity of the emergency and determination of the continuing risk to the community.

### **Procedure:**

1. Public safety is alerted to any emergency on campus; officers then respond to assess, evaluate and contain the emergency. Officers then confirm nature and severity of the emergency.
2. On-duty officers notify command staff on duty or on call. The command staff on duty or on call determines if an alert needs to be sent out. Should the emergency pose a danger to the community, that command staff member will, without delay, initiate the college's emergency notification system.
3. This decision process also includes which level of alert is required, as well as which contingencies require the most urgent notification. For example, a fire in a single residence hall would cause alerts and communications most directly with the residents of that residence hall.

### **Emergency Notification System / Timely Warnings**

It is the policy of the college to notify the campus community in a timely manner of any significant emergency or dangerous situation occurring on the campus involving an immediate threat to the health or safety of students or employees. Campus police or first-responders can identify certain threats that allow for the immediate activation of the notification system.

However, other threats that would allow for the activation need to be assessed, and consultation with other experts may be required. The timely warning of an emergency event will be issued without delay utilizing Eagle Alert and take into account the safety of the campus community. The only exception is if doing so would compromise efforts to assist a victim or to contain, respond to or otherwise mitigate the emergency. If a victim is involved every effort will be made to withhold the name of the victim. When an emergency situation arises, the Emergency Operations director or his/her designee will determine the nature and severity of the situation, and if appropriate, will declare an immediate campus threat and authorize activation of the Emergency Notification System. Once immediate notification has been made, more detailed follow-up information will be released on the college website, <http://www.meridiancc.edu/>, or via email.

Eagle Alert is a mass notification system comprising email and text-messaging that is designed to send emergency messages to the college's employees and students in a matter of minutes. It will be used in conjunction with existing college avenues of emergency communication, including news alerts and the college's website. MCC students and employees have the option to participate by providing a primary mobile phone number for text-messaging. Students or employees with a valid college

ID and password may sign up online on EagleNet:

1. [Log on to EAGLENET home page.](#)
2. [Under the heading My Records, Grades, etc. click on Financial Aid, Personal Information and](#)

## Other Services

3. Click on Eagle Alert – Update Emergency Contact Cell

4. For text messages individuals must provide their cell phone number and choose the provider of their cell phone service.

(Note: Text messages can result in additional cost depending on an individual's wireless phone plan.)

5. For “non Eaglenet” (ie. Work or Personal) e-mail, individuals must provide an e-mail address

MCC schedules drills, tests and exercises internally and with outside agencies (Lauderdale County EMD, et. al.) to evaluate the procedures and response plans. Some activities occur monthly such as testing the outdoor warning system, with larger scale tests and exercises occurring less frequently (e.g. annually, bi-annually).

## Campus Fire Safety Responsibilities

### Requirements for All Members of the Campus Community:

- Participate in all fire drills and promptly leave a building when the fire alarm sounds. Follow any instructions of public safety or fire officials during a drill or an actual alarm.
- Report any condition that creates a fire hazard (trash in the corridors or stairwells, missing fire extinguishers, blocked floor exits or stairwells, etc.) to public safety.
- Report any active or past fires to public safety immediately.
- Know where the fire extinguishers are located. Learn how to operate them.
- Know the location of the fire alarms and how to activate them.
- Know where the nearest exits are and be prepared to use an alternative exit, if necessary. Plan how you would escape through each of these exits in case of a fire.
- Know the location of the fire stairwells.
- Never use an elevator to evacuate a building.
- If you become trapped, dial 911 from a campus phone or cell phone and alert the dispatcher to your location.

### What should I do if I discover a fire?

Any person who discovers a fire, smoke, or an unusual amount of heat should do the following:

1. Pull the nearest fire alarm.
2. Exit the building immediately; notify those in the immediate area of the danger.
3. Assist in removing any person needing assistance from the immediate area and to the stairwells to wait for fire department personnel (or to the outside if that can be done safely). However, never place yourself in danger.
4. Assemble outside your building at the predetermined location.
5. Follow the instructions given by the public safety Officers and the Fire Department personnel.

## Fire Safety and Education Program

Meridian Community College's fire safety education program is multi-faceted. Initial training on the college's fire safety program is provided at the first hall meeting each year. Additional information and reminders on fire safety zones and evacuation procedures is provided to all students prior to the start of fire drills for the year. Residence hall staff receives additional training prior to the start of each semester.

## STUDENTS –



**Safety is a shared responsibility.**

**STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO:**

- ☐ Lock the doors to their rooms at all times.
- ☐ Not prop open doors or entrances.
- ☐ Not allow strangers to enter a residence hall building, room or floor.
- ☐ Not allow anyone to enter a residence hall building, room or floor after curfew.
- ☐ Not allow visitors to enter a residence hall building, room or floor when the building lobby is not open for visitors.
- ☐ Call Campus Police or residence hall staff for assistance when needed.
- ☐ Walk with others at night on Campus.
- ☐ Immediately report suspicious persons/activities to residence hall staff or Campus Police.
- ☐ Take appropriate steps to secure personal property like computer, car, jewelry, etc.
- ☐ Participate in security-related programming such as engraving personal property.
- ☐ Read, understand, and abide by the College and Residence Hall Rules and Regulations.