

## Notifications

### **When does St. Thomas issue all campus notifications?**

Emergency notifications and timely warnings are requirements of the Clery Act, which provides specific guidance for when Universities are to notify the entire campus community of a crime, significant emergency or dangerous situation. Anyone may read the details of these requirements in the 2016 Clery Handbook for Campus Safety [here](#), or see excerpts from the handbook below.

In any emergency, including when the University of St. Thomas learns about an incident involving a reported sexual assault, members of the University Action and Response Team (UART) meet to determine immediate actions required to protect the parties involved and to further assess risk to the St. Thomas community. During this time, UART members ensure people involved are cared for and safe. For example, this may include providing transportation to an area hospital or coordinating with Public Safety and local law enforcement. A risk assessment will also be conducted to determine if a campus notification is required. Campus notification is made based on the facts and circumstances of each incident.

A notification is not always issued in cases of sexual assault. If a campus notification is not issued, it does not mean St. Thomas is not acting in response to the incident and continually assessing campus safety. Many times the facts and circumstances of a sexual assault do not meet the requirements for notification under Clery.

### **Even if the law doesn't require it, why doesn't St. Thomas make the decision to issue an alert or an all campus notification whenever a sexual assault is reported?**

There are potential outcomes of issuing notifications that we do not take lightly. We have carefully considered the potential benefits and the potential drawbacks to issuing a campus alert or all-campus notification each time a campus sexual assault is reported and we have determined that it is better to make a decision about issuing an all-campus alert on a case-by-case basis. Below are some of the potential benefits and drawbacks of notifying the campus every time a sexual assault occurs. This is not an exhaustive list:

<b>Potential Benefits</b>	<b>Potential Drawbacks</b>
Communicates to the entire community that sexual assault is a serious crime and St. Thomas acknowledges and responds when people in our community are impacted.	Notifications are incident-specific. This may compromise confidentiality because community members may attempt to identify involved individuals, and there is potential to interfere with a pending university or police investigation.
Makes the entire community aware that sexual assaults happen at St. Thomas. It increases awareness that our community is not immune to this type of violence.	The decision for victims to report sexual assault to St. Thomas or the police may be impacted if campus notification is made in all circumstances. Victims may be less likely to report crimes if they believe an all-campus alert will be issued.

<p>When St. Thomas makes notification for less serious incidents such as stolen bikes and there isn't notification for sexual assaults, it can send a message that sexual assaults don't happen at St. Thomas or that St. Thomas doesn't view them as seriously as property theft. Both of these perceptions are false, and issuing an alert would aid in correcting these misperceptions.</p>	<p>All individuals involved in incidents of reported sexual assault risk repercussion from the community. Issuance of alerts in all cases, even without identifying information of the involved parties, may lead to direct or indirect backlash against the victim or the accused. Backlash could include victim blaming statements on social media or in general conversations or attempts to identify or vilify the accused, for example.</p>
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**From the 2016 Handbook for Campus Safety and Security Reporting:**

**When is an emergency notification necessary?**

Under the Clery Act, every institution is required to immediately notify the campus community upon confirmation of a significant emergency or dangerous situation occurring on the campus that involves an immediate threat to the health or safety of students or employees. An "immediate" threat as used here includes an imminent or impending threat, such as an approaching forest fire, or a fire currently raging in one of your buildings.

**Timely Warnings:**

The Clery Act requires you to alert the campus community to certain crimes in a manner that is timely and will aid in the prevention of similar crimes. Although the Clery Act doesn't define "timely," the intent of a warning regarding a criminal incident(s) is to enable people to protect themselves. This means that a warning should be issued as soon as pertinent information is available.