

The University of Alabama Custodial Services Department provides daily service to 12.5 million square feet of academic, residential, medical, and athletic building space.

The department delivers a wide range of services for campus buildings and University properties. The scope of services ranges from routine, general cleaning to specialty services such as carpet cleaning, hard surface restorations, and special event support.

The Emergency Response Project Team evolved out of a need for swift response to floods and other emergencies requiring immediate attention. The Team is deployed as a rapid reaction solution during times requiring expedited emergency services. When not utilized in this emergency capacity, the team serves as a primary resource for special projects including carpet extraction, hard surface floor care and pressure washing.

While the team initially launched as a special projects group, this mission dynamic recently changed as new needs arose which resulted in retooling for increased functionality and staffing. Since then, the team has expanded to encompass a full range of emergency services.

Currently the Emergency Response Project Team's project assignments have grown exponentially to include emergency flood response, dry-down procedures, storm shelter watch, winter storm watch, equipment assessment, equipment transport, and even minor equipment repair campus-wide.



## 1.0 Institutional Benefit

The Emergency Response Project Team has contributed a host of cost-savings and reliability solutions for the university since its inception.

The team's primary institutional benefits are responsiveness and cost containment related to reductions in expenditures associated with third-party contractor utilization for emergency events such as water mitigation and dry down procedures to address issues caused by flooding. Additionally, a high level of success has been achieved in reducing the amount of overtime utilized in addressing emergency response calls.

Specific institutional benefits include the following:

- Emergency Response Time:

The Emergency Response Project Team was developed to operate on-campus during the prime hours for emergency calls with a focus on eliminating the need to call outside contractors or to call in off-duty staff on overtime which has resulted in significant improvements in overall response time to emergency calls.

The team works in unison with other maintenance departments to efficiently locate and address concerns. This cross-functional collaboration among interdisciplinary groups provides a mechanism to minimize damage caused by water intrusion during floods and subsequently reduces mitigation and repair cost associated with such damage. Quicker response equates to less damage. Each member of the Emergency Response Project Team is specially trained and team members are selected based on their years of experience and specialized working knowledge. This approach has uniquely positioned the team to address emergency situations in all areas across the campus regardless of the complexity of the project scope, as the team is familiar with all locations and procedures on campus. The team is also specially trained in the various access control measures across campus in order to quickly gain access to most buildings which might otherwise be restricted.

- Security:

The Emergency Response Project Team has earned a well-deserved reputation as a highly trusted in-house solution for quick response emergency cleaning, restoration, and adverse event mitigation.

All team personnel are fully vetted through the University's hiring process and work within university guidelines for professional conduct. As such, they provide faculty, staff, and students with a high level of assurance that property and equipment will be treated

with the utmost care which has proven especially essential when working in highly secure areas and private offices where attention to detail and operational security are paramount.

The operational security benefits of having properly vetted university employees familiar with accessing highly sensitive areas has proven very successful versus allowing non-vetted, untrained third-party workers access to these areas. The result of this added due diligence and credentialling has provided the University with a high level of protection for campus assets.

The Emergency Response Project Team has earned a reputation as the go-to solution for addressing needs in high profile areas as opposed to hiring outside contractors who typically have little or no institutional knowledge of the campus and have less stringent hiring practices. The Emergency Response Project Team provides an unparalleled comfort level for the university that is unmatched in this regard.



- Efficiency:

The Emergency Response Project Team's core mission is to deploy assets in the most efficient and expedient means possible in order provide emergency response capabilities that protect campus Infrastructure and assets. As a result, this team has become a reliable resource and service provider offering substantial institutional benefit to the University.

The team has achieved a high measure of success due to the university's investment in the people and tools necessary to effectively accomplish the mission. Team members receive advanced training in a broad range of equipment and techniques which positions them as the most efficient and most readily deployable resource on campus.

Recently, the custodial services department invested in updated equipment that further increased the team's productivity, scope of service, and response time. As a result, The Emergency Response Project Team has embarked on an initiative to enhance service capability with the addition of state-of-the-art high volume water extraction units, advanced dehumidification equipment and vehicle upgrades enabling the team to deploy assets in the most efficient and effective manner possible. Additional logistical improvements such as vehicular-deployed portable ramps, power lift gates and equipment wheel kits have been added resulting in enhancements that provide safe, efficient, and expeditious deployment of critical equipment and materials when hours, minutes and seconds count.

In addition to equipment upgrades, specialized equipment tracking processes have been deployed to ensure assets placed for extended periods in buildings throughout campus can be properly accounted for. All equipment is logged in and out and required building condition checks associated with restoration and remediation are logged to ensure dry out operations are conducted in compliance with industry standards. This process allows the team and management to monitor progress and communicate project status with customers as well as ensures all assets are accounted for.

The Emergency Response Project Team's focus on efficiency has resulted in quicker response time, improved outcomes related to minimized damage to buildings, and cost savings associated with reductions in overtime and third-party services expenditures.

- **Agility and Time Sensitivity:**

The Emergency Response Project Team successfully completes a multitude of time sensitive tasks effectively and efficiently. A high percentage of these tasks are executed with a limited planning window during times of peak student occupancy when classes are in session. Due to the manner in which the team is structured, flexibility is hardwired into the way assets are deployed allowing for agile scheduling and nimble project execution that accommodates the team's ability to tackle unforeseen emergencies and unplanned reactive project work without disrupting regular service to any given area. Special communication processes have been employed to enable the Emergency Response Project Team to operate as an extension of the other facilities management disciplines on campus resulting in the team working hand-in-glove with these other groups as emergencies arise. This nimbleness has enabled the team to execute recovery and restoration services at a level that cannot be matched using outside contractors.

- **Non-emergency Specialized Capabilities:**

In addition to being a key force multiplier for emergency response on campus, the Emergency Response Project Team provides a multitude of non-emergency specialized services such as high temperature carpet extraction and limited capacity pressure washing. By expanding the team's scope of services into these two service categories, the Emergency Response Project Team has been effective in providing substantial savings to the university by performing these tasks in-house versus hiring third-party contractors to perform the work.

- **Pandemic Readiness:**

The Emergency Response Project Team assumed additional responsibilities throughout the COVID19 pandemic and is fully trained and fitted with the tools, equipment and safety gear to address and treat COVID affected areas. From the onset of the pandemic throughout its duration, the team has been the first to return to campus to provide basic custodial services to buildings while supporting disinfection efforts of the university's Environmental Health Services department. The team provided essential disinfection services utilizing EPA registered chemicals throughout the pandemic and was a key contributor to the University's successful return to normal operations. As students, faculty and staff returned to campus, the Emergency Response Project Team played a pivotal role in providing daily cleaning and disinfection of quarantine facilities enabling the university to operate in a safe and efficient manner throughout the year.

- Storm Readiness:

The Emergency Response Project Team has further expanded its operational capability by assuming storm readiness responsibilities for the campus. During winter storms, the team is deployed on campus for the duration of the inclement weather event. In many instances, conditions are such that it is not advisable for staff to travel to and from work. Having the Emergency Response Project Team deployed onsite prior to road conditions deteriorating provides a custodial services presence on campus to answer emergency calls and provides the university with onsite staff to monitor, supply and clean vital areas such as restrooms in the university's series of storm shelters that are strategically located on campus to provide safe spaces during tornadoes and severe storm activity.

- Flexibility:

The Emergency Response Project Team has sole reporting responsibility directly under a single manager versus reporting to a manager / supervisor team, which offers single-point-of-contact efficiency and flexibility to quickly address issues and pivot resources as fluid situations associated with individual projects dictate. As a result, the team is uniquely positioned to tackle large projects without the department having to move staff and interrupt schedule cleaning in any one area. Project approvals and changes are also expedited as a result of this reporting structure.



#### 4.0 Management Commitment and Employee Involvement

- Management Commitment:

Management commitment to the Emergency Response Project Team has provided the motivating force necessary for successful implementation as well as the resources required for organizing and controlling activities to maintain this program as a viable and cost-effective solution for the university.

UA leadership has been fully engaged in supporting the development and success of the Emergency Response Project Team. Involvement by UA management has reinforced a culture of excellence that is visible at all levels of the organization and this commitment has been supportive of the Emergency Response Project Team development process from top to bottom.

Management has provided the oversight, tools, and resources to assure this program's success by formalizing strategic initiatives for employee development and resource acquisition, setting clear goals and objectives to assure program success, being a very visible advocate and "cheerleader" for the program, and holding both the department's leadership and individual team members accountable for meeting performance goals while providing recognition for the program's hard-earned successes.



- Employee involvement:

Employee involvement has been a key component of the Emergency Response Project Team's overall success.

The direct participation of custodial staff in planning and development helped mold the Emergency Response Project Team into its current form and continues to help fulfill its mission and meet its objectives by applying employee ideas, feedback, expertise, and efforts towards solving problems and making decisions that impact the program's overall success.

Custodial employee participation has included direct communication with leadership and upward problem solving that have resulted in streamlining processes and eliminating duplication of processes to develop robust and successful outcomes, tools, and methods.

This dedication and active participation in the process has been beneficial for individual employees as well as the entire organization resulting in improved organizational decision-making capability, reduced costs through elimination of waste and reduced product cycle times, improved empowerment and job satisfaction, an increased sense of commitment, and motivation (as well as intent to stay with the organization) and increased employee productivity.





## 2.0 Innovativeness, Creativity, and Originality

The Emergency Response Project Team was created to provide a unique, cost-effective, in-house solution for rapid response to emergency calls involving flooding, inclement weather, water damage restoration and emergency situations.

The results of this innovative team approach to emergency response have produced the following positive outcomes:

- Reduction in overtime expense
- Reduction in third-party services expenditures
- Improvement in response times
- Reduction in propensity for damage to assets
- Improvement in the Universities ability to keep facilities open for business and reductions in downtime.

UA Custodial services leadership drew from a wealth of private sector experience to develop a viable solution that took best practices from the restoration, mitigation and emergency services industry and tailored them to fit the needs of higher education. The creativity and originality employed in developing this team solution has set UA custodial services apart from their peers and has resulted in the following capability enhancements for the department:

- Certified Mold Assessor nationally recognized credential
- Certified Mold Remediator nationally recognized credential
- Testing protocols and capacity to test moisture content after water removal and extraction via the use of hygrometers and industry standard best practices
- Specially trained team of custodial specialists equipped to mitigate flooding and emergency response situations
- Streamlined communications processes to assure the fastest response possible to emergencies
- Cross-functional interoperability between custodial and other facilities disciplines enabling robust and nimble response when minutes count
- Resource capability to support inclement weather plan and storm shelter plan implementation
- Subject matter experts in rapid response emergency mitigation



From an innovation standpoint, the UA Emergency Response Project Team has evolved from performing routine project work to focusing on emergency response services and has expanded capabilities to include two staff professionals who are nationally credentialed Certified Mold Assessors and Certified Mold Remediators. These accomplishments have positioned UA Custodial Services as a leader in Innovation, creativity and originality related to this program and enabled the team to capitalize on efficiencies that have enabled UA Custodial Services to provide significant cost savings to the university in both overtime-avoidance as well as savings in third-party contracted services expense.



Additionally, UA Custodial Services has taken a creative approach in improving response time associated with emergency incidents which has greatly improved the team's ability to mitigate risks and limit damage to university property. The Emergency Response Project Team's innovative approach to risk management has resulted in greatly improved reaction time, eliminating the need to route all emergency calls through traditional call desk dispatch by working directly with building maintenance personnel. This innovation enabled our team to consistently respond to events as they were occurring in order to minimize flooding risks and property damage.

Finally, UA's commitment to training has been the capstone of this team's success. Not only have all team members been trained in industry standard emergency response, disaster mitigation and restoration techniques, the department has further enhanced the team's effectiveness by adding specialized training in the following areas:

- VCT-floor refinishing
- Terrazzo-polishing, sealing, maintenance and care
- Sheet Vinyl-maintenance and care
- Carpet Extraction-steam and portable units
- Upholstery-cleaning
- Ceramic Tile-maintenance, grout cleaning and care
- Dehumidifier and air movers-set up and placement training
- Respirator and PPE training
- COVID response training
- Advanced customer service
- Portable Lift Training
- Emergency Response Training
- Water Extraction Training
- Extensive Equipment Training



### 5.0 Documentation, Analysis, Customer Input, and Benchmarking

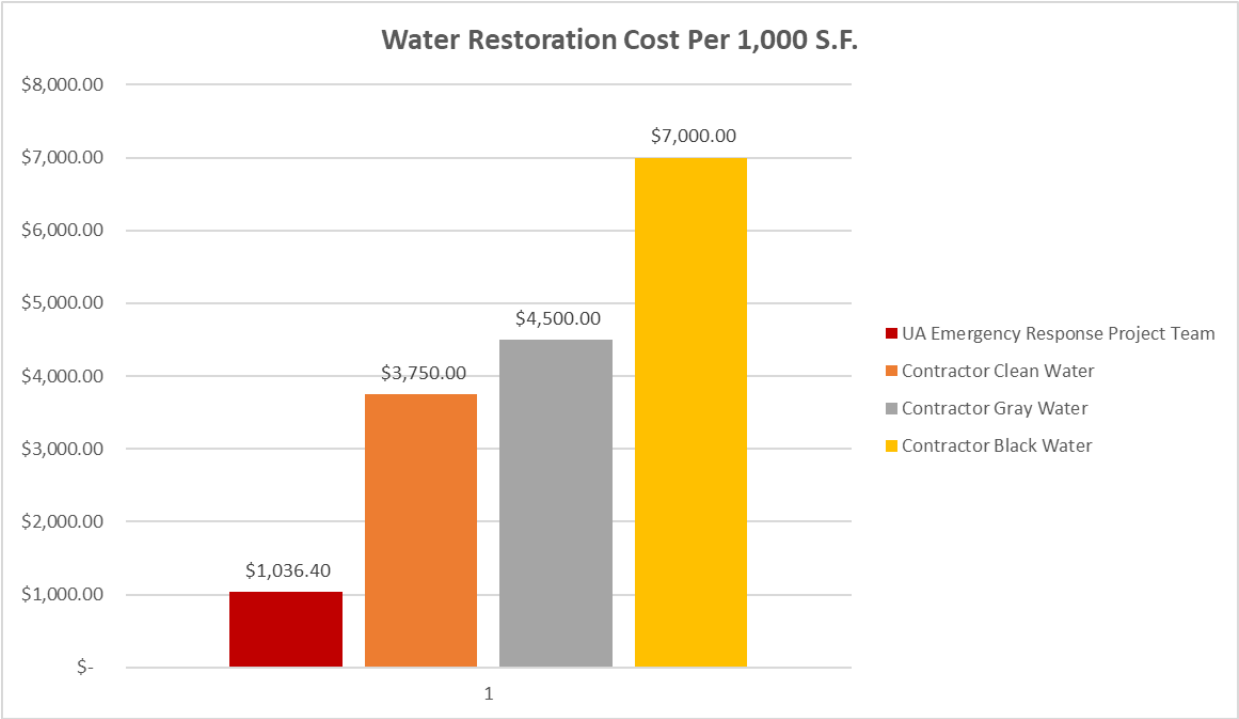
The Emergency Response Project Team has developed a number of data collection tools to streamline operations and provide evidenced-based statistical analysis. These tools have proven vital in documenting the program's measure of success and viability.

Documentation tools have been developed to log and manage emergency affected areas and resolve issues by communicating specific needs to decision makers within the department as well as provide interdepartmental dialogue to maintain a course of action and see projects through to completion.

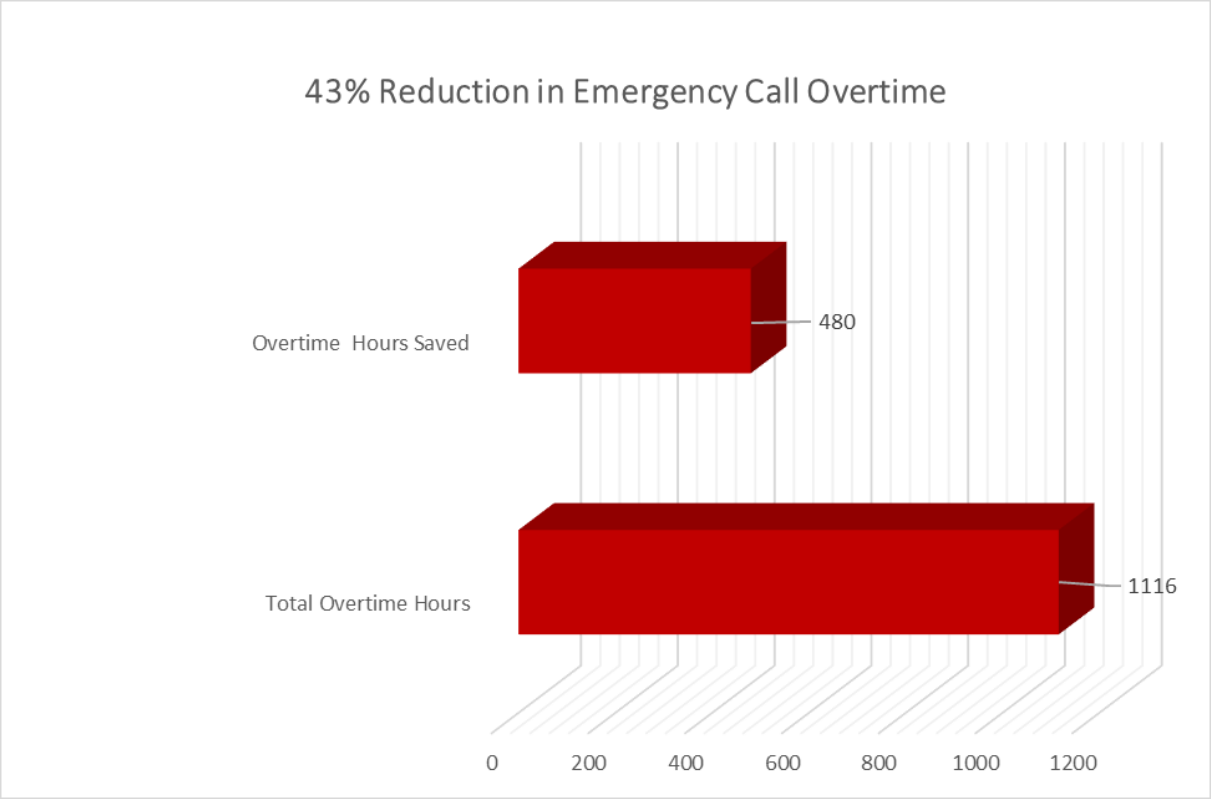


The Emergency Response Project Team also tracks all equipment stationed during emergencies and additionally maintains communication via electronic messaging platforms between selected team members and management to ensure all project locations maintain up-to-date status reports related to project duration and resource utilization. The tools have proven vital in properly managing mitigation resources and equipment. The improvements realized by the development of the Emergency Response Project Team have been benchmarked against industry best practices resulting in evidence-base validation of the efficacy of this UA program.

The Emergency Response Project Team has impacted UA's bottom line regarding cost savings by utilizing skilled in-house custodial technicians instead of third-party contractors as benchmarked below:

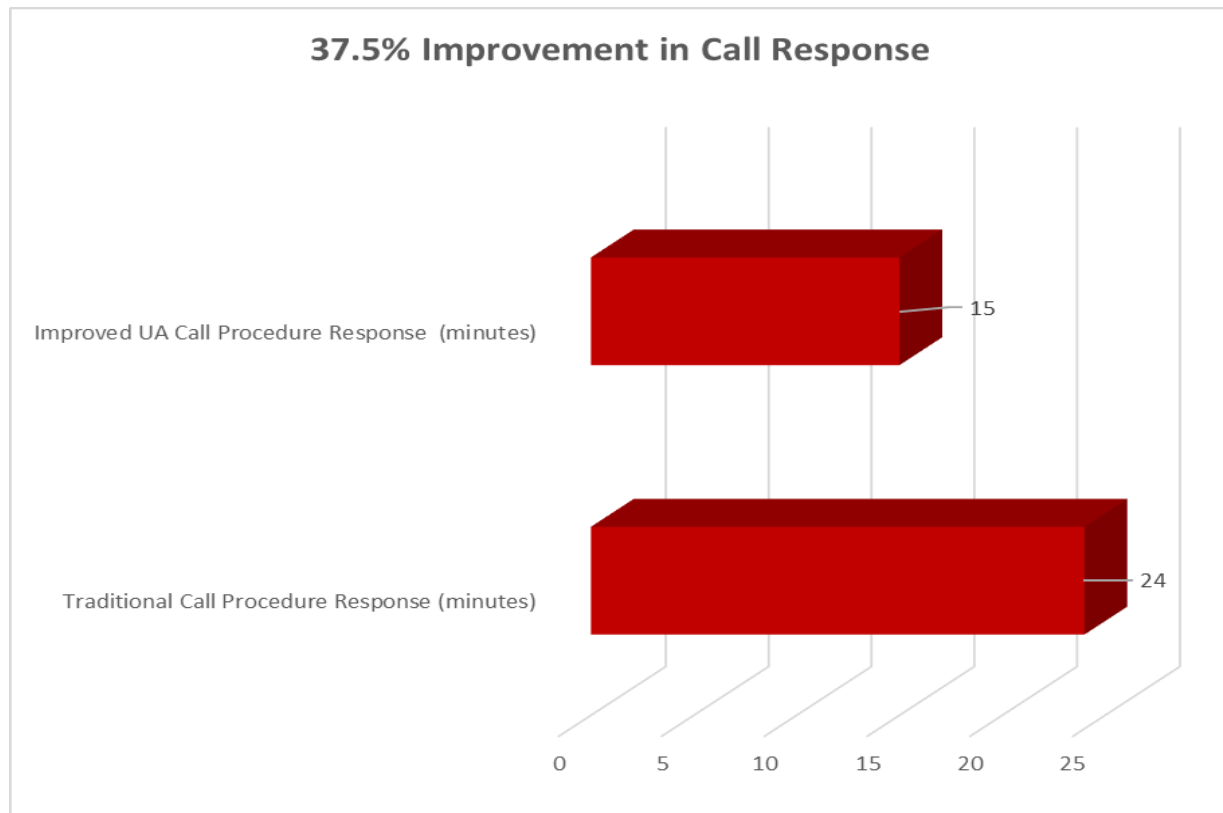


The Emergency Response Project Team has also produced savings for the university by reducing emergency response related overtime 43%.



Additionally, the Emergency Response Project Team has reduced response time to in-house calls by 37.5% by instituting targeting process improvements that capitalize on interdisciplinary collaboration and communication.





Emergency calls placed conventionally vs expedited process working interdepartmental with Building Maintenance.

emergency call participants	emergency call procedure	expedited emergency call procedure
	call time/minutes	call time/minutes
building maintenance originates call		
call service receives/relays call	3	
on call supervisor	3	
evening supervisor receives/relays call	3	
evening project team receives call	3	3
response time	12	12
average time from origin to response	24	15

- Documentation:

**Emergency Van Checklist**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

circle van being inventoried	#1	#2	need
• 2-wet/dry vacuums w/squeegees, hoses, and wands.			
• 2-mop buckets and wringers			
• 4-deck mops			
• 1-roller barrel			
• 2-25' extension cords			
• 1-gallon of CONSUME			
• 6-bags of VOBAN			
• 1-Virex-spray bottle			
• 1-Glance-spray bottle			
• 2-toilet brushes			
• 2-blowers			
• 1-vacuum			
• 4-rolls of jumbo toilet paper			
• 4-rolls of white paper towels			
• Rags			
• 1-gallon of bleach			
• 2-rolls of large trash bags 40x46			
• 2-rolls of medium trash bags 33x39			
• 2-rolls of small trash bags 23x24			
• 2-brooms and dustpans			
• 2-floor squeegees			
• 1-box of each size glove			
comments:			

**Emergency Blower Inventory List:**

Code/Make	Serial#	FF/HO #	Supervisor/Use	Current Location/last known
Viper	WT3SPD-025035	06KSB64	EMERGENCY USE	Wittichen Main Storage
Viper	WT3SPD-025027	06KSB65	EMERGENCY USE	unknown
Viper	WT3SPD-025016	06KSB66	EMERGENCY USE	unknown
Viper	WT3SPD-024712	06KSB67	EMERGENCY USE	Wittichen Main Storage
Viper	WT3SPD-025025	06KSB69	EMERGENCY USE	unknown
Viper	WT3SPD-025026	06KSB70	EMERGENCY USE	no sign out recorded
Viper	WT3SPD-025024	06KSB71	EMERGENCY USE	Wittichen Main Storage
Viper		06kcb55	EMERGENCY USE	Wittichen Main Storage
Viper		04kcb29	EMERGENCY USE	Wittichen Main Storage
Viper		06kcb83	EMERGENCY USE	Wittichen Main Storage
VPR 1/Viper		02kcb44	EMERGENCY USE	Wittichen Main Storage
VPR 2/Viper	WT3SPD-025030	06KSB68	EMERGENCY USE	Wittichen Main Storage
VPR 3/Viper	WT3SPD-12340	no number	EMERGENCY USE	Wittichen Main Storage
VPR 4/Viper	WT3SPD-025023	06KSB72	EMERGENCY USE	Wittichen Main Storage
VPR 5/Viper	WT3SPD-024720	06KSB73	EMERGENCY USE	Wittichen Main Storage
VPR 6/Viper		06ksb74	EMERGENCY USE	Wittichen Main Storage
VPR 7/Viper	WT3SPD-025017	06KSB63	EMERGENCY USE	Wittichen Main Storage
AXB 1/Phoenix Axial (red)	H1324755	13KCB119	EMERGENCY USE	Wittichen Main Storage
AXB 2/Phoenix Axial (red)	C1502704	16KCB139	EMERGENCY USE	Wittichen Main Storage
AXB 3/Phoenix Axial (red)	M1271021	13KCB117	EMERGENCY USE	Wittichen Main Storage
AXB 4/Phoenix Axial (red)	M1271022	13KCB118	EMERGENCY USE	Wittichen Main Storage
AXB 5/Phoenix Axial (red)	M1271019	13KCB115	EMERGENCY USE	Wittichen Main Storage
AXB 6/Phoenix Axial (red)	M1271020	13KCB116	EMERGENCY USE	Wittichen Main Storage
AXB 7/Phoenix Axial (red)	H2187999	18KCB167	EMERGENCY USE	Emerg. Equipment (Southlawn)
AXB 8/Phoenix Axial (red)	H2187997	18KCB168	EMERGENCY USE	Emerg. Equipment (Southlawn)
AXB 9/Phoenix Axial (red)	H2187996	18KCB166	EMERGENCY USE	Emerg. Equipment (Southlawn)

**Dehumidifier Inventory List:**

Make	Serial#	FF/HO #	Supervisor/Use	Current Location/last known
DHU 1/B-Air VG 1500	DY14NOV004664	18DHUM11	EMERGENCY USE	Wittichen Main Storage
DHU 2/B-Air VG 1500	31692	18DHUM13	EMERGENCY USE	Wittichen Main Storage
DHU 3/Drieaz F203A	164674	18DHUM12	EMERGENCY USE	Wittichen Main Storage
DHU 4/Drieaz F203A	176153	18DHUM16	EMERGENCY USE	Emerg. Equipment (Southlawn)
DHU 5/Drieaz F203A	176155	18DHUM15	EMERGENCY USE	Emerg. Equipment (Southlawn)
Drieaz F203A	122046	16DHUM09	EMERGENCY USE	Wittichen Main Storage

**Emergency Blower Inventory List:**

Drieaz F203A	122047	16DHUM10	EMERGENCY USE	Wittichen Main Storage
Drieaz Revolution	1561	14DHUM07	EMERGENCY USE	Wittichen Main Storage
Drieaz Revolution	1562	14DHUM08	EMERGENCY USE	Wittichen Main Storage

**Wet Vacuums**

Make	Serial#	FF/HO #	Supervisor/Use	Current Location/STATUS
HVE 1/Drieaz HVE 3000	4037	18KWWDV167	EMERGENCY USE	Wittichen Main Storage
HVE 2/Drieaz HVE 3000	4023	18KWWDV166	EMERGENCY USE	Wittichen Main Storage
HVE 3/Drieaz HVE 3000	4035	18KWWDV165	EMERGENCY USE	Emerg. Equipment (Southlawn)
Typhoon	NO NUMBER	14KWWDV142	EMERGENCY USE	Wittichen Main Storage
WDV 1/Typhoon	607673-10119464	NO NUMBERS	EMERGENCY USE	Emerg. Equipment (Southlawn)
WDV 2/Typhoon	159EV00020869KR	03KUDV14	EMERGENCY USE	Emerg. Equipment (Southlawn)
WDV 3/Typhoon	N151E00036364BU	NO NUMBERS	EMERGENCY USE	Emerg. Equipment (Southlawn)

**Additional Equipment**

Make	Serial#	FF/HO #	Supervisor/Use	Current Location/STATUS
Tennant-1240 Extractor		05CE49	EMERGENCY USE	EPT CAGE-ALL ATTACHMENTS
Tennant 900 Pumper		NO NUMBERS	EMERGENCY USE	EPT CAGE-ALL ATTACHMENTS
Generator		2019PGEN001	EMERGENCY USE	Wittichen Main Storage
Sump Pump		NO NUMBERS	EMERGENCY USE	EPT CAGE-ALL ATTACHMENTS
Sump Pump		NO NUMBERS	EMERGENCY USE	EPT CAGE-ALL ATTACHMENTS
Extraction Wand		NO NUMBERS	EMERGENCY USE	EPT CAGE-NO HOSE

Responder: \_\_\_\_\_

Building Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Room Number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**EQUIPMENT:** Place equipment number in spaces below

[illegible]

**Monitored:**

[illegible]

Completion Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



**Call Out Sheet**

Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_ Date Starting \_\_\_\_\_ Ending \_\_\_\_\_

Receive Call Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Call From: Answer Service/In House

Person Initiating Call: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Building Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Building Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Area Location/Access: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe Issue: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Receive Call Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Call From: Answer Service/In House

Person Initiating Call: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Building Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Building Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Area Location/Access: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe Issue: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Tracking for Buildings that are Charged for Emergencies**

Staff Name, Time In & Out	Staff Name, Time In & Out

[illegible]

Make certain your supervisor or manager is notified of equipment use, date of removal from cage, return to cage and location of use.

- Customer Feedback:

The following comments are excerpted from customer emails commending the Emergency Response Project Team for their quality job performance.

Please be sure and thank your floor crew on my behalf. They did a very nice job in SHLB 3082! I really appreciate the fine effort and nice results.

Best,

I was off yesterday, just seeing the floors and carpet everything looks great. Thanks for your assistance with this.

Thanks

Transportation Services  
[The University of Alabama](#)

Thank you for your timely personal and team support at the Sid McDonald Hall building cleaning tasks. Your team did an outstanding job so please tell them thank you from me.

[The University of Alabama](#)

I appreciate all you and your team's efforts to get them clean. The floors have seen a lot of wear and spills over the years, so I am not surprised they were bad.

Laura

We followed up and all affected rooms have been cleaned and sanitized.

Thanks to all of you for your excellent work.

Zone 170. Thanks. They did a great job.

Shannon

Please tell the guys they did a great job. I think it will be a lot better now. Let them know we also appreciate the help with the phone and them being on standby for the classroom buildings.

Thanks.

Supervisor

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