Penelope Says to Sleep

Penelope the NOVA Police Cat reminds the NOVA community of the importance of continuous situational awareness. Predators are always looking for people who are unaware of what is happening around them. Distracted people are prime targets because they make themselves vulnerable.

An important component of situational awareness is alertness which, in turn, depends on people being well rested. When it comes to getting enough sleep, you can learn a lot from a cat.

Penelope wishes you good fortune in your final exams and a happy and safe summer.

Are You Safe?

NOVA is a safe place. In general, schools and colleges are much safer for students, faculty and staff than surrounding neighborhoods. For instance, the probability of a homicide at post-secondary institutions is .07/100,000 residents. In the US as a whole, the rate is more than 80 times higher: 5.7/100,000; and for those in the 17-29-year-old age group, the rate is over 200 times higher (14.1/100,000)! The vast majority of violent crimes that victimize college students (93%) occurs off-campus.

Not only is NOVA safe; it’s getting safer as evidenced by the more than 50+% drop in reported campus crime over the last 5 years. Of the crime that does occur on campus, only 20% was crime against persons. The rest were property crimes such as vandalism and larcenies. When crimes on campus are committed, NOVA Police solve...
Are You Safe? (cont’d)

them. The department’s closure rate (i.e., crimes resolved by arrest, proof of non-occurrence, etc.) is much higher than those of municipal departments.

Despite these reassuring statistics, NOVA Police and the Office of Emergency Management and Safety (OEMS) understand there are times when people need to know what is being done to maintain safety and security on our campuses. The following bullets illustrate only some of our many initiatives to keep you safe.

- **Empowerment.** NOVA Police and OEMS conduct more than 150 presentations annually in classrooms, convocations, orientations and meetings. Topics include active shooter response, situational awareness, crimes against women, self-defense considerations, dealing with difficult people, how to create and maintain a safe classroom, the secrets of safety, and many more. OEMS conducts regular fire, earthquake and tornado drills and exercises throughout the year, empowering the community to take informed and effective actions in crises.

- **Information.** NOVA’s monthly Public Safety Newsletter, which arrives each month via an email-delivered link (www.nvcc.edu/police/psnewsletters.html). Here you can see important information from the police and OEMS to keep you safe and secure. You can even read monthly tips from the ever popular Penelope the NOVA Police Cat (also, check her out on Instagram #penelopenovapolicecat). We also provide important safety information at campus convocations and orientations for new faculty and staff. NOVA Police Dispatch transmits time-urgent and critical information to warn people about emergencies and necessary courses of action. Additionally, OEMS provides syllabus handouts that consolidate critical safety information for students.

- **Support.** NOVA Police provide frequent support to College faculty, students and staff in the form of providing class lectures on academic topics (e.g., police procedures, writing in the workplace); sponsoring safety events, such as child safety seat installation and inspection; Drug Take-Back and Preventing Vehicle Theft with the Drug Enforcement Agency and State Police respectively; serving as social hosts for international students; providing access control to buildings, classrooms and labs; mentoring clubs; maintaining lost and found on each campus; and providing escorts to vehicles (just call dispatch and an officer will be sent to your location); etc. OEMS trains wardens and campus crisis response personnel to augment the actions of first responders in critical situations. This support can save lives and improve the community’s response to dangerous situations.

- **Outreach.** NOVA Police are active both on campus and in surrounding communities. In addition to our presentations and events, we provide training at local houses of worship, businesses and professional organizations, support campus events such as the annual MLK Day of Service, create podcasts, and patrol our campuses on foot and bicycle to deter crime and respond expeditiously to calls for service.

- **Technology.** Panic dialers in classrooms, cameras monitoring selected campus activities, the availability to the entire NOVA community of the free LiveSafe Mobile Safety app to enhance every aspect of campus safety, and OEMS testing of NOVA alert systems are among the many services that keep our campuses safe.

- **Professionalism.** NOVA officers are always working to improve our services to the campus community. Some of our training and initiatives include Crisis Intervention Team (40 hours of mental health issue response) training and Stop the Bleed training and annual Active Shooter Response training.

In short, NOVA Police and OEMS are highly successful professionals who enjoy great respect on campus, in the Commonwealth and across the country. National award winners in the department include the Chief of Police and this Public Safety Newsletter.

However, safe and secure campuses rely on more than a professional police and OEMS. Campus community members also have critical roles to play in keeping campuses safe and secure. These tasks include prompt reporting of concerning or unusual behaviors to deter such behaviors along with activities that can mitigate the seriousness of and
Are You Safe? (cont’d)

assist recovery from a serious crisis. In short, first responders cannot do it all (i.e., provide complete safety and security). Action is incumbent upon all members of the campus community.

The NOVA Police and OEMS are willing partners in keeping our campuses safe and eager to work with you. Meet us half-way by inviting us into your classes, attending our training and events, making use of our resources, and exercising situational awareness and prompt reporting of concerning or unusual behaviors.

If you desire additional information about NOVA’s safety and security capabilities, training or services, please contact Lt. John Weinstein at jweinstein@nvcc.edu or at 571-422-9928.

Stay safe!

Weather Terminology 101

Knowing what to do when the National Weather Service issues a weather alert is crucial for your safety. But what is the difference between a watch and warning? What should I do if a weather alert is issued? Below are a few common alert definitions you should know so you can keep yourself and your family safe.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tornado Watch</th>
<th>Severe Thunderstorm Watch</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weather conditions <strong>may</strong> lead to the formation of severe storms and tornadoes.</td>
<td>A tornado has been spotted or indicated by weather radar, meaning a tornado is occurring or expected soon.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Be Prepared:</strong> Know your safe locations. Be ready to act quickly if a warning is issued or you suspect a tornado is approaching.</td>
<td><strong>Take Action:</strong> There is immediate danger to life and property. Immediately seek refuge in the safest location possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Be Prepared:</strong> The watch area is typically large. Stay informed and be ready to act if a severe thunderstorm warning is issued.</td>
<td><strong>Take Action:</strong> Take shelter in a substantial building.</td>
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</tbody>
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As you see, the main difference between a watch and warning is that a warning indicates imminent danger to life and property. Another way to remember the differences -- there is an “R” in “warning”. “R” means RUN! If you want to learn more about weather safety, please visit the [National Weather Service’s Safety Tips Website](https://www.weather.gov/safety)
May is Mental Health Month

Each May in the U.S., we observe Mental Health Month (MHM) to raise awareness, reduce stigma, provide support, and advocate for policies to help the 60 million Americans who live with mental illness. This year marks the 70th year MHM has been observed in the U.S.

Last year’s MHM theme, #4Mind4Body, is being expanded to explore the topics of animal companionship (including pets and support animals) spirituality, humor, work-life balance, and recreation and social connections as ways to boost mental health and general wellness. A toolkit at http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/2019-mental-health-month-toolkit can help NOVA members:

- understand how lifestyle factors affect the health of the body and the mind;
- learn to assess their own mental health through the use of screening tools; and
- share their own strategies for maintaining both physical and mental health by using the #4Mind4Body hashtag in social media posts.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) “WhyCare?” awareness campaign seeks to share the importance of mental health treatment, support, and services as well as address broken systems and attitudes that undermine treatment and recovery. For educators, mental health conditions are present in their daily work with students and can affect classroom management. According to NAMI's Mental Health by the Numbers, half of all lifetime mental health conditions begin by age 14 and 75% by age 24, and early intervention programs can help. However, despite effective treatment, there are long delays, sometimes decades, between the first appearance of symptoms and when people get help. Further, over one-third (37%) of students with a mental health condition age 14-21 and older who are served by special education drop out, the highest dropout rate of any disability group.

NAMI has developed crisis intervention team (CIT) programs as a result of the lack of mental health crisis services across the U.S. CIT materials, currently in use by NOVA Police, can be helpful to faculty and staff as well, and can be found at https://www.nami.org/Get-Involved/Crisis-Intervention-Team-(CIT)-Programs/CIT-Resources.

For additional mental health resources, visit: https://www.nccpsafety.org/resources/library_search/eyJyZXN1bHRfcGFnZSI6InJlc291cmNlcy8xNjA1MjgwMDIzNzUwNDU4Nzk5ODE2Njg2ODE5MDIzMjguMjI0Ii8iLCJrZXl3b3JkcyI6Im1lbnRhbCBoZWFsdGgifQ.

NOVA Police Conduct Active Shooter Response Training

Although the probability of injury from an active shooter on campus is extremely low (about 3.6 out of 10 million), active shooters have assaulted schools so we must be prepared. Your NOVA Police officers train hard to hone their response capabilities to neutralize any threats and mitigate damage.

During March and April, all NOVA officers attended intensive tactical training in the Brault building. This training was conducted by two NOVA officers who are certified Active Shooter response trainers. Officers reviewed the department’s General Orders and response protocols, communications requirements, joint operations with neighboring agencies, and how to deal with evacuees. The officers also participated in various tactical drills that taught officers how to exploit cover and move under fire, move safely in stairwells and hallways, negotiate corners and intersections, and make dynamic entry into areas where violence is occurring. NOVA Vice President of Finance and Administration, Ms. Ina Dimkova, who
NOVA Police Conduct Active Shooter Response Training (cont’d)

observed the tactical training, noted “I was extremely impressed with the thoroughness of training and the officers’ demonstration of proficiency. Our police department serves us well and made me proud.”

Additionally, officers completed “Stop the Bleed” training, sponsored by the American College of Surgeons (ACS). This training reviewed how to stop catastrophic bleeding through the prompt and effective application of tourniquets as well as the use of hemostatic gauze. What makes this training so important is the fact that the vast majority of active shooting deaths are due to blood loss. This life-saving training is also applicable to traffic accidents and serious injuries officers may encounter on campus or in the community. The officers’ Stop the Bleed training required them to demonstrate proficiency in these crucial life-saving skills to receive ACS certification and receive new tourniquets, which is carried on their persons and in all NOVA Police cruisers.

Police training and expertise are only part of an effective active shooter response program. Community members and police must partner to detect and respond to crises. The most critical impact can be achieved by NOVA community members through their situational awareness and communication of concerning and even unusual behavior to NOVA Police’s 24/7 dispatch (703-764-5000).

In an actual active shooter incident, Police may not arrive at the scene for several minutes. During this time, you are responsible for ensuring your own safety so you should develop a plan for each location you frequent. Time is critical, so be prepared to act decisively to survive.

In the event of an active shooter on campus, you have three options, which are summarized in an excellent active shooter response video found on the NOVA Police website http://www.nvcc.edu/police/training.html:

- **Run.** Evacuate the area immediately. *If you can evacuate, this may be your best chance of survival!* Even if the shooter is approaching you, you

Officers practice hallway movement and rear security under the watchful eye of a police trainer.
are more likely to survive by running away, since a moving target is difficult to hit and most shooters are not trained marksmen. Furthermore, if you are injured, you will receive medical attention sooner if you can evacuate.

- **Hide.** If you cannot evacuate, lock the doors; turn off lights, pagers, and silence cell phones; hide behind articles such as desks as far out of view from windows as possible; and remain quiet. Spread out; do not huddle together.

- **Fight.** If, during evacuation or sheltering in place, you actually confront the shooter, putting your life in imminent danger, go on the offensive. Yell, improvise weapons, throw articles, attack, and (with others) secure the shooter in a sustained attack to neutralize the shooter until help arrives. A shooter on the defensive will interrupt killing and reduce casualties.

NOVA Police are available to attend faculty and staff meetings as well as classes and clubs to present this life-saving training. To schedule a presentation, please call Lt. John Weinstein at 571-422-9928 or contact him at jweinstein@nvcc.edu.

### 2018-2019 NOVA Police Training

NOVA Police conduct an active community outreach program. The following topics are available for presentation to faculty, students, clubs and staff. If there are additional topics you would like presented in your class, please contact Lt. John Weinstein at jweinstein@nvcc.edu.

**Topics:**

- Active Shooter Response
- Dealing with Difficult People
- Staying Safe in the Classroom
- Staying Safe on the Street/Self-Defense Considerations
- Alcohol/DUI Awareness
- Recognizing/Reporting Suspicious Behavior
- Crimes Against Women/Human Trafficking
- Staying Safe While Using Uber and Lyft
- Identity Protection
- Technology and Policing
- Empower Yourself to be Safe!
- Writing in the Workplace
- Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About the Police (But Were Afraid to Ask)
- Strategic Planning
Download LifeSafe Mobile Safety App

The LifeSafe Mobile Safety app, available for free to all NOVA faculty, students, staff and their friends, is a powerful tool that can empower you to stay safe, keep your campus safe, put potentially life-saving information at your fingertips, and facilitate timely interaction with NOVA Police and OEMS professionals in the event of an emergency or need for assistance. Download LiveSafe at iTunes or Google Play. It is easy and fast. Go to www.LiveSafeMobile.com to download this great app.