The horrific events that took place at Virginia Tech in 2007 heightened the awareness that tragedies can occur anywhere and at anytime, including a college or university campus. While the College cannot prevent all crises from occurring, it strives to maximize the safety of the campus community.

The first priority of the College is the safety of its students, faculty and staff. The President's Office and senior level administration are structured to develop and implement a plan of action to promote the safety of the campus community in the event of a crisis. This includes close coordination with our Campus Police and Safety Department.

The mission of our campus police is to work with all members of the campus community to preserve life, maintain human rights, investigate crime, protect property, and promote individual responsibility. Bridgewater College has a sworn campus police chief and sworn police sergeant, both trained professional law enforcement officers with combined experience of over 60 years. In addition, the College has five campus safety officers with at least one on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They serve as the initial point of contact for all emergencies.

Our campus police chief and sergeant have both completed active-shooter training. The College has cooperative relationships with law enforcement personnel from local jurisdictions that may be called on to help in responding to a situation as well as controlling access to campus. Depending on the situation, local rescue squads and fire departments may be contacted as well.

The size of the Bridgewater College campus facilitates the communication of emergency information in a timely manner. In the event of a crisis or emergency situation, students, faculty and staff will be notified of the situation and provided direction on how to avoid potential harm. Even prior to the tragic events at Virginia Tech, the College could notify the campus community of an emergency by mass email or through the College's web site, as well as local radio and TV stations. Because Bridgewater is a small campus, we can quickly telephone each building on campus or even physically move from building to building to warn students and others of any danger.

In 2007, the College added emergency text messaging capability for members of the College community. Through this method, we can send an almost instantaneous cell phone text message, as well as a computer email message, warning all who have provided the requisite information of the emergency and how to respond. The system is tested on a regular basis. A web-based sign up system allows our campus community to register for this service from any computer on or off campus. We strongly encourage our students, faculty, and staff to provide us with their cell phone numbers for inclusion in the emergency notification system. Our campus police chief and key members of the administration have the authority to issue emergency communication messages via the emergency alert system.

The College also has installed an audible alert siren on top of Blue Ridge Hall. If a crisis occurs, the audible siren will be activated to warn the campus community to seek shelter in place and check for communication and updates from the College Administration.

Bridgewater College has a "student of concern" assessment team that includes student affairs personnel and counseling staff, which evaluates students whose behavior exhibits dangerous warning signs. Depending on the student's behavior, the assessment team may also include campus police as well as a member of senior level administration. To facilitate bringing a student to the attention of the assessment
team, our counseling office created an online "I am concerned about a student" form. Faculty and staff can submit this confidential online form that expresses concern regarding a student's behavior. Once received, a counselor will evaluate the behavioral concerns and handle the matter accordingly. The director of the counseling center meets with faculty and residence life staff to review with them some of the warning signs to look for in students who may be experiencing mental or emotional health issues.

In addition, the College has policies and procedures designed to enhance campus safety. For example, access to all residence halls is only by use of a College ID card, and access is limited to only residents of each hall during certain hours of the day. We also recently revised our weapons policy. No employee is permitted to possess a weapon on campus at any time. Students may bring hunting weapons to campus, but only for use during the appropriate hunting season. Prior to bringing the weapon to campus, the student must provide a criminal record check obtained from the Virginia State Police. The campus police chief will then examine each individual request, and permission will be granted on a case-by-case basis. Any student granted permission to bring a hunting weapon to campus must store the weapon with campus police, and may only remove it from storage with the permission of campus police.

Bridgewater continues to review its existing crisis and emergency plans to determine what improvements can be made to enhance the safety of its campus. The College is committed to providing a safe educational environment for its students, faculty and staff.