Civil/Criminal Disturbance or Hostage Situations

If you are a victim or a witness to any offense on or near campus or observe a criminal act or suspicious person on campus, report it to the ODU Police Department at 757-683-4000. Note details and supply the dispatcher with any helpful information.

Everyone can help make the campus a safe place by promptly reporting suspicious or criminal activity.

If a CIVIL DISTURBANCE or RIOT is in progress:

- Keep a safe distance from any crowd activities that appear unsafe.
- Secure your area—lock doors, windows.
- Avoid confrontation with crowd participants.
- If police are not already present, report it to ODU Police Department by calling 757-683-4000 or 9-1-1 and report details of the event.

If you are involved in a HOSTAGE SITUATION:

- The initial capture phase presents your best opportunity to escape; so if possible, avoid becoming a hostage in the first place.
- Should you be taken hostage, your primary goal is to stay alive.
- As quickly as possible, try to assess the intent of the hostage taker (i.e., financial gain/ransom, terrorist/political motives, or to cause harm), this will help in deciding the best course of action.
- If taken as a hostage, attempt to gain control over panic reactions and maintain a calm composure. Hostages who are hysterical or overly emotional draw attention to themselves.
- Control impulsive behavior and avoid overt resistance.
- Comply with the hostage taker(s) instructions. Attempt to calm other hostages.
- Do not antagonize or threaten the hostage taker(s).
- Eye contact may appear to be a challenge to the captor's domination, especially in the early stages.
- Be observant; note the hostage taker(s) descriptions, speech, and behaviors.
- As time passes, attempt to show the hostage taker(s) your humanity by fostering communication on nonthreatening topics such as family or interests, but avoid political, religious, and other potentially sensitive issues.

Look for possible escape opportunities, but attempt an escape ONLY if you are reasonably certain that remaining a hostage will likely lead to your being injured or killed. If there is a rescue attempt, follow the instructions of the emergency responders (i.e., lie down, keep still, identify yourself). If you are unsure what to do, stay low and ensure that the emergency responders can see your empty hands. The rescuers will need to be able to separate the hostages from the hostage takers.