



## Campus Safety Awareness Month

### Campus Safety Awareness Month: Empowering College Communities

As September arrives, new students are arriving on our campuses. This is a perfect time to shine a spotlight on the safety and security of our students, employees, and visitors. Campus Safety Awareness Month serves as a reminder for colleges to prioritize the well-being of their students, employees, and visitors. As the academic year kicks off, this month-long initiative aims to empower college communities with the knowledge, tools, and resources needed to create a safe and secure environment for everyone. This is also a great time to send out your Annual Security Report as required by the Clery Act by October 1.

#### Why Campus Safety Matters

Your college is a dynamic and diverse space where many individuals come together to pursue education and personal growth. Campus safety isn't just about physical security; it encompasses digital and technology safety, mental health support, and promoting a culture of respect and inclusivity.

#### Key Focus Areas to Consider

- 1. Personal Safety Education:** Awareness starts with education. Workshops, seminars, and online training sessions can equip students and staff with the knowledge to make informed decisions about personal safety. Topics could include emergency response protocols, self-defense techniques, and walk safe programs.
- 2. Mental Health and Well-being:** Providing resources such as counseling services, stress management workshops, and promoting a stigma-free environment for seeking help is crucial. September is also Suicide Prevention Awareness Month.
- 3. Cybersecurity Awareness:** We live in the digital age; cybersecurity is more important than ever. Sessions on online privacy, responsible social media use, and protecting personal information can help prevent cyber threats and identity theft. Next month, October, is Cybersecurity Awareness Month.
- 4. Emergency Preparedness:** Being ready for any situation is essential. Conducting drills for fires, natural disasters, and lockdowns can ensure that everyone knows what to do in these intense and critical moments on campus. Did I mention that it's also National Preparedness Month in September?
- 5. Preventing Sexual Assault and Harassment:** Promoting consent education, bystander intervention training, and creating a culture of respect can contribute to reducing instances of sexual assault and harassment on campus. You can work with your Title IX Coordinator on these educational campaigns and initiatives.

6. **Campus Infrastructure:** Adequate lighting, well-maintained pathways, and clear signage contribute to a safe environment. Colleges should continually assess and improve campus infrastructure to eliminate potential safety hazards.
7. **Community Engagement:** Safety is a collective effort. Encouraging open dialogue between campus safety and security, local law enforcement, students, faculty, and staff promotes a sense of unity and shared responsibility.

### **Taking Action**

During Campus Safety Awareness Month, Colleges can organize a series of events and initiatives that address the above focus areas. This could include self-defense classes, mental health workshops, cybersecurity webinars, and “town hall” or “coffee with public safety” meetings to discuss safety concerns. Engaging students through social media campaigns, contests, and information pamphlets can expand the reach of your messages.

### **A Year-Round Commitment**

While Campus Safety Awareness Month serves as a spotlight on safety during September, it's important to remember that safety awareness should be a year-round commitment. Colleges should always be looking to improve policies, infrastructure, and education related to safety.

Campus Safety Awareness Month is a reminder that a safe campus is a shared responsibility, and together, we can build a stronger and more secure college experience.

-Lance