I. Purpose

Defines and governs emergency purchases.

II. Scope

Applies to all university departments and activities.

III. Policy

A. Definition and Cause of Emergencies

1. An emergency is an unexpected situation of a serious nature that demands immediate action. Although emergencies do occur through failure of equipment and other unforeseen conditions, frequent emergency orders may indicate poor planning, coordination, and organization. The State of North Carolina defines some as pressing needs:

2. A pressing need is one arising from unforeseen causes, including but not limited to, delay by contractors, delay in transportation, breakdown in machinery, or unanticipated volume of work; while emergencies are defined as situations which endanger lives, property or the continuation of a vital program and which can be rectified only by immediate on-the-spot purchases or rental of commodities, printing or services.

B. Approval of Emergency Purchases
Pressing need and emergency purchases are allowed by Purchasing Services when conditions warrant immediate action. They entail a deviation from normal procurement procedure and shall be permitted only with the approval of the Director of Purchasing. Emergency purchases shall be affected by Purchasing Services on the basis of verbal contacts with department heads and vendors, and followed up with required written documentation.

C. Vendor Contact

The university recognizes that an extreme emergency may exist where direct contact with the vendor by university personnel would be warranted. An emergency occurring outside working hours or during working hours when time is of the essence (for example, hurricane disasters) could warrant such action. Purchasing cardholders may contact vendors directly to resolve shipment or payment discrepancies.

D. Options for Obtaining Emergency Purchases

Emergency orders may be obtained through one of the following methods: purchase order, standing purchase order, purchasing card, check request, and petty cash reimbursement.

IV. Procedure

A. Emergency Purchase Order.

1. If an emergency purchase order is required, the department must complete a Requisition Input/Authorization Form, obtain approval signatures, and ENTER THIS REQUISITION IN THE BANNER REQUISITION SYSTEM AND CALL PURCHASING WITH THE REQUISITION NUMBER. UNCW treats “pressing needs” as emergencies.

2. The State of North Carolina’s defines pressing needs and emergencies as follows:

   a. a pressing need is one arising from unforeseen causes, including but not limited to, delay by contractors, delay in transportation, breakdown in machinery, or unanticipated volume of work;

   b. emergencies are situations which endanger lives, property or the continuation of a vital program and which can be rectified only by immediate on-the-spot purchases or rental of commodities, printing or services.
3. Upon receipt of the requisition number, Purchasing will evaluate the request and assign either a regular purchase order number or an emergency purchase order number. The purchase order will be distributed as normal.

4. Distinction must be made as to whether:

   a. The department will take the purchase order number to the vendor and pick up the merchandise or call the vendor with the purchase order number or..

   b. Purchasing will call the purchase order number to the vendor and direct the vendor to the departmental contact as may be necessary.

5. A purchase order will be printed the next day and distributed as normal with a confirming copy sent to the vendor.

6. The department will sign the receiving copy of the purchase order to indicate receipt of the merchandise and return to Purchasing immediately upon delivery.

B. Standing Purchase Order.

   If a standing purchase order has been established, emergency purchases may be made within the conditions of the standing purchase order.

C. Check Request.

   If the emergency purchase was necessary after normal working hours, attach a memorandum outlining the reasons for the emergency purchase after normal working hours (along with the original sales receipt or invoice) to the Check Request when submitting to the Director of Purchasing.

D. Petty Cash Reimbursement.

   Petty cash reimbursement is available for emergency purchases of items costing $50.00 or less. (See UNCW Policy 05.142 Petty Cash).