

# Police and Public Safety Department

The Police and Public Safety Department is responsible for security and emergency response on all GSCC campuses. Police and Public Safety (which includes security, mail, transportation, Alabama Department of Emergency Management reporting and severe weather monitoring) is an important component of the educational environment at GSCC. The Police and Public Safety Office phone number is 256.549.8425, and the 24-hour phone number is 256.312.2132.

## Security Offices

<u>Campus</u>	<u>Building</u>	<u>Room #</u>
Ayers	Student Center	101
Cherokee	Cherokee Academic Building	102
Valley Street	Carpentry Building	1
Wallace Drive	Inzer Hall, 2nd Floor	

Officers patrol the campuses and provide safety and security services through the deployment of vehicle and foot patrols. To achieve the highest degree of safety and security at all campuses, centers, and sites, the Office of Safety and Security encourages community members to recognize the importance of following good safety practices. Community members should also understand that safety is their responsibility, not just that of those officially and formally charged with enforcing the laws, policies, and rules. This community responsibility includes using the escort service available by calling the 24 Hour (security) number posted on each campus, locking valuables, and reporting suspicious/criminal activities. Police and Public Safety takes a leadership role by providing educational programs on campus safety, preventative patrols, incident investigation and reporting, fire safety and prevention, and crime prevention. In addition, the Police and Public Safety Department is responsible for monitoring, maintaining, and/or enforcing GSCC alarm systems, parking services, property/evidence collection, officer training, and crime reporting. Police and Public Safety officers receive training in security and emergency care.

The primary objective of the Police and Public Safety Department is to provide a safe college environment wherein its community members can work and study and personally and professionally develop, both intellectually and socially. GSCC has the Safety and Security Committee, whose mission is to ensure that appropriate health and safety standards are maintained and that the appropriate Federal and State statutes are observed.

**1. Crime Reporting and Timely Warnings:** Numerous and diligent efforts are made to advise members of the campus community about crime-related problems. The College's duty to inform students of threatening situations is taken seriously, and as a result, information related to crime and criminal activity is provided to the community in an accurate and timely fashion. Because awareness is essential to effective crime reduction, the College will release information that can be used by students and other College community members to reduce their chances of becoming victims. The Police and Public Safety Department will issue timely warnings or safety alerts to campus community members informing them of incidents/crimes impacting the College community and/or surrounding property. This information is disseminated to the College community members via use of electronic mail messages, electronic sign, information flyers posted at highly visible locations throughout campus, Cardinal Alert and crime prevention presentations by Police and Public Safety personnel, Cardinal Commit, all campus orientations, and on-line orientations required of all students.

**2. Reporting of Criminal Actions or Emergencies:** To report an emergency or a crime in progress, 911 should be called first then your campus security officer. To report a crime no longer in progress, members of the community should call your campus Police/Public Safety officer or the Police and Public Safety office. To obtain information or

request an escort or for any other security service, community members should call your Campus Security number. Police and Public Safety personnel also have the ability to notify county emergency dispatchers regarding emergency situations occurring on campus.

**3. Campus Enforcement Authority:** All students and employees are encouraged to report promptly all on-campus crime and suspicious activities to the Police and Public Safety Department. While off campus, students and employees are encouraged to contact the local law enforcement authorities. Public Safety officers lack the authority to make arrests, but they can report offenses to the Gadsden State Police Department for investigation. The Office has a good working relationship with the local police and sheriffs where campuses are located. The College and this office diligently cooperate with law enforcement agencies to maximize the effectiveness of police services to the campus community. The Dean of Student Services at GSCC coordinates disciplinary action for matters that are violations of College rules.

**4. Sexual Assault Prevention Program and Procedures:** GSCC will act swiftly to protect the rights of all its members. In the event of sexual assault, various campus and area resources are available to victims. The College supports the victim's right to choose which avenues of assistance are best for the individual. These resources include the following: The Police and Public Safety Department, where all crimes, including sexual assaults, should be reported (a designated employee is assigned to assist victims of sexual assault); the Dean of Student Services; the Title IX Coordinator; the local police agency with jurisdiction; and the Emergency Department of the local hospitals. An individual who has been sexually assaulted has the following rights:

- An opportunity to contact the local law enforcement authorities. GSCC will assist the student in this notification;
- Transport to the nearest medical facility approved for the collection of rape evidence;
- Awareness of pastoral and professional mental health counseling in the community;
- Alternative academic and living arrangements if requested and reasonably available.

Due to the severity of incidents of sexual assault, the College strongly encourages individuals who have been sexually assaulted to contact the police. Reporting the incident to a Gadsden State Police Officer immediately will greatly increase the possibility of successful prosecution if criminal charges are brought. Preserving all evidence of a sexual assault is extremely important.

An individual who has been sexually assaulted will be offered the opportunity to make a formal complaint against the offender through the College's disciplinary process pursuant to the Student Code of Conduct. The College may pursue charges regardless of whether any criminal charges are filed. The College will initiate internal proceedings in incidents of sexual assault when a student requests such proceedings and/or when subsequent investigation produces evidence of a violation of College policy.

Individuals have the right to have any questions about College policy and the College judicial process answered. If an individual who reports a sexual assault is harassed by anyone in connection with the incident in question, the harassment should be reported immediately. An individual has the option to have a victim's advocate and/or any other advisor with them at all times throughout such procedures. The accuser and the accused are entitled to the same opportunities to have others present during judicial disciplinary proceedings. Both the accuser and the accused shall be informed of the institutional disciplinary proceeding (the College's final determination and any sanction against the accused) brought alleging a sex offense.

**5. Sexual Offender Registry and Access to Related Information:** In accordance with the Campus Sex Crimes Act of 2002, institutions of higher education are required to issue a statement advising the campus community where information about registered sex offenders may be obtained. It also requires sex offenders already required to register in a state to provide notice, as required under state law, of each institution of higher education in that state at which the person is employed, carries on a vocation, or is a student. In the State of Alabama, information regarding

registered sex offenders may be obtained from local municipal police departments, the county sheriff's office, or the Alabama Highway Patrol. This information can also be found online by visiting [Alabama Law Enforcement Agency](#) and searching the Sex Offender Registry.

**6. Access to College Facilities:** Most of the College's buildings and facilities are accessible to members of the college community, guests, and visitors during normal business hours, (Monday through Friday), except holidays. Faculty and staff who wish to enter any facilities after hours should notify the Police and Public Safety Officer on duty or the 24-hour security phone number 256.312.2132.

**7. Guidelines for Violence Threat Response:** Employees who believe they have been subjected to acts of violence, threatened acts of violence, including hostile behavior, physical or verbal abuse, or possession of weapons or dangerous materials of any kind, or who witness or have knowledge of any actions that could be perceived as violent should immediately report the incident to the President, Chief of Police or other appropriate administrator. Students should report such actions to the Dean of Student Services or the Chief of Police. All complaints will be promptly investigated, and appropriate action will be taken.

Employees or students who are witnesses to a violent act are advised to resist personal involvement in the situation, to leave the immediate area, and to immediately report the event to a Gadsden State Police Officer or Public Safety employee.

The President, along with the Chief of Police, will evaluate what has occurred and will proceed with an internal investigation.

Pending the circumstances under investigation, the President, along with the Chief of Police, may need to remove from the premises employees or students who are involved in a physical or verbal altercation.

The President must notify the General Counsel of the Alabama Community College System upon the occurrence of or upon the report of an incident under this policy and must keep the General Counsel informed as to the progress of the investigation and its outcome.

It is the intent of the Alabama Community College System and the President of Gadsden State Community College to provide a safe workplace and a safe educational environment, free of acts or threatened acts of violence, including hostile behavior, physical or verbal abuse, or possession of weapons or dangerous materials of any kind on College property or while one is conducting College business. This policy applies to employees, contractors, students, visitors, or anyone else. Additionally, this policy provides a planned and immediate response to such incidents. Violence or threats of violence will not be tolerated.

**Third Party Influences:** Contractors, and/or visitors purposefully threatening the safety of others on College premises are subject to immediate removal from the premises and/or prosecution under the law.

**Employees:** To ensure both safe and efficient operations, the Alabama Community College System expects and requires all College employees to display common courtesy and to engage in safe and appropriate behavior on the job at all times. Any involvement in acts or threatened acts of violence, including hostile behavior, physical or verbal abuse, or possession of weapons or dangerous materials of any kind is considered unacceptable behavior that violates this standard of appropriate behavior in the workplace and in the educational environment.

Employees are responsible for their conduct on College premises, whether they are on or off duty. Alabama Community College System and institutional rules of conduct and behavior expectations also apply when employees are traveling on College business, as well as any time employees are working for or are representing the Alabama Community College System away from the premises.

The College will promptly investigate any physical or verbal altercation, threats of violence, or other conduct by employees that threatens the health or safety of other employees or students or the public or otherwise might involve a breach of or departure from the conduct standards in this policy. A search of property may be conducted, under appropriate circumstances. All incidents of physical altercations or threats of violence are treated as gross misconduct and will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment for employees and disciplinary action up to and including expulsion for students.

Retaliation in any form against an individual who exercises their right to make a complaint under this policy or who provides information in the investigation of a complaint is strictly prohibited and will result in appropriate disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment for employees and appropriate disciplinary action up to and including expulsion for students.

**8. Cardinal Alert:** Cardinal Alert is an emergency notification service that will allow Gadsden State to contact all enrolled students and employees via cell phone, text message, home phone, and e-mail. For follow-up emergency information to the College community, all of the above media to include postings on our web site, television, and radio will be utilized. The service will be used only when there is imminent danger to the campus, i.e., tornado warnings, chemical spills, orders to evacuate or shelter in place, and active shooters.