

Zombie Attack Activity

This activity used the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response's *Preparedness 101: Zombie Pandemic Preparedness Ideas for Educators* (<https://www.cdc.gov/phpr/learn.htm>) and the University of Florida's E-learning System Support Team's *Zombie Attack: Disaster Preparedness Simulation Exercise #5* (<http://www.astro.ufl.edu/~jybarra/zombieplan.pdf>) as inspiration and starting points. Thank you to the agency and university for making the work available.

Zombie Attack Activity

Situation

Approximately two hours ago, reports of loud and strange moaning in remote parts of campus were made to campus police. An hour later, zombie invaded your campus, and they are headed directly toward the center of campus. The gloomy and overcast day has emboldened these intruders.

Faculty and staff have said students are damaging to campus buildings and property. For example, students have stripped dining halls of all food (especially broccoli) and are fashioning weapons and barricades out of dorm and classroom furniture. Students have taken matters into their own hands in order to protect themselves at a time when no official response or information has been released.

Over the past few nights, students have gone missing, but people thought these students had gone out of town for break. Adding to the confusion, many of the students previously thought to be missing have now re-emerged as zombies. It is now known that zombies are in and around the dorms. Zombies bang on students' dorm room doors if their drapes are not tightly drawn. Once students open their doors, the zombies try to enter the students' rooms. If the students are able to escape, the zombies chase them down the hall.

To make matters worse, electricity is out in the central part of campus, landlines are down, and cell phone reception is spotty in all areas of campus. There are also many rumors circulating on social media such as one that states prominent local authorities and university leaders are infected with Zombie Infectious Disease Syndrome (ZIDS) and another stating that zombies fear broccoli causing even more panic and chaos.

Local hospitals and the student health center have been overrun with patients. Health professionals are having a difficult time responding to those infected with ZIDS. ZIDS has a wide spectrum of indicators including flu-like symptoms, decaying flesh, open wounds, lack of rational thought, unresponsiveness, stating a desire to eat brains, and those thought to have been deceased suddenly moving again. In addition, those infected with ZIDS often have difficulty articulating and speaking clearly. The director of the health center is asking for help to move patients elsewhere so they can receive specialized medical interventions. It is thought that between 30 and 45 percent of the student population either is infected, or has been exposed to, ZIDS in the last 24 hours. The long-term effects of ZIDS exposure are unknown at this time as is the incubation period of the infection.

The zombies and frantic students are headed from campus into the surrounding community, which means the likelihood of ZIDS spreading is quite high.

The university president, local city leaders, the head of campus security, and the director of the health center will hold a press conference about the invasion in an hour.

Stakeholders

President

Other university administrators

Mayor

Fire marshal

Chief of police

Parents

Students

Local residents

Health professionals

Faculty

Staff

Governor

State Officials

Media

President

Administrators, Faculty, Staff and Students at other colleges and universities

Other police and fire officials

Other mayors, governors, and state officials

The American public

Suggested activities

1. Have a discussion in class and ask students to determine what information should be released, to whom, and how while being mindful of transparency and disclosure. Students could talk about the use of traditional and social media. They could also speak about how to prioritize and determine what information should be disseminated to which public at what time.
2. Students could role play a press conference and determine the setting, format and messaging for it. For example, some students could represent the campus and local leaders holding the press conference. Others could be eye witnesses to the attack. Still others could be members of the media.