



# CAMPUS & PUBLIC SAFETY

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## EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

# **SEVERE WEATHER PROCEDURES**

# Severe Weather Procedures

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## Introduction

This document is a functional guide providing procedural direction for a change in campus operational status due to severe or inclement weather, including closure, delayed opening, or early release. Most often this procedure is implemented for snow and other winter weather event impacts, but may be used for any severe weather that threatens normal operations such as a hurricane, extreme flooding, a tornado, or other hazardous weather which could impact University operations.

### Purpose

To enable a consistent, transparent and coordinated multi-department and multi-campus efficient response to any inclement weather.

### Limitations

The University of Delaware will endeavor to make every reasonable effort to respond to severe storms or hazardous weather incidents. However, resources and systems may become overwhelmed by the magnitude of a storm and its impacts. There is no guarantee implied by this document that a perfect response to a severe storm or hazardous weather incident will be practical or possible.

## Concept of Operations

### Roles and Responsibilities

<b>Title/Department</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
<b>Executive Vice President and COO</b>	In collaboration with the Provost, authorizes the decision to close, delay, or release the campus early.
<b>Provost</b>	In collaboration with the Executive Vice President and COO, authorizes the decision to close, delay, or release the campus early.
<b>Office of Communications and Marketing</b>	Receives campus status decision and communicates the decision via internal and social media channels (digital content group), and notifies external media (radio, television, online media). Receive campus status decision and crafts school-focused internal communications to follow university communication.
<b>Associate Director of Emergency Management</b>	Monitors weather forecasts, obtains relevant information from government agencies and counterparts at nearby institutions. Team communicates conditions with regular Weather Assessment Group conference calls.
<b>AVP Safety</b>	Assesses campus conditions to assist in reaching an operational status decision. Coordinates reaching a weather-related operational status decision with the Executive Vice President and COO and the Provost.

<b>Vice President of Facilities, Real Estate &amp; University Architect</b>	Assesses campus conditions to assist in reaching an operational status decision. Coordinates snow/debris removal operations and responds to reports of facility damage. Advises Executive Vice President on snow/debris removal, power status, and weather-related matters.
<b>Chief of Police</b>	Assess current campus conditions to assist in reaching an operational status recommendation, including condition of roadways and sidewalks.
<b>Director of Custodial and University Services</b>	Provides status reports on campus conditions.
<b>Vice President of Human Resources</b>	Advises the Executive Vice President and COO on any human resources related-issues to altering university operations due to severe weather.
<b>Director of Intercollegiate Athletics and Recreation Services</b>	Reports on current and future athletic events and/or special events on campus that may be impacted by a change in operational status.

**Operations Group**

The Weather Operations Group is the primary decision-making body for severe weather events that may impact the university. The Group will receive advanced notice of severe weather forecasts, typically by email, at least 48 hours in advance of the event. The Director of Emergency Management will keep the Group informed on the forecast and, if necessary, will organize a teleconference call or meeting to provide updated weather briefings to allow for operational decisions. The Group consists of the following personnel:

- a) Office of the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer
- b) Office of the Provost
- c) Vice President of the Office of Human Resources
- d) Vice President of Communications and Marketing
- e) Vice President of Student Life
- f) Vice President of Facilities, Real Estate and Auxiliary Services & University Architect
- g) Director of Intercollegiate Athletics and Recreation Services
- h) AVP Safety
- i) Chief of Police, University Police
- j) University Registrar
- k) Director of Grounds
- l) Director of Custodial and University Services
- m) Director of Emergency Management

**Note:** Above list is subject to change and dependent on storm severity

## Response Options – Modification of Campus Operational Status

The university has identified three (3) possible response options to modify operations during or after the impact of significant weather: **closing, delayed opening, and early release**. While longer-term options may be modified by decision of the Weather Operations Group, short-term status modifications should always follow one of these three options. Each of these options should be considered by each of the university campuses (Newark, Wilmington, Paradee, Carvel and Sharp).

Status	Description	Rationale
<b>Suspended</b>	Normal operations are cancelled for the business day. Unless otherwise decided, activities scheduled for the evening are cancelled. Essential services continue.	The campus cannot be safely made ready for the day, and the weather impact is forecast to continue or worsen during the day.
<b>Delayed Opening</b>	Activities occurring before the selected opening time are cancelled, and activities beginning after the opening time continue as scheduled.	The campus cannot be safely made ready for normal opening time, but is confidently expected to be safe at the selected time. Weather impact has ended or is confidently forecast to end before the opening time.
<b>Early Release</b>	Normal operations are suspended during the business day and employees are dismissed early (the specific time will be communicated).	Weather impact during the business day creates hazardous traveling conditions or other problems.

## Procedures

Advances in meteorology have made forecasts more accurate. Whenever possible, a suspension of operations or closing decision, should be encouraged to be made the evening before an anticipated weather impact based on the confidence of the forecast, expected impacts, and the known or anticipated actions of public authorities. When a decision cannot be made in advance, the status decision should be made and notifications communicated by 5:45 a.m. to all university personnel on the affected day.

Campus & Public Safety (C&PS) is responsible for monitoring the potential for severe weather. There are two methods of monitoring for weather: active and passive. For all campuses, C&PS monitors National Weather Service (NWS) Advisories, Watches, and Warnings and determines whether passive or active monitoring is recommended.

Passive monitoring means that there is a chance for winter weather conditions based on forecasts and that C&PS will be assessing forecasts for any developments or changes.

Active monitoring means that winter weather conditions are occurring or are imminent and that the C&PS staff will be assessing conditions and obtaining data from various sources. The Director of Emergency Management, within C&PS, will participate in the Delaware Emergency Management Agency (DEMA) weather bridge calls which provide a real-time forecast from a staff meteorologist from the local NWS office in Mount Holly, New Jersey.

Depending upon conditions and the impact of the storm, active monitoring will commence at approximately 3:30 a.m., each day before university classes are scheduled. This will facilitate ongoing assessment of conditions in order to make recommendations to the full Weather Operations Group.

C&PS will discuss the forecast with the Executive Vice President and COO. If the EVP/COO requests a conference call with the Weather Operations Group, C&PS will schedule the call. The conference call may take place in the evening (typically at 8:00 p.m.) or early the following morning (no later than 5:00 a.m.) Each member of the Weather Operations Group will participate.

Prior to any conference call, members of the Weather Operations Group should gather assessments of conditions specific to each of their areas of responsibility so this can be shared on the call, if necessary.

C&PS will consult campus representatives at the Wilmington, Paradee, Carvel and Sharp campuses to assess conditions and get updates on their specific situations.

The conference call agenda will consist of the following:

1. C&PS will provide campus and regional updates to include:
  - a. Latest National Weather Service forecast for the area, including any posted advisories, watches, or warnings;
  - b. Emergency/closing status of State, local and county government;
  - c. Status of local road conditions, transit operations and restrictions;
  - d. Status of other area colleges and universities, if known;
  - e. Status of K-12 school districts in the surrounding communities; and,
  - f. Any additional hazards or conditions of concern.
2. The guiding principles should focus on public safety and health, with other factors secondary in the final recommendation. (For specific guidance, refer to *Appendix A: Campus Closure Analysis Worksheet*). C&PS will complete the Decision Matrix for Inclement Weather and make recommendations on campus operations.
3. The EVP/COO and Provost make a final official decision based upon all information available on changing the status of campus operations (if any).
  - i. **Suspended Operations, Closing** or **Delayed Opening** decisions should be made before 5:45 a.m.
  - ii. **Delayed Opening** must indicate a specific time at which the campus is expected to be open for normal operations.
  - iii. **Early Release** decisions should be made at least 90 minutes before the effective time of the release, when possible.

### *Academic Notification*

Immediately following the conference call, the Office of Communications and Marketing will provide broad-based notifications regarding any significant change to campus operations through the following means:

- University homepage ( [www.udel.edu](http://www.udel.edu) ) and on UDaily
- University email to all members of the campus community
- University information line (302.831.2000)
- Information will be posted to the University's primary social media accounts

- Information will be to the University's Live Safe app in the form of a broadcast message to all subscribers
- Information will be posted to the State of Delaware School Closings website
- Information will be shared with local radio, television and online media outlets

### Continued Monitoring

C&PS is responsible for continuing to monitor the weather situation. When a closing or delay has been enacted, C&PS will coordinate a reassessment of campus conditions at least three hours before the anticipated end of the closure, following the same procedures outlined for the initial closing, to determine if it is safe to resume normal operations. If necessary, a subsequent weather conference call may be scheduled with the Weather Operations Group.

Appendix A. Campus Closure Analysis Worksheet

**SEE MATRIX ON FOLLOWING PAGE**





### SEVERE WEATHER CLOSURE MATRIX

Status: The safety of all individuals is compromised by weather.  
Campus closed until specific time. Essential services will continue.

Incident Type:		Date:	
		Time:	

## Campus Closure - Analysis Worksheet

Check if Pertinent/Notes

### Impacts to Life Safety

Impending or existing dangerous conditions for UD community health/safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Injury or death has occurred as a result of the hazardous condition	<input type="checkbox"/>	
State of Delaware State of Emergency or Level 1, 2 or 3 Driving Restriction (circle which applies)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Road conditions in the City of Newark are hazardous	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Road conditions in the region are hazardous (De./Md./Pa./NJ)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Emergency response to impacted area may be prevented or restricted due to hazardous conditions	<input type="checkbox"/>	

### Certainty of Impact

Certainty level of impending hazardous conditions (NWS prediction)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Duration of impending emergency is expected to last more than 8-12 hours	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Predicted snowfall totals in excess of five inches within 24 hours	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Snowfall rate greater than 1 inch per hour for more than 2 hours	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Severe cold, wind-chill and/or ice accretions are predicted	<input type="checkbox"/>	

### Impacts to Campus Infrastructure and Facilities

Incident has interrupted/impacted campus infrastructure (Roadways, gas, electricity, steam, chilled water)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Incident has potential to disrupt staff operations, academics, or special events on campus	<input type="checkbox"/>	
There are significant physical damages to structures on campus	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Parking lots and sidewalks on campus are hazardous	<input type="checkbox"/>	

### Other Factors to Consider

K-12 schools in region are either delayed or closed (circle one)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other higher education institutions delayed or closed (circle one)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
State, County, or Municipal government delay or closure (circle one)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Power outage or utility failure on campus or in region	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Potential for or existence of physical damage to UD facilities (heavy snow, ice accretion, high winds)	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Complexity Score

Comments:

Recommended Action: For each box checked above, add 1 and develop a total sum

1-3	Normal Operations - no immediate actions needed at this time	
4-7	Limited closure/Classes cancelled- other operations continue	
7-10	Full closure/classes cancelled	9
	All campus operations are cancelled - Essential Personnel Report Per Policy	

Also see [University of Delaware Extreme Weather and Emergency Conditions Policy 4-23](#)

## Appendix B. Winter Weather Key Terminology

**OUTLOOK** – Hazardous Weather Outlooks are issued every day, and serve as a “heads up” that a significant weather event may be possible in the next 7 days.

**ADVISORY** – An advisory is issued when winter weather events could cause a significant inconvenience, but could also lead to life threatening conditions if not cautious.

**WATCH** – A watch is issued when winter weather events have the potential to threaten life and property, but the exact timing and location of the storm is uncertain. Watches are normally issued between 12 to 48 hours in advance.

**WARNING** – A warning is issued when winter weather events are occurring or are imminent and pose a threat to life and property. Warnings are normally issued between 2 and 24 hours in advance.

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**Winter Weather Product Criteria** (In addition to these thresholds, impacts that cause significant inconvenience or could lead to life threatening conditions if not cautious)

### Advisory Products

- Freezing Rain Advisory – Small accumulation of ice (freezing rain and/or freezing drizzle), generally less than 1/4 of an inch
- Winter Weather Advisory
  - For Snow – Snow accumulation of 3 to 5 inches in 12 hours
  - For Sleet – Accumulation of ice pellets less than 1/2 of an inch
  - For Snow & Blowing Snow – Snowfall with blowing snow intermittently reducing visibility to less than 1/2 of a mile
- Wind Chill Advisory – Wind Chill values of -20°F to -29°F

### Watch Products

- Blizzard Watch – Conditions are favorable for a blizzard event in the next 12 to 48 hrs.
- Winter Storm Watch – Conditions are favorable for a winter storm event (Heavy Sleet, Heavy Snow, Ice Storm, Heavy Snow and Blowing Snow or a combination of events) to meet or exceed local Winter Storm Warning criteria in the next 12 to 48 hrs.
- Wind Chill Watch – Conditions are favorable for wind chill temperatures to meet or exceed Wind Chill Warning criteria in the next 12 to 48 hours.

**Warning Products** (In addition to these thresholds, impacts that pose a threat to life and property)

**Blizzard Warning** – Sustained wind or frequent gusts greater than or equal to 35 miles per hour accompanied by falling and/or blowing snow, frequently visibilities less than 1/4 of a mile for at least 3 hours.

**Ice Storm Warning** – Widespread ice accumulation of 1/4 of an inch or more.

Winter Storm Warning – Heavy Snow (snow accumulation of 6 inches or more in 12 hours or 8 inches or more in 24 hours), Sleet (accumulation of ice pellets 1/2 of an inch and greater), Ice (accumulation of 1/4 of an inch or more) and/or heavy Snow and Blowing Snow (wind is below blizzard criteria).

Wind Chill Warning – Wind chills -30°F or colder.

**For more information about this plan contact:**

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