

Colorado State University

EMERGENCY AND SEVERE WEATHER NOTIFICATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Fall 2007

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this policy is to provide a reasonable and organized method of maintaining a safe environment for the students, faculty, and staff of Colorado State University during severe weather conditions or other campus emergencies. This policy is divided into several sections that address issues of public safety information and internal operations.

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This policy was originally created by a committee with representation from several Colorado State University organizations: CSU Police Department (CSUPD), Facilities Management (FM), Housing and Dining Services (H&DS), Associated Students of CSU (ASCSU), Classified Personnel Council (CPC), University Parking Services (UPS), Disabled Student Services, Public Relations, and the Division of Administrative Services in 1994. A debt of gratitude is owed to those individuals who participated.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

I Overview

- * The intent of this policy is to protect lives and property and to effectively use available resources to maintain an appropriate level of University operations during episodes of severe weather or other campus emergency.
- * **Colorado State's severe weather policy is driven by the needs of the entire campus community rather than the particular needs of each individual. Each individual is responsible for deciding if the conditions are safe for his/her travel.**
- * The University's response to a given situation will take into consideration the conditions on campus, in Fort Collins and the immediate region. The University Chief of Police, or designee, will gather information from on duty police personnel, Facilities Management personnel, local law enforcement agencies, City of Fort Collins, National Weather Service bulletins, and other major public and private entities when possible, regarding conditions on campus and the surrounding community, and specifically, access to the University.
- * For severe snow storms, the University has identified areas of campus that are priorities for snow removal. As conditions deteriorate, additional stress is placed on available resources. To maintain access for police, fire and emergency medical vehicles, high priority areas -- those areas considered essential for the safety and well being of the campus's 30,000+ people, including the 7,000 people living on campus -- will be served first.
- * During a severe storm, representatives of the CSUPD (Police Chief or designee) and Facilities Management will assess the severity of weather conditions and analyze data from the National Weather Service and other emergency centers. **The Chief of Police, or designee, will make a recommendation to the Vice President for Administrative Services (or Vice President for Student Affairs or other Cabinet-level official as designated in the absence of the Vice President) based on what level of weather emergency exists and the action to be considered regarding the status of services on campus. If this is not possible, the Chief of Police or designee shall confer directly with the President and make a recommendation as to the operational status of the University.**
- * The decision will be made by 5:30 a.m. (if at all possible) on the course of action for the campus. The desire is to maintain the uninterrupted

operation of the University. If operations in one segment of the University are suspended, e.g., classes canceled, other University operations may also be suspended, with the exception of essential services, e.g. police, food service in residence halls.

- * Public Relations will issue announcements in a timely fashion via the news media to inform the campus population of any disruption to normal campus operations and provide updates to the "snow/weather line" at 491-SNOW (491-7669).
- * A review of this policy and process will occur if severe weather or other potential emergency is forecast to occur within the next 24-hour period.
- * Departments that provide services which must be provided, regardless of weather conditions, (e.g. food preparation for University Housing, animal care, etc.) need to identify/inform those personnel that are considered "essential" to that function.
- * Reminders of the policy and process should take place at least annually. Conducting practice or mock drills of the notification plan may occur periodically.

II Public Relations and Education

University Service Interruption Notification Plan

Description

Rarely, Colorado State University must suspend services due to severe inclement weather (snow storms, flooding, etc.) or other emergency. The decision to suspend services, ultimately made by the Provost or his/her designee, is based upon public health and safety issues associated with those conditions. Notification of service interruptions is managed internally and externally by CSUPD in conjunction with Public Relations.

University Objectives:

- * To ensure the public health and safety of the campus community during periods of severe inclement weather or other emergency;
- * To be a responsible citizen by notifying, in a timely manner, the campus community, media and community at large of campus service interruptions.

Public Relations Objectives:

- * To create and manage a notification plan, in conjunction with CSUPD, that supports the University's public health and safety objectives;
- * To create internal and external awareness of the notification process so that procedures are followed and the plan is successfully implemented.

Notifications

- Internal* CSUPD, Public Relations, President's Office, President's Cabinet, Student Affairs, E-Mail System, Deans, Directors and Department Heads, General Faculty, Student Body, Continuing Education, Colorado State Forest Service, Agricultural Experiment Station, Cooperative Extension Service, Denver Center.
- External* Local and Denver print and broadcast media, Poudre R-1 District Office, Front Range Community College - Larimer County Campus, City of Fort Collins Emergency Management Coordinator, Larimer County Sheriff's Department, other emergency response agencies as deemed appropriate.

Public Service Announcement Policy

Service Interruptions

The campus will suspend services only under extreme circumstances so that a minimum number of students lose educational time or opportunity. The University urges you to use common sense regarding your safety and travel to campus during inclement weather. Information regarding the suspension of classes, administrative functions, or specific building closures will be given to the media.

Deans, directors and department heads should identify University facilities essential to the health and safety of the University which must remain operational even under extreme weather conditions or other campus emergency, and notify affected employees of their responsibilities. Special transportation arrangements may have to be considered for employees in those areas.

Deans, department heads, and directors are encouraged to use good judgment in accommodating individual employee circumstances, such as distance to travel from home or child care obligations due to public school closures during periods of severe weather conditions which do not warrant a suspension of University services under this policy. Such accommodations could include late reporting or early release times, etc. The type of leave an employee will take (administrative, annual, or other leave) is defined in the Human Resource Services Manual, General Provisions, Section 1. (Please see Appendix D.)

Full-Day Service Interruptions

If the decision is made to suspend all or part of campus services due to extreme inclement weather or other campus emergency, information will be available to the media by 5:30 a.m. the day of the emergency. (Essential personnel should report to assigned area.) You should consider the information you hear on radio and television to be accurate and reliable. In addition, the University has established an information number = 970-491-SNOW (7669). Announcements about the operating status of the University will be updated periodically on this line during inclement weather conditions or other campus emergency. **Please do not call the CSUPD or Facilities Management to verify that the campus is closed.** These phone lines must remain open for emergency communications.

Workday Service Interruptions - Early Release

If the decision to suspend services on campus is made during a workday, deans, directors and department heads will be notified and asked to pass along information to their employees. Again, please do not call the CSUPD or Facilities Management to verify information. Please tune to the broadcast media for further information. The "snow line" will also contain current information.

Telephone Notification and Warning System for Campus

A feature in the University telecommunications phone switch improves campus notification in case of an emergency during a normal working day. This feature allows specific phone numbers of key officials to be dialed simultaneously to receive the same information on the operational status of the University. Specific instructions may be added to these pre-scripted messages. The system undergoes period tests, and continual improvements are being made. Tests may be conducted at any time and departments should make sure that office staff are aware of the procedures involved.

Currently, the CSU Severe Weather and Emergency Notification Policy includes sections on Public Information (II.6), and Notification (Appendix G). The flow chart in Appendix "G" describes a "phone tree" of offices to be contacted in a specific order. Although the system can't accommodate all departments at once, a large number of key university areas, including the offices of the vice presidents and deans, will be contacted with one call.

The procedure for group conference calls is:

1. All primary numbers on the list will ring (then, secondary phones if primary numbers are unanswered).
2. When the call is answered you will hear a recorded alert announcement - "Please stay on the line. The Campus Emergency and Warning Notification System is being activated - an important conference call will begin within several minutes."
3. The telephone system will try each primary number twice for 15 seconds, and then try the secondary number.
4. When all numbers have been dialed, the announcement will stop and all parties will be connected. Unanswered calls are disconnected.
5. A brief message will be given. Questions may also be answered at this time.

Appendix "G" lists the numbers currently assigned for this conference call.

Media Announcements

Radio stations that will broadcast the status of operations and updates about conditions for the above days are:

AM

KHOW (630)
KOA (850)

FM

KCSU-FM (90.5)
KUNC-FM (91.5)
KTCL-FM (93.3)
KBCO-FM (97.3)
KPAW-FM (107.9)

Fort Collins local television stations; Denver television stations 2, 4, 7, 9, 12, and 31; Cheyenne television station 5; and other Denver radio stations will also be notified.

Snow-Removal Operations

In the case of a snow emergency, streets and parking lots may be temporarily blocked for snow removal operations. It is imperative that drivers yield to snow-removal equipment during these times. Vehicles blocking snow removal or safety operations will be towed.

“Remember to yield to ‘blue’ emergency access vehicles”

INTERNAL STAFF OPERATIONS

III Internal Operational Definitions of Weather/Snow Conditions and Emergencies

The Chief of Police (or designee) will make a recommendation to the Vice President for Administrative Services (VPAS) or other Cabinet-level official. If this is not possible, the Chief of Police (or designee) shall confer with the President and make a recommendation as to the operational status of the University. Under these latter circumstances, the Chief of Police (or designee) should assume the role of the VPAS in checking with the Senior Vice President/Provost (prior to making a recommendation to the President), the Vice President for Student Affairs, and other campus activities which may have unique circumstances, (e.g., Library, University Health Services, etc.).

Other examples:

Situation A: President cannot be contacted to accept, reject, or modify VP for Finance and Administration recommendation (developed by CSUPD Chief and the VP for Finance and Administration in accordance with weather emergency policy Standard Operating Procedures). The VP for Finance and Administration will then contact the following persons and continue down the list if the individual is unavailable: Senior Vice President/Provost, VP for Research, VP for Student Affairs, and VP for University Advancement and Strategic Initiatives. If all are unavailable, the VP for Administrative Services will make the final decision.

Situation B: VP for Administrative Services (or other Cabinet-level official) is not in the area or unable to be contacted, then CSUPD will contact the President directly.

Situation C: Both the President and the VP for Administrative Services are unavailable, then CSUPD will contact the Senior Vice President/Provost, VP for Research, VP for Student Affairs, or VP for University Advancement and Strategic Initiatives (in that order) to reach a final decision.

Classification of Conditions

Flood/Flash Flood Watch - A flood "watch" is issued when flooding is possible so that people in affected areas can monitor local radio and television broadcasts for emergency information and instructions.

Flood/Flash Flood Warning - A flood "warning" is issued when flooding is occurring or is imminent and when emergency population evacuations may be necessary.

Class 1 Weather/Snow Emergency - This classification is used when the situation requires additional resources beyond those normally scheduled. Travel is possible but difficult in some areas. The safety of people on campus is minimally threatened by the conditions. Essential and emergency resources are readily accessible.

Class 2 Weather/Snow Emergency - This classification is used when the situation requires more resources than can be applied. In snow storms, travel is generally difficult and snow removal cannot keep pace with snowfall. Icy conditions, where traction and vehicle stability are seriously impaired, may qualify for this level of alert. Walking and bicycling may be impaired or unsafe for certain members of the community as indicated by a recognized authority such as the National Weather Service. Conditions such as black ice, high winds, poor visibility and extremely low chill factors may be present. The safety of people on campus is not overtly threatened unless they are acting outside the range of sensible behavior. Essential and emergency resources may be delayed in reaching campus because of the current conditions.

Class 3 Weather/Snow Emergency - This classification applies to situations where snow removal has stopped or is seriously impaired. The National Weather Service or other recognized authority has declared the storm a severe winter storm. Travel of any sort is dangerous. External resources to support the normal operation of the campus may not be available. Health and life safety may be threatened because essential and emergency resources are at maximum capacity. Under these circumstances, normal services and operations of the University are suspended and only essential services will be provided.

Tornado/Severe Wind Storm Watch - Conditions exist which are favorable for the development of tornadoes and severe thunderstorms in or near the watch area during the time frame indicated.

Tornado Warning - A funnel cloud or tornado has been confirmed in the vicinity, either by radar or field observation.

Normal Service and Operations Suspended

This means that classes have been canceled, non-essential buildings are closed and only university facilities essential to the health and safety of the University must remain operational even under extreme weather conditions *. When campus services and operations are suspended, a specific time frame of the suspension of services will be included in media information issued by Public Relations. This could include a late opening schedule for classes and administrative services or an early release for students and/or faculty and staff.

**As established by the deans, department heads or directors of each operating unit. See Appendix C for University policy.*

These classification levels provide a system that the administration can use to evaluate weather conditions for storms that generate abnormal demands on the campus community and its resources. If conditions do not warrant the declaration of a weather/snow emergency, normal campus operations will continue.

Criteria

Police and Facilities Management staff will confer hourly, by radio or phone, during such emergency conditions to evaluate if safe access to campus is possible using criteria such as:

1. An estimate of the time required to make safe access available to the campus
2. Changing weather conditions
 - a. Wind speed
 - b. Rate of precipitation
 - c. Temperature extremes
3. Equipment status
4. Utility problems or failures
5. City of Fort Collins, Larimer County and State highway road conditions
6. Other major public entities operational status
7. Recommendations by elected or other local government officials

This information will be given to the Chief of Police or designee, through the shift commander no later than 4 a.m. on any regularly scheduled business day for the University.

Police and Facilities Management staff will review severe weather and emergency plans when weather or other emergency conditions are forecast to occur within the next 24 hour period.

IV Description of the Situation Management Process Inside Facilities Management

During snow storms, Facilities Management is responsible for snow removal efforts. Resources from other providers will be managed by Facilities Management to maximize their usefulness. The primary provider of snow removal resources within Facilities Management is the Outside Services crew. CSUPD will monitor the campus and notify Facilities Management of any area or situation that requires immediate attention.

Facilities Management will update Public Relations on conditions on an hourly basis.

V Specific Restrictions and Regulations During Weather, Snow, or Other Emergencies

The University will not provide assistance to vehicles stuck in the snow unless they impair snow removal operations. The 4x4 shop truck available from Transportation Services will only be used in response to requests from the CSUPD or a supervisor or manager from Facilities Management. These resources will not be available to the campus community at large.

Certain areas may be barricaded during snow removal operations by Facilities Management personnel. It will be the responsibility of the snow-removal crew that erects the barricades to minimize the necessity to barricade areas and remove any which may create a hazard.

CRS 42-4-614.2 requires that the driver of a vehicle shall yield the right-of-way to any authorized service vehicle engaged in work upon a highway whenever such vehicle displays flashing lights meeting the requirements of section 42-4-212.5. This law means that snow removal vehicles must be given the right of way during snow removal operations. Failure to comply is a Class A traffic infraction. This also could hinder operations and place people at risk of injury from an accident.

During weather or other emergencies, the Office of University Parking Services will suspend enforcement of parking regulations for the Motor Pool parking lot to allow emergency/snow removal personnel to park their vehicles in the lot. **Any personal vehicles that block operations or unauthorized cars parking in this lot risk being ticketed or having the vehicle removed.**

Also, cars will be towed if found in lots to be used for Facilities Management vehicles. Non-essential employees parking in cleared lots meant for essential employees will be towed.

VI Actions Associated With Each Level of Weather/Snow Condition

Class 1

Increased personnel and resources are brought in. This includes bringing in on-call personnel and equipment. Vehicles blocking emergency operations (e.g. snow removal) will be removed at the owner's expense.

Class 2

Vehicles blocking emergency routes (i.e., stuck in snow) will be removed by tow if necessary. All available resources used for emergency management (i.e., snow removal) will be utilized or scheduled. Public Relations may issue information about the status of University classes and operations to the media/public. This information may include advisories to students, faculty and staff with disabilities. Consideration for transportation needs of essential personnel may be necessary.

Class 3

Academic classes are canceled and non-essential campus operations and services are suspended for part or all of a 24-hour period because it is impossible or impractical to conduct normal operations. Conditions are beyond the resources available despite continuous efforts to address weather-related problems. This may include situations where the weather is clearing but the streets and parking lots on campus and or the city are impassable. Under this classification only emergency and essential-services personnel, as identified by the deans, directors, and department heads, need to report to work.

All University resources for transportation (especially Transportation Services 4x4 vehicles) will be considered available to the University. Immediately upon declaring a Class 3 Weather/Snow Emergency, the Emergency Telephone Notification List is implemented to alert campus offices of the decision. Public Relations will be notified so that the media can be informed.

VII Snow Routes

The University will establish emergency snow routes. During Class 2 and 3 snow conditions, vehicles stuck on a snow route and blocking snow removal operations can be ticketed or towed at the owner's expense. All vehicles towed will be logged with the CSUPD.

All streets listed in Appendix A under First Priority are considered snow routes. In order to enforce ordinances regarding snow routes in the future, these streets will be publicly posted with appropriate signs similar to those used by the City of Fort Collins. Public Relations will inform the campus community about the snow routes. Please see the attached maps in Appendix B.

The final snow route designations are subject to change as the policy is revised and for current needs. The contact person is Chief Yarbrough, CSUPD at 970-491-7439.

**ACADEMIC FACULTY & ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONAL STAFF MANUAL
INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY**

Section F:

F.3.15 University Closure

Only the Provost of the University or his/her representative may make the decision to close the University. Announcement of such unscheduled closures will be communicated to the local media by the director and staff members of Public Relations or his/her designee no later than 5:30 a.m., whenever possible. Employees are encouraged to tune in a local radio station whenever inclement weather conditions indicate the possibility of closure.

HUMAN RESOURCE SERVICES MANUAL

SECTION 1: GENERAL PROVISIONS

Revised: October 2006

Inclement Weather Policy

Only the President of the University or his/her representative may make the decision to close the University. Announcement of such unscheduled closures will be communicated to the local media by the University Relations Department no later than 5:30 a.m., whenever possible. Employees are encouraged to tune in a local radio station (530-AM), or contact the University's weather-emergency hotline, (970) 491-SNOW, whenever weather conditions indicate the possibility of closure. The following is the University's Policy relative to the pay status of the University's faculty and staff during periods of inclement weather. This policy applies only to employees paid on a salaried basis. Hourly employees do not qualify for any type of paid leave and are paid only for actual time worked. Determinations as to the operational status of all University units outside the Fort Collins area shall be the responsibility of the appropriate Department or Agency Head. Employees in such units should consult with their departments concerning their status relative to paid time off.

1. Employees who are absent due to extreme weather conditions when the University remains open must take annual leave, or leave without pay if no annual leave is available, for work time missed. Minor periods of tardiness shall be excused. However, lengthy periods should either be made up in the same work week or charged to annual leave or leave without pay as appropriate.
2. When the University is officially closed because of inclement weather, the resultant absences of employees during scheduled work time will be considered as administrative leave with pay for all normally scheduled work hours during this period.
3. Employees on scheduled leave (annual, sick, etc.) shall remain on that status during periods of closure to the extent approved or appropriate and shall not be granted administrative leave.
4. Employees required to work during periods of closure due to inclement weather may be entitled to a comparable amount of time off as outlined below if the period of closure is for one half day or more. If the period of closure is less than one-half day, employees required to continue working will not be given time off for such work.
 - a. Overtime eligible employees required to work during periods of suspended operation of at least 4 hours are entitled to a comparable number of hours off as paid administrative leave, up to the number of hours equal to their normal work schedule. In these cases, only those hours actually worked are to be counted as

“work-time” for purposes of overtime calculations (cannot count the same hours twice). Such employees who terminate employment prior to taking all administrative leave hours are compensated for the unused time.

- b. Overtime-exempt employees required to work during periods of suspended operation may be given time off for all or part of the hours worked with the specific approval of the appropriate Department Head. Terminating employees are not compensated for any unused balance.
5. Departments are responsible for notifying employees who are to respond during University emergencies including those required to report during periods of closure. In addition, others may be required to report due to unusual circumstances and will be so notified by the appropriate supervisors at that time. Employees unsure of their status or unclear as to the nature or extent of a closure announcement should contact their immediate supervisor(s) or departmental offices for clarification.