



UNIVERSITY *of*
WASHINGTON

Inclement Weather Plan

Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) –

Annex 6

Updated: 02/01/2019

Introduction

This document represents a functional annex (Annex 6) to the [University of Washington Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan](#) (CEMP). It provides procedural guidance for a change in campus operational status due to weather, including suspending operations, closure, delayed opening and/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 severe thunderstorms with damaging winds, flooding, extreme heat, and other hazardous weather could impact University operations.

Purpose

To enable a coordinated multi-department and multi-campus response to any inclement weather.

Scope

This is an Annex of the University of Washington [Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan](#) (CEMP) and applies to the entire UW Seattle (main) Campus and in coordination with both UW Bothell and UW Tacoma Campuses. UW Bothell and UW Tacoma will follow each of their own campus' policies and procedures for inclement weather. The University of Washington Medical Center (UWMC) will be included in the coordination, but will follow their own UWMC policies and plans regarding inclement weather. This plan address the roles and responsibilities, provides definitions, campus procedures.

Authority

See the UW CEMP for authority references.

Limitations

The University of Washington will endeavor to make every reasonable effort to respond to severe storms or hazardous weather incidents. However, the University of Washington 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

Title/Department	Responsibilities
President Provost (or his or her designee)	Authorizes the recommended decision to suspend operations, close, delay, or release campus early.
UW Facilities Vice President (or his/her designee)	Assess campus conditions to assist in reaching an operational status recommendation. Coordinates snow/debris removal operations and response to reports of facility damage. Will forward the Weather Assessment Group's consensus recommendation(s) to either suspend operations, close, delay, or release campus early from the inclement weather advisory committee. The EVP will also relay the final decision back to the advisory committee in order to implement the decision.
UW Emergency Management	Monitors weather forecasts, obtains relevant information from government agencies and counterparts at nearby institutions and K-12 school districts, local transportation and transit agencies, coordinates reaching a weather-related operational status decision, and ensures that the recommendation is promptly shared with the decision makers usually the President or his or her designee (Provost, Dean of Students, etc...).
Vice President of Student Life (or his/her designee)	Assess campus conditions to assist in reaching an operational status recommendation, including condition and accessibility of student housing.
UW Police Department	Assess current campus conditions to assist in reaching an operational status recommendation.
Crisis Communications Team & UW News	Receives campus status decisions and communicates the decisions via the UW Alert System and UW Alert online Blog (Crisis Communication Team), and notifies external media (UW News).
UW-Bothell & UW-Tacoma Emergency Management	Participate in conference calls and provide status reports on respective campus conditions. Ensure that UW-Seattle discussions and decisions are shared with their campus leadership to ensure seamless coordination and information-sharing among the three primary residential campuses.

Response Options – Modification of Campus Operational Status

The University has identified four (4) possible response options to modify operations during or after the impact of significant weather: suspended operations, closed, delayed opening, and early release. While longer-term options may be modified by decision of the UW’s Emergency Policy Council (EPC), short-term status modifications should always follow one of these four options. Each of these options may be considered by the three main UW campuses: Seattle, Bothell and Tacoma.

Status	Description	Rationale
Suspended Operations	Normal non-essential operations are cancelled for the business day (first shift) for the campus. Unless otherwise stated in the timing of the notification, activities scheduled for the evening (second shift) or night (third shift) are expected to continue.	The campus cannot be safely made ready for the day, and the weather impact is forecast to continue or worsen during the day. However, critical operations of the campus must continue (e.g. housing and food service for residence halls, maintaining core building utility and communications systems, safety/security activities, maintaining care of research animals and/or specimens, medical center operations)
Closed	Normal operations are cancelled for the business day (first shift) for the campus. Unless otherwise stated in the timing of the notification, activities scheduled for the evening (second shift) or night (third shift) are expected to continue.	The campus cannot be safely made ready for the day, and the weather impact is forecast to continue or worsen during the day.
Delayed Opening	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 delayed opening time.
Early Release	Authorizes supervisors to dismiss employees early at their discretion. Generally classes, clinics, scheduled events, and supporting activities continue unless independently cancelled.	Weather impact 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 anticipated impact, confidence of the forecast, and the known or anticipated actions of public authorities. When a decision cannot be made in advance, the status decision should be made and notification sent out by UW Alert at the earliest without delay to the appropriate campuses that would be impacted on the affected day.

Conference Call or Meeting of the UW's Weather Status Assessment Group

UW Seattle Campus

UW Emergency Management (Director or Duty Officer) will coordinate an information-gathering discussion prior to an operational status change decision usually conducted by telephone conference (bridge) call. Depending on the severity and certainty of the assessment, the call may occur the night-before, but no later than 11:00 pm. For morning-of decisions, the call will occur no later than 4:00 am at a time arranged by the Director of Emergency Management.

The UW's **Weather Status Assessment Group** include the following members:

- The Vice President of UW Facilities or his/her designee,
- The Vice President of Student Life or his/her designee,
- The UWEM Director and/or Duty Officer,
- A representative from UW Police or his/her designee.
- A representative of University News and/or and the Crisis Communication Team will also participate in the call in order to receive and implement the status decision once it has been confirmed by the President or Provost
- The Emergency Preparedness Manager (Bothell campus) and the Emergency Director of Campus Safety & Security (Tacoma campus) will also be invited to provide input – *see below*.
- *(Other key stakeholders may be invited to participate depending upon the situation.)*

The purpose of the conference call is to reach a consensus recommendation for the campus operational status, prior to the UW Facilities VP sharing the recommendation(s) with the University President.

1. Prior to the call, all members should gather assessments of conditions specific to each of their areas of responsibility and provide a brief updates status report on:
 - a. Condition of roadways on and near campus;
 - b. Condition of parking lots, and the ability to safely receive/ park vehicles;
 - c. Condition of walkways and outdoor stairs;
 - d. Accessibility of buildings, including all emergency exits;
 - e. Projection of snow/debris removal by 8:00 am, including ability to maintain or improve roadway and walkway conditions based on the anticipated continuing weather; and
 - f. Any additional hazards or conditions of concern, including reliability of critical utilities, such as electricity and telecommunications.

2. Conference Call: UW Emergency Management (Seattle campus), Emergency Preparedness Manager (Bothell campus), and Emergency Director of Campus Safety & Security (Tacoma) will begin each conference call with campus-specific updates/report on:
 - a. Latest National Weather Service forecast for the area, including any posted advisories, watches, or warnings;
 - b. Emergency/closing status of the City, County, and local K-12 school districts in the surrounding communities;
 - c. Status of other area colleges and universities, if known; and
 - d. Any additional hazards or conditions of concern.
3. Members of the Weather Status Assessment Group will assess each of the reports given by individual members and weigh the various factors as they related to any campus operational changes. The guiding principles should focus on public safety and health, with other factors secondary in the final recommendation.
4. *(For the Seattle Campus only)*: The Vice President for UW Facilities will listen to the information provided and the recommendations from each member on changing the status of campus operations.
 - a. After listening to each of the member's reports and recommendations, the UW Facilities Vice President will notify the UW President or his/her designee of the official recommendation(s) and ask for the final official decision on changing the status of campus operations (if any).
 - i. **Suspended Operations, Closing or Delayed Opening** decisions should be made before 5:00 am, or at least 3 hours prior to the resumption of activity, if an existing suspending operations or closure will be extended.
 - 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.
 - b. Once the Vice President of UW Facilities has received the final decision from the UW President, the VP will immediately contact the Weather Status Assessment Group via conference call (*preferred*) or other rapid notification methods (i.e., email, group text) and provide the official decision of changing the status of the campus from the UW President.

Notification

Immediately following the official decision of any official change of status for the campus received by the UW President, UW News and the UW's Crisis Communication Team representative will activate the Crisis Communication Team through processes defined in the UW's Crisis Communication Plan. The Crisis Communication Team will use the UW Alert system to provide notification of the official change in campus operations to the impacted campus as well as notify traditional print and broadcast media (television and radio) of the UW's change in operational status.

Continued Monitoring

UW Emergency Management and/or specific emergency management roles at the Bothell and Tacoma campuses are responsible for continuing to monitor the weather situation. When a suspended of operations or closing has been enacted, each campus Emergency Management official 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 changes in campus operations, to determine if it is safe to resume normal operations.

Related Documents

[Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan \(CEMP\)](#)

[Crisis Communication Plan](#)

[HR Policy on Suspended Operations](#)

[HR Policy on Inclement Weather](#)

[UW Libraries Suspended Operations Policy](#)

[Facilities Services Policy on Inclement Weather](#)

[Executive Order No. 27 Suspended Operations Policy](#)

UW Bothell Campus Weather Policies and Procedures

[UW Bothell Inclement Weather Policy](#)

[UW Bothell Inclement Weather Procedures](#)

UW Tacoma Campus Weather Policies and Procedures

[UW Tacoma Inclement Weather Information](#)

[UW Tacoma Inclement Weather Decision Process](#)

[UW Tacoma Inclement Weather/ Suspension Procedure](#)