



## POLICY & PROCEDURE DOCUMENT

NUMBER: 0.2010

SECTION: General University

TITLE: Severe Weather Warnings

DATE: March 14, 2014

APPROVED: Dr. Gary Ransdell, President

### I. Purpose and Scope

This document prescribes actions to be taken during periods of severe weather that affect one or more of the WKU campuses, and delineates policy to address classes missed as a result of compliance with the actions described herein.

### II. Policy

#### A. Definition of "Severe Weather"

For the purposes of this policy, "severe weather" is a meteorological phenomenon that causes a National Weather Service (NWS) warning (e.g., tornado, severe thunderstorm, winter storm) to be issued for a county in which a WKU campus is located (i.e., Warren, Barren, Daviess or Hardin, as appropriate). Meteorological conditions that cause a watch to be issued are not considered "severe weather" for the purposes of this policy.

### III. Procedure

#### A. Actions to be taken during Tornado Warnings

The first priority during NWS Tornado warnings is the safety of persons in the affected area. Therefore, upon notification of the warning (via sirens, text messages, etc.) individuals should immediately seek appropriate shelter.

1. Immediately upon receiving notification of a tornado warning, all campuses affected will communicate the details of the warning, including the expiration time, to the campus community. For the main Bowling Green Campus, including South Campus, the WKU Police dispatch center will activate the outdoor warning system, and also transmit a text message alert via the RAVE Alert System.

For all WKU entities located in Bowling Green and Warren County (WKU Farm, Center for Research and Development, etc.), faculty, staff, and students should seek shelter upon activation of the Warren County Community Outdoor Warning System (C.O.W.S.), weather radio, and/or the receipt of a campus-issued text message alert.

Extended campus personnel should monitor weather conditions and be prepared to notify their faculty, staff, students, and visitors to immediately seek shelter upon the issuance of a tornado warning affecting their respective campus.

2. If a designated safe area (e.g., tornado shelter) exists in the building in which an individual is present at the time of issuance of the warning, then shelter should be sought in that designated area. If no shelter is identified, remain in the building in an appropriate room (e.g., interior room with no windows). Individuals should not attempt to move to a neighboring building unless it is clearly safe to do so.
3. Individuals should remain in that shelter area until the tornado warning has expired or is cancelled by the National Weather Service. Students and faculty, who would otherwise have been engaged in instructional activities, should return to the classroom/laboratory. Staff should return to their normal place of work.
4. Operation of Teaching and Research Laboratories. If a laboratory environment is such that it cannot be readily abandoned, then appropriate **essential personnel** (see III.E) should remain to the extent necessary to maintain or shut down the facility, as appropriate.

#### B. Closing Campus or Canceling Classes

##### 1. *Bowling Green Campus*

- a. In the event of severe storm damage or winter weather conditions, the Director of Facilities Management, the WKU Police Chief, and the Director of Environmental Health & Safety or their respective designees will survey the condition of the campus, and make a recommendation to the Provost regarding campus operations.
- b. The Provost will discuss with the President and will finalize the decision to cancel part or all of classes, to open late or to close the University.
- c. The Provost will communicate the decision to Public Affairs no later than 5:30 a.m. for day classes and 12:00 noon for evening classes.
- d. Public Affairs will begin the notification process via emergency text alert, web site, campus-all email, social media, recorded information line, campus operator, and appropriate news media.
- e. Public Affairs will consult with Campus and Community Events and Athletics to include information about major events impacted by the situation.

##### 2. *Regional Campuses*

- a. Regional chancellors will survey local and area conditions and communicate decisions to open or close campuses with Public Affairs.
- b. In the event a host KCTCS institution closes (e.g., Elizabethtown), the associated WKU campus will also close. Public Affairs will work with KCTCS institutions to include information about both in media announcements.
- c. Public Affairs will begin the notification process and will work with regional chancellors to

notify appropriate news media. Regional campus contacts will also use their web sites and social media to communicate the decision.

- d. Since regional campuses draw from a wide area, decisions should be made no later than 5:30 a.m. local time for day classes and 12:00 noon local time for evening classes.

#### C. Other conditions

1. Should conditions other than weather warrant the cancellation of classes or the closing of all or part of the University, the decision will come from the President. University employees should direct questions to their supervisors.
2. The President's Office will notify the Office of Public Affairs, which will begin the notification process as outlined above.
3. In the event the President is unavailable, the Provost will assume responsibility, followed by the Vice President for Student Affairs.

#### D. Academic Issues related to Missed Classes

Students shall not suffer any academic penalty that is a direct result of classes not held as a result of a severe weather event or campus closing at the campus where the missed class was scheduled. In making modifications for activities, assignments, or examinations that are missed due to such events, faculty should make every effort to ensure that students suffer no academic penalty. To the extent practicable, faculty should provide alternative accommodations for missed examinations.

#### E. Essential Employees

In the event any campus is closed, division leaders are responsible for designating and notifying personnel who are considered essential and should still report to work. Each division should have a plan in place and be ready to implement.

#### F. Notification methods

Public Affairs will use a variety of venues to communicate any decisions to alter normal schedules. These will be communicated to the campus via text alert and e-mail and all information will be posted on the WKU web site. Communication methods include:

1. Emergency text message
2. WKU web site
3. Campus-wide e-mail
4. Social media (Facebook, Twitter)
5. WKU recorded information line
6. Campus Operator
7. Selected news media (primarily radio and TV)
8. Campus CATV