

Severe Weather Plan (updated October 2024)

Severe Weather Definition: Winter storms/blizzard, high winds (microburst) or straight winds, flooding, severe thunderstorms/hailstorms, or other weather phenomena.

Purpose: To determine what can be done prior to weather-related scenarios to protect people on campus and protect property. Review common actions for any weather-related scenario. Address additional plans and actions for common weather-related scenarios.

Storm-Ready Designation: UVU has met criteria with the National Weather Service to be designated as a Storm-Ready university. This designation was renewed summer/2024.

Weather forecast for indoor and outdoor events: Campus groups may need a weather forecast for an indoor or outside event (athletics, events staff, etc.). The respective planning group for that event may contact the Office of Emergency Management/Safety for a weather forecast.

General Weather-related actions

Office of Emergency Management and Safety will monitor weather-related issues. Weather can occur any time during the day/night. Some weather is more predictable than others. IF there is a concern that arises, anyone on the Weather Watch Team may initiate a call or meeting (virtually, by phone, in-person). Remember to consider all UVU campuses.

Weather Watch Team: all or part of team may meet. An asterisk indicates those required for decision making.

- Provost or academic designee (Wayne Vaught) *
- VP Administration/Finance or designee (Val Peterson) *
- Director of internal communications (Josh Berndt)
- Director Public Relations (Scott Trotter)
- Director of Public Safety/Police Chief (Jeff Long/Interim Chief)
- Associate VP of Facilities (Frank Young) *
- Director of EM/Safety (Robin Ebmeyer)
- Safety Coordinator (Justin Hansen)

Criteria for University Closure: (Questions asked while considering university closure)

- Weather forecast (current and next hour, 2 hours, 4 hours, and so on). Review local weather, can call National Weather Services (in Salt Lake City)
- Monitor local public school district and their decisions
- Number of calls through facilities (requests for action)
- Type of calls through facilities (incidents that create an unsafe environment)

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- Public safety calls (number of weather-related police calls)
- Number of serious accidents (slips/falls, vehicle accidents, number of injuries requiring healthcare)
- Ability to keep sidewalks/roadways clear (enough staff, equipment, supplies)

University Closure: Communication, operational functions that continue

- **Decide:** open or closed status of campus based on criteria listed in this plan.
- **Notification: Use** all appropriate means and methods of communication to alert the campus community of the decisions that have been made regarding closure and reevaluation and re-opening.
- What needs to happen to safely get people off the campus? Is there anything the university can do to assist? (transportation, communications).
- **Who stays: What** essential staff will still need to work? This may depend on the scenario as to who would need to stay.
 - Grounds for clearing roadways and sidewalks
 - Plant Operations to ensure HVAC systems are working
 - Facilities to assess building damage
 - Police Department to ensure safety and security for facilities and direct people away from campus while closed
 - Other essential staff, to be determined

Recovery: Time to reopen

- The Weather Watch Team and any others needed will convene in person or through electronic means. They will assess the situation and decide what actions are next.
- **Notification:** Use all appropriate means and methods of communication to alert the campus community of the decisions that have been made regarding re-opening.
- What needs to happen in the physical environment before it is safe to reopen and stay open (utilities functioning, transportation available, physical infrastructure intact, clear roadways and sidewalks)
 - Communication written for text and email and uvu.info (emergency/disaster website).
 - Mass text/email sent out to campus community.

Scenario Specific Information

Snowstorms: blizzard or heavy snow can impact transportation to and from campus, transportation within campus boundaries, cause power outages, and increase injury from falls.

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Experience on campus. It is common for UVU to experience a winter storm that activates the Weather Watch Team, to assess, decide about campus closure, and communicate to campus.

- Preparedness/Mitigation: Weather is monitored by facilities personnel. Large storms are reviewed for possible impact. Pre-scripted messaging developed for ease of use and quick execution of messages to campus. Snow removal staff are made aware of impending storms.
- Response/Recovery:
 - Snow removal staff are notified when ½ inch of snow accumulates on roads and sidewalks. They deploy day or night to initiate snow removal for roadways/sidewalks
 - Custodial staff increase cleaning of wet interior hallways/stairways
 - The potential of school closure will be discussed by an executive group (mixture of EOC/Policy group members) if a storm has a potentially large impact
 - Information/communication will be shared with the campus community as needed for possible closure and reopening. Appropriate communication methods will be utilized.

Additional criteria to consider for school closure during a snow/blizzard:

- Weather forecast from National Weather Service (current and next hour, 2 hours, 4 hours, and so on) look at weather websites that can show local weather and forecast
- Ability to keep sidewalks/roadways clear (enough staff, equipment, supplies)
- What local school districts have closed or remained open (Alpine, Provo, Nebo, Wasatch Counties, most have a Facebook page or website where they will post an alert)
- May consider BYU campus status
- Review recommendations from Utah Department of Transportation, State agencies, other appropriate agencies from the state, county, or city

Procedure for evening/night/early morning winter storms:

- Review weather forecast
- If a storm will hit during the night or early morning, notify the Weather Watch Team
- May meet late in the evening (10:00 pm) or early in the morning (5:00 am) to assess conditions
- Decide if campus will remain open or if it will close
- Decide whether classes will be held face-to-face or move to remote or live-stream as possible
- Communication to campus would go out in the evening by 10:30 pm or in the morning by 6:00 am as much as possible depending upon the situation.

High Winds (microburst or straight-line winds): usually associated with a storm and can occur suddenly lasting for a short amount of time.

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Experience on campus. High wind associated with storms has occurred and affected campus. There has been property damage such as, vehicles, broken tree branches, downed light poles, and flying debris.

- Preparedness/Mitigation: Knowing what the weather is for the day and taking proper precautions and securing or removing items that could become flying debris—rolling up car windows, etc.
- Response/Recovery:
 - Take cover or shelter indoors is possible to avoid injury
 - If there are injured people, damage to property, respond as quickly as possible to remove risk of further injury or damage from occurring
 - Get medical help if needed for people injured by calling 801-863-5555 (UVU Police) or 911 (city dispatch)
 - Remove hazards or secure damaged property
 - Call facilities at 801-863-8130 to initiate repairs to property

Flooding: An accumulation of water due to a rainstorm that has the potential of causing injury or damage to people and property.

Experience on campus. Flooding has occurred on campus from rainwater, a broken water pipe, or water leaking from roof to the inside of a building. This guideline will focus on flooding that is weather-related.

- Preparedness/Mitigation: Facilities are generally aware of areas that have a high potential of flooding during a heavy rainstorm. They have taken actions to decrease the potential of flooding (i.e. ballroom floor) across campus. Despite these actions there are still certain areas where water can get deep (at the roundabout) and people should use good judgment when negotiating these areas.
- Response/Recovery:
 - If an employee notices water coming into a building during or after a rainstorm, they should call facilities at 801-863-8130.
 - If there are any actions that can be reasonably taken to direct water away from causing property damage, they should be taken, if these actions would be risky for the employee they should NOT be taken.

Severe thunderstorm, lightning, or hail: a storm with thunder and lightning and typically also heavy rain or hail.

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Experience on campus. Every year campus experiences these types of storms, often these storms are associated with flooding and at times high winds. Damage from flooding, high winds, and flying debris has occurred. Lightning related storms are also frequent, and we have had lightning strikes on campus (with little damage). We have experienced from time-to-time hailstorms as well.

- Preparedness/Mitigation: Be aware of the weather forecast in advance, be prepared to come indoors for cover if lightning begins.
- Response/Recovery:
 - Seek shelter during heavy rainstorm, lightning, or hailstorm
 - If you are unable to get inside a building, get in a vehicle, if possible
 - During lightning do not stand under a tree or metal poles
 - Get medical help if needed for people injured by calling 801-863-5555 (UVU Police) or 911 (city dispatch)
 - Remove hazards or secure damaged property
 - Call facilities at 801-863-8130 to initiate repairs to property