

34.99.99.R0.01 Weather-Related Closing of the University

Revised December 20, 2023
Next Scheduled Review: December 20, 2028



Rule Summary

East Texas A&M University has an obligation to provide a safe and secure environment for students, faculty, staff, and visitors, and to provide a higher level of service to residential students when there are unsafe conditions.

This procedure outlines the order of advisement, notification, and services related to a weather-related closing of the campus during the week or for weekend classes and operations.

Procedures and Responsibilities

1 ORDER OF ADVISEMENT

- 1.1 During inclement weather, if the current environment or predictions indicate hazardous conditions, the Facilities Director, the Safety Director, and the Chief of Police will access information and review the physical condition of the Commerce campus and surrounding areas. Once a determination is made, the Chief of Police will advise the President or designee, who determines the need for closure or late opening of the University.
- 1.2 The decision to remain open or close at off-site locations during inclement weather will be determined by review of the current environment and conditions by the Special Assistant to the Provost, who has oversight of the extended university sites, with the exception of the Dallas and RELLIS sites, and/or with the following guidelines:
 - 1.2.1 If Mesquite ISD is closed, classes are canceled at the Mesquite Metroplex Center.
 - 1.2.2 If Navarro College is closed or if Corsicana ISD is closed, classes are cancelled at the Navarro Partnership-Corsicana.
 - 1.2.3 If Collin College is closed, classes are canceled at the Collin Higher Education Center and East Texas A&M at Frisco.
 - 1.2.4 If RELLIS Campus is closed, classes are canceled at the RELLIS Campus.
 - 1.2.5 In any school district where the University offers dual credit classes, those classes will be canceled if that school district is closed.

- 1.3 With the exception of the RELLIS site, the off-site locations will activate their alert system regarding delays and closures in accordance with the above protocol. Some of these are in conjunction with the City of Commerce alert system.

2 ORDER OF NOTIFICATION

- 2.1 The Chief of Police will alert appropriate staff to activate the IRIS system and will notify the Chief Marketing and Communications Officer, who will notify the students, staff, and the public as warranted, as well as The Texas A&M University System in the event of closure or late opening of the University.
- 2.2 The Chief Marketing and Communications Officer will alert the Marketing and Communications staff to place a weather alert on the University main web page, update the recording on the University's weather hotline, contact area radio and television stations, and continuously broadcast public service announcements on KETR 88.9 FM, public radio station, KETR main web page, and official social media channels.
 - 2.2.1 The same message sent out for the IRIS system will be syndicated onto our official Facebook (fb.com/tamuc) and X (formerly known as Twitter) accounts (twitter.com/tamuc and twitter.com/tamuc_news) without altering or modifying the details of the message.
 - 2.2.2 All other social media channels representing an official entity of the University or as a representative of the University (i.e. employee) should only syndicate the same message the University social media channels are posting (i.e. "Share" for Facebook, "ReTweet" for X).

3 SERVICES

- 3.1 A decision to close the University applies to all facilities and services on the Commerce campus. The only exceptions are: the University Police Department; University Food Service; Facilities, IT, residence halls; KETR; and the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), all of which must remain open and secure. Other areas that may need to be open with limited operations are the Waters Library, Morris Recreation Center, and the Rayburn Student Center.
- 3.2 The Vivarium in the Science Building and facilities where university livestock are housed must remain accessible and secure with full access to essential/assigned personnel responsible for the feeding, care, and general husbandry of the animals.
- 3.3 Facilities where research and essential projects are ongoing must remain accessible and secure with full access to essential personnel as assigned by the Academic Dean in consultation with the relevant Department Head. A current list of essential/assigned personnel will be provided to the President, Provost, Vice President for Finance and Administration, and University Police Department by the Academic Dean.
- 3.4 In the event that the residential students' cafeteria cannot be made safe and secure, the director of food services will arrange to deliver meals to the residence halls.

3.4.1 In the event that the roadways and walkways serving residence halls and student family housing cannot be made safe, the Facilities Director will notify residence life staff to inform occupants to stay indoors until the hazards are removed.

3.5 Any other department or facility (outside of those named in section 3.1) must have specific approval from the President to open during a university-wide closing.

3.5.1 The Facilities Director will advise the President whether the campus roadways and walkways, which lead to the requested facility, can be made reasonably safe.

3.5.2 The Chief of Police will advise the President whether the requested facility can be made safe and secure during a weather-related closing.

3.5.3 In the event that the requested facility cannot be made safe and secure in a reasonable manner, the facility will remain closed.

4 ESSENTIAL PERSONNEL DESIGNATION

Some university employees (e.g., police, critical physical plant personnel, etc.), because of the nature of their jobs, are identified as “essential personnel” during times of inclement weather. Essential personnel will be identified as such by their supervisors. A list of employees identified as essential personnel will be maintained by the University Police Department and updated each semester. Essential employees are expected to travel to the university (if possible) and work. These employees will receive their pay along with compensatory time. If an essential employee cannot safely commute to the university and cannot work remotely, he or she will be granted emergency leave. Essential employees unable to report to campus should contact their supervisors immediately.

At the discretion and written approval of the supervisor, employees may be designated as “essential” personnel on an ad hoc basis who may be required to work remotely during times of inclement weather. Those employees who are deemed “essential” personnel and required to work remotely may be granted compensatory time for time worked during the closure.

5 NON-ESSENTIAL PERSONNEL

5.1 All other employees not designated as essential in Section 4, are not required to be on campus during weather-related closures and are granted emergency leave for the time the university is closed.

5.2 Employees should maintain communication with their direct supervisor regarding operations and workflow expectations. Employees should not return to campus until the working/travel conditions are deemed safe by the University.

6 MISCELLANEOUS

6.1 During closings or delays in opening, employees normally scheduled to work will be compensated as if they had actually worked during those periods.

- 6.2 As soon as possible after the closure announcement, faculty members are expected to communicate directly with their students to share information about specific plans for each course and address deadlines for coursework and other aspects of the course. To minimize disruption of academic activities, all instruction will transition to online and remain online for the duration of the weather-related closure.
- 6.3 Any scheduled group travel of students, faculty, and staff in university or private vehicles must be approved by the President or his designee.
- 6.4 All auxiliary activities and service centers on the Commerce campus will develop their own guidelines, in accordance with these procedures, to assure the safety and security of their clients and to protect the University from loss and liability.
- 6.5 If the University is open during inclement weather, faculty and staff should make every attempt to get to work within the bounds of their personal safety. Faculty and staff who face particularly dangerous hazards in transit to work during inclement weather should consult with their supervisors. Faculty shall notify students by email and copy their Academic Dean, Department Heads, and departmental administrative assistants if they are unable to travel to class.
- 6.5.1 Employees will record the absences during these periods as Leave with Pay referencing Unsafe Working/Travel Conditions in Workday.
- 6.6 During any designated University closure (holiday, inclement weather or crisis event), all academic buildings will be secured and automated door card swipes will be placed in locked state.
- 6.6.1 Essential personnel who have obtained permission to manage critical areas during these closures will use keys instead of cards for entry.

Related Statutes, Policies, or Requirements

[System Regulation 31.03.03, *Leave of Absence with Pay*](#)

Revision History

Approved September 1, 2003
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Contact Office

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