

# **IOWA**

University of Iowa

# **Extreme Weather Plan**

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**Operational Considerations and Procedures**

**Version 4.3-E**

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## Introduction

This document represents a functional annex to the University of Iowa Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and is maintained by the Department of Emergency Management (DEM), Campus Safety. It provides procedural guidance for any changes in campus operational status due to extreme weather, including but not limited to reducing operations, class cancellations, delayed opening and/or early termination of services. Most often, this procedure will be implemented for winter weather event impacts but may also be used for any hazardous or severe weather that threatens normal operations such as flooding, extreme temperatures, and other potentially dangerous conditions that could impact university operations.

The University of Iowa (UI or university) will operate in accordance with the university academic and master calendars except when overriding public safety concerns otherwise require operational adjustments to be made or as determined appropriate by the University President.

The University of Iowa is never fully closed. The residential, healthcare, research, and overall public safety aspects of UI operations make this a necessity.

## Purpose

To enable a consistent, efficient, and coordinated multi-department and multi-campus response to applicable inclement weather.

## Scope

This plan applies to the UI-Johnson County campuses in coordination with all other UI campuses. UI campuses located outside of Johnson County will follow each of their own campus policies and procedures for inclement weather decision making in coordination with the Provost. University of Iowa Health Care will be included in the coordination through the routine emergency management structure and coordination but will follow UI Health Care policies and plans regarding inclement weather.

This plan addresses roles and responsibilities, provides definitions, and outlines campus procedures.

In cases where the UI Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is activated due to severe weather, UI will follow the incident management structure and process as outlined in the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP).

## Authority

The authority to make extreme weather operational decisions on behalf of the university has been delegated by the University President to the Executive Vice President and Provost (Provost). The Provost may consult with various resources, including but not limited to members of the Severe

Weather Advisory Group (SWAG), as applicable. For current conditions and other real-time updates, the Provost may confer with campus partners such as Campus Safety, Building and Landscape Services, and CAMBUS, as needed, to make an informed decision.

## Limitations

The University of Iowa will endeavor to make every reasonable effort to respond to forecasted severe storms and/or hazardous weather incidents. However, there is no guarantee implied by this document that a perfect response will be practical or possible.

## Operational Decisions

Inclement weather often develops overnight and can change rapidly. In such cases and depending on conditions, attempts are made to distribute a campus announcement and notify media by 5:30 a.m. before the start of the day. If inclement weather or an emergency develops during any other time of the day, the same notification procedures are followed, and an announcement will be made as soon as reasonably possible.

When inclement weather or emergency conditions are such that a change in operations needs to occur two or more days in succession, the procedure is followed each day, including weekends. Unless there is an announced operational change for a particular day, the university is open and operating on a regular schedule. Because conditions can change unexpectedly overnight, an evening announcement usually will not be made for the next day, except in rare situations.

Even when the university is operating normally, there could be unsafe travel conditions in the area. Students and employees should exercise caution and gather as much information as possible about weather and road conditions before they decide whether to travel during periods of inclement weather.

During deteriorating weather conditions, it should be assumed that university-wide operations will continue unless an official announcement is made via Hawk Alert and in conjunction with the Office of Strategic Communication. For special events, individuals are encouraged to check with event sponsors and/or applicable webpages. Those who travel to and from campus should use their judgment as to whether such travel is wise. Employees should refer to the UI Policy Manual for additional information regarding leave and other Human Resources related topics.

Coordination and approval are necessary if an organization/department/unit wants to alter building access or adjust building hours of operation during a time when inclement/hazardous weather is forecasted. The requesting entity must submit the appropriate request as soon as reasonably possible with applicable information and receive approval prior to implementing any access changes. DEM will coordinate with the Provost and applicable members of SWAG to evaluate potential risks associated to the requested actions. Consultation with the requesting entity's vice president level leader, as applicable, may also occur if a denial of the request is being

considered. The final decision, as determined by the Provost, will be communicated to the original requestor.

Most, but not all, inclement weather announcements may be made in response to the declaration of an Extreme Cold Emergency or a Snow/Ice Emergency.

- **Extreme Cold Emergency**  
Conditions: When the National Weather Service issues an Extreme Cold Warning for applicable campus locations and timeframes, an extreme cold emergency may be declared. Warnings are issued when temperatures and/or wind chills of -30F or colder are expected.
- **Snow/Ice Emergency**  
Conditions: When snow or ice accumulation is predicted or occurs, significantly impacting roads and sidewalks on/around campus, a snow/ice emergency may be declared if the impact rises to the level that safe travel is no longer possible and poses a significant public safety threat.

When UI reduces operations, it could include but is not limited to transitioning applicable coursework to virtual classes, reducing on campus work to include essential operations only, and/or other adjustments as determined appropriate.

When UI reduces operations to include essential operations only on campus, employees involved in critical functions should report to work on campus, as applicable. Unless otherwise determined by a specific department's Business Continuity Plan, critical functions are those that relate directly to the health, safety, and welfare of the university, ensure continuity of key operations, and maintain and protect university property.

When an announcement is made to reduce campus operations, the campus community should refer to [emergency.uiowa.edu](https://emergency.uiowa.edu) and/or departmental webpages for information regarding specific operations updates or events.

1. **Special Events** – Departments and units hosting special events should make their own prior arrangements with employees and participants, notifying them how to proceed in case of inclement weather or an emergency. In unique circumstances, where the safety of the participants and employees is not jeopardized, special events, such as ticketed concerts or athletic events open to the public, may be held upon approval from applicable university leadership. In these situations, departments and units must ensure adequate services through coordination with Facilities Management, Campus Safety, and other units expected to support such operations and then submit their request via email to the UI Department of Emergency Management (DEM) via [UI-EM@uiowa.edu](mailto:UI-EM@uiowa.edu) or following other provided instructions. DEM will coordinate with the Provost and/or the applicable Vice President of the applicable requestor to determine approval.
2. **Transportation** – When the decision is made to reduce UI operations for inclement weather conditions, CAMBUS may continue to provide on-campus transit services beyond that time as road and weather conditions allow. The ability to operate in a safe manner will be the

primary consideration when determining whether service can be provided. Notifications regarding operational changes will be made available through CAMBUS official means of communication, including but not limited to, applicable apps and webpages.

3. **Dining Services** – The university residential dining commons will provide meal plan service even when the university changes operations for inclement weather. However, the department may delay opening and/or may opt to close early if weather conditions impact operational capabilities. Meal plan participants will be notified by email of any changes in daily operations. Up-to-date information will also be provided via their webpage or other designated methods of official communication.
4. **Other Campuses** – Announcements for weather related operational impacts at UI campuses outside of Johnson County are disseminated by those campus administrators separately from the main campus announcements.

## Severe Weather Advisory Group (SWAG)

SWAG is a group whose membership is representative of the university administrative structure responsible for certain essential/critical campus operations as well as other applicable areas. See Annex A for members and their contact information.

In their role within SWAG, these individuals report to the Provost for the purpose of serving in an advisory capacity regarding severe weather impacts and response capabilities. SWAG is coordinated through DEM.

### Responsibilities

- When activated, SWAG will assess the nature, the severity, and the anticipated impacts and recovery of the university due to the potential inclement weather and advise the Provost of its findings. The Provost will make the decision regarding classes and, if necessary, to reduce operations, as applicable.
- SWAG will implement the decision and take appropriate actions to support any applicable response.

### Advisory Process

1. Key Actions
  - ✓ Monitor weather threat
  - ✓ Communicate weather forecast, current conditions, and potential impacts
  - ✓ Maintain coordination throughout the event, to include ongoing status reports of campus operations and events
  - ✓ Provide information to senior leadership
  - ✓ Document event and applicable operations
2. Procedures
  - A. Activation
    - Upon determination of a threat of inclement weather that has the potential to significantly disrupt the normal course of business and/or poses a significant

threat to the health and safety of the campus community, the Provost may authorize the activation of SWAG. DEM may activate some or all of the group, based on the direction of the Provost, and request members to provide situation reports pertinent to their areas.

- i. Any member of SWAG may contact DEM and recommend activation of the group. The decision to activate will be made by the Provost.
    - At the direction of the Provost, DEM will create initial briefing messages and either schedule a conference call or direct other means of coordination.
      - SWAG members will be notified via email and/or text message.
  - B. Coordination Activities
    - When using a conference call, Annex B should be used to document the call.
    - For operational change discussions, the Provost may use Annex C to aid in the decision-making process although the results of this form shall not override the ability of UI leadership to use caution and independent judgment in determining the operational status of the university.
  - C. Craft applicable operation change message using template.
    - Campus Safety Communications and External Relations, Office of Strategic Communication, DEM, Office of the Provost Communications, UI External Relations
    - Submit for approval to Provost (or designee)
  - D. Communicate applicable operational changes:

Communication Task	Assigned To
When possible, provide advance notice to president, cabinet, collegiate deans and identified associate deans/leaders	Office of the Provost
Issue Hawk Alert	Office of the Provost
Social media dissemination	Campus Safety and OSC
Share messaging with campus communicators	Campus Safety (lead coordination), OSC and Office of the Provost
Post situation updates to UI Emergency page	Campus Safety

- OSC will coordinate the review of any scheduled emails in the applicable mass e-mail systems and remove any that conflict with the changes in operations or otherwise coordinate with the author/sponsor, as applicable, to adjust messaging.
  - E. Continue to gather information.
    - Campus Safety will continue to monitor the weather threat and impacts.
    - Updates in between calls may be shared via email or other designated means.
    - DEM will facilitate additional coordination efforts as needed.

### F. Event Close-Out

- Unless specific announcements, extending cancellations, and/or operational changes are made, classes will resume the next regularly scheduled class day and the university will resume normal operations at the beginning of the next morning shift or regular business day.

### G. Hot Wash and After Action Review (AAR)

- Events will be reviewed as necessary. Extent and type of review will be determined based on the impacts of the event.
- After action items will be solicited and should be submitted via email to [UI-EM@uiowa.edu](mailto:UI-EM@uiowa.edu) or as otherwise directed.
- DEM will compile AAR items into a document which may be distributed via email or as otherwise determined appropriate.

## Factors to Consider

- The inherent unpredictability of the weather makes it impossible to definitively dictate a time for certain procedures to take place.
- A more expansive storm/situation may require several pre-event conference calls and/or may result in an EOC activation.
- Special consideration should be given to decisions made after the start of the workday. This represents a logistical challenge especially as it pertains to Parking and Transportation.
- Consideration should also be given to the city streets adjoining the university, as city street conditions may prohibit CAMBUS from passing on their normal routes.
- Consideration may be given to weather in outlying areas where significant populations of faculty, staff, and/or students may be commuting from.
- The decision worksheet (Annex C) can be used to help further aid in the decision-making process. This document includes additional criteria and factors that should be considered with an attributable value system to support the process. The decision worksheet in no way shall limit the ability of leadership to use good judgement and extreme caution.

## SWAG Coordination

### Overview

Upon receipt of an applicable advisory, watch, warning or otherwise indicated by DEM, the Director of DEM (or designee) will inform the Provost. The Provost may opt to request activation of all or specific members of the Severe Weather Advisory Group (SWAG) via conference call or Veoci. The purpose of the coordination may be to:

- Gather information pertaining to impacts and potential recovery capabilities.
- Maintain situational awareness.

Generally, the first coordination meeting (virtual, via phone, ect) for an event will likely commence at least 12 hours ahead of the forecasted start of the event. However, these times are subject to change based on the path and timing of the weather event.

Coordination of information is key to effective and appropriate decision making. Again, the University of Iowa Health Care coordinates with their Incident Management Teams (IMT) as it relates to their medical emergency support function. Coordination with UI Health Care to ensure collaboration and consistent communications will occur through routine coordination in emergency management and UI leadership roles. This also includes any operational impacts or concerns that need to be coordinated based on an institutional response up until any appropriate/further activations occurs.

The following shall be used as a reference for suggested information to be shared by the applicable group/area:

Group/Area	Focus
<b>Emergency Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weather briefing</li> <li>• Local impacts and updates</li> <li>• UI Health Care status (hospital operations, clinic operations, and event declaration/staffing)</li> <li>• Johnson County and State of Iowa status</li> <li>• DOT travel status</li> </ul>
<b>Facilities Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roads and grounds conditions</li> <li>• FM Staffing</li> <li>• Loss of critical services</li> <li>• Expected time for clearing</li> <li>• Operational considerations</li> </ul>
<b>Campus Safety/Police</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roads and grounds conditions</li> <li>• Emergency responder staffing</li> <li>• Building access</li> <li>• Operational considerations</li> <li>• NITE RIDE status</li> </ul>
<b>Business Services</b> <b>Parking and Transportation</b> <b>Risk Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchasing needs and approvals</li> <li>• Receiving operations</li> <li>• P&amp;T reported road and grounds conditions</li> <li>• CAMBUS schedule/status</li> <li>• Parking lot status</li> <li>• Risk management concerns</li> </ul>

<b>Provost's Office</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic operations</li> <li>• Messaging</li> </ul>
<b>Office of General Counsel</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal concerns</li> </ul>
<b>Student Life</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing and Dining operations status</li> <li>• Student activities</li> <li>• Iowa Memorial Union status</li> </ul>
<b>Human Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Campus employee reporting status</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>Information Technology Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ITS system statuses</li> <li>• Applicable data points monitored by ITS</li> </ul>
<b>UI External Relations/ Office of the President</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Events (Hancher, etc.)</li> <li>• Local impacts</li> <li>• Consideration to messaging</li> </ul>
<b>Communication Teams</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consideration to messaging</li> <li>• Communication dissemination</li> </ul>
<b>Athletics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Events</li> </ul>
<b>Any and/or all</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updates/Comments</li> </ul>

### Incident Management Software

UI may use an incident management system software tool, currently Veoci, that will allow for ongoing virtual situational awareness and information sharing as well as accountability/tracking of resources and documentation, as it applies to coordination for extreme weather situations. DEM may activate a room for the forecasted extreme weather so that all SWAG members can share related concerns, information, and assessments.

### Conference Call Procedure

In the absence of Veoci or if the need arises that a conference call is better suited, the call will be announced via email and/or text messaging to the applicable members of SWAG, including backups. Those unable to join the call are encouraged to share updates with DEM to be shared with the group. As applicable, DEM may provide situation reports (SitRep) via email between calls, as appropriate. Therefore, members of the SWAG are encouraged to share updates with DEM between conference calls, for situational awareness purposes.

The Department of Emergency Management (DEM) will initiate the call and open the line approximately 5 minutes prior to the scheduled time of the call. Participants will be polled for

attendance and then the DEM facilitator will poll each office/department and ask for an update. At the conclusion of the departmental reports, there will be time allotted for questions and other commentary.

Conference calls should be facilitated and documented by DEM personnel and should follow the subsequent agenda:

1. DEM will begin the call with a roll call and a weather briefing.
2. DEM will then solicit applicable information.
3. Discuss additional concerns and ensure appropriate information is available for decision making needs and any applicable communications.
4. Operating schedule and/or other recommendations.
5. Schedule next call time.

## Annex List

**A: Severe Weather Advisory Group Contacts**

**B: Conference Call Worksheet**

**C: Campus Operations Analysis Worksheet**

## **Annex A: Severe Weather Advisory Group Contacts**

*This annex is not available via this public access document*

# Annex B: Conference Call Worksheet

## Conference Call Worksheet

Date of Call: \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

Time of Call: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Event: \_\_\_\_\_

Weather Forecast: \_\_\_\_\_

Department/Office	Representative(s)	Report/ Comments/ Notes

Recommendation: \_\_\_\_\_ Next Call: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Annex C: Campus Operations Analysis Worksheet**

*This annex is not available via this public access document.*