

## **NORTHWEST ARKANSAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER COLLEGE CLOSING POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

#### **Policy Statement**

Closing of NWACC classes and administrative offices may be necessary from time to time due to bad weather and/or emergency situations. Decisions on any closings or subsequent openings are made by the college President or the President's designee.

Announcements of decisions to close and/or open will normally be announced at approximately 5:30 a.m. for daytime activities and 2:30 p.m. for evening activities through the local media and on the Staff Services Information 619-4343 and the Student Information Line: 619-4377. Decisions to close the college during college operating hours will be made as quickly as possible based on the available information.

Unless announced otherwise, NWACC will be open at the regularly scheduled times. This policy may differ from bad weather/emergency policies of local public school districts because:

1. NWACC does not bus students, as do the public schools;
2. The College has evening classes, but the public schools normally do not;
3. NWACC classes may be canceled, but the College administrative office may be open.

Due to the fact that NWACC is a unique institution, its openings and closings have to be made based on the needs of the College district and cannot necessarily correspond with decisions of local public schools or other area entities.

Students and employees are encouraged to make decisions regarding reporting to class or to their respective work stations based upon their own individual set of circumstances. The College values the safety of each individual and expects that people will take responsibility for safeguarding their own welfare.

#### **Communications Procedures During Inclement Weather**

The Public Safety Director, upon notification of a predicted or in-progress severe weather event, will:

1. Advise the Vice President for Learning of potential impact on college operations by forecasted severe weather; and

2. Ensure coordination to monitor weather conditions and take appropriate action to make the campus safe for students and employees, including:
  - a. Have the on-duty Public Safety officer assess in-progress severe weather conditions;
  - b. When warranted, advise the Dean of Risk Management and the Physical Plant Director about possible delay/closure of campus due to weather conditions.

### **Decision Making Procedures During Inclement Weather**

In the event of inclement weather, the Vice President for Learning will evaluate available data from personal observations, news sources, and recommendations from the Public Safety Director and make a recommendation to the college President, who will make the decision to close or delay opening the college. That decision will be relayed to the Executive Director of Public Relations and Marketing, who will notify other college officials and place an announcement with the media and the college student and staff information lines.

If the college is closing due to inclement weather during operating hours, students and employees will be notified of this closing through their instructors or supervisors. Once this is communicated students and employees should make every effort to leave the college as quickly as possible but in an orderly manner.

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER EMERGENCY SAFETY POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

#### **Policy Statement**

Some inclement weather events like strong winds, rainstorms or tornados will require students and employees to go to sheltered areas within their respective college buildings. In these cases, students and employees should not evacuate the building, since this may cause injury. When strong winds, rain or a tornado are coming, you have only a short amount of time to make life-or-death decisions. Advance planning and a quick response are the keys to surviving this type of inclement weather. The College values the safety of each individual and expects that people will take responsibility for safeguarding their own welfare.

#### **Inclement Weather Emergency Safety Procedures**

NWACC Public Safety Department personnel will monitor inclement weather in the area and will respond to all levels of notifications from the National Weather Service. The procedure will be to notify the College President or administrator in charge, other administrators, College Emergency Coordinators and building occupants of a severe weather warning. If a “take cover warning” is issued by the

NWS, building occupants will immediately be notified and should move to sheltered areas. Emergency Coordinators will assist building occupants to get to these areas and to take cover.

The weather notification the National Weather Service uses are the following:

#### **A Tornado or Severe Weather Watch**

- Conditions are right for the formation of severe storms
- Continue activities, but be alert for changes in the weather.
- Outside activities must be monitored carefully due to lightning and high winds.

#### **A Tornado or Severe Weather Warning:**

- Department of Public Safety personnel will notify the College President or Administrator in Charge, other College administrators and building Emergency Coordinators. .
- Department of Public Safety personnel will notify building occupants of the affected facilities **to prepare to move to a designated shelter area or other place of safety.**
- A tornado warning will be a verbal warning made over the Burns Hall or Shewmaker Building public address system or a verbal warning passed on to administrators in charge at the East Campus and Washington County Center buildings.
- This warning means that a tornado has been sighted or the signature of a tornado has been detected by radar.

#### **A Take Cover Warning**

- If a tornado is spotted and is moving in the direction of a college building, the weather service will issue a “take cover” warning for persons in the path of the storm.
- Even if a tornado is not directed at the exact location of a college building, strong winds, lightning and hail may occur.
- Department of Public Safety personnel will notify the College President or Administrator in Charge, other College administrators and building Emergency Coordinators.
- Department of Public Safety personnel will notify building occupants **to move to a designated shelter area or other place of safety.**
- A take cover warning will be a verbal warning made over the Burns Hall and Shewmaker Building public address announcement system or a verbal warning passed on the administrators at the East Campus or the Washington County Center facilities.

- Once this warning is given, all building occupants should move to one of the places designated in your building as a severe weather shelter. These shelters are indicated by signs in the buildings and on emergency evacuation maps in the buildings. All interior hallways of buildings away from glass are designated severe weather shelter areas. **Emergency Coordinators will be in the buildings hallways to direct occupants to these shelters.**
- If you are unable to immediately find a designated shelter area, go to an interior room of the building. DO NOT go outside to reach a shelter area. In addition, follow these guidelines in seeking shelter:

- **SEEK THE NEAREST SEVERE WEATHER SHELTER IN YOUR AREA.**
- Go to an **inner hallway** or a smaller **inner room** without windows, such as a bathroom or closet
- Vacate any exterior rooms and close the doors to those rooms.
- Get away from windows.
- Take shelter under stairwells and tables, if possible.
- Go to the center of the room. Stay away from corners because they tend to attract debris.
- Sit down
- Cover your head.
- Make every effort to remain calm and encourage those around you to do likewise.

Updates on the college severe weather status will be made using the 619-4343 and 619-4377 information lines.

Approved by Cabinet

4/4/05