

WESTERN NEBRASKA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Administrative Procedure

TITLE:	Weather Closures
CATEGORY:	Safety
DIVISION:	General Institutional
REFERENCE:	BP-716 Weather Closures
NUMBER:	AP-716
DATE OF REVIEW:	November 21, 2021
APPROVAL:	John Marrin, Interim President

Procedure

This administrative procedure outlines how WNCC effects closures due to severe or inclement weather conditions while accommodating previously scheduled academic activities of faculty and students and considering the health and safety of students, campus residents, and staff, as well as the need for business continuity. The provisions of this procedure apply to the entire College community, including students, faculty, staff, affiliates, and visitors to the main campus or designated College locations.

Responsibility for Implementation

The President will designate a Weather Advisory Team responsible for determining when to close and/or reopen the main campus or location due to inclement weather or emergency conditions in accordance with the provisions of this procedure.

The President's Weather Advisory Team will be comprised of the following WNCC employees:

- Facilities Operations Assistant Director as the environmental health and safety officer
- Facilities Operations Director
- Alliance and Sidney Centers Executive Director or designee
- President or designee

The Weather Advisory Team will contact and utilize input from other WNCC department leaders when necessary to make official decisions regarding closures.

Process

Upon notification of inclement weather circumstances such as winter storm or blizzard warnings, ice storms, snow squalls, or extreme temperatures or weather conditions, the Weather Advisory Team will continue to monitor weather forecasts for updates and discuss anticipated outcomes and hazards as may impact the institution at all locations.

The Weather Advisory Team will review and utilize the “Weather Closing Checklist” (Appendix A) to determine the status of campus preparedness for operation and the impact/s to operation at all locations.

Guiding Principles

Consideration of the following will guide the Weather Advisory Team in its decisions:

- The safety of all students, faculty, staff, affiliates, and visitors.
- The ability to maintain necessary campus operations and ensure safety to all.
- Major impacts on essential campus operations (e.g., exam schedules)

Status Definitions

Closed – When closed, WNCC cannot safely prepare for full operation, and the incident or weather impact is forecast to continue or worsen throughout the period noted in the communicated message/s. During a **closure**, regular operations and activities, except essential functions, are cancelled or will cease for the period noted in communicated message/s.

Delayed Opening – It is determined that WNCC cannot safely prepare for normal operating time but is expected to be safe at the identified time of opening. At that time, the incident or weather impact is expected to have ended or is forecast to end before the opening time. With a **delayed opening**, operations and activities occurring before the selected opening time are cancelled or will cease, and operations and activities beginning after the opening time will continue as scheduled. Essential functions will be maintained as normal throughout.

Early Release – WNCC determines travel may be affected during later times of the normal workday due to an incident or weather impact creating hazardous conditions or other issues are expected to occur due to the incident or weather impact. With an **early release**, operations and activities occurring after the identified closing time are cancelled or will cease; operations and activities occurring before the closing time will continue as scheduled.

Essential Functions – Identified as building and grounds maintenance, cleaning services, security services, payroll, or required institutional governance meetings or tasks.

Notifications

Once an official decision has been made by the Weather Advisory Team, the information will be communicated to the Public Relations and Marketing Director or designee, and disseminated via the following:

- WNCC Alert (Rave)
- WNCC.edu website
- WNCC social media outlets
- Local media sources

It should be assumed that the College is open and operating normally if there is no notification of a delay or closure.

At the time of notification, snow and ice removal plans will be activated (if not already) for all locations impacted to ensure the timely removal of snow and ice hazards. Residence life areas take priority in snow and ice removal plans, followed by all other facilities.

Members of the Executive Planning Team will communicate with leaders within their span of management to implement necessary contingency plans and cancel and reschedule activities as necessary.

Timing of Notifications

In the event any or all WNCC locations close early or for an entire day, every attempt will be made to inform students, faculty, staff, and affiliates in a timely manner to avoid unnecessary hazardous travel and allow for alternative arrangements to be made for classes, events, or programs.

Decisions will, at a minimum, be made as follows:

For operations occurring during regular business hours (8 a.m. to 5 p.m.): Preliminary discussion by 4:30 a.m., with a final decision and notification made by 5:30 a.m.

For operations occurring after regular business hours (after 5 p.m.): Preliminary discussions by 3 p.m., with a final decision and notifications made by 4 p.m.

Revising this Procedure

This Administrative Procedure supersedes any prior WNCC policy, procedure, guideline, or handbook on this subject matter.

WNCC reserves the right to revise this procedure, as necessary, and for the changes to become effective immediately.

Original Adoption Date:	March 17, 2021
Revision Date:	November 21, 2021
Sponsoring Division:	Administrative Services



WEATHER CLOSURE CHECKLIST

Certainty of Hazardous Conditions

- ☐ Certainty level of National Weather Service (NWS) prediction it “high.” (Assistant Director of Facilities can request a location specific forecast for each location from the NWS.)
- ☐ Duration of hazardous conditions are expected to last throughout the entire business day. (Will this be safe for students and employees to commute during the duration of the hazard?)
- ☐ Snowfall rate greater than 1” per hour for 2 hours or longer. (Impacts to travel and infrastructure while open can cause road closures, unsafe traveling conditions, and stranded individuals.)

Impacts to Facilities/Infrastructure

- ☐ Weather has impacted campus infrastructure, including natural gas, electricity, HVAC, internet, telecommunications, etc.
- ☐ Parking lots and sidewalks are still hazards / cannot be safely cleared before operations begin. (Roadways, parking lots, walkways and outdoor staircases, accessibility of buildings, including emergency exits, etc.)
- ☐ Roads and highways that are used by students and employees to commute to campus are closed. (Check Nebraska 511, traveler information website.)
- ☐ Have campus communities activated “snow emergencies”?
- ☐ Has the state issued an “emergency declaration”?

Impacts to Operations

- ☐ Have K-12 schools either delayed or closed? (Assistant Director of Facilities obtains information from Gering, Scottsbluff, Sidney, and Alliance public schools.)
- ☐ Have state, county, or municipal governments delayed or closed?
- ☐ Are there major student / community events on campus that will be impacted? (Contact department leaders / utilize 25Live to check schedules.)
- ☐ What does the schedule of classes look like for the day? (Will a delay impact the first classes of the day? Will an early release impact essential operations after 5 p.m.? Can events be rescheduled?)
- ☐ Will Residence Life operations be able to continue or need support? (Obtain information from Residence Life Director and Food Services Director.)