

## **Adverse Weather's Impact on University Operations: A Summary**

This summary explains how UNC-Chapel Hill operates during winter weather and outlines key factors the administration considers in deciding to reduce or suspend operations because of safety concerns. Guiding that process is the [UNC system's Adverse Weather and Emergency Event Policy](#), which took effect Jan. 1, 2016, and applies to non-faculty employees at UNC-Chapel Hill.

**The safety of our students and employees is our number one priority in making any weather-related decision about campus operations.** Unless the University announces a change in status, the campus operates on a regular schedule. Based on information from grounds, police and transportation staffs, Chapel Hill Transit, law enforcement agencies, the National Weather Service, and other sources, the University may activate one of three **Adverse Weather Conditions (Condition 1, 2, and 3)** described below. The University is committed to announcing a change in class or work schedules as far in advance as possible so students, faculty and staff can plan their travel to and from campus accordingly.

General notices about state government agency delays and closings do not apply to the UNC System or UNC campuses. Please note the UNC System policy also says, *"The Governor's declaration of a 'State of Emergency' or an advisory by the State Highway Patrol to avoid travel does not automatically necessitate suspended operations."*

As a general rule, individual students, faculty and staff, many of whom commute to Chapel Hill from a multi-county area, must use their own best judgment about whether they can travel safely to and from campus given local conditions.

Under the UNC System's Adverse Weather and Emergency Event Policy, the three **Adverse Weather Conditions** are:

- **Condition 1: Reduced Operations**
- **Condition 2: Suspended Operations** and
- **Condition 3: Closure**

The following chart describes each condition, while the rest of this summary outlines the conditions, key factors in the University's decision-making process, and sources of information when the University announces weather decisions.

## Overview of Adverse Weather Conditions

Condition Level	Student & Faculty Effect	Non-Faculty (Staff) Employee Effect	
		Non-Mandatory Employees	Mandatory Employees
Condition 1 - Reduced Operations	Classes held. Individual faculty may use discretion to adjust class schedules and arrange make-up work.	<p>Employees can decide to leave early, arrive late, or not report, with timely notice to supervisor.</p> <p>Employees use leave if not working. Alternatively, and only with supervisor approval, employees may work from home or alternate site.</p>	Employees must report to or remain at work unless otherwise notified.
Condition 2 - Suspended Operations	Classes cancelled.	<p>Employees must not report, or must leave campus.</p> <p>Employees use leave if not working, or can use make-up time subject to applicable rules.</p> <p>Alternatively, and only with supervisor approval, employees may work from home or alternate site.</p>	Employees must report to or remain at work unless otherwise notified.
Condition 3 - Closure	Classes cancelled.	Employees must not report, or must leave campus. Employees <b>do not</b> use personal leave if not working.	Employees must report to or remain at work unless otherwise notified.

## Description of Adverse Weather Conditions

### Condition 1 – Reduced Operations. Summary: The University is open.

Current conditions may not pose severe safety risks or logistical challenges, but an event has significant potential to negatively affect – or already is affecting – local area commuting, important campus services, or the efficient functioning of campus buildings and grounds. Employees, faculty, and students should consider their own personal circumstances to determine whether to report late, leave early, or not report at all.

#### For Students and Faculty

- Classes will operate on a regular schedule.
- Individual faculty may use discretion to adjust class schedules and arrange make-up work for students unable to report to class due to the weather event.

#### For Non-Faculty (Staff) Employees

- **Non-mandatory employees**, *after informing their supervisors in a timely manner*, have the option to report to work late, leave early, or not report to work.
  - These employees must use available personal leave time (compensatory, vacation or bonus) to cover any time away from regular work hours.
  - ***Alternatively, and only with supervisor approval (not mere timely notice to the supervisor)***, these employees may be permitted to work from home or alternate sites when, in the supervisor’s discretion, it is feasible and safe for this to occur. Employees working away from campus do not use leave. Even so, such arrangements may not be practicable for all types of employees or during every type of adverse weather or emergency event.
- **Mandatory employees** (whose presence has been designated mandatory to University operations during adverse weather or emergency events) are expected to report to work or remain on the job, and if deemed necessary by their supervisor, to work a differing schedule or shift than normally assigned.
  - **The University may also take the unusual measure of “calling-in” employees who are not normally designated as “mandatory” and temporarily assign them to this status, if a specific adverse weather or emergency event requires it.**

### Condition 2 – Suspended Operations

**Summary: Classes are cancelled, and the University is open only for mandatory operations.**

Safety risks or logistical challenges are severe, and there is substantial interest in having a relatively limited number of individuals travel to or remain on campus. **Classes are cancelled; all non-mandatory operations are suspended; only mandatory employees must report to or remain work.**

### **For Students and Faculty**

- Classes are cancelled.

### **For Non-Faculty (Staff) Employees**

- **Non-mandatory employees** must not report to work and must leave campus.
  - These employees must code available personal leave time (compensatory, vacation or bonus) for any work time missed, unless:
    - the supervisor authorized off-site work arrangements.
    - the Governor issued an executive order permitting leave with pay for any missed work time.
    - the employee chooses to take leave without pay.
    - the employee chooses to use make-up time; units and departments are responsible for determining whether time not worked during Condition 2 can be coded as make-up time.

Compensatory time must be used prior to make-up time.

The maximum make-up time that can be coded is the number of regularly scheduled work hours during Condition 2, minus the actual hours worked during Condition 2.

Make-up time must be made up no later than 90 calendar days following the triggering event.

Make-up time is not subject to premium pay.

Employees who are already out on approved leave during adverse weather must charge the approved type of leave.

- **Mandatory employees** must report to work or remain on the job, unless otherwise directed by supervisors.

### **Condition 3 – Closure**

**Summary: The University is closed.**

Conditions pose the most severe risks to health and safety or present the most difficult logistical challenges that will severely impede the efficient and effective functioning of the University. (Examples of such conditions include a substantial numbers of downed trees and/or power lines, uncontrolled flooding over a significant portion of the local commuting area, risks to building stability or safety, or loss of critical utilities). **Classes are cancelled; offices and facilities are closed; only mandatory employees must report to or remain at work.**

### **For Students and Faculty**

- Classes are cancelled.

### **For Non-Faculty (Staff) Employees**

- **Non-mandatory employees** must not report to work and must leave campus.
  - These employees are not required to use personal leave time when absent from work in Condition 3.
- **Mandatory employees** must report to work or remain on the job, unless otherwise directed by supervisors.

Note: Under the UNC System policy, Condition 3 would be an extremely rare occurrence given typical winter weather in the area.

### **Key Factors for Making Decisions About Adverse Weather**

- **The personal safety of our students, faculty and staff is our top priority.** This is the most important factor in making decisions about University operations.
- **As a state agency and a UNC system campus, the University must administer and follow the rules, regulations and personnel policies set by state government and UNC General Administration.** We pledge to interpret and administer those policies as compassionately as those policies permit. While the University is required to follow these policies, employees ultimately must make their own personal decisions about reporting for work based on their own circumstances. When necessary, they should contact their supervisors to share any safety concerns, to determine pressing office needs, and to determine if working from home or an alternate work site is feasible.
- **Chapel Hill Transit operations are critical to the University's capacity to operate.** The weather's effects on key Chapel Hill Transit bus routes or operations are a major factor in the University's decision-making process because of high ridership rates among students (43%) who commute to campus. We regularly consult with both local and regional transit officials before, during, and after weather events. According to a recent survey conducted by our Department of Transportation and Parking, more than 12,100

commuter students (58%) rely on local, regional or park-and-ride transit services each day. An estimated 4,400 employees rely on local, regional or park-and-ride transit to work at the University.

- **Conditions on campus are equally important – on roads, in parking lots and parking decks, and on sidewalks.** We rely on the University’s transportation and grounds crews to assess conditions and timing for addressing snow or ice removal or treatment. This is another critical safety concern that plays an important role in any deliberations about the status of campus operations.
- **Class time and work time is precious for students, faculty, and staff.** Canceling classes, altering work schedules or, the rare occasion of closing the campus under the UNC system policy, are extremely disruptive scenarios for everyone. Administrators make these difficult decisions with considerable input and information.
- **When students must miss class or we must cancel classes due to adverse weather, we ask faculty to be as flexible as possible in working with students to make up any assignments and lost class time.** We understand faculty are responsible for their classes, exams and decisions about the academic work their students must complete. We expect them to accommodate reasonable requests from students who may have faced legitimate challenges during a winter adverse weather episode.
- **We understand that a change in University operations affects the lives of others besides our students and employees.** Winter weather disrupts schools, day care centers, businesses, hospitals, doctor’s offices and elderly care. We want to be sensitive to the demands that our employees and students who are parents or caregivers face when juggling their work and educational responsibilities with the needs of their children and loved ones.
- **We pledge to make decisions affecting students, faculty and staff in as timely a fashion as possible.** Our goal is to focus on timely operational issues, such as whether night classes can be held, second- and third-shift operations, running shuttle transportation, and managing safety-related services. We do not want people to lie awake at night and wonder if they may face safety risks if the event timing allows that to be avoided. We will give a firm time by which we will make a decision well in advance. And our communication plan includes posting and communicating the approach of winter weather based on National Weather Service forecasts as far in advance as possible on the University homepage, [www.unc.edu](http://www.unc.edu), and official University social media accounts to make sure people start thinking about these issues well before possible frozen precipitation starts falling.
- **Critical student support services must continue.** During inclement weather, Carolina Dining Services typically operates the Rams Head and Top of Lenoir dining halls on a

limited schedule. Refer to <http://dining.unc.edu/> for updates. For the status of Campus Health Services operations and specific services available to students, refer to <https://campushealth.unc.edu/>. In most inclement weather instances, Campus Health Services continues to operate walk-in, acute care services.

- **We also will do our best to acknowledge the possible impact of winter weather decisions on other events and services based on campus, the UNC Health Care System, or in other clinical practices affiliated with the University.** Those include athletics, cultural performances, lectures, and services that bring patients, visitors and others to Chapel Hill or campus on a regular basis.

Atlantic Coast Conference guidelines for game operations stipulate that host institutions should make every effort to play a game provided both teams and the officials can safely make it to the arena or venue. However, the University and Department of Athletics may choose to play the game, but encourage ticketholders, vendors and staff to only attempt travel to the game if they can do so safely, or under more extreme weather conditions, may close the event to spectators in the interest of travel and general public safety. University announcements will reference <http://goheels.com/> and the sport in question's Twitter feed as the best sources of information about the status of specific athletics events.

- Patrons or visitors holding tickets for events associated with Carolina Performing Arts (<https://www.carolinaperformingarts.org/>), PlayMakers Repertory Company (<https://www.playmakersrep.org/>), the Morehead Planetarium and Science Center (<http://moreheadplanetarium.org/>), the Ackland Art Museum (<http://ackland.org/>), the N.C. Botanical Garden (<http://ncbg.unc.edu/>), or other campus cultural attractions, should check with those venues or the sponsoring unit (for a major lecture, for example) for details about the event status, including rescheduling or ticket reimbursement. As a general rule, the best source of information is that unit's website. The University's main events website is <http://events.unc.edu/>, and those postings are maintained by campus units.
- Patients and family members wondering about the status of appointments or services operating at UNC Health Care should visit <http://www.uncmedicalcenter.org> for information about operating status. If you cannot safely drive to your appointment, please notify your clinic directly. UNC Health Care employees should visit <http://intranet.unchealthcare.org> or refer to their email for the latest updates.
- Patients seeking information about appointments at the School of Dentistry should visit [www.dentistry.unc.edu](http://www.dentistry.unc.edu) for the most recent update about clinic closings. If you cannot safely travel to your appointment, please contact your provider and/or the clinic as soon as possible. If your appointment is cancelled due to a closing, you should contact your

provider and/or the clinic to reschedule. School of Dentistry employees and students should refer to their email for the latest updates.

- **We acknowledge that each decision based on adverse weather will not make everyone happy.** And, keep in mind that even the best possible weather predictions may turn out to be wrong or overstated.

### Information Sources

If winter weather changes the University's operating status, campus communications will include:

- An email, website post and, if conditions warrant, a text message from Alert Carolina, <http://www.alertcarolina.unc.edu>. You must be signed up to receive an Alert Carolina text message.
- Posts on the University's homepage, [www.unc.edu](http://www.unc.edu), amplified via official social media accounts including @UNC, @Alert\_UNCCH (for parents, family, Chapel Hill residents and friends) and @UNC\_HR on Twitter.
- Many campus units, including Carolina Dining Services and Campus Health Services, post news about the status of their operations on their websites.
- Adverse Weather and Emergency Phone Line: (919) 843-1234. You may call this number to hear recorded announcements about campus operations.
- UNC Transportation and Parking for information including parking lot conditions and the status of Point-to-Point shuttle operations, which may cease at any point when travel becomes hazardous for drivers and passengers. Refer to <http://move.unc.edu>.
- Area news media websites.
- Chapel Hill Transit also posts adverse weather news and routes and schedules. Refer to <http://www.townofchapelhill.org/town-hall/news-events/emergency/adverse-weather-updates>