

Whitman College

Inclement Weather Policy

Purpose

To establish guidelines for the protection of the health and safety of Whitman faculty and staff and students during periods of inclement weather and other similar emergency events. These conditions may include, but are not limited to, extended or potentially hazardous heavy snow, ice, and wind storms, poor road conditions, power outages and other utility service disruptions, heating problems, floods, and downed trees.

Policy Statement

The College will remain open unless weather or other emergency conditions are so severe as to require closure or delayed operations. Any decision regarding closure or delay of operations will apply to all administrative offices, college events, classes, athletic practices and other programs. Some exceptions include those critical staff whose presence is required on campus to provide essential support for campus residents, as described below.

Authorization

The decision to close the College or delay operations due to inclement weather or other emergencies will be the joint responsibility of the Provost and Dean of Faculty and the Treasurer and Chief Financial Officer. Each of those officers will have the authority to make such decisions in the absence of the other. Should both of those officers be unavailable, this authority may be delegated to other members of the President's Cabinet.

Communications

In the interest of avoiding confusion and inconsistent and unauthorized messages, the Vice President for Communications and Public Relations will coordinate distribution of **ALL** announcements regarding College closure, College-wide class cancellation, or delayed operations. Such announcements may be communicated through a variety of methods, including:

- Posting on the Whitman College home page/website.
- Emergency phone line (call in, with recorded message).
- Email and text messaging.
- Social media.

- Notification of local media sources (radio, TV, newspaper).

Weather conditions will be closely monitored seven days a week. To the extent possible, announcements will be sent out prior to the early morning commute, at approximately 6:30 a.m. However, staff, faculty, and students should understand that developing weather conditions may make early notification impossible.

It is, therefore, the responsibility of all members of the Whitman community to maintain awareness of conditions, to be watching for College messages, and to be in touch with their colleagues, professors and work supervisors. When major winter storms are predicted, staff and faculty are encouraged to anticipate closure or delayed operations and to take home materials they may require for their work to be done remotely, if feasible.

Safety, Discretion, and Judgment

Adverse weather conditions may make it difficult, if not impossible, for some to come to campus, even if the College remains open. If, in the best judgment of students or employees, based on their individual circumstances, conditions are too hazardous for travel, they should not make the attempt, should remain home, and should notify their respective work supervisors or professors.

Compensation

When the decision is reached to close the college or modify the work schedule due to severe weather, all employees scheduled to work will receive pay for all of the hours that they had originally been scheduled to work. Staff on previously scheduled vacation or sick leave will still be required to claim vacation or sick leave, despite the delay. Temporary staff members will only be paid for hours worked. Student workers will not be paid for unworked hours, and are encouraged to reschedule work hours as possible. To the extent possible, employees are encouraged to complete work from home during the closure.

Note: In the unlikely event that closure occurs on consecutive days for an extended period, the College may announce a modification of this pay practice, which may include alternative work arrangements and/or the expectation that employees claim some amount of vacation time or sick leave during the closure.

College Open – Employees Unable to Travel

Employees are urged to use their best judgment in determining whether conditions are too hazardous for travel. Some employees reside in locations more severely affected by inclement

weather and hazardous conditions than that of the College. When the College is open, those staff unable to travel to campus due to weather conditions should remain home and notify their respective work supervisors. If unable to complete work from home, or if their supervisor does not authorize work from home, they will be expected to charge vacation time or time off without pay for the regularly scheduled hours on that day. If those employees do not have sufficient vacation accrued to cover the absence, they should claim time off without pay.

Critical Staff Required to Work

During College closures due to inclement weather, certain critical staff members will be required to work in order to provide essential support for campus residents and for the preservation of security, grounds and physical plant, communications, and IT resources and services.

Some examples might typically include staff of security, grounds and physical plant, communications, IT, the Health Center, and other functions, as required by the circumstances. The College will work closely with Bon Appetit, our contracted dining service, to ensure that dining services remain available.

Additionally, to provide options for student activities during a closure, the College will work to keep Reid Center, the library and the fitness center open, if possible, while ensuring safety.

The determination of which staff members are considered critical and required to work rests exclusively with the Cabinet, and will depend upon the circumstances of the closure. Exempt staff members are not paid additional compensation if they are required to work during an emergency closure. Nonexempt staff required to work on campus during a complete closure will receive compensation in two forms: pay for all of the hours that they had originally been scheduled to work for every closure day, and time off, to be taken at a later date, equivalent to the actual hours worked on closure days.

Faculty

Because faculty members do not earn vacation leave, they will continue to receive their usual pay under all conditions of delayed operations and closure.

Further Information

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