

Emergency Response to Severe Weather: UAB Campus Plan (Non-hospital areas)

This plan addresses specific responsibilities and procedures for responding to severe weather that could impact the safe operation of the University and the safety of its students, faculty, staff, visitors and patients. It is primarily intended to address the response plans for non-hospital areas. UAB Hospital, and the other Health System departments that provide support for the clinical enterprise, will operate under a separate Inclement Weather Plan. This plan does not supersede departmental plans for areas already considered “essential services”.

Responsibilities:

UAB Administration

The President, Vice President for Financial Affairs and Administration, the Provost, and other senior administrators are responsible for evaluating available information on the potential and actual impact of the weather emergency on the UAB campus and surrounding community and the impact on life safety. The President or designee, in consultation with others, is responsible for timely decisions on closings and restricted hours.

Emergency Management Team: UAB Senior Administration, AVP for Facilities, OH&S, UAB Police, other individuals as needed. Responsibilities include providing overall leadership during the emergency response, as well as, planning and resource allocation. This team is also responsible for advising the President or Designee and assisting with command level decisions.

UAB Police

The Police Department is trained and equipped to assume the responsibility of initial assessment of damage after the danger has passed and can pass this initial information on to the Administration, Maintenance, Occupational Health and Safety quickly. The Department have a number of officers and staff on campus around the clock with the proper transportation and communication tools and access to every area of campus. They have immediate access to Birmingham Police, Birmingham Fire and Rescue Service and other community agencies if needed. They also have primary responsibility for public safety on the University roads, alleys and walkways.

Campus Maintenance

During normal work hours, Campus Maintenance is fully staffed and prepared to respond to any weather emergency. Each cluster has specific plans in place that are implemented prior to an anticipated event in order to mitigate damage. They are responsible for ensuring sand bags and other water control measures are in place, generators are fueled and in good working order and other preparations appropriate to the emergency.

After normal hours and on weekends and holidays, Campus maintenance has a minimal presence, often just one person who can call in additional help if necessary. In an emergency, maintenance has the primary responsibility of evaluation and recovery. They assess the level of damage, implement short term solutions to assist in immediate response efforts, and develop long term recovery and repair plans, budgets and timelines. If emergency conditions are predicted, additional personnel will be on campus to make preparations and to be available for recovery efforts.

Support Services (Building Services and Campus Services and Grounds)

After hours, Support Services does not have a presence on campus. However, many report to work as early as 4 a.m., provided roads are passable and the University is open. Responsibilities include response and recovery actions to clean up water and other problems that can render internal areas of the campus unusable or unsafe. If emergency conditions are predicted, additional personnel will be on campus to make preparations and to be available for recovery efforts.

Occupational Health and Safety

OH&S is responsible for evaluating and responding to hazards posed by hazardous chemicals, biological or infectious materials, radioactive materials, and other threats to health and safety and the environment. OH&S is also responsible for coordination with regulatory agencies for any reporting requirements triggered by the release of hazardous materials. OH&S has an internal spill response team with the training and expertise to begin the clean up process and effectively coordinate with other first responders whose resources may be stretched thin in a large event.

Media Relations

Responsibilities include coordination with UAB Administration for preparing and distributing notification information to media outlets related to closings or delays. Media Relations is also responsible for making sure the Severe Weather Hotline recording is transmitted to WBHM, and is accurately updated in a timely manner.

UAB Emergency Operations Team

Members include those individuals/departments with primary responsibilities for response and recovery after an event. Examples are; Facilities (Maintenance, Building Services, Grounds), UAB Police, OH&S, Information Technology, Student Affairs, Housing, etc. Responsibilities include development and testing of specific response and recovery plans, integration of plans, drills, and mitigation efforts and recommendations.

UAB Departments (Deans, Directors, and Department Heads)

Prior to severe weather, each department must ensure that all faculty and staff are aware of how to find information on the status of the University, especially the UAB Home Page, www.uab.edu, WBHM 90.3 FM radio, and the Severe Weather Hotline 934-2165. Faculty and staff should also be made aware of University policy requiring employees to contact their supervisor concerning individual issues and concerns.

Procedures:

- All areas of Campus will implement severe weather preparations according to departmental or building emergency plans, and according to the impending weather scenario.
- UAB Police and OH&S will monitor conditions and published reports in an effort to project the expected severity and timetable of the severe weather and keep the Emergency Management Team informed.
- Mitigation: All areas of campus will implement plans to reduce the impact of the expected severe weather.

During normal work hours:

If the peak of the severe weather is predicted to hit campus during normal business hours, the President, or designee, with the assistance of the Emergency Management Team, will determine precautions necessary, i.e. early closing, etc.

1. If an early closing is called for, UAB Police and Maintenance will keep additional personnel on duty.
2. UAB Police will be responsible for a campus assessment for damage, when conditions are safe, and immediately notify the VP for FA&A, maintenance, OH&S, and other appropriate departments.
3. Maintenance will assess the impact of the damage, estimate recovery and immediately notify the VP for FA&A.
4. Other departments will respond as needed and use their internal call trees for notification of required staff.

After normal hours:

If the peak of severe weather is predicted to hit campus after 5 p.m.:

UAB Police:

1. UAB Police will monitor conditions on campus through sector assignments, if conditions are safe. Officers in the field will maintain communication with the shift supervisor through dispatch. Patrol officers should report:
 - Street flooding and building flooding,
 - Power outages, in buildings as well as street lights and other outside lights,
 - Power lines or phone lines down on streets or sidewalks,
 - Damage to grounds and facilities; trees down, buildings damaged, windows broken, etc.
 - Other conditions which may prevent access to or conducting of university business.
2. Any of these conditions should be reported to the shift supervisor immediately with an estimate of severity. A summary of conditions in all sectors will then be phoned to the Chief of Police periodically who will inform the VP FA&A (or designee), Maintenance, OH&S and others as necessary.
3. If damage is found, the Officer will secure the area according to procedure and assist emergency responders, if required. The shift supervisor will determine if the officer should resume patrol duties.
4. If notified of grounds or facility damage by a patrol officer, the shift supervisor will notify UAB Maintenance, OH&S and other appropriate departments to implement their internal response plans and assist in evaluating damage and determining a recovery time period.
5. UAB Police will maintain communication with communities who have experienced the same weather system to determine the kinds of conditions we can expect. They will also maintain communication with nearby agencies, such as Shelby and Jefferson County Sheriff's Departments, Birmingham Police, Jefferson County EMA, etc.
6. Information on conditions that affect the normal operation of the University must be provided to the VP FA&A through established communication lines no later than 5:00 a.m.

Facilities (Maintenance, Grounds, Building Services, etc.)

1. When expected weather warrants, weather preparation plans will be implemented to mitigate possible damage, such as placement of sandbags, and other water control methods, policing outside areas for possible debris, etc.
2. Staffing requirements will be reviewed and appropriate additional FTEs added to the after hours schedule.
3. After hours call lists should be up to date so additional staff can be recalled as needed.
4. When required, assessment of damaged areas should be done as quickly as possible with regular status reports sent to the AVP for Facilities and the VP FA&A.
5. Information affecting the normal operation of the University must be provided to the VP FA&A no later than 5:00 a.m.

Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S)

1. OH&S will monitor weather sources and conditions, get periodic updates from Jefferson County EMA and be available to advise the VP FA&A.
2. Information affecting the normal operation of the University must be provided to the VP FA&A no later than 5:00 a.m.
3. If required, OH&S will implement appropriate response plans to deal with potential issues with hazardous materials, research animals, fire and life safety, etc.

Media Relations

1. Based upon decisions by the President, or designee, the office of Media Relations will prepare an announcement on University status and post it to the UAB Web Site Home Page. The status message will also be called to WBHM 90.3 FM, the official source for University closing news, as well as all other media outlets.
2. WBHM 90.3 FM is responsible for making the recording for the Severe Weather Hotline 934-2165. Once received, the message is placed on the Hotline immediately and announced on the air at frequent intervals.
3. Media Relations will confer with the President, or designee, and distribute the initial status message no later than 5:30 a.m.

Administration

1. The Vice President for Financial Affairs and Administration (VP FA&A) is responsible for collecting information provided by UABPD, Facilities, OH&S, and other sources, and informing the President, or designee, on the status of the campus for the purpose of formulating a public announcement no later than 5:30 a.m. in order to ensure the timely distribution of the status of UAB campus.
2. UAB Hospital is not affected by this plan and operates under a separate Inclement Weather Plan. However, the VP FA&A will confer with the Chief Operating Officer of the Hospital and the Chief Executive Officer of the Health System concerning the University's intended response.
3. Conditions in the community and on the UAB campus will be evaluated hourly and, if appropriate, the information given to the media, the UAB Home Page, and the Severe Weather Hotline will be updated accordingly.
4. All parties who are named on the critical call list should ensure they have access to a telephone set at home that is either battery operated or can be plugged into and powered by their home land line in the event of a power outage.