



EXTREME WINTER WEATHER COLLEGE CLOSING PROCEDURE

Effective Date: November 2025

PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure the safety and well-being of all students, faculty, staff, and visitors during periods of extreme winter weather. The decision to modify college operations (delay, cancel classes, or fully close) is always based on conditions that present significant risk to travel or render the college unsafe for instruction and activity.

The college president or designee holds the sole authority to declare a change in operational status.

INFORMATION MONITORING

The college routinely monitors weather including the potential for extreme winter weather conditions. During seasons where extreme winter weather is possible and or expected:

- The Director of Emergency Management and/or Campus Police will:
 - monitor and provide information from the National Weather Service (NWS).
 - Review current campus events including all scheduled athletics activities (home and away).
- The Campus Police Department will provide information regarding the conditions of roads and highway systems based on information obtained from the Law Enforcement Data System and other relevant sources.
- Campus Safety and Operations will:
 - monitor and provide information regarding conditions of all college roads, buildings, and grounds.
 - compare NWS forecast models with thresholds for ability to maintain safe conditions on college property.
- Marketing and Communications will provide information regarding closing status of local school districts and area colleges.

Additional Information Sources that will be monitored (*see all references at the end of this document*):

- K-12 School Status/Bus Garage Reports
- Illinois State Police Reports
- Illinois Department of Transportation Report

CRITERIA

The following criteria will be considered for the decision to close or alter college hours:

- National Weather Service forecasting (i.e., extreme cold/wind chill warnings).
- Road conditions for employees and students traveling to any WCC location.
- Ability for Campus Safety and Operations staff to travel to any college location to begin snow and ice removal and to maintain safe conditions on college property.
- Local impacts and surrounding school closures.

Extreme Cold/Wind Chill Threshold

Operational status changes, up to and including a full college closure, will be considered when the National Weather Service (NWS) forecast predicts:

1. **Air Temperature or Sustained Wind Chill** is expected to reach **-25°F (-31.6°C)** or below between the timeframes of 6:00a.m. and 5:00p.m. for daytime classes and 5:00p.m. and 10:00p.m. for evening classes.
2. A current **Extreme Cold** and/or **Wind Chill Warning** is issued by the NWS for the immediate area of college locations.

Snow and Ice Accumulation Threshold

Operational status changes will be considered when any of the following conditions pose a significant safety risk:

1. **Ice Accumulation:** Any forecasted or actual accumulation of freezing rain or glaze ice that results in severely hazardous driving or walking conditions.
2. **Snowfall Rate/Accumulation:** Rapid heavy snowfall (i.e., high rate per hour) or total accumulation that overwhelms the ability of Campus Safety and Operations to clear primary walkways, roads, and ADA access points.
3. **Local Conditions:** Declared State of Emergency, local/regional travel bans or other transportation closures that prevent the majority of the community from traveling safely.

DECISION PROCESS

Upon notification of the potential for extreme winter weather from the NWS or identification of other related criteria, the Director of Emergency Management will initiate a meeting with the following leadership team members to discuss the current situation and further assess the need for a delayed start, full closure, or early closure.

- Executive Director of Campus Safety and Operations
- Director of Emergency Management
- Executive Director of Marketing and Communications
- Vice President of Finance and Administration (IMT Chair)
- Provost and Vice President of Teaching, Learning, and Student Success
- Chief of Staff and Assistant Vice President of Strategy

The Director of Emergency Management will facilitate the meeting using the following agenda points:

- Current/forecasted weather conditions
- Current/anticipated impacts to Waubensee locations
- Status surrounding area K-12 districts and colleges
- Current institutional/instruction related concerns
- Final recommendation for President

Immediately following the meeting, the IMT Chair will inform the College President and/or designee of recommendations to close, delay, or alter college hours due to extreme winter weather conditions. The College President or their backup designee will provide the final decision and communicate this to the IMT Chair no later than 4:45a.m. for full day closures or delayed starts, and 1:00p.m. for early closures. However, these times should be considered final deadlines. As much notice as possible will be given to allow for all necessary arrangements to be made.

All college locations will follow the same direction. The determined status (listed on the next page) will apply to all Waubensee college facilities regardless of variances in local weather conditions.

OPERATIONAL STATUS DEFINITIONS

In response to extreme winter weather, one of the following official statuses will be announced for all college facilities:

Status	All Activities College Wide
Normal Operations	All classes and activities meet as scheduled.
Delayed Start	Classes starting before the delayed time are CANCELED .
Early Closure	Ongoing classes are dismissed early and classes scheduled to begin after dismissal time are CANCELED.
College Closed	All classes and activities are CANCELED .

DELAYED START PROVISIONS

- The decision will specify an opening time (e.g., 10:00 AM).
- Any class, lab, meeting, or event scheduled to **begin before** the delayed opening time is automatically **canceled for the entire day**.
- Classes scheduled to begin at or after the delayed opening time will meet as scheduled.
- Staff should adjust their start time to the delayed opening time (excluding essential operations personnel).

CLASS CANCELLATION PROVISIONS

- **Faculty Responsibility:** Faculty are encouraged to communicate with their students regarding the status of online components or potential make-up work. Classes will not be held in-person or virtually if the college closes due to severe weather.

EARLY CLOSURE PROVISIONS

- If weather conditions deteriorate suddenly during the operational day, the President or designee may declare an **Early Closure**.
- The announcement will specify the exact time all non-essential operations will cease and the college will close (e.g., "The college will close at 3:00 PM").
- All classes, meetings, and events scheduled to **start after** the official early closure time are **canceled**.
- Employees are released at the official closure time without loss of compensation for remaining scheduled work hours.

TIMING OF DECISION AND COMMUNICATION

- **Morning Operations:** A decision regarding full-day closure or delayed start will be made and communicated no later than **5:00 AM**.

- **Evening Operations:** A decision regarding evening classes will be made and communicated no later than **3:30 PM**.
- **Early Closure:** Decisions will be made as warranted by rapidly deteriorating conditions.

COMMUNICATIONS

The official status announcement will be communicated via the following channels:

System/Service	Primary	Second Alternate	Third Alternate
Waubonsee Alert System (SMS/Email/Voice)	Executive Director of Campus Safety and Operations	Campus Police Chief	Campus Police Officer On-Duty
Auto-Attendant Recording	Executive Director of Marketing and Communication	Communications Manager	Marketing and Communications Coordinator
Auto-Attendant System Update	Network Technology Coordinator	Director of Technology Infrastructure	As Delegated
College Website Homepage/mywcc	Executive Director of Marketing and Communication	Digital Marketing Manager	Digital Communications Coordinator
Official Social Media Channels	Executive Director of Marketing and Communication	Digital Marketing Manager	Digital Communications Coordinator
Emergencyclosingcenter.com	Executive Director of Campus Safety and Operations	Director of Emergency Management	Executive Director of Marketing and Communication
Local Media Outlets	Executive Director of Marketing and Communication	Communications Manager	Marketing and Communications Coordinator
External Message Boards (setup at entrances)	Executive Director of Campus Safety and Operations	Campus Project Manager	Director of Building, Grounds, and Events

Athletics Events

The athletics manager and assistant manager will be notified immediately via the Waubonsee Alert System (text/voice) when a decision to notify the college is made. All athletics events scheduled for home or away visits will be canceled when Waubonsee is closed for any type of severe weather.

For athletic events that require travel to locations that may be more severely impacted by weather conditions when Waubonsee will remain open, the Athletics Manager or Assistant Manager in consultation with the Dean for Student Engagement and/or Director of Emergency Management will make a determination for Waubonsee's participation. The criteria included in this procedure as related to the location in question, will be considered for Waubonsee athletics participation in events requiring travel.

REPORTING OF ESSENTIAL PERSONNEL

Essential Personnel are those whose presence is required to maintain critical operations (e.g., Campus Police, designated Campus Safety and Operations staff) regardless of operational status.

- The Executive Director for Campus Safety and Operations will coordinate with supervisors and department personnel to make timely decisions and notifications regarding work reporting times before and during extreme winter weather events.
- Personnel who are required to work during a college closure due to severe weather will receive compensation according to the employee handbook.

Information Resources:

- National Weather Service Definitions:
 - **Extreme Cold Warning: Take Action!** An Extreme Cold Warning is issued when extremely dangerous cold conditions or wind chill values are expected or occurring. If you are in an area with an Extreme Cold Warning, avoid going outside. If you have to go outside, dress in layers, cover exposed skin, and make sure at least one other person knows your whereabouts. Update them when you arrive safely at your destination.
 - **Extreme Cold Watch: Be Prepared.** An Extreme Cold Watch is issued when extremely dangerous cold conditions or wind chill values are possible, but the occurrence, location, and/or timing is still uncertain. As with a Warning, adjust your plans to avoid being outside during the coldest parts of the day. Make sure your car has at least half a tank of gas, and update your winter survival kit.
- <https://www.gettingaroundillinois.com/WinterConditions/index.html>