

CAMPUS EMERGENCY PROCEDURE

Procedure title: Inclement Weather
Effective date: May 2014
Revision date: May 2016

Introduction

This procedure provides direction to the campus community when responding to an incident or emergency that may threaten the institution's processes, the safety of its employees and students, or the facility itself.

Definitions/explanation

Southern Ontario is susceptible to a variety of extreme weather conditions that can range from exhausting heat in the summer to frigid cold and blizzards in the winter. These conditions not only affect the safety and security of those on campus, but also play a factor in everyone's travel arrangements to and from campus.

Extreme heat refers to high temperatures in the late spring, summer, and early fall that play a role in heat stress. Heat stress occurs when heat is combined with other stresses such as hard physical work, loss of fluids, fatigue or some medical conditions. It may lead to heat-related illness, disability and even death.

Extreme cold refers to temperatures that despite individual efforts to keep warm, can lead to hypothermia or frost bite, and is an often underrated atmospheric hazard in Canada.

Winter storms are extreme winter conditions characterized by one or more of the following: strong winds, low visibility, snow, cold temperatures, freezing rain, or poor driving conditions.

Thunderstorm is a form of weather characterized by the presence of lightning and its acoustic effect on the Earth's atmosphere known as thunder. Thunderstorms are usually accompanied by strong winds, heavy rain and sometimes snow, sleet, hail or no precipitation at all.

Flooding may occur as a result of excessive rainfall or a building failure; it can cause significant damage to property and poses a risk to personal safety.

Tornado refers to any violent windstorm characterized by a twisting funnel shaped cloud that forms at the base of cloud banks and points towards the ground. Tornadoes form suddenly, are often preceded by warm humid weather and are always produced by thunderstorms. They generally occur in the late afternoon and early evening from May to September.

Procedure

Extreme heat

In the event of extreme heat, consider the following:

- If possible, avoid strenuous outdoor activities and limit your exposure to the sun;
- If outside, apply sunscreen uniformly to cover all exposed areas for 15 minutes before exposure;
- Sunscreen should be reapplied every two hours;
- Remain hydrated by drinking lots of water;
- Wear a hat to protect the top of your head and face;
- Dress in loose-fitting, lightweight and light-coloured clothes that cover as much of your body as possible; and
- Consider rescheduling outdoor events for cooler times of the day.

Call Campus Security at ext. 2400 or 905.721.3211 immediately if you or a victim is experiencing the following heat-related symptoms or conditions:

- Heat exhaustion;
- Heat stroke;
- Heat cramps;
- Fainting;
- Vomiting;
- Nausea;
- Dizziness;
- Paleness;
- Headaches; or
- Weakness.

Extreme cold

In the event of extreme cold, consider the following:

- Stay indoors as much as possible; and
- Pay attention to reports from local media outlets for information on weather and emergencies.

Dress appropriately when heading outdoors

- Wear several layers of loose fitting, lightweight, warm clothing rather than one layer of heavy clothing;
- Cover your head as most body heat is lost through the top of the head;
- Cover your mouth to protect your lungs;
- Watch for signs of frostbite – loss of feeling and white or pale appearance in extremities such as fingers, toes, ear lobes and the tip of the nose;
- Watch for signs of hypothermia – uncontrollable shivering, memory loss, disorientation, incoherence, slurred speech, drowsiness and apparent exhaustion. (If symptoms of hypothermia are detected, get the victim to a warm location and remove any wet clothing. If conscious, warm the centre of the body first by giving warm, non-alcoholic beverages. Seek medical help as soon as possible.); and

- If signs of frostbite or hypothermia are present while on campus, contact Campus Security at ext. 2400 from a campus phone or 905.721.3211 from an external line. They will dispatch the Campus Emergency Response Team (CERT) and the appropriate authorities.

Winter storms

Driving during the winter season:

- Avoid travelling alone, and try to keep others informed of your travel schedule and whereabouts;
- If possible, stay on the main roads and avoid using back roads. The busiest roads are typically first to be treated by snow removal crews;
- Before the winter season begins, it is good practice to ensure your vehicle is sufficiently prepared for the impending winter conditions, which includes:
 - Checking your battery, ignition system, lights, thermostat, brakes, heating system, exhaust, defroster and oil levels;
 - Ensuring you have sufficient antifreeze and windshield washer fluid;
 - Ensuring that your vehicle's gas tank is consistently full;
 - Consider using snow tires during the winter to improve traction; and
 - Carry a basic vehicle emergency kit in the trunk of your vehicle.

On campus:

Anyone who finds him or herself stranded on campus should remain inside until the storm subsides, and inform security of her or his location. Campus Security can be reached at ext. 2400 or 905.721.3211 from an external line.

Thunderstorm

In the event of a thunderstorm:

- Find a safe shelter; avoid being outdoors;
 - Do not use a tree as shelter;
- If you are unable to find a safe shelter, and are trapped outdoors, lie in a ditch or any low-lying area with few trees, or crouch near a strong building for shelter;
- Avoid showering or bathing, as plumbing conducts electricity;
- Postpone, cancel or relocate outdoor activities;
- Avoid standing near windows, as glass can be quite dangerous when experiencing extreme winds;
- Use a corded phone *only* if you or someone around you requires emergency assistance, a cellphone is much safer to use;
- Avoid natural lightning rods, like tall trees or other tall objects in open areas;
- Avoid hilltops, open areas, or waterfronts; and
- Do not use metal objects like golf clubs, motorcycles, bicycles, etc.

Flooding

In the event of a flood:

- Do not walk through floodwater - it could be electrically charged or contaminated;

- If safe to do so, inform security of the affected area by dialing ext. 2400 or 905.721.3211;
- If possible and safe to do so, shut off power to affected area;
- Move all hazardous materials and vulnerable equipment to above anticipated water line; and
- Never cross a flooded area:
 - If you are on foot, fast water could sweep you away; or
 - If you are in a car, do not drive through flood waters or underpasses - the water may be deeper than it looks and your car could get stuck or swept away by fast water.

Tornadoes

If a tornado strikes, and you are indoors:

- Remain calm and do not leave the building;
- Do not use the elevators;
- If possible, move to the closest small interior room;
- Take cover immediately;
- Stay away from exterior walls, windows, doors or any other objects that could become projectiles;
- If possible, find a sturdy piece of furniture such as a heavy table or desk to use as cover;
- Use your hands to cover your head to avoid serious injury;
- Remain in one area until the storm has passed; and
- Once the storm has passed, if there are any damage or injuries, contact Campus Security at ext. 2400 or 905.721.3211.

If a tornado strikes, and you are outdoors:

- Do not try to outrun or out drive a tornado;
- If possible, seek a safe structure to hide under;
- If you are unable to seek shelter, search for a low area such as a ditch or depression away from vehicles or other light structures;
- Lie low and use your hands to cover your head to avoid serious injury;
- Remain calm; and
- Once the storm has passed, if there is any damage or injuries, contact Campus Security at ext. 2400 or at 905.721.3211.

In the event of an injury:

In the event an injury occurs as a result of a workplace accident, please contact your immediate supervisor to inform her or him of the incident. Next, you or your supervisor must fill out an Accident/Incident Report Form.

For Durham College employees, the form can be located on the employee intranet, ICE, under Forms, then Human Resources, and Accident, Injury. For more information, please refer to the Durham College Accident Reporting Procedure (EMPL-301.1), also located on ICE.

UOIT employees can access the form through the UOIT.ca website. On the homepage, click Faculty and Staff, then Human Resources, then Healthy Workplace, then Accident/Injury Form. For more information, please refer to the Accident Reporting Procedure, which is located on the UOIT.ca website

Authority and responsibilities

The Emergency Management Response Team (EMRT) and the Office of Campus Safety will be responsible for enforcing and communicating these procedures to staff and students.

Faculty, staff, and students will be responsible for taking direction from the appropriate authorities and contributing to a safe and secure environment.

Reference

Durham College and UOIT Emergency Preparedness Plan & Policy
Durham College Administrative Procedure – Emergency Closure Admin-211.1
Durham College Emergency Preparedness Plan
Durham College Accident Reporting Procedure
Environment Canada – Extreme Cold guidelines
UOIT Accident Reporting Procedure