

Policies and Procedures

Subject: Inclement Weather/Emergent Hazardous Conditions

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1. Purpose

This policy establishes the authority and procedures for closing the college or a campus in the event of inclement weather or an emergent condition that jeopardizes public health or safety.

2. Policy

Tidewater Community College (TCC) shall operate in accordance with the approved Academic Calendar, maintaining full operations and providing a safe environment for employees, students, and visitors, unless specifically closed by designated college officials. College closings or delayed openings shall be authorized when

hazardous weather conditions are predicted to occur that present a serious threat to the institution's safe operation and to the wellbeing and safety of employees, students, and visitors. For the sake of clarity and consistency, all TCC campuses and off-campus locations shall follow the same operating schedule to the extent possible. However, it is recognized that campuses and off-campus locations may not be able to operate on the same schedule due to localized extraordinary circumstances. Examples of such circumstances include emergent localized severe weather, such as a tornado, or a utility outage resulting in disruption of essential services to a campus or off-campus location. Such emergent conditions may jeopardize public health or safety and, therefore, may require modifications to normal operations.

2.1. College Closings

The President's Cabinet will decide to close the college or declare a delayed opening for reasons of inclement weather or emergencies.

2.2. Campus and Off-Campus Location Closings

The College President has delegated to the dean of the affected campus and related off-campus facility, and to the appropriate college vice president¹ for district facilities, the authority to respond to extraordinary circumstances in the interest of public health or safety. In the instance of an emergent severe weather event, such as a tornado, the campus dean/appropriate college vice president for the affected location shall implement procedures that cause personnel to be moved to safe locations for the duration of the event.

In the event of emergent potentially hazardous circumstances, such as a utility outage that jeopardizes public health or safety, the campus dean/appropriate college vice president for the affected location shall take such action as necessary to provide a safe environment for employees, students, and visitors, including closing the campus, off-campus location, or offices or portions thereof, if appropriate.

When the potentially hazardous circumstances are restricted to one building or to a limited area of a campus, without widespread impact, the campus dean/appropriate college vice president for the affected locations shall direct which actions should be taken. The campus dean/appropriate college vice president for the affected location shall notify the College President of the extraordinary circumstances, providing an assessment of the situation, the action taken, the anticipated time for repairs if required, and the expected time of return to normal operations.

When an emergent, potentially hazardous event is sufficiently widespread that it affects both a campus and the co-located district facilities, the appropriate campus dean shall coordinate the response with the appropriate college vice president. In such cases, one of the administrators, normally the affected campus dean, shall make the required report to the College President, addressing actions taken for both the campus and the co-located district facilities.

2.3. Closings at Non-TCC Locations

Classes or other TCC activities being conducted at non-TCC locations (e.g., military bases, clinical healthcare facilities, other institutions' or companies' facilities, etc.) shall be governed by a college closure or delayed opening decision. In addition, if the host facility is unavailable due to closure, the TCC class or activity shall be suspended.

2.4. Notification

In the event of a college or campus closure or delayed opening, the President's Cabinet shall determine the extent of public notification required based on the extent to which the college is affected and the anticipated duration of the closure. The President's Cabinet shall coordinate with the Vice President for Institutional Advancement for public announcements of closures or delayed openings.

2.5. Designated Personnel

The vice presidents shall identify those individuals who may be required to work during an authorized closing. Different employees may be designated as essential for different situations. For example, certain employees may be designated as essential to college/campus operations during inclement weather situations while different employees may be designated essential during heating or electrical problems. Designated personnel shall report for work as directed by their supervisors. In the event that hazardous conditions make travel unsafe, designated personnel shall notify their supervisors and report to work as soon as travel conditions will permit. Absent hazardous travel conditions or other extenuating circumstances, failure of designated personnel to report as required shall result in disciplinary action.

2.6. Academic Schedule

When deciding to close or delay the opening of the college or a campus or other location where classes are conducted, the President's Cabinet shall take the college's standard class schedule into consideration to the extent feasible.

2.7. Compensation

Compensation of classified staff shall be in accordance with Virginia Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM) [Policy 1.25 \(Hours of Work\)](#) and [Policy 1.35 \(Emergency Closings\)](#). Although DHRM Policy 1.35 applies only to classified employees, TCC extends the spirit of this policy to the entire college community. In general, the state's policy is that persons working on site should be shown forbearance when inclement weather causes them to be late for work. Further, those classified staff or administrative/professional faculty who are "designated personnel" and required to report to work when the college is otherwise closed shall be given compensatory leave for this work.

2.8. Compliance

Teaching faculty (full-time and adjunct) are expected to be present at all class meetings unless classes are cancelled. Administrative & professional faculty and classified & wage employees are expected to be at work, except in exceptional circumstances, whenever the college is open according to their assigned work schedules. Employees, other than designated personnel, who report to work or remain at work during the period the college is closed, shall not be credited with compensatory leave unless their supervisor authorized such leave in advance.

3. Responsibilities

The Vice President for Administration & Chief Financial Officer and the vice presidents shall be responsible for maintaining the currency of this policy and for ensuring its compliance with applicable policies and procedures of the Virginia Community College System and the Commonwealth of Virginia.

4. Procedures

The following procedures will be followed in implementing this policy.

4.1. Inclement Weather

Decisions to alter TCC's operating schedule are made by the President's Cabinet in consultation with the campus deans, the Director of Public Safety, and the AVP for Facilities Planning & Operations. In the absence of the President's Cabinet, the decision will be made by the next available college official as listed in the orders of succession in Table C-1 of the TCC Crisis and Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) in consultation with the officials identified above or their successors.

4.1.1 Timing of Decisions

When severe weather (e.g. snow, freezing road surfaces, heavy rain/flooding) is anticipated in the early morning, every effort will be made to make the decision to delay opening or close the college by 4:30 a.m. to facilitate public announcement in time to advise faculty and students with early class schedules, including health professions and nursing clinicals which may begin at 6:00 a.m.

When severe weather conditions evolve over the course of the day, modifications to college operations should be made with consideration for the typical class schedule for the day of the week as well as for the need to release college employees and students so they may travel in relative safety.

4.1.2 Factors to Consider

In making a decision regarding inclement weather, the following factors will be considered. Due to the complex nature of weather emergencies decisions should not be limited to this list.

- Current and future road conditions surrounding TCC campuses and

other locations as well as on major roadways and bridges in the region;

- Current and future closures/suspensions of public transportation; and
- Current and future conditions of parking lots, roads, and walkways on TCC campuses and other locations.

4.1.3 Weather Resources

General weather information and forecasts for TCC's service region provided by the National Weather Service (NWS) (Wakefield Forecast Office) will be consulted. As well, local media weather reporting, especially current conditions, may be consulted to supplement the NWS reporting.

4.2. Non-Weather Related Emergent Conditions

In the event of a non-weather related emergent condition, the decision to modify the college's or a campus's operating schedule will be based upon the unique circumstances of the specific situation.

4.3. Notification

In the event of a decision to close the college or to delay its opening, the Vice President for Institutional Advancement will cause notification to be sent via *TCC Alerts* and the college's e-mail system. The Vice President for Institutional Advancement will promulgate an appropriate announcement on the college's website homepage and social media channels, the college's telephone system, and local electronic and print media.

In the event that a decision is made to close or delay opening a campus or other location due to severe weather conditions or an emergent condition, the Vice President for Institutional Advancement will consult with the respective campus dean or responsible vice president to determine the extent of a public announcement warranted by the situation.

If feasible, closure announcements sent via *TCC Alerts* and the college's e-mail system and posted to the TCC homepage, social media, and the college's telephone system will include a statement of when the college is expected to re-open. In the event of an extended closure, once a decision is made regarding re-opening the college, the decision will be communicated via the means identified above, including local media to the extent that they will accept "opening" announcements.

4.4. Compensation

4.4.1 Designated Personnel

- Exempt and non-exempt employees are paid their regular rate of pay for hours worked.
- Employees are granted compensatory time for hours worked during authorized closings up to the maximum number of hours of their normal work shifts whether or not the authorized closing occurs

during the employee's regularly-scheduled work shift and whether or not the authorized closing is for an entire or partial work shift.

- All hours worked in a workweek, including hours worked during an authorized closing, will be counted for purposes of determining if overtime pay is warranted for non-exempt employees.
- Designated personnel on pre-approved leave during an authorized closing will have the leave charged to the authorized closing, and not to their leave balances.
- When road conditions and transportation difficulties cause designated personnel to arrive late, the supervisor may determine that the conditions and difficulties justified the tardiness. In such cases, the lost time will not be charged to employees' leave balances or to leave without pay, and no disciplinary action will be taken.
- Designated personnel will be considered non-designated while they are on short-term disability under the Virginia Sickness and Disability Program (VSDP).

4.4.2 Failure to Report

Failure to report to work as directed by designated personnel can result in disciplinary action under [DHRM Policy 1.60 \(Standards of Conduct\)](#) and/or the hours missed may be charged to leave with or without pay, as appropriate.

4.4.3 Non-Designated Personnel

Non-designated personnel are those employees who are not required to work during an authorized closing because their positions have not been identified as essential during emergency conditions.

- **Full Shift Closing Compensation.** Non-designated personnel will be paid for the hours they are scheduled to work during an authorized closing, if they worked or took paid leave the day before and the day after the authorized closing.
 - **Pre-approved Leave With Pay.** Non-designated personnel who are on pre-approved leave with pay when an authorized closing occurs will have the time charged to the authorized closing and not to personal leave balances.
 - **Short-term Disability.** Non-designated personnel who are on short-term disability under VSDP will continue to receive their percentage of compensation based on the benefits provided under VSDP.
 - **Alternate Work Schedule.** Non-designated personnel on an alternate work schedule in accordance with [TCC Policy 3101 \(Alternative Work Arrangements\)](#) who were scheduled to work more than eight hours on an authorized closing day will be

paid for the scheduled hours. When an employee on an alternate work schedule is scheduled to work less than eight hours on an eight-hour, authorized closing day, he/she will be paid for the hours actually scheduled.

- **Partial Shift Closing Compensation.** Non-designated personnel will be paid for the scheduled hours worked during an authorized closing if they worked or took paid leave the day before and the day after the authorized closing. Any scheduled hours not worked by non-designated employees while the college was open must be charged to personal leave or leave without pay. Non-designated personnel who call in the day of a partial closing are only required to submit leave for the work hours not covered by the partial closing.
 - **Late Arrivals.** When road conditions and transportation difficulties cause non-designated personnel to arrive late, the supervisor may determine that the tardiness was justified. In such cases, the lost time will not be charged to the employee's leave balances or to leave without pay.
 - **Pre-Approved Leave With Pay.** When non-designated personnel are on pre-approved leave during a partial shift closing, the hours of the authorized closing will not be charged to the individual's leave balances or to leave without pay.
- **Failure to Hear Closing Announcement.** When non-designated personnel report to work as usual because they have not heard an authorized closing announcement, they will be paid the regular rate of pay for the time worked, but will not be credited with compensatory leave for any time worked during the authorized closing.
- **Unscheduled Leave.** The Vice President for Administration & Chief Financial Officer may authorize non-designated personnel to utilize appropriate leave (e.g. annual, family/personal, recognition, etc.) during an inclement weather or emergency event. Non-designated personnel who cannot report for work may request unscheduled leave for the entire scheduled workday. Employees must notify their supervisors of their intent to take unscheduled leave. Salaried employees must account for the time period that they are away from routinely scheduled work by using annual leave or compensatory time taken.
- **Wage Employees.** Wage employees will not be compensated if they do not work.

4.5. Class Schedules

Teaching faculty shall include in their class syllabi their expectations for how students will respond to an announced closing or delayed opening if the designated time of closure/opening occurs during the class or lab period. This is particularly important if the specific class's schedule does not comport with

the college's standard class schedule. For example, Monday – Wednesday – Friday classes typically start on the hour and last 50 minutes. Thus, a delayed opening on a Monday will typically be effected on the hour. If a faculty member's class starts at a time and runs for a period such that it is likely to be in session when such delayed opening is effected, they should advise students whether or not they will be expected to attend the class that day based on the amount of the class period that will remain after the delayed opening time.

Faculty teaching an online or hybrid course that has a scheduled activity (e.g., quiz, discussion session, etc.) during a period when the college is closed shall notify the students by e-mail and notice in the course learning management system instance of their expectations for completion of the activity. When making such a decision, the faculty member should consider the fact that the conditions causing the closure may prevent students from accessing the technology necessary to connect to the course activity (e.g., students who do not have Internet access at home or whose access may be disrupted by the severe weather).

If the college is closed for more than two days, it may become necessary to adjust the academic calendar as described in [TCC Policy 2106 \(Disposition of Classes for Emergency Shutdown of the College\)](#). The Vice President for Academic Affairs & Chief Academic Officer, in consultation with the academic deans, shall make a recommendation to the college president.

5. Definitions

Designated Personnel: exempt and non-exempt employees who are required to work during an authorized closing because their positions have been designated as essential to college operations during emergencies. (Designated employees may be required to work during times they are not regularly scheduled to work.)

6. References

TCC Crisis and Emergency Plan (distributed on need-to-know basis)

[TCC Policy 2106 \(Disposition of Classes for Emergency Shutdown of the College\)](#)

[TCC Policy 3101 \(Alternative Work Arrangements\)](#)

[Virginia DHRM Policy 1.25 \(Hours of Work\)](#)

[Virginia DHRM Policy 1.35 \(Emergency Closings\)](#)

[Virginia DHRM Policy 1.60 \(Standards of Conduct\)](#)

7. Review Periodicity and Responsibility

The Vice President for Administration & Chief Financial Officer shall review this policy at the anniversary of its approval and, if necessary, recommend revisions.

8. Effective Date and Approval

This policy is effective upon its approval by the College President on May 16, 2022.

Policy Approved:

Procedure Developed:

Dr. Marcia Conston
President

Heather Hardiman
Vice President for Administration
& Chief Financial Officer

9. Review and Revision History

The initial version of this policy was approved July 6, 2001.

| Revision | Description | Date Approved |
|----------|---|-------------------|
| 1 | Reflects re-write of the policy and adds a procedure to describe the college's process for deciding and announcing weather-related and other modifications to college or campus operations. | September 5, 2013 |
| 2 | Reflects updated position titles. Reflects revisions to the decision-making responsibilities and removes calling tree. | May 16, 2022 |