

Chancellor's Memorandum

**CM-51 – Emergency Closure Policy & Procedures for Weather-Related and Other Events**

Initially Issued: CM-51, June 15, 2006 & CM-64, July 11, 2017, hereby incorporated & superseded  
Last Revised: June 9, 2026  
Monitoring Unit: Office of Property & Facilities

**I. PURPOSE**

This policy is intended to provide guidance to all LSU Health Sciences Center at New Orleans (LSUHSC-NO) faculty, staff, students, patients, and visitors on procedures in anticipation of and in response to severe weather events including but not limited to hurricanes, tornadoes, flooding, or other adverse weather events. This policy applies to all LSUHSC-NO divisions and units including but not limited to schools, clinical operations, business and administrative offices, centers of excellence, and institutes, and to all LSUHSC-NO faculty, employees, students, patients, and visitors to campus facilities.

This policy includes separate sections specific to Hurricanes, Flooding, and Tornadoes, which are further detailed in the [LSUHSC-NO Emergency Response Plan](#).

Additional information related to adverse weather preparedness also is available through the [Louisiana Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness](#), including information about disaster preparedness, tips on developing a personal evacuation plan, maps describing the State Police contra-flow plan, and road closures. All employees and students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the information provided there.

**II. DEFINITIONS**

1. **Essential Employees**, as defined in LSUHSC-NO Human Resource Management Policy, are those designated by their applicable Dean or Vice Chancellor as those personnel who may be essential to the continued performance of their department or the protection of LSUHSC-NO assets during an emergency. The requirement for essential employees is situation dependent. All personnel classified as essential will not necessarily be required in the event of an emergency; different types of emergencies require different types of support. Accordingly, in the event of an emergency where only essential personnel are required, each Vice Chancellor and Dean, with approval from the Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance (VCAF), will determine which essential personnel are required, ensure they are properly notified, and ensure they report to their designated work site.

**III. GENERAL GUIDELINES & RESPONSIBILITIES FOR WEATHER RELATED EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

1. The Senior Vice Chancellor of LSUHSC-NO (SVC) has sole authority to activate any portion of the Weather Emergency Response Plan, and only they or their designee may order closure of all or any part of the LSUHSC-NO campus.

2. The LSUHSC-NO campus will **not** function as an evacuation site for LSUHSC-NO faculty, staff, and students, or for the general public during a severe weather event requiring campus closure. Only Essential Employees will be allowed access to the campus once a state of emergency or weather-related closure has been declared.

3. At least once annually, each unit (department, division, center, institute, school, etc.) should review and update their Business Continuity & Disaster Recovery Plans, designate their Essential Employees as needed, and take other appropriate preparatory steps to ensure safety and continuity of operations in the event of a weather emergency. See the [LSUHSC-NO Emergency Response Plan](#) for additional information and guidance. As a part of this planning each unit should update phone trees for notifying faculty, staff and students in their respective schools, departments, units, and areas.

4. The Assistant Vice Chancellor for Property and Facilities (AVCPF) is designated as the Incident Commander for weather-related emergencies and has the authority to implement the Weather Emergency Response Plan upon direction of the SVC. The AVCPF is responsible for maintaining Hurricane Preparedness Procedures to minimize the impact of flooding and high winds to LSUHSC-NO campus and facilities, incorporated by reference into the LSUHSC-NO Emergency Response Plan.

5. The Assistant Vice Chancellor for Information Technology (AVCIT) is responsible for maintaining an Information Systems Disaster Recovery Plan, incorporated by reference into the LSUHSC-NO Emergency Response Plan.

6. The Department of Animal Care, in accordance with the standards of AAALAC International, is responsible for maintaining an Animal Care Emergency Situation Response Plan. The Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (VCAA) or their designee is responsible for activating this Plan once a state of emergency or weather-related campus closure has been declared.

7. The Executive Policy Group (EPG) is a specifically designated group of personnel selected by the SVC to serve as an executive advisory team for all weather-related emergencies and is responsible for managing all external and internal communications before, during, and immediately after a weather-related emergency, including the dissemination of communications to the LSUHSC-NO Emergency Web site, text messages, mass emails, social media, and statewide radio and television.

8. The Emergency Response Team (ERT) is a specifically designated group of essential personnel selected by the SVC or their designee from University Police, Facility Services, Information Technology, and Animal Care who come to campus during a mandated closure to assess all operational and physical assets under their respective areas of authority. Members of the ERT often function on the Shutdown and Startup Teams mentioned below.

10. The Shutdown Team is a specifically designated group of personnel selected by the SVC or their designee from University Police, Facility Services, Auxiliary Enterprises, Information Technology, and Animal Care and is charged with the orderly shutdown of mechanical and electrical systems, elevators, I.T. systems and networks, access control systems, parking systems, care of animals, and securing property and facilities associated with a mandated campus closure.

11. The Startup Team is a specifically designated group of personnel selected by the SVC or their designee from University Police, Facility Services, Auxiliary Enterprises, Information Technology, and Animal Care and is charged with the orderly startup of mechanical and electrical systems, elevators, I.T. systems and networks, access control systems, parking systems, care of animals, and startup of property and facilities associated with a campus reopening.

#### **IV. PERSONNEL POLICY GUIDELINES FOR WEATHER RELATED EMERGENCIES**

1. To ensure emergency calling trees are current, all employees and students must provide their supervisor with updated personal contact information annually or as changes occur.
2. Unless otherwise notified by their supervisor, all faculty and staff with clinical duties have a professional obligation to be available for work during periods of adverse weather conditions.
3. Essential Employees are required to report to their designated work site during their appointed work schedule even if the campus has been closed due to weather-related conditions. A failure to report to work will be considered an unauthorized absence. Essential Employees are not authorized to leave their work duties due to weather-related conditions or the activation of any phase of the Weather Emergency Response Plan without specific approval of their department head or supervisor.
4. During a weather-related emergency, the following personnel guidelines apply:
  - a. In accordance with PM-20, Leave Policies for Academic and Unclassified Employees and Classified Personnel, when the SVC determines that the existence of certain conditions require closure of the campus or a specific part thereof, an official closure declaration will be issued. The SVC also may grant special leave to those affected employees.
  - b. Classified employees who are required to work through a weather-related emergency closure will be paid in accordance with Civil Service rules.
  - c. If special leave is not granted for the entire closure and/or an employee requires additional time beyond the amount of special leave granted, that time will be charged to annual leave, sick leave, leave without pay, or other leave as appropriate.
  - d. Employees leaving work or not appearing for work without supervisory approval will be denied special leave and will be charged either leave without pay or annual leave for all workdays until their return, as determined by their supervisor.
  - e. Those Essential Employees assigned to work locations other than the main Downtown Campus and the School of Dentistry will follow those location schedules as directed by those in charge of the facility.
  - f. Essential Employees on vacation, sick leave or other approved leave, at the time of the declared weather-related emergency, are expected to return to work to fulfill their roles if it is feasible for them to do so or unless otherwise approved by their supervisor.
  - g. In the event the LSUHSC-NO campus closes in anticipation of an approaching hurricane, all students and LSUHSC-NO personnel (other than members of the Shutdown Team) MUST vacate campus NOT LATER than (six) 6 hours in advance of the mandated campus closure time.

#### **V. GUIDELINES FOR PROTECTION OF THE RESEARCH ENTERPRISE**

1. In the event of a weather-related or other emergency which could disrupt the biomedical research enterprise, plans should be developed and advance action should be taken to protect those vital materials and activities including at a minimum the steps outlined below.
2. Faculty are encouraged to establish redundant/back-up repositories for critical samples and tissue banks with colleagues at other institutions or at commercial biorepositories and should not rely solely on LSUHSC-NO back-up generators or other mechanical systems to protect their research.
3. Each Department or Center must generate an inventory of critical equipment (including dewars) to be placed on emergency circuits with exact location and an indication of either "essential" and "expendable" priority

status.

4. To supplement the LSUHSC-NO campus stand-by power, portable liquid nitrogen dewars equipped with casters will be used as a means of cryostorage for critical reagents and specimens. Departments and Centers should ensure that adequate liquid nitrogen is available to fully charge these dewars prior to a weather-related emergency.

## **VI. GUIDELINES FOR HURRICANE WEATHER-RELATED EVENTS**

1. The SVC will monitor potential hurricane weather-related impacts on campus and will take certain steps at 72, 48, 36, and 24 hours in advance of projected onset of tropical force strength winds, with input from the EPG and the AVCPF. The SVC has sole discretion to activate the LSUHSC-NO Hurricane Response Plan which will trigger certain additional unit-level responsibilities and actions, as outlined in the [LSUHSC-NO Emergency Response Plan](#).

2. The SVC may issue a campus Hurricane Watch at 48-72 hours in advance of projected onset of tropical force strength winds, triggering additional unit-level responsibilities and actions, as outlined in the [LSUHSC-NO Emergency Response Plan](#).

3. The SVC may issue a campus Hurricane Warning and campus closure at 36-48 hours in advance of projected onset of tropical force strength winds, triggering units to release non-essential employees, secure work areas, and send Essential Employees to their designated work areas in addition to other unit-level responsibilities and actions, as outlined in the [LSUHSC-NO Emergency Response Plan](#).

4. If a campus closure has been issued by the SVC in conjunction with a Hurricane Warning or otherwise, all LSUHSC-NO students and non-essential employees must vacate campus no later than six (6) hours prior to announced time of closure. The LSUHSC-NO campus will not function as an evacuation site for LSUHSC-NO faculty, staff, or students, or for the general public, during a weather event that requires closure of the campus.

## **VII. GUIDELINES FOR CAMPUS FLOODING EVENTS**

1. Flash floods can strike any time and any place with little or no warning. Measures must be taken to mitigate the risk to life and property in the event of flooding.

2. The Executive Director, Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) is responsible for informing the SVC and AVCPF of potentially dangerous weather conditions including possible flooding. If the SVC or their designee determines action is required to protect life and property as a result of potential flooding, they will determine whether a closure or a shelter-in-place order is required for all or part of the LSUHSC-NO campus.

3. At the discretion and direction of the AVCPF, with approval of the SVC or their designee, the emergency operations center may be activated, and all or part of the campus may be closed, or a Shelter in Place directive may be issued until the flooding danger has passed. The AVCPF will keep the SVC and EPG informed of flood preparation actions, assess the campus for damage after the flooding event, and inform the SVC when facilities are ready to be reoccupied.

4. Facility Services and University Police may take action in the event of potential flooding in any campus facility to secure it and protect life and property from flood impact.

## VIII. GUIDELINES FOR TORNADO RELATED WEATHER EVENTS

1. The National Weather Service (NWS), a component of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), issues public watches and warnings in the event of severe weather events with potential for tornadoes. Watches and warnings issued to the public are based on different criteria. State, parish, and local government entities also issue tornado watches and warnings.
2. LSUHSC-NO mid-and high-rise facilities are designed not to collapse under wind loads associated with tornadoes; however, windows, cladding and roofs can incur damage and the main hazard from a tornado is broken glass from a window or flying debris entering through a window. Thus, preparedness and standard procedures as provided herein are vital to ensuring personal safety.
3. All LSUHSC-NO community members are advised to practice a tornado drill at least once annually (following the procedures of items 5-9 below), know where they will go in the event a Tornado Warning is issued, and have a pre-determined meeting location established with colleagues, friends and family to connect after an incident has occurred.
4. When LSUHSC-NO campuses are at risk of a tornado, identified through an NWS warning or watch, notification will be provided through the various LSUHSC-NO emergency communications systems.
5. If a Tornado Watch is issued, review applicable emergency plans, check supplies, confirm safe room/location, and prepare to act quickly if a Tornado Warning is issued.
6. If a Tornado Warning is issued:
  - a. Immediately move to a refuge area on a lower floor, away from windows, in the central part of the building. Recommended tornado refuge areas across campus buildings are listed below in VIII.9.
  - b. Move out of buildings at the School of Dentistry (Asset Management and Facility Services warehouses, shops and powerhouse) and into the main buildings on the Dental School campus.
  - c. Avoid first floor lobbies with glass doors and windows and be aware that broken glass from atriums could impact lower floors.
  - d. Do not use elevators.
  - e. Close doors to offices, labs and classrooms with windows to protect against flying debris. Close all other doors, including main corridors, making sure they latch.
  - f. If possible, shelter under something sturdy.
  - g. Share notification with others and assist anyone with disabilities, if possible.
  - h. Stay indoors until the threat has passed and an all-clear message or notification from an authorized LSUHSC-NO source has been distributed.
7. If someone is injured or there is building damage, immediately notify LSUHSC-NO University Police by phone (504-568-8999), through the [LSU Shield app](#), or by sending u-Tip alert text alert to 50911 and begin your message with LSUHSC followed by a space. Provide the location and nature of the injury or damage.
8. Immediately exit a building that smells of natural gas or chemical fumes, and do not tour damaged areas or enter damaged buildings.

9. If you are caught outdoors and receive a text alert or email that a tornado may be approaching campus, seek shelter in a sturdy building or take cover in a ditch or other low-lying area. Do not call 911 unless you require immediate emergency assistance.

10. LSUHSC-NO Designated Tornado Refuge Areas:

- Center for Advanced Learning and Simulation (CALs)
  - Stairwells and restrooms on lower floors.
  - Avoid the grand entrance stairwell as it has windows
- Clinical Education Building (1542 Tulane)
  - Stairwell 5 on lower floors.
  - Avoid Stairwells 4, 3, and 1 as they have windows
  - First floor auditorium and restrooms
- Residence Hall
  - Stairwells on lower floors
- Resource Center Building
  - Stairwells and restrooms on lower floors
  - First and second floor rooms without windows
- Human Development Center
  - First floor auditorium and restrooms
  - Classroom 101
  - Avoid the stairwells as they have windows
- Medical Education Building
  - Stairwells and restrooms on lower floors
  - Lecture rooms A and B
- Mervin L. Trail Clinical Sciences Research Building
  - Stairwells on lower floors
  - 3rd and 4th floor hallways and interior offices
- Lions Eye Center
  - Stairwells and restrooms on lower floors
  - 2nd and 3rd floor hallways and interior offices
  - Avoid the exterior stairwell as it has exposure to windows
- Allied Health / Nursing Building
  - Stairwells and restrooms on lower floors
  - Auditoriums A, B and C
  - 2nd floor elevator lobby
- School of Dentistry Advanced Clinical Care and Clinical Research Building
  - Stairwells on first and second floors
  - 2nd floor interior hallways and rooms with no exposure to windows
- School of Dentistry Clinic Building
  - Stairwells on lower floors
  - Interior hallways and offices, elevator lobbies and waiting rooms on 2nd, 3rd and 4th floors.
  - 5th floor interior hallways and rooms with no exposure to windows
- School of Dentistry Admin Building
  - Stairwells on lower floors
  - 2nd floor interior offices and hallways with no exposure to windows

- 3rd floor interior offices
- Seton Building
  - Stairwells and restrooms on lower floors