

OPENING MMU CAMPUSES & BUILDINGS IN SEVERE WEATHER

POLICY & PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this policy is to provide a reasonable and organized method of maintaining a safe environment for the students and staff of Manchester Metropolitan University during severe weather conditions, supported by an effective communications plan.

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1 PUBLIC SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS AND COMMUNICATION

1.1 Overview

- The purpose of this policy is to provide a safe environment, prevent accidents, enable effective access to property and use available resources, and to maintain an appropriate level of University operations during episodes of severe weather.
- The policy is driven by the needs of our multi-campus communities rather than the particular needs of individuals. Each individual is responsible for deciding if weather conditions are safe for his/her travel.
- The University's response to a given situation will take into consideration the conditions on each campus and in the immediate region. The Head of Security & Business Continuity (HoS&BC), or nominee, will gather information from on duty personnel, National and Local Weather Service bulletins, the Emergency Services and other major bodies where possible, regarding conditions on different campuses and the surrounding environment,

and specifically seek information affecting access to the campuses of the University.

- During severe weather conditions, the University will deploy its resources to maintain access for police, fire and emergency vehicles and to those areas which are considered essential for the safety and wellbeing of staff, students and visitors on campuses and in particular those living on campus. These areas will be cleared first.
- During severe conditions, the Director of Estates in conjunction with the HoS&BC will assess the severity of weather conditions and analyse data from the National and Local Weather Service and other emergency services. This assessment will result in a recommendation as to the operational status of the University, based on the level of weather emergency that exists and the status of services on campus(es).
- The Director of Estates, will communicate the recommendation to the Vice-Chancellor or his/her nominee (one of the Deputy Vice-Chancellors) with a view to reaching a decision by 5:30 am (if at all possible) on the course of action for each campus. The desire is to maintain the uninterrupted operation of the University, where it is safe to do so. If operations in one segment of the University are suspended, eg classes cancelled, other University operations may also be suspended, with the exception of essential services, eg security, food service in residence halls.
- The Director of Estates will immediately request Marketing, Communications & Development to set in motion the Communications Routine set out in Appendix A to inform the University community of any disruption to normal campus operations and provide updates to the University website. Students and staff will be encouraged to visit the University website whenever severe weather conditions indicate the possibility of closure.
- The decision(s) will be reviewed during the day taking account of forecast for the following 24-hour period.
- Departments that provide essential services, regardless of weather conditions (eg management and security of Halls of Residence), need to identify/inform those personnel that are considered "essential" to that function.
- Reminders of the policy and process should take place at least annually. Conducting practice or mock drills of the notification plan may occur periodically.

1.2 Health & Safety

1.2.1 Suspension of operations during the day

The University will suspend operations and services only in extreme circumstances to minimize adverse impact on students and staff. Members of the University community are advised to use common sense regarding safety and travel to campus during severe weather.

If the decision to suspend operations on a campus is made during a workday, Deans, Directors and Department Heads will be notified by the Director of Services, or nominee, and asked to pass along information to staff and students in the building(s) under their

care, in addition to the communications plan shown in Appendix A.

Deans, Directors and Department Heads should identify University facilities essential to the health and safety of the University which must remain operational even under extreme weather conditions, and notify affected employees of their responsibilities. Special transportation arrangements may have to be considered for employees in those areas.

1.2.2 Whole day closures

If a decision is made to suspend all or part of operations and services on a campus or campuses due to extreme conditions, every effort will be made to provide information on the University website by 6 am on the day of the emergency. Announcements about the operating status of the University will be updated periodically on the web site during inclement weather conditions. A campus closure information line 0161 247 6000 will be established to enable members of the MMU community without home access to the web to call in for basic information. A menu will be set up on the line enabling callers to select a specific campus.

2 DEFINITIONS OF WEATHER/SNOW CONDITIONS AND EMERGENCIES

In reaching a recommendation to inform the decision of the Vice-Chancellor, the Head of Security, or nominee, will assess conditions under the following classifications.

2.1 Class 1 Emergency

This classification is used when the situation requires additional resources beyond those normally scheduled. Travel is possible but difficult in some areas. Public transport is still functioning. The safety of people on campus is minimally threatened by the conditions. Essential and emergency resources are readily accessible.

2.2 Class 2 Emergency

This classification is used when the situation requires more resources than are routinely available. In snow storms, travel is generally difficult and snow removal cannot keep pace with snowfall. Icy conditions, where traction and vehicle stability are seriously impaired, may qualify for this level of alert. Public transport will be operating at a reduced level and certain services may have ceased. Walking and cycling may be impaired or unsafe for certain members of the community as indicated by a recognized authority such as the National/Local Weather Service. Conditions such as black ice, high winds, poor visibility and extremely low chill factors may be present. The safety of people on campus is not overtly threatened unless they are acting outside the range of sensible behavior. Essential and emergency resources may be delayed in reaching campus because of the current conditions.

2.3 Class 3 Emergency

This classification applies to situations where snow removal has stopped or is seriously impaired. All public transport will have ceased. The National/Local Weather Service or other recognized authority has declared the storm a severe winter storm or extreme

weather incident at any time of year. Travel of any sort is dangerous. External resources to support the normal operation of the campus may not be available. Health and life safety may be threatened because essential and emergency resources are at maximum capacity. Under these circumstances, normal services and operations of the University are suspended and only essential services will be provided.

3 ACTION INDICATED BY THE EMERGENCY CLASSIFICATIONS

These classification levels provide a mechanism for evaluating weather conditions that may generate abnormal demands on the University community and its resources. Class 1 would not warrant the declaration of a weather/snow emergency and normal campus operations will continue. Increased staffing levels and resources may be brought in. This includes bringing in on-call staff and equipment.

Class 2 may warrant the closure of certain operations, services or areas of a campus, because academic staff have been unable to reach campus or operational staffing levels may have reduced. Marketing & Communications may issue specific information about the status of University classes and operations to students/staff with PEEPs. Consideration for transportation needs of essential staff may be necessary

In situations where the assessment is at Class 3, conditions will be beyond the resources available despite continuous efforts to address weather-related problems. This may include situations where the weather is clearing but the streets and car parks on campus and or the city/town are impassable. Lectures will have been cancelled, non-essential buildings closed and only facilities essential to the health and safety of the University will remain operational. Under this classification only emergency and essential-services personnel, as identified by the Deans, Directors, and Departmental Heads, need to report to work.

In the event of campus services and operations being suspended, a specific time frame for the suspension will be included in media information issued by Marketing, Communications & Development. This could include a late opening schedule for classes and administrative services or an early release for students and/or faculty and staff.

4 INFORMING DECISION-MAKING

Security staff will confer hourly, by radio or mobile phone, during such emergency conditions to evaluate if safe access to campus can be reinstated using criteria such as:

- Estimating time required to make safe access available to the campus
- Changing weather conditions
- Wind speed
- Rate of precipitation
- Temperature extremes
- Equipment status
- Utility problems or failures
- Surrounding road conditions external to the campus

- Advice from emergency services
- Recommendations by local government officials

This information will be given to the Head of Security & Business Continuity (HoS&BC) or nominee, through the shift supervisor, no later than 4 am on any regularly scheduled business day for the University.

The HoS&BC in conjunction with the Director of Estates will review severe weather plans when weather conditions are forecast to occur within the following 24 hour period.

5 GRITTING AND SNOW REMOVAL

The winter risk period usually runs from the 1st October until 31st March with a low risk period from 1st October until 12th November and 18th March to the end of April. Monitoring of weather information and data will take place throughout the whole period.

Property Services holds overall responsibility for the winter maintenance service but works closely with Facilities Management and Security.

At Crewe there are defined processes in place which work and are effective, as long as they are reviewed yearly nothing need change.

We will operate an automatic gritting service that is triggered by Met Office reports at 0 degrees. In Manchester we will use our current outsourced grounds contractor (Peter Ashley Ltd) who will supply the necessary material and machinery. The contractor will also take full responsibility for any insurance claims that result in the areas they have treated.

Facilities Management have a key role to play in keeping areas that machinery cannot treat such as the front of buildings and steps etc.

The HoS&BC will provide regular updates to Marketing, Communications & Development relating to conditions on the different campuses to enable updates to the communications plan.

6 CAR PARKING ARRANGEMENTS & RESTRICTIONS DURING WEATHER EMERGENCIES

The University is not resourced to provide assistance to vehicles stuck in snow unless they impair snow removal operations.

Certain areas may be barricaded during snow removal operations by Facilities staff. The snow-removal team will be responsible for erecting barricades, will keep barricade areas to a minimum and remove any which may create a hazard.

During weather emergencies, the Car Parking Office will suspend enforcement of parking regulations in designated areas to allow snow removal personnel and essential staff to park their vehicles. Any personal vehicles that block operations or unauthorized cars parking in these designated areas risk being ticketed or having the vehicle removed. Non-essential employees parking in cleared parking spaces designated for essential employees may be

towed.

In situations assessed at Class 1, staff with vehicles blocking emergency operations (eg snow removal) will be requested to relocate them to avoid them being removed at the owner's expense.

In situations assessed at Class 2, vehicles blocking emergency routes (ie stuck in snow) will be removed by tow if necessary. All available resources used for emergency management (ie snow removal) will be utilized or scheduled.

7 SNOW ROUTES

A list of all the main and emergency routes at the Manchester campuses has been agreed with Property Services which designates areas to the respective responsibilities of Facilities Management and the external contractor. These have been agreed with and circulated to all the Facilities Managers.

Appendix A SEVERE WEATHER COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

1 Overview of responsibilities

Following communication about closures from the Director of Estates, or nominee, the Director of Marketing, Communications and Development will arrange updates to the MMU homepage, primary Twitter and Facebook accounts, provide the content for an all staff email and contact the media. If the Director of Marketing, Communications and Development is not available to contact the media and update the above strands, the Marketing Manager will handle these actions. The Press and Publicity Officer will serve as backup if the above two are unavailable.

Each office responsible for an action listed in the checklist below should nominate a primary responsibility and backup person designated to carry out the steps outlined.

All individuals involved in this process should keep the necessary information to hand, both in offices and at home, to carry out their assigned duty.

2 Action checklist

- Action 1: Prepare the content for communication under all the actions noted below and provide to nominated leads for each action
 - Responsible Office: Marketing, Communications and Development
- Action 2: Update the MMU campus information line 0161 247 6000
 - Responsible Office: IT Services: Helpdesk x 4646 (24/7)
- Action 3: Place message on MMU's homepage
 - Responsible Office: Marketing, Communications and Development

- Action 4: Contact broadcast media
 - Responsible Office: Marketing, Communications and Development
- Action 5: Distribute e-mail to all staff, non-university employees who work on-campus, off-campus program employees, and other relevant MMU stakeholders
 - Responsible Office: Marketing, Communications and Development
- Action 6: Distribute a message to all students on the student portal homepage
 - Responsible Office: Marketing, Communications and Development
- Action 7: Contact the main desk in each residential hall and have the person on duty post notices and notify appropriate hall staff
 - Responsible Office: Security Services/Residential Facilities Managers
- Action 8: Distribute a message on main Twitter and Facebook accounts
 - Responsible Office: Marketing, Communications and Development
- Action 9: Distribute relevant details to all Facilities non desk-based staff
 - Responsible Office: Estates & Facilities Business Support Services

3 Communications during a power failure

- Utilise mobile phones if necessary
 - Responsible Office: all relevant staff
- Establish a command centre at the control room in Cambridge Halls South in Security Services where radios and auxiliary power are available
 - Responsible Office: Security Services
- Prepare a media contact folder with phone numbers, appropriate messages, and instructions to be housed at the command centre that can be used by the person on-duty in the event others cannot travel to the centre.
 - Responsible Office: Marketing, Communications and Development