

Emergency Closing Policy

(updated 11/25/09)

Emergency Closing Policies

This is a reminder that the Governor is the only person who has the authority to close the college. However, the cancellation of classes is a campus decision. Campus Emergency Closing Procedures from the College Handbook are outlined below.

490.01 EMERGENCY CLOSING POLICIES

Notification of the campus and the public

When severe weather conditions, power failures or other emergencies force the closing of the SUNY Cortland campus, the College president will contact the provost and the director of public relations to disseminate information about the closing to both the internal and external publics. The provost is responsible for contacting a) the university police, b) the campus switchboard, c) the Graduate Studies Office and d) the Child Care Center. The provost also will send an e-mail to inform the campus community. Cancellation of classes held on campus also applies to online classes (ASYNCH).

The public relations director is responsible for contacting the Central New York media. The following radio and television stations will be notified:

- Cortland: WIII, WSUC
- Homer: WXHC
- Ithaca: WHCU, WYXL, WQNY, WNYN
- Norwich: WCHN, WKXZ, WZOZ, WBKT
- Owego: WEBO
- Syracuse: WSYR, WHEN, WYYY, WBBS, WWHT, WPHR, WNDR, WNTQ, WSEN, WFBL, WSTM-TV Ch. 3, WTVH-TV Ch.5, WIXTTV Ch. 9, News 10 Now
- Waterloo: WNYR, WGVA, WLLW, WAUB, WSWF, WCGR
- Binghamton: WBNF, WHWK, WWYL, WAAL, WSKG, WSQX, WBNG, WBXI

The public relations director will be responsible for posting a scrolling message on the SUNY Cortland official Web site. The content of that message will be pre-approved by the president. In addition to the public relations director, the emergency message may be posted by the director of publications and electronic media, the Web manager or the senior programmer analyst in administrative computing services.

In the case of weather-related campus closing, the public relations director will activate the NY-Alert mass notification. An alert will be disseminated via campus IP phones, cell-phone text

messages and campus e-mail to those students, faculty and staff who have registered their contact information. The associate public relations director or the university police may activate the system in the absence of the public relations director.

For all non-weather-related emergencies, the university police will activate the NY-Alert system. In those instances, the modes of distribution, depending upon the type of emergency, may extend to include cell phone calls and the use of a campus-wide loudspeaker and siren system.

The State of New York has a number of personnel policies that are put into effect at times of emergency situations, such as severe weather conditions or a breakdown in plant operations. It is important that members of the SUNY Cortland staff are aware of these policies so that they know what is expected of them in terms of reporting for work, conducting classes, leaving early and crediting leave time.

The following information concerning state regulations applies to members of the classified staff, professional and teaching staff, and management-confidential. Faculty members should particularly note the reference to class scheduling in item number five.

1. The only person authorized to close the College is the governor of New York State. It will, therefore, be an extreme condition before the College will be closed because of weather conditions. If an employee is unable to report to work because of weather conditions, the time off must be charged to leave credits, even though local ordinances regarding travel are enacted. Staff members who are essential to such operations of the College should make every effort to report (see number six for definitions of essential personnel).
2. Severe weather conditions during the working day may cause some employees to request permission from supervisors for early departure. Supervisors, however, are responsible for the continued functioning of offices and departments unless the president or his designee authorizes otherwise. Early departure must be charged to employee leave credits (vacation, personal leave or compensatory time) and the accrual charge slips should be made out before departure. Individual building administrators are **not** authorized to close buildings under such conditions.
3. Occasionally, weather conditions may deteriorate so severely that the president or his designee may seek authority from the Governor's Office to close the facility. If authorization is obtained and employees are then directed to leave, the employee is not required to charge the absence to leave credits. This authorized leave may also be obtained during emergency situations such as those resulting from power failures and heating plant breakdowns.
4. There may be instances of planned shutdown for physical plant purposes such as major electrical, heating plant, or water system repairs. Personnel affected by this work will be given proper advance notification via the President's Office. Employees will be invited to use appropriate accruals, relocated, or be given an accommodation to work.
5. Since a majority of the College's undergraduate student population resides on campus, it is unlikely that undergraduate courses would be canceled because of weather conditions. Teaching faculty should meet classes even though faced with weather problems in

getting to the campus. However, many graduate and adult undergraduate students commute to Cortland for late afternoon and evening classes. When weather causes dangerous traveling conditions, the College may take steps to cancel classes and appropriate announcements will be made through a number of radio stations in the Cortland-Homer-Ithaca-Syracuse-Waterloo-Binghamton-Norwich area. Courses at the 500-level will not be canceled since many undergraduates are enrolled. The Mohawk Valley Graduate Center, due to its location in Utica, may experience different weather conditions compared to Cortland. In the case of severe weather conditions in the Utica area, the College may take steps to cancel classes offered at the center.

6. "Essential personnel" during emergency campus closings is defined according to the nature of the emergency. In all instances, the lists included below may be expanded by the appropriate vice president based on the particular situation:

On-campus emergencies (weather related) - Essential personnel include university police, heating plant staff and all other physical plant employees (unless otherwise directed by supervisor).

On-campus emergencies (non-weather related) - Essential personnel include university police, heating plant staff and Customer Service Center staff.

Non-campus emergencies (when students are in residence) - Essential personnel include university police, heating plant staff, Customer Service Center staff, residence hall directors and ASC staff.

Non-campus emergencies (when students are not in residence) - Essential personnel include university police and heating plant staff (except during summer). Physical plant staffing goes to weekend mode.