Purpose
To establish an inclement weather/emergency conditions policy.

Background
Chapter 230 of the Wisconsin Statutes contains specific information about instances in which institutions may be closed. This operational policy provides University of Wisconsin System (UWS) institutions with inclement weather and emergency conditions policies that are similar to the policies set forth in Wis. Stat. § 230.35(5)(c) and Wisconsin Human Resources Handbook Chapter 736. The University of Wisconsin System UPS Operational Policy GEN 15: Inclement Weather/Emergency Conditions was implemented July 1, 2015.

Policy
In accordance with Chapter 36, and delegated authority from the Board of Regents and the UW System President, the Chancellor of UW-River Falls has the authority to cancel classes, close all or part of the institution to the public, or completely close all or part of the institution to the public and employees. While the decision rests with the chancellor, the effect on the university community of completely closing the institution makes it preferable to ensure that UW-River Falls remains open to all staff, if at all possible, even where cancellation of classes or public events is necessary. UW-River Falls employees who are unable to reach campus due to inclement weather but who are able to work remotely may make arrangements to do so in accordance with their supervisor.

When inclement weather or emergency conditions exist, every effort will be made to keep UW-River Falls open and operating as normal, as there are numerous vital services that must be maintained such as security services, food services for residential students, power plant operations, snow removal, etc. However, where the health and safety of students, employees or the public would be placed at risk, or conditions prevent the normal operation or services of UW-River Falls, the nature and extent of any class cancellations or closure of any part of campus will be determined by the chancellor.

UW-River Falls classes will meet as usual unless there is formal notification from the Chancellor’s Office. In the absence of such notice, classes are presumed to meet as scheduled. Individuals who travel to and from campus are encouraged to use their own judgment as to whether or not such travel is wise. Should it be necessary to cancel a class due to the absence of an instructor, it is the responsibility of that instructor to notify their department head, notify their students, and develop an alternative method of covering class content, including online or remote delivery if appropriate.

A. Reporting to Work/Leave Expectations

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When UW-River Falls is not closed, employees are expected to report to work unless an absence or telework arrangement is approved by the employee’s supervisor. Employees are expected to notify their supervisor if they cannot report to work or will report late. Supervisors may require the employee to make up lost time if required for the operation of the work unit.

When the institution is closed, most employees will be directed to not report to work. Employees at work when the institution is closed will be given the option of remaining at work or leaving their worksite, operational needs permitting. This applies to all employees except employees whose continued presence is required.

Employees absent from work because of inclement weather or emergency conditions must use available vacation, accrued compensatory time, available holidays, or leave without pay to cover the absence, or they may arrange another work schedule with their supervisor. Supervisors may require the employee to make up lost time during the same workweek of the absence if required for the operation of the work unit. Employees who are not exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) overtime pay provisions (i.e., those who must be paid overtime for hours worked over 40 in a workweek) must account for each hour of scheduled duty during the workweek. FLSA exempt employees may account for their time in a manner consistent with their professional responsibilities, as approved by their supervisor.

B. Preparedness

The institution as a whole, as well as many administrative units on campus, has the responsibility to maintain an up-to-date Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP), establishing current methods, procedures, and protocols to continue to perform the University’s mission and essential functions with minimal interruption. Severe inclement weather/emergency conditions may require activation of a COOP.

Procedure

1. In the event that all or part of the campus will close and/or classes will be cancelled, the university will notify employees, students, and the public through a variety of communication methods. The primary methods for notification are: 1) UW-River Falls email listservs; 2) UW-River Falls emergency communications system (InformaCast); 3) the UW-River Falls homepage: www.uwrf.edu; 4) notification to local and Twin Cities news media; and 5) institutional social media channels.

2. A decision to delay or cancel classes scheduled during the regular Monday-Friday period will be communicated through these channels at least two hours prior to the start time for the first classes affected. If no announcement is made on these channels regarding the status of classes, the campus community should assume courses are meeting as scheduled.

3. Cancellation of class held on Saturday or Sunday is determined by the instructor. When possible, students should be notified by the instructor through the learning management system (D2L or Canvas) or other electronic communication (e-mail, text, social media) at least two hours prior to the start time of the class. It is expected that the instructor will develop an alternative method of covering class content.
University Responsibilities
Chancellor, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, and Vice Chancellor for Business and Finance

Department/Unit Responsibilities
All departments.

Authority
The UW-River Falls Chancellor issues this policy in accordance with the Administrative Policy process.

The Office of Business and Finance is responsible for the administration of this policy. Request an exception to this policy by writing to administrative-policy@uwrf.edu.

Sanctions and Appeals Process
Failure to adhere to the provisions of this policy may result in appropriate disciplinary action as provided under existing procedures applicable to students, faculty, and staff, and/or civil or criminal prosecution.

Contact
Please direct questions about this policy to administrative-policy@uwrf.edu.

Reference Links
Chapter 230: http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/230

Wis. Stat. § 230.35(5)(c): http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/230/II/35/5/c
