



# Dallas County Community College District



## **“H” Hazardous Weather ANNEX (1.0)**



# Approval and Implementation

## **Dallas County Community College District Support Annex H – Hazardous Weather**

This Emergency Operations Plan Annex is hereby approved for the Dallas County Community College District. This plan annex is effective immediately and supersedes all previous editions.

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## Authority

See Emergency Operations Plan, Authority.

## Introduction

The Hazard Annexes to the Emergency Operations Plan organize the applicable college district positions, departments, and outside support agencies into groups according to their roles in response to a pre-determined category of hazard(s) that may create a campus emergency or disaster. Outside agencies may include: governmental, non-governmental, private sector, and other volunteer resources. The Hazard Annex provides basic information for hazard-specific operations and resources which might be needed for an incident that affects Dallas County Community College District. Hazard Annexes may trigger EOC and subsequent ESF Annex activations to provide response command and control.

Hazard Annexes provide hazard-specific guidance for the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Director and ESFs in response to all activation level emergencies as outlined in the EOP. Designated department and agency resources may be requested to respond or recover from emergency incidents that affect the District. Normally, the response and recovery actions will be coordinated from the EOC as Incident or Unified Command will use the resources at the incident scene.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the Hazardous Weather Annex is to provide a hazard-specific framework for use during a weather related emergency or disaster impacting Dallas County Community College District.

## Scope

The Hazardous Weather Annex:

- Is applicable to all phases of emergency management for District impacts from hazardous weather.

## Situation

Weather related incidents have a high probability of impact at Dallas County Community College District. The District must address this hazard to aid in mitigating impacts and expediting disaster response and recovery.

## Assumptions

The District makes the following planning assumptions:

- Hazardous weather often has little to no lead time for warning.
- District resources will be quickly overwhelmed.
- Communication will be disrupted.
- Shortfalls can be expected in both support personnel and equipment.
- Local, state, and federal assistance may not be immediately available.

## Responsibilities

The Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC) or EOC Director is the primary responsible party for addressing all phases of emergency management related to hazardous weather situations. Delegation may be made for various response functions through the EOP and its ESF annexes.

## Warning Systems and Activation Criteria

The DCCCD emergency notification system is the local warning transmission system for the District and is further described in support Annex A, Warning, published under a separate cover.

### **Receiving Warnings**

The District has the following means of receiving warnings disseminated by the NWS:

1. **NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards Receivers**
2. **Television**
3. **Emergency Alert System**
4. **NWSChat**
5. **Wireless Emergency Alerts**

The NWS disseminates weather forecasts, watches, and warnings via the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Wire Service, which is a satellite communications system that broadcasts to specialized receiver terminals. NWS watches and warnings are transmitted to the State Operations Center (SOC). The SOC, as the State Warning Point, retransmits these weather messages to communities, including DCCCD, by the Texas Law Enforcement Telecommunications System and SOC e-mail distribution network. These messages are also distributed among the other reception means listed above. Some of the weather messages that are provided are:

1. Flood and flash flood watches and warnings.
2. Severe weather watches and warnings.
3. Tornado watches and warnings.
4. Winter weather watches, warnings, and advisories.

## Severe Weather Warning Activation Criteria

The DCCCD emergency notification system is not activated for every severe weather warning in the District’s service area. Some established criteria, as shown in the table below, identifies the minimum requirements for broadcasting alerts. Alerts may be issued outside of these criteria as deemed necessary by the EMC. DCCCD activation mode is dependent on impact areas. For example, a tornado warning may not trigger facility notifications if a campus will not be directly impacted, but text messages may be sent for those in the campus service area.

Weather Event	Description and Criteria
Tornadoes	<b>Tornado Warnings</b> – Tornadoes are deadly and unpredictable. Alert(s) will be issued for warnings directly affecting DCCCD locations.
High Wind	<b>Winds <math>\geq</math> 70mph</b> – These winds are considered hurricane force and can be damaging or deadly. Alert(s) may be issued when there is potential campus or service area impact.
Hail	<p><b>Hail <math>\geq</math> 2.50”</b> – Baseball size hail can be damaging or deadly. Alert(s) may be issued when there is potential campus or service area impact.</p> <p><b>Hail Any Size</b> – When any planned outdoor event is occurring (baseball, softball, student life event, etc.) Alert(s) may be issued when there is potential campus or service area impact.</p>
Flooding	<b>Flash Flood Warnings</b> – Flooding in high traffic areas leading to a campus or any area on or near campus that might affect safe travel. Alert(s) may be issued when there is potential campus or service area impact.

## **Weather Aware Notices**

The facility notification system will push automated and minimally intrusive notifications for weather events that should be monitored, but do not meet the institutional warning activation criteria. Winter weather watches, advisories, and warnings as well as severe thunderstorm watches, tornado watches, severe thunderstorm warnings, and flash flood warnings will be broadcast to the campus community through this notification method.

## [Severe Weather](#)

### **Situation**

The District's highest probability high impact hazard is that of severe weather. North Texas resides in the heart of Tornado Alley, a nickname given to an area in the southern plains of the central United States that consistently experiences a high frequency of tornadoes each year. Tornadoes in this region typically happen in late spring and occasionally the early fall, but may occur during any season (Example: December). In addition to the risk of tornadoes, the District faces threats of destructive high winds, large hail, lightning, and flooding rains.

### **Monitoring**

The District Central Dispatch Center will monitor for potential severe weather impacts with information provided from the National Weather Service and the Storm Prediction Center.

### **Severe Weather Closure Protocol**

Closure of campuses due to impending severe weather is determined based on probability of impact and forecast severity of the event. Generally, consideration for closure will only be made when The District lies within a moderate or high risk outlook area and fall within a Particularly Dangerous Situation (PDS) Tornado Watch as established by the NWS Storm

Prediction Center. Recommendations for any full or early closure will be made by the EMC to the Chancellor, Executive Vice Chancellor, and Chief of Police.

Early dismissal during regular instruction and operational hours may occur upon order of the Chief Executive Officer or designee in coordination with the Chancellor's Office. Only the Chief Executive Officer or designee in coordination with the Chancellor's Office is authorized to close, delay opening, or accelerate the end of the class day.

## **Storm Sheltering**

Upon the issuance of a warning requiring sheltering, the campus community in District facilities will shelter in the best available area of severe weather refuge. Spaces labeled as "Tornado Safer Zones" areas may not be designed as reinforced storm shelters, but have been deemed as best available areas of storm refuge. Sheltering should always occur in these areas or on the lowest level of a building in an interior room or hallway free of windows and glass when designated severe weather areas are at capacity.

## **Storm Impact and Damage Reporting**

Any storm damage or impacts to the District should be reported immediately to the EMC or activated EOC/VEOC. Basic storm impacts and damage reports from observers on the ground will be provided to the National Weather Service in real time to ensure that all relevant information to the forecast office for public warning is available. The District EMC or designee will provide preliminary damage reports from the field to the NWS Forecast Office in Ft. Worth by established communication channels. Closure of campuses or areas of a campus due to storm damage will be the responsibility of the Emergency Support Functions to the EOP as necessary. Damage to facilities shall be immediately communicated to the EOC to activate ESF 9 and direct the first search and rescue operations to pre-designated "Severe Weather Shelter" and "Severe Weather Refuge" areas.

## Inclement Weather

### **Situation**

The District is susceptible to inclement weather events that may impact travel, utility services, and, as a result, life safety.

The District Emergency Management Coordinator will monitor for potential impacts with information provided from the National Weather Service beginning 120 hours in advance (H-120) of a storm. During this time the EOC will be at Level 4: Monitoring activation.

This hazardous weather support annex section for inclement weather events is established to aid in closure or delay determinations.

Students, faculty, and staff should monitor DCCCD notifications, the college website, social media, local television, and radio stations for weather closing announcements.

### **Winter Weather Closure Protocol**

The Winter Weather Decision Support and Action Guidance below will be followed for all winter weather events impacting the District. Closure and delay determinations may also be made at the discretion of the College President outside of the decision guidance.

Most winter weather closing decisions will be made during the night prior to the impact of a weather event; however, the institution may be closed during the regular class/work day if warranted.

In most cases the Dallas County Community College District will close as a District (all locations) after evaluation by the Chancellor's Cabinet. Early dismissal during regular instruction and operational hours may occur upon order of the Chief Executive Officer or designee. Only the Chief Executive Officer or designee is authorized to close, delay

opening, or accelerate the end of the class day. Inclement Weather Alerts will only be issued by Public and Governmental Affairs.

## Winter Weather Decision Support and Action Guidance

The decision support and action guidance table is divided into 5 phases of a winter storm. Each phase occurs during a time period (H) from an hour marked window with H hour zero being the point of first weather impact.

1. H-120 to H-48 **Winter Weather Outlook Issued**
2. H-48 to H-12 **Winter Weather Watch (or Moderate Forecast Confidence)**
3. H-12 to H-3 **Winter Weather Warning or Advisory**
4. H-3 to H+1 **Winter Weather is Occurring in the Region**
5. H+1 to Conclusion **Winter Weather Event Has Severely Impacted the District**

The following table identifies each phase, required actions, and responsible parties.

NWS Issues Winter Weather Outlook (H-120 to H-48)			
Action	Responsible Actor(s)		Special Considerations
Communicate with NWS and TXDOT to obtain more information on probability and potential severity. Attend SOC briefings.	<i>Primary</i>	EMC	EOC is Active at Level 4: Monitoring.
	<i>Support</i>	NWS & TXDOT	
Communicate information from the subject matter experts to the EOC.	<i>Primary</i>	EMC	N/A
	<i>Support</i>	EOC	

Identify and communicate with organizers of planned large or outdoor events about the potential for winter weather.	<i>Primary</i>	EMC	Consider third party events scheduled to use campus facilities (UIL, High School Athletic Tournaments, etc.)
	<i>Support</i>	Athletics, Student Life, Performing Arts, Student Services, Campus Operations	
Review and check inventory of emergency supplies to address potential winter weather event.	<i>Primary</i>	Facilities	N/A
	<i>Support</i>	DCCCD Public Safety & Security, EMC	
Review notification and communication procedures for winter weather.	<i>Primary</i>	PGA (Public & Governmental Affairs)	N/A
	<i>Support</i>	EMC	

**NWS Issues Winter Weather Watch or Moderate confidence of impact to DCCCD Service Area (H-48 to H-12)**

Action	Responsible Actor(s)		Special Considerations
Initiate conversations with EOC and the Chancellor's Office to discuss possible scenarios, probability of occurrence, and potential severity of the event.	<i>Primary</i>	EMC	Can initiate conversations either in person or virtually through VEOC, email, and/or phone calls.
	<i>Support</i>	EOC	
Discuss with employees the potential for winter weather and possible actions to reduce impacts and disruption to operations	<i>Primary</i>	Department chairs and heads	N/A
	<i>Support</i>	EMC, DCCCD Public Safety & Security, and Facilities	

Initiate implementation of protective and mitigation measures to prevent or reduce possible damage to infrastructure.	<i>Primary</i>	Facilities and ITS	Will need to follow projected timeframes to complete individual protective actions.
	<i>Support</i>	DCCCD Public Safety & Security	
Initiate mitigation measures to reduce or prevent the accumulation of snow and ice on uncovered parking lots, sidewalks, and other walkways.	<i>Primary</i>	Facilities	Will need to follow projected timeframes to complete each individual action before the winter weather event.
	<i>Support</i>	DCCCD Public Safety & Security	

**NWS issues Winter Weather Warning or Winter Weather Advisory  
(H-12 to H-3)**

Action	Responsible Actor(s)		Special Considerations
Contact or monitor local ISDs and neighboring universities to discuss their operational status. Police Commanders report to the Chief of Police, who will brief concerned parties.	<i>Primary</i>	Chancellor's Office	May need to call each institution to discuss their current thinking as it will likely impact the college's staffing.
	<i>Support</i>	Local ISDs, EMC	
Attend State and local conference calls to discuss the latest winter weather information and actions taken.	<i>Primary</i>	EMC	State calls are coordinated by TDEM.
	<i>Support</i>	DCCCD Public Safety & Security	
Discuss with NWS, TXDOT, local city and county agencies as needed on the severity and timing of the winter weather event for the service area.	<i>Primary</i>	EMC	N/A
	<i>Support</i>	NWS and TXDOT	
Convene meeting (physical or virtual) to involve members of the Chancellor's Cabinet to discuss the winter weather situation, potential disruption of operations, and timeframe for making decision to possibly close campuses.	<i>Primary</i>	Chancellor's Cabinet	The decision to close a campus at a particular time should be made during this meeting, unless the severity and impacts of the possible winter weather are uncertain. Then the college should hold this decision until
	<i>Support</i>	EMC or any needed Subject Matter Experts (Ex: NWS and TXDOT)	

			the H-3 to H+1 phase of the event.
Initiate or continue implementing protection and mitigation measures to protect vulnerable infrastructure from winter weather and below-freezing temperatures.	<i>Primary</i>	Facilities	Status on the progress of these measures will be provided to the EOC or EMC to maintain situation awareness.
	<i>Support</i>	DCCCD Public Safety & Security	
Initiate or continue implementing mitigation measures to treat uncovered parking lots, sidewalks, and other walkways to reduce or prevent accumulation of ice and/or snow.	<i>Primary</i>	Facilities	Status on the progress of these measures will be provided to the EOC or EMC to maintain situation awareness.
	<i>Support</i>	DCCCD Public Safety and Security (If road, lot, or path closure is needed)	
Inform faculty of the potential impact and disruption to classes. Will need to take action according to department plans and procedures to reduce or prevent impacts and disruption.	<i>Primary</i>	Deans and Department Chairs	Consideration of creating online alternatives for assignments and testing in the event of weather impact to campuses. Prepare to activate Instructional and Operational Continuity programs has needed.
	<i>Support</i>	Department's faculty and staff	

**Winter Weather is Occurring in the Region / Neighboring Counties  
(H-3 to H+1)**

Action	Responsible Actor(s)		Special Considerations
Hold an immediate discussion to make a decision on the operational status of the college. (Partial or complete closure of campuses)	<i>Primary</i>	Chancellor's Cabinet	This action will only need to occur if a decision on campus closure was not made in the previous phase of the event.
	<i>Support</i>	PGA and EMC	
Communicate decision on operational status of college and coordinate closure or delay notifications.	<i>Primary</i>	EMC	The primary method for sending notification will be DCCCD's Notification System
	<i>Support</i>	EOC	

Contact local TV and radio stations to inform them of the DCCCD's operational status.	<b>Primary</b>	PGA	The following are media outlets that should receive information on the operational status:  -KDFW-TV (Ch. 4) -KXAS-TV (Ch. 5) -WFAA-TV (Ch. 8) -KTVT-TV (Ch. 11) -KXII-TV (Ch. 12) -KRLD 1080AM -WBAP 820AM
	<b>Support</b>		
Make information on campus closures available on the college website's weather closure page.	<b>Primary</b>	PGA	
	<b>Support</b>		
Update the main telephone number's automated message to reflect the college's operational status.	<b>Primary</b>	Marketing and Public Relations, ITS	Message will need to be consistent with current messaging from PGA.
	<b>Support</b>	PGA	
Update electronic access systems and secure mechanically locked exterior doors when closed to secure facilities when closed.	<b>Primary</b>	DCCCD Public Safety & Security	Ensure exterior doors are secure during the period the campuses are closed for inclement weather.
	<b>Support</b>	Facilities	
Communicate to staff and faculty of their option to use leave if they feel staying on campus could impact their safety.	<b>Primary</b>	Department heads and chairs	This action will only occur if conditions are beginning to affect campus and a decision to close has not been made. Faculty and staff should contact or speak with their supervisors directly to inform them of their decision.
	<b>Support</b>	EMC, and DCCCD Public Safety & Security	

Contact essential personnel to inform them that they will need to check in should the need for support efforts in addressing issues related to the winter weather event arise.	<b>Primary</b>	Department heads that are pre-identified essential personnel	
	<b>Support</b>	DCCCD Public Safety & Security	

**Winter Weather Event Has Severely Impacted the District  
(H+3 until close of event)**

Action	Responsible Actor(s)		Special Considerations
Perform damage assessments and provide information to the EOC on the extent and location of damage to infrastructure, buildings, and equipment.	<b>Primary</b>	Facilities, EMC, DCCCD Public Safety & Security	N/A
	<b>Support</b>	EOC	
Secure any buildings or areas to prevent people from entering potentially hazardous areas.	<b>Primary</b>	DCCCD Public Safety & Security	N/A
	<b>Support</b>	Facilities	
Hold virtual meetings to discuss the winter weather situation and prospects on when it will be feasible to restore operations and open campus. This meeting and decision to continue suspended operations will need to occur on each day the college is closed.	<b>Primary</b>	Chancellor's Cabinet	N/A
	<b>Support</b>	DCCCD Public Safety & Security	
Communicate with and notify the campus community of information on current operational status of the college by the early evening hours of each day the college's operations are partially or fully suspended.	<b>Primary</b>	PGA	If long-term closure is planned, then notifications should include the date range. If long-term status is unknown, then notifications should be made for daily status. If a decision is made to open the
	<b>Support</b>	EMC	

This will allow students and employees enough time to make plans and report.			next day, then a notification should be sent to the campus community to make this decision clear.
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## Terms and References

Acronyms	
<b>DCCCD</b>	Dallas Community College District
<b>EMC</b>	Emergency Management Coordinator
<b>EOC</b>	Emergency Operations or Operating Center
<b>ESF</b>	Emergency Support Function
<b>FEMA</b>	Federal Emergency Management Agency
<b>IS</b>	Independent Study (FEMA)
<b>NIMS</b>	National Incident Management System
<b>NWS</b>	National Weather Service
<b>PIO</b>	Public Information Officer
<b>SOPs</b>	Standard Operating Procedures
<b>SPC</b>	Storm Prediction Center

Definitions	
<b>Downburst</b>	A sudden rush of cool air toward ground that can impact with speeds over 70 mph and produce damage similar to that of a tornado. It usually occurs near the leading edge of the storm and may occur in heavy rain. May be referred to as <i>microburst</i> or <i>macro burst</i> .
<b>Emergency Operations Center</b>	Specially equipped facilities from which government officials exercise direction and control and coordinate necessary resources in an emergency situation.
<b>Flash Flood</b>	A flood that occurs suddenly during or shortly following heavy rain or from a sudden release of water as in a

	dam break. Small streams and creeks usually react the fastest to heavy rain and rise several feet in hours or even minutes.
<b>Freezing Rain</b>	Rain that falls onto a surface with a temperature at or below freezing.
<b>Funnel Cloud</b>	A funnel-shaped cloud extending from a towering cumulus or thunderstorm. It is associated with a rotating column of air that has condensed to form a cloud. It is not in contact the ground.
<b>NWSChat</b>	An instant messaging system utilized by NWS operational personnel to share critical warning decision expertise and other types of significant weather information essential to the NWS's mission of saving lives and property.
<b>Severe Thunderstorm</b>	A thunderstorm producing damaging winds or winds greater than 58 mph and/or hail 1 inch or greater in diameter.
<b>Sleet</b>	Ice pellets or granules of frozen rain. Sleet occurs when rain falls into a layer of air with temperatures below freezing. Sleet usually bounces when hitting a surface and does not stick, but can accumulate on roadways, creating a hazard to motorists.
<b>Standard Operating Procedures</b>	Approved methods for accomplishing a task or set of tasks. SOPs are typically prepared at the department or agency level. May also be referred to as Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs).
<b>Tornado</b>	A violently rotating column of air in contact with the ground and extending to the thunderstorm base, often seen extending from near the wall cloud. Its size may range from a few yards across to a mile wide.
<b>Weather Advisories</b>	An advisory is issued for weather that is expected to be a disruption to the normal routine and an inconvenience, but it is not expected to be life-threatening. Advisories may be issued for wind, snow,

	sleet and freezing rain, among other things. Lead-times are generally 6 to 12 hours.
<b>Weather Warning</b>	The hazard (severe thunderstorm, tornado, flash flood, winter storm, etc.) is imminent. The probability of occurrence is extremely high. Warnings are issued based on eyewitness reports or clear signatures from remote sensing devices such as Doppler radar. Lead-times for thunderstorm type events are generally 30 minutes or less. Lead-times for winter storms and river floods may up to 24 hours.
<b>Weather Watches</b>	Meteorologists have determined that conditions appear right for the development of the hazard. Watches generally cover larger areas than warnings. In the case of thunderstorms, less than 30% of the watch area may experience the hazard. However, with larger storms, such as winter storms, the entire watch area may be affected. Severe thunderstorm and tornado watches are usually issued 1 to 3 hours before the event begins. With flash floods, lead-times may be 3 to 12 hours. For winter storm watches, lead-times are usually 12 to 36 hours.