

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

POLICY NO: IV:00:03

DATE: August 24, 2004

SUPERSEDES POLICY NO: None

DATED:

SUBJECT: Inclement Weather

APPROVED: Sidney A. McPhee, President



Introduction: This policy reaffirm the MTSU's commitment to the safety of student, faculty, and staff and its recognition that many commuters must travel long distances to meet teaching, learning, and work commitments at the MTSU campus.

The primary function of MTSU is to provide a high quality instruction during the academic year. These guidelines describe how the MTSU campus will notify student, faculty, and staff if inclement or dangerous weather occurs or develops prior to and/or during the normal business day.

The determination of such conditions will be made by the Provost and Vice President for Business and Finance in consultation with Police Services and Facilities Services and will be based on definitions and announcements from the Tennessee Department of Transportation, state and local police agencies, and other public officials using data provided by local and national weather services. While the conditions in specific locales may vary and local conditions may not apply uniformly to the entire region, MTSU will endeavor to meet its dual responsibility on conducting classes and managing the safety of its students, faculty, and staff during hazardous weather conditions in the region.

General Guidelines: When the Provost and Vice President for Business and Finance make the decision to close the campus or delay the start of classes, the regional media will be notified at least two hours prior to the standard 8:00 a.m. reporting time for staff and before the start of the earliest scheduled class. The announcement will apply to all classes credit and non-credit for the period affected, that is, morning, afternoon, or evening according to the specific scripts below. The MTSU web page will also carry a message regarding the status of classes and opening of offices.

Offices at MTSU will be considered open unless the announcement specifically states that they will be closed.

Principles Governing Faculty Practices: If faculty make personal decisions to cancel classes during inclement weather, each instructor must discuss any weather-related arrangements in advance with the students preferably at the beginning of the semester.

If a faculty member cancels a class, he/she must notify students through telephone trees, email lists, instant messaging, or any other appropriate means. These arrangements, which must be approved in writing by the college dean, should appear in the course syllabus along with a statement that students may also watch/listen to local media and/or check the MTSU web page.

Faculty must also notify the departmental secretary, who will inform the dean's office. Such information is essential should students call the campus. Faculty should not ask the department secretary or other staff to telephone students. If it is after normal office hours, faculty should contact the department's and dean's offices official contact or if unable to reach them, leave a voice mail message.

The best notification strategy may be for faculty to access the MTSU's voice mail system and leave a message at their office number. If this available, students should be instructed to call the faculty member's office phone, which can be programmed with a message for students.

To assist students who travel a significant distance for classes, any such cancellation notices should be programmed, if possible, no later than two hours prior to the beginning of the class period.

Those faculty using personal web pages to communicate regularly with students should also consider including a statement about weather related cancellations or delays in all such communications.

Principles Governing Student Practices: If students notify the department offices that they are unable to travel to class because of weather conditions, faculty members should help students make up the missed work.

Principles Governing Staff Practices: With the exception of essential employees, who have been informed of their status, all other staff should follow the same instructions that apply to students. Staff should know the specific meanings of the scripts below and follow the instructions carefully. If a staff member believes that he/she is in any danger, each employee should exercise her/his own good judgment about reporting to work. However, each staff member should understand the implications of personal decisions and follow the directions provided in the Attendance Policy for Inclement Weather (Policy No. IV:07:22).

Interpreting the Various Scripts Used by Media Outlets: MTSU will do everything it can to deliver clear and concise messages to the media. The number of statements noted in previous weather policies has been reduced to a minimum: the campus is open, is closed, or will open/close at a specific time. All student, faculty, and staff are expected to familiarize themselves with the specific phrases and their meanings. The common phrases are indicated below:

1. **Campus Will Open at [time will be indicated]** – This statement applies to all but essential employees. Classes scheduled to begin prior to the designated time will be rescheduled at

another time. All afternoon and evening classes will be held. Staff should report at the designated time.

2. **Campus Will Close at [time will be indicated]** – All operations after the closing time will be terminated. All but essential staff will be authorized to leave at the time indicated.

3. **Campus is Closed. Only essential staff should report.**

Please note that some media outlets release only minimal information and may use terminology different than MTSU. Most media operators use computer systems with limited memory and often remove critical weather information after a few hours. Please pay careful attention to the broadcast media and check different outlets if you have any questions about the weather situation at the MTSU campus.

MEDIA OUTLETS OFFERING WEATHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Radio Stations

FM

WMOT-FM 89.5

AM

WSM-AM 650

WGNS-AM 1450

WLAC-AM 1510

Television

WKRN-TV Ch. 2

WSMV-TV Ch. 4

WTVF-TV Ch. 5

WZTV – Fox 17

MTSU WEB PAGE <http://www.mtsu.edu>