

## Outdoor Group Activities/Weather Hazards CO-CS-PR7

Responsible Officer: Vice President for Administration and Campus Operations

Sponsoring Department: Emergency Management

Revision Date: 05 March 2012

Errors or changes to: [aim@uta.edu](mailto:aim@uta.edu)

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### PROCEDURE OBJECTIVE

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The objective for this procedure is to ensure that event planners who hold outdoor events develop specific plans to protect attendees from severe weather hazards.

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### SCOPE

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The scope of the procedure will address actions that may be taken by event planners during the planning process to be aware of potential bad weather before, during, and after an event; what actions may be taken during an event if severe weather occurs; and what to do in the aftermath of a severe weather event.

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### RESPONSIBILITIES

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It is up to the event planner to contact The University of Texas at Arlington (UT Arlington) emergency management coordinator to review outdoor venue severe weather plans before an event. Because each outdoor event is unique, hazardous weather planning is critical to the life safety of participants.

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## PROCEDURES

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### **Section I. Before Any Event**

Before any event, the event planners should research types of weather that may occur during the particular time of year the event is scheduled. Once potential hazardous weather or conditions are identified, mitigation efforts should be included in the event planning.

### **Section II. Lightning**

In the event of weather conditions with the potential of lightning activity, careful monitoring of the weather dynamics is required. Such factors as the developing cloud patterns in the area and the lightning and thunder activity should be considered. Indicators such as the interval between sighting of lightning and the subsequent report of thunder and the cloud formations in the immediate vicinity can serve as guides for making the decision to suspend activities. An interval of five seconds between the flash of lightning and the sound of thunder indicates the lightning is about one mile away. It appears that any lightning closer than five miles without any cloud formations in the immediate area would warrant suspension of activities. In conditions where there is observable lightning and cloud cover in the immediate areas, activities should be suspended.

There is no safe place outside when thunderstorms are in the area. If thunder is heard, you are likely within striking distance of the storm. Evacuation to substantial buildings and hard-topped vehicles are safe options. A safe building is one that is fully enclosed with a roof, walls and floors, and has plumbing or wiring (excludes temporary, portable, or metal buildings).

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Lightning safety tips when assisting individuals who are outside when lightning is seen or thunder is heard, or when dark clouds are observed:

- Postpone activities promptly; do not wait for rain.
- If you cannot get to a shelter, stay away from trees.
- If you are out in a field, get to the lowest point.
- Keep an eye on the sky.
- Listen for the sound of thunder. If you can hear thunder, go to a safe shelter immediately.
- If you see or hear a thunderstorm coming or your hair stands on end, immediately suspend outside activity and go to a safe building or car.

- Avoid metal.
- Move away from a group of people.

Lightning safety tips once inside a safe building:

- Avoid contact with electrical equipment or cords.
- Avoid contact with plumbing.
- Stay away from windows and doors, and stay off porches.
- Do not lie on concrete floors and do not lean against concrete walls.

UT Arlington has a lightning prediction system in place to monitor outdoor activity venues, e.g., Maverick Stadium, Clay Gould Ball Park, Intramural fields, MAC, etc. The system is monitored and activates automatically to warn participants of the potential for lightning. Specific actions are outlined by the UT Arlington Athletic Department, Maverick Stadium, and Campus Recreation as to what to tell participants to do, where to go, etc.

### **Section III. Wind/Downburst**

Power outages may occur with as little as twenty-five mile per hour winds and can up-root trees with shallow roots. If an event has tents, be cautious of the stability of the structure. Wind can pose a hazard to participants or spectators, and if the event planner determines that winds pose a life safety issue, then activities should be suspended.

### **Section IV. Hail**

Most hailstorms develop in the presence of cumulonimbus clouds and other severe weather phenomena. Hailstones can cause serious damage, notably to automobiles, aircraft, skylights, glass-roofed structures, and people. Hailstorms rarely last more than 15 minutes.

Some safety tips for hailstorms that an event planner should know or may want to pass on to participants are as follows:

- If you are outside, get inside.
- If you cannot find shelter, at least find something to protect your head.
- Stay away from windows.

### **Section V. Excessive Rainfall**

Excessive rains occur within a plume of air with high amounts of moisture are directed around a cold-core low or tropical cyclone. Flash flooding can frequently occur in of slow-moving

thunderstorms in densely populated urban environments where less plants and bodies of water are present to absorb and contain the extra water. Should excessive rainfall occur during an event, the event planner should:

- Listen to the radio or television for information.
- Be aware that flash flooding can occur. If the event site is in a low-lying area with the potential to flood, move immediately to higher ground.
- Be aware of streams, drainage channels, and other areas known to flood suddenly.
- Let participants know not to walk through moving water. Six inches of moving water can make you fall.
- Let participants know not to drive in flooded areas. If floodwaters rise around a car, abandon it. Move to higher ground.

## **Section VI. Ice Storm**

Ice storms are caused by liquid precipitation freezing on cold surfaces and leads to the gradual development of a thickening layer of ice. The accumulation of ice during the storm can be extremely destructive. Trees and vegetation can be destroyed and ice can down power lines, causing loss of heat and communication lines. Because ice storms are usually slow developing, the event planner should monitor the weather before, during, and after the event. Mitigation efforts may include sanding or salting walkways, stairways, and roads, shortening the event, or offering shuttle service to minimize the number of cars on hazardous roadways.

## **Section VII. Heat Wave**

Heat is the number one weather-related killer in the United States, resulting in hundreds of fatalities each year. On average, excessive heat claims more lives each year than floods, lightning, tornadoes, and hurricanes combined. In planning for outdoor activities during a heat wave, consider certain precautions, e.g., can the event be scheduled in the morning or evening hours when it is cooler? The event planner should offer or encourage participants to:

- Drink or have plenty of water available. Avoid alcoholic and high sugar drinks.
- Encourage participants to wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing, wear a wide-brimmed hat, sunglasses, and sunscreen.
- Provide cooling places with misting stations.

The event planner will be responsible for determining if weather conditions become a hazard to personnel at the activity. If in doubt, choose the safest alternative.

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## FORMS AND TOOLS/ONLINE PROCESSES

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N/A

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## DEFINITIONS

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**Event planner:** one who plans a festival, ceremony, competition, party, or convention. The event planner considers budgeting, establishing dates and alternate dates, selecting, and reserving the event site, acquiring permits, and coordinating transportation and parking. The event planner may also be responsible for some or all of the following, depending on the event: developing a theme or motif for the event, arranging for speakers and alternate speakers, coordinating location support (such as electricity and other utilities), arranging decor, tables, chairs, tents, event support and security, catering, police, fire, portable toilets, parking, signage, emergency plans, health care professionals, and cleanup.

**Mitigation:** the elimination or reduction of the frequency, magnitude, or severity of exposure to risks, or minimization of the potential impact of a threat or warning.

**Watch:** a watch is used when the risk of a hazardous weather or hydrologic event has increased significantly, but its occurrence, location, and/or timing is still uncertain. It is intended to provide enough lead-time so that those who need to set their plans in motion can do so.

**Warning:** a warning is issued when a hazardous weather or hydrologic event is occurring, is imminent, or has a very high probability of occurring. A warning is used for conditions posing a threat to life or property.

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## RATIONALE

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Not all severe weather events can be listed in this procedure nor all the actions one might take during such an event. It will be incumbent on the event planner to research what may be likely to occur by contacting the national weather service or UT Arlington's emergency management coordinator and use best practices to ensure the safety of participants in an outdoor event.

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## RELATED STATUTES, POLICIES, REQUIREMENTS OR STANDARDS

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UT System Administration Policies and Standards	Other Policies and Standards
None	<i>Emergency Communications</i> ( <a href="#">Procedure 7-1</a> ) <i>Tornado</i> ( <a href="#">Procedure 7-3</a> )

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## APPENDICES

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N/A

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## CONTACTS

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If you have any questions about Procedure 7-7, *Outdoor Group Activities/Weather Hazards*, contact the following departments:

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Office Name</b>	<b>Telephone Number</b>	<b>Email/URL</b>
All topics in Procedure	Emergency Management	(817) 272-0117	<a href="mailto:mohat@uta.edu">mohat@uta.edu</a>
Website access	Administrative Information Management	(817) 272-0222	<a href="mailto:aim@uta.edu">aim@uta.edu</a> <a href="http://www.uta.edu/aim">http://www.uta.edu/aim</a>

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## WEBSITE ADDRESS FOR THIS PROCEDURE

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<http://www.uta.edu/policy/procedure/7-7>