EMERGENCY CANCELLATIONS AND DELAYS

See also: Office of Emergency Management's Emergency Cancellations and Delays Policy

In-person classes will be cancelled or delayed only under extreme circumstances, such as severely inclement weather or other emergency situations. Students, faculty and staff have the ability to have emergency notifications sent to their cell phone.

In a situation where there is inclement weather, but classes are in session and offices are open, commuting students, faculty and staff must use their best judgment as to whether they feel comfortable traveling on the roadways. In these circumstances, it is up to the individual to decide whether to travel to campus. Because these circumstances occur only rarely, most professors are understanding of absences due to weather.

Faculty have the option to hold class meetings remotely in the event that in-person classes are cancelled. If they do meet remotely, they will not have to use makeup days later in the semester. This decision will be left to the discretion of the faculty member.

The University asks that students make an effort to notify professors of their planned absence and that faculty communicate their plans to their students.

The University asks that employees make an effort to notify supervisors of their planned absence and their intention to use leave credits, as appropriate, or perform their work from home in accordance with SUNY's telecommuting policy.

When the University makes the decision to delay or cancel in-person classes due to severely inclement weather or other emergency situations, this does not apply to online classes. However, a faculty member teaching an online course from a physical classroom on campus will have the discretion to cancel the class.

Online class meetings will take place as originally scheduled unless otherwise noted. Faculty members who are unable to host online class meetings as scheduled are encouraged to notify students as quickly as possible upon making that determination.

Delay or Cancellation of In-Person Classes or Other On-Campus Activities

The decision to delay or cancel in-person classes is a collaborative process that involves Facilities Operations & Management, the president, and the provost.

There are many factors that are considered in this process, including the forecast from the National Weather Service, inclement weather in the immediate vicinity of the campus, local road conditions, and the ability to properly clear campus walkways and parking lots.

When in-person classes are delayed, all in-person classes on the affected day that begin before the delayed opening time will be cancelled. For example, if classes are delayed until 11 a.m., any classes scheduled to meet prior to 11 a.m. will be cancelled.

When in-person classes are cancelled or delayed, Facilities staff may not be able to keep up with snowfall or ice conditions to ensure all campus roadways and sidewalks are safe. Organizers of campus events should be aware of these conditions. It may be prudent for event organizers to cancel or postpone their events during severe weather. It is the responsibility of the event organizers to inform the campus community and any off-campus participants about any cancellation or postponement.

During and after a significant snowstorm, the University will prioritize major arterial roads for snow removal. This includes high-traffic walks and entrance ways, especially the ones that connect critical service areas such as University Police, the Health Center, the physical plant, residence halls, academic buildings and food service. Priority is also given to ADA walkways as directed by the Disability Resource Center. Secondary paths are given lower priority and are addressed as resources allow.

When the University indicates that offices will open at 9:15 or 10:45 a.m., this means the campus is not ready for faculty, staff or commuter arrival. We need time for our essential employees to prepare campus roadways, parking lots and sidewalks. Thank you in advance for your cooperation. If you have questions about delayed office openings, please contact Human Resources at x3171.

There is no exact science to predicting the weather. The conditions that each storm brings are unique. Some are more challenging than others to manage. We understand that it can be inconvenient at times for people's schedules. Ultimately, individuals should use their own best judgment in making decisions related to winter weather and travel.

How We Communicate Delays and Cancellations

When the decision has been made to delay or cancel classes and/or delay office openings, the Office of Communication & Marketing will take the following steps to inform our community of that decision:

- Send an email announcement to all students, faculty and staff via their @newpaltz.edu addresses
- Send a text message (SMS) announcement to all students, faculty and staff via the NPAlert emergency communications system
- Update the campus homepage (newpaltz.edu)
- Record a message on the INFO phone line at (845) 257-INFO (4636)

These communications are the official sources of information on SUNY New Paltz delays and cancellations and supersede any other available public information.

The decision to delay or cancel on-campus activities will be announced as early as possible (usually by 6 a.m.) for any day that is affected by severe weather. For inclement weather during the afternoon and evening, a decision will be made no less than 90 minutes prior to the cancellation of in-person classes. For example, a decision will be made and announced by 12:30 p.m. for afternoon in-person classes that begin at 2 p.m., or by 2 p.m. for those that begin at 3:30 p.m. or later.

Closing of Campus Buildings or Offices

Only the Governor may close New York State offices due to weather conditions. Because we are a state university, we follow New York State policies regarding office closings.

SUNY New Paltz's president is authorized to suspend campus activities, but can give non-teaching professional staff or classified civil service

personnel time off without charge to leave credits only in very limited circumstances, including:

- Delayed office openings
- If the Governor takes action to close our campus or, pursuant to contract provisions, if there is an approved early departure.

The University must be mindful of the number of State-mandated contact hours necessary to earn academic credits.

Procedure for Communicating Office Status to Students, Staff and Visitors during Inclement Weather

While offices generally remain open during inclement weather unless otherwise directed by the Governor, it is common that many offices will be understaffed because all staff members in that unit have opted to remain home for personal safety reasons.

Because we are a residential campus and students, staff and visitors who remain on campus are expecting offices to be open, we want to make them aware of office closings or reductions in staffing BEFORE they venture out in inclement weather.

When the Office of Communication & Marketing announces the University is canceling in-person classes via all-fs/all-stu messages, Communication & Marketing will include in that e-mail, and on the campus home page, a link to the Office Hours and Availability page, where the status of department offices will be posted.