

SNOWSTORM POLICY 2023/2024

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is

- (a) to establish guidelines for the decision-making process that may lead to closure or cancellation;
- (b) to establish protocols for communicating a closure decision once made; and
- (c) to outline procedures to be followed at such a time.

Although this policy has been developed primarily for closures due to hazardous weather conditions, it will also be followed in the event of any other conditions that require the closing or partial closing of the University such as utilities failure. Thus, the policy developed here will maintain a degree of flexibility in order to handle the essential nature of emergency situations, which are unique and may arrive unexpectedly.

Scope

This policy is applicable University-wide.

Authority

The decision to close/partially close the University or cancel classes is the responsibility of the President, or designate, after consideration of all relevant information available as per Determining Factors.

Closure/Partial Closure

The University will close when there is a situation which makes it extremely difficult or dangerous for faculty, staff or students to inhabit University facilities, to remain at, or travel to the University.

In addition to Closure/Partial Closure, the University will close when the President determines that closure is appropriate in the circumstances.

Partial closure of the campus (i.e. selected buildings) may take place from time to time and may result in staff being moved to other facilities on campus.

The University may close for part of the day to allow for the clearing of parking lots and to give individuals more time to reach the campus.

SNOWSTORM POLICY 2023/2024

Cancellation of Classes

In some circumstances, where it is deemed safe to remain open, it may be decided to cancel some or all classes.

Where classes have been cancelled but the University remains open, all employees will make reasonable efforts to fulfill their regularly scheduled responsibilities at the University.

When on-campus classes are cancelled and/or the University is closed due to inclement weather or other emergencies, courses offered on-campus, multi-mode or online classes (Blackboard Collaborate classes and Moodle discussions) may proceed online as scheduled, provided the technology is available. In the event that a course cannot be offered remotely (for example, due to a power failure), information on alternate arrangements will be communicated by course instructors as soon as possible.

There may be circumstances when the University remains open but an individual instructor finds it impossible to get in to conduct a scheduled class. In such cases, the faculty member should make every reasonable effort to inform students of the class cancellation. It is strongly recommended that faculty members make reference to their notification procedures (e.g. course tools, E-mail, voice mail, etc.) in their course syllabi.

In order to provide students with the most up-to-date information, an online submission form has been created to allow faculty members to post their cancellation directly to the class cancellation page on the website. If you must cancel your class please submit your information using the online form found at www.msvu.ca/classcancellation (log-in required to access the submission form).

There will be situations where faculty without internet access will need to communicate the cancellation; this should be done by calling the Deans' office, 902-457-6400, with the class cancellation information. Faculty are encouraged, however, to use the online form whenever possible. The Deans' office will still monitor the site and will be able to edit the page, if necessary.

Class Cancellation Hotline – while the class cancellation page on the website will contain the most up to date and detailed information, every effort is made to update the cancellation hotline in a timely manner. The hotline can be accessed by calling 902-457-6566.

Cancelled Examinations

The final examinations time table is the responsibility of the Registrar's Office. Cancelled formal examinations, or alternative arrangements, are rescheduled through the Exams and Scheduling Coordinator located in the Registrar's Office.

SNOWSTORM POLICY 2023/2024

Timing

Every effort will be made to communicate a firm decision as early as possible, taking into consideration that many staff work evening, night, or weekend/holiday shifts.

Our goal is to communicate a decision whether to open as usual or cancel classes/close the University by:

Before the Start of Normal Working Hours	6:00 AM
During Normal Working Hours	3:30 PM

Determining Factors

The safety of our students, staff and faculty is of paramount importance.

Factors contributing to the decision to close/partially close the University or cancel classes include:

- (a) state of emergency or impending state of emergency
- (b) weather conditions (current and forecast)
- (c) road conditions
- (d) availability of public transport
- (e) ability to access and use the campus safely
- (f) ability to maintain campus roadways, parking lots, paths, stairs and building entrances in safe condition
- (g) ability of emergency services to access the campus
- (h) disadvantages of sending individuals back into the weather once they have arrived on campus; and
- (i) anticipation that conditions will worsen or persist such that public transportation may not operate or roads may be closed as a result of storm conditions, which will make travel home unusually difficult or hazardous

Communications

The Associate Vice-President, University Relations is responsible for the coordination of communications concerning closure of the University. The Associate Vice-President, University Relations, or designate, will act as the official University spokesperson with media concerning the closure. Communications will, as appropriate, include: the time period covered, when further announcements will be made, how the decision will affect day, evening and online classes, examinations and University services.

In recognition that not all students, faculty and staff have access to all communication methods, a variety of methods will be used including, the [MSVU SAFE App](#) (a free campus safety app), [Mount Alert](#) (our mass notification system), the [MSVU website](#) homepage, Facebook

SNOWSTORM POLICY 2023/2024

(facebook.com/MountSaintVincentUniversity), X, formerly Twitter (@[MSVU_Halifax](https://twitter.com/MSVU_Halifax)) and Instagram ([msvu_halifax](https://www.instagram.com/msvu_halifax)). Halifax-area media (broadcast and online) will be notified of campus closures as well, though it is at their discretion whether or not to post the information and there may be a delay in their sharing or updating of information provided.

Overnight Parking

1. All vehicles parked on campus afterhours require a parking permit through Hotspot.
2. Vehicles left overnight must be parked in Rosaria lot #4, furthest down the hill, or in other locations as designated by Security staff.
3. Security requires a notification prior to a vehicle being left overnight.
4. In the event of a concern related to a vehicle parked overnight, security would contact the phone number registered with Hotspot.

Last updated: November 16, 2023