

## SEVERE WEATHER

**Section:** Health/Life Safety

**Policy:** Staff members will notify residents of serious weather conditions and will assist residents in responding appropriately in the event of severe weather watches and warnings. Additionally, University Housing follows the UGA Inclement Weather Operations Policy, accessed at [http://uga.edu/weather\\_policy/](http://uga.edu/weather_policy/) .

**Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to outline procedures for staff members and residents in the event of tornado warnings and watches. Additionally, this policy outlines expense documentation requirements in the event of severe weather events. The University System of Georgia requests and tracks cost analysis information related to severe weather events.

**Scope:** This policy applies to all staff members of University Housing. Residents cannot be forced to follow these procedures. However, staff members should strongly encourage everyone to participate.

**Background:** The following recommended procedures for severe storms, tornadoes and winter weather are grouped under three distinctive headings, tornado watch, tornado warning, and winter weather. Staff members and residents should be familiar with this crucial distinction because it dictates which course of action to follow.

### **Tornado Watch:**

A tornado watch signifies that atmospheric conditions are such that a tornado could develop. The National Weather Service will issue a tornado watch for a specific time period and geographic area. Although a tornado watch does not represent imminent danger, it should not be treated lightly. Residents should monitor both television and radio weather bulletins and begin taking precautionary measures.

### **Tornado Warning:**

A tornado warning means that a tornado has been sighted in the immediate area. The weather radio located at each community desk will sound an alarm when a tornado warning has been issued for Athens-Clarke County. UGA Alert is also activated in the event of a tornado warning. City sirens may also sound at a steady blast or tone for three to five minutes to signal a tornado warning. Local FM or television stations may also be a source for tornado warning information. Staff members and residents should take shelter at once and follow the instructions below for maximum protection.

### **Procedure:**

- I. Desk staff members will closely monitor severe weather transmissions from the Weather Radio located at the 24-hour desks. Desk staff members should check radios periodically to ensure they are still programmed correctly.
- II. Desk staff members should notify all on duty staff of the watch or warning and then proceed to notify remaining staff when a warning or watch is announced.
- III. Staff members are expected to advise residents of the following in the event of a weather warning (should a watch be issued, staff members should continue to watch local news for further information about the weather). During normal workday operating hours, the community office should assist with the dissemination of information to staff members and students.

- A. If time allows, residents are advised to: disconnect major appliances such as TVs, stereos, etc. during electrical storms and close all curtains and window shades for protection from debris and flying glass.
  - B. Building occupants should move to lower floors within the building and not stay on floors higher than the fourth floor. Corridors or stairwells without windows are the best shelter. Each community will designate shelter areas. More specific directions are available in the Community Guide.
  - C. If residents are in a place where they might be hit by falling objects, they should protect themselves with a heavy blanket, mattress, etc.
  - D. Permanently reinforced, concrete classroom and office buildings are relatively safe places to be during a tornado. If there is no basement, people should take shelter inside a small interior room or under a sturdy desk.
- IV. Residents and staff members should remain in the designated safe locations until the desk staff have heard on the weather radio that the warning is over.
- V. Expense documentation
- A. Staff members should work with supervisors to track expenses (rental and/or use of equipment and material, lodging and food, damage to facilities, debris removal, etc.) related to severe weather events.
  - B. Supervisors should then submit the expenses up the supervisory chain to respective directors copying the executive director and Housing Business and Human Resources (HBHR) associate director.
  - C. Expense submissions shall be compiled by HBHR and submitted to the executive director.

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