

**Policy Number/Title:** 6.2.10 Tornado  
**Effective Since:** 10/01/2016  
**Last Revision Approved:** 07/23/2025  
**Responsible Office:** Winthrop University Police Department

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### **1. Scope:**

Winthrop University community, faculty, staff, students, and visitors.

### **2. Definitions:**

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### **3. Policy:**

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to establish the procedures to be followed by the student body, faculty, and staff in the event of a tornado warning alert or actual tornado. Implementation of these procedures whenever necessary should minimize loss of life, injury, and disruption of scheduled activities.

Priorities:

A TORNADO WATCH means tornados are possible.

A TORNADO WARNING means a tornado actually has been sighted somewhere in the warning area. Usually warning sirens will sound.

In the event conditions exist to activate the tornado response procedure, the Winthrop University Police Department will work with the York County Emergency Operation Center to obtain frequent weather update. Faculty and staff will be required to assist in assuring student safety.

Expectations for Employees and Students:

In the event of a tornado watch or warning the Winthrop University Police Department will



be notified by the Emergency Operations Center on the extent of the emergency. Following this notification, The Winthrop University Police Department will notify faculty, staff, and students through the Emergency Notification System. The information provided will give direction on how to respond to the emergency.

#### **4. Procedures:**

Communications:

Winthrop University may communicate with the campus community by any of the following means:

- ALERTUS Notification System — Beacons within campus buildings, also includes instant messaging system for the campus' networked computers
- WU Alert — Blackboard Connect text/SMS and voice messages for all subscribers
- Email — Messages to faculty/staff/student distribution lists
- Web — Updates on [www.winthrop.edu](http://www.winthrop.edu) and detailed information on [www.winthrop.edu/emergency](http://www.winthrop.edu/emergency)
- Campus Alert Line — Recorded message on 803/323-2222 with detailed information, primarily for individuals without access to a mobile device, computer, etc.
- Face to Face — Direct contact by emergency responders
- Runner — Group contact by individuals moving from area to area
- Media — Communication via local radio and television stations

Communications between Winthrop University and the York County Emergency Operations Center will be conducted via commercial telephone service. Backup communications will be through utilization of the York County Comprehensive 800 MHz Communications System.

When the area is given the "all clear" signal from the York County Emergency Operations Center and confirmed by the Winthrop University Police Department, this information will then be disseminated via the listed means throughout the Winthrop campus community.

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Responsibility and Control:

Emergency responders will have total control of the scene. If the situation dictates, the Incident Command System will be used as directed by the National Incident Management System.



The university also will assemble the Emergency Management Team to make university-related decisions.

The Winthrop University Police Department will operate an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) located in the Winthrop University Police Department. If the incident requires York County to open the Emergency Operations Center, the Winthrop University Police Department or a designee will be represented in the York County EOC and/or will be in continuous communications with the Winthrop EOC.

#### Emergency and Training Plans:

##### *Notification*

If a Tornado Warning occurs in the Rock Hill area, the initial alert notification will come from the York County Office of Emergency Management by activation of the all-hazards radio located in Winthrop University Police Department office, by commercial telephone, or by utilizing the 800 MHz radio system. York County Office of Emergency Management will activate the outdoor siren system and Emergency Alert System (EAS) messages on local radio and television stations. The sirens will cycle for three minutes and recycle again for a total of 15 minutes. The sirens will sound for one (1) three-minute cycle if they are being tested. This siren system is tested audibly once every quarter throughout the year.

##### *WUPD Notification Actions*

When notification of imminent danger is received from either the York County Office of Emergency Management or the outdoor warning siren system, Winthrop's President or designee will be notified by the Winthrop University Police Department. The Chief of Campus Police or designee will verify the status of the emergency with the York County Office of Emergency Management, when practicable and advise Winthrop's President or designee to help in the decision affecting Winthrop University.

##### *Specific Notification Actions*

If a tornado situation occurs the following specific actions will be taken to insure the safety of Winthrop University student body and staff.

##### *During a Tornado Warning*

- If you are indoors and if time allows, move to the lowest floor possible. Move into an inside wall away from windows. Everyone must remain inside the building for maximum protection. If time allows, close all doors to rooms. Assume a fetal position to protect your head and eyes.
- If you are outside and hear a tornado warning or see a tornado, try to reach a building immediately. If you cannot reach a building, then you should lie flat in the nearest depression such as a ditch, curb, or ravine away from power lines, buildings, and trees.

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- If you are driving, do not remain in your vehicle. Get out of your vehicle and follow the instructions above. Do not attempt to outrun a tornado.

## *After a Tornado Passes*

- Check for injuries. Do not move a seriously injured person unless he or she is in immediate danger of further injuries. If you need emergency assistance, call the Winthrop University Police Department at 323-3333.
- Be aware of any structural damage around you, and if necessary and safe to do so, carefully leave the building per the "General Building Evacuation" guidelines.
- Always check for hazards.
- Fire or fire hazards
- Damaged electrical wiring
- Downed or damaged utility lines. Stay away from downed lines, even if power appears to be off.
- Fallen objects in closets and cabinets. Displaced objects may fall when you open the door.
- Make sure each phone is on its receiver. Telephones off the hook can tie up the telephone network.
- Cleanup potentially harmful materials and/or medicines that may have spilled per the Hazardous Communications Plan.
- If you are instructed to evacuate the campus, follow the "Campus Evacuation" plan.

## **5. Resources:**

This section was intentionally left blank.

## **6. History of Revisions:**

07/23/2025	Minor Revisions
10/01/2016	Minor Revisions
01/01/2005	Policy first established

## **7. Approvals:**

President Signature/Date: