

Severe Weather Emergency Guide

Severe weather is a continuous threat in Georgia and can include hail, lightning, heavy rain, high winds, and tornadoes. The following plan has been developed to provide guidance to faculty, staff, and students in the event severe weather threatens the Armstrong community. These procedures apply to all personnel, and to all buildings and grounds owned and operated by the University.

DEFINITIONS

Watch

The National Weather Service will issue a Watch when conditions are favorable for the development of severe weather. For example, if a severe thunderstorm watch is in effect, then conditions are favorable for the development of a severe thunderstorm. Preparations for a warning should begin.

Warning

The National Weather Service will issue a Warning when severe weather has been indicated on radar, reported by trained weather spotters, or reported by public safety agencies. For example, a severe thunderstorm warning means a line of thunderstorms has been indicated by radar and immediate response is necessary.

The Armstrong State University Police Department will monitor the National Weather Service for severe weather. In the event that severe weather is in the immediate area, notifications to campus will be made using the BLAST system.

Severe Thunderstorms

A severe thunderstorm is a thunderstorm that produces winds of at least 58 mph and/or hail at least 1" in diameter. Strong winds, torrential rain, and cloud-to-ground lightening are also possible with these storms.

If a **severe thunderstorm warning** is issued, individuals should remain indoors and away from large glass windows until the storm passes. Individuals should prepare to take appropriate shelter if conditions dictate.

Tornado

A tornado is a rotating column of wind in touch with the ground. Tornadoes can produce winds in excess of 300 mph and damage paths from tornadoes can be over a mile wide.

If a **tornado watch** is issued, University Police will issue a BLAST message to campus indicating the watch and urging personnel to move toward safe shelter. Individuals should be ready to act quickly if a warning is issued and should monitor weather announcements, if possible. If you are on an upper floor and there is a likelihood that a warning will be issued, consider moving to the lowest level.

If a **tornado warning** is issued, the following steps will be taken:

1. University Police will initiate a BLAST message indicating an immediate Shelter in Place order.
2. Individuals outside when a warning is issued should immediately seek shelter in the nearest building. Individuals inside when a warning is issued should remain inside.
3. Individuals should take appropriate shelter on the lowest possible floor in interior rooms, away from windows and doors.
 - a. Avoid areas near glass.
 - b. Avoid exterior walls.
 - c. Avoid areas with high ceilings, or large expansive spaces.
 - d. Do not enter elevators.
4. When sheltering, individuals should sit or lie directly on the floor against a wall, and cover their heads with their hands until the storm passes. If individuals are unable to get indoors, they should find a low spot and lie flat in it, shielding their heads with their hands.
5. Remain sheltered in place until the all-clear is issued by the University.

Flooding

Flooding is the temporary inundation of a normally dry area caused by rising water in an existing waterway or by the ponding of water at or near the point where the rain fell. There are three types of flooding for which the National Weather Service issues warnings: Flash Flooding, Areal Flooding, and River Flooding.

Flash Flooding is rapid flow of high water due to an intense rainfall.

Areal Flooding is gradual flooding from a prolonged moderate to heavy rainfall.

River Flooding is the flooding of an area due to overflowing banks of a waterway.

Armstrong State University has a mild risk of flooding due to our position relative to sea level. The areas most at risk are on the south and west portions of campus.

The type of response to a flooding event is typically evacuation, either through a relocation to another site on campus, or vertically to higher floors in a building. University Police will monitor the campus when a risk of flooding is possible, and initiate evacuation orders as necessary through the BLAST system.

Individuals should **NEVER** attempt to cross any street or sidewalk that is covered with water, either by foot or by vehicle. The depth of the coverage can be deceiving, and undercurrents are possible. Even 1 inch of standing water, moving rapidly, can knock a person off his/her feet, or send a car floating away.

Inclement Weather

Inclement weather is defined as weather conditions that are forecasted and could affect campus operations. Inclement weather can include winter weather, tropical cyclones, and extreme temperatures.

In the event of inclement weather, the President, in consultation with University Police and Senior Leadership, will determine the continuity of operations. Appropriate action can include campus closure, suspension of classes and/or campus events, delayed openings, or normal operations. Decisions regarding campus operations will be made as early as possible and communicated via BLAST messages and the University website.

Earthquakes

While the risk of earthquakes is relatively low in Savannah, they can occur. Earthquakes can cause significant damage, especially in areas where building codes do not require earthquake-proof construction practices.

Earthquakes happen without warning, so it is important to remain calm and take shelter quickly. If you are indoors, you should lie on the ground and cover your head and neck with your arms. If possible, hold on to something sturdy until the shaking is over. Individuals should avoid exterior walls, glass, unsecured shelves/cabinets, overhead fixtures, or any other heavy object that could fall. If you are outside, get into the open and stay away from buildings, street lights, and power lines.

After an earthquake, follow instructions from University Personnel and assist those who may need special assistance.