

OCHSNER CLINICAL SCHOOL POLICY	Policy #: OCS 052411.2
Title: Severe Weather (Code Gray)	

I. PURPOSE

To provide students of the Xavier University of Louisiana Physician Assistant Program guidelines for planning and preparedness in the event of a severe weather occurrence and school closure.

II. SCOPE

The Xavier University of Louisiana Physician Assistant Program Administration, Faculty, and Staff recognize their responsibility for the safety of physician assistant students associated with the Xavier University of Louisiana Physician Assistant Program as well as the protection of Ochsner property in the event of a severe weather occurrence. This policy is in place to provide direction for those involved in these efforts. This policy however, may be supplemented by additional actions pending the length, severity, and community impact of a severe weather event.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. Severe Weather Emergency - Within the context of this plan, a severe weather emergency is any meteorological condition that can detrimentally affect the physical facility or operation of Ochsner.

- B. Tropical Weather Events - Hurricane season extends from June 1-November 30. That is the period when climactic conditions are optimum for the formation and sustained movement of hurricane events in Southeast Louisiana and the Gulf of Mexico. The National Weather Service issues warnings when hurricanes are approaching the United States mainland. The stages of hurricane announcements given by the National Hurricane Center are as follows:
 - 1. Tropical Storm - Use of modular buildings may be suspended at the Tropical Storm level (Sustained winds in excess of 39 mph)
 - 2. Hurricane Watch means a hurricane may threaten an area within 24 hours - a first alert for emergency preparations to begin. When a hurricane watch is issued, normal activities shall be continued but weather advisories shall be monitored periodically by the Department of Emergency Preparedness & Response. Winds of at least 74 mph may affect the area within 24-36 hours.
 - 3. Hurricane Warning means a hurricane is expected to strike our area within 24 hours. Advisories containing a hurricane warning include assessment of flood danger in our area, gale warnings for the storm's periphery and estimated storm effects. Winds of at least 74 mph are expected in the area within 24 hours

- C. Tornado – The National Weather Service issues tornado warnings.

1. Tornado Watch means that tornadoes are expected to develop. A tornado watch usually covers a very large area, including many cities and parishes.
 2. Tornado Warning means that a tornado has actually been sighted or indicated by radar.
- D. Flood - The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, NOAA, issues flood forecasts and warnings when rainfall is enough to cause rivers/lakes to overflow their banks.
1. Flood Watch is an alert that our area may experience a flood disaster.
 2. Flood Warning is a forecast of impending floods, and is distributed to the public via the broadcasting media.
 3. Flash Flood Warning is the most urgent type of flood warning.
- E. Hard Freeze/Extreme Cold Temperatures - Extreme temperatures can cause adverse conditions and create travel restrictions, hard freezes, power outages, and or any other identified extreme weather conditions, these conditions may affect the hospital's ability treat patients or sustain normal operations.

IV. POLICY STATEMENTS

A. School Closure and Evacuation

1. If severe weather threatens Southeast Louisiana, the Program Director of Xavier University of Louisiana Physician Assistant Program in conjunction with the Ochsner Health System (OHS) Executive Team and Safety Director may make the decision to close the Xavier University of Louisiana Physician Assistant Program. The decision to close will be based upon the projection of a threatening situation. Bulletins issued by the National Weather Service and the Office of Emergency Management will be considered in determining the implementation of emergency procedures.
2. Upon activation of the Ochsner Medical System Severe Weather Response Guide, email alerts and notifications are distributed at this time. Ahead of landfall, Ochsner will provide updates and refinement of data related to the weather event and storm track. Prior to landfall, in conjunction with State and Local authorities, the Ochsner Executive Team and Safety Director will determine closure of Ochsner facilities and activate the severe weather closure plan. At this time, only designated Essential "Team A" Personnel will be allowed on campus.

V. PROCEDURES/STANDARDS AND ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

A. All Xavier University of Louisiana Physician Assistant Program Students

1. Our primary concern is the safety of our students and we are committed to providing information in a timely manner in the event of an emergency so that all students can seek safe shelter and, following the event, return to their program as quickly as possible.
2. We will require all students to develop their own personal emergency plans in the event that there is a severe weather threat to New Orleans and discuss this plan with family well ahead of a weather emergency. These plans must include transportation and destination arrangements for safe evacuation from the city.
3. In the event a hurricane or other severe weather occurrence threatens the New Orleans area and the institution activates the severe weather response guide, only essential personnel will be allowed access to the Ochsner Facilities.
4. Students are expected to follow the Xavier University of Louisiana Physician Assistant Program closure notifications. Students will be expected to follow the closure and evacuation notifications of the institution and city officials.
5. Ochsner emergency personnel will make every effort to provide as much advanced notice as possible and the Academic Division Administrative Staff will take responsibility to assure that all students receive necessary information. Ochsner has several mechanisms to "stay in touch"

with students and employees, to include toll free call-in numbers, emergency web sites that are activated at the time of the emergency and through official Ochsner and UQ email accounts. a.

[Clinical Medical Education – Emergency Information](#)

(<https://education.ochsner.org/clined/uq-ochsner-clinical-school/resources/disasterpreparation>)

b. Ochsner Information Disaster Hotline - 504-842-9999 or 1-800-961-6247

6. Post-Storm, authorized personnel will conduct damage assessment and will issue a directive to reopen the after conferring with the Executive team and the Incident Command Center.
7. Information relevant to reopening will be available through the academic division disaster webpage and email notifications.
8. Students completing rotations at Ochsner sites deemed safe and not under the severe weather response guide will be expected to continue their clinical rotations at that site.
9. Students will be guided to the *Xavier University of Louisiana Physician Assistant Program Handbook* for policies related to clinical assignment and completion or return to campus for completion of assigned clinical rotations.

B. XULA PA Students

1. It is important to note that in the event of a call for evacuation, NO XULA PA Students will be allowed to remain or seek shelter in any Ochsner facility.
2. **XULA PA Students are NOT designated as essential “Team A” personnel and are not to report to the Ochsner facility that has been designated under the mandatory Disaster Plan.**
3. Depending on severity and duration expectancy of the storm, XULA PA students may be assigned to another OHS facility to complete their clinical assignments.

VI. INTERNAL REFERENCES

OHS Ochsner Emergency Manual – Chapter 21

VII. EXTERNAL REFERENCES

A. Hurricane Preparations

1. During the hurricane season you should have on hand a list of items including a supply of nonperishable foods, bottled water (one gallon per day), first aid kit, flashlight, fire extinguisher, battery powered commercial radio, and NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) Weather Radio with extra batteries.
2. If a hurricane threatens, store water in a clean bathtub, jugs, or pails, as the water system may become inoperative or contaminated (One gallon per person per day).
3. If you have made the decision to evacuate, make sure you have a safe evacuation route planned well in advance. Be prepared to leave early. Evacuation routes become extremely congested closer to hurricane landfall and eventually close.
4. Most levees can be overtopped by the storm surge generated from a powerful hurricane's direct strike.
5. If you are not in danger of storm surge flooding, and decide not to evacuate, you still are vulnerable to wind related damage from hurricanes. The safest places of shelter from destructive winds and tornadoes are small interior rooms on the lowest floor of a well-constructed house or building, which is safe from storm surge.
6. Please see the following links for Hurricane Preparation and Evacuation Information: [Louisiana Citizen Awareness & Disaster Evacuation Guide](#) - <http://www.lsp.org/p/HurricaneGuideSE.pdf>

[National Hurricane Center – Hurricane Preparedness](#) -

