

Hazardous Winter Weather Closure and Snow Plan

Revised: September 2022

This plan is an annex to the Cheyenne / Laramie County Emergency Response Plan

Purpose:

This annex outlines the response by local government to severe winter weather conditions affecting the operations of government offices. The plan outlines late openings / delayed start, early closure and full closures of government offices.

The plan also provides safety information about winter weather hazards and information you may need to survive severe winter weather.

This plan affects the City of Cheyenne and Laramie County.

Objective:

Unified Statement of those involved in the planning process:

“School and government closure decisions due to inclement weather are not taken lightly. They are made as a cooperative effort between the City of Cheyenne, Laramie County, State of Wyoming, F.E. Warren Air Force Base and Laramie County School Districts.

If roads are passable and open, we will make every attempt to be open for business. However, individual patrons must make the ultimate decision about whether to travel to work or school based on their comfort level.

Closure decisions are made based on a variety of factors. These include reports from the National Weather Service, firsthand accounts from personnel working on clearing sidewalks, streets and parking lots and discussions between the entities regarding city wide ramifications of a shutdown.”

This plan prioritizes safety. It can be implemented by both public and private organizations. The plan is a coordinated process between agencies to assess threatening weather and allow employees and citizens to determine the safest response to inclement weather.

The responsibility for your safety lies with you. You must determine if travel to and from work is safe for you. Preparedness and planning for winter storms are key parts to your safety and survival.

Process:

Laramie County is divided in to three (3) areas closing in on the City of Cheyenne (see map). Advisories closures are determined by road and weather conditions affecting the area. Area 3 is furthest away from Cheyenne and is divided into 2 parts, East and West, separated by I-25. Next is Area 2 followed by Area 1 which is within the city limits of Cheyenne. Area 1 is consistent with the boundary closures of LCSD # 1.

As severe weather approaches and conditions worsen a Level 3 Advisory will be placed into effect. People living in Area 3 (East, West or both) will be advised to go home and prepare to shelter the storm. Any persons working in Area 3 are advised to move to their homes or shelter closer to interior areas.

As conditions deteriorate an Advisory for Level 2 and Closure for Level 1 would follow.

Employees and supervisors should determine the area you live in (see map). If a Level 1 Closure does not go into effect, you must use employee leave / vacation time for any time away from work. If closures reach Level 1, the government may pay the employee for time lost due to the closure. This may not affect all departments or employees. Contact your supervisor prior to coming in to work or leaving to determine what level of continuity operations your department will be working under.

Employees having prior scheduled leave, vacation time or have requested sick leave may not receive inclement weather compensation for Level 1 closure.

Essential employees: Employees required to work regardless of weather conditions are exempt from inclement weather leave.

Map Description

Area 1 Boundaries:

North: Beginning at the junction of I-25 and US 85 following US 85 to the east at the intersection with Morningstar Rd. Turning south on Morningstar Rd and following the platted subdivision boundaries for North Star Ranch to the east until reaching Powderhouse Rd (or the boundary line extending Powderhouse Rd). Continuing south on Powderhouse Rd until the intersection with E Four Mile Rd.

East: Beginning at the intersection of Powderhouse Rd. and E Four Mile Rd. following E Four Mile Rd. to the intersection of Whitney Rd. Continuing south on Whitney Rd to the intersection of US 30 then turning east along the subdivision boundaries for the original Saddle Ridge development. Following the eastern edge for the subdivision to E. Pershing Blvd to include the subdivisions of Rice and Foster Tracts to the south to Tate Rd. From the intersection of E. Pershing Blvd and Whitney Road on the south boundary of Saddle Ridge, an boundary line from Whitney Rd continues due south to the boundary line of High Plains Rd.

South: The boundary runs east and west from the eastern boundary to I-25 to the west.

West: (This excludes FE Warren AFB) Beginning from the intersection of the south boundary with I-25, following I-25 north to the I-80 and I-25 junction and continuing to Old Happy Jack Rd (or the boundary line that extends Old Happy Jack Rd to I-25). Continuing west on Old Happy Jack Rd. and Military Rd. until the intersection with Roundtop Rd. Then following Roundtop Rd north along the FE Warren AFB boundary until the property lines of the FEWARFB meets Murray Hills Estates 3rd Filing. Continue north along the subdivision property lines until intersecting with Horse Creek Rd and then east to I-25 and continuing along I-25 until meeting with the north boundary.

Area 2 Boundaries:

The Area outside of Area 1 and inside the following:

North: Beginning at the intersection of Road 116 and Road 224 (or the boundary lines that extend these 2 roads) continuing east on Road 224 to the intersection with Road 124. Turning south on Road 124 to the boundary line that extends Road 222 from the east. Turning east along Road 222 (or the boundary line that extends Road 222) past the intersection with US 85 to the intersection of Road 140.

East: Continuing from the intersection of Road 222 and Road 140 due south to the state line.

South: Continuing from Road 140 and the state line, heading west along the state line to Soapstone Ranch Rd.

West: A line running North from the state line and Soapstone Ranch Rd crossing Happy Jack Road at the landfill and Horse Creek Road until reaching the northern boundary.

Area 3 Boundaries:

The area outside of Area 2 extending to the county and state lines.

Delayed Opening:

A delayed opening may occur if weather conditions are severe but will improve later in the morning or as time is needed for snow removal in the downtown area prior to employees' arrival. A local media notification will be sent delaying opening and a time to report to work will be given. Employee time may be compensated due to delayed closure.

Day Time Closures:

Day time closures will be called according to area. Likely, Area 3 (East or West) will be closed first then moving closer in to Area 2 and 1. Supervisors and employees may be notified of closures by several methods such as email, social media, phone or in person. Media will be notified of building and program closures. Not all agencies / governments will close or may delay closing. If your agency does not close you are responsible for media notification. You will be advised to travel home and shelter the storm.

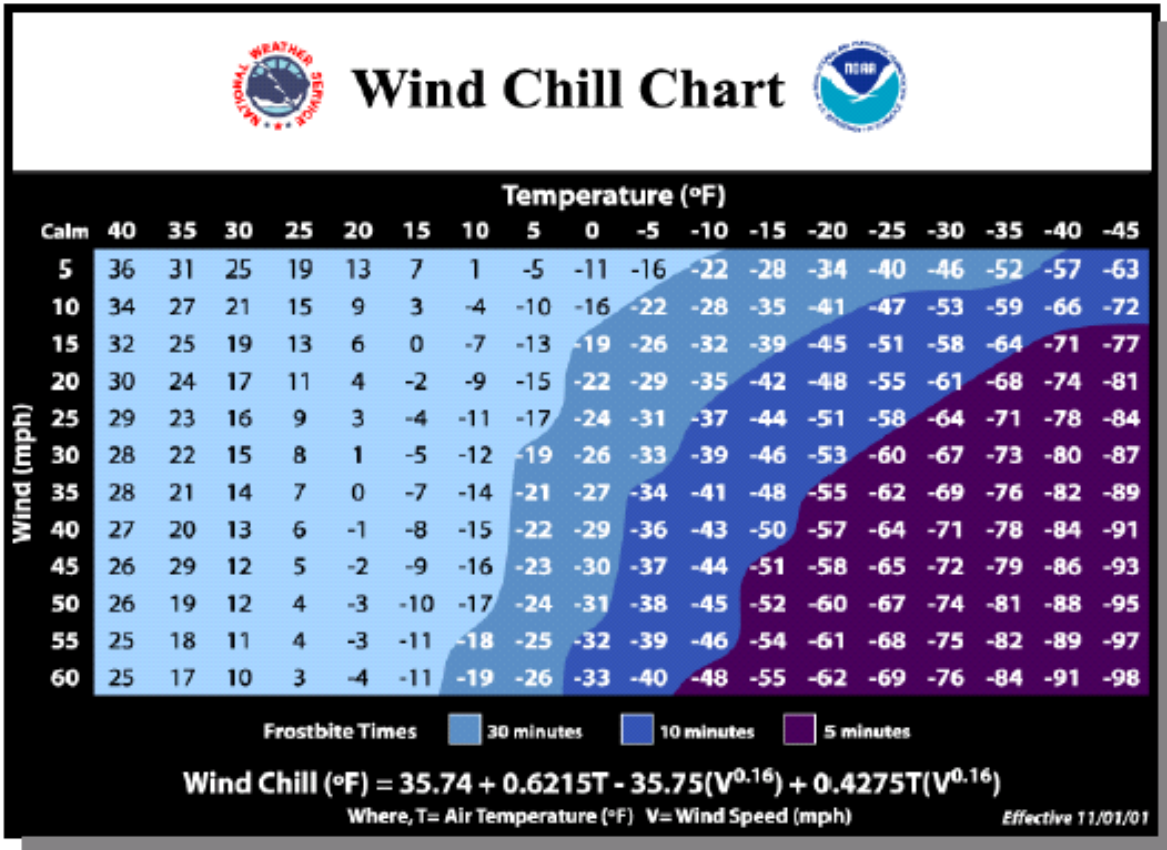
Overnight Closures:

Conditions may deteriorate rapidly over night causing more than one area to be closed. Local media will be advised of closers as soon as possible, the goal is to make this decision prior to 5:30 am. The areas of closure will be a part of the media release. You must determine the area in which you live and whether conditions are safe for you to travel to and from work.

Know the Difference

- **Winter Storm Outlook** - Winter storm conditions are possible in the next 2 to 5 days.
- **Snow Squall Warning** - used to warn of an intense, short-lived burst of heavy snowfall. They will be issued for a combination of quick reduction in visibilities (less than 1/4 mile), sudden whiteout conditions, and slick/hazardous roads.
- **Winter Weather Advisory** - Winter weather conditions are expected to cause significant inconveniences and may be hazardous. When caution is used, these situations should not be life threatening.
- **Winter Storm Watch** - Winter storm conditions are possible within the next 36 to 48 hours. People in a watch area should review their winter storm plans and stay informed about weather conditions.

- **Winter Storm Warning** - Life-threatening, severe winter conditions have begun or will begin within 24 hours. People in a warning area should take precautions immediately.



Winter Weather Safety

Frostbite and Hypothermia

Frostbite and hypothermia are cold-related emergencies that may quickly become life or limb threatening. Preventing cold-related emergencies includes not starting an activity in, on, or around cold water unless you know you can get help quickly in an emergency. Be aware of the wind chill. Dress appropriately and avoid staying in the cold too long. Wear a hat and gloves when appropriate with layers of clothing. Drink plenty of warm fluids or warm water but avoid caffeine and alcohol. Stay active to maintain body heat. Take frequent breaks from the cold. Avoid unnecessary exposure of any part of the body to the cold. Get out of the cold immediately if the signals of hypothermia or frostbite appear.

Five Winter Driving Tips

Every winter, people are injured or killed because they are unprepared or overconfident on snowy, icy roads. Even if you are a veteran driver from a Snow Belt state and don't give venturing out in a blizzard a second thought, keeping these safety tips fresh in your mind can keep you on the road and in control.

Make sure you and your car are properly equipped

Before you set out on a snowy trip, even if it's just a short drive to the grocery store, keep the following items in mind.

- Make sure that your car has ample antifreeze, the windshield is clean and you have plenty of windshield washer fluid.
- Check to make sure the headlights are clean and in working order.
- Verify that the tires have tread and are properly inflated.
- Have your battery tested, to avoid being stranded in the cold with a car that won't start.
- Equip your car with a flashlight and extra batteries, a first aid kit, warm clothes, and a blanket.
- Remember to have sunglasses in the car, as the glare of the sun off of snow and ice can be more intense in the winter than it is in the summer.
- Perhaps the most important of all: Remember your cell phone, so you can call in case of emergency.

Slow down and drive smoothly

Driving too quickly is the main cause of accidents in winter conditions. Even if you're driving an SUV or a four-wheel-drive vehicle, you cannot safely do 80 mph during a snowstorm. Regardless of your vehicle, how you drive can prevent accidents.

- Avoid abrupt acceleration, braking and unnecessary lane changes. These maneuvers can cause your vehicle to lose traction and can launch you into an uncontrollable skid, leading to a collision.
- Four-wheel-drive may help your vehicle get going in the slushy stuff, but it's of no use when you're trying to steer or safely stop on a slippery road surface.
- Be patient and accept the fact that it is going to take longer to arrive at your destination.

Do not tailgate

Tailgating often leads to accidents, especially if you are driving in stop-and-go traffic. You may think that the driver in front of you doing 35 mph on the freeway is going too slow and needs a reminder in the form of you riding their bumper, but doing so is dangerous.

- Be patient and stay well behind the driver in front of you until it's safe to pass.
- It is important to remember that it takes a much longer distance to stop your vehicle in the snow or ice due to the reduced traction, even with just a light covering on the road.
- Having to deal with a fender bender on a busy road in the snow is certainly something that you want to avoid, especially if other cars are sliding around as well.
- Many serious accident injuries come from a second impact from another car after a seemingly trivial collision.

Do not use cruise control

Driving with cruise control has become almost second nature. Sure, it prevents you from getting leg fatigue, keeps you from unwittingly speeding and is great on long trips, but driving with it on in winter conditions can be unsafe.

- If cruise control has become a staple of your driving habits, make a conscious effort to ensure that you are not using it in winter weather.
- Using cruise control in the snow, ice or even rain is dangerous because if your car hydroplanes or skids, the car can accelerate and spin the wheels, attempting to maintain a constant speed.
- If you hydroplane with cruise control on, it will be more likely that you lose control of your vehicle.

Pull over or stay home

Remember, there is no shame in making the logical decision to stay in when the conditions are bad. You may be late arriving to your destination, but arriving late in one piece is much better than the alternative.

- If you can postpone your trip, or if it is non-essential, stay in when the weather is really bad.
- If at any point during your trip you feel that the weather is too bad to continue driving, simply stay put.
- If you're out on the road, find a safe spot to pull over and wait until the weather passes or calms to the point where you feel comfortable driving again.
- If driving in bad weather conditions is fatiguing, switch drivers before you get tired.

Update the emergency kit in your vehicle with:

- **Shovel**
- **Ice scraper and small broom**
- **Flashlight**
- **Battery powered radio**
- **Extra batteries**
- **Water**
- **Snack food**
- **Extra hats, socks and mittens**
- **First aid kit and pocket knife**
- **Medication**
- **Blanket**
- **Tow chain or rope**
- **Booster cables**
- **Emergency flairs or flags**

Do not leave your vehicle if you become stuck. Keep the exhaust clear and run the vehicle when needed to stay warm.

****This plan supersedes all previous weather plans and Human Resources policy pertaining to inclement weather.**