



## **Inclement weather FAQs**

### **Why doesn't VCU take into account its commuting students when making operations decisions during inclement weather?**

VCU does consider its commuting students. However, VCU is a 24-hour, seven-day, residential, major public research university with an academic medical center. The standard for decision-making is based on whether a substantial majority of students, staff and faculty can safely get to class and work.

### **Why does the "finance guy" have a say in the decisions?**

The vice president for finance and administration plays a role in the decision to delay opening or not to open at all because the following areas fall under that division:

- Facilities management
- Food services (dining halls, retail food outlets, bookstores, etc.)
- VCU Police (safety, security, traffic)
- Human resources
- Parking and transportation
- Technology services

### **What if my best judgment tells me to stay home and that means I miss class, but VCU is open?**

Even when the university opens during inclement weather conditions, we recognize that personal safety may continue to be a concern. We encourage faculty to be mindful of the need to provide students who miss classes with the opportunity to complete assignments and to make up work missed. However, it is the student's responsibility to communicate with the faculty member to make arrangements.

### **Why do the alerts come out so late?**

For a typical event, either a meeting or conference call is conducted among these officials:

- Vice president for finance and administration
- Provost and vice president for academic affairs
- CEO of the VCU Health System and VCU vice president for health sciences
- President's chief of staff
- Associate vice president for facilities management
- VCU chief of police

If inclement weather conditions evolve or occur late in the evening or overnight, the above officials participate in a 5 a.m. conference call. These issues are considered:

- Current and forecasted weather
- Actual weather conditions in the area of the conference call participants – includes city of Richmond and the counties of Chesterfield, Henrico, Goochland and Hanover
- VCU Police report of road conditions in the metro area
- VDOT report of road conditions for the greater metro area
- On-campus conditions as revealed by grounds personnel who arrive around 3 a.m. to begin clearing priority sidewalks and parking lots
- Status of snow removal by the contractor who clears the upper level of the decks and assists with surface parking lots
- Closings in the area, including other universities, and local and state and government offices

Media outlets are immediately notified. At the same time, the VCU Alert website, the VCU home page and the inclement weather phone message are updated. Social media is engaged and texts and email are sent. The goal is to make these public notifications within minutes of the decision.

#### **Why is VCU open if all the secondary schools in the area are closed?**

VCU's decisions aren't made based on whether or not a bus can safely bring in the students from the most remote area. The decision is made based on whether a majority of the students, faculty and staff can be here.